

Stay in Style in Tahiti Without Paying Hotel Prices



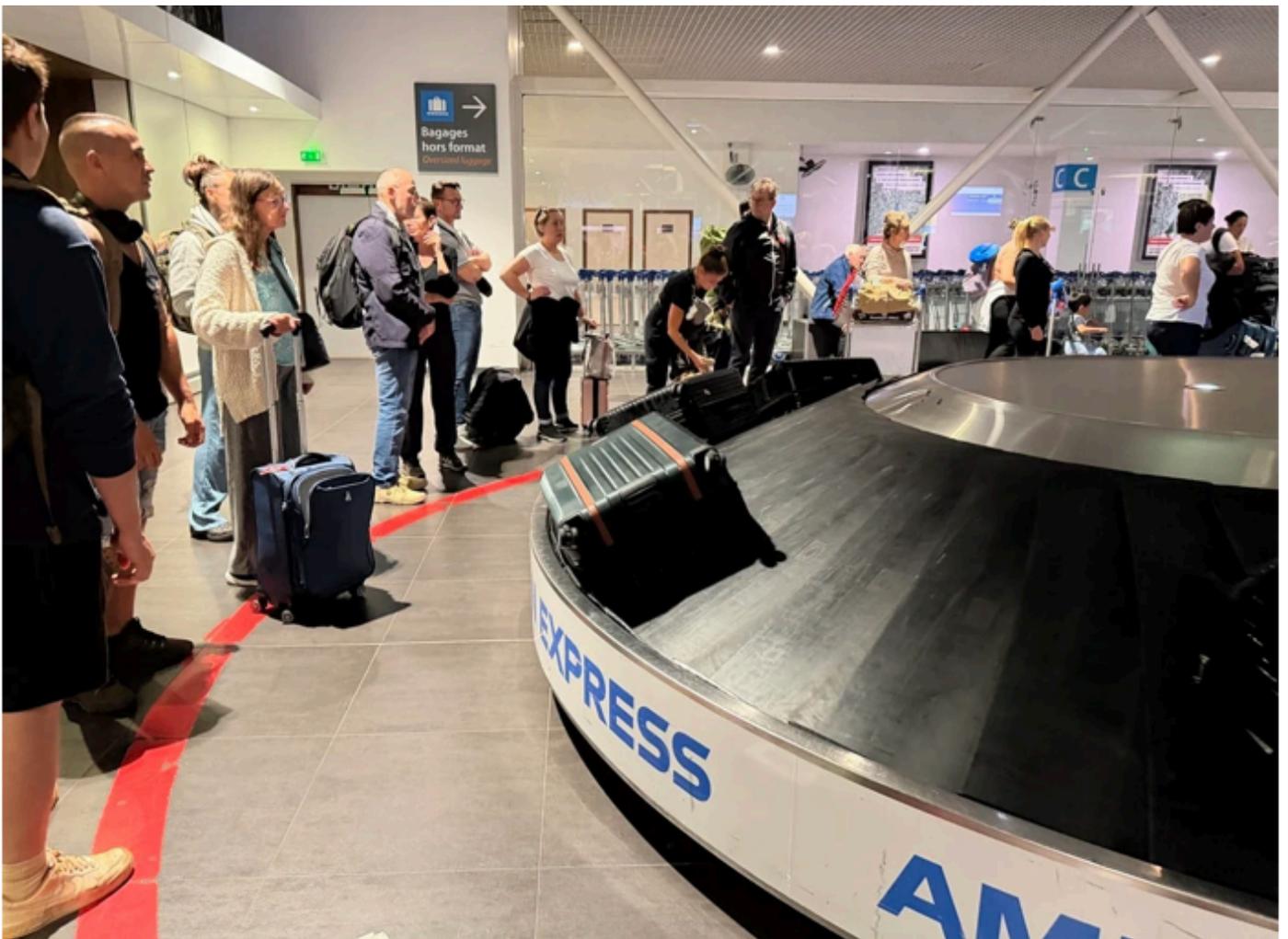
[Johnny Jet](#) | Published on December 21, 2025

I travel to 20+ countries a year sharing my firsthand knowledge of reward travel, travel credit card deals, travel tips and more.

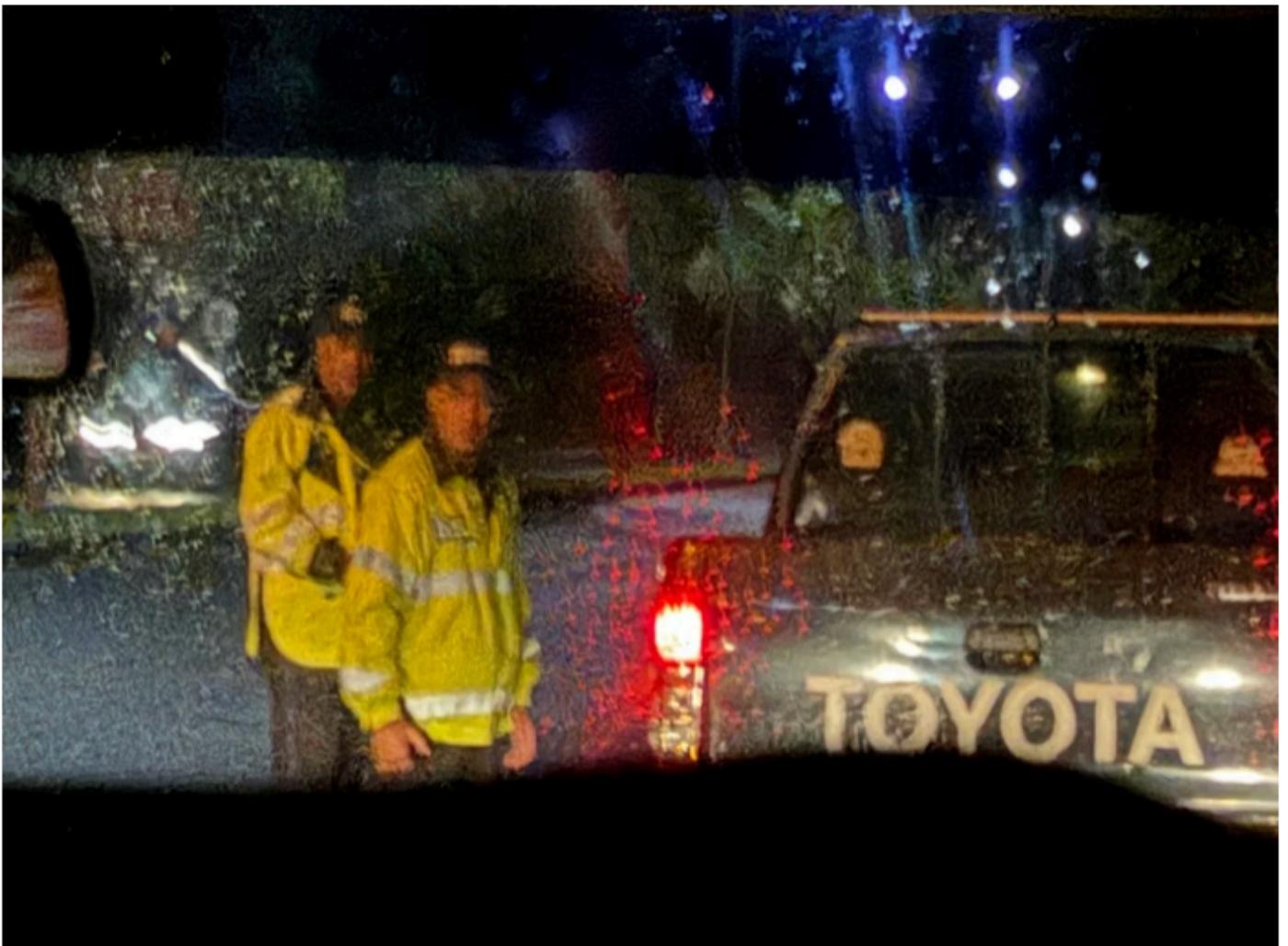
If you've been following me on [social media](#), then you know that my family and I just returned from an epic trip to French Polynesia. With the exception of the weather, this was my best trip not only there on the islands (I've been a total of four times) but possibly ever because my kids did so much, including swimming with sharks (more on that later).



I wrote about our flight there on Air Tahiti Nui, which you can read [here](#). We arrived in Papeete at 10:20pm. We quickly cleared customs and our bags were on the carousel by 10:28pm.



Our driver, who was arranged by our host, Tahiti Tourisme, was waiting for us with flower necklaces, called *hei* in Tahitian, and we were in his van a few minutes later.



On the way to our house rental (15 minutes from the airport), there was a police roadside check since it was Friday night and the authorities are cracking down on intoxicated drivers. Even with the 10-minute delay, we were still at our place by 11pm, according to my camera roll timestamps.



The tourism board rented the home we stayed in through [Tahiti Homes](#), which is a locally based vacation rental and real estate agency in French Polynesia, specializing in seasonal stays across Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora. Headquartered in Papeete, the company curates a portfolio ranging from stylish apartments to private villas and luxury properties, offering travelers an alternative to traditional hotels with more space, privacy and a sense of living like a local.

Beyond accommodation, Tahiti Homes distinguishes itself through concierge-level services designed to elevate the guest experience. From airport transfers and car rentals to private chefs, in-home massages and personalized welcome amenities, the agency blends professional property management with insider destination knowledge. Founded by tourism professionals with strong roots in the local hospitality industry, Tahiti Homes has become a trusted name for travelers seeking a seamless, high-quality stay in French Polynesia.

When you rent with Tahiti Homes, a week or more prior to the check-in date, they send an email with an attachment so guests can download the directions and documents before landing and access them without internet service. **BTW:** My T-Mobile phone worked with no issues and I added a second line of local data via [Ubigi](#) (if you have a newer phone that's unlocked and has an e-SIM).

If you rent a home, you will most likely want to rent a car and if you arrive late, keys will be left with the rental company in an envelope. For those not renting a car or not feeling at ease driving at night, they offer two options: book a taxi and private transfer with a special meet-and-greet like we had, or they can arrange a private guide (also a special meet-and-greet) who will accompany guests in their rental car to the property.



If you rent the same house we were in, which was off-the-charts huge and gorgeous, I highly recommend getting a special meet-and-greet since there is no way I would have found it. It was located down a dark road and had a gated entrance. There wasn't an actual driveway; they just parked on the grass, which I wouldn't have been sure was okay.



Although, I've been to Tahiti four times but this was my first time staying in a vacation rental. My wife wasn't too keen on the idea at first, but after the first night, she was a believer. It was so nice to have our own house, with no loud noises from the hallways or the room next door ... though you will hear roosters!



It's also really nice to have a fully stocked kitchen, especially when you have kids and more specifically, a child with food allergies.



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Having a washing machine and dryer was another plus. Just note that you need to turn the gas (pictured above on the left) on to get heat in both the washing machine and dryer, which was news to me. The dryer also had two handles on the inside. I only saw one, which was a costly mistake in terms of time.



Our house slept 10! It had three bedrooms and bathrooms ...



... including an outdoor shower, which was my favorite.



We also had an incredible swimming pool, but unfortunately we had terrible weather, as it rained for 90% of our first three days. It was unusual but it was also kind of welcoming since we rarely get rain in L.A., and it was so nice to fall asleep to the sound of rain. The downside was that we didn't get great photos, so Tahiti Homes let me use the one above, showing what the view is like on a clear day. But even when it was cloudy and rainy, it was still amazing; lush and tropical.



The only thing my wife and kids didn't like was that the first night, we spotted an enormous spider on the kitchen floor. I was able to capture it and shoo it out the door while my wife and kids were screaming. They wanted me to kill it, but I've learned over the years that spiders, especially Huntsman spiders, are good.

The next day, I asked ChatGPT: "Tell me about Huntsman spiders in French Polynesia. Should we be scared?" We all felt better after reading this:

"Huntsman spiders do exist in French Polynesia, including Tahiti, but they're nothing to be afraid of for most people. These spiders are large and fast-moving, which is what makes them startling. Their leg span can look impressive, especially when one appears on a wall at night. However, huntsman spiders are non-aggressive, shy, and prefer to avoid humans. They don't build webs; instead, they roam and hunt insects, making them useful natural pest controllers, especially for cockroaches and mosquitoes.

As for danger, huntsman spiders are not considered dangerous to humans. Bites are very rare and usually only happen if the spider is handled or trapped. If a bite does occur, it's typically comparable to a mild bee sting, uncomfortable but not medically serious. In French Polynesia, there are no native spiders known to be deadly to humans.

So while a huntsman spider can definitely give you a fright if you're not used to seeing one, there's no real reason to be scared. Most locals simply leave them alone or gently move them outside, knowing they're harmless roommates just doing their job."



The first night all four of us slept in one bed together thanks to the spider situation (strength in numbers LOL) but the second night, everyone felt better and I slept in one of the bedrooms alone. My daughter walked through the house in the dark to find me in the middle of the night since she was jet-lagged and bored. But it proved she wasn't scared.



Speaking of grocery stores, they have some surprisingly huge ones that have everything you need, but food is not cheap. A box of cereal is around \$7, Ben & Jerry's is \$15 and a bag of mandarin oranges is \$5.50. This is expected since it's an island in the middle of the South Pacific. What was inexpensive was bread. A fresh baguette was the equivalent of 50 cents.



On our way home to L.A., I ran into my old neighbors, who just happened to be on our flight and who have three little kids similar in age to mine. They went to Moorea and Bora Bora and didn't book any hotels. Instead, they rented via Airbnb and loved it, especially Bora Bora, where they spent four nights in [this three-bedroom, two-bath home](#).



They bought day passes at nearby hotels. In Moorea, they spent the day at the [Sofitel Kia Ora Moorea Beach Resort](#) (\$400) and in Bora Bora, at the [InterContinental Bora Bora Resort Thalasso Spa](#) for just under \$700 but it included breakfast buffet and drinks.

In the next installment, I'll tell you about our day tour of the island of Tahiti before we explore Raiatea, Taha'a and [Bora Bora](#).