



Aerial View Of Four Seasons Bora Bora ©Four Seasons Resorts

POISSON CRU AT FARÉ HOA BEACH BAR & GRILL, FOUR SEASONS RESORT BORA BORA

By Debra Dunning Brouillette

Naturally-distanced is the way the Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora describes itself, located on a private islet, offering plenty of space and privacy for its guests.

Everyone who has experienced this dreamy destination in French Polynesia knows that they can access the Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora, with its 108 overwater bungalow suites and seven beachfront villa estates, only by boat or helicopter.

My husband and I stayed in a pleasant overwater bungalow for one night only, whisked there by private launch from the main island. Our 10-day Tahiti-Tuamotus cruise aboard Windstar's Wind Spirit had a planned overnight stay in Bora Bora, which gave us the opportunity to bask in its beauty.

We chose to dine at the toes-in-the-sand Faré Hoa Beach Bar & Grill for our evening meal. The Seafood Selection For Two, featuring Marquesas Islands Spiny Lobster, Moorea Shrimp, Yellow Fin Tuna, and Mahi-mahi, was truly a feast, impeccably prepared and presented.

Faré Hoa Beach Bar & Grill is open for lunch, too. After a morning swim in the lagoon, we returned for a midday meal before returning to the main island to reboard the Windstar ship for the remainder of our cruise.

I already knew what I wanted to order— *poisson cru*—which I had first tasted on my first trip to French Polynesia seven years earlier.

If you speak French, you may already know that *poisson cru* translates as “raw fish.” *Poisson cru*, considered to be the national dish of Tahiti and all



Views Of Fare Hoa Beach Bar & Grill ©Four Seasons Resorts



of French Polynesia, is oh, so much more than these two words reveal.

Chunks of fresh raw tuna are combined with freshly squeezed lime juice, raw vegetables (cucumber, carrot, tomato and onion, sliced into bite-sized pieces), then soaked in coconut milk. It sounds so simple, and it is, but it is also so delicious! Not only is it tasty, but it rocks with culinary presentation, too, as it is often served in half a coconut shell.

Meet the Executive Chef

Eric Desbordes, who joined Four Seasons Bora Bora as executive chef in April 2019, is a native of France who spent several years at the Four Seasons Hotel George V in Paris, learning from master chefs there before going on to hold chef positions at other highly-respected hotels in Paris. Then, in 2014, he was introduced to island life in the Caribbean, serving as executive chef for Eden Rock Hotel in St. Barths. He later became a private chef for luxury villas there before returning to France to serve as executive chef of La Bastide de Gordes in Provence, his last position before Bora Bora beckoned.

Chef Desbordes, you were in Bora Bora for about a year before the COVID-19 pandemic changed travel worldwide. What has been the biggest challenge for you and the staff during this time?

Chefs are all part artist, and that creative element in us needs to be challenged constantly. When the



destination closed down, we obviously lost a big part of what keeps us busy and creative. Of course, we shifted to taking care of our families and each other, which was the priority at that point anyway.

Did the resort stay open to local travelers during this time?

The government here mandated that hotels close, as the airlift was also stopped. We, like many others, shifted to a virtual workplace, and continued to grow, train, and learn from home.

How have you acclimated to living in French Polynesia?

I absolutely love it here. Sure, it's no big city with every amenity, but waking up here every day is truly magical. Lovely, talented people, and the most amazing setting I can imagine.

How did you and your staff prepare for the reopening on July 15, 2020?

Four Seasons introduced the Lead With Care program, which is really guiding our company in the new reality. It's a comprehensive program led by the world's top experts,

ensuring the safest and most enjoyable experience for our guests and staff.

Photos (from top): Seafood Feast At Fare Hoa; Executive Chef Eric Desbordes ©Four Seasons Resorts; Poisson Cru

Were you familiar with *poisson cru* before you came to Bora Bora? To me, *poisson cru* is the perfect, light lunch. I can't imagine improving on a good thing.

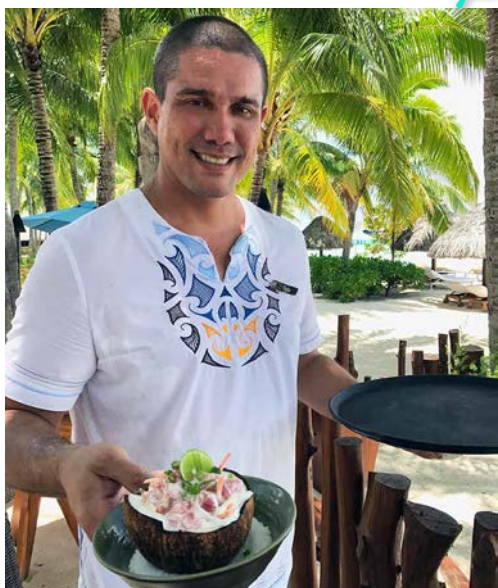
I was, and absolutely loved it. It's French Polynesia's answer to ceviche, poke, etc. And to me, it's the cleanest, freshest raw fish dish out there.

If not this, have you put your own touches on other items on the menu?

I have absolutely worked with my team to refine and create menus across the Resort. My experiences and influences in life guide much of what I love to cook, and I want that of my cooks to also be incorporated into our menus, as well.

What do you hope diners take away from their dining experiences while a guest at Four Seasons Resort Bora Bora, both at Faré Hoa and the resorts other restaurants?

I want our guests to enjoy each minute of their meal – including the drinks, food, atmosphere, and service. If they walk away at the end of the meal with smiles, holding hands, kissing, then we have done something right. We want every meal here to be a memory they will savor long beyond their last bite.



Poisson Cru recipe

from Executive Chef Eric Desbordes

Ingredients

- 1.75 pounds red tuna
- ½ cucumber
- 1 carrot
- 1 tomato
- 1 red onion
- 4 limes
- 1 cup coconut milk
- Salt & black pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Dice the fish into ½-inch cubes and place it in a large bowl. Refrigerate.
2. Squeeze the limes into a glass. Set aside.
3. Cut the vegetables into thin slices. For the cucumber, remove seeds but keep the skin for color.
4. In the bowl, add all vegetables to the tuna and mix. Add some lime juice with salt & pepper to taste. Mix again.
5. Five minutes before serving, add coconut milk.
6. Present on a bed of lettuce, on individual plates, or best in a half coconut shell.

Serve chilled with half a lime on top.

Photos (from left): Serving Poisson Cru; Poisson Cru