

## RAIATEA

We arrive in Uturoa, the capital of Raiatea, at breakfast time, and as we do not sail out until 5.30am tomorrow, we have plenty of time to enjoy the town.

There is a newly built waterside area, with handicraft stalls, excursion desks, jewellery shops and ornamental ponds full of goldfish and purple water lilies. In the main part of the town, there are a number of shops - many Chinese owned, and selling a variety of cheap merchandise, but not at cheap prices.



We spend some time in an internet café, catching up with our e-mails, as our modem does not work in this part of the world. Hopefully we will be able to go online ourselves when we get to Fiji, in a few days time.



We eat at a small café, where we sample the local Crepes Beurre and Hinano beer, and afterwards we walk down to a nearby coral beach. Here Alvina swims in the cooling water, while trying out the new

snorkel mask she has bought. There are a number of varieties of small colourful fish here, and they are quite close to land, as the beach area shelves quite steeply into the deeper sea.

After our beach trip, we call at a Chinese restaurant, and book a table for tonight. Having changed into our evening clothes, we arrive at the restaurant ready for a leisurely meal and drink.

Unfortunately, the service is over-zealous and we feel rushed into ordering our food almost immediately. Within minutes our first course arrives, and then a few minutes later our second course arrives - even before we have eaten half of our appetizer. So, by the time we start our main course, it is already cold. We are not happy with the service, and say so. The manager's response is "This is the way all Chinese meals are served". It is a pleasure to get back to the Van Gogh with its pleasant, attentive staff, and food that is always hot and served with smiling efficiency.