



# Art Expedition in the Cook Islands



*With sketchbook, pens and painting gear we explore and experience three beautiful and very different South Pacific islands.*

What is more fun than to sketch and paint our impressions of lush tropical landscapes, exotic plants, dramatic rugged coast lines with secluded beaches - and laugh with fellow artists about the artistic challenges? The welcoming people of the Cook Islands are great hosts and the relaxed local life style is as inspiring as the vibrant Polynesian cultural performances.

Our Art Expedition program is action packed with walks to see endemic birds, hiking in tropical rainforest, visiting ancient Polynesian sites, swimming and snorkelling in turquoise lagoons. There are alternatives to hikes and swims, and for those who would like to wander off to work on their own for a while.

Our tour is for groups of 6 to 12 amateur and professional artists. We spend 10 days in the Cook Islands: 4 days on Rarotonga, the heart of the Cook Islands with dramatic green mountains, 4 days on Atiu, a rugged, lush island and 2 days on Aitutaki, an atoll with a stunning turquoise lagoon. Our hotels are comfortable and we will enjoy great food in local restaurants and cafés.



## Included:

- Inter-island flights from/to Rarotonga, Atiu and Aitutaki.
- Airport transfers and accommodation with private facilities.
- All breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners, plus an Island Night with dance performance.
- Nature and culture tours
- Tour guide and art instruction

## Not included:

- International travel to and from Rarotonga
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Excess baggage
- Drinks and special diet food
- Tips, laundry, telephone calls
- Lunches and dinners marked **red** in the program
- Personal rental bikes and cars

## What to take:

- Small backpack
- Sketchbook, watercolour pad, etc
- Drawing and painting tools
- Good shoes for walks/hikes
- Reef shoes and swimsuit
- Hat, sun protection, mosquito repellent
- Rain gear
- Light cotton clothing
- Light-weight folding chair or cushion

# Art Expedition Program

## Day 1: Tuesday

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We meet our tour guide Judith at 11 am at our Rarotonga hotel to check-in. We pack our art supplies and hop on the island bus heading for the Botanical Garden. Under big shady trees at the garden café we have **lunch** and an introduction to our program. We also find out about everyone's preferences, ideas and working methods, before we all get started with sketching and painting in the garden. Those who would like art instruction work with Judith, the others wander off in pursuit of exotic subjects.

We transfer back to our hotel in time for a late afternoon swim and relax before our Welcome dinner.



## Day 2 Wednesday

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This morning we pack our sketchbook and walk up a scenic valley that has been cultivated with taro in terraced ponds for centuries.

After **lunch** in Avarua town, we transfer to Muri beach to paint and draw the lagoon and beautiful reef islets.

Before **dinner** we share a recap, showing and discussing our work and experiences.



## Day 3: Thursday

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Today we pack a **lunch** with our sketchbook and hike across the island. There are some steep sections up and down, but the views are rewarding and the forest is lush and pristine. There are alternatives to hiking.

**Dinner.**

## Day 4: Friday

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We check out of the hotel on Rarotonga and fly to Atiu, where we will be welcomed with flower garlands by our host of the Atiu Villas.



After lunch we walk to the south coast to draw and paint one of Atiu's wild coast lines: black cliffs with white sand, the breakers crashing on the reef.

At recap we share our artistic discoveries and challenges, and talk about the program for the next days on Atiu. Dinner at the Atiu Villas.

## Day 5: Saturday

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This morning we transfer to sketch the site where Captain Cook's men came ashore in 1777.

After lunch and a siesta, we go on a hike in lush rain forest over rugged *makatea* (fossil coral) to a cave. In complete darkness we hear the clicks of the endemic swiftlet, the Kopeka birds, navigating between stalactites. On the way home, we call

in at a local bush beer school, the Tumunu, to taste the brew and sketch the scene.

Tonight is Island Night with a traditional dance performance at the Atiu Villas. Let's sketch the action!

## Day 6: Sunday

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With our sketchpads we walk along a lake and taro plantations to Vai Piake, a rocky and dramatic coast.

After a light lunch, we climb on Birdman George's open-air bus. He shows us his island, with stops for sketching, and serves us a traditional earth-oven dinner on the most beautiful beach.

## Day 7: Monday

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This morning we visit a fairy-tale forest, where not many artists have been to capture and experience the magic. We walk or transfer back up and through the villages to lunch at the Atiu Villas.





This afternoon we visit the Atiu Fibre Arts Studio, where we meet fellow artist Andrea Eimke in her studio and join her for a cup of coffee, look at her works and share art talk.

Recap and our last tasty dinner at the Atiu Villas.

### Day 8: Tuesday

We pack our gear and transfer to the Atiu airport to catch an Air Rarotonga flight to Aitutaki. After check-in at the hotel on the beach, we walk to a gourmet **lunch** at the nearby Koru Cafe.

The afternoon is free for painting and a watercolour demonstration by Judith, dealing with the colours of the incredibly turquoise lagoon, in preparation for the next day.

We walk to **dinner** to the local bar and hang-out, the Boatshed restaurant.



### Day 9: Wednesday

Today is the ultimate delight for colourists. We spend the day cruising on the lagoon, snorkelling and visiting reef islets with swaying coconut palms. A BBQ lunch is served on an island with seabirds nesting and circling overhead.

Tonight we transfer to Tupuna's restaurant for **dinner**, with elegant food and our toes in cool white sand.

### Day 10: Thursday

After we have seen the lagoon, we explore the land of

Aitutaki with a Safari & History Tour. We visit the largest marae (sacred site) in the Cook Islands and enjoy great views over the lagoon.

After **lunch** we stage an exhibition of the works done on our trip, celebrate our achievements and the many lessons learned and shared.

In the afternoon, we fly back to Rarotonga, check into the hotel and transfer to a local restaurant for our Farewell dinner.

All meals in **red** are not included in the tour. Judith has recommendations, makes reservations, organises transfers and will join you.

**Tour guide** Judith Kunzlé is an experienced artist, painter and travel journal-maker. She came to Rarotonga 25 years ago to design schoolbooks. Since then she has been drawing the local plants and animals, painted landscapes in watercolour, and is best known for her vibrant drawings and paintings of Cook Islands dancers. [www.jkunzle.com](http://www.jkunzle.com)



### **Before and after the Art Expedition**

We can assist with accommodation bookings before and after the Art Expedition.

### **Is the Art Expedition also for beginners?**

Yes, beginners are welcome, and Judith is happy to help you get started.

### **About the islands**

**Rarotonga** is the main island, the administrative and commercial centre of the 15 Cook Islands. It has stunning mountains with pristine rainforest, beautiful beaches and a lagoon. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rarotonga> <http://www.ck/raro.htm>

**Atiu** is a raised island, with rugged coastal cliffs. The villages are in the centre, where we will be staying at the Atiu Villas, in a tropical garden. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atiu> <http://www.atiu.info>

**Aitutaki** is a picture-book South-Seas-island, a stunningly beautiful atoll with a huge turquoise lagoon and gently swaying palm trees. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aitutaki> <http://www.cookislands.org.uk/aitutaki1.html>

