



The Province

# LIVE IT

## *Hey man,* **NICE BUN**

**FLASH IN THE PAN?  
EVERYDAY 'DO? A LOOK  
AT THE LOVED/HATED  
HAIRSTYLE MODERN  
MEN JUST CAN'T SEEM  
TO STOP SPORTING**

**PAGES B2-3**

During his playing days, soccer superstar David Beckham was one of the first to pull off the man bun. — GETTY IMAGES FILES



## **ENTERTAINMENT**

**BAD CHRISTMAS MOVIES**  
BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY  
GOOD HOLIDAY FILMS YOU BE  
WATCHING, WE'VE COME UP  
WITH A TOP 10 LIST TO AVOID  
**PAGES B8-9**



## **TRAVEL**

**BORA BORA**  
IT'S KNOWN AS A ROMANTIC  
DESTINATION, BUT FRENCH  
POLYNESIA OFFERS PLENTY  
OF FUN FOR FAMILIES, TOO  
**PAGE B14**



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# TRAVEL

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## A playful paradise

**Yes, you can  
bring the kids to  
Bora Bora PAGE B14**



The overwater villa at St. Regis Bora Bora, with the dormant volcano Mount Otemanu in the distance, is a great vacation choice for the entire family. — CURT WOODHALL



# Bora Bora a kids' playground, too

It's known as a romantic destination, but French Polynesia offers lots for the whole family

**Mhairri Woodhall**

SPECIAL TO THE SUNDAY PROVINCE

Lounging on the deck of our over-water villa, my eyes drift from the impossibly blue lagoon to Mount Otemanu soaring in the distance.

I feel the urge to pinch myself out of a dream. Imagine the beauty of a secluded island.

Brilliant white powder sand, gently swaying palms and clear water that changes colour with sunlight — from sparkling blue topaz to aquamarine and sapphire.

Our hotel, the St. Regis, is the fourth luxury resort I've stayed at on Bora Bora. Without a doubt it trumps all that went before it.

It's my second visit to French Polynesia. I was pregnant with my now three-year old the last time we were here. On that trip, we toured six islands — four we travelled to by fishing boat, following the epic 125 km three-day Hawaiki Nui Va'a canoe race. This time around, things feel infinitely more relaxed.

While planning the trip, we struggled with whether we should bring our daughter. In the end, given her young age, we left her home with my parents.

However, I've come to realize that even though it is one of the most romantic vacation destinations on the planet, Tahiti and her islands go above and beyond for families.

Air Tahiti Nui, which has direct flights from Los Angeles, offers a free children's ticket (up to age 11) with the purchase of an adult fare, and most hotels — including the St. Regis Bora Bora — offer a kids stay-free program. The airport in Papeete also has an expedited customs line for families, dramatically reducing wait times upon arrival.

Before arriving, we stayed on the islands of Tahiti and Moorea, great choices for family travel.

Our first hotel, Le Meridien Tahiti, was ideal for kids of all ages — even my loud and exuberant one would have been just fine here. We saw quite a few guests with children and because the property is close to the international airport, it's an easy to transfer after a long flight.

Throughout our stay I felt a few pangs of guilt — my daughter would have loved the saltwater pool with sand bottom and gradual slope. Non-motorized water sports are offered for free and the older kids enjoyed snorkelling and kayaking. There's also a grocery store and an amazing, yet reasonably priced, French restaurant called Chez Remy within walking distance.

Tahiti's famed Friday night Roulettes — or food trucks — on the dock in Papeete are another big draw. It's



The Hilton Moorea features a pool with a view no visitor is likely to easily forget. — PHOTOS: CURT WOODHALL /ARRIVALS TRAVEL



A Bora Bora snorkelling experience can include some swimming with black tip reef sharks and stingrays.

a relatively inexpensive culinary extravaganza and we found everything from fish and chips and barbecue to savoury and dessert crepes. Portions are huge — Tahitians love to eat — and it's a fun way to experi-

ence local culture. Moorea is another good choice for kids. The island is a 35-minute ferry ride from Papeete. I was thrilled to find a new departure terminal had been built since the first time we visited.

An outdoor café and comfortable pre-boarding area have elevated the travel experience. We stayed in a garden bungalow at the Hilton Moorea Lagoon Resort & Spa, which is perfect for families wanting an alterna-

tive to overwater accommodation. Snorkelling, standup paddle boarding, kayaking and tennis are complimentary for guests.

Off-resort, there are a ton of accessible activities on Moorea — from guided waterfall hikes to horseback riding and island sightseeing safaris.

We loved our snorkelling experience, which included swimming with gentle black tip reef sharks and stingrays. While not suitable for toddlers, it's totally do-able for older kids and if you're here between July and November, there's a good chance you'll see humpback whales.

Land tour options are somewhat limited, so you tend to spend the majority of your time on the resort. With its lush gardens, thatched roof over water bungalows, open-air — amazing — restaurants, picture perfect beachfront and on-site Kid's Club, the St. Regis is as close to heaven on earth as you can get.

However not all resorts are created equal, so it's important to do your research prior to booking.

If we happen to find ourselves in French Polynesia for a third time — which doesn't seem that unlikely — it will definitely be on a family trip.

*The writer was a guest of Tahiti Tourism. They did not edit or approve of this article before publication.*