

# One Foot Island by Day, Ukulele Nights in Muri — A 5-Day Cook Islands Itinerary

The Cook Islands pack two very different lagoons into one short hop: Rarotonga's Muri, calm and motu-studded, wadeable straight from a beach towel, and Aitutaki's, a 12-kilometer stretch of turquoise ringed by a reef so photogenic it's been used to sell more than one airline's ad campaign. This 5-day route splits the week between the two — a rainforest trek to Rarotonga's basalt spire, a night market of grilled mahi mahi, and a lagoon cruise to a motu with its own foot-shaped passport stamp — using the same resorts, tour operators and inter-island flights real travelers book.



## Day 2

### Rarotonga Cross-Island Trek & Muri Night Market

A full day covering Rarotonga at two speeds — a guided trek into the interior to a basalt spire, then an evening browsing food trucks at the Muri lagoon shorefront.

#### Guided Cross-Island Trek to Te Rua Manga (The Needle)

*~4 hours · \$80 USD/person (guided, transport included)*

A steep inland hike through Rarotonga's rainforest interior with Maunga Tours (the operator behind the long-running Pa's Treks), climbing to the base of Te Rua Manga, a basalt spire with views over both coasts.

#### Rarotonga Circle-Island Bus

*~40 minutes each way · \$5 USD one-way*

A public bus that loops the island's 32km coast road in each direction, an easy way to reach Avarua or get back to Muri without a rental car.

#### Punanga Nui Market

*~1.5 hours · free entry (Saturday mornings)*

Avarua's open-air market, with stalls of tropical fruit, black pearl jewelry and island-style pancakes alongside a live ukulele band.

#### Dinner: Muri Night Market

*~1.5 hours · dinner ~\$15–\$20 USD/person*

Open-air food trucks along the Muri lagoon shorefront serving grilled mahi mahi skewers, curries and rukau (taro leaves in coconut cream) most evenings of the week.

## Day 3

### Fly to Aitutaki — Lagoon Arrival

A short flight north to Aitutaki, whose lagoon is routinely ranked among the world's most beautiful, then an afternoon settling into a resort on its edge.

#### Flight: Rarotonga to Aitutaki (Air Rarotonga)

*~45 minutes · from \$210 USD/person one-way*

A short Air Rarotonga hop north over open ocean, landing at Aitutaki's small airstrip beside the lagoon.

### **Check-In: Pacific Resort Aitutaki**

*From \$650 USD/night, for 2 people*

Beachfront bungalows on Aitutaki's lagoon, with a private beach facing the motu that dot the outer reef.

### **Final Swim: Aitutaki Lagoon**

*~1.5 hours · free*

One last wade into the lagoon's shallow, glass-clear water before checkout.

### **Flight: Aitutaki to Rarotonga (Air Rarotonga)**

*~45 minutes · from \$210 USD/person one-way*

The return hop south to Rarotonga, timed to connect with same-day international departures.

### **Airport Transfer: Rarotonga Intl Departure**

*~20 minutes · from \$25 USD (private transfer)*

A final transfer to Rarotonga International Airport (RAR), timed for at least two hours before an international flight.