

Expedition activity opportunities:

An excursion to Raivavae will give the few who volunteer a rare opportunity to visit one of the last remaining unspoiled islands of French Polynesia. Raivavae is an island with a very slow pace, where the people maintain an almost subsistence lifestyle; farming taro and fishing the outer reef in handmade outrigger canoes much like they have for generations. There are no restaurants, bars or tee-shirt shops, only a very few small pensions. Tourists are still rare on Raivavae, all the local natives still offer an Iorana and a friendly wave each time we pass.

The adventurous few who come will visit the ancient Marae of Raivavae with one of the worlds leading experts on Polynesian prehistory. Edmundo Edwards surveyed the sites extensively in the late 80's and has written one of the only books on Raivavae. We hope to do some cleaning and clearing of a few of the most significant sites. We will also visit the only remaining Tiki on the island and the tiny museum with the only surviving Petroglyphs on the island.

We plan to offer many other adventures on Raivavae, bike tours around the island to experience the island at the pace most of the local people enjoy. We will explore the off shore, small uninhabited islands or Motus, snorkel the crystal clear waters, swim at the empty beaches of Mahanatoa, hike to the top of Mt. Hiro, along the ridge of the Taamora Peninsula and through the jungles. We will also attend the magnificent church in charming Anatonu village on Sunday to hear their specialized version of singing in harmony along with their native chants. This will also give us a chance to observe the colorful handmade hats and dresses of the women that they reserve only for the special occasion of church. There will be opportunities to observe different groups of the local people prepare and taste their traditional foods of Ti, Taro and Pig, all cooked in the earth oven in the same manner as their ancestors of ancient times.

One of the most important aspects of our efforts and visit to Raivavae will be to compile an exhibit of photographs of the past expeditions to Raivavae, primarily Stokes in 1921. Stokes took several photographs of Marae that have since been destroyed and of the people of that time, the way they lived and worked.