

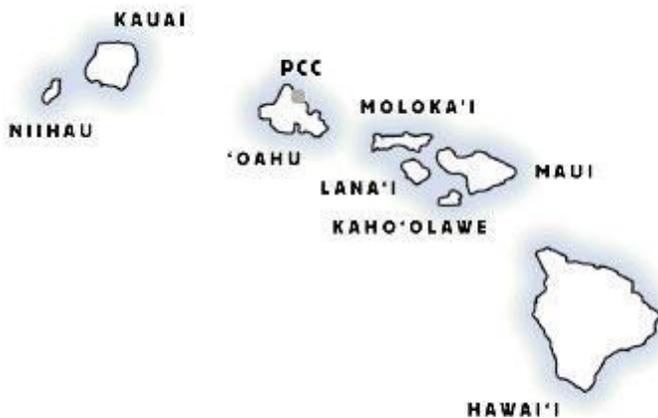
Islands of Hawaii

Overview

Quite simply, there are good reasons why Hawai'i is one of the leading visitor destinations in the world: The natural beauty of the islands is superlative; the tropical climate is ideal; the visitor infrastructure accommodates all levels of travelers in comfort and budget; and the reputation of the Hawaiian Aloha Spirit is well deserved.

Location

Hawai'i is located about 2,300 miles west-southwest of the mainland U.S.A., about a five-hour flight from the California coast. Hawai'i Standard Time (HST) is three hours behind the west coast (PST) during daylight savings months, and otherwise two hours behind.



Geography

There are actually 132 islands in Hawai'i, including the leeward northwest part of the island chain that extends for a thousand miles toward Midway; but most people think of Hawai'i as the 8 major islands: Hawai'i, Maui, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, Kaho'olawe (uninhabited), O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Ni'ihau (privately owned island, 20 miles off the west coast of Kauai).

The Hawaiian archipelago actually extends 1000 miles to the northwest of the major inhabited islands comprising an area of just under 11,000 square miles. Much of the area is actually water, with the land mass comprising approximately 6,400 square miles of it.

The peaks of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa (located on Hawai'i island) rise above 13,000 feet above sea level. However the volcanos actually start at the ocean floor and rise above sea level. This makes both volcanos well over 33,000 feet tall, and the tallest mountains in the world, often with snow-capped peaks during the winter. By comparison the peaks of Mount Everest are just over 29,000 feet.

In contrast to the high mountains of Hawai'i island, most of the northwestern islands of the archipelago are coral atolls, which make up Papahānaumokuākea, the Marine National Monument. It encompasses 139,797 square miles of the Pacific Ocean (362,073 square kilometers) - an area larger than all the country's national parks combined. Travel there is restricted to scientific, educational, and cultural practices.

The capital of Hawai'i was Kailua Kona during the time of Kamehameha the Great. It was later moved to Lahaina Maui during the reign of Kamehameha III, who finally moved it to Honolulu. Oahu, the third largest island in land mass, has been the center of government and commerce from that point forward. The majority of the Aloha State's population lives on Oahu, and the Polynesian Cultural Center is located about an hour's drive from the famous Waikiki Beach towards the north shore. Hawai'i is the only archipelago of Polynesia that is north of the equator. Our tropical climate means temperatures at sea level rarely rise above 90°(F) in the summer and only occasionally drop below 70° (F) at night in the winter. The islands are also graced most days by gentle trade winds.

Population

About 1.42 million people currently live in Hawai'i, with approximately 67% of them on the island of Oahu. About 17% of the overall population is Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian, making Hawaiians a minority in their own land. There are also other Pacific Islanders in Hawai'i as well. The remainder of the population, in which no group holds a majority, is divided among Asians, Caucasians and others, making Hawai'i the "melting pot of the Pacific" and a truly unique and diverse place.

History and Discovery

It is believed that the Hawaiian Islands were settled in two main waves. Explorers from the Marquesas Islands first arrived in Hawai'i in 300 A.D. A second group of Polynesians came from Tahiti in 1200 A.D. There are also oral traditions of Hawai'i being an origin of some of the early Maori emigrants to Aotearoa (New Zealand).

British Captain James Cook is credited with being the first European to discover Hawai'i in 1778, although some oral traditions and scholars hold that the Spaniards, who first crossed the Pacific Ocean in 1522, and regularly crossed from Peru to the Philippines by the late 1500s, also made inadvertent landfall in Hawai'i, but never correctly mapped or claimed credit for their accomplishment. Captain Cook is also well known for having been killed several months later by Hawaiians at Kealahou Bay in Kona while trying to retrieve a long boat. After Cook, the stream of Europeans quickly grew including Russians for a short period. In addition to appreciating the beauty of the islands, they participated in the sandalwood trade.

The first Christian missionaries arrived in 1820 and many Hawaiians converted to christianity. The year before, King Kamehameha II and Queen Kaahumanu had abolished the age old Kapu or taboo system based on the ancient Hawaiian religion. In 1850 the Kingdom of Hawai'i made

it possible for foreigners to own private property in Hawai'i, which along with increasing international trade with America, gave rise to the sugar industry. The rapid depletion of the Hawaiian population due to illnesses eventually led the sugar plantation owners to import contract laborers from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Russia, Scandinavia, Portugal and the Azores, Europe and Puerto Rico, among other places: The descendants of those who stayed formed Hawai'i cosmopolitan population of today.

In 1893 a revolution largely led by influential American businessmen with the help of forces off the USS Boston, overthrew the last reigning Hawaiian monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani. In 1900 the United States of America annexed Hawai'i, reportedly for the purpose of gaining the Pearl Harbor anchorage. We were known as the Territory of Hawai'i until an overwhelming majority of the population voted for statehood in the 1950s: Hawai'i became the 50th state in 1959. It should be noted that 94% of those who voted, voted for statehood if you only count the "Yes" votes. If you factor in the "No" votes, only 77% of those who voted wanted statehood. It is also interesting to note that 65% of those eligible to vote decided to stay home and "vote with their feet" by not acknowledging the vote at all, and in essence voting "No". If you factor in the "voting with your feet" votes, only 27% of eligible voters wanted statehood which was well below the 50% needed to carry the vote. Today, Hawai'i with its ancient Polynesian heritage and overlays of Asian and other cultures is one of the most unique parts of America.

Language

English and Hawaiian are the official languages of the state of Hawai'i. At one time, the number of Hawaiian speakers had greatly diminished, but a tremendous renaissance of Hawaiian culture has taken place over the past generation or two. Today, thousands of people study and speak the Hawaiian language and other aspects of Hawaiian culture, and there are even K-12 Hawaiian immersion schools within the public statewide Department of Education. Also Bachelors and Masters degrees in Hawaiian Language are available at the university level.

Hawaiian is closely related to the other major Polynesian dialects: Tahitian, Maori, Marquesan, Rarotongan, Samoan and Tongan. Although it is not necessarily mutually intelligible with these other dialects, many Hawaiian words and grammatical syntax are similar or nearly identical with the other dialects. Hawaiian is also sometimes recognized around the world as the language with the fewest letters in its alphabet: a, e, i, o, u, h, k, l, m, n, p, w, - 12 in all.

However, the Hawaiian alphabet actually has 42 letters, as each vowel has 4 different sounds and meanings (ie; a, 'a, ā, 'ā), making 20 different letters for vowel sounds alone. Then add all the consonants found in English, and the glottal stop that acts as a consonant, totaling 42 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet. The purpose of the consonant is to stop the flow of air and sound as in the English word Uh-oh. The 'Okina or glottal stop, is the break in the sound of the word and is treated and written as a consonant. Hawaiian words never end in a consonant, so you will never see the 'okina at the end of the word. Also you will never have two consonants next to each other in a Hawaiian word. Likewise you will never have an 'okina next to a consonant.

The kahakō (macron) is another diacritical mark used in modern times to help with those who do not speak Hawaiian to pronounce Hawaiian words correctly. It is placed above a vowel to hold out that sound twice as long as it would normally be. It doesn't stress that vowel or add emphasis to it. The change in sound also changes the meaning of the word. As an example; Nana means a style of weaving (ulana) mats, Nāna means for him/her or by him/her, or even belonging to him/her, Nanā means to snarl or provoke, as one looking to fight, and Nānā means to look, watch, or observe.

Even though the missionaries said that the Hawaiians only had 7 consonants, we know from as early as 1822 when the first printed Hawaiian language booklet was printed, that Hawaiians used all the consonant sound when speaking. As evident in the printing of more than 100 Hawaiian language newspapers and publications from 1834 (Ka Lama Hawai'i, first newspaper west of the Rocky Mountain), till 1948. We have learned through missionary journals and minutes from meetings that some letters were omitted to make it easier for the missionaries to write in Hawaiian, as Hawaiian was an oral language up until that point.

When Hawaiians learned to read and write their language, the level of literacy in Hawaii rose to more than 90% literacy in a single generation. The highest ever in history, for any civilization. When early Christian missionaries first devised the Hawaiian alphabet, almost everyone spoke the language and so they often did not indicate the 'okina or the kahakō in writing. Native speakers already understood the difference, say, between nāna and nānā by context. As the years went by the number of Hawaiian language speakers diminished due to government intervention.

Today, we use the 'okina and kahakō in writing to help those who can not see the difference in the context of the sentence, and also to help those who are not sure how to pronounce the word correctly. Along with the rest of the Hawaiian renaissance, people and institutions such as media and government are becoming more sensitive to including the 'okina and kahakō in written Hawaiian; so, don't be surprised to see both Waikiki and Waikīkī or Lanai and Lāna'i...and try to pronounce them in the proper way.

Village Life

Ahupua'a – Ahupua'a was a land division in Hawai'i that extended from the mountain to about 1 ½ miles into the sea. The borders of the Ahupua'a often followed ridge lines and streams. It was more than just a land division. It was a sustainable self-sufficient eco system which allowed everyone who live within those boundaries, to work and share with others in that ahupua'a, and access to resources to sustain a community. Salt and ocean resources, fishing and gathering along the coast, taro or sweet potato farmed on fertile mid-lands, Koa and other trees for timber growing in the mountain areas. The coastal boundaries were marked by an Ahu, a stone foundation supporting a carved image of a pua'a (pig), symbolizing the payments made to the high chief of the island, by lesser chiefs or Konohiki in charge of each Ahupua'a.

There was no private land ownership, however tenure of the land by Maka'ainana (commoners) was stable. Many Ahupua'a included a loko i'a (fish pond) as a source of food. Hawaiians

were the only ones in the Pacific to have aquaculture in the form of these loko i‘a. They were able to raise as much as 5 times the amount of fish within the loko i‘a than you would find outside of the loko i‘a in the surrounding ocean. Some of these loko i‘a had external walls a mile or two long. Creating large fisheries with multiple Makaha (gate ways) to aid in stocking and harvesting of fish. Some of the loko i‘a today are still in working order, or being repaired and renovated to start producing fish for sale.

Kauhale – Kauhale is a family dwelling consisting of multiple houses with individual purposes. A village consisted of multiple Kauhale in an ‘Ahupua‘a land division. Hawaiians did not live in single buildings divided into different rooms. Each house in the kauhale had its own purpose. We had houses to sleep in (Hale Noho/Noa), houses to eat in (Hale Mua, Hale ‘Aina), houses to work in (Hale Ulana / Hale Hana), houses to store things in (Hale Papa‘a), houses for our canoes (Hale Wa‘a), houses for fishing (Hale Lawai‘a), and temporary houses for the sick (Hale Pe‘a).

Hale (houses) in a kauhale were made with thatched roofs made of Pili grass. The approximately 3 foot long grass was bundled and tied to a lattice roof structure in a layered pattern much like roof shingles. There were two main types of houses, one with enclosed thatched walls, and the other with open walls and thatched roof only. Hales that had four walls were believed to be special houses where your ancestors would come back to visit with the family, so special care and respect was given to these houses. Even today, many Hawaiian families will not allow children to run around, play games, and make a lot of noise inside the house. All of that should be done outside the house.

All hales had a stone platform at least a foot high to keep the house dry from rain water. The top layer of the stone platform consisted of small pebbles (‘ili‘ili) that made it more comfortable to walk and sit on. Woven lauhala (pandanus leaves) mats were placed on the stones, often times with leaves or pili grass beneath to add softness for sitting and sleeping. The inside walls of the house were often lined with lauhala or Tī leaves.

To provide light inside the hale, Hawaiians used kukui or candlenuts. The beautiful kukui with its light green leaves which can be seen growing down the mountains in cascades, is the Hawai‘i state tree. The kernel in the nut produces a natural oil that burns like kerosene. In old Hawai‘i, kukui oil was placed in hollowed-out rocks with a kapa or bark-cloth wick. Sometimes, several kukui nuts were also strung on a coconut leaf midrib and each was lighted in turn. Kukui nuts are widely used today to make lei.

Hale Ali‘i - The Hale Ali‘i (Chiefs House) was a house where the high chief would conduct meetings and councils. It was often placed on a prominent rise in the kauhale to show respect to the rank and status of the chief. It was not a place for him to live or reside. He had a house to sleep in (Hale Noho/Noa), and a house to eat in (Hale Mua), as well as other houses to use. If there was a Hale Ali‘i in the kauhale, then everyone who lived in that kauhale was related to the Ali‘i (chief).

Hale Mua - The Hale Mua (Men's Eating House) is an example of the 'Ai Kapu (eating law) practiced by Hawaiians prior to 1820. Men and women were forbidden to eat together. It was believed that certain foods were spiritual gifts from the Gods and reserved for men only. By eating separately, it took away any chance of women mistakingly eating these forbidden foods. Because of this, men had to cook their own special foods. They would actually cook all the food and feed the women in their eating house (Hale 'Aina), and then the Hale Mua for themselves.

During meal time the men would symbolically feed and take care of the family gods. Young boys would eat with their mothers until the age of accountability around 6 to 8 years of age. After initiated into manhood the young boy would then eat in the Hale Mua with the men and learn his responsibility as a man in Hawaiian society.

Hawaiians excelled at making bowls. Often made from wood, gourds and stone. Larger wooden platters were also made to make poi. Poi is a dish made from a starchy vegetable that is cooked, peeled, and mashed to eat with meat, fish, or chicken. Poi was pounded on large wooden platters called Papa Ku'i 'Ai. It was often made from Taro (Kalo) but was also made from uala (sweet potato), ulu (bread fruit), and mai'a (banana). The stone used to mash the poi is called a pōhaku ku'i 'ai and made from basalt or sometimes from sandstone found in the islands.

Food was often cooked in an imu (underground oven). There was a lot of work involved in cooking this way. First a pit was dug about 3 feet deep and as wide as was needed to fit all the food to be cooked. Wood was placed in the bottom of the pit, and porous riverbed stones were placed on the wood. A fire was started and the stones heated until they became white hot. After the stones have been heated properly, any remaining wood was removed and the stones leveled. A layer of shredded banana stumps and leaves were placed on the leveled rocks to create a buffer between the hot rocks and the food. The moisture from the banana stumps and leaves on the hot rocks created steam to help cook the food. Food, wrapped in banana and tī leaves were placed on the bed of shredded banana stumps and then more leaves were placed on it to add more protection of the food. Next mats were placed on the leaves (today burlap or canvas tarps often soaked in water) to cover the whole imu. Then dirt was used to cover everything so that no steam escaped. After several hours (depending on what is being cooked), the dirt is carefully removed so to not fall on the food. When the mats (or tarps) were removed, the food was uncovered and placed on platters for eating.

Generally cooking was traditionally done once a day and the main meal was served around midday. Food was stored for dinner that evening and breakfast the next day. Cooking was started early in the morning so that the food would be ready by lunch time.

Hale Wa'a - The Hale Wa'a (Canoe House) was built close to the water for easy access. The Koa (Acacia Koa) canoes at the Polynesian Cultural Center are all over 100 years old. Koa tree logs of sufficient size to carve canoes are increasingly harder to find today in Hawai'i.

Wa'a Kaulua 'O Iosepa - Iosepa is a 57 foot doubled hull voyaging canoe built by the BYU-Hawai'i Hawaiian Studies Department in 2001. It was built using trees from Fiji, because no

suitable Koa trees were available in Hawai‘i at the time of the build. The trees from Fiji are called dakua trees and the wood is very similar to that of the Hawaiian koa that would normally be used. Building of the canoe began in March of that year, under the direction of two master carvers - Tuione Pulotu and Kawika Eskaran.

Traditionally it would take a whole community to build a canoe like this, and it did for Iosepa as well. It was an open build, meaning anyone who wanted to help could, and did. Eight months from the day the first logs were cut, Iosepa was completed. A feat that surprised many canoe builders, as building voyaging canoes would often take several years to make. On November 3 2001, Iosepa rolled into Lā‘ie bay for the first time. Thousands of people were there at it’s dedication and launching. Many helped push Iosepa into the water as it rolled in on papaya tree trunks for the first time. Iosepa is a classroom for the BYU-Hawai‘i Hawaiian Studies Department to teach the students how to sail a voyaging canoe and has made several sails within the islands of Hawai‘i with it’s crew of students, faculty, and community members.

Hale Lawai'a - The Hale Lawai‘a (Fishing House) was a house to store and make all the tools used for fishing, including ‘upena (nets), aho (fishing line), kao / ‘ō (fishing spears), makau (hooks), hā lawai‘a (sinkers), and kōheoheo (floaters). ‘Aha / Aho (cordage) which was utilized to make all of these items, were completed first and took the longest to make. Hooks were made from bone, shell, and sometimes a bone and hard wood composite. Sometimes stone, wood, and bone were used together to create fishing lures like the leho he‘e (octopus lure). Pump drills with shell tips were used to help cut and shape the hooks, then stone and coral were used to fine shape, sand, and finish them. These were valued possessions, as they took a long time to make and were not easily replaced.

Hale Hālau - The Hale Hālau (House of Learning) was used to teach various aspects of Hawaiian culture, including the hula (dance), kapa (bark cloth material), lā‘au lapa‘au (herbal medicine), lomi (massage), protocol and ceremony among others.

Hale Noho/Noa - Sleeping House. The purpose of this house was to provide a place for the family to sleep. In essence, a bedroom. In traditional times, individual families (parents and children) all slept together in the same hale noho/noa. Multiple hale noho/noa were often found in a kauhale as most families were extended families. In the other hale noho would be an uncle and aunty with the cousins, or maybe grandma and grandpa. The number of hale noho/noa in a kauhala depended on how large the family was. Much like today where most homes have multiple bedrooms, kauhale had multiple hale noho/noa. The order in which everyone slept, extending from the entrance door, was very important. Each person would like down in the middle of the building with legs stretched out towards the wall for safety reasons, and children slept on the outer ends of the hale. Traditional beds were very simple. Pili grass and dried leaves were spread on the pebbled floors as a cushion. Mats were then placed over the grass to serve as beds. The mats were often left in the sun to cleanse and refresh them during the daytime. After the missionaries brought framed beds to the islands, Hawaiians copied them by weaving lauhala frames which they filled with leaves and other natural materials. Again, they were covered with simple mats for comfort.

Hale Papa'a - The Hale Papa'a (Storage house) is a storage house use to store many different things. Sometimes Chiefs would have multiple hale papa'a to store different things. One might be for all of the chiefly regalia, such as kahili (feathered standard) 'ahu'ula (feather capes) lei hulu (feather lei), lei niho palaoa (whale tooth pendant), and other lei and clothing for the chief. Other Hale Papa'a might store food, or mats and clothing.

Kapa Kuiki - Hawaiian Quilting - Hawaiian women were also fascinated by the New England patchwork quilts that missionary women brought to the islands. After learning quilting techniques, the Hawaiian women began to design and appliqué their own patterns which reflected the natural beauty of the islands. They also added stitching around the appliqué that suggest the wave movements of the ocean. Some of these quilts or kapa patterns have become family treasures and are passed from generation to generation. Some designs were considered royal and were, of course, forbidden to any but kings. Hawaiian quilting, which is demonstrated in the 1850s Hawaiian Mission Settlement, was originally an individual art done on a quilting frame. Older quilts such as those on display at the Polynesian Cultural Center and other places throughout Hawai'i, are highly prized heirlooms. Today, however, many Hawaiian quilts are machine appliqué and, therefore, are of lesser value – yet they still represent traditional designs.

Mea Pa'ani - Mea Pa'ani or games were very important for the development of many different skills from hand and eye coordination, to physical strength, and strategy. Simple games like Hū (tops) taught fine finger dexterity for young children. Pala'ie (ball and loop game) taught hand and eye coordination. Ulumaika (Hawaiian disk rolling) taught one to read the terrain and force of the roll. Kōnane (Hawaiian checkers) taught strategy to the young chiefs. Games were played when time allowed. Makahiki was a time to celebrate the God Lono and the harvest. It was also a time when normal activities gave way to sporting events and competitions. Many different games were played, testing a wide variety of skills used for everyday work as well as combat and war.

Interesting Facts

Hawai'i is more than just a tropical island. It contains 10 of the 14 climate zones in the world. Two of which are only found in Hawai'i, making Hawai'i one of the most environmentally diverse place to live in.