

CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

PACIFIC ISLANDS & HAWAII



Na Pali Coast, Kauai

BEST TIME TO GO/WEATHER

The South Pacific enjoys a year-round tropical climate. However, as this is such a vast area, conditions can vary, especially as the equator cuts through the region. The milder dry season from May to October is the most popular time for cruises when temperatures hover around a comfortable 25 Celsius. In Southern Hemisphere spots, such as Tahiti and Fiji, this falls during winter. The wet season between November and April is more humid when there is a risk of cyclones.

Hawaii enjoys year-round cruising, though the winter months tend to be the most popular and this is also peak whale-watching season. The summer, from June to August, is hottest, but the shoulder seasons in April/May and September/October are a prime time to visit as the weather is still good and there are no summer crowds.

Fire Dancing- Honolulu



Surfing in Hawaii



10 REASONS TO CRUISE HERE

Far-flung escape – the dreamy isles of the South Pacific are regarded as the ultimate slice of tropical paradise, staggeringly beautiful with warm friendly people and, even better, not too touristy.

Natural treasure chest – turquoise lagoons teeming with rainbow-coloured fish, coral atolls encircling glittering aquamarine waters, emerald green jungles tumbling down to dazzling white sand beaches studded with palm trees, plus the contrast of vibrant tropical flowers and glowering active volcanoes.

Cultural cornucopia – the Polynesian spirit runs throughout the islands, mixed with the all-consuming American twang of Hawaii, the Gallic air of French Polynesia led by Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora, and the British heritage of Fiji, Tonga and the Solomon Isles.

Island-hopping bounty – jump aboard smaller vessels that serve these islands year-round; sail through them on repositioning voyages of larger lines; cruise from New Zealand and Australia; or dip into Hawaii from North America's West Coast.

Escape the crowds – the remoteness of the South Pacific archipelagos has saved them from the curse of overtourism, making it easy to find unspoilt, peaceful hideaways. Even on the busier islands of Hawaii, away from the high-rises of Waikiki Beach on Oahu are quieter spots.

Centuries of history – sail in the footsteps of Captain James Cook who visited the islands three times in search of Australia, and Captain William Bligh who was famously cast adrift from his ship Bounty, while the mutineers settled on Pitcairn Island.

The spirit of Aloha – tap into an evocative land of flower leis and hula girls in Hawaii where the Polynesian culture comes with an American flourish, plus intriguing British links dating from their discovery by Captain Cook, who named them the Sandwich Islands.

Wartime stories – the Japanese bombing of the US naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii during World War II turned the South Pacific into a theatre of war and the site of decisive battles between Allied and Japanese forces – reminders of which are evident today.

Surfing spirit – the beautifully warm clear waters and perfect rollers off Hawaii and other islands including Fiji, Tahiti and Vanuatu make for ideal surfing territory whether you're a beginner wanting beach lessons or a pro searching for the perfect wave.

Castaway stars – French artist Paul Gauguin who arrived in Tahiti and never left, immortalising the islands in his paintings; legendary actor Marlon Brando who retreated to French Polynesia to escape the spotlight; and Scottish novelist Robert Louis Stevenson who settled in Samoa and is buried there, his house now a museum.

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10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

- 1. It's a heck of a long way** – Hawaii is a six-hour flight from the US West Coast or you can cruise from West Coast ports. Other South Pacific islands are even further – an eight or nine-hour flight from the likes of Los Angeles. This is on top of the UK flight of around 11 hours to the West Coast in the first place.
- 2. So break up the journey** – with stays in the likes of Vancouver, Seattle, Los Angeles or San Diego on the outbound and inbound legs to help travellers acclimatise to the time difference and give them a breather from the long flights.
- 3. Choose your departure port** – decide if you want sail to Hawaii from ports including Vancouver, Los Angeles and San Francisco or fly to Hawaii and sail from Oahu. For the South Pacific, sail from Tahiti around the islands or cruise from Australia and New Zealand.
- 4. Add on a land stay** – pair-up sailings that start from within the islands with stays at local hotels. This gives travellers a chance to soak up the unspoilt island ambience, especially in the South Pacific's romantic over-water bungalow resorts.
- 5. Know your islands** – while they all have been blessed with beautiful surroundings by Mother Nature, there's a marked cultural difference between some archipelagos, while some outposts have more of a desert island feel than others.
- 6. Big ship v small ship experience** – smaller ships tend to be based in the islands offering a variety of itineraries to lesser-known corners, while mainstream lines and their larger ships tend to hug main ports, especially as some are on world cruises or repositioning voyages.
- 7. Beware choppy waters** – cruising to Hawaii from North America and to the South Pacific archipelagos from Australia and New Zealand involves crossing open seas, so sensitive sailors should take seasickness medication.
- 8. Plan your excursions** – some islands are easier to explore than others thanks to local transport links and the location of the cruise ports, so do your research to see where it is best to take pre-arranged tours.
- 9. Watch the sea days** – be prepared for ship time as it takes five days to reach Hawaii from Vancouver/Seattle and four from Los Angeles/San Francisco. It can also take a couple of days from Australia and New Zealand to the South Pacific islands.
- 10. Port intensive** – once you arrive in the islands, there are likely to be stops every day so expect to be on the go and be aware that some cruise ports will be tender only.

