



DEEP OCEAN EXPEDITIONS

presents

THE ATOLLS OF FRENCH POLYNESIA

Aboard the RV Akademik Shokalskiy

Departing Papeete, Tahiti – Arriving Papeete, Tahiti

31st March – 14th April 2005 / 13th April – 27th April 2005

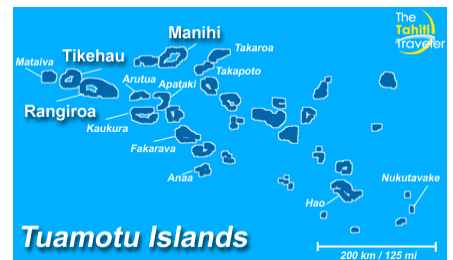
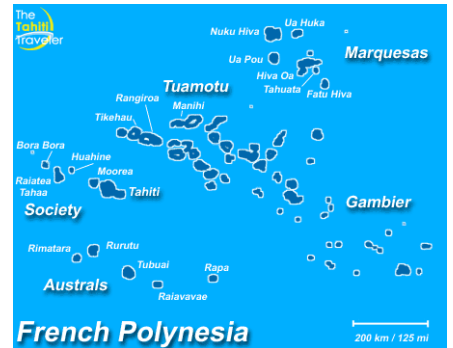
For over twenty years adventurer and explorer Mike McDowell has been offering remote and exciting dive expeditions to a variety of “out of the way” dive destinations throughout Oceania. Deep Ocean Expeditions are pleased to announce that 2005 is no exception, with an exciting expedition planned to the world-famous atolls and passes of French Polynesia (Tahiti).

French Polynesia is made up of five archipelago groups, and we will devote our expedition to an in-depth exploration of the largest, the Tuamotu group. The Tuamotus is located approx 180 nautical miles northeast of Tahiti and includes seventy-six islets and atolls spread out over more than 7,500 square miles.

Many archaeologists believe the Tuamotus were settled around 850 AD, by ocean-going Polynesian explorers. They settled in numerous small villages throughout the archipelago, the small Islets being unable to support large settlements. From 1520 the atolls were discovered by various intrepid sailors from Spain, Netherlands, England and France. Known as the "dangerous archipelago", because their shallow reefs and strong currents made them infamously dangerous to seafarers, the Tuamotus are not Islands, but motus (small islets) surrounded by fringing reef. The waters between these motus are thousands of feet deep but inside the atolls are lagoons featuring enormous ecosystems at depths accessible to scuba divers and snorkellers.

The capital of French Polynesia Papeete, located on the island of Tahiti, offers the only international airport in the archipelago and for this reason our expeditions will operate from Papeete. We are offering two similar expeditions, both departing through the March through April 2005 period. The itinerary below is valid for both departures but as always come with a flexible approach as we will explore new areas to take advantage of local information and weather/sea conditions.

Many of the dive sites provide world-class diving for snorkellers, novice and experienced scuba divers alike. More adventurous diving is provided by strong current dives in local Tuamotu “passes”. These passes are the gaps in the atolls open to the deep blue ocean through which large volumes of water rush during peak tidal times creating strong currents. It is this process that creates magnificent amounts of marine life feeding on the nutrient rich racing current. All divers will need to show a level of competency before making these current (or “drift”) dives, of which we will make one daily, recommended only for experienced divers. If you are a learner diver do not despair as we will always offer a full range of activities including snorkeling, atoll visits and excursions to island communities to purchase local produce and souvenirs.



ITINERARY

Please use this itinerary as a guide only. In addition to the atolls mentioned in the itinerary, the Tuamotu group offers many additional atolls. Weather/sea conditions will dictate our final itinerary.

Day 1: Departure Los Angeles

A group flight (still to be confirmed) will depart Los Angeles today. Flight time from Los Angeles to Papeete, Tahiti is 7 ½ hours and local time in Papeete is 3 hours behind Pacific daylight time. Upon arrival in Papeete you will be transferred to a local Papeete hotel. The remainder of the day is at your leisure to shop and dine in local establishments such as the highly recommended “Casablanca” restaurant.

Day 2: Papeete / Embark RV Akademik Shokalskiy

A transfer will be organized early afternoon from your hotel to the vessel. We will cast off the lines early evening and set sail for the Tuamotu group.

Days 3 – 4: Tikehau Atoll

This morning you will wake up at Tikehau Atoll, 185 miles to the northwest of Tahiti. Tikehau is one of the most beautiful atolls in Polynesia and forms an almost unbroken circle 16 miles across, creating a unique ecosystem with an incredible diversity of fish. It boasts exotic pink coral sand beaches, a large pass and a series of natural islets, only the largest of which (at half a mile wide!) is inhabited. Tikehau is an important supplier of fresh fish and copra to the island of Tahiti.

We will dive the Tuheiava Pass where schools of manta ray dance alongside a parade of barracudas, sea turtles, tunas, multicolored coral fish and the ubiquitous reef sharks. This diverse island is also home to a number of bird colonies that have sought refuge on the aptly named "Isle of Birds." We will visit the charming village of Thresher, which swathed in flowers, is nestled at the end of this large motu. Tikehau atoll offers the wonderful opportunity to discover the traditional Tuamotu way of life.

Days 5 – 7: Rangiroa Atoll

Situated only 8 miles from Tikehau the next few days will be spent at Rangiroa (meaning “huge sky”), the world’s second largest atoll. Shaped like a large pearl necklace, Rangiroa is a ring of low land creating an endless lagoon of deep turquoise and blue. As there is no freshwater runoff from the motus, the visibility in the lagoon is often over 150 feet and a constant 80 degrees temperature. The famous Tiputa Pass, rich with sea life provides an opening to the ocean. Tiputa Pass is known as one of the world’s greatest shark dives, and those who "shoot the pass" will find themselves in the deep blue with literally hundreds of grey, black-tip, white-tip, lemon and nurse sharks. For the non-divers, snorkeling in all of these locations is world-class and in particular here at Tiputa Pass there is the chance for snorkellers to see schools of dolphins that gather in the pass.

Days 8 – 9: Apataki Atoll

Discovered by the Dutch navigator Roggeven in 1722, Apataki is 370 kms northeast of the island of Tahiti. The atoll is rectangular in shape and a major center for pearl farming development. From this atoll a small amount of fish is exported to Tahiti as well as copra and "noni" juice, an exported exotic health elixir.

Several dives will be conducted on this atoll, of which only some are recommended for the experienced divers only. A number of dives will be conducted in a narrow canyon where there are very strong currents but it is here that you can view and photograph hundreds of grey reef sharks hanging in the current.



Day 10: Toau Atoll

Toau is almost uninhabited and has three lovely passes very close to each other, offering exciting dives with a profusion of pristine underwater life. We will spend the day on this small but highly recommended motu.

Day 11: Kauehi Atoll

On all our expeditions we include time for visits to sites which are a little “off the beaten track” and Kauehi is one of these. The pass of Kauehi is exceptional as the bottom is a huge amphitheater with many underwater caves and coral formations. This pass is definitely one of the most interesting and dramatic in the Tuamotus because of the underwater scenery and the abundant and varied fauna.

Days 12 - 14: Fakarava Atoll

Fakarava is the second largest atoll in French Polynesia, after Rangiroa. This protected atoll, along with its six neighboring islands is listed with UNESCO as a World Heritage Area. The delicate ecosystem on Fakarava supports rare flora, fauna and sea life such as squills and sea cicadas. Fakarava also contains one of the first Catholic churches constructed in French Polynesia. Here we will dive the pass of Tumokahua adjacent to the atoll village of Tetamanu. Again you will be amongst a fauna such as manta rays, gray sharks, white tip sharks, huge napoleon wrasse and grouper. This is a great dive perfect for all levels of divers.

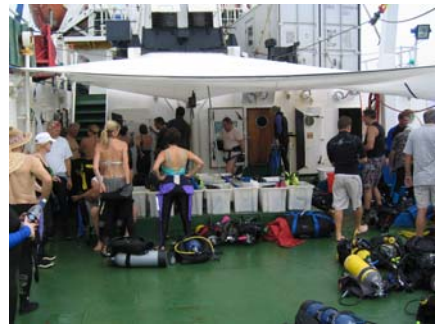
To the northeast of Fakarava we intend to dive the large pass of Garuae, the biggest pass in Polynesia. This is a more challenging dive area featuring strong currents and huge rewards. The fauna in this pass is remarkably dense and varied with a great variety and abundance of sharks.

In these heavenly surroundings, the calm lagoon and peaceful village offer the perfect backdrop for sunset drinks. It is from here we heave anchor and head southwest back to Papeete. A traditional Shokalskiy expedition barbeque will be held on the bow to farewell the Islands of the Tuamotus.

Day 15: Papeete / Disembark RV Akademik Shokalskiy

Breakfast will be served on board and we will then transfer you to Papeete airport for your ongoing flights.

If you require more information or wish to confirm your participation please contact belinda@deepoceanexpeditions.com



LECTURERS / EXPEDITION STAFF

All Deep Ocean Expedition voyages provide a team of experienced staff to offer their knowledge and assistance. Our staff will comprise of a team of experienced divemasters, zodiac drivers and experienced Australian divers Ron and Valerie Taylor who will offer a series of on-board lectures.

European chefs and catering staff will serve international cuisine using quality fresh provisions.

A Western Doctor experienced in dive medicine will also join the expedition team.

CRUISE PRICE

Prices quoted in US Dollars on a per person share basis. Single occupancy 1.4 times twin rate except for the Suite that is unavailable as a single. Airfare is not included.

- Deck 3 Twin with shared bath US \$4850.00
- Deck 4/5 Twin with bath US \$5450.00
- Deck 5 Superior US \$5900.00 (one cabin only)
- Deck 5 Suite US \$6300.00 (one cabin only)

NOTE: THESE FARES INCLUDE ALL FRENCH POLYNESIAN GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL PASSENGER TAXES

CABIN CATEGORIES

Cabins on Deck 3 have a porthole and two lower berths with shared facilities.

Cabins on Decks 4 & 5 have windows, upper and lower berths and private facilities.

The Suite and Superior cabins have windows, lower berths, a sitting area and private facilities.

INCLUDED IN CRUISE COST:

- All meals, services of expedition staff and access to normal facilities on board *Akademik Shokalskiy*.
- Any miscellaneous taxes and port charges incurred throughout the cruise.
- One hotel night in Papeete, Tahiti including breakfast prior to embarkation.
- Group transfers from the airport in Papeete to the hotel on arrival and from the vessel to the airport on departure.

NOT INCLUDED IN CRUISE COST:

- Airfares to and from the ports of embarkation/disembarkation. Any meals or arrangements before or after the voyage not specified above.
- Dive equipment such as regulators, computers, weight belts (weights are available on board), wet suits, flippers, masks, buoyancy compensators -- *All items must be brought by each individual*.
- Personal insurance or medical costs.
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks; communications; gratuities to ship's crew; overweight baggage charges; any visas required to travel to countries visited on this itinerary; airport arrival/departure or government taxes.

VISAS

Tourist visas to French Polynesia are not required for visitors from the US, all Commonwealth countries and most European countries. However all visitors must hold a valid passport and possess an onward air or sea ticket.

THE VESSEL – RV AKADEMIK SHOKALSKIY

The *Akademik Shokalskiy* is an ideal floating hotel and dive/snorkel support vessel. Built in 1982 she was designed as a Russian oceanographic research vessel but is now used for expedition travel predominantly in the Polar Regions.

Akademik Shokalskiy has a very large open aft deck area which is close to the waterline. This is used as the dive “kit up” and storage area. Lots of other open deck space allows comfortable “sun bathing” and viewing. As usual, the vessel is equipped with three Bauer Marine dive compressors, dive tanks and other necessary support equipment. The vessel will carry four Mark V heavy duty Zodiacs for ferrying divers to the dive sites.

SPECIFICATIONS

Delivered:	1982
Length:	71.60 metres
Beam:	12.60 metres
Draught:	4.50 metres
Speed:	max 12.5 knots
Gross Registered Tonnage:	1,764
Net Registered Tonnage:	529 tonnes
Port of Registry:	Vladivostok
Capacity:	46 pax maximum
Flag:	Russia



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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

INFO@DEEPOCEANEXPEDITIONS.COM

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TERMS & CONDITIONS

Reservations and Payment. A deposit of US\$1,500 per person is required to confirm a reservation with final payment due 90 days prior to departure. All prices and payments are in US dollars.

Cancellations and Refunds. All requests for cancellations must be received in writing. Cancellations received 90 days prior to departure are fully refunded less an administrative fee of \$500 per person. Please note that within the 90-day limit all deposits and tariffs are forfeited. If cancellation occurs within the 90-day period and full payment has not yet been received, the full penalty will still apply and unpaid monies are due immediately. For these and other reasons mentioned below, you are strongly encouraged to obtain trip cancellation insurance. Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for any reason whatsoever.

Itinerary. The itinerary described is subject to change at the discretion of the ship's master. We reserve the right to change the itinerary due to weather conditions, availability of anchorages, political conditions and other factors beyond our control without consulting the participants. It is understood that such decisions will be made in the best interests of all passengers aboard and with regard to the safety of the vessel. Participants have no right to any refund or other considerations in the event of these inevitable itinerary changes.

Rates. Voyage rates are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect at the time of printing and are subject to change prior to departure. Substantial changes in tariffs, exchange rates and the price of fuel, services and labor sometimes increase the cost of expedition arrangements significantly, and we reserve the right to alter our prices accordingly.

Responsibility. *Please read this important information carefully.* The payment of a deposit of any part or full payment for a reservation on this tour shall constitute consent to all the provisions contained herein.

Quark Expeditions Inc. (QEI), Oceanic Odyssey Cruises (OOC) Deep Ocean Expeditions (DOE) and Supernova Expeditions Ltd. (SEL) act as general sales agents for the vessel and as such exercise every possible care. However, QEI, OOC, DOE, SEL, their subsidiaries and/or associated Agents, shall not be held responsible for property loss or damage and/or any damages resulting from illness, personal injuries or death which may be sustained by reason of, or while engaged on, any tour whether due to the ownership, maintenance, use, operation or control of any aircraft, helicopter, automobile, bicycle, boat, vehicle, hotel, common carrier or any other conveyance used in carrying out these tours. We can assume no liability due to any cause whatsoever whether caused by failure or delay or other irregularity, acts or omissions occurring during a tour under which the means of transportation or other service provided thereby is offered or supplied by owners, operators or public carriers for whom QEI, OOC, DOE and SEL act only as agent.

QEI, OOC, DOE and SEL reserve the right (at their discretion) to alter or omit any part of the itinerary or change any reservation, feature and/or means of conveyance without notice and for any reason whatsoever and without allowance or refund and with extra costs, if any, resulting there from paid by the passengers. We reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part.

QEI, OOC, DOE and SEL shall not be responsible for any injury to person (whether or not resulting in death) or damage to property arising out of any act of war, insurrection, revolt or other civil uprising or military action occurring in the countries of origin, destination or passage. QEI, OOC, DOE and SEL strongly urge individual passengers obtain appropriate insurance coverage. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely.

In case of a medical problem arising during the voyage, either on board or on shore, which results in costs for evacuation, use of aircraft or repatriation, the responsibility for payment of these costs belongs solely to the passenger. QEI, OOC, DOE and SEL strongly advise that passengers ensure that such eventualities are covered by travel insurance. If not covered by travel insurance the responsibility still remains with the passenger and QEI, OOC, DOE and SEL specifically decline any responsibility whatsoever.

The transportation companies concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not aboard their carriers or conveyances. The passenger contract in use by the carriers concerned (when issued) shall constitute the sole contract between the transportation companies and the purchaser of these tours and/or passage. By accepting the ticket the passenger also agrees to its terms and conditions.

By forwarding of deposit, the passenger certifies that he/she does not have any mental, physical or other condition or disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other passengers. QEI, OOC, DOE and SEL reserve the right to cancel or withdraw any person as a member of the tour at any time.