

FOOD IN THE MARQUESAS ISLANDS
sv/Jacaranda - June 2015- Feb. 2016
www.jacarandajourney.com ("Other Good Stuff")

What a shock to go into the little Marquesan grocery stores (magasins) on the three main islands of Hiva Oa (Atuona), Ua Pou (Hakahau), and Nuku Hiva (Taiohae) and find shelves stocked with great food!! This is so very different - almost polar opposite - from Chuck's experience here 20 years ago when little could be found - and I had provisioned in Ecuador as if his experience still held true. So I was totally unprepared to find such a diverse and gourmet selection of food!!!

You can eat verrrry well in the Marquesas...for a price. Even with some subsidized prices from the French, food is much more expensive here (especially coming from cheap Ecuador), and depending on how you eat, it can dig into your pocket quite a bit. On the other hand, as consolation, we remind ourselves that we pay nothing for the free anchorages, water and garbage disposal throughout this whole archipelago!

Besides the three main islands listed above, Tahuata (Vaitahu), Ua Huka (Vaipée), and Fatu Hiva (Omoa) have fresh bread although you may have to order it ahead of time or reserve it. Most smaller villages also have small stores that provide very basic goods.

Local Food

"In Tahiti, you need money to eat, here in the Marquesas, if you don't have money, no problem, you can still eat".....Marquesan from Tahuata.

The islanders regularly make you generous gifts of free fruits from their gardens. How often we have walked down a street in any village, been hailed by a Marquesan family and given shopping bags of bananas, pamplemousse (grapefruit), limes, mangos, papayas, breadfruit, Marquesan apples, and coconuts. Or gone to a carver's home to see his expert crafts and left with armfuls of fruit. Or seen a woman harvesting mangoes from the tree in her front garden and when we asked if we could buy a few mangoes from her, were given several free bags full. There is hardly a cruising boat without a stalk of bananas hanging from the stern like an ornament ripening in the sun. Pineapples are grown here but usually they are for sale in the stores.

Surprisingly, one of the most expensive local items is honey: \$17-25 for a small soda bottle.

Tuna and wahoo are very plentiful on most islands; sometimes you can get mahi mahi, and we have bought lobster (which was very expensive). We don't eat any other kind of fish for fear of ciguatera although there are other types for sale from the fishermen; the locals supposedly know what is safe and what isn't. You can sometimes find octopus - from a fisherman or hunt your own.

Goat and pig are hunted in the mountains and hills and sometimes there is local beef. In order to get these items, you need to arrange it with a local directly. Eggs in the stores are local.

Unfortunately, vegetables are often hard to find. Tomatoes and lettuce are the holy grail. Cucumbers, long green beans, peppers, eggplant, tropical avocados, a bok choy like green used in cooking and cabbage are more commonly found on food trucks or in early morning markets. Potatoes, onions and carrots are shipped in. Imported bags of frozen vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, green beans, and a veggie medley are found in the magasins.

Timing is everything - and the stores are like Christmas brimming with delicacies after the Taporo or Aranui supply ships come into port. But get here a few days before they arrive and you're out of luck, likely to find a lot of bare shelves. As with many things in life, if you see it, get it! Don't wait to come back to buy it later - it won't be there.

Imported Food

There is beef from Uruguay, lamb from New Zealand, salmon from Denmark, shrimp from Vietnam, pasta and gnocchi from Italy, kim chee from Korea, raclette, "swiss", and emmentaler cheeses from Switzerland, delicious frozen vegetables from Belgium, sausages from Spain, olives from Greece, grapes from Chile, sushi fixings from Japan, apples, oranges, bacon, peanut butter and Betty Crocker cake mixes from the USA (along with all the items of junk food we have globalized). And of course, from France you can have pate de foie gras or brie/camembert with your fresh baguette as well as find escargot, duck and chicken. Because of the large Asian population, there is a large variety of chinese and asian food.

There is excellent butter, cream and milk from New Zealand (the butter also comes in tins if you prefer). Long-life milk is in boxes; the cream needs to be refrigerated - no long-life media crema like found in Mexico. Besides the cheeses mentioned above, I have found the ubiquitous processed cheese La Vache qui Rit, sliced processed "cheddar", and a rare offering of out-of-date buffalo mozzarella. I have NOT seen monterey jack, real US cheddar, blocks of mozzarella, parmesan, fontina, or ricotta. You will have to make your own sour cream. Occasionally there is cream cheese (Philadelphia brand) but there is another spread called Kiri that is comparable. Yogurt is delicious and the little cups do not need to be refrigerated until opened. I did not need to bring the applesauce I bought in Ecuador. Cream crackers and cookies (Oreo and Chips Ahoy) abound. Dessert? How about Sara Lee pound cake (vanilla and chocolate), Tip Top ice cream (try the Taro flavor), ladyfingers, or pate brisee?

Drink-wise, there is excellent canned and boxed tropical fruit juices, all the usual sodas, nice variety of tea and coffee, Martinellis' sparkling juices, Somersby hard apple cider (from Denmark), and bottles of grenadine syrup to add to sparkling or still water. French Polynesian beer, Hinano brand, is for sale everywhere and inexpensive. Alcohol is very expensive - wine is easily \$20 for a nice Chilean bottle and a bottle of Jim Beam whiskey can be \$80/bottle. That is why many Marquesan ask for rum or alcohol as trade items from cruisers - we strongly discourage this however since alcoholism is too much of a problem and is too often associated with domestic violence.

There's actually very little we can't find here. Although our periodic cravings for favorite Mexican dishes go unsatisfied, I did find - just ONCE - Olde El Paso Mexican flour tortillas. Almost anything can be found in Papeete, Tahiti, though and several cruisers have pooled shopping lists together and arranged for their own private shipment to be delivered to them in Marquesan anchorages by the supply ships.

Whew! Now that the shopping is done, I know a nice beach where we can sit under a coconut palm and eat that pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream we found (\$14)!

FOOD/FUEL COSTS IN MARQUESAS

June 2015 - Feb. 2016

sv/JACARANDA

All prices in French Polynesian Francs (cpf)

Figure US\$1 = 100 cpf

Taiohae (Nuku Hiva)

3 major food stores; veggie and fruit market located near the artisan craft shop right near the quay.

Magasin LARSON

Air conditioned

English is spoken

Owned by a Chinese family; Very friendly staff

Small organic/natural food section

Usually out of baguettes earlier than Magasin Kamake

Hours: 8-6; Close midday; Also open Saturdays and Sun a.m.

Have some chocolate croissants and pastries inside in the counter by the cashier

Baguette	53
Bread- Sliced loaf (frozen)	980
Butter (Anchor) 227g.	233
Butter - President - 500g.	662
Eggs (doz.)	500
Coffee Noa Noa	1250
Cornflakes, Skippy 500 g.	354
Dececco Fusilli (pasta) 500 g	191
Can of lychees 565 g.	340
Canned peaches 420 g	200
Planters Peanuts - (large can)12	600
Planters Peanuts - (small can) 6	360
Trail Mix (Bouton d'or Melange Raisins)	320
Raspberry vinegar 25	300
Raspberry jam - 370 g.	350
Brie cheese - President brand	550

Baby Bel Gouda Cheese - 200 g	475
Rondele Cheese - 125 g.	565
Gruyere cheese	399
Ham 1st Choice -3 slices	396
Milk (Box, President brand whole)	165
Anchor creme fraiche UHT 250g	285
Cream president 20CL	270
Kraft whipped cream cheese 25	905
Khong Guan Cream Crackers 200	94
Old Paso Tortillas (small) 326g	740
Lays Potato chips (lg.)185g	650
Rdrd S. Chili and Sour Cream chips	315
Nabisco Oreo cookies 274g	340
Scotch finger cookies (Arnott) 250g	340
Chips Ahoy - small package 1.4 oz	90
Pork chops (4)	820
Chicken (Haut de cuisse)800g	426
Chicken - 800g - Blanc de poulet	692
Shoulder of Lamb 1 kg.	1810
Bag of Tiger Shrimp frozen 26/3	1340
Smoked salmon 150g	772
Salmon Dann KA - 4 pieces 500g	1885
Steak with herbs - 4 frozen	1548
Furicake Fumi Rice seasoning 50g	410
Vegetable oil (bottle)	447
Olive Oil .5 L	1035
Olives (sm. bag) 100 g.	240
Monoi Ylang Ylang (skin oil)	475
Tarragon spice jar (5g)	410
Quaker Oats (500g)	490
Fresh Potatoes	229/kg.
Bag of fresh carrots	341
Bag of fresh mandarines	605
Head of fresh broccoli	527
Panko Japanese bread crumbs	395
Genoise chocolate pudding (4)	680
Bag of Frozen Green beans (St. Eloi)	695
Somersby Apple Cider beer - 33CL	440
Lipton yellow tea - 50S	339
coca cola - bottle 285 (glass)	130
Rotui can of mango juice 33CL	137
Rotui can of pineapple juice 350	115
Toilet paper 2RLX Tiare	120
Kirkland Paper Towels	535
Nivea baby wipes	420

Magasin KAMAKE

There is one person who speaks English

Outside the store is a table of nice fresh vegetables and fresh baked brioche and specialty pastries in the morning

They always have baguettes except late in the day.

Close at midday

Anchor salted butter 454g	453
Milk President whole 1 liter	165
Dozen fresh eggs	500
Duncan Hines Brownie Mix	370
Can of lychee 56 (Best choice)	205
Boursin with herbs	550
White sugar - 1kg	133
raw sugar - 1kg	275
Paprika - spice bottle	410
Bag Potatoes fresh	367
Coca cola bottle (plastic) 50CL	200

Atuona (Hiva Oa)

3 major stores in town (about a 35 minute walk or easy hitch-hike) plus the service station at the port; veggie truck located most mornings at the tohua on the main road; I have occasionally seen trucks parked on an empty lot next to Magasin Gaubil that have had fruit, sandwiches, drinks, lobsters, and fish.

Magasin GAUBIL

Nice people; across from the Post Office

Some english spoken

Closes midday

Has a section for non-food items (clothes, fabric, toys, etc.)

Cheddar Cheese (12 slices; processed)	200
Hoffy Bacon - 12 oz.	875
Chicken Legs - (frozen, 5 lb. box, USA)	627
Whole chicken (frozen)	290/kg.
Lamb (gigot, frozen)	1178/kg.
Hamburger Patties (frozen)	1123/kg.
Chinese chowmein noodles (frozen lg. bag)	768
Fresh apples (USA)	559/kg
Lays potato chips - 6 1/2 oz.	741
Green lip mussels (New Zealand)	2133/kg.
Martinelli sparkling cider (lg. bottle)	832
Hinano Beer (6 pack)	1638
Heineken Beer (6 pack)	1710
Box Wine - 1 liter -	950
Wine (bottles of random selection)	

Spanish	1300
French	1000-4000
US - Rossi	2100
Chile (Cono Sur)	2300

Magasin NAIKI

Up the road from the turnaround past the tohua (open ceremonial space)

Some items are a bit more expensive than the other two stores but Naiki has a better selection

Receipt not itemized like other stores so no prices listed here.

I did the majority of my shopping here.

SARL SERVICE STATION in the port

The most convenient place to shop with comparable prices to the stores in town.

Often sold-out of baguettes - get there early

Baguette	64
Flour (box)	143/kg.
Sugar	132/kg.
Freshly caught tuna right off the boats	500-800/kg.
Mayonnaise (Best Food)	680
Lays Potato chips 42g	140
Fresh Potatoes (sm. bag)	293
Fresh Tomatoes (sm. bag)	205
Teriaki sauce	340
Corn Flakes	414
Dozen Eggs	494
Frozen green beans	580
Milk (Box; long-life)	147
Mayonnaise Best Foods 15oz	710
Whipping Cream 5m	530

Hakahau (Ua Pou)

Several shops, a cafe/bakery, and a man who bakes loaves of bread at his home.

Magasin MARIELLE

Across from the Soccer Field and Medical Clinic

Nice upright refrigerator unit had some great fruit and veggies the first time I went in; the second time it was empty.

Kelloggs Corn Flakes	290
Basmati Rice	330

Thai Rice	330
Jasmine Rice	276
Cream crackers	94
Dozen eggs	480
Milk - President whole l ltr	165
Raspberry Coulis	380
mozzarella - 600 g	1070
Treetop juice cocktail (cran.)	160
creme fraiche (anchor) small	290
Lay's potato chips (sm.)	82
Bacon	400

Fuel Costs

Cooking GAS (Butane) deposit 3000 + 3000 for the gas
 Large steel container enough to fill 20lb bottle plus some into another bottle. You transfer in all islands. In Nuku Hiva (Taiohae), Kevin at Nuku Hiva Yacht Services will fill your tank for a fee.

Gasoline	155 ltr
Diesel from the pump	150 ltr
Diesel Duty Free	64 ltr
Diesel Oil Mobil DELVAC 15-40	3300 gallon
Diesel Oil Mobil DELVAC 15-40	675 ltr (!! haha yep cheaper)
Motor Oil 10-40	600 ltr
Motor Oil 2 Stroke Mobil 4X	635 ltr

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