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# Tahiti Infos

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## Rendezvous with the sacred for Hōkūle'a, the star of happiness

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**T**ahiti, June 19, 2025 - After a 20-day journey from Hawaii, the traditional double-handed canoe Hōkūle'a, Star of Happiness in the Hawaiian language, will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary this Monday, June 23, by reconnecting with the ancestral traditions of Polynesia at the Marae of Taputapuātea. Raiatea, a sacred island among all, will therefore be the cradle of this reunion between tradition, culture, and population at the end of a direct voyage

from Hawaii without passing through Tahiti.

The most symbolic and meaningful place, it is at the Marae of Taputapuātea that Hōkūle'a and her faithful companion since 2012, Hikianalia, should dock this Monday, June 23, if the ocean is kind to them. On board, the famous 'ōfa'i of Taputapuātea are back.

The day will begin at the site of the great marae of Opoa, where the public is expected from 8 a.m. for the set-up. From 9 a.m., the opening rituals of the Te Ava Mo'a pass will take place, and the two Hawaiian canoes, Hōkūle'a and Hikianalia, accompanied by the canoe Fa'afaite, will finally sail into the lagoon to the sound of conch shells.

At 10 a.m., the traditional crew welcoming ceremonies will begin on Taura'a-tapu beach, which separates the Hauviri and 'Oputeina marae. A highly symbolic place whose name is said to mean "place of arrival of human sacrifices offered to 'Oro." It is here that the chiefdoms came to consult during inter-island gatherings, but also to collect the foundation stones intended to build new marae dedicated to the worship of the god 'Oro on other islands.

'Ōrero, Polynesian and Hawaiian songs and dances, followed by the coronation of the crews, will be the highlights of this first part of the ceremonies.

Fa'atau-Aroha, the second part, will begin at 11 a.m. with the procession to the tahua-marae Taputapuātea. This procession will be punctuated by speeches, offerings, and 'ōrero, still under the leadership of the officiating high priest André Maramatoa. This will also be an opportunity for the Hawaii-Taiwan delegation to perform some sacred dances.

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From 1 p.m., the afternoon will be devoted to the exchange of learning and celebration between the high school delegation from Hawaii and the young people of the island, who will sing and dance in turn. To close this day, the public will be able to visit the two Hawaiian canoes Hōkūle'a and Hikianalia on the Fare-Ofe site from 3 p.m. for one hour.

### **“A ceremony to exchange and recharge”**

#### **A word from André Maramatōa, officiating high priest**

This Opoa native owes his cultural vocation to his grandfather, who also officiated at the marae. A vocation that has continued to strengthen over the years with his encounters, particularly in New Zealand. On Monday, it is he, André Maramatōa, who will officiate as Elder and high priest. A heavy task that does not frighten him.

#### **How do you welcome the arrival of Hōkūle'a?**

*"It is a whole and it is a symbol. The symbol that the elders who left were able to accomplish their task by traveling the ocean to find new lands. A symbol of success."*

#### **What is the significance of choosing Taputapuātea for this ceremony?**

*"By coming here, they come to recharge their batteries, to find the mana to navigate. But they also come to exchange with us and rediscover the sacred land. The ancient canoes came here to find the mana."*

#### **What will be the most significant moments of this Monday?**

*"The pass will be the most important. Crossing the pass and entering the lagoon will be very powerful. Then the passage from sea to land will also be very important. And the stones are receptacles for mana. They are the cornerstones of the marae. They are very important for them and for us."*



#### **Hōkūle'a and the Moananuiākea**

In the 1970s, the enigma of Polynesian migrations across the Pacific Ocean remained unsolved. In 1976, Hōkūle'a became a pioneer. By sailing from Hawaii to Tahiti without instruments, she revived and recognized Polynesian navigation guided by star paths, the rua, as a science in its own right. Her voyages showed that the conquest of the Ocean from Asia was achieved through navigational knowledge and not by drifting with the currents as was then thought.

Hōkūle'a is a double-decked canoe of the "Tipaerua" type built on the basis of the ancestral model. It requires a crew of about twenty men. Its two hollowed-out hulls connected by a platform support a hut for shelter. The port side is that of the women and children. This hull was the first to be dug. Starboard is called O'tāne and welcomed the men.

For Hōkūle'a, Raiatea will be only the first Polynesian stop on this 15th <sup>expedition</sup>. A 47-month journey, which began two years ago, called "Moananuiākea" (Pacific Ocean) in which the 'ōfa'i, stones from Taputapuātea, have embarked and which celebrate the oceans and the Earth. 'ōfa'i who will return to their homeland on this occasion while others will take their place in the canoes to continue the journey.

After Raiatea where they should stay for a few days, the canoes will stay in French Polynesia for about four weeks. They will be in Papeete, Mataiea, Moorea and Tautira. After French Polynesia, the canoes plan to visit the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Aotearoa (New Zealand), the islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, Palau, and finally the main coastal countries of Asia, Central America and South America, before returning to Polynesia via Rapa Nui and Tahiti in 2028.

Written by Sylvain Lefevre on Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 6:44 p.m. | Read 1932 times



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