

Ahoy Pacific Puddle Jumpers,

Please take a few minutes to read the important topics below:

- Earlybirds Trickling into Nuku Hiva — PPJ Burgees Are Flying

Since Hiva Oa is no longer a port of entry, the vast majority of 2022 Pacific Puddle Jumpers will be making landfall at Nuku Hiva this year. In fact, the first of the ‘early departers’ have already arrived, as have several members of the 25-boat Oyster Round the World Rally.

As mentioned earlier, Nuku Hiva Yacht Services will probably be one of your first stops in Taiohae Bay — after pausing to kiss the ground. There you’ll find Kevin and Annabella, who will welcome you, answer your questions, and give you your official Pacific Puddle Jump burgee. Fly it proudly from your flag halyard!

- Check-in Reminder & Fleet Tracking Sight

Because the PPJ is neither a race nor a tightly structured, point-to-point rally, we cannot really require that each boat checks in every day, but we greatly appreciate it when you do! The easiest way to let us — as well as friends and family — know where you are during your crossing is by adding your track, plus lat/long, course and speed to our [2022 Pacific Puddle Jump tracking page](#), hosted by PredictWind. Once you are set up, reporting is automatic. And additional status report comments can be added. (Send an email to: support@predictwind.com to be included.)

Alternately, you can check in with us by emailing: ppj.checkin@gmail.com. (Or simply include that address in your recipient list for automated messages.)

Before You Jump — A Small Purchase with a Big Payoff

Every year the most popular time to set sail on the Puddle Jump is the first half of April. And we know from experience that the final days before departing are typically a whirlwind of provisioning, making minor repairs and speed-reading the instruction manuals for all the fancy new equipment you’ve just installed.

All of that is important, of course, but allow us to suggest one additional item for your “must do pre-departure” list: In this sailor’s opinion, there is no single thing you can do to enhance the value of your travels through French Polynesia, than learning to speak a little French. True, it’s not an easy language to speak well, but you’ll score points with the locals every time you make a token effort. My wife Julie and I have tried four or five different learning methods, but for us, the casual, low-stress lessons by Paul Noble are the easiest to absorb — and they are a great way to pass the time while alone on night watch in the middle of the ocean. Sold as books on tape, and easily downloadable from Audible.com, we think they are a wise investment in your Polynesian cruise. (And no, we were not paid to say this.)

By the way, Marquesans and Tahitians have their own native dialects, but we don’t know of any easy way for visitors to learn them. Thankfully, many, if not most, French Polynesian kids study both French and English in school, as well as the dialect of their heritage.

— Internet Access in the Islands — What to Expect

Before setting sail for the South Pacific, many of us imagine that we’ll reinvent ourselves, becoming much more physically active, and abandoning sedentary habits such as mindlessly browsing the Internet. But even if you successfully break your addictions to watching cat videos, posting silly selfies and reading insidious celebrity gossip, there will be times when you will absolutely need

Internet access; such as to order crucial parts and supplies, to pay bills, to confirm transactions, and to check in with family and friends.

The good news is that Internet access and bandwidth have been vastly improving ever since 2010 when a 3,000-mile fiber-optic cable was laid on the seafloor between Tahiti and Hawaii. But while Taiohae Bay, Nuku Hiva, actually has 4G Internet, many of the most remote and beautiful places you might want to visit have little or no public Internet access, except perhaps via a cell tower or post office, if there is one. Many post offices in the Marquesas and Tuamotus sell (Vini) SIM cards plus recharge cards for both voice and data, and many P.O.s serve as WiFi Hot Spots, meaning you can use a tablet or smartphone there to access the wider world.

If you plan to stay in FP for a year or more and can show proof of some sort that you are a long-term resident (marina bill, utility bill, etc.), you can buy or lease a mobile hotspot unit (about as big as a pack of cigarettes), which will connect you to full-strength cell tower WiFi, and these devices can be recharged online. Vini is the territory's largest phone and internet provider, but Vodafone is giving strong competition in Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora. Tahiti Phone has also jumped into the ring, offering a variety of plans.

Another option to look into before you jump on your first trip home is getting set up with a Google Fi phone. Designed with world travelers in mind, Google negotiated with several hundred foreign phone and data providers around the world to share connectivity via their cell networks. This service gives you an Android phone and a generous amount of (cell tower-based) data monthly, then simply throttles back the data speed if and when you go over the 15GB threshold. It has been a godsend for us, in terms of staying connected. I believe it must be set up in your home country. And who knows, there may be other companies offering similar products, but I am not aware of them.

Finally, let me give a big thumbs-up to the Iridium Go, a product used by roughly half of this year's fleet for both offshore voice and data. While you're sailing a couple of thousand miles offshore, his tiny yet powerful satellite communications device can allow you to chat with your kids, check in with your banker, or consult with your mechanic about strange engine noises, and also facilitate weather routing downloads and more. No wonder they are so popular.

Free Chart Resource — Check Out the Chart Locker

All charting sources, whether on a chartplotter, your laptop, your tablet, or your chart table have errors. That's why a prudent mariner uses multiple sources for charts. One place to find free charts for French Polynesia is The Chart Locker (theChartLocker.com).

You'll find mbTile satellite image charts for use with OpenCPN. The resolution of many of the charts is so good that you can see the individual coral heads in the atolls of the Tuamotus. You can also download charts for most of the other island groups of the South Pacific. There's also a video tutorial on how to use the charts in the free OpenCPN charting software. (Submitted by our good friend Bruce Balan of the 2022 PPJ boat Migration.)

That's it for today. But if you're jumping off this month, we wish you a fabulous passage!

— Andy Turpin, PPJ