

Things to do on Mitiaro

1. EXPLORE MITIARO

A large coastal road encircles the island. Get off the beaten track and take your time exploring Mitiaro.

2. MEET THE LOCALS

There are a lot of people in Mitiaro, even though it may appear otherwise! On any given day you will find the locals at the town hall, swimming in the caves, in the harbour, out fishing or at the plantations. A lot of the farmers believe that the food crops grown in their plantations are “the food of our tupuna” (ancestors). There’s a wide range of fruit and vegetation grown in Mitiaro, like guavas, pineapple, cocoa and Mitiaro spinach!

3. LEARN ABOUT THE TRADITIONAL PRESERVATION OF PIERE (DRIED BANANA)

Piere involves drying and preserving bananas by cutting them in half and leaving them to dry in the sun until they’re a caramelized brown colour. Once they’re thoroughly ‘sun-baked’, they’re typically wrapped up in pandanus leaves and can last as long as 20 years.

4. FRESHEN UP AT VAI NAURI

This is an absolute must-do. Vai Nauri is the largest, freshwater cave in Mitiaro and is immensely popular with both locals and visitors alike.

5. THE ONLY KNOWN SULPHUR CAVE IN THE COOK ISLANDS

Vai Marere is the only known sulphur cave in the Cook Islands, nestled amongst the many caves of Mitiaro.

As you walk into the cave, it broadens out into a gloomy cavern covered with stalactites.

6. GO SWIMMING AT THE HARBOUR

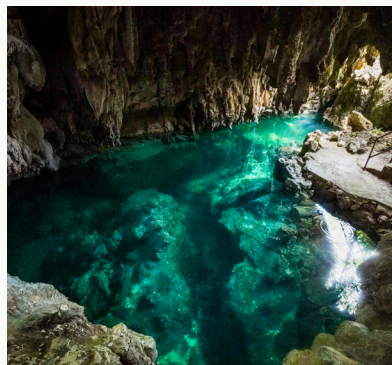
Enjoy a refreshing splash with the friendly locals at the Mitiaro Harbour.

7. TE ROTO NUI & TE ROTO ITI

Simply meaning Big lake (Te Roto Nui) and Small lake (Te Roto Iti), these twin lakes make up 3 quarters of the islands land mass. The fresh water lake is home to some of the island’s local delicacies such as A’va (milk fish) and itiki (fresh water eel).

8. VISIT THE CHURCHES

If you’re planning to visit, ensure you’re dressed appropriately – for ladies in particular, this means covering shoulders and knee length attire. Please also note that no photos are permitted during Sunday service.



Cook Islands Tourism

Head Office, Rarotonga:

Main road, Avarua

(Between the Banana Court & ANZ Bank)

Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 8am - 4pm,

Sat 10am - 1.30pm

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COOK
ISLANDS

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Mitiaro (Nukuroa)

Harbouring some of the most stunning subterranean limestone caves and pools to be found in the Pacific, Mitiaro is a natural playground featuring; white sandy beaches, fossilized coral formations and coconut palms reaching high into a strikingly blue sky.

With a population of under 200 people, the island's residents live in one settlement on the west coast, although, if one were discussing the point, technically it is four villages which are north to south, Atai, Auta, Mangarei and Takaue. The government buildings are based in Takaue, so inevitably the settlement is often referred to by this name, and the high school is in the principal village of Arai. Like most of the other inhabited islands, Mitiaro is deeply Christian and the singing in Betela, the CICC church, on a Sunday is an unforgettable experience for any intrepid visitor who has managed to step onto this little island secret. The plateau like centre is quite flat and swampy – and the freshwater lakes provide a unique perspective to this beautiful little island. Between them, Roto Nui (a large lake that is half the size of the island) and Roto Iti (a small Lake), make up a large part of Mitiaro.

Only a quick 50-minute flight from Rarotonga with Air Rarotonga.

What's unique about Mitiaro?

Long live the Mitiaro Queen

Visit the Queen! Now in her 90s, the queen of Mitiaro, Temaeu Ote Rangi Teikamata Ariki Mii O'Bryan affectionately known to many as 'Mama Mii', is the oldest and one of the longest-reigning royal in the Cook Islands. Mama Mii hesitantly accepted the chiefly title in 1985 and has grown into the role, doing her best to keep her people happy and content. Her house is located a short walk down from CICC Betela Church. Long live the Mitiaro Queen!

Fresh is best

Small plantations align the roads containing different variations of taro, kumara and maniotā (arrowroot). There's also banana, pawpaw, cocoa, kuru (breadfruit) and lychee trees that sprout unexpectedly; guavas which grow further in by the groves; oranges, herbs, pineapples, and much, much more.

Visit the fresh water cave - Vai Marere

Vai Marere is located close to the village of Mangarei and the people of Mitiaro hold a lot of respect for this water cave. The cave water is considered to have healing properties, the only one on the island that is known to heal skin and eye diseases, as well as body aches.

Learn the art of Tivaevae

Get amongst the local mama's and learn the art of tivaevae making! The mama's love sharing their knowledge and stories about how they learnt to sew and make many other crafts in Mitiaro.

Local Hosts

Mitiaro has a distinctive history, plus the unique appeal of some of the most stunning subterranean limestone pools and caves in Polynesia.

Fast facts

Traditional name

Nukuroa - Mitiaro

Population

Mitiaro 154 (2021 census)

Domestic air travel

Air Rarotonga operates multiple, scheduled flights during the week. Phone (682) 22 888 or Book Online with Air Raro at: www.airraro.com

Currency & banking

The currency used in Mitiaro is the New Zealand Dollar (NZD). There is a BCI branch located at the wharf, and a BSP agent located at Pa's store where local cards can be used to withdraw cash. International cards can be used for purchases. We recommend you have cash on hand.

Shops

All shops are open daily except Sunday with a siesta in the afternoon. Please remember that only basic items are available.

Electricity

Electricity voltage is 240 AC/50 cycle, the same plugs as used in New Zealand and Australia.

Driving

Driving is on the left hand side of the road and licences can be obtained from the Mitiaro Police Station.

Medical & dental

The hospital is located along the back road close to the airport and can be contacted on phone (682) 36120. Emergency Dental Services Only.

Telecommunications

Wifi vouchers and postpaid mobile credit are available from most outlet stores on the island. There are 3 wifi hotspots located at the Mitiaro Airport, Vodafone Office near the Island Administration, and Divine Retreat.

Churches

Sunday is a day of worship and there are various denominations on island. Catholic Church, Cook Islands Christian Church & Assembly of God (AOG).

Weather

The Cook Islands enjoy a pleasant warm and sunny climate all year round. The drier months are from April to November with an average temperature of 26°C. November to March marks the warmer season, with slightly higher humidity and occasional rainfall between December and March when the temperature ranges between 22°C (min) and 30°C (max).



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