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Goodbye Former Life

Daydreams and luxury mingle on a tiny Tahitian island.



Motu Mahana

IF YOU'RE CURIOUS

Tahiti is beautiful, but a beach chair on my own private island defies all adjectives. Sure, this isn't "my" island. It's owned by the Paul Gauguin cruise line. But the ship is a white dot on the horizon, this lagoon was a short walk from other passengers, and this island, just 750 feet long, is sandwiched between two other private motus. Behind me I hear Tahitian ukuleles being played by beautiful islanders. I'm sitting in a living postcard. Would anyone notice if I just stayed?

IF YOU'RE SERIOUS

Digging your toes into this sand starts by boarding the *m/s Paul Gauguin* (from \$3,995, pgcruises.com). Getting to your stateroom requires an eight-hour flight from Los Angeles to Papeete. Motu Mahana sits off the northern coast of Taha'a island and is usually the third destination of the seven-day Society Islands cruise.

WHAT WE LEARNED

The dress code for Motu Mahana is a swimsuit, but you'll need one pair of pants to dine in the restaurants aboard the ship. The only slacks available in the boutique sell for \$93. You can guess how I know.

by JON WHITTLE