

### ***Day 3 – Arriving in Rangiroa, French Polynesia [Monday 24-Jan-2011]***

The flight was a bit over 8 hours. After dinner we slept until around 3AM local time. They served breakfast which included warm crepes with apple sauce. It tasted great.



**Great breakfast before we land in Tahiti. They served warm crepes with apple sauce.**



**Stepping out of the plane in Tahiti was very gratifying.**

The sun had just come up as we landed. The weather looked just fine, despite this being the rainy season and that the weather forecast was not too great either. While we experienced the lower 80s (28C), Izzy reported that they had sub zero (-19C) back home.

As soon as we picked up our bags and got through customs, Martine's son, Thibault Tracqui, was waiting for us. He placed nice flowers around our necks and we were off to a blitz tour of Papeete area. Note: we were out of the terminal at 6:30AM and we needed to be back at the airport again at 9:30AM the same day! What a treat to have Thibault drive us around on a sightseeing trip as seen by one the island's locals!!



**Martine's son, Thibault, handed us flowers to wear around our necks**



**On Tahiti: about 4km (2 ½ miles) between the airport and the city**



**Lilli is fully decked out with a hand picked local flower**



**Fresh bananas spotted in a shipping crate by the port in Papeete, Tahiti**



**Breakfast in town: curry flavored white tuna (with coffee, of course)**



**A local specialty: lemon cured white tuna, coleslaw and coconut milk. Delicious.**



**Admiring some local currency (those are \$100 bill equivalents)**



**Lilli is standing next to Thibault**



**Thibault is explaining what we see from up here, including the island of Morea**



**It was such a clear day that we could even see the moon**



**Lilli, Thibault and Per posing by the view of Morea island**

Thibault took us back to the airport where we had time for a last drink before boarding the plane to Rangiroa. It made one stop on another island before getting to our island.



**Basic idea of Rangiroa: 1,000ft wide strip of land in a 130 mile circle with a lagoon inside**



**The turbo prop we arrived with from Tahiti**



**At the airport in Rangiroa: No doubt it rains a lot at this time of year**

We were picked up by Freddie and Jean-Marie of Rangiroa Lodge. It took a couple of minutes by car to get to the place we were staying at. Jean-Marie noted that tourism was down about 80% compared to normal. And this place maxes out at about 300. Right now there were much less than 50 tourists on it. Bad for them, good for us! They said we were lucky with the weather since (a) this is monsoon season and (b) it had already rained for a week solid when we got there!



**This is outside the door of where we're staying: A view over the giant lagoon of Rangiroa.**



**Enjoying a chilled local brew while watching the waves by the shore**

The place where we are staying appears to meet our expectations. It is Spartan, but the price is definitely right. We have the beach right outside. 6 rooms share a shower and 2 toilets. There is a shared kitchen as well, with a large communal fridge in it.

We walked over to their local store (about five minutes down the road) and bought some basic groceries, like cheese and wine. The store did not have A/C and the vast majority of products were super pasteurized. The store reminded us of Mauritius Island, outside of Madagascar.



**Just back from snorkeling, Lilli describes how big the stingray was**

Lilli went out snorkeling and saw plenty of stuff, including a sting ray.

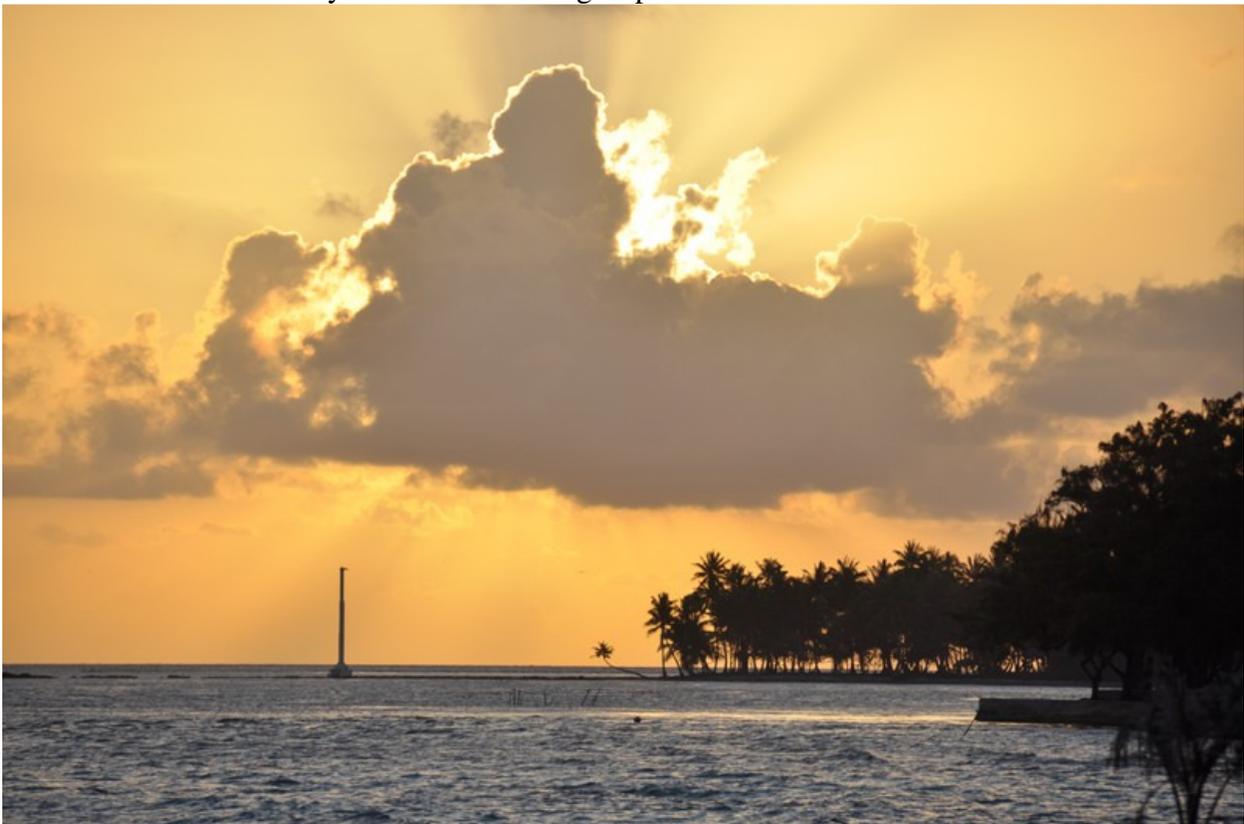


**The Polynesians are world famous for their speed in this sport**



**We ordered a \$11 three cheese pizza, moved the table down and poured some chilled wine**

For dinner, we ordered a pizza from the local pizza maker. That is 100ft from our door. Tasted great. We spoke with our new neighbor from Paris who had visited Rangiroa 30 times already. He showed us videos from the dive he took this afternoon. They had encountered 2 dolphins about 100ft down and they swam around the group over and over. Beautiful.



**Then we watched the sun go down over the Rangiroa Lagoon**



**The Rangiroa Lodge has a shared kitchen. Notice the coral floor!**