

BORA BORA

The next day we arrive in the lagoon around Bora Bora at 8am - it is only 25 miles away from Raiatea, hence the short journey time here. Normally it takes quite a while to tender passengers ashore, but today it all seems to happen very fast. In fact, we pick up our tender tickets on our way up to breakfast, and are called to board the tender boat before we have even poured our coffee!



Breakfast is a baguette and espresso coffee, taken at an open air café in the main town of Vaitape, before we set off to wander around the handicraft stalls and small shops around the quayside. Owain is tempted by, and buys, a single black pearl on a leather chain for himself.

After lunch, we have a trip planned to the Lagoonarium, which is situated on one of the sandy motus that surround the main island of Bora Bora. The trip is made on a small double decker boat with 2 x 200HP engines.

We travel from the quayside in Vaitape, in an anticlockwise direction through the multicoloured lagoon surrounding Bora Bora. In the shallowest areas of the lagoon, the water is a light turquoise, with black areas where sea urchins are gathered. From the boat the water is so clear that we can see the individual spines of the urchins.

The colour of the water in the lagoon varies between this light turquoise, through ultramarine, and even to a deep purple in places. The powerful boat needs to throttle back and glide gently through the shallowest areas. As we travel between the main island and the sandy motus, we are treated to many different views of Mount Otemanu that dominates the island of Bora Bora. Most of the motus have hotels on them, and we can see many water bungalows on stilts in the water.



After an hour of travelling, we arrive at the Lagoonarium, where we can see several enclosed areas near the beach. Here we waded out from the boat to the beach, and are given snorkel masks to enter the separate areas.

The depth of water varies from 2 feet to 10 feet, and is an ideal place for novice snorkellers. In fact, you don't even have to swim; simply place your head underwater to view the many colourful fish. Our guide feeds the fish, and we can see them swimming around us, in between our legs and in front of our masks. There are even some large, friendly stingrays, which let you touch them.

A second pool area has more varieties of fish, including bright blue Jackfish, around 2 feet in length, which dart underneath us as we snorkel. A third pool houses some local turtles, with amazing, colourful, green and brown patterned shells.

The final pool houses the much larger fish - including some 5 feet long Lemon Sharks. Our guide tells us that they are not dangerous, and proceeds to feed them by hand. We are then able to view these magnificent creatures, swimming above them and sharing their environment. What a fantastic experience!



All too soon it is time to complete our circumnavigation of Bora Bora, and we

arrive back in Vaitape in time to pay a visit to the supermarket for a quick snack. It has been a truly wonderful day, and one that we will remember for a long time.

We now have a few days at sea before we reach Fiji, and as we cross over the International Date Line, we will "lose" one whole day (February 8th). We are due to dock in Fiji on February 12th at 7pm and leave again at 11pm.

We have now been given a much more comfortable cabin on Deck 5, which has a window and a larger desk to work on. Our previous inside cabin on Deck 3 was dark and dingy, and unsuitable to prepare work for our classes. We have also been given a spare cabin on deck 4 to store all our computer equipment, and which is very near to the Nightclub where we hold our Computer Club Workshops.

So, all in all we seem to be moving up in the world! - Maybe we are getting some good feedback from the passengers. In fact we have done a quick head count in our 3 separate Computer Workshops, and we realise we are catering for around 100 members! This is just short of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total number of passengers on board. Yesterday we were given a draft contract for 10 future cruises which will take us up as far as the World Cruise planned for 2010!

