

PAPE'ETE, FRENCH POLYNESIA

Compared to some of the island resorts on nearby islands, French Polynesia's capital city is a little chaotic and grubby. But despite not having the famed South Pacific islands of its neighbors, Tahiti's first city is colorful and exciting... and just about the only place in the region with any nightlife

KEY INFO

Currency: CFP (1 USD = 0.0091 CFP)

Population: 27,000 (304,000 FP)

Emergency #: 15 (medical), 17 (police), 18 (fire)

Drinking water: Tap water is **not** drinkable

Time Zone: GMT-10


ID Requirements: Photo ID

Languages: French, Tahitian

Drive on the: Right

Pharmacy: Pharmacie du Port, 1 Rue Paul Gaugin 

Protection: Bug Spray & SPF 30+

Wi-Fi: Café Maeva (upstairs at Marché de Pape'ete) 

Post Office: OPT, 8 Bd de la Reine Pomare IV 

PORT LOCATION


Cruise ships dock at the Port of Pape'ete (Quai d'Honneur) on the western shores of the city, in front of Place Vai'ete (a nice park with food trucks). The walk into town is about 5-minutes (less than 1km).

Getting Around: The best way to get around Pape'ete is by walking. Buses are available, both in the city and further along the coast to nearby towns (such as Puna'auia, for the beach | Route 5). Modern buses have replaced pretty much all of Tahiti's classic Le Truck open-backed wagons. City fares are about 130CFP. Taking the bus all the way to its terminus costs 750CFP. Car rentals are available, mainly from Faaa Airport – options include [Avis](#), [Hertz](#), [Europcar](#) and a local firm called [Daniel Location de Voitures](#).

Taxis: There are plenty of taxis in Pape'ete. Taxis are metered with a base of 1000CPF + 130CPF/km


Tourist Bus: There is a [tourist train](#) that visits some of the city sights with an audio commentary (1-hour)



Port Facilities: Taxis, Local Guides



Port Address: Quai d'Honneur, FC6J+X8X, Papeete 98714, French Polynesia 

WHERE TO EAT

Vaiette Roulottes: Right next to the port, in Place Vai'ete, you'll find a gathering of take-and-go food trucks which are something of an icon here. Enjoy delicious, reasonably priced food on a park bench, or walking along the waterfront in the evening. [Evenings](#) | [Free](#) | 

Marché de Pape'ete: A great place for a casual takeaway lunch. Eat like a local and grab Ma'a Tahiti (traditional Tahitian food) from the main market. 5:30a-4p (Mon-Fri), 5:30a-1p (Sat), 4:30a-10a (Sun) | 









Maeva Café: Casual local food – good spot for a fish sandwich or hamburger. Also, delicious free Wi-Fi. 7:30a-3:30p (Sun-Fri), 7:30a-1p (Sat) |  | 

Le Perchoir: Only open three nights a week, this scrumptious patisserie and restaurant has a great view of the port. A modern take of French-Tahitian cuisine. 7p-3a (Thu-Sat) |  | 

HIGHLIGHTS IN PAPE'ETE

Marché de Pape'ete: The main market in the city takes up a whole block and is the main attraction, for visitors and locals alike. The cheapest place to buy pearls, as well as a good spot for fresh flowers, exotic fruits, and handcrafted goods such as wood carvings, pareu (sarongs), shell jewelry and woven hats and baskets. Keep an eye out for the homemade monoi (coconut oil).


5:30a-4p (Mon-Fri), 5:30a-1p (Sat), 4:30a-10a (Sun) | Free | 

Shop for Pearls: Tahiti is world-famous for its pearls - in particular black pearls. In addition to the main municipal market, **Blue Pearl Tahiti** ( | ) and **Vaima Perles** ( | ) around Rue Jeanne d'Arc both offer good selections of pearl jewelry. **Robert Wan** ( | ) is the biggest name in the local pearl scene (but expect to pay a premium for that). And **Tahiti Pearl Market** ( | ) gives you the opportunity to buy loose pearls and create your own custom piece.

Robert Wan Pearl Museum: This small pearl museum claims to be the only museum dedicated to pearls in the world. Learn about pearl cultivation and explore the (rather expensive) shop after exploring.

9a-5p (Mon-Sat) | Free | 



 www.robertwan.com



Cathédrale Notre-Dame: Inaugurated in 1875, this colonial era yellow-fronted church features some gothic elements and is the main congregation of the city. Hours unknown | \$ unknown | 

 www.cathedraledepapeete.com

Presidential Palace: Admire the presidential palace from outside and see the statue of Pouvana'a Opa, a pro-independence hero. 24 hours | Free | 

AFTER DARK IN PAPE'ETE

Intercontinental Resort: Just south of the airport, in the village of Tata'a, this is widely considered to be the premier resort on the island. It's got a good night scene with a popular bar and often live music and shows.  | 

Reeftop at Kon Tiki Hotel: On the rooftop of Boutique Hotel Kon Tiki Tahiti, this buzzing bar looks over the port. 4:30p-12:30a | Free Entry |  | 

Zion Social Club: A French-feel outdoor bar with adjacent bowling alley for a fun night out.

2p - 11p (Mon, Wed-Sat) | Free |  | 

BEACHES IN TAHITI

Pape'ete itself doesn't have a beach, so if you're looking for a day in the sea or lazing on beautiful white sand, head down the west coast towards **Puna'avia**. Here you'll find several nice beaches including **Plage de Toaroto** (at PK 15.5), **Plage de Vaiava** (at PK 18), which is often noted as the best beach on the island (though less good for swimming as the water is very shallow). And for snorkeling, head to **Plage du Mahana Park**, which is particular popular with snorkelers thanks to its coral gardens.