

Hiva Oa, Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia

The wildest island in French Polynesia — volcanic peaks, ancient stone tikis, and the final resting place of Gauguin and Jacques Brel. No lagoons, no resort hotels, just raw Marquesas.

Tender port (no pier)

Typical call: 8–10 hrs

CFP Franc (XPF) — bring cash

French & Marquesan

Culture & history focus

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: Arrive: All aboard:

Excursion: Notes:

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Tender to Tahauku Harbor pier

Best For: Art history, archaeology, Polynesian culture

Walk to Atuona: ~2.4 km (40 min) or shared taxi/shuttle

Don't Miss: Calvary Cemetery (Gauguin & Brel graves)

Getting around: Taxi 1,000–2,000 CFP (~\$12–\$25) · Rideshare not available

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Gauguin Cultural Center & Maison du Jouis** — Explore Gauguin's final years through high-quality reproductions of his Polynesian paintings and a replica of his infamous 'House of Pleasure' studio.
- Calvary Cemetery — Gauguin & Brel Graves** — A steep 15-minute walk from town leads to the hillside cemetery where both Gauguin and Brel are buried side by side with sweeping views of Atuona Bay.
- Espace Jacques Brel — Jojo's Hangar** — Jacques Brel spent his last years flying medical evacuations on this remote island.
- Tikis of Puamau — Me'ae Lipona** — The largest stone tiki statues in all of French Polynesia, including the 2.6-m Tiki Takaii, stand at this remote ceremonial site in the Puamau Valley.
- Taaoa Valley — Upeke Archaeological Site** — One of the largest ancient ceremonial complexes in the Marquesas, hidden in the jungle just 20 minutes from Atuona by 4x4.

BEST WALKS

- Atuona Village & Calvary Cemetery Loop** 3 km · 1.5–2 hrs · Moderate (hilly) — From the Gauguin Cultural Center, walk uphill through Atuona village past the red-stone Notre Dame church, then continue the steep climb to Calvary Cemetery for...
- Harbor to Atuona Black Sand Beach** 2 km one-way · 25 min · Easy (flat) — From Tahauku Harbor, follow the coastal road toward the mouth of the bay to reach the dramatic black volcanic sand beach.

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)

	Mon	High	Low	Rain
Apr		84°	78°	19d
Jun		82°	77°	20d
Aug		81°	75°	20d
Sep		81°	75°	19d
Oct		82°	76°	19d

DAYLIGHT & MONEY

Apr 5:49AM–5:42PM · Jun 6:00AM–5:33PM · Aug 5:57AM–5:44PM · Sep 5:39AM–5:42PM · Oct 5:22AM–5:41PM

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Nonos are brutal. These tiny biting midges cause intensely itchy welts. Standard DEET often doesn't work — buy Monoi oil with citronella at the pier shop or bring high-concentration Picaridin before you leave the ship.
- Cash only, and the ATM runs dry. Bring XPF or euros — the single Banque Socredo ATM in Atuona often empties on cruise days. Credit cards accepted at the museums, rarely elsewhere.
- Puamau takes the whole day. The giant tikis at Me'ae Lipona are 2.5 hours each way by 4x4. Only attempt it if your ship is in port for 9+ hours and you pre-book a driver.
- Sunday closures. If you're in port on a Sunday, most shops and restaurants close. The artisans' market usually opens for cruise arrivals regardless.
- Eat local. Try poisson cru (raw fish in coconut milk) and Marquesan goat curry at Snack Temetiu. If you see a local selling giant pamplemousse (Marquesan grapefruit), buy one — they're extraordinary.
- Wild horses roam freely along the roads and ridges — a quirky Marquesan signature. They're generally gentle but give them space on narrow roads.

Hiva Oa, Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia — Port Map

cruiseports.org

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



- 1

Paul Gauguin Cultural Center

Small museum in Atuaona with reproductions of Gauguin's Marquesan-period paintings, since the originals are held abroad.
- 2

Calvary Cemetery

Hillside cemetery above Atuaona where painter Paul Gauguin and singer Jacques Brel are both buried, with sweeping bay views.
- 3

Me'ae Iipona Archaeological Site

Marquesas' largest restored ceremonial site, with some of Polynesia's tallest surviving stone tiki figures.
- 4

Taaoa Petroglyphs

Ancient rock carvings and a restored marae complex in a valley a short drive from Atuaona.
- P

Cruise port / terminal