

Authentic Easter Island (6 days / 5 nights)

The Polynesian island nation of Rapa Nui, also known as Easter Island, is located around 3,500 km (2,200 mi) from mainland Chile. It is estimated that the origins of the Rapa Nui date back to the 5th century, even though many mysteries remain. Unquestionable is the fact that the Rapa Nui developed a complex belief system and created the monumental Moai figures, which do not exist in any other part of the world.

This unique cultural program provides you with a very intimate insight into the history, traditions and beliefs of the Rapa Nui people. The Tuki family, one of the oldest and most important families on the island, will not only show you the island's archeological sites, but also allows you to take part in their daily life. Experience authentic ceremonies and learn about the preparation of delicious traditional meals at first hand. Immerse into the ancient Polynesian culture of long-gone days.

DAY 1: HANGA ROA

Upon arrival on Easter Island, you are welcomed with a garland of flowers, as it is tradition. Your Rapa Nui tour guide provides you with an introduction into the customs and traditions of this ethnic group. Upon arrival at the hotel, enjoy a welcome drink with the host family Tuki, which gives you some advice on how to behave responsibly towards the local culture. The afternoon is at leisure, allowing you to recover from the long flight and explore the town of Hanga Roa.

Overnight stay: 3-Hotel in Hanga Roa*

DAY 2: AHU AKAHANGA, TONGARIKI & RAPA NUI CURANTO (B, D)

Today you will have plenty of opportunity to marvel at the Moais, the famous and legendary stone statues of the Rapa Nui. Our first stop is at Ahu Akahanga on the south coast of the island. This ceremonial center is a sacred place for the local people; according to tradition, the tomb of Ariki Hotu a Matu'a, the first settler and king of this Polynesian island, is buried here.

We then continue to Rano Raraku, the site chosen by the Rapa Nui to produce their giant Moai statues. The next stop is Ahu Tongariki, the most important ceremonial site on Easter Island. It is equipped with a platform of 15 statues, the largest of which is 14 m (45 ft) high, including the pukao (topknot).

The evening is spent on the outskirts of Hanga Roa, where you prepare a traditional Rapa Nui Curanto with the Turi family. Nowadays, Curanto is also considered a traditional dish on the island of Chiloé in southern Chile. This similarity gave rise to the theory of a possible settlement of Chiloé from the Polynesian islands. Enjoy this very special dish and participate in a small ceremony for the success of the days of travel to follow.

Overnight stay: 3-Hotel in Hanga Roa*

DAY 3: AHU AKIVI, ANAKENA BEACH & POLYNESIAN CUSTOMS (B, L)

Today's excursion takes you to Puna Pau, a red volcanic crater about 15 km (9 mi) northwest of Hanga Roa. The red volcanic slag was used to create the "Pukao", the cylindrical headgear that has decorated several Moai ever since.

Next stop is at Akivi Ahu, whose seven Moai are the only ones looking towards the sea and not inland. According to Rapa Nui tradition, they were the first arrivals on the island sent by King Hotu Matu'a before his own journey.

The warm turquoise waters and coral sand beach of Anakena allow for an agreeable swimming break. Refreshed, we continue on to the area of Poike, near Ranu Raraku volcano, where an extraordinary experience awaits. Just like the Rapa Nui did for centuries, you collect mussels and catch fish from the shore. Learn how to prepare your catch the traditional Polynesian way: Roasted over a fire covered by stones. Enjoy your meal!

Overnight stay: 3-Hotel in Hanga Roa*

DAY 4: VINAPU & ORONGO (B)

Today's excursion leads to the archaeological site of Vinapu on the southwest coast, where three Ahu can be found. This extraordinary platform was built with special techniques from basalt boulders, similar to some Inca buildings in present-day Peru.

We continue on to the cave of Ana Kai Tangata, located on the cliffs south of Hanga Roa. It contains murals of Manutara, a sea tern whose egg is central to the annual traditional Rapa Nui competition. This competition is held on the outskirts of the sacred village of Orongo, which we visit at the end of this day.

Overnight stay: 3-Hotel in Hanga Roa*

DAY 5: TEREVEKA & TRADITIONAL DANCES (B, D)

In the morning, hike up to the highest point of the island, the top of the 512 m (1680 ft) high extinct volcano Ma-unga Terevaka. On request, horses are provided for this excursion. From here you have a 360° panoramic view over the island and it is even possible to see the curvature of the earth on the horizon.

The afternoon is at your free disposal. In the evening, your host family Tuki awaits you with a farewell dinner. Freshly harvested fruits are served along with other tasty dishes prepared with local products. As is traditionally the case with family visits, rhythmic dances are performed to the music of the Rapa Nui. You receive a handmade souvenir as a farewell present.

Overnight stay: 3-Hotel in Hanga Roa*

DAY 6: DEPARTURE (B)

Today it is time to say goodbye to this remarkable island. After breakfast, a transfer takes you to the airport for your onward or return journey.