

## 2025 Pacific Puddle Jump Rally

Fleet Letter #1

Ahoy, Pacific Puddle Jumpers! Welcome to the fleet!

This message confirms that your boat is officially registered with the 2025 Pacific Puddle Jump Rally.

### Why It's a "Privilege" to Cruise French Polynesia —

Ever since the first European adventurers returned home from exploring the dramatic, volcano-formed islands and atolls that we now call French Polynesia, sailors of all stripes have dreamed of experiencing firsthand the territory's spellbinding beauty and exotic cultural traditions. Believe us when we say it is a very special place to visit! In fact, we'd bet that soon after you make landfall in the islands you'll agree that it is truly a "privilege" to sail there.

But along with that privilege comes the responsibility of every visiting sailor to always be respectful of local residents and their property, and to be equally respectful of the region's delicate underwater ecosystems. Be aware also that although visiting yachts do contribute to the economy of this French Overseas Territory, income from cruisers is not essential to its bottom line. And because France contributes roughly 80% of French Polynesia's annual budget, tourism in all its forms does not dominate the local economy. Hawaii, by comparison, sees roughly 30 times more tourists annually than does Tahiti and her sister islands.

**Polynesian Cultural Traditions** — A big part of Tahiti's allure to both land-based visitors and sailors is that the region's rich cultural traditions — in music,

### **Info-Packed Fleet Letters & Online Resources**

— This is the first in a series of PPJ "Fleet Letters" you'll receive between now and July. They will include important fleet info compiled to help you and your boat become well-prepared for the crossing, and they will keep you up to date with French Polynesia's rules and regulations that pertain to visiting crews and vessels. \*\* (If you prefer to receive **text-only Fleet Letters rather than pdfs**, email us at: [pacific.puddle.jump@gmail.com](mailto:pacific.puddle.jump@gmail.com).)

dance, sports and cuisine — exist in the forefront of everyday life, while tourism in all forms exists quietly in the background. And as you'll soon see, that's a good thing.

**Keeping Track of Cruisers** — Because France has always been proud of its legacy as a maritime nation, international cruising yachts have always been welcome in these exotic isles — even during the COVID nightmare. But the economic slowdown brought on by the pandemic gave local government agencies time to thoroughly assess the territory's tourism sector, including visits by international cruisers. One result of that process was the establishment of a mandatory pre-arrival online check-in procedure called the Declaration of Entry and Exit. See:

[www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/declaration-unique-plaisance-polynesie-francaise](http://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/declaration-unique-plaisance-polynesie-francaise)

Government sources tell us the main goal of this program is to achieve better communications with, and monitoring of, visiting vessels, including during search and rescue incidents.

**Other Potential Changes** — It costs almost nothing

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*In the Marquesas, the jagged volcanic peaks of Ua Pou serve as unmistakable landmarks.*



to enter French Polynesia, and arriving cruisers have never been charged a cruising fee, as in the Med and Caribbean. But with a steady trickle of cruisers arriving each season, a variety of new initiatives are being discussed by the government, including the restriction of open anchoring in some areas (mostly in the Society Islands), along with the eventual installation of overnight mooring balls, which will be reservable in advance via the above-mentioned online monitoring system.

No moorings are currently planned for the Marquesas, however some are now being installed in the two largest Tuamotu atolls, Rangiroa and Fakarava — part of which is a World Heritage site. But such changes are made slowly in these islands. We're told the mooring installation and reservation system probably won't be fully implemented until late in 2025, or later.

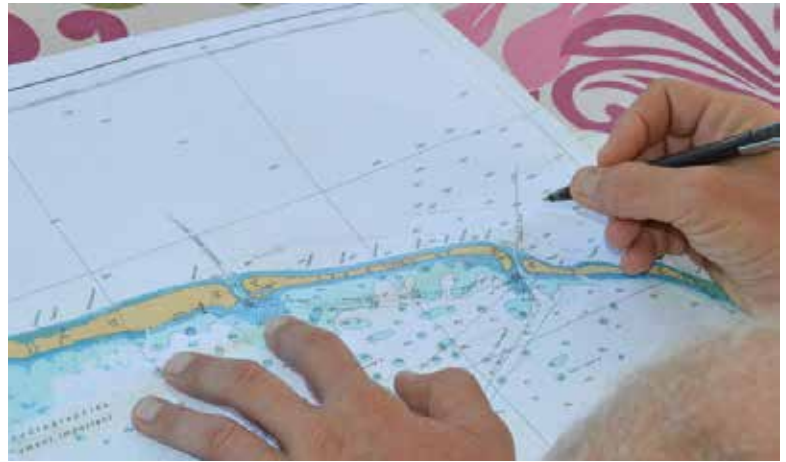
**How Long Can You Stay?** — If you are like most sailors preparing to do the Puddle Jump, you've probably got enough projects scribbled on your "to-do list" to make your head spin. And you may be wondering which tasks to tackle first. But before you get embroiled with any of them, we suggest addressing the question of how long you intend to stay in these islands.

If you and your crew are European Union passport holders (and do not intend to work for pay), you can enter the territory without obtaining a visa in advance and stay as long as you like.

Americans, Canadians, New Zealanders, Australians and some others are given 90-day passport stamps upon arrival, without having fulfilled any bureaucratic obligations in advance. But as many veteran cruisers would tell you, 90 days isn't nearly enough time to explore these alluring islands. So you

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*The Tuamotus are famous for surreal sites like the Blue Lagoon.*



*Rangiroa is 50 miles across, but has only two entry channels.*

may want to take on the bureaucratic challenge of obtaining Long Stay Visas which allow you to stay for an entire year (and are renewable in Tahiti).

The application process is a bit complicated, requiring you to surrender your passport for six weeks or longer. Fortunately, longtime South Pacific cruisers Chuck Houlihan and Bruce Balan have taken on the challenge of keeping up with occasional subtle changes to the application process. In early January, Chuck posted a newly updated version of the procedure on his highly informative website. See: <https://www.jacarandajourney.com/fplongstayvisa>.

### **Need a little help?**

If you'd like some professional help in this process, consider using the services of our longtime partners at TahitiCrew yacht agency. Based in Tahiti, they're conscientious, reliable, and they give discounted rates on all of their services to registered Pacific Puddle Jumpers. Please visit the links on our PPJ website to the agency's [Welcome Letter](#) and [Rates](#). If you contact them, and you have joined the PPJ be sure to mention the 2025 PPJ fleet discount code.

### **Download the free 2025 Stopover Handbook —**

Whether you will be visiting the islands for the first time or the hundredth time, the free Stopover Handbook to French Polynesia will be an indispensable resource, as it is chock-full of up-to-date information on everything from Customs regulations to fuel dock locations. <https://www.pacificpuddlejumps.com/Alumni/2024/StopoverHandbook-FrenchPolynesia.pdf>

***Look for our next fleet letter in a week or two!  
— PPJ 2025 Rally Committee***