

Obtaining a French Polynesian Long Stay Visa from Ecuador

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It appears that each French embassy or consulate has their own flavor of what is required and how long it takes to obtain a long term visa for French Polynesia.

Linda applied here in Ecuador and it was very easy. I include the message we received from the French embassy when I sent them an email asking them what Linda should supply.

“As requested, please find attached the long stay visa application form for your wife.

We are also sending you hereafter the documents you have to present with a long stay visa application form:

- Long stay visa application form duly filled and signed
- Copie of your passeport
- Cover letter explaining your trip project
- Sailboat registration
- Last 6 months bank statements
- Insurance

Best regards,

Visa section”

What Linda supplied was the following

Copy of Passport

Visa application in English

Cover letter stating why she wanted a 1 year visa. Supplied in both English and French.

6 months of bank statements printed off her online account

DAN insurance card

Jacaranda vessel documentation

Letter stating she would not seek employment

Letter from me stating she is onboard Jacaranda(Different last names)

Passport photo (US size was acceptable)

Boat card

Linda filled out the online request for an appointment, received email confirmation with time and date, arrived at the embassy and presented the paperwork. Linda was allowed to keep her passport as we were traveling thru South America. Process took 6 weeks and we just received an email saying to come back to Quito as it was ready for pick up. In Panama folks have reported the entire process takes 3 weeks.

There was No interview just a French embassy employee checking off the items they required. The application was sent to Papette for processing.

Upon arrival the embassy staff took Linda's passport and glued in the LS visa that gave her a 3 month window. The visa stated we had 3 months from June 1 to arrive and submit additional information to Tahiti. The application asked when she would arrive and we said June 1

Once we arrive in French Polynesia Linda still needs to obtain yellow Carte de Sejour. **See part II for actual details.** But according to where you first check in you may need to post a bond until you receive the paperwork back from Papeete.

Part II – Upon Arrival in French Polynesia

Just to add to my earlier note about the French Polynesia Long Stay visa and our arrival in the Marquesas. I am traveling on an EU passport and Linda on a US passport. This information only pertains to non EU citizens. *If your spouse is an EU citizen then you can apply in FP upon arrival for your spouses cds.*

Overview >>>Assuming you have already obtained a Long Stay Visa from a French Embassy before arriving<<<

Obtain a Long Stay Visa(LS) from a French Embassy (Not obtained in French Polynesia)
Upon arrival in French Polynesia submit paperwork and documents to the Haut Commissaire office in Papeete or Nuka Hiva for your carte de sejour (cds). Your completed yellow cds will be sent back to you or available for pickup in Tahiti. Original passport as earlier reported does not need to be sent to Tahiti.

Long Stay Visa

The Long Stay Visa in your passport only starts the process. The dates on the LS visa are the dates (usually a 3 month window) when you need to check in. Upon arrival you will need to submit additional documents to the Haut Commissaire office so you can obtain your carte de sejour (cds). The cds is what you will need to have in hand to be legally in French Polynesia for more than 90 days

Upon arrival and after checking into French Polynesia a stamp must be purchased at the post office (9000cfp about \$90US). One stamp per person.

The stamp, a copy of your passport showing the page with the arrival stamp, the page with the visa (obtained at the embassy in Ecuador), and two (2) passport sized photos will need to be submitted to the Haut Commissaire office. There is an office in Papeete, Nuka Hiva and Raiatea.

Details

While in Ecuador I contacted the agent that is used by the Pacific Puddle Jump fleet – Tehani at Tahiti Crew <http://tahiticrew.com> - yachts@tahiticrew.com - requesting information about needing to pay the bond for Linda while waiting for the cds to be processed after our arrival in Hiva Oa. Tehani contacted immigration in Papeete and was told that a bond is required while awaiting completion of your cds. I contacted the agent based in Nuku Hiva (Kevin at Nuku Hiva Yacht Services) with the same question and he responded that some years no bond is needed but

his office could produce a letter (\$90 per passport) that would satisfy the Gendarmerie. But we did not want to check in at Nuku Hiva as that would put most all the rest of the Marquesas islands to windward.

Information sent to Tahiti Crew after signing up for their service.

Formulaire du Yachtmaster (supplied by Tahiti Crew)

Mandate(supplied by Tahiti Crew)

Yachtmasters form(supplied by Tahiti Crew)

Mouvement des Membres D'Equipage(supplied by Tahiti Crew)

Crew List

Passport Linda Edeiken

Passport Chuck Houlihan

Health Insurance Linda Edeiken

Jacaranda Vessel Documentation

Passport page of the visa obtained at the French Embassy Quito (sent to Tahiti Crew at a later date when issued)

If you will be doing your own bond then ignore the info above.

Warning: Boats have received conflicting information about the necessity of posting a bond if they have a LS Visa. You may need to sort things out once you get here or do your own research before arriving.

Since we were going to check into Hiva Oa we decided to pay the agent fee (\$235 discounted with Lat38 PPJ signup) for Linda and with that we could get the bond exempt paperwork, duty fee fuel certificate (saving us about 40%) plus help with the carte de sejour(pre Jan 2016). Current fuel prices are 155cpf per liter diesel and 158cpf per liter for gasoline. Duty free fuel only pertains to diesel, not gasoline. Duty free fuel is 83cpf per liter. Exchange rate is about 100cpf = \$1US (See our write up about food & Fuel costs in the Marquesas on our website)

With that said, we arrived in Atuona, Hiva Oa and the agent, Sandra (Hiva Oa Yacht Services), met us on the dock. Check in was easily accomplished at the Gendarmerie by filling in one form. All crew must be present in person with their passports regardless of nationality. An interesting item on the form besides the usual is an inventory of how much alcohol (liquor/wine) you have on board. You may want to do an alcohol inventory before checking in so you have that in hand while at the Gendarmerie's office. We paid Sandra for the postal stamp for Linda's passport and gave her Linda's 2 passport photos. Normally you have to go to the Post Office to buy your own stamp but in our case Sandra did it for us. She then said she would send the paperwork to Tehani in Tahiti (photos, a copy of the passport with the Gendarmerie stamp in it, post office stamp and a copy of the visa). **Here the trouble started as the post is very unreliable and it took 5 weeks for our letter to arrive in Papeete!!**

Once Tehani (Tahiti Crew) received the documents from Sandra in Atuona, she submitted them to the Haut Commissaire office in Papeete. When completed she picked them up and mailed the carte de sejour back to us in Nuku Hiva. The actual process in the Haut Commissaire office in

Papeete took 2 weeks. It was getting the documents to Tahiti and back to Nuku Hiva that took 9 weeks!!!

In 2016 a new ruling came into effect that requires LS visa applicants to appear in person at the haut Commissaire's office to submit and receive the cds. That would eliminate any help the agent could give you and require you to proceed to Nuka Hiva as they have a haut commissaires office in Taiohae. On Feb 28th I received an email from Tahiti Crew (see below)

2-28-16 An update from our agent in Tahiti – Tahiti Crew

“Also, this morning, I went to check on the status of the carte de sejour of the application made last year, and they told me that I can actually apply for the cruisers however, they will need to pick the card up. As the haut commissaire needs to see the cruisers face to face at least one time during the application to make sure they really exist and they are really there.

As you can see there are some changes and things appear to be a bit fluid at the moment. Best to check yourself.

If you want to contact the officials directly

Contact Haut Commissaire office in Papeete: Miss Taiha or Mr Stephenson Phone 40.46.86.07

Contact Haut Commissaire office in Nuka Hiva: Anne-Marie Guiguen Phone # 87768987

Suggestions

#1

Stop in Nuka Hiva at the haute commissaires office to have your cds process started and then have the completed cds sent back to you in Nuka Hiva via the haute commissaires office in Taiohae, Nuka Hiva.

#2

Stop in Nuka Hiva at the haute commissaires office to have your cds process started and then have the completed cds picked up by the agent in Tahiti and sent to you at an island of your choice. (Be sure to read issues with FP mail system)

#3

Check into Hiva oa and have the paperwork sent to the agent in Tahiti to be submitted to the Haute Commissaires office on your behalf and then you will need to pick it up in Tahiti before it expires. Do not have the agent send the information but do it yourself via overnight air (Be sure to read issues with FP mail system)

Be sure to keep the receipt from submitting the cds paperwork as this will be needed to be shown if you are approached by an official as in the case of friends who were boarded by the French Navy. They showed them the receipt of submittal for the cds and that was satisfactory.

This is what we did (remember before the new ruling came into effect)

Our suggestion is to have the documents sent overnight to Papeete and after the cds is ready, have it overnighted back to an island of your choice rather than use the regular mail service. Yes it's more costly but it took us **9 weeks** to get Linda's cds in her hand. This extended timeframe was not a problem for us because we had planned to stay in the Marquesas rather than cruise other island groups. It may cause a big problem for others if that is not your plan. We had the cds sent to us in Nuku Hiva by regular post. We could have saved 7 weeks by having it sent overnight by plane. You could also pick up your completed cds in Papeete saving you the expense and time of delivery to the Marquesas.

Cost to send overnight from Hiva Oa to Tahiti Crew in Papeete 1870 CFP.

Cost to have Tahiti Crew overnight to Nuku Hiva cost 750cfp and agent fee to go to the airport is 2000cfp. Total 2750cfp.

We would also make copies (to keep for ourselves) of everything including the post office stamp before having an agent send it to Tahiti.

Other friends Dave & Kim on svMaluhia used the same agent (Sandra) in Hiva Oa that we used and had their documents disappear en-route to Papeete. They had to resubmit the paperwork to Tehani at Tahiti Crew again including buying 2 more stamps from the post office. In their case it was two people (\$90 x 2). Other friends who did not use an agent are still trying to sort things out now going on 8 weeks. But the stumbling block appears to be the French Polynesian post. By using the overnight method these problems would have been eliminated for approximately \$46US.

Hope this helps folks coming down next season. We are really enjoying it here and will be staying the whole season in the Marquesas and renewing for an additional year for Linda before departing for the Tuamotus in April.

Safe sailing

Chuck Houlihan

Linda Edeiken

Lifetime Commodores SSCA

SV Jacaranda

www.jacarandajourney.com