

Aitutaki Island, Cook Islands

A shimmering atoll lagoon ringed by white-sand motus — Aitutaki is a rare South Pacific stop where the water really is that turquoise, and the hardest decision is which deserted islet to lunch on.

 Tender port (anchor offshore)

 Typical call: 7-9 hrs

 NZD (New Zealand Dollar)

 English / Cook Islands Māori

 Lagoon-focused destination

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____ Arrive: _____ All aboard: _____

Excursion: _____ Notes: _____

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Tender to Arutanga Wharf — ships anchor outside the reef; Zodiacs used by smaller expedition vessels

Best For: Lagoon cruises, snorkeling, motu hopping, One Foot Island stamp

Walk to Center: Immediate — Arutanga village is right at the wharf

Don't Miss: Book a lagoon cruise before your port day — they sell out and don't run Sundays

Getting around:  Taxi  NZ\$20–\$30 ·  Rideshare  not available

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Aitutaki Lagoon Cruise** — A half-day cruise by catamaran or traditional vaka visiting multiple motus inside the lagoon, with snorkeling stops, a beachside barbecue lunch, and...
- One Foot Island (Tapuaetai) Visit** — The most photographed motu in the Cook Islands — pristine white sand, turquoise shallows, and a tiny post office where you can get a unique Aitutaki...
- Maungapu Summit Hike** — A short but steep hike to the highest point on Aitutaki (123m) rewards with panoramic views of the entire atoll, the lagoon, and surrounding motus.
- Ootu Beach Day** — Ootu Beach on the eastern side of the main island offers calm, shallow water ideal for swimming and paddleboarding.
- Arutanga Village & CICC Church Walk** — The Cook Islands Christian Church in Arutanga is the oldest church in the country, featuring carved woodwork and stained-glass windows.

BEST WALKS

- Arutanga Village Stroll** 30-45 min | Easy | Flat — From the wharf, walk north along the main road past local shops and the post office to the Cook Islands Christian Church (CICC).
- Coastal Road to Ootu Beach** 45-60 min each way | Easy | Flat road — A scenic road walk (or cycle) along Aitutaki's eastern coast from Arutanga to Ootu Beach.

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

 CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)

	Mon	High	Low	Rain
Apr		81°	78°	18d
Jun		78°	76°	12d
Aug		77°	74°	11d
Sep		77°	75°	12d
Oct		78°	75°	13d

 DAYLIGHT &  MONEY

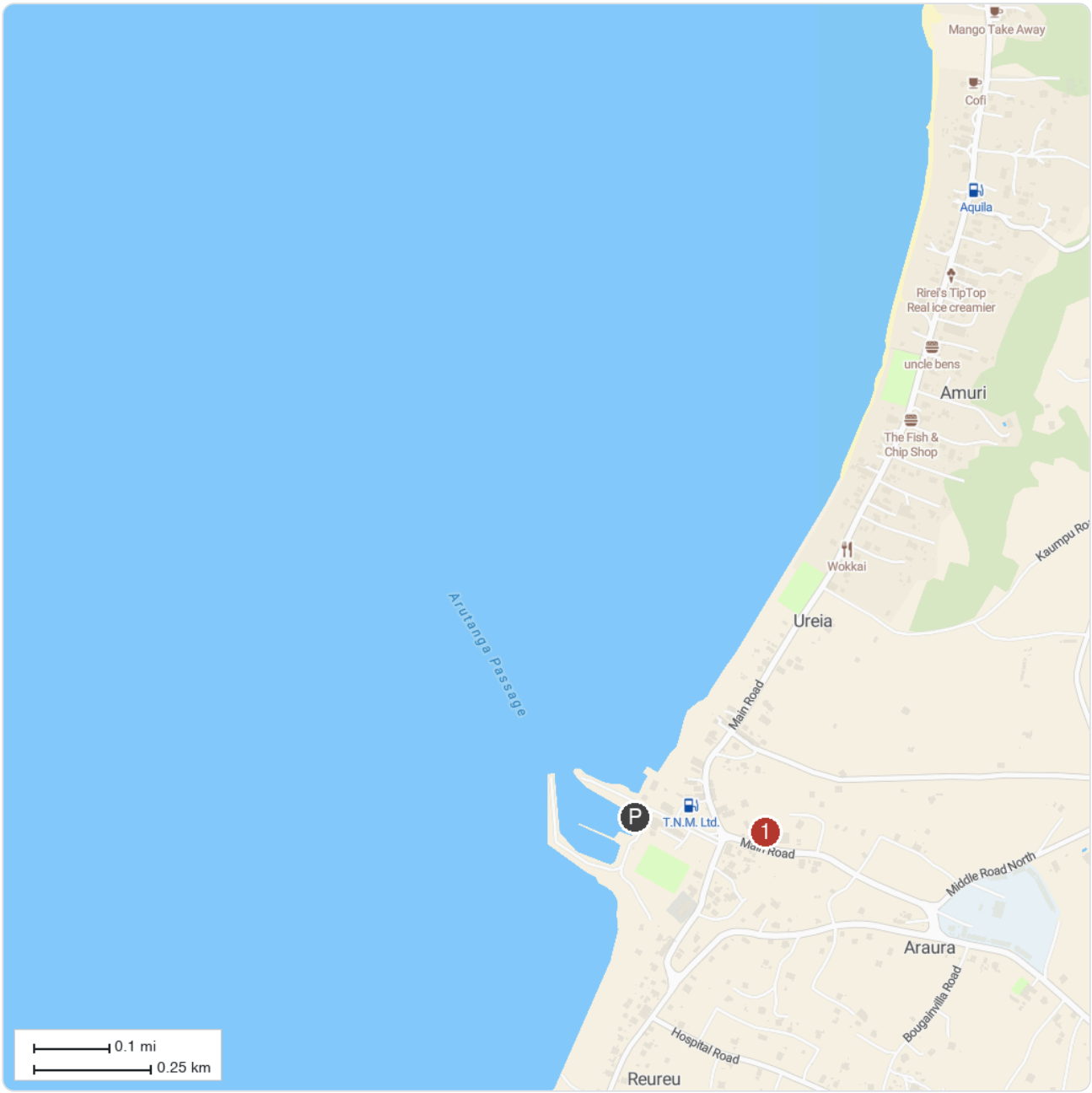
Apr 6:49AM–6:28PM · Jun 7:10AM–6:09PM · Aug 6:59AM–6:27PM · Sep 6:34AM–6:33PM · Oct 6:09AM–6:40PM

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Book your lagoon cruise before you sail. Aitutaki lagoon tours fill completely on cruise ship days — walk-up availability is unreliable. Tours don't run Sundays.
- Port cancellations happen here more than almost anywhere. Rough swells can make tendering unsafe. Have a backup plan and keep expectations flexible.
- Bring NZD cash. The Cook Islands dollar is pegged 1:1 to NZD. There's an ATM in Arutanga near the wharf, but cash is king at market stalls and small operators.
- Rent a scooter or bicycle if you're exploring independently — there's no public bus, and the island loop is only about 25km. Rentals are available near the wharf on ship days.
- Sun protection is non-negotiable. The South Pacific equatorial sun is intense. High-SPF reef-safe sunscreen, a rash guard, and a hat are essential for lagoon days.
- Bring your passport for the One Foot Island stamp. The tiny post office on Tapuaetai will stamp it — a genuine travel keepsake, not just a tourist gimmick.

Aitutaki Island, Cook Islands — Port Map

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



1 Arutanga Aitutaki's main village, home to the historic CICC church.

P Cruise port / terminal