



## HMS Bounty's journey

Voyage duration: Voyage lasted from 1787 to 1790. The mutiny occurred April 28, 1789 near the Tongan Islands. HMS *Bounty* was destroyed on the Pitcairn islands, January 1790.

Destinations prior to mutiny: Spithead (United Kingdom) – Tenerife (Canary Islands) – Cape Horn (South America) – Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) – False Bay (South Africa) – Adventure Bay (Tasmania) – Tahiti/Tofoa. This journey took around ten months.

Bligh's launch destinations (after mutiny): Tahiti – Fiji Islands – Great Barrier Reef (Australia) – Restoration Island – Coupang Harbour (Timor) – Batavia (Jakarta) – Portsmouth, United Kingdom via various sailing ships.

HMS *Bounty* is best known as a ship that was mutinied near Tonga. Captained by William Bligh, HMS *Bounty* and has been the subject of three films and several books. She had a crew of 43 men and was commissioned to collect breadfruit plants from Tahiti. The British Government hoped to establish breadfruit as a cheap food source for plantation slaves in the West Indies (although the slaves as food rejected the breadfruit).

In 1787, the British Government purchased the merchant ship *Bethia* for £1,950 (at the insistence of Joseph Banks). It was refitted over three months to Royal Navy standards, becoming HMS *Bounty*. The overhaul included shortening the masts and creating more room below decks to carry the breadfruit.

HMS *Bounty* set sail from Spithead, England on 23 December 1787. It was forced to wait almost one month for suitable conditions to sail around Cape Horn. Instead, HMS *Bounty* was forced to sail back to the Cape of Good Hope and onwards to Adventure Bay, Tasmania (landing there on 19 August 1788). HMS *Bounty* continued south of New Zealand, naming a small group of nearby islands the Bounty Islands before arriving in Tahiti on 26 October 1788. While in Tahiti, breadfruit was collected and the crew enjoyed the lifestyle and mixed well with the Tahitian people.

They left Tahiti on April 4 1789, with over 1 000 breadfruit plants on board. When they reached the island of Tofua (near the Tongan islands) on April 28, 1789 mutiny broke out. Sailing as the first mate was Fletcher Christian, who led the revolt and forced Bligh and eighteen men (who remained loyal to Bligh) into the ship's launch (an open boat just over seven metres long). Using a map, compass, sextant, quadrant and navigational tables, Bligh showed incredible navigational skill in steering the small boat over 5 800km to Batavia, Jakarta. From here, he found his way back to England via various merchant ships.

Christian and his supporters returned to Tahiti on HMS *Bounty* where they collected six Tahitian men and twelve Tahitian women. They set sail, looking for a new isolated island home, when they found Pitcairn Island on January 15, 1790. HMS *Bounty* was stripped and burnt shortly after arriving on Pitcairn, to avoid any passing vessels from sighting them. While the Tahitians and crewmembers settled and had families, frictions developed, resulting in murder within the group. The remaining survivors (one HMS *Bounty* crewmember, 10 Tahitian women and 23 children) were 'discovered' by passing ships in 1808, then again in 1814. The British were so impressed by their simple lifestyle that it was decided not to report the remaining HMS *Bounty* crew member for mutiny and trade was established between Pitcairn Island and passing ships.

