



Grand Princess Hawaii for New Years

12/27/19 - 1/12/20

Stevie Jay
TRAVEL

Your Travel Agent Adds:

Welcome aboard! We appreciate your joining us on this voyage to the South Seas while crossing over into a new year! - Stevie Jay & Janet

Presented By:



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Friday, Dec 27, 2019

San Francisco, California

5:30p- 11a Friday, December 27, 2019

Introduction

San Francisco, California, is a world-class destination, a favorite of international travelers and domestic tourists alike. An unmatched spectrum of dining experiences, first-class cultural events, exceptional scenery and a pleasant climate combine for an enjoyable visit. Compared with cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Paris or London, San Francisco is a small, almost provincial city. It is a mere 8 mi/13 km from the Embarcadero, on the Bay, to the Great Highway and the Pacific Ocean.

Despite the notable influx of tech companies such as Google, Facebook, Salesforce and Twitter, tourism remains its prime industry, and the city has a thriving convention business that keeps its hotels and restaurants busy throughout the year.

You'll find San Francisco one of the world's most scenic cities—the Golden Gate Bridge, cable cars, Chinatown, the crazy quilt of Victorians, precipitous hills, extraordinary restaurants and, of course, earthquakes and fog. See the white-capped waters of San Francisco Bay, eat crab cakes along Fisherman's Wharf, attend a free concert in Golden Gate Park or a game with one of the Bay Area teams—the Warriors, 49ers or the Giants.

San Francisco's roller-coastering landscape cuts through dozens of distinct neighborhoods and its diverse population is every bit as colorful as the city's iconic landmarks and topography.

Highlights

Sights—The Golden Gate Bridge; a cable-car ride over Nob Hill; the exquisitely restored Palace of Fine Arts; views of the city atop Coit Tower and Telegraph Hill; Saints Peter and Paul church in North Beach; Golden Gate Park; Fisherman's Wharf; a ferry ride to Sausalito; the postcard Victorian homes at Alamo Square, Haight-Ashbury and famed mansions of Pacific Heights; goods at the Ferry Plaza Farmers Market outside the Ferry Building; Lombard Street, the crookedest street in the U.S.

Museums—The Asian Art Museum; the Legion of Honor; the de Young Museum; Beat Museum; the Cable Car Museum; SFMoMA; Renzo Piano's iconic California Academy of Sciences; Contemporary Jewish Museum; Musee Mecanique; Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD).

Memorable Meals—Vegetarian fare at Greens; dim sum at Ton Kiang; sushi at Ozumo; dinner, dancing and great city views at Top of the Mark; Irish coffee at the historic Buena Vista Cafe while watching the sun set.

Late Night—Cocktails and film noir at Lone Palm; dancing at Harry Denton's Starlight Room atop the Sir Francis Drake Hotel; local music and comedy at the Independent (Dave Chappell regularly tries out sets there); dinner and dancing at Bimbo's 365 Club.

Walks—Hiking across the Golden Gate Bridge; strolling anywhere along the 10-mi/15-km coastline from the Embarcadero through the Golden Gate Promenade (in the Presidio); shopping around Union Square; exploring the smaller streets and alleys of Chinatown; climbing the garden-lined stairway to Coit Tower.

Especially for Kids—Aquarium of the Bay and watching the sea lions at Pier 39; hands-on science fun at the Exploratorium at Pier 15; a plethora of kid-friendly attractions at the Children's Creativity Museum, at the Rooftop at Yerba Buena Gardens; paddleboats on Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park; the living roof at the California Academy of Sciences; a nature trek along the Presidio's ecology trail; the San Francisco Zoo; The Walt Disney Family Museum.

Geography

Perched on the northern tip of a peninsula, San Francisco is surrounded on three sides by water—to the west by the Pacific Ocean; to the east by San Francisco Bay, with Berkeley and Oakland on the other side (across the East Bay); and to the north by the narrow mouth of the Bay, spanned by the Golden Gate Bridge, which stretches to Marin County.

More than 50 hills stud "the City" (as San Franciscans call it), accounting for the bounty of breathtaking views. These hills break up and

isolate otherwise contiguous communities. It's a city of neighborhoods, each with its own distinct character and attractions. Some of the most visited are Union Square, the Financial District, SoMa (the area south of Market Street), the Embarcadero, Chinatown, North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf, all clustered in the northeast corner of town.

Other neighborhoods well worth visiting are Japantown, the Mission, the Castro, North Beach, Russian Hill, the Marina, Pacific Heights, Hayes Valley, Nob Hill, the inner and outer Richmond and Sunset districts, and Cole Valley and Haight-Ashbury, which adjoin the eastern tip of Golden Gate Park. The park itself stretches westward to the Pacific Ocean, dividing two large residential neighborhoods—Richmond to the north and Sunset to the south.

History

The San Francisco Bay Area was originally inhabited by the Miwok and Ohlone people about 10,000 years ago. However, after Spanish explorers arrived in 1775, the Native Americans were almost wiped out by disease and mistreatment.

The Spanish established an army base at the Presidio and the Mision San Francisco de Asis (more commonly known as Mission Dolores). The Spanish themselves were pushed out in 1846 when U.S. forces captured San Francisco during the Mexican-American War, and a small outpost founded by Mormon priest Sam Brannan became an official part of the U.S.

Just two years later, a sawmill owner named James Marshall discovered gold around the American River (a little more than 100 mi/160 km from San Francisco). Brannan publicized the discovery, setting off the largest peacetime migration in U.S. history. The population leaped from 500 to 50,000 in one year, as people from all over the world rushed to the area in search of riches. A few years later in 1858, just as the gold rush was waning, the Comstock Lode of silver was discovered.

In the following decades, the city grew from a collection of tents to a world-class metropolis where the new gold and railroad barons could enjoy the finer things in life. San Francisco also became known for its many brothels, saloons and opium dens. The city developed in size and importance as a shipping port and military garrison. Abandoned fortifications can still be explored along the coastline, and tourist destinations line some of the old piers.

In April 1906, an immense earthquake struck, and one result was a fire that raged for three days. Some 400 people were killed, and half of San Francisco was destroyed. The city rebuilt itself quickly—much of the renowned architecture you see today dates from that era. City leaders, however, thwarted plans to rebuild the red-light district.

In 1915, the Panama-Pacific Exposition was held in the Marina District. The Palace of Fine Arts was built for it. During that same year, San Francisco's city hall was rebuilt.

San Francisco was a major staging area for troops during World War II, and its burgeoning shipbuilding industry attracted a diverse mix of people. As an international port linked to distant cultures, and as a destination for a multitude of Americans with various backgrounds, San Francisco became known for its liberal leanings and a tolerance for differences.

During the 1950s, the Beat Generation writers—Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti—congregated in San Francisco, creating a subculture of poets and writers in the North Beach neighborhood. Their music was jazz. When North Beach rents went up in the 1960s, many bohemians moved to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood; out of that grew the hippie movement and a steady stream of literary and musical innovation. The city's tradition of diversity continued in the 1970s and 1980s as the Castro District became a mecca for the LGBTQ community.

Despite another major earthquake in 1989, San Francisco's economy has prospered. Another "gold rush" erupted in the 1990s with the technology boom. San Francisco and neighboring Silicon Valley became a hotbed of dot-com innovation. Renovations at City Hall, the development of the area South of Market (or SoMa) and the construction of the main library reflect those indulgent times. Today, San Francisco is still fueling the digital revolution and leads the way in green technologies.

Port Information

Location

The Port of San Francisco's cruise terminal is situated on the city's famed Embarcadero. Terminal 27 totals 88,000 sq ft/8,180 sq m on two levels and features overhead gangway for boarding passengers along the Pier 27 apron and shoreside power infrastructure to permit docked ships to shut down their onboard engines. A 3-acre/1-hectare triangular paved area between Pier 27 and Pier 29 serves as a ground transportation and provisioning area. The terminal at Pier 35, at the intersection of North Point Street and the Embarcadero, continues as a secondary terminal when there is more than one cruise ship in port.

Pier 39, the popular waterfront shopping area, is just a few blocks west, and just beyond that is Fisherman's Wharf. To the east lie Embarcadero Center and Market Street. Both are connected by the historical streetcars (Muni's F-line) running along the Embarcadero, and there are paid parking lots and meters nearby.

Have your camera ready when your ship sails under the Golden Gate Bridge and past Alcatraz (the famed penitentiary) and Angel Island (once the detention center for Chinese immigrants). The bridge farther ahead is the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. From the cruise terminal you can see two of San Francisco's architectural landmarks, Coit Tower and the Transamerica Pyramid.

Potpourri

Denim jeans were invented in San Francisco by German immigrant Levi Strauss. The miners, who went there for the gold rush, needed strong but comfortable pants.

The song "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" was written by a gay couple—George Cory and Douglass Cross—in Brooklyn, New York, in 1953. Tony Bennett first recorded it in 1962 as the B-side for "Once Upon a Time."

Filbert Street between Hyde and Leavenworth (in Russian Hill) is reportedly the steepest street in San Francisco at an angle of 31.5 degrees. As for the city's most crooked street, it's actually not the legendary Lombard Street, but rather Vermont Avenue, between 20th and 22nd streets in Potrero Hill.

Local legend says fortune cookies were first served in the U.S. at the Golden Gate Park's Japanese Tea Garden in the early 1900s by a landscape designer named Baron Makoto Hagiwara. You can see how they are made and enjoy them fresh from the Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory in Chinatown in narrow Ross Alley.

Bison have lived in Golden Gate Park since 1892, when the park used to be a free-range zoo. Although elk, bear and goats are no longer residents, the bison can still be seen grazing in the Bison Paddock near Spreckles Lake.

In 1901, San Francisco outlawed further burials in town because of a lack of space. All bodies were shipped to the city of Colma, just south of San Francisco. Fans of the macabre enjoy pointing out that, in Colma, which was incorporated as a necropolis in the 1920s, dead residents outnumber those still living by a margin of more than 1,000 to one.

The Golden Gate Bridge was originally painted "International Orange" as a temporary primer before it got that color permanently.

Dining Overview

The city's stellar restaurants representing cuisines from around the world are a source of pride for San Franciscans, who claim they have more restaurants per capita than any other city.

A diverse set of neighborhoods makes ethnic dining a lively option: Chinatown and Inner Richmond for Chinese dishes; Polk and Larkin streets for Vietnamese and Cambodian; North Beach for Italian; and the Mission District for Mexican, Latin American and contemporary American. Then there's Fisherman's Wharf for seafood; SoMa (south of Market) for trendy, avant-garde cuisine; and Haight-Ashbury for inexpensive, eclectic menus geared to the bohemian crowd.

Though no longer nouvelle, California cuisine still makes use of ultrafresh, local ingredients—vegetables, fish and meats—in imaginative and colorful presentations. The dishes are often complemented by terrific California wines. You'll find fine restaurants serving California cuisine throughout the city, but many are around Union Square and in the Financial District.

Restaurants tend to be busiest for dinner between 7 and 9 pm, and most close their kitchens by 11 pm.

Smoking is illegal inside public buildings, including restaurants and bars. Be aware that many restaurants, theaters and stores in San Francisco have banned the use of cell phones, as well.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of a dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$15; \$\$ = US\$15-\$35; \$\$\$ = US\$36-\$80; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$80.

Personal Safety

As with all major cities, San Francisco has its share of hazards. Being aware of your surroundings and cautious in unfamiliar places can help you avoid most problems. Although most of the areas that travelers frequent are reasonably safe, some are adjacent to areas that are not. Use extra caution after dark in the Civic Center area, in the Tenderloin (near Union Square-Theater District), the Mission District and

Western Addition (south of Japantown). San Francisco has one of the largest homeless populations in the country, and there are often aggressive panhandlers in tourist areas. Use a combination of respect and caution; refrain from giving money or engaging panhandlers.

Keep alert when walking in Golden Gate Park—stay on main paths if you're walking alone, and avoid walking there at night. Be cautious about venturing off the well-populated streets in SoMa (South of Market). Extra caution is also advised in the Mission District (Mission and 16th streets) and Haight-Ashbury (specifically the Lower Haight) at night.

Auto and bicycle theft is not uncommon in San Francisco. Always drive with your doors locked and stow your purse or other valuables under the seat. Do not leave any valuables or luggage in plain sight in your car, and park in well-lit, well-trafficked areas. If renting a bike, lock it to something substantial, not aluminum posts, chain-link fences or anything that could be cut easily.

When riding public transportation, keep your purse, cell phone or backpack in front of you and visible at all times. Don't carry large amounts of cash, and keep your wallet in your front pocket. When using ATMs, be aware of your surroundings; at night, visit machines inside buildings or in well-lit areas. Tourists aren't particularly more targeted than residents, but criminals will take opportunities when visitors are distracted, especially in crowded tourist districts.

Cell phone and tablet thefts have been on the rise in the city. Be aware of your surroundings when using your phone in public, especially on Muni. Thieves have been known to grab phones from people's hands and run out just before exit doors close.

If anyone calls your hotel room, do not give any personal or credit card information over the phone, even if they claim to be hotel staff. Handle any discrepancies in person at the front desk.

San Francisco is located near many geologic plates and faults, so there will always be earthquakes there. Most of them won't even be felt, but in case there's a major quake, there are some things to keep in mind. If indoors, stay inside (don't run outside). Stand in a doorway, under a heavy table or against a wall, but away from any windows. If outside, stay away from trees, power lines or the sides of buildings. If in a car, stay in your car but pull over to the side of the road, away from power lines, telephone poles, tall trees or bridges.

Dos & Don'ts

Do dress warmly if you plan to walk across the Golden Gate Bridge—the heavy winds can make it mighty brisk. And for that matter, dress in layers all the time, even in summer; once the sun sets, the weather almost immediately turns chilly.

Don't ignore the color-coded curbs when parking. Yellow is for truck parking only, white for passenger loading, green for 15-minute parking and blue for disabled parking. If you disregard them, your car *will* be ticketed and towed.

Do go to the friendly TIX Bay Area box-office service, which sells half-priced tickets on the day of the performance for major theaters and cultural events. It's at Union Square.

Don't call it Frisco, whatever you do—locals hate that.

Do wear comfortable shoes. San Francisco's distinct neighborhoods are best explored on foot.

Do take public transportation, but be mindful of fellow riders. Enter in front and move to the back of a crowded bus, exiting through the rear doors. Don't stand on the left side of BART escalators; that's the passing lane.

Thursday, Jan 2, 2020

Hilo, Hawaii

Thursday, January 2, 2020

Introduction

Hilo, the largest city on the island of Hawaii and the second largest in the state, is a must-see, daylong visit for garden enthusiasts and probably a half-day trip for everyone else.

Hilo is also a perfect base for visiting what residents simply refer to as The Volcano. Only 30 mi/48 km south of Hilo along Highway 11, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is the home of the active Kilauea Volcano.

Keep in mind that Hilo gets 280 days of rain a year (129 in/328 cm annually), but the rains don't last long. Moreover, while Hilo definitely

has a large amount of rain, much of it is at night. Even when it does precipitate, they're usually just passing showers, and the abundant tropical rainfall is what makes the Hilo side of the Big Island so lush and green.

Highlights

Sights—Smoking Halemaumau Crater and spectacular scenery in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park; beautiful plants and a view of Onomea Bay at Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden; the breathtaking beauty of Rainbow Falls; a drive along the spectacular Hamakua Coast.

Museums—Hawaii's diverse multicultural heritage on display at Lyman Museum and Mission House; the impact of nature at the Pacific Tsunami Museum; the Big Island's legendary astronomy program at the Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawaii.

Memorable Meals—Fresh fish and seafood at the Seaside Restaurant; Pacific Island seafood risotto at Cafe Pesto Hilo Bay; antelope filet at Kilauea Lodge Restaurant; chocolate-dipped shortbread from Big Island Candies for dessert; a local, grass-fed Parker Ranch-beef burger at Hilo Bay Cafe.

Late Night—Live local Hawaiian and contemporary music in the Wai'oli Lounge at Hilo Hawaiian Hotel; lava flows near Kalapana.

Walks—A walk through the rain forest to plunging waterfalls in Akaka Falls State Park; a stroll past the graceful pagoda bridge and beautiful plantings at Liliuokalani Gardens; a walk along Bayfront Park, admiring the boats and activity on the bay; enjoying ancient strangler figs on Banyan Drive.

Especially for Kids—Mokupapapa: Discovery Center for Hawaii's Remote Coral Reefs to learn about various aquatic environments; Panaewa Rain Forest Zoo; swimming and exploring the tidal pools at Onekahakaha Beach Park.

Geography

Hilo is located on the east, or windward, side of the Big Island. The city faces a large crescent bay, with the towering mountains of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa as a backdrop.

Hilo's port is protected by a long rock seawall about 3 mi/5 km east of downtown. The old downtown area is clustered near the mouth of the Wailuku River at Hilo Bay. Other commercial and residential areas extend east and south of town and in the western slopes above downtown.

The rocky Hamakua Coast to the northwest of Hilo is considered one of the island's most enjoyable drives, but the shoreline has few areas safe for swimmers. The Puna district, south and east of Hilo town, is an area of open rolling lava lands, rugged coasts and rain-forest slopes stretching up to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

History

Polynesians were the first to arrive in the Hilo area around 1100. They inhabited Hilo Bay and established farms and fishing communities.

What later become known as the town of Hilo was established along the banks of the Wailuku River as a missionary outpost in the 1840s. It became an important port town for trading ships. Over the years, the town expanded and spread to the area behind the sweeping bayfront and the black-sand beach of Hilo Bay. As the sugar industry grew and developed, Hilo became the commercial and governmental center for the Big Island of Hawaii.

The Hamakua Coast between Hilo and Honokaa to the northwest was the heart of the Big Island's sugar industry until it collapsed in the 1990s. During the industry's heyday (the late 1800s-1970s), sugar was the Big Island's economic mainstay. Now fields once green with sugarcane have been transformed by a diversified agricultural economy based on macadamia nuts, ginger, papaya, bananas, tropical flowers and other crops.

Hilo is the center for the island's tropical-flower industry, with anthuriums (heart-shaped, multicolored blooms) and orchids shipped to worldwide markets.

Potpourri

The Hilo Rain Forest Zoo is the only U.S. zoo that is located in a natural rain-forest environment.

There are two kinds of lava: smooth lava (*pahoehoe*) and rough, porous lava (*'a'a*).

Local celebrity Hilo Hattie kissed Elvis Presley in the film *Blue Hawaii*. She also earned a cameo appearance in the 1942 film *Song of the Islands* with Betty Grable.

You can taste chocolate-covered ika (dried squid) at Big Island Candies.

Don't take home any lava rocks, because legend has it that Pele, goddess of the volcano, doesn't like that, and that she will bring you bad, bad luck. Whether or not its true, it's interesting to note that thousands of pounds/kilograms of lava rocks are mailed back to the islands every year.

The University of Hawaii at Hilo is the only school in the world to offer a degree in Hawaiian Studies, where students learn island culture and the ancient language of Hawaii.

One of the oldest golf courses in the U.S. is the 18-hole Volcano Golf Course, which opened in 1921 on the rim of the Kilauea Crater in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

Robert Kiyosaki, bestselling author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, was born in Hilo.

Sightseeing

Of all the places we've visited in Hawaii, Hilo seems the least changed by the business of tourism. What is most striking about this multicultural, diverse city is how normal daily life appears. You'll see Japanese grandmothers tending anthuriums and orchids in their yards, Hawaiian fathers teaching the *keiki* (children) how to catch crabs in the harbor and folks of all ethnic backgrounds buying, selling and trading produce or fresh fish at Hilo Farmers Market. This is a community of friendly, laid-back people who are very family-oriented.

Much of downtown Hilo consists of vintage buildings, many dating from the early 1900s. A stroll through downtown uncovers a collection of retail shops, offices, and flower and fruit stalls. To some, Hilo appears frozen in the early 20th century.

Outside of the downtown area to the east is Banyan Drive, or "Hotel Row," as it's locally known. The town's major lodgings are arranged between Hilo Bay and this lovely drive lined by giant banyan trees. Take a stroll along Banyan Drive and note the sign markers on the stately trees. All were planted during the 1930s-1950s by visiting VIPs and celebrities such as U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, baseball legend Babe Ruth, jazz musician Louis Armstrong and U.S. aviator Amelia Earhart.

A must-see on any visit to the Hilo side of the island is Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The park includes the Jaggar Museum, hiking trails, Halemaumau Crater, Bird Park and plenty of activities.

Recreation

With its rainy weather and small beaches, Hilo is not considered a prime area for watersports, though surfing is as popular as anywhere else in the Aloha State. Sunny Kona and the northerly Kohala Coast more than make up for this deficiency, however, with commercial ventures and many sites for diving, windsurfing, deep-sea fishing and boating.

Hilo does have some good trails for hiking and horseback riding.

Shopping

Hilo's climate makes it a natural tropical greenhouse—you'll see more varieties of ferns, orchids, anthuriums and tropical fruit in residents' yards than in most botanical gardens. This is a great place to shop for flowers, which you can have shipped home at very reasonable prices.

Cut-flower bouquets and potted plants without soil can be exported to the mainland, but no plants in soil and no fresh fruits, except papaya and pineapple, are allowed. All flowers and fruit are subject to agriculture inspection at airports.

You'll discover many stores selling arts and crafts, books, old maps and wood items in the downtown Hilo area, especially along Kamehameha Avenue.

Shopping Hours: Most shops are open daily 9 am-6 pm, and some stay open till 9 pm.

Dining Overview

Hilo, being relatively unspoiled by tourism and still very much a glimpse into the Hawaiian way of life, is exceptionally well-suited to allow

a sampling of local flavors.

You won't find much—if any—five-star fine dining on this side of the island, but in Hilo, you can expect a preponderance of affordable, Asian-influenced comfort food and local plate lunches. Splurge and try a multicourse meal featuring the fusion of Hawaii's many ethnic cuisines, or keep it simple with a bowl of the Hawaiian classic, *saimin* noodles. Whatever your choice, the local fare is always a delicious adventure.

The Banyan Drive hotel row area offers some restaurant choices, and there are many more in the downtown Hilo area. Visitors are advised to dine downtown earlier rather than later, as it can be an unsavory area at night.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$10; \$\$ = US\$10-\$25; \$\$\$ = more than US\$25.

Personal Safety

Violent crime on the Big Island is minimal, and the streets are generally quite safe, but be sure to take the usual precautions. Avoid Banyan Drive and the downtown area at night, as they are frequented by the homeless, and drug use is prevalent.

Thieves tend to prey on visitors, so try to blend in with the locals. Be aware of your surroundings, especially at night. Don't leave valuables unattended, and don't leave anything of value (or which could be perceived as valuable) visible inside a parked car. One special precaution: Don't trespass on unfamiliar property, particularly in forests, where farmers have been known to protect marijuana crops with rifles and booby traps.

To call the police, phone 911 or 808-935-3311.

Dos & Don'ts

Don't comment about how you love the sound the tiny coqui frogs make. Although beloved in Puerto Rico, where they are native, in Hilo they are considered a pest. Males start singing at 7 pm. With about 25,000 per acre/half-hectare, it's difficult to talk over the shrill noise of their 70-decibel mating "song."

Do take advantage of free ukulele lessons, offered at many state parks and hotels.

Don't fear the island's ubiquitous cane spiders; these large, lightning-fast arachnids are not poisonous and rarely bite humans.

Do make sure to try some local food specialties, such as shaved ice, Spam *musubi* (the infamous canned meat product wrapped in rice and nori) and poi.

Don't forget to take your umbrella. With 129 in/328 cm of rain annually, Hilo is the rainiest city in the U.S. However, it tends to rain in the mornings and let up by afternoon, and it is usually a nice warm rain.

Do learn how to make a traditional Hawaiian lei; orchids grow wild in the forests just outside of Hilo.

Do pronounce Hilo correctly. It's "*hee-low*," not "*hi-low*."

Friday, Jan 3, 2020

Honolulu, Hawaii

Friday, January 3, 2020

Introduction

Visitors to Honolulu may hear that, because it's Hawaii's largest city, it is less "Hawaiian" than the rest of the state. The high-rise office buildings and busy traffic of Honolulu don't match people's romantic ideal of what Hawaii should be—remote, palm-fringed beaches and lavish resorts.

In truth, Honolulu is probably the most Hawaiian part of the state, because it best reflects the reality of today's Hawaii. Honolulu contains a multicultural mix of people, a beautiful landscape of greenery and ocean, and a place where amazing events have unfolded—many of them recounted in the city's historic sites and museums.

All that's exciting about big-city life— theater, opera, museums, shopping, nightclubs, fine dining—is set against Honolulu's backdrop of majestic mountains, lush rain forests and sweeping vistas.

With Waikiki along one edge of the city, travelers to Honolulu even have a beach resort. Waikiki remains Hawaii's busiest tourist spot and makes a good departure point for exploring recreational possibilities in Honolulu and the rest of Oahu. Active travelers can ramble through a rainforest and discover ancient religious shrines, swim with the green sea turtles off Waikiki Beach and surf past Diamond Head.

Other activities include hiking a coastline trail, watching for humpback whales, visiting World War II memorials or playing a round of golf at a variety of public and resort golf courses.

Visitors to Honolulu can choose from the best of both worlds—the city's bustle and the beauty of nature.

Highlights

Sights—USS *Arizona* Memorial; Waikiki Beach; Polynesian Cultural Center; National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific; watching the sunset from one of the hotel lounges fronting the ocean.

Museums—Iolani Palace; Bishop Museum; Honolulu Museum of Art; Spalding House.

Memorable Meals—The fresh fish specials at Alan Wong's Honolulu; the delectable fusion of flavors in the pho at The Pig and the Lady; afternoon tea at The Veranda.

Late Night—Live jazz at Lewers Lounge; dancing at Rumors nightclub; mingling with local hipsters at the Mai Tai Bar.

Walks—Hiking through rain forest and bamboo groves at the Hawaii Nature Center; climbing to the top of Diamond Head; strolling among the noodle shops and street vendors of Chinatown; hiking the trail at Makapuu Point Lighthouse.

Especially for Kids—Critter Encounter at the Waikiki Aquarium; children's programs at the Hawaii Nature Center; hands-on exhibits at the Hawaii Children's Discovery Center and the Bishop Museum.

Geography

Honolulu is on the south shore of Oahu and it dominates the island. The city's government administers all of Oahu, and Honolulu is also the state's capital. Oahu itself is a volcanic mass divided into sections by two separate mountain ranges. Both ranges run northwest to southeast: the Waianae Range on the western side of the island, and the Koolau Range to the east. The Koolau separates the city of Honolulu with its hotel-choked neighborhood of Waikiki from the windward side of the island and the towns of Kailua and Kaneohe.

Honolulu's neighborhoods have distinctive identities. The office buildings of downtown Honolulu are just north of Honolulu Harbor. To the south of downtown is Waikiki, which is bordered to the east by Diamond Head. Makiki, to the north of downtown, surrounds the Punchbowl, a crater that is the home of the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

History

The history of Honolulu is really the history of Oahu. The island was an independent fiefdom controlled by a succession of Polynesian chiefs until the 1780s. That's when the ambitious king of Maui, Kahekili, conquered Oahu and killed its chief—his own stepson—in a bid to enlarge his territories.

After Kahekili's death, his sons battled one another for control of the islands. This division made it easier for the now-legendary Kamehameha I to conquer all of the Hawaiian Islands.

With the help of Westerners with firearms, Kamehameha's troops took Oahu in 1795 in a rout that ultimately forced the defenders to flee to the mountains behind Honolulu and over the cliffs at Nuuanu Pali. His court was set up in Waikiki, then moved to Honolulu in 1809.

By the 1840s, Honolulu was a busy port town doing a brisk trade in the sandalwood harvested on the island. Sandalwood later gave way to sugar, and laborers from China, Japan, Portugal and the Philippines were brought in to work the plantations.

After U.S. sugar companies engineered the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, which led to the U.S. annexation of the Hawaiian Islands in 1898, Oahu's Pearl Harbor became the centerpiece of U.S. naval operations in the Pacific. On 7 December 1941, a squadron of some 400 Japanese planes attacked the base, killing more than 2,400 people and marking the entrance of the U.S. into World War II.

With the advent of jet travel in the postwar years, Honolulu became the gateway for millions of paradise-seeking vacationers, and

developers began building the towering hotels of Waikiki.

Potpourri

The Royal Hawaiian Hotel was the Western White House for U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Poet and writer Robert Louis Stevenson lived in Hawaii for some time and was befriended by King David Kalakaua and the Princess Victoria Kaiulani. Their Scottish heritage was their common bond.

Hawaii's federal roads are referred to as interstates, although technically they are intrastate arteries built to connect its military bases.

Iolani Palace had electricity and telephone service before the White House.

An average of 5,000 guests per day and 1.8 million guests annually visit the USS *Arizona* Memorial in Pearl Harbor.

Honolulu's Royal Hawaiian Band performs more than 300 times a year at various state, city and military functions. Started by King David Kalakaua, it is the only band in the U.S. with a royal legacy.

In Hawaii, May 1 is Lei Day. In Honolulu, it's celebrated with a lei-making contest and all-day festival in Kapiolani Park.

Mark Twain once called Hawaii the "loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean."

Sightseeing

The best way to see Honolulu is to first decide what most interests you and then group your choices according to their physical location. You might spend a morning exploring Chinatown, stop for lunch at one of the many excellent Asian restaurants there, and relax on the beach at Ala Moana or Waikiki in the late afternoon when the sun's rays are less intense.

Or you might plan tours of Iolani Palace and the Mission Houses Museum, eat a picnic lunch on the Palace grounds and spend the afternoon trekking on one of the Hawaii Nature Center's short rain-forest trails.

Whatever you decide to do, remember not to rush. Outside the city, Oahu is a laid-back island, so relax and take things slowly. If you're driving, make sure to allow extra time to navigate the highway system during the rush hours of 7-9 am and 3-6 pm during the week. It can easily take an hour to get from Honolulu to the airport during those busy times.

Recreation

Beach and water activities are Honolulu's biggest recreational draws. If you want to enjoy the sand without venturing away from the city, head for Kuhio Beach at Waikiki or the beach park at Ala Moana. If you have time to make a longer trip, there are many more beaches to choose from around the island, most of which are excellent and surprisingly uncrowded. To check current wave conditions, download the free Hawaii Beach Safety app which shows real-time hazard levels both nearshore and offshore at 33 Oahu beaches, with recommendations for activities and a list of amenities for each one.

Beginning surfers can take a lesson at Waikiki. The coastal waters are also great for various boating options, including Jet-Skiing, parasailing, wakeboarding, waterskiing, kayaking, sailing and fishing. Back on dry land, the Hawaii Nature Center offers some good hiking routes, and golf courses abound.

Shopping

Honolulu has just about as many T-shirt sellers as grains of sand on Waikiki Beach. More authentic (and tastier) souvenirs include Kona coffee (make sure it's 100% Kona), macadamia nuts and candy. The quality of macadamia products varies greatly, and the few extra cents spent on the Mauna Loa or MacFarms brands will get you chocolates that don't taste like wax. Fresh pineapple is also fair proof of your visit, but many other fruits (limes, mangoes, papayas) can't be taken out of state, so eat your fill while you're there.

Kitchen items and decorative objects crafted of Hawaiian woods such as monkey pod and the endangered koa (only naturally fallen or diseased trees can be harvested) make good gifts, as do unusual jewelry creations. Don't overlook music shops for CDs of steel-guitar, slack-key or ukulele music; art galleries for local art inspired by the islands' natural beauty; and bookstores for Hawaii picture books and calendars. Museum shops also offer some unusual products.

You may find that shops in Waikiki are a little more expensive than those at more outlying shopping centers such as Ala Moana Shopping

Center, Kahala Mall and Ward Warehouse, but there are good deals to be had even in Waikiki if you look for them. Hotel-shop prices will inevitably be higher than those of most other places. For some real bargains and all the shopping you can handle, head out to the Aloha Stadium Swap Meet, held on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

Shopping Hours: Generally Monday-Saturday 9 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-5 pm. The ubiquitous ABC stores have various hours depending on location, but you can probably buy a T-shirt at midnight at one of them if you need to.

Dining Overview

If the physical surroundings of Honolulu don't tempt you to stay a few extra days, the food will. Hawaiian regional cuisine, an easy blend of Asian, Polynesian, U.S. and European traditions, pleases a wide variety of tastes, and the local chefs are inventive. You'll find scrumptious cross-cultural dishes based on fresh local ingredients—especially seafood, vegetables, herbs and fruit—as well as pure Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, Laotian, French, German, Portuguese and Italian favorites.

Good restaurants are plentiful in Waikiki, especially downtown, but don't overlook food trucks and hole-in-the-wall places in the city's different neighborhoods.

Few Honolulu restaurants offer the types of foods that were prepared by the early Hawaiians. It's mostly at a luau that you'll encounter *lomi* salmon, *kalua* pig, poi (taro ground into a purple paste) and *laulau* (salted pork, chicken or fish, wrapped in a taro leaf and baked). A word about the luau, the traditional Hawaiian feast whose main dish is a roasted *kalua* pig: There are some excellent ones, and there are some real losers, but they all tend to be pricey. In any case, one luau is usually plenty. The best luau we've found is at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. You might want to ask other visitors which ones they've attended and seek a recommendation.

Standard fare for most Hawaii residents these days is the inexpensive plate lunch available in many cafes and from outdoor lunch wagons, where they are served in a paper box that is perfect for a casual outdoor meal. A plate lunch typically consists of a serving of fried meat, chicken or seafood, macaroni salad, two scoops of white rice and sometimes corn or pickled cabbage. There are a number of these operations serving shrimp along Kamehameha Highway. Look for the sandwich-board signs and tented picnic tables. Dining there is a no-frills atmosphere, but locals and tourists alike keep going back for more.

For a tasty and less-filling local treat, try *saimin* (Japanese noodle soup), shave ice (snow cones), *malasadas* (hot Portuguese donuts sprinkled with sugar) or *manapua* (Chinese steamed buns filled with red pork).

In restaurants, breakfast is generally served 7-9:30 am, lunch 11 am-2 pm and dinner 6-10 pm.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$10; \$\$ = US\$10-\$20; \$\$\$ = US\$21-\$50; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Personal Safety

Honolulu is no more dangerous than most major U.S. cities, with low rates of violent crime. Be aware, however, that some sections of the leeward coast are especially popular with thieves. Pickpockets sometimes target vacationers, so hold tight to purses and expensive cameras, and avoid showing off expensive jewelry or large amounts of cash. There is a large homeless population, but they keep to themselves for the most part and there are few panhandlers on the streets.

Also, don't assume your rental car is secure. Thieves frequently break into parked cars at beaches, tourist attractions and major shopping centers. Never leave anything valuable inside your car, not even for a few minutes, even if it's locked.

If you go to the beach, don't spread out your towel, dump all your belongings on it and run for the water. Even the locals don't do that. Travel light. Keep an eye on your things, and don't let your guard down. Watertight cases big enough to hold room keys and some cash are available at surf shops.

We recommend avoiding the downtown district on Hotel Street near Chinatown at night unless you are with a large group, and take special care if you visit the Waianae Coast on the west side of the Waianae Mountains. The beaches along this stretch are some of the most beautiful on the island, but violent attacks and robberies have taken place there on occasion.

Also, be aware of your surroundings on the streets of Waikiki. Drive-by purse snatchings are rare, but they do occur. Save your strolls on Oahu's beaches or on Waikiki's less-traveled streets for the daytime and early evening. If you go hiking, stick to marked trails.

Dos & Don'ts

Do pay attention to how Hawaii place names are pronounced. For instance, you'll be told to take the Likelike Highway to get to Kailua. That's not "like-like," as in rhymes with Ike, but is pronounced "Lee-KAY-Lee-KAY."

Don't refer to highways by their numbers. Except for the H-1, the H-2 and the H-3, residents call highways by name. Kamehameha (Kam) Highway, Farrington Highway, the Pali Highway, the Likelike Highway, Kahekili Highway and Kalaniana'ole (Kal) Highway probably all have numbers, but hardly anyone knows them.

Don't walk around in your bikini. Believe it or not, people in Hawaii don't wear bathing suits all day long. Have a modest coverup available for quick runs to the ABC store. Gentlemen, no one likes those sleeveless shirts except you.

Do take a surfing lesson (try tandem surfing) or take a ride in an outrigger canoe. Remember, this is where surfing was invented.

Do keep a fully charged cell phone handy, especially if you are going out on excursions or hikes. The global positioning capabilities of late-model phones have been the key to rescuing many missing hikers in Hawaii's rain forests.

Do take your shoes off if you enter someone's home. It's a local custom and sign of respect. You'll see a slew of footwear outside or just inside the door.

Do take a lei-making class or try your hand at pounding **tapa** (the bark of the paper mulberry tree, which was used by early Hawaiians as cloth). These local crafts are an important part of Hawaii's culture. Go early to most luaus and you will usually have a chance to observe and try them.

Do learn the **shaka** sign (make a fist, extend thumb and pinkie, hold it up about head height, and swivel the wrist back and forth quickly). It's a local sign of greeting, agreement, or just to let someone know that everything is going well. Also useful as a thank-you when drivers let you change lanes.

Do wait your turn in the line-up if you go surfing. Local surfers don't appreciate line jumping.

Saturday, Jan 4, 2020

Kauai Island, Hawaii

Saturday, January 4, 2020

Introduction

Kauai Island is farther north and west than the other major Hawaiian Islands. It has dramatic craggy mountains, luxuriant valleys and many breezy beaches that have mostly managed to dodge excessive development. Yes, Kauai has many hotels, resort complexes and some of the state's best golf courses, but they're centralized in small pockets on the east, north and south sides of the island.

The landscape has also been protected by height restrictions—keeping buildings from towering over the coconut trees—and the interior of the island remains predominantly rural. As a result, it's the natural scenery that elicits the "Wows!" on Kauai.

Serious hikers should set aside an extra day or two just to hike Kauai's marvelous nature trails. Outdoor enthusiasts will also find challenging golf, whale-watching (December- to mid-April) and boat trips along the spectacular Na Pali Coast. This island is well-suited to travelers who enjoy nature—the scenery and abundance of outdoor activities are the highlight there; shopping and nightlife are relatively limited.

Highlights

Sights—Hanalei Valley Lookout and its view of the north shore landscape; Hanapepe Valley Lookout; Kee Beach; the cliffs on Na Pali Coast.

Memorable Meals—The Beach House Restaurant in Poipu for great Pacific Rim innovations and fabulous ocean views; the creative and tasty tapas menu at Bar Acuda in Hanalei; Gaylord's Restaurant for island-sourced dining by torchlight.

Late Night—Live music and drinks at Trees Lounge in Kapaa; local sounds and dancing at the Bamboo Bar at Keoki's Paradise in Poipu.

Walks—The Koloa Heritage Trail through south-side points of interest; a self-guided tour of the native plants at scenic Limahuli Garden and Preserve on the north shore; farm animals, fruit trees and gardens at the Kilohana Estate.

Especially for Kids—Kamalani Playground in Lydgate Beach in Wailua; exploring with a boogie board or snorkel gear in the safe waters at Poipu Beach and Lydgate Beach; the Spouting Horn blowhole.

Geography

The volcanic island of Kauai owes its sculpted beauty to 5 million years of pounding surf, enduring trade winds and steady rain showers. The sea cliffs of the northwest shore (Na Pali Coast) plunge into the ocean, creating quirky caves, cascading waterfalls and crescents of white sand.

Mostly impenetrable mountains stretch over much of the interior, giving way on the west side to Waimea Canyon, carved by one of the many rivers that flow from the mountains to the sea. Perfect beaches line the coastline, some protected by coral reefs and others opening into deep water.

History

Kauai, the oldest of the Hawaiian Islands, is also believed to have been the first stop for Polynesian voyagers. The broad, fertile river valleys were ideal for agriculture, and taro was widely cultivated from at least AD 700.

Kauai remained independent of the other islands until it received its first European visitor in 1778. Capt. James Cook made his first stop in the islands at Waimea, on Kauai's west side, ushering in dramatic social, cultural and environmental changes.

Kauai was the only island that was not conquered by Kamehameha in his quest to unite the Hawaiian Islands, but it eventually agreed to come under his rule. Missionaries began visiting Kauai in the early 1800s, and the island's abundant water was a magnet for sugar growers, with Koloa (on the south side) becoming the site of Hawaii's first sugar plantation.

U.S. interests in the islands grew, and following the sugar planters' illegal overthrow of the monarchy in 1893, for which the U.S. later apologized, Hawaii became a state in 1959.

The sugar industry collapsed in the late 1990s, and the mills and plantations gradually closed. The island's last plantation, Gay & Robinson, closed in 2009. Kauai began to focus on coffee and is now the state's leading producer. Tourism, however, has long been the mainstay of the economy.

Potpourri

Kauai has more endangered Hawaiian monk seals than any of the other main Hawaiian Islands. They're attracted to the peaceful beaches, where they sleep in the sun and raise their pups.

Kauai landscapes have been featured in more films than any other Hawaiian Island.

Kauai and Lanai are the only Hawaiian Islands to escape the introduction of the mongoose. It was imported to control rats in the sugar fields, but it also preys upon ground-nesting native birds. As a result, the spectacular Laysan albatross nests there, along with the endangered state bird, the nene.

Kauai boasts the westernmost inhabited spot in the U.S. The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are technically uninhabited, although U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel and support staff stay there on a temporary basis.

The approximately 400 in/1,016 cm of rain that falls on Mount Waialeale each year makes this part of the island one of the wettest spots on earth.

Chickens and crowing roosters run loose throughout Kauai. The Polynesians introduced jungle chickens centuries ago, but their numbers and hardiness got a boost when fighting chickens got loose from their cages during Hurricane Iniki in 1992. With few predators, their numbers have skyrocketed.

Kauai has the only navigable rivers in Hawaii.

Sightseeing

Most of Kauai's attractions can be found in nature. Visitors won't want to miss the various overlooks along the coastal roads or a boat

excursion along Na Pali Coast. Kayaking and boat trips along the Wailua River, the only truly navigable fresh waterway in Hawaii, and hiking in Waimea Canyon are also popular.

Recreation

Kauai is a paradise for outdoor activities. Active sports are plentiful and include snorkeling, swimming, bodysurfing, boogie boarding, surfing, windsurfing, kitesurfing, kayaking, hiking, golf, tennis, horseback riding, and even inner tubing and ziplining.

Tamer activities include excellent bird-watching and sunbathing.

Shopping

There are plenty of shopping opportunities in Kauai, and some shops have shuttle buses to ensure that visitors without cars and those from cruise ships won't leave the island without souvenirs.

Be aware that the local shops recommended by tour operators, taxi drivers and cruise ships generally pay for the privilege.

Shopping Hours: Shops in resort areas tend to be open later than elsewhere, but most stores are open daily 9 am-7 pm.

Dining Overview

Kauai has an eclectic assortment of restaurants. The usual array of U.S. fast-food restaurants is present, as are upscale hotel eateries. In between are steak houses and burger joints, as well as Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and Thai restaurants.

If you haven't sampled a Hawaiian-style plate lunch, do so on Kauai. Plate lunches include one or more meat, fish or chicken entree, as well as two scoops of rice and macaroni salad. For breakfast, island fare often includes eggs, rice and Portuguese sausage. If you don't have time for a sit-down lunch, plenty of takeout places sell plate lunches and sandwiches.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$10; \$\$ = US\$10-\$20; \$\$\$ = US\$21-\$50; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Personal Safety

Generally, Kauai is a safe destination for visitors. Violent crime is rare, but property crimes are not. Car break-ins are very common in parking lots at the more secluded beaches and trailheads. It's best to leave the vehicle unlocked, with no valuables anywhere inside. Don't leave your purse, wallet or other valuables unattended on the beach.

Thefts are increasingly common at vacation rentals; be sure to lock doors and don't leave any valuables on decks and porches. Be sure to buckle up when driving, as Kauai police are strict about personal safety and uphold the state's seat belt law.

For more information on how to stay safe when visiting Hawaii, visit the Travel Smart Hawaii website.
<http://www.travelsmarthawaii.com/en>.

Dos & Don'ts

Don't walk between the sea and anyone who is fishing.

Don't approach monk seals or *honu* (turtles) on the beach. They're both protected by law.

Do keep in mind that the island lifestyle is casual, open and relaxed. Expect things to move at a slower pace.

Don't speed while driving, always wear your seat belt, and be courteous and let other motorists into traffic.

Do expect very dark roads at night and generally slow going if you're driving; plan your outings accordingly.

Do pull over and let other cars pass if a line of cars is building up behind you.

Don't turn your back on the sea while standing on oceanside rocks or beaches, especially on Kauai's north and west shores. Many who are swept into the sea by rogue waves don't survive.

Do learn two of the most commonly used Hawaiian words. *Aloha* (ah-low-ha) means much more than simply hello or goodbye, but that's

how you'll hear it used most often. **Mahalo** (mah-hall-oh) means thank you.

Sunday, Jan 5, 2020

Maui Island, Hawaii

Sunday, January 5, 2020

Introduction

The island of Maui, Hawaii, deserves its reputation as a top vacation destination: It's covered with pristine white-sand beaches, calm ocean bays and thrilling surf, stunning mountain and volcano vistas, sugarcane fields, highland ranches, waterfall-fed pools and twisting mountain roads.

But Maui is no hidden gem—it's the second most-visited Hawaiian island, and you'll have to do some work to find tropical solitude. Still, Maui's beauty and the mix of different areas make it a good choice. Regardless of where you're staying, the entire island can be seen in a series of day trips.

Most Maui hotels and resorts line the leeward, dry western shores of the island in West Maui and South Maui. The majority of the island's visitors stay there. Beyond the perimeters of the beautiful resort areas, however, the rest of Maui is open for exploration.

Highlights

Sights—Whale-watching December-April in the shallow ocean channels or by boat; lounging on any of the island's fantastic beaches; Art Night Fridays in Lahaina.

Museums—Alexander and Baldwin Sugar Museum; Bailey House Museum; Hana Cultural Center.

Memorable Meals—An appetizer and a drink at the secluded Mama's Fish House outside Pa'ia; sushi at Sansei Seafood Restaurant and Sushi Bar; celebrity chef cuisine at Star Noodle; dinner and a show at the Old Lahaina Luau.

Late Night—Local entertainers at Charley's Restaurant & Saloon in Pa'ia; **Ulalena** at the Maui Theatre, the live show of Hawaii's history; bar crawling along Lahaina's strip of historic whaling-era bars.

Walks—The short, paved walk to view the Iao Needle cinder cone in Iao Valley State Park; any of the public walkways near the resorts; a stroll along the path stretching across Ka'anapali Beach; the manicured coastal trail in Wailea.

Especially for Kids—The walk-through aquarium tunnel of Maui Ocean Center; the Maui Golf & Sports Park for miniature golf, bumper boats and the X-treme trampoline; the ziplines at Maui Tropical Plantation.

Geography

Maui's shape resembles a lopsided figure-eight, composed of two volcanoes. The dormant volcano Haleakala (10,000 ft/3,000 m tall) and the rolling hills of Upcountry Maui are to the east. On the opposite side are the dramatic mountains of the West Maui Range (with peaks rising more than 5,000 ft/1,500 m).

In between, a central valley cleaves the island, giving Maui its nickname, the Valley Isle. The island's major roads and towns follow the coastline and run along the central valley. Maui overlooks the neighboring volcanic islands of Hawaii, Molokai, Lanai and Kahoolawe, and the crescent-shaped Molokini.

History

Polynesian navigators from the Marquesas Islands and Tahiti journeyed thousands of miles/kilometers to first settle the chain of Hawaiian Islands beginning around AD 500. Maui's Chief Kahekili was the first to nearly unite the islands under one command, but it wasn't until 1810 that King Kamehameha of the Big Island accomplished the feat. Lahaina, Maui, served as the Kingdom of Hawaii's capital from 1820 to 1845.

British Capt. James Cook made the first recorded Western contact in 1778. International trade in sandalwood, whaling, sugar and

pineapple developed in the 1800s. The islands became known for their sugarcane plantations, and immigrant workers arrived from around the world. At the same time, Christian missionaries arrived on the islands from the U.S.

The Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown in 1893 and six years later, the U.S. annexed the islands. Hawaii became the 50th state in 1959.

The mainstay of the economy, the sugarcane industry, began to falter in the 1990s. The state has since diversified to other industries, including tourism, agriculture and construction.

Potpourri

Removing stones or sand from Hawaii is not only archaeologically and environmentally frowned upon, but locals believe all rocks belong to volcano goddess Pele and doing so will invite her wrath. Each year visitors mail back stones and sand to visitor bureaus and other offices, citing bad luck.

Bats are the only warm-blooded land animals native to Hawaii. The mongoose was imported from India to eradicate rats, thought to have stowed away on boats to run rampant there. The experiment was a failure: The mongoose hunts in daytime, while rats are nocturnal.

There are no billboards on Maui to mar the views.

Every winter some of the world's best surfers compete on waves towering more than 40 ft/12 m at Maui's famed Jaws surf break. Spectators can watch safely from the cliffs above as Jet Skis tow the surfers into the waves.

The oldest school west of the Mississippi is the Lahainaluna School in Lahaina, established in 1831 by U.S. missionaries.

Hawaiian written language, devised by missionaries, uses only seven consonants: h, k, l, m, n, p and w along with the vowels a, e, i, o and u.

Pi'ilani Heiau, at the Kahanu National Tropical Botanical Garden, is the largest temple complex remaining in all of Polynesia.

Sightseeing

Spend an afternoon or evening exploring Lahaina Town. Get up before dawn for the drive up the Haleakala volcano to see the sunrise at the crater. Allow a day to drive the Hana Highway; it is a road that is meant to be savored.

Make sure you also take time to learn some of the island's history at one of the museums and to learn about some of the island's flora at one of the nurseries or botanical gardens.

Recreation

Because of its fabulous weather and warm, inviting ocean waters, outdoor activities and watersports are highly popular on Maui. Snorkel in the submerged bowl of Molokini Crater, where parrotfish and other dazzling tropical specimens dart among the cauliflower coral. Explore the island's coastline on a sea kayaking tour, ride along lush tropical trails on horseback or take a helicopter tour above the otherwise inaccessible valleys of the upcountry slopes.

Whale-watching is a popular activity December-April. Visitors often seek out McGregor Point on Honoapi'ilani Highway 30 for its ocean views and vista of South Maui. It is a prime spot to watch the whales breach.

Shopping

Maui's shopping options range from inexpensive novelty gift shops to upscale luxury boutiques.

Kitsch is alive and well in Maui's souvenir stores: You'll find dolphin ashtrays, glass whale paperweights, shell jewelry boxes, "Just Mauied" T-shirts and grass skirts. But the island also has other souvenir possibilities.

Look for *pareau* (colorful skirts worn over swimwear), Hawaiian shirts, handmade tapa products (a soft paperlike material made from the bark of the mulberry tree), freshwater pearls, *kukui*-nut jewelry, handmade quilts, koa-wood sculptures, tropical-fruit jams and teas, macadamia nuts and Kona coffee. Tropical fruits and flowers are also available but must be approved for export (many stores will ship products for you).

Front Street in Lahaina probably has the island's largest collection of small shops and art galleries. Everything from T-shirt stalls to fine

jewelry stores are there. Shopping can be crowded and chaotic, depending on the day and time, but it's a fun place to people-watch.

Shopping centers are dotted across the island. Don't overlook the shopping arcades in the big hotels—you won't find many bargains there, but you'll almost always discover unusual shops and gift ideas.

Various shuttle buses operate within the Lahaina-Ka'anapali, Kapalua and Wailea areas and provide shuttle service to and from the main shopping centers, golf courses and the resorts. Inquire with the hotel concierge or desk staff.

Shopping Hours: Monday-Saturday 9 am-9 pm and Sunday 10 am-6 pm. Some shopping malls may stay open later in the evenings.

Dining Overview

Maui's steady stream of visitors supports a thriving and diverse restaurant scene. You can enjoy the best of Asian, American, French, Italian and Polynesian cuisines, and often a blend of the styles and flavors are featured on the menus. Hawaiian regional cuisine is an outgrowth of local chefs using innovative techniques on the freshest local ingredients. Fresh seafood, herbs and vegetables from Upcountry farms combine for some memorable meals.

Maui has a couple of its own specialties. Be sure to sample the Maui onion. Similar to Georgia's Vidalia onion, it's so sweet it can be eaten almost like an apple. (Try the creamy Maui onion soup.) The purple Molokai sweet potato makes for a visual treat. Maui Potato Chips, a local brand made from Maui potatoes, go well with any sandwich. It's also easy to find Taro Chips, which are purple or brown and have a hearty flavor. The ubiquitous plate lunch typically provides an inexpensive and generously portioned two scoops of rice, macaroni salad, and beef, fish, pork or chicken with gravy.

The ambience of most establishments reflects the indoor-outdoor and casual spirit of Hawaii. The majority of restaurants, not surprisingly, are located where the tourists are in West and South Maui. Versions of the luau are offered at many hotels and other venues. They usually include Hawaiian music and dance as well as food (*kalua* pig, poi and other dishes).

Note: Maui County law prohibits guests from taking their own wine or liquor into licensed establishments. This "no corkage" policy applies to restaurants and large banquets at licensed facilities. You must order from their wine lists. If the venue does not have a liquor license, it may permit you to take your own for a corkage fee.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$10; \$\$ = US\$10-\$20; \$\$\$ = US\$21-\$50; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Personal Safety

Violent crime is minimal in Maui, but take the same precautions you would elsewhere: Use common sense and be aware of your surroundings, especially at night and in bars. Don't leave valuables unattended at the beach, and never leave anything of value inside a parked car, even if it's locked. Locals leave their cars unlocked to avoid broken windows. Rental cars are common targets at trail heads and remote beaches.

If a sign says "*Kapu*," that is Hawaiian for "off-limits," meaning keep out. It is best to follow these warnings and do not venture where you are not welcome (most likely private property).

Dos & Don'ts

Do make an attempt to pronounce Hawaiian words correctly (sounding out all of the vowels) when dealing with locals. Don't attempt to be friendly by speaking bad pidgin to local residents.

Do make arrangements to watch the whales when the season arrives, but don't stop in the middle of the road to gawk at them offshore.

Do enjoy and respect the tropical ocean. Don't step or stand on coral, which can kill it (and besides, coral is very sharp and can cut you), and don't turn your back on the waves (the currents can be strong).

Do relax and ease into "Hawaiian time." Don't be impatient on the highways.

Do enjoy the breathtaking views on the Hana Highway. Pull over and let faster cars behind you pass.

Do stay on trails when hiking to avoid inadvertently damaging endemic or endangered plants, such as the silversword.

Do make an effort to learn about Hawaiian culture and history while visiting. Maui is more than just a pretty resort destination; cultural

exhibits and classes proliferate.

Do wear "slippers" (rubber sandals, or flip-flops), even out to dinner. Do take your shoes off before entering anyone's home.

Do buy "Made in Maui" products whenever possible and support Maui self-sustainability by shopping at local farmers markets.

Don't waste your valuable vacation time at a time-share presentation just for free activities tickets or discounts unless you are truly interested in owning a vacation week. Do ask a lot of questions when you are on the tour.

Do use public transportation instead of driving whenever possible. Be careful on bicycles or scooters or when walking, as shoulders are narrow and streets are not typically pedestrian- or bike-friendly.

Do accept a lei greeting (unless you are allergic). Both men and women wear flower leis, which are often presented with a kiss on the cheek. And ladies, feel free to tuck a flower behind your ear.

Friday, Jan 10, 2020

Ensenada, Baja California Norte, Mexico

Friday, January 10, 2020

Introduction

It's said that Ensenada, Mexico—one of Mexico's busiest ports—is built around a bar. Although that's not true (fishing and wineries remain its economic mainstays), Hussong's Cantina has enticed revelers to Ensenada since 1892—a date that's easy to believe once visitors see the legendary watering hole's clapboard exterior and scarred wooden floors covered in sawdust. Most tourist dollars are spent by U.S. partygoers who drive south or arrive on cruise ships out of Southern California.

Another of Ensenada's attractions is the low-key and truly Mexican flavor of its reasonably priced restaurants, shops and hotels—all only 65 mi/105 km south of the U.S.-Mexico border. These are rapidly succumbing to mass tourism and all that it entails, but for the moment they are wonderful enclaves of culture and cuisine, and in a much safer setting than most of the border towns offer.

Visitors soon find, however, that Ensenada isn't really a beach resort: The closest beach is a 15-minute drive away, and the most important occupant of the waterfront boulevard is a bustling fish market. But while Ensenada has neither the beachfront boardwalk of Puerto Vallarta nor Mazatlan's "Golden Zone" of beaches and bars, it does boast an earthy attraction and friendly people in an authentic Mexican environment.

The lack of palm-lined coves and colonial architecture doesn't keep tourists away. Visitors to Ensenada can visit a cantina or sidewalk cafe and stroll through the market and adjoining seafood eateries. Tourists browse along the main shopping district, Avenida Lopez Mateos, with its sidewalks, refurbished storefronts and ornate streetlamps. Visitors can also enjoy good wine from gold-green Guadalupe Valley outside the city.

Ensenada serves as the gateway to the fabled Baja Peninsula and is considered one of the best sportfishing ports anywhere along the Pacific.

Highlights

Sights—Fabulous views of the harbor, city and one of the largest flags you'll ever see from El Mirador on Chapultepec Hill; the ocean geyser at La Bufadora; the Valle de Guadalupe wine region; world-class sportfishing, surfing and wind surfing.

Museums—The Museo del Puerto; the Museo Historico Regional de Ensenada; and the Museo de Historia de Ensenada.

Memorable Meals—Fresh fish tacos at one of the food stands facing Ensenada's daily fish market; seafood at La Cocedora de Langosta.

Late Night—Loud music and dancing at Papas and Beer; a visit to Hussong's Cantina.

Walks—Strolling along La Ventana al Mar (Window to the Sea) park or the *malecon* (ocean-facing boulevard).

Especially for Kids—Go-karts and family fun at the Epcocas Family Amusement Center.

Geography

Downtown Ensenada faces Todos Santos Bay (All Saints' Bay), which curves along the waterfront Bulevar Lazaro Cardenas (formerly Costero, and still often referred to by that name). Most of the restaurants, shops and businesses geared toward tourists are along the waterfront and Avenida Lopez Mateos (known as Calle Primera or First Street), one block inland. Ensenada's best beaches are about a 15-minute drive south of town. Islas Todos Santos, a pair of islands located two hours offshore by boat, draw ever-increasing numbers for surfing.

History

Good fishing may have been what enticed the nomadic Yumano Indians, the first known visitors to the region, but they never established a permanent settlement. Portuguese explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo (exploring in the name of Spain) stopped briefly in the area in September 1542, and called it San Mateo. Nearly 60 years later, in 1602, Sebastian Vizcaino renamed the bay Bahia de Todos Santos. He dubbed the shore Ensenada de Todos Santos, which means "cove of all saints" in Spanish. Even Junipero Serro stopped in on Ensenada, but only briefly, and no missions were founded there.

In 1806, Alferes Jose Manuel Ruiz, a commander of the border territory, bought Ensenada from Gov. Jose Joaquín Arrillaga for 2 pesos. He used the land only for ranching. In 1824, Ruiz returned to his hometown Loreto and sold the land to his son-in-law, Francisco Gastelum for 600 pesos. Gastelum and his family became the first nonnative residents of Ensenada.

Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1810 and became its own country in 1821. In 1848, the treaty of Guadalupe Hildago was signed, splitting Alta and Baja Californias. In 1854, American William Walker invaded the territory and named the Gastelum house Fort McKibbin. His occupation was short lived, however. A guerilla group, led by Antonio Melendez, took the area back for Mexico.

Then it languished for nearly 20 years with few settlers from south of Baja and other parts of Mexico, until the gold strike in 1870. This established Ensenada as a port, since people preferred to do business by sea instead of the lengthy land travel through Tijuana. Once the mines were depleted, Ensenada drifted into obscurity again until the 1920s, when film idols bucking U.S. Prohibition started driving down to indulge themselves.

In the 1930s, a paved road was built between Tijuana and Ensenada ensuring the small but steady stream of tourists from the U.S. Migration doubled from interior Mexico during World War II, when Ensenada became a military base. Another boost to the economy came when Californians started building vacation homes around Ensenada.

Nonetheless, the town still retains a strong Mexican flavor, though it is less obvious when the cruise ships call, bringing millions of tourist per year to this once-sleepy town. Even when business is booming, locals approach their work with a sense of calm, certain that everything absolutely necessary will get done *eventually*. Visitors soon slip into the same pace. Just relax and sing along with the mariachis, and remember that *manana* means just that—tomorrow (maybe), not today.

Potpourri

Filibuster William Walker invaded Baja California in 1853, declaring it the Republic of Lower California, and made Ensenada his headquarters, living in the only house in town. He wanted to annex Lower California to the U.S. as a slave state but failed.

Following the end of the Civil War, a wave of U.S. adventurers immigrated to Ensenada hoping to make a fortune from the 1870 gold rush.

"Poker Charlie," a local character of the 1890s when Ensenada was still a frontier town, claimed to own the only kangaroo racehorse, a mix of coyote and burro.

Ensenada hosts one of Baja's largest Carnival celebrations, with parades, fiestas and dances. In general, the city's high season corresponds with U.S. holidays—expect crowds during the summer months as well as during spring break, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day.

Todos Santos Islands have hosted the world's most famous surfing contest—Billabong—several times. Waves in excess of 50 ft/17 m are common there and are the largest anywhere along the Pacific coast.

Most immigrants to the areas surrounding Ensenada are not from the U.S. (except for winter residents) or even Mexico, but rather are descended from religious emigres from Russia. Many local vineyards were founded by these immigrants, known as Molokans.

Chez Panisse, Berkeley, CA



Chez Panisse, Berkeley, CA

1517 Shattuck Ave.
Berkeley, CA
Phone: 510-548-5049 (restaurant) or 510-548-5049 (cafe)
<http://www.chezpanisse.com>

Chez Panisse, Berkeley, CA

This is where modern California cuisine was born. Culinary visionary Alice Waters led the way, insisting upon using only organically grown vegetables and chemical-free meats. With a casual upstairs cafe and an elegant downstairs restaurant, this great American option has something for everyone. There's a prix-fixe menu every night in the restaurant, and the same dish is rarely served two nights in a row. This citadel is well worth a trip across the Bay Bridge.

Monday-Thursday 5:30-8:45 pm, Friday and Saturday 6-9:15 pm. Reservations required for the restaurant; reservations for the cafe are highly recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Delancey Street Restaurant, San Francisco, CA



Delancey Street Restaurant, San Francisco, CA

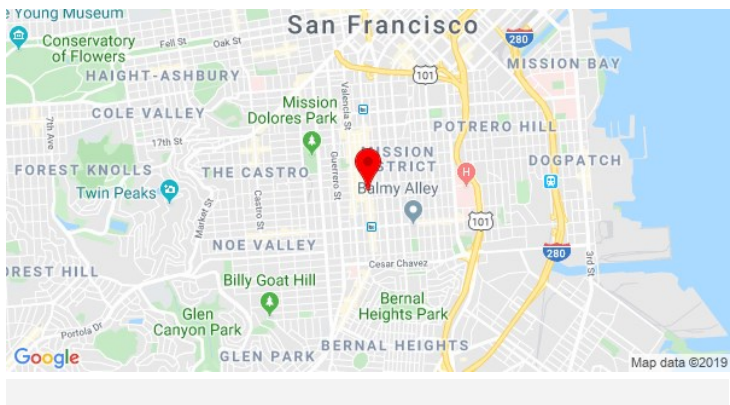
The Embarcadero (at Brannan)
San Francisco, CA
Phone: 415-512-5179
<http://www.delanceystreetfoundation.org/enterrestaurant.php>

Delancey Street Restaurant, San Francisco, CA

Located on the Embarcadero at Pier 30, this restaurant is the brainchild of the Delancey Street Foundation, with employees all part of the self-help treatment center for victims of substance abuse and felons looking to get their feet back on the ground. No backwater dive, this place boasts a corner locale with an outdoor terrace that has to-die-for views of the Bay Bridge and the Bay. The menu is comprised of comfort fare, and you won't find a less costly salmon or steak dinner in the city. Beer and wine flow freely, and the vintage room harkens back to gas-lamp diners of the past. The cafe-cum-bookstore around the corner is also run by the Delancey Street Foundation.

Tuesday-Sunday 11 am-11 pm.

Foreign Cinema, San Francisco, CA



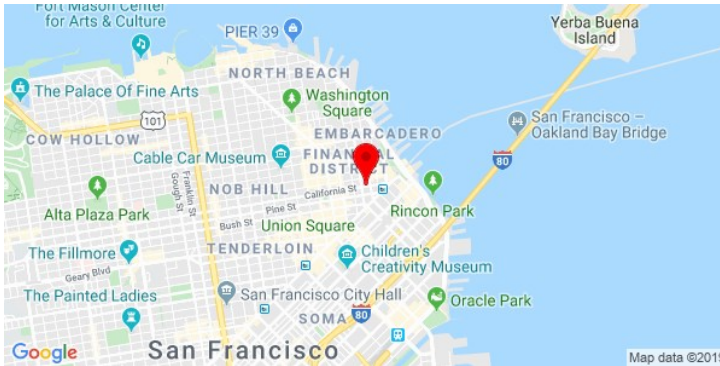
Foreign Cinema, San Francisco, CA

Within the chrome and brick exterior, the simple and robust California and Mediterranean cuisine is the star at this popular restaurant in the Mission District. Foreign films flicker on a back wall of the heated patio as diners enjoy the ever-changing menu. The weekend brunch oyster bar is a perennial favorite. Seating is available fireside and upstairs on the mezzanine overlooking the dining room. Private dining is offered in the art gallery.

Sunday-Wednesday 5:30-10 pm, Thursday-Saturday 5:30-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Valet parking is available for US\$15. Most major credit cards.

Foreign Cinema, San Francisco, CA

2534 Mission St. (between 21st and 22nd streets)
San Francisco, CA
Phone: 415-648-7600
<http://www.foreigncinema.com>

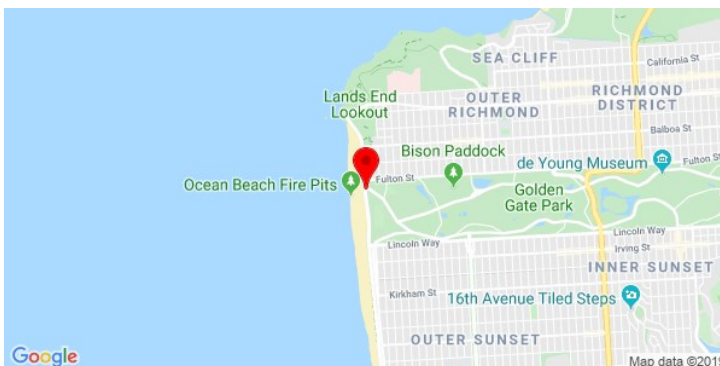
Michael Mina, San Francisco, CA**Michael Mina, San Francisco, CA**

252 California St. (between Front and Battery streets)
San Francisco, CA
Phone: 415-397-9222
<http://www.michaelmina.net>

Michael Mina, San Francisco, CA

One of San Francisco's finest dining experiences—and that's a bold claim in a city boasting one of the country's greatest culinary scenes—Michael Mina is a one-of-a-kind experience. The presentation of each meticulously laid out dish—black truffle-poached halibut, garlic-thyme roasted lamb, lobster potpie and passion-fruit panna cotta—is simply divine. The chef's selections seven-course tasting menu is US\$170.

Monday-Thursday 11:30 am-9 pm, Friday 11:30 am-10 pm, Saturday 5:30-10 pm, Sunday 5:30-9 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

The Beach Chalet, San Francisco, CA**The Beach Chalet, San Francisco, CA**

1000 Great Highway (between Irving and Balboa streets, where Golden Gate Park reaches Ocean Beach)
San Francisco, CA
Phone: 415-386-8439
<http://www.beachchalet.com>

The Beach Chalet, San Francisco, CA

This is a great place to have a house-brewed ale as you watch the waves crashing on Ocean Beach. Even on sunny days, the beach is cool and windswept, with stinging sand—it's pleasant to sit, warm and protected, inside. It has a casual atmosphere and somewhat overpriced burgers and seafood, but hey, there *is* that killer view. Live music most evenings. The adjoining Park Chalet overlooks verdant Golden Gate Park and offers a similar, less costly American bistro menu of pizzas, soups and salads.

Monday-Thursday 11 am-9:30 pm, Friday 11 am-10 pm, Saturday 10 am-10 pm, Sunday 10 am-9:30 pm. \$\$. Most major credit cards.

Zuni Cafe, San Francisco, CA

**Zuni Cafe, San Francisco, CA**

1658 Market St. (between Franklin and Gough streets)
San Francisco, CA
Phone: 415-552-2522
<http://www.zunicafe.com>

Zuni Cafe, San Francisco, CA

Located in a glass-walled space overlooking Market Street, Zuni still feels like a hot spot even after more than 20 years. The secret: a copper-topped bar, buzzing clientele and a semi open kitchen with a brick oven. It all adds up to a place that can make any day into a special occasion. The restaurant is known for brick-oven roasted chicken and Caesar salad—always good choices—and you **must** try the burger, although it's only available for lunch and after 10 pm. Downstairs is where the action is; avoid the cramped dining room upstairs.

Tuesday-Thursday 11:30 am-11 pm, Friday and Saturday 11:30 am-midnight, Sunday 11 am-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Valet parking is available during dinner only for US\$12; enter on Rose Alley. Most major credit cards.