Air Tahiti Put Just 26 Business-Class Seats on an ATR 72 Turboprop. Getting It From France to Tahiti Takes 8 Flights.

Air Tahiti's all-business ATR 72-600 has 26 seats for 1-hour hops to Bora Bora, and its delivery from France to Tahiti takes 8 flights and 14,400 miles.

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The airplane will spend its working life on hops of under an hour to Bora Bora. Its delivery flight is about 44 times longer

Air Tahiti's new ATR 72-600, registered F-OPFO, has 26 seats and no economy cabin. Every passenger gets a single seat by the window with direct aisle access, and the airline is selling it under a new brand, Air Tahiti Signature.

On October 13, 2026, it left Toulouse on a ferry flight of eight legs and nine airports to Papeete. Once there, it will fly Tahiti to Bora Bora and Raiatea, sectors of 20 to 55 minutes, from November 11.

Why Air Tahiti put business class on a turboprop

can sell something else: the arrival.

Air Data News describes the target as French Polynesia's high-end tourism market, where short domestic flights connect Tahiti with the luxury resorts of Bora Bora. Until now that flight meant the same cabin for everyone. Air Tahiti's standard ATR 72-600 carries 70 seats, four abreast, according to One Mile at a Time.



Air Tahiti ATR 72-600 all business class – © ATR

lounges in Tahiti and Bora Bora. Simple Flying reports the cabin has no overhead bins at all, which opens up the ceiling.

The layout comes from ATR itself. The manufacturer launched its HighLine cabin collection in 2024 to sell the ATR 72 as more than a high-density commuter, and the all-business version allows up to 30 seats at a 34 or 35-inch pitch, according to AirInsight.



Air Tahiti ATR 72-600 all business class – © ATR

between its own resorts, starting with Subang to Koh Samui. Air Data News reports Air Tahiti chose its 26-seat layout at the Paris Air Show in June 2025, making it the second airline to fly the configuration.

The numbers behind a 26-seat ATR 72

Cutting from 70 seats to 26 removes 63% of the cabin's capacity. What is left is 13 rows of Geven ETEREA seats, 21.6 inches (55 cm) wide, at a 39-inch (99 cm) pitch, with 7 inches (18 cm) of recline and USB-A and USB-C charging.

One Mile at a Time found one-way fares starting just under $500, against a typical Air Tahiti economy minimum of about $220. Its rough math says that with 26 seats instead of 70, the airline needs fares around three times higher to come out even. The opening fare is a little over twice.



Air Tahiti ATR 72-600 – © ATR

The flights themselves are tiny. AeroRoutes lists the morning service as Papeete to Bora Bora in 55 minutes, Bora Bora to Raiatea in 20, and Raiatea back to Papeete in 45. By great-circle distance, that is 161 miles, then 27 miles, then 136 miles.

The trip to get there is not. Simple Flying published the ferry routing as Toulouse, Cairo, Muscat, Hyderabad, Subang, Lombok, Cairns, Nadi and Papeete, about 14,400 miles (23,200 km) in a straight line between stops.

> The whole Papeete, Bora Bora, Raiatea triangle is about 324 miles. The ferry flight that brings the ATR to Tahiti is about 14,400 miles, roughly 44 laps of the route it was built for.

Every one of those eight legs is longer than the ATR 72-600's published range of 825 nm (950 mi). The shortest, Subang to Lombok, is about 1,305 miles. The longest, Nadi to Papeete across the open Pacific, is about 2,167 miles (1,883 nm).

Range figures assume a load of passengers and bags. As Allplane noted of an earlier Air Tahiti delivery, an empty ATR goes farther than the brochure number.

Flightradar24 shows the first leg, Toulouse to Cairo, took 6 hours 30 minutes on October 13. The airplane flew on to Muscat the same evening, another 6 hours 33 minutes.

Why Air Tahiti's ATRs fly halfway around the world

There is no shortcut. ATR is based in Toulouse, and with a range measured in hundreds of miles rather than thousands,

positioning flights covers why airlines fly empty airplanes at all.

Air Tahiti has done it before. When its ATR 72-600 F-ORVU was delivered in 2020, the ferry crew filmed the trip, which ran through Cyprus, Dubai, Chennai, Kuala Lumpur, Indonesia, Cairns and Fiji, with several overnights. That is the same shape as F-OPFO's route, ending with the same Cairns and Fiji stops.



Air Tahiti ATR 72-600 – © ATR

some locals said it would bring in big spenders, while others asked whether there was a real need for it.

Even One Mile at a Time, which called it a sensible attempt, was unsure. With one airplane, most passengers will book whichever flight fits their schedule, not wait for the one with the nice seats. That is a hard place to charge a premium.



Air Tahiti ATR 72-600 F-WWEG at Toulouse, where ATR builds the airplanes, before delivery. – © Gyrostat / CC BY-SA 4.0

platform, a type already central to Air Tahiti's operations, which is part of why turboprops are still used on short routes like these.

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What happens when F-OPFO reaches Tahiti

On October 14, F-OPFO was on the ground in Muscat, two legs into the trip. La 1ère reports Air Tahiti expects to receive it in Tahiti on October 19, landing at Faa'a International Airport in Papeete.



Faa'a International Airport in Papeete is where the ferry flight ends. – © prelude2000 / CC BY-ND 2.0

Service starts on November 11, nearly a month earlier than the December 8 launch first announced. AeroRoutes lists the morning triangle as flight VT064, five times a week and six a week from November 20 to December 7, with a midday Papeete to Bora Bora round trip added from December 9.

The numbers are a callback. AeroRoutes notes that 64 and 66 were Bora Bora flight numbers used by RAI, Air Tahiti's predecessor, until the late 1960s.

on an Air Tahiti Nui ticket. La 1ère reports two more ATRs are due to join the program in 2027 and 2028.

That is the real test. Long-haul airlines spent decades proving that travelers will pay for a seat on a 12-hour flight, as any ranking of the best business class airlines shows. Air Tahiti now has to prove they will pay for one on a flight of under an hour.

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