

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **1. RESORT**

### **1.1 Should we purchase travel insurance?**

We strongly recommend that all visiting the Cook Islands should purchase the appropriate level of travel insurance to protect themselves against any unforeseen circumstances such as illness, accidents, need for emergency air evacuation, cancellation and disrupted travel.

### **1.2 Where is the resort located?**

Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort is located on Akitua Motu approx 5-minute drive from Aitutaki airport.

### **1.3 How far is the resort from the island's attractions?**

Most attractions are only a very short trip from the resort. Any of the island's many eateries, tours, activities, shopping, deep sea fishing, water sports, hiking, snorkeling, island night shows, etc., are within 10 minutes of the resort. Our Front Desk staff can book excursions or activities for you.

### **1.4 How far are you from the airport and town?**

If travelling by car, the resort is approx.:

- ~ from the airport, 2km or 5 minutes
- ~ from Aitutaki township, 8km or 15 minutes

### **1.1 Where can I park my rental car?**

Complementary parking for vehicles is available at the resort's car park.

### **1.2 How do we get to you from other local accommodation?**

If you do not have your own rental car, you may wish to call one of the local taxi providers to arrange a transfer to the Resort.

### **1.3 How much is the Wi-Fi?**

Due to being a small tropical island in the middle of the South Pacific with only one telecommunications company, wi-fi is considerably more expensive than in a large metropolitan country with a competitive telecommunications market. We price match the local monopoly telecommunications company and have the best wi-fi service available in the Cook Islands. Our wi-fi plans can be bought from the Front Desk. We also offer special accommodation rate plans that include free wi-fi, which are available online.

Wi-fi rates are:

- ~ \$10 – 450mb (valid for 7 days from purchase)
- ~ \$30 – 1500mb (valid for 10 days from purchase)
- ~ \$50 – 3000mb (valid for 14 days from purchase)

To prevent unexpected draining of data, we advise guests to disable automatic app updates before logging on to the wi-fi, and that they log out properly when finished.

### **1.4 What laundry facilities are there?**

We are pleased to be able to offer guests the choice of either having laundry done for you by our housekeeping team, or doing your own laundry using the washing and drying machines conveniently located close to games area. The washing machines and dryers are token-operated, and tokens can be purchased from Front Desk for NZ\$8 each. One token will do a load of washing or drying. A washing powder sachet is NZ\$1. A standard drying/washing cycle takes approximately 45 minutes. Please retrieve your laundry shortly after completion of the washing or drying cycle as a courtesy to others. The cost for this service is on a cost-recovery basis but does reflect the extremely high electricity costs in the Cook Islands.

### **1.5 Do you have a spa onsite?**

SpaPolynesia is located beside the Royal Honeymoon Pool Villa and spa brochures are available in all bungalows. Dial "0" for reservations. To book in advance of arriving at the resort, please contact our friendly Reservations Team.

### **1.6 What spa treatments does SpaPolynesia offer?**

SpaPolynesia in Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort has a range of therapeutic massages, wraps and body treatments, facials, manicures and pedicures and nail art, combination packages, plus beauty treatments like waxing, tinting, spray tanning and braiding.

### **1.7 Is the water safe to drink?**

The Resort has a water filtration and UV-sterilisation system in place which means your tap water has been through a comprehensive purification process and is tested regularly.

If you do have any concerns, you may prefer to boil your drinking water in the kettle provided, or to buy bottled water from the Beach Bar, Bounty Restaurant & Bar, from the Vaka Gift Shop. Please note only bottled water is served in all our restaurants and bars.

Some guests do not react well to changes in their diet and / or water supply, therefore it is suggested that if a guest has such sensitivity, they purchase bottled water from the bar or gift shop.

### **1.8 What hours are the Duty Managers available?**

The resort has a Duty Manager available from 7am-10pm who is available to assist or address any concerns during your stay. Alternatively, the Resort Manager is also available for any assistance.

### **1.9 Does the resort have a 24/7 security service?**

On site management can be contacted on 8121 for any assistance required.

## **2. RATES & RESERVATIONS**

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### **2.1 How do I make a reservation at Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort?**

To make a booking directly, please contact our friendly Reservations team via your most convenient method. You can contact us directly on the following email and telephone numbers:

Email:

~ [reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com](mailto:reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com)

Call directly:

~ + 682 31-200

Call toll free from your country of origin:

~ **NZ** 0800 727 686

~ **AU** 1800 272 768

~ **US** (883) 801 3162

~ **UK** 0800 710 1505

Skype:

~ talr.res.joe

## **2.2 How much are transfers to and from the airport to the resort?**

Transfers to and from the Aitutaki airport to Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort are complementary.

## **3. GUEST ROOMS**

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### **3.1 Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort has Beachfront Bungalows, Premium Bungalows, Deluxe Bungalows and the Overwater Bungalows.**

All of the bungalows have magnificent views of the pristine waters of our stunning lagoon and are a very short stroll to the water's edge.

Our website has the latest 360-degree virtual tours as well as photographs, room layout maps, and detailed descriptions to assist guests to identify the best room option for their holiday.

We conduct daily 2pm site inspection tours where guests can view other categories if they would like to consider upgrading, or book for future visits. The rooms viewed on this inspection are subject to room categories being available.

### **3.2 Can you accommodate group bookings?**

We have several rooming options, depending on the size of your group. Please forward your request to our reservations team who will be able to advise and assist with the different options.

### **3.3 Which room types have a kitchen or kitchenette?**

Our Royal Honeymoon Pool Villa Princess Te Arau has a full kitchen. Our deluxe bungalows have microwave ovens and all bungalows have coffee and tea facilities.

### **3.4 Are there fridges in all the rooms?**

All bungalows at Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort have fridges.

### **3.5 Is there a hairdryer in my room?**

Yes, all rooms have a hairdryer them.

### **3.6 Is there an iron and ironing board in my room?**

Yes, all rooms have an iron and ironing board in them.

### **3.7 What are the Voltage and Power Points?**

We have standard NZ / AUS 3 pin plugs –at 230V. Adaptors are available at the Gift Shop.

### **3.8 Are the rooms air-conditioned?**

Yes, all our guest rooms have air conditioning, as well as oscillating fans which operate independently of each other and can be set to guest comfort.

### **3.9 What is there to watch on TV?**

The TV in each guest room shows 6 TV channels including CNN, BBC, Vaka, Discovery, Cook Islands Television, as well as live coverage of many international sport events, particularly those popular in New Zealand and Australia such as rugby, rugby league, netball, soccer, etc.

### **3.10 Do you show major or international sporting events on TV?**

The TV in each guest room shows live coverage of many international sport events, particularly those popular in New Zealand and Australia such as rugby, rugby league, netball, soccer, etc.

### **3.11 What amenities are there in each room category?**

Please refer to our website for a more comprehensive list of what your bungalow includes. If you have any further questions or requests, please contact our Reservations Team who will be happy to assist.

### **3.12 What if I like a firmer / softer mattress or pillow?**

Our beds are specialist hotel beds designed for the rigors of hotel accommodation. Sleeping comfort can be a very personal thing, and if you find you bed or pillows uncomfortable, please advise our Duty Managers who will try to find a suitable alternative. All beds are replaced progressively in line with manufacturer specifications

### **3.13 How do I contact Housekeeping?**

Housekeeping is at your service daily from 9am-5pm for additional pillows, blankets, towels, room supplies and valet laundry. If you DO NOT DISTURB (DND) sign is out, your room will not be serviced. If you would like to request a specific room service time, please contact Front Desk, and our team will do our best to accommodate you. For assistance, please dial 0.

### **3.14 Is there Housekeeping service on Sundays and Public Holidays?**

Full housekeeping service is available on Sunday's and Public holidays.

### **3.15 Does every room have a room safe?**

For the comfort and convenience of our guests, all rooms are provided with a room safe which can be operated by following the simple instructions provided. Guests are advised to keep valuables such as passports, travel documentation, wallets, jewelry, etc. in the room safe.

## **4. CHECK-IN / CHECK-OUT**

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### **4.1 What time is check-in and check-out?**

Please check your ticket carefully with regards to your flight's arrival and departure dates. We are behind the dateline for New Zealand and Australia which can cause confusion when booking accommodation. If you are not sure, please contact our Reservations team who will be happy to clarify.

Check-in is 3pm. Early check-in *may* be possible depending on occupancy levels, and can be confirmed 24hrs prior, with an additional small cost which reflects the need to reschedule the Housekeeping Attendants. We recommend that if guests require earlier access to their rooms, that they book an extra night's accommodation prior (pre-register).

Check-out is 10am as per the international standard for resorts. Late check-out *may* be arranged depending on occupancy levels, and can be confirmed 24hrs prior, with an additional small cost which reflects the need to reschedule the Housekeeping Attendants. We recommend that if guests wish to stay in their room due to late night flights, that they book an extra nights' accommodation.

There is also a Day Room available for guests and an alternative to booking an extra night or where a late check-out or late check-in is not possible. Guests are welcome to use the Resort facilities until they depart for the airport, or until guest rooms are available for check-in.

### **4.2 Can we leave our luggage with reception until we head to the airport?**

Guests are welcome to store luggage at Reception. The Resort takes every care to ensure the safekeeping of your luggage but does not accept any liability for your belongings whilst they are in storage.

### **4.3 Can we stay at the hotel without a room until our late flight?**

Guests are welcome to continue using the facilities and amenities of the resort post-check out of their guest room, and until they depart for the airport.

### **4.4 How will I be able to settle my bill for any additional charges or incidentals?**

On checking out you will be able to settle your bill by Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard) or cash.

### **4.5 What is a "pre-authorisation" of my credit card?**

A pre-authorisation is a temporary hold of a specific amount of the available balance on a credit or debit card that is provided upon booking. The pre-authorisation is not a charge and no funds have been debited from your account. When you give us a credit/debit card, the pre-authorisation guarantees us

that the funds are available to pay for any charges incurred. The amount that we pre-authorise will depend on the amount of nights that you stay, normally we will charge your card \$100 per room per night up to a maximum of \$500.

#### **4.6 When does the pre-authorisation get released from the credit card?**

This varies dependent on your individual credit/debit card. Upon check-out your room-charge and any extras will be charged to your card, this should appear on your credit card statement within 3 working days. However, if you choose to pay the balance with another credit card or choose cash, we will cancel the pre-authorisation and this can take up to 7 working days to clear in your account.

The Resort is **NOT** charging your credit card. A pre-authorisation is a security guarantee for payment only. The pre-authorisation fund is not held by the Resort, the company who provide the credit card system or by the authorising bank. The pre-authorisation fund is held on your card by your own issuing bank. A pre-authorisation can be held on your card for a minimum of 7 to 10 working days. Pre-authorisation should be released by your issuing bank automatically, if not you will need to contact your home issuing bank.

## **5. MARINE SANCTUARY**

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### **5.1 What is the snorkeling like?**

Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort is surrounded by a marine sanctuary called ra'ui in Cook Islands Maori, which has been placed by the elders of the local community. The resort is situated directly on the Lagoon Marine Sanctuary which has abundant tropical fish, as well as occasional turtles, spotted eagle rays and moray eels. Swim with rainbow-colored angel, parrot, butterfly, squirrel, goat, rabbit, unicorn, box and Picasso fish, and beautiful wrasses such as sunset and bird, all in chest-deep, clear warm waters.

The snorkeling in Aitutaki is good and if you've never snorkeled before, you'll be amazed at how easy and rewarding it is. Resort guests receive complementary snorkeling masks, flippers and reef shoes from the Activities Hut, along with invaluable local knowledge.

### **5.2 What can I do to protect the marine life?**

We encourage all our guests to be sun smart, but also to consider the environment at the same time and to carefully read your sunscreen labels and screen your potential purchases for oxybenzone. Instead, try to opt for mineral-based varieties that use zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, which protect you without threatening the environment. Our marine life and corals will thank you for your consideration.

To preserve the living reef in the Marine Sanctuary, walking on the reef is discouraged. The corals are beautiful and delicate living organisms which take decades to grow and one loose or heavy foot can destroy many years of growth.

### **5.3 Is the lagoon safe to swim in?**

Swimming in our magnificent Lagoon Marine Sanctuary is safe for confident swimmers following sensible water safety guidelines.

#### **5.4 Do I need reef shoes?**

We advise our guests to wear reef shoes when swimming in the lagoon as coral can be very sharp and coral cuts are notorious for getting infected. Reef shoes are available from the Activities Hut. Please note that to preserve the living reef in the Marine Sanctuary, walking on the reef is discouraged. The corals are beautiful and delicate living organisms which take decades to grow and one loose or heavy foot can destroy many years of growth.

#### **5.5 When is the best time to see the whales?**

From July to October is the best time to be in the Cook Islands for the whale migration. You don't even need to venture into the water to see them because they swim so close to shore, they can often be seen from the resort.

The whole of the territorial waters of the Cook Islands - some 2 million sq km of ocean - is a designated whale sanctuary. Humpbacks migrate into the South Pacific waters from the Southern Hemisphere, passing by the Cook Islands in a 4,000-mile journey, en route to warmer waters to mate, give birth and to rest.

#### **5.6 What is the beach like?**

Our private island resort has a natural white sand coral beach around the island. However, as elsewhere, we are subject to climate change with increasing storm activity which can cause erosion. The Resort works with the Government Environment Service to manage the natural environment using international best practices.

#### **5.7 What sensible water safety guidelines should I follow?**

Please note that there are no life guards on duty at the Akitua Lagoon Marine Sanctuary or anywhere in Aitutaki. Therefore, we recommend the following water safety guidelines;

- ~ check the water and weather conditions
- ~ know your physical limits and experience
- ~ never be in the water alone
- ~ if in doubt, stay out of the water
- ~ wear a buoyancy-vest or life jacket when kayaking or paddle boarding
- ~ do not touch any marine life or coral
- ~ always wear reef shoes
- ~ if you need to stand up, wave your foot a few centimeters above the bottom to clear the area you will be standing on of any marine life
- ~ use eco-friendly sun screen or wear a T-Shirt or wet suit for sun protection
- ~ do not enter the water after drinking alcohol
- ~ if you need help, keep calm and raise your hand in the air.

The passage/outer reef from the lagoon to the open ocean can be very dangerous for swimming, snorkeling and kayaking/SUP's. Please avoid them unless with an accredited tour guide.

#### **5.8 Am I able to feed the fish in the Marine Sanctuary?**

Join our friendly Activities Team for Fish Feeding at 10.30 am daily. You can even hand-feed the fish down at the water's edge – an unforgettable experience!

We have researched and taken advice from various local and overseas experts regarding Fish Feeding. The consensus was;

- ~ Bread is not toxic to the fish; and
- ~ Only certain species are interested in this food source which tend to be the schooling species;
- ~ The Fish Feeding activity provides an opportunity for people, to be personally engaged with the natural wild life in the Marine Sanctuary which will hopefully assist in generating more consciousness about the importance of human stewardship of the natural world.

Aitutaki Lagoon Private Island Resort played the leadership role in generating, fostering and maintaining community support for the Marine Sanctuary, with visitors and locals alike enjoying personal contact with the fish.

## **6. RESORT DINING**

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### **6.1 What does your complimentary Continental Tropical Breakfast Buffet offer?**

Our complimentary Continental Tropical Breakfast Buffet includes seasonal fresh island fruits, fresh fruit salad, home-stewed fruits, Bircher muesli, homemade yoghurt, fresh-baked breads, pastries, muffins & croissants, ham, cheese, boiled eggs, cereals, toast, spreads, fruit juices, tea & coffee. Other hot breakfast options are available from our a la carte menu for a small charge.

### **6.2 Can you cater to my special dietary requirements?**

Our menus are annotated to reflect special dietary needs such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, dairy and nut free, etc. If you have such dietary requirements, we would appreciate advance notice, so our Chef and/or Restaurant Manager can meet with you upon arrival to understand your requirements.

### **6.3 What are the prices on your menus?**

Our menus are designed to appeal to as broad a range of guests as possible.

Our menus offer casual beach and poolside dining including light and tasty snacks from \$9 to \$14, salads, pizzas, burgers & sandwiches from \$19 to \$26, and a range of main courses. Our daily changing dinner menu features international favorites as well as a wide range of local flavors from \$19 to \$36. Our menus are available online.

### **6.4 What night time entertainment is there?**

Monday and Saturday nights, we have a local cultural performance and on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday nights our resident vocalist and organ player to entertain in the restaurant.

### **6.5 What can I organize for a special occasion?**

We offer a five-course Degustation Candlelit Dinner menu which can be set up at your choice of one of several romantic locations from Kuriri Point to private gazebo. This includes a five-course meal (options for each course) the attentive service of your own personal waiter.

The current menu is available on our website.

### **6.6 Do you offer room service?**

Room service is available. Please see the Food & Beverage menu in your room for in-room dining options, prices and times on our website or in your room.

### **6.7 Can we organize a BBQ or buffet for our group?**

We would be pleased to discuss the various options with you for your group dining. Please contact our Reservations team to discuss your requirements at [reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com](mailto:reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com) or on + 682 31-200 extension 8103.

### **6.8 Can we drink our Duty-Free at the Resort?**

Our Liquor Licensing laws in the Cook Islands are very similar to that of New Zealand and Australia. The resort is licensed as an "On License" for the Restaurant and Bar. If you wish to drink your "Duty Free" alcohol on your room's deck or balcony that is fine, you just can't bring it into any other area of the Resort. Ice is available from the Bounty Restaurant & Bar.

## **7. WEDDINGS**

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### **7.1 Do you organize weddings? How many guests can you cater for?**

Absolutely we do weddings! Bridal couples love our absolute beachfront locations over the lagoon to exchange their vows and wow their guests. We can cater for elopement weddings for two, or groups to 10. We have all-inclusive to stand-alone packages, and our Weddings team is only too happy to discuss your requirements with you.

Our onsite wedding planner has many years of experience in putting bridal couples at ease and ensuring that everything is taken care of on the day, so couples can both really enjoy the day and their guests' company. By having our Wedding Planner take care of all the big things, you can focus your energies on enjoying your guests' company and relaxing. Please contact our Wedding planner on [reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com](mailto:reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com) or phone + 682 31-200 extension 8103.

### **7.2 When is the best time to get married in the Cook Islands?**

With our equable climate, any time is a great time to get married in the Cook Islands.

June to September are the cooler drier months with temperatures around 24°C to 27°C which is a popular time.

However, the warmer, more humid Frangipani season from December to March is also popular, with temperatures ranging from 27°C to 30°C.

As we are tropical islands in the heart of the South Pacific, passing warm tropical showers can be experienced at any time of year, without any specific pattern. Even if there's a passing tropical daytime shower, it's usually still warm and often sunny as well.

### **7.3 Can you help me organize something memorable for a special occasion?**

Whether it be booking our exclusive Royal Honeymoon Pool Villa Princess Te Arau, one of our famous overwater bungalows, arranging a special spa treatment, candlelit dinner, celebration cake, or champagne and flowers on arrival, we can help make your holiday special and romantic. Please contact our Weddings team on [reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com](mailto:reservations@aitutakilagoonresort.com) or phone + 682 31-200 extension 8103.

#### **7.4 What is the Royal Honeymoon Pool Villa Princess Te Arau?**

The Honeymoon Villa is designed for luxurious tropical living and features a 4-post super king bed, flat screen TV, air conditioning, ensuite bathroom with glorious open-air rain shower temple. The private pool is flanked by a spa bath pavilion on one side and a romantic thatched day bed pavilion on the other, a separate 3rd pavilion houses a full kitchen.

## **8. TOWN AND AROUND**

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#### **8.1 What currency is used in the Cook Islands?**

New Zealand Dollars are the currency used in the Cook Islands. Other currencies such as Australian Dollars, US Dollars and Euros can be exchanged to New Zealand Dollars to a value of NZ\$100.00 daily at Reception or at the two banks in Aitutaki.

#### **8.2 Can we hire a scooter or car?**

If you do not have a full motorcycle license from your home country, you will be required to sit a theory and practical test in order to hire a scooter. Scooters and cars are widely available, and cost varies depending on length of hire.

Your safety is paramount, so while many locals ride around without helmets, and the freedom looks enticing, by law visitors to the Island are required to wear helmets. This is a local law, as well as a condition of your scooter hire. Please ask at Reception for assistance and further information on rental vehicle locations.

#### **8.3 Does the island have any mosquitoes or ants?**

As our Resort is a private island, we are better able to control the mosquito population. Further, the resort carries out a regular pest control programs with environmentally friendly spray as per internationally recommended guidelines.

There are no mosquito borne diseases in Aitutaki unless there is an outbreak in which case the Public Health Department will notify all concerned. Otherwise, mosquitoes can be a nuisance but are harmless.

Ants are attracted by water, drinks, food items and flowers left on surfaces, so we advise guests to store drinks and food in the fridges provided in the rooms, as sugar ants are quick to descend on tasty morsels. Insect spray and mosquito coils are provided in guest rooms should it be necessary.

#### **8.4 Where can I buy groceries?**

The resort has a small onsite Gift Shop where guests can purchase snacks such as crisps, nuts, biscuits and chocolates bars, as well as cold drinks such as beer, wine, spirits, soft drinks, water and juices, plus, there are small trade stores and a supermarket in Aitutaki township.

Most facilities are closed on Sundays for religious observance or operate on restricted hours.

The majority of food is imported from New Zealand (by ship or airfreight) and is often more expensive than would be typical in New Zealand. The range is not as large as in New Zealand or Australia but has all the basic varieties. There is however a good variety of local fresh fruit, vegetables, fish and eggs.

### **8.5 When is the best time to visit?**

With our equable climate, any time is a great time to visit the Cook Islands.

### **8.6 What are the seasons?**

Aitutaki enjoys an equable climate year-round, with relatively minor fluctuations in temperature and climatic conditions.

June to September are the cooler months, whilst December through to March is the warmer season. As Aitutaki is a tropical island in the heart of the South Pacific, passing warm tropical showers can be experienced at any time, without any specific pattern.

The term 'rainy season' is a myth when it comes to the Cook Islands, as there is no 'rainy season' here. The warmer months tend to be slightly wetter (statistically speaking anyway), and any rain is often conveniently at night!

The drier months from May/June to August/September range in maximum temperature from almost 25°C to 27°C.

The warmer, more humid season from December to March (our Frangipani Season) enjoys a maximum temperature range of between 27 to 29 degrees Celsius. So even if there's a passing tropical shower, it's usually still warm and often sunny as well. It pays to remember that some of the most gorgeous blue-sky shots that you see in brochures were actually taken in January one of the absolutely best months to visit, often picture-perfect!

### **8.7 Walking, hiking & biking**

Guests are welcome to explore Aitutaki by many means and most visitors choose to use the resort's complementary bicycles. Please ask at reception for further information and a free road map of Aitutaki which outlines the different attractions. We encourage all our guests to take plenty of water, sun screen and insect repellent when exploring Aitutaki.

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## **9. FERRY SERVICE**

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**9.1** The resort's private ferry service operates between 7.00am to 11.00pm daily. Please see reception for your boat ride and when returning to the resort from the main island to use the hot line telephone service located at the landing area in the visitor's hut. Dial "0".

## ***10. FISHING PERMITS***

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10.1 The regulations state that all anglers must purchase a fishing permit before they start fishing. Permits are available for purchase at the Boat Shed. Permit fees start at NZ\$10.00 per day.

## ***11. CHURCH SERVICES***

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11.1 Visitors are most welcomed at Sunday services and are expected to wear modest attire. Please consider making a small contribution when the plate is passed around. For further information please see the team at Reception.

## ***12. DIVING***

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12.1 Aitutaki's clear, warm waters offer excellent visibility and diversity of marine life making it an excellent destination for diving. If you would like to explore our marine environment, please see the team at Reception.