

Day 4 – Blue Lagoon, Rangiroa [Tuesday 25-Jan-2011]

We slept well. Lilli mentioned that she had heard a major rainfall overnight. I did not hear anything. We tried to watch the sun come up but a big cloud moved up in front of it. Weather looks alright this morning, too. We have mixed clouds, but sunny where we are. We ate breakfast at the lodge, which was included in the price: coffee/tee/chocolate with baguette, butter and fruit compote.

Last night we decided to take a risk and take the boat trip out to the Blue Lagoon. That is an area of Rangiroa where fairly shallow water has been trapped by corrals into a large pool. The pool might be a ½ mile long, or so. The boat left from the marina, near where we are staying. There were 15 guests, including us. First, they took us to the Avatoru Pass, which is only a couple of minutes away. It is one of the two openings to the ocean from this giant atoll. There we were indulged into drift snorkeling on the current that drew us from the ocean and into the main lagoon. We current moved us at about 3ft per second (1m), so there was no use fighting it. The depth varied, but seemed to be around 50-100ft. The clarity was just extraordinary.

After that, we boarded the boat for the Blue Lagoon. That is about 25km away, towards the west, within the main Rangiroa Lagoon, and took a good hour on a fairly fast boat. We were surrounded by clouds, but it looked blue:ish where we were going. When we arrived, there was no dock. So we had to get into waist deep water and walk to shore. It was unsettling to see all the sharks around us, even though we were assured they would do no harm.



Blue Lagoon: We start out with drinks, some chips and some freshly cut coconut

After a few quick snacks they took us in two groups to a smaller island they called Bird Island, only five minutes away from our base camp. The weather was gradually improving. We walked around that small island. It had a “Castaway” feeling to it. It was very pretty.



One of many birds on “bird island” where we spent 2 hours walking and snorkeling



Me and Lilli, by Bird Island, in front of the Blue Lagoon of Rangiroa



Lilli is getting ready to leave Bird Island by the Blue Lagoon in Rangiroa



Crossing the Blue Lagoon to get ready for BBQ lunch

When we returned it was time for lunch. They had prepared it while we were away. It was just delicious. While we ate, they played Polynesian music on a ukulele and a guitar. It was quite amusing. The view of the blue lagoon was breath taking.



We are now seated for lunch, in the shade.



Lunch consisted of lemon cured tuna in coconut milk, rice and BBQ'd tuna!



Excellent lunch music with ukulele, guitar and a “trashy” base!



The ukulele and the guitar, leaning against a palm tree

After lunch, it was time for some shark feeding. After a while I became more comfortable with the idea of having sharks swim around my ankles. They were all black tips.



With 3ft and smaller black-tip sharks swimming around our ankles, its feeding time

After this our hosts had prepared to show us how to make some basic items with palm leaves. It was quite amusing.



One of our Polynesian hosts is preparing material for a basket making show-n-tell



Lilli gets shown how to make a serving plate from palm tree leaves



Lilli is posing in the freshly made handbag: notice the little rose on it!



Here is a “tip”: swimming in tropical waters can bring a surprise



Yea

After we had eaten and watched the light show, it was time to make our way back. First, we had to get out to the boat again. Most of us had a bit more courage with the sharks around us. By the boat they were bigger, up to 6ft.



This is paradise: a good looking lady carrying your things in a hockey bag

They took us out a little bit and offered to let us swim in a school of 50+ black tip sharks. It was the first time I've personally been in the water with sharks, face to face. They were all around me and beneath me.



To ensure the sharks were not hungry, I first sent Lilli to check things out



Then it was my turn to go into a school of 50+ black tip sharks (5+ ft long). Unsettling.



They did not seem hungry until they got something to snack on



Kudos to our Polynesian hosts



Lilli enjoys the 25km (15 mile) ride back from the Blue Lagoon to the port of Rangiroa



Even a cheap Ramen tastes good by the shore (with some chilled red wine)