

Chile shares a longitude with what Canadian province? Answer below.

TRAVEL TRENDS

Gambling losing its appeal in Vegas

Gambling, once the mainstay of Las Vegas, is slowly taking a back seat to other entertainment in Sin City.

The latest survey of Las Vegas visitors found that fewer people go to the city to gamble and that first-time visitors are more likely to travel there for a wedding or a convention or to visit friends and family.

The number of visitors increased to 41 million in 2014, up from 39.7 million in 2013, according to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau. But as hotel occupancy rates and hotel tax revenue rose, gaming revenue for Clark County fell from \$9.7 billion in 2013 to \$9.5 billion in 2014, according to the agency.

Gaming experts have long noted a trend of Las Vegas visitors cutting back on gambling to spend more time and money attending comedy performances, magic shows and musical acts.

The latest survey of 300 visitors conducted for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Bureau shows that the percentage of visitors who said gambling was the primary purpose for their trip to Las Vegas dropped from 15 percent in 2013 to 12 percent last year.

The percentage of first-time visitors to Las Vegas has increased from 15 percent in 2013 to 19 percent in 2014, according to the survey. Only 4 percent of first-time visitors said their primary reason for visiting Las Vegas was to gamble, compared with 14 percent for repeat visitors.

Instead, a higher percentage of first-time visitors said they took a trip to Las Vegas last year to vacation, attend a convention or a wedding or to visit friends and relatives, according to the survey.

—Hugo Martin
Los Angeles Times

WEB BUZZ

HotelsByDay books rooms available during day

Did someone say “day date”? With this app you can grab a hotel stay during the middle of the day for lower rates.

Name: HotelsByDay
Available: iPhone, iPad and iPod touch. Requires iOS 7 or later. Also available for Android on Google Play.

Cost: Free
What it does: The app reveals a variety of options for the traveler when it comes to hotel stays. Discover hotels that will let you book a room for the day (10 a.m.-4 p.m.) instead of overnight. Available in 11 cities, including Los Angeles; San Francisco; Washington D.C.; New York City; Newark, New Jersey; Philadelphia; Atlanta; Chicago; Palm Springs; Miami; and Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

—Jen Leo
Los Angeles Times

GEOQUIZ ANSWER

Quebec. The longitude 70 degrees west cuts through both locations. Canada’s Nunavut territory also shares this longitude.

—Chicago Tribune

DESTINATIONS

The Gazette

Sunday, April 26, 2015—Section C

Your contact: Destinations Editor Tim Seeman, 608-755-8248, tseeman@gazetteextra.com

Nicaraguan city of Granada embraces its 19th-century aesthetic



Tahitian blues

There’s no need to be unhappy when soaking in the South Pacific | By Anne Z. Cooke/Tribune News Service

TIKEHAU, The Tuamotu Islands—There’s nothing quite so blue—vibrantly, rivetingly, blindingly blue—as the blue of the lagoon on Tikehau, an hour’s flight from Tahiti, in French Polynesia. Unless you’re suspended above it, looking down.

I’m deliciously alone this morning, lying on the deck of my overwater bungalow at the Tikehau Pearl Resort, peering down through water as clear as glass and busier than any aquarium. When I climb down into the lagoon to float face down, a crowd of iridescent fish—silver striped, day-glow blue, yellow and a velvety black—crowd around me, bumping my hands and pecking at my face mask’s shiny rims.

The water is shallow here, close to the Pearl’s thatched main lodge. A breezy Polynesian-style retreat, it shelters beneath coconut palms on a sandy motu (islet) on this coral atoll in the Tuamotu Archipelago. The boardwalk starts here and curves away over the lagoon toward the bungalows, the deck and pilings offering a refuge for the marine community below: brown corals, blue-lipped oysters, lumbering sea cucumbers, foot-long juvenile sharks and the fish.

From my perch on the deck, it’s peaceful watching the frigate birds overhead and listening to the roar of the waves crashing on the outer reef, a continuous low hum. Since Tikehau’s only “pass” through the reef is a

narrow gap too perilous for anything larger than a fishing boat, it’s likely that Tikehau, where time seems to have stopped, will remain secluded and unspoiled. And how different it is from Tahiti and Bora Bora, in the neighboring Society Islands where my vacation began.

“Choices,” said Marie Garrigou, a spokesman for the Pearl Beach Resort hotels, when we met for a glass of French wine on the terrace of the Manava Hotel, in Papeete, Tahiti’s capital. “Choices is what visitors have here on Tahiti, or Bora Bora, or Tikehau. There are a dozen ways to spend a vacation, from introducing your kids to Polynesian culture to mountain biking or kayaking. But mention Bora Bora and most people think honeymoon. We’d like to change that.”

After 10 days in French Polynesia, I knew what she meant. I didn’t know much about Tikehau when I added it to my itinerary, figuring that an atoll would be a change from two high islands. But I was lucky. Not only was it close to Tahiti—convenient for flying in and out from Papeete’s airport—but Tikehau is as different from Tahiti and Bora Bora as the two are from each other.

The magic on Tikehau was the empty motus, the silence, hot sunny days and the chance to be part of a group of six—not 60—exploring Bird Island, a Galapagos-like sanctuary



Tribune News Service photos

Top: Bora Bora’s Mount Orohena frames the scene at the Bora Bora Pearl Beach Resort. Above: A snorkeler surfaces near Bora Bora’s famous coral gardens.

Turn to **TAHITI** on Page 2C

First-time scalloping trip eventually yields results

By Samantha Feuss
Tribune News Service

Have you ever gone scalloping? Personally, I had not—until a recent trip to Gulf County, Florida. I wasn’t even sure what the act of “scallop” was. Yes, getting scallops, surely, but how? And what did that entail? It turns out, it’s both fairly simple and

not as easy as you would expect.

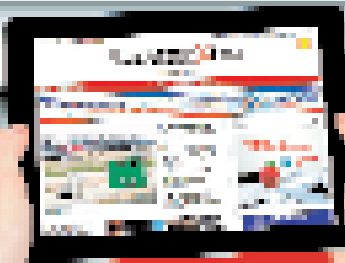
One basically needs to get to a body of water that contains these mollusks, which are both mild in flavor and extremely healthy for you. You can charter a boat, get on a kayak or find a company that does scalloping tours. If you head out without a guide or boat captain, you will need a Florida salt-water fishing license, a mesh bag and a dive flag.

Get your license ahead of time online or head to the experts at Bluewater Outriggers. They can get you a license, supplies, tell you the local hot spots and supply tips on how to find scallops.

We first tried our hand on the Break-a-Way Charters boats, owned and operated by the father and son team of Capt. Bobby and Capt. Wade

Turn to **SCALLOPS** on Page 3B

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Tahiti/Dozens of islands supply variety of experiences

Continued from 1C

where two dozen resident and migratory sea birds eat, fly and build nests, completely unafraid of the visitors who pause to snap selfies with newly hatched chicks.

In contrast, Tahiti and Bora Bora's steep, volcanic peaks and encircling lagoons beckoned with hiking, rock climbing, first-rate snorkeling, and those famous sunsets over the South Seas, the ones that paint the sky when the clouds gather over the peaks. And for explorers yearning for variety, the rest of French Polynesia was there, 115 more islands in five archipelagoes scattered over 2,123 square miles of Pacific Ocean.

The big-city thrill of the trip was my day in Papeete, Tahiti's administrative capital, a city alive with energy, shops and offices, a busy harbor filled with ships, narrow streets clogged with taxis and delivery trucks, and sidewalks crowded with sightseers, snack joints and fancy store windows displaying everything from women's dresses to office equipment.

I contemplated mountain biking on the lower slopes of 7,352-foot Mount Orohena, highest mountain on Tahiti, and in the Society Islands, but after a closer inspection changed my mind. Instead, I joined a half-day cultural and waterfall truck tour guided by Teiva (he uses just one name), a 12th-generation Tahitian who arrived in festival gear (boar's tusk necklace, green pareo, pony tail and a huge smile).



Tribune News Service

Not many views on Earth can top a sunset over the South Pacific Ocean.

Teiva's family once owned the valley that was now parkland. But having played there as a child, he knew every creek and gully, bush and flower, he told us. Leaving sea level and a lush, flowery forest behind, we drove uphill on a narrow winding road, heading for the top of the valley. Here we stopped to identify an entirely different set of plants, those typically found above 5,000 feet. Then suddenly the forest parted to reveal rows of waterfalls pouring down each narrow gully.

On Bora Bora, the celebrity island, it was all about the South Seas dream. And with a blue lagoon to dive in and two

dozen deluxe resorts, regional hotels and guest houses, the possibilities seemed almost endless. No matter where you stayed, you could find a shady spot on a beach, hire a guide to snorkel with the sharks or take a jeep trip up the mountain.

My overwater bungalow, at the deluxe Bora Bora Pearl Beach Resort, on Tevairoa Motu near the island's only pass (it was enlarged years ago to admit cruise ships) made bamboo and thatch feel as elegant as a palace. The extra-long bathtub invited slow, pampering soaks, and there was a pool, as well. Much larger than its sister resort on

Tikehau, the Bora Bora Pearl occupied acres of beach and a palm grove. But as luxe as it was, low-key, traditional Polynesian hospitality was the modus operandi.

The employees, mostly Tahitians, welcomed the guests with attention and respect, as if we were family. And for those who wanted to experience a bit more, one-hour cultural activities (crafts, dance and music) were offered daily at 10:30 a.m., according to General Manager Sylvain Delanchy, who stopped at the lounge at sunset, to greet guests gathering to chat.

Born in France, Delanchy

IF YOU GO

Island tips: Because Tahiti is a former French colony (an "over-seas collectivity,") many visitors are French. Because they observe similar holidays, Tahiti's busiest months are over Christmas and summer school holidays. For better room rates and availability, consider visiting in the spring and fall.

Tahiti has rainy and dry seasons, with similar temperatures year round. The rainy season, from December through April, is hotter and more humid, with short storms and cloud cover. The dry season, May to October, is sunnier and slightly cooler.

Getting there: Air Tahiti Nui, Air France, American Airlines and Delta fly nonstop from Los Angeles to Papeete, on Tahiti. Travelers coming from Boston, Dallas, Minneapolis or other U.S. cities will be routed through Los Angeles.

Staying there: For rates, dates and reservations at the Manava Hotel on Papeete and the Pearl Beach Resorts on Tikehau, Moorea, Bora Bora and Huahine, go to sprmhotels.pf.

took the job on Bora Bora "to give Polynesia a try," and fell in love with the lifestyle. "Look at the flower wreaths that the waitresses wear around their hair," he said, as the sun dropped below the yardarm. "They make them fresh every day using ordinary flowers, the ones growing out there on the bushes. I've never seen people so artistic, who make such beautiful things out of the most ordinary objects. What matters here is the culture," he added. "Without it, it's just another beach."

Just because you can fill every minute with sports, cuisine and culture, doesn't mean that a honeymoon, or even a wedding, wouldn't be a dream come true. It would. If you're planning to get hitched, any deluxe hotel on Bora Bora will make it happen. Assistants can arrange the flowers, organize a reception, order a wedding cake

decorated with flowers and whales and can promise enough beds to accommodate all your relatives as well as your entire high school graduating class.

If you want a smaller wedding, choose Tikehau and book the entire Pearl Beach Resort, all 19 overwater bungalows, plus the restaurant. Fly your friends over from Papeete and treat them to snorkeling, scuba diving, picnicking, a trip to Bird Island and romantic evenings watching the stars come out.

And there's another plus. Because Tikehau is self-sufficient (the resort's "green" technology includes a desalination plant, solar panels and refuse disposal tanks periodically shipped to treatment plants on Tahiti) your wedding will leave no footprints. But it will surely be the year's most memorable.

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Tribune News Service

Locals, not tourists, do most of the shopping at the open-air market in Granada, Nicaragua.

A colonial atmosphere in Nicaragua

By Josh Noel
Chicago Tribune

GRANADA, NICARAGUA
I happened to arrive in Nicaragua's oldest city on Sept. 14, a day before of the anniversary of Central American independence. Upon checking into my hotel, La Gran Francia, a two-story building dating back nearly 500 years, the receptionist warned me that the next morning might get a bit festive. If I heard celebrating, he said, don't be alarmed. It's just the holiday in action, he said.

It seemed an odd warning—but only until the next morning arrived. Curtains drawn tight and just a glint of golden light seeping through, I awoke to the sharp crack of drums. And then the roar of a crowd. And the bleating of horns and heaving of tubas. Had I slept strangely late and missed all the fun?

I fumbled for a clock and found that, nope, it was 7 a.m.—prime time, apparently, for celebrating Central American independence in colonial Nicaragua. I wiped the sleep

IF YOU GO

Granada is about 30 miles southeast of Managua and can be reached as cheaply as about \$1 by bus or about \$40 in a taxi. More information: visit nicaragua.us

from my eyes, found some coffee and walked down the block to join the fun in Granada's historic square. The whole town seemed to be there: boys in polo shirts, men already selling shaved ice from metal carts, teenage girls in matching green-and-white cheerleading outfits and women wearing long dresses and holding umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun. The boys with the drums that had woken me sat dressed in red-and-white uniforms at the edge of the town's handsome, historic cathedral, painted mustard yellow and receiving a steady flow of visitors. By noon, the party was finished. But Granada's historic charms didn't end with the celebration; they endured

around the clock. One of the oldest European-settled cities in the Americas, Granada was founded by Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba (who named the town for his home in Spain) on the shores of Lake Nicaragua in 1524. The city grew into a center of trade and opulence as a conservative ruling class came to dominate the city. The city clings tightly to those roots. Though relatively small, with a population of about 120,000, Granada remains among the most essential and vibrant examples of Central American history. The chains peppering the capital, Managua—TGI Friday's, the local Tip Top fast food chicken restaurant—are not here, thankfully. Instead, Granada boasts generations-old buildings of stucco and cement painted vivid rainbow hues: sherbet orange, lime green, deep grape and beyond. Without a modern construction boom to its name, much of Granada dates to the 1800s, including, for instance, both the hotels where I

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