

Ensemble Experience

NUKU HIVA, MARQUESAS

Ship/Sailing:	Paul Gauguin	December 27, 2008
Tour Date:	January 1, 2009	
Ship Time in Port:	8:00 am -	6:00 pm
Tour Name:	<i>Visit to Taiohae and Toovii, the Heart of Nuku Hiva</i>	
Half-Day Tour:	Depart: 8:30 am	Return: 1:00 pm

Spend a fabulous morning absorbing the breathtaking views and idyllic atmosphere of this stunning island in the South Pacific. Your guide will meet you ashore at the tender dock where you will board comfortable, four passenger 4WD touring vehicles and begin your tour.

Enjoy the scenic drive along the protected crescent shoreline of Taiohae's bay until you come to your first stop, the artisan's center in this charming port village. Admire the artistry and creativity of the Marquesan wood and stone sculptors and the stunning results of their labors. Then visit Taiohae's Cathedral of Notre Dame. The center of Marquesan Catholicism, this lovely Catholic Church is adorned inside and out with splendid wood sculptures, many of which have been donated from all the islands in the archipelago.

From here, you will continue on to a tohua, or ancient community meeting place. The large, dressed stone platform is known as Pae Pae Piki Vehine. Here the exceptional skill of the Marquesans in working with the great slabs of basalt that are part of their island's heritage is wondrously manifest.

Your next stop will be at the atelier of Nuku Hiva's top sculptor to see the master at work and to admire some of his creations-in-progress. Upon leaving the atelier your tour turns inland, climbing toward the island's central plateau of Toovii. The Mount Muake viewpoint and its breathtaking views will be your first stop. Savor the panorama of craggy peaks, vertiginous cliffs, lush green valleys and the distant sea before continuing to the Toovii ranch, located on the plateau.

Drive around the area where acres of lush green pasture are dotted with the cattle that comprise Nuku Hiva's only dairy herd. Then visit the ranch proper for a refreshing glass of fruit juice and a chance to sample some of the many local delicacies produced here. Now it's time to begin the drive back down to the coast. Along the way you will make a slight detour to stop at another fantastic viewpoint, this one overlooking the adjoining Taipivai valley, the site of Herman Melville's classic South Seas novel, Typee. After your brief stop it's back to the tender dock in Taiohae in time for lunch aboard ship.

Ensemble Experience shore excursions are capacity controlled, subject to change without notice and require a minimum number of participants. All times are approximate. Your Ensemble Traveler host onboard will advise final details.