

Cook Island

By Rob Fowler, Willamette Family

July, 2007

My wife, Nancy (Willamette agent), and I visited Rarotonga, Cook Islands in July. The flight on Air New Zealand was very comfortable considering being in coach class for approximately 10 hours from LAX. It is not like being in coach class on a domestic flight. There was more leg room and free movies to pass the time and of course time for a nap before landing at 6:00 A.M. It was raining quite heavily when we arrived but no one cared; we were in the South Pacific (It was a dry rain!!). Our transfer was waiting for us and took us to our first "hotel" Raina Lagoon Villas. We were shown our room and in no time we were eating our breakfast that was delivered to our front covered patio with a view of the ocean — the rain had stopped by now.



We stayed there for 3 days and moved to the east side of the island (Raina is on the west side). We took a taxi to the Manea Beach Villas on Muri Beach. It only has a few bungalows but is very clean and had a kitchen. Every morning I would go out to the beach before anyone else and get on one of the complimentary kayaks to watch the sunrise from the water. It was great! There are three islands in Muri Lagoon, so you can easily row to them.

The last place we stayed — this is what happens when you are married to a travel agent — was the Muri Beach Club Hotel. It was just a block away so being as cheap as I am, I walked over with our luggage. That's why luggage has wheels, right?? This hotel was very nice with restaurant and big rooms with large verandas. We had a great time there with live music on most nights and a very nice manager who would make sure you had everything you needed. From their beach you could walk to the islands when the tide was going out. The water is about 4 feet deep but it is fun. Just make sure you get back before high tide or you have to swim across.

There is a bus service that goes around the island. One bus goes clockwise the other goes counterclockwise so it gives you two chances to catch a bus every hour. It cost about 75 cents. It is very convenient for us cheap guys. Great way to get to town.

The snorkeling was good once I found the spot. It is the south end of Muri Beach across from the Fruits of Rarotonga; there is a bus stop there. I heard Aroa Beach is good also but didn't make it there.

It was a great trip and I would love to go back but next time will also go to Aitutaki. Everyone that we talked who had just returned from there just loved it. It is a lot smaller and fewer people. Can't wait to go back someday.

