





## JANUARY 22 - PAPEETE, TAHITI

We arrived in Tahiti the night before and they docked quickly. Some people got off the ship and walked around the nearby shopping area. Later I heard from our housekeeper that some of the crew were able to get off for a couple of hours but nothing was open.

We both were exhausted from the ride in the back of the pick up truck yesterday but ready to go do whatever it takes today. We sat out on the balcony, waking up to our espressos that we make in our room. I'm getting to like these espressos as they give you a quick jolt to get you going in the morning. We decided we don't want to go to breakfast so Larry goes to the dining room and gets us a couple of rolls to tide us over. That was a mistake. He brought back the most delicious freshly made donut and cinnamon rolls ever. Now that will be hard to avoid the rest of the trip.

As we sit out on the balcony enjoying them, work has begun on the dock. I should've made a time lapse movie as they are very busy and organized. Concrete barricades are one by one removed from blocking trucks and cars from getting close to the ship. They are stacked in a nice neat pile. Soon the work trucks begin to come in. The first one in is the truck with the sewer hose. Then the garbage removal truck, then the Polynesian greeters come and get set up to play music. They are all dressed in beautiful red and white moo moo's with floral lei's on their heads.

We can hear sirens for the first time in many days on the main road along the shoreline. A marina is nearby. Several catamarans and sailboats are docked there. A couple look like they are on a journey as they are loaded with survival gear and opening their sails to check them. I look with my binoculars and see they are from Ventura California where we used to keep the Nordhavn. That must have been quite an adventure sailing that ship from Ventura to here. They have even more adventures ahead of them. Ah to be young and doing something like that...

## ANOTHER SAFARI IN THE BACK OF A PICK UP TRUCK





I should have mentioned before as you must be wondering why we signed up for two safari tours in the back of a pick up truck two days in a row. The thing is, we had signed up for an ATV tour at the last stop but the day before we were scheduled to go on it, they called us and said Larry is too old. The cut off is 80! That's a first! Well, they just don't know Larry very well. So the only thing left that wasn't booked was the back-of-the-pick-up tour. I think it was more difficult than what the ATV could have possibly been. But actually, I think we lucked out as I think we got a really good guide.

So here we go again, taking another pick-up tour. Our tour today starts early, 8:30 and is supposed to last for 4.5 hours and no restroom stops. So we would be going light on the liquids this morning. As we dragged ourselves out of bed we looked at each other and wondered if we are up to another bumpy ride. Not going to miss out on anything though and it's not raining yet so no cancelling.

We climb in and meet the other two couples. One lady was brave I think, as she had a big knee brace on and her husband is also hobbling with a cane. I do not know what was wrong with her leg because she was not very friendly. The other couple are older too so I think we should be OK. The guide is not as charming as the Scottish guy from Moorea. Doesn't talk much at all. He heads out and goes one of the only two possible directions on this island, either left around the island or right around the island in the opposite direction.

### ONE ROAD CIRCUMNAVIGATES THE ISLAND

There is one road that circumnavigates the island and all the houses and buildings are built along the shore and this road. Some settlements creep up the mountain but not far as it is steep. So there's quite a lot of traffic on this road. It is busy with small cars, trucks and scooters all making noise and mix that in with many police and ambulance sirens, it's quite hectic from what we've been used to for the last several days. We sped past many businesses and walls covered in graffiti and murals.

### OVERLOOK

Finally somewhat out of the hustle and bustle of the city we stop at an overlook. The guide comes and opens the back door that we will be climbing in and out of all morning. We walk around and look up the coast and then down the coast and take expected pictures. There is another dog hanging around, kind of like the care taker for this nob of land sticking out into the ocean. We have no idea what this place means because the guide is more like a driver than full of information.

You know when it is time to get back into the truck as he kind of grunts at us which we all took to







mean to get back in the truck. The stop usually takes as long as he and the other guy take to smoke a cigarette. That's one thing we've notice here in Tahiti, everyone seems to smoke.

### LUSH INTERIOR TAHITI

We speed again down the highway and this time take a turn inland. The road us full of potholes that literally toss us up and down and left and right. It's like riding a bucking bronco. Many of the pot holes are the size of trucks. It heads into the jungle. It's a challenge to just hold on. We drive on and on admiring the tall rising mountains and lush landscape as much as we can with the bumpiness and then finally he stops the truck . There is a waterfall off in the far distance. We all get out and stretch our legs, take picture of the waterfall and then get back in and move on to the next waterfall. The scenery is amazing but the torture to get there is beyond belief. We keep driving on and on for probably 2 hours of this torture. Guess there is no other way to see it except to be bumped around in the back of a truck. We get to what we think is the other side of the island. We hope that he will just get on that smooth road that goes around the island but no, he instead, turns





the truck around and we go back over the same pot holes for another 2 hours, because, he says, the other way would take 6 hours.

A couple times I fell back into the truck and hurt my back and a couple times my neck was snapped, thought I'd get whip lash. The old poor guy next to me, who must be in his 80s, was holding his neck with both hands. Oh and by the way this entire trip lasted for 4.5 hours! And no bathrooms.



When we got back, I was so dehydrated and hurting we just had to go to the room and rest.

But not wanting to miss anything, off we went, but trying to go out to the shopping was too much for me as I was hurting too much. So we found a little French bar and cafe and had a coffee and then a beer and then managed to get back to the boat still so tired and hurting from the day's torture. Was glad to see the interior of the island though and do not regret it. I guess that is the only way you can do it.









Quite a fun welcome back. Viking really does a good job of trying to make you happy and feel welcome.

That night after dinner, we went right to bed. The ship left the dock 8pm as the harbor tug guided us out. We are now headed for 5 more days of sea, destination Bay of Islands, New Zealand.



