



## ANATAKITAKI (KOPEKA BIRD) CAVE TOUR

Atiu

Atiu, traditionally known as Enuamanu (land of birds), is the third largest island in the Cook Islands. Its spectacular ecosystem boasts fringed coastlines with coral cliffs, secluded beach coves, dense tropical rainforests and hidden caves.

Atiu is a Wildlife Sanctuary for many endemic and threatened bird species, many of which can be found on the uninhabited Takutea Island, located 20 kilometres north-west of Atiu. Atiu is home to the Kopeka Bird or Atiu Swiftlet, endemic to Atiu. The Kopeka Bird which measures 10 centimetres and weighs 7 grams, nests deep within the caverns. When outside the caves during the day, they fly continuously (without landing) and feed on tiny flying insects such as mosquitos before returning to their nests.

The Anatakitaki Cave Tour takes you to one of the habitats of the Kopeka Bird. While in the pitch darkness of the cave, the Kopeka cannot see so it navigates its way around using a series of echolocating clicks, the same way as bats do.

With your local guide Ben Isaia, your tour begins with a 30-minute trek through the rainforest and over rugged terrain of makatea (raised coral limestone). Along the way, Ben will take time to explain the various plants, trees and their many uses. You will also learn about the coral limestone formations and see fossilised shells embedded in them, some of which date back 120,000 years.

When you come to the entrance of the cave, you will be required to climb down a 3 meter ladder to the caves first level. As you walk and climb through a series of interesting chambers, Ben will share with you the history surrounding them, including that of his family and ancestors. You will fascinate in the majestic stalagmites and stalactites on display and also learn about how they came to be.

Continuing on further into the cave and as you begin to lose the natural light, be captivated by the crystalline rock walls and boulders within until you begin to hear the Kopeka birds clicking away in the darkness. If you are lucky, you may see the Kopeka birds nesting with their babies high in small pockets of the stalactites and walls of the cave. At a certain point, you will be asked to turn your lights and headlamps off and listen as the birds use their clicks to fly around. They are able to fly so close to objects (including cave walkers) without actually flying into them.

From here you will turn around and make your way back to the light. Outside the cave is the entrance way that leads down (about 10 meters) into a fresh artesian water pool. The climb down is slightly narrow and tight but there is a rope fixed to the wall that will help and assist you with getting down. Candles will be lit and placed around the cave giving a soft and peaceful ambience, setting a relaxing mood.

What better way to complete your experience. Following your swim you begin the trek back to the starting point.



## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

### Knowledgeable Guide

Ben Isaia, your tour guide has extensive knowledge of the geography and history of Atiu island—this is evident in the way he presents his commentary throughout the tour. He will share many stories passed down from his ancestors with you, as well as facts about the formation of the makatea, stalactites and stalagmites, and so forth that you will come to see throughout the tour.

### Anatakitaki Cave Entrance

The 3-meter climb down a ladder has you entering into the mouth of Anatakitaki Cave. This reveals a surreal underground world of uniquely formed chambers and passages.

### Kopeka (Atiu Swiftlet)—A fascinating bird

The Kopeka Bird or Atiu Swiftlet an endangered bird species is endemic to Atiu. The Kopeka measures 10 centimetres and weighs 7 grams. They nest deep within the caverns and use echolocating clicks to navigate through the darkness. When outside the caves during the day, they fly continuously (without landing) and feed on tiny flying insects before returning to their nests.

### Water cavern

After seeing the Kopeka Bird, those who wish to, can enjoy a cool and refreshing swim in an underground swimming hole. Climbing down into the water cavern can be slightly challenging but is worth it, and a great way to end the cave tour.



## THE ISLAND OF ATIU



## TOUR DETAILS

DAYS OF OPERATION	TOUR DURATION	VEHICLE INFORMATION	SEATING ARRANGEMENTS	ACCESS FOR DISABLE
TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS & SATURDAYS. OTHER DAYS ON REQUEST BASIS	PICK UP FROM ACCOMMODATION 2:30PM  APPROX. 3.5-4 HOURS	TRANSFERS FROM YOUR ACCOMMODATION TO THE START OF THE TREK IS BY 4X4 OPEN DECK TRUCK	1 VEHICLE WITH SEATS- 4 PAX IN CAB AND 6-8 PAX ON THE OPEN BACK DECK	NOT POSSIBLE FOR WHEELCHAIR BOUND PERSONS OR THOSE WITH WALKING DIFFICULTIES.
INCLUSIONS	TOILET STOPS	ACTIVITY LEVEL	WHAT TO BRING/WEAR	PAX REQUIREMENT
TRANSFERS & GUIDED TOUR. WALKING STICKS/POLES PROVIDED - PLEASE ENSURE YOU BRING BOTTLED WATER	NOT AVAILABLE DURING THIS TOUR	ONLY SUITABLE FOR THOSE WITH REASONABLE FITNESS AND AGILITY. INVOLVES SOME CLIMBING, WALKING OVER UNEVEN AND RUGGED TERRAIN. NOT SUITABLE FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT WALK LONG DISTANCES, ELDERLY PERSONS, OR THOSE WITH WALKING DIFFICULTIES AND BAD KNEES.	- INSECT REPELLENT - TOWEL/CHANGE OF CLOTHES - GOOD WALKING OR REEF SHOES - CAMERA - BOTTLED WATER	MINIMUM PAX- 2 MAXIMUM PAX - 12