

THE 'HOT SPOTS' ON EASTER ISLAND



One of the most isolated places on the Earth is without doubt Easter Island. It is located over 2,000 miles from the nearest population center. Even though it is very small, Easter Island, or Rapa Nui as the locals call it, is favored by tourists. Visitors may access it by plane from either Tahiti, or Santiago de Chile. Most of them come here to see the Moai, the giant stone monoliths that are mainly found on the coastline. Since the island is quite small, it is easy to find one's way around.

Jeeps are available for hire anywhere, and cycling-fans may also rent bikes. For the more adventurous tourists, horses are available, too. There are many hotels and guest houses around the island.

Once on the spot, there are several must-see places. One of the most interesting ones is Rano Raraku, an extinct volcano where most of the moai statues were quarried. Its nickname 'the nursery' is connected to the fact that there are over a hundred statues in various states of construction. The Orongo Ceremonial Village is best known for its petroglyphs, or rock carvings that relate to the - locally famous - Cult of the Birdman. Nearby, there also lies the Ahu Akivi. The seven statues found here are very exceptional since they are the only ones facing the sea.

Another fascinating aspect of Easter Island is the series of cave systems. Apart from the 'official' caves, there are dozens of 'unofficial' ones to explore. However, tourists are asked to keep in mind that some of them are very deep and dangerous. Tourists who like to combine their island trips with relaxation will have a great opportunity to enjoy lazy afternoons by the sea. There are not many white-sand beaches on the island; the one any local would recommend is Anakena, but there are several other beaches around the island. Tourists only need to find the ideal spot themselves . . . it is, after all, not that complicated on Rapa Nui.

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