

# Star Clipper—Tahiti

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I can't tell you how fantastic this trip was for us. The destination and the ship are phenomenal and I do think travel around Polynesia on a clipper ship is the ultimate way to experience the islands and atolls of the South Pacific.

The Star Flyer is a 360-foot tall ship with four masts. Maximum number of passengers is 170. We were "under sail" about 50% of the time. The ship is beautiful - feels like a private yacht. Crew and passengers come from around the world. Dress is very casual including at dinner. There were just over 50% Americans with Germans, French, Aussies, English, Canadians, Italians and a few other European countries represented as well. Three languages were spoken during the cruise by the cruise director and all announcements and the daily paper were also in those three languages (English, German and French). All had fascinating stories to tell, were well-traveled, well-educated, independent travelers. The interaction on board was excellent.

I was on the 11-night cruise: Papeete-at sea-Fakarava-Rangiora-at sea-Bora Bora -Raiatea-Taha'a-Huahine-Moorea Cook's Bay- Moorea Opunohu Bay-Papeete. Focus on this cruise is the water: sailing, snorkeling, diving, jet skiing and beach days. We had the opportunity to swim with sharks, stingrays and humpback whales! The "life" event was on our last day - we went on an excursion on Moorea with Dr. Michael Poole, Ph.D. from Berkeley who lives there and studies dolphins and whales. He has been featured on the Discovery Channel and Animal Planet to name a few. We found three humpbacks and were within yards of them as they swam around our tiny boat. Michael told us to grab our snorkels and masks and in the water we went! I watched two whales doing a ballet literally yards below me in the water! Absolutely incredible.

The water is crystal clear, warm and five shades of blue. The islands are covered in palm trees and exotic flowers. Black pearls and vanilla are their primary exports and the bright colored pareos are fun to shop for. I would return in a heartbeat.