Travel tips

Make the most out of your visit

First the bad news: Honolulu has terrible rush hour traffic so plan your outings accordingly. We are an island so there's basically just one main highway to go around the island and 3 freeways that cross it. Best tip is to make sure that you are not on the highways between 6am and 8am or 4pm to 6pm. Do that and you will have a much more pleasant visit.

If you are staying in Waikiki you probably won't need a rental car for your entire trip and hotel parking is pretty expensive. But it is definitely a good idea to get one for at least a day or two. Then you have more options for where to have your ceremony so that you can drive there as well as take an around the island tour on day two.

If you have a rental car be sure to plan a north shore outing to visit the famous surfing beaches at Pipeline, Banzai, Waimea, and Sunset beach. Finish the afternoon at historic Haleiwa town. There you can swim with the turtles at beautiful Haleiwa Ali'i beach park, check out the shops in Haleiwa town, grab some shaved ice at world famous Matusmoto's, and maybe wrap the day up at Jamison's By The Sea for dinner. Check our posting below for tips on the island's best luau's for a great night out.

We recommend www.hotwire.com for car rentals.

Accommodations on Oahu

While Hawaii has an incredible selection of fine hotels another good alternative is staying at a vacation rental. These range from studio condominiums to mansions on the beach.

A one bedroom vacation rental in Waikiki can cost the same or even less than a regular hotel room. Many of them also have kitchenettes or full-sized kitchens and since meals are one of the biggest expenses for vacationers this can be a real value in terms of savings. Instead of needing to eat out for every meal you can keep things in the fridge so that you can grab some breakfast before setting out for the day or even pack a lunch to take with you. No need to run down to the nearest store for a bottled water when you can just grab one from the fridge. There are also house rentals that can accommodate large families and groups, many right on the ocean.

We have found that one of the best, easiest sites to use to find a vacation rental is www.vrbo.com Check it out and you could save a lot of money. Oh yeah, and don't forget to contact us for a wonderful Hawaii wedding or vow renewal ceremony!

Must do’s in the Waikiki area

Have a plate lunch at Rainbow Drive-In. A plate lunch is Hawaii’s fast food staple. 2 scoops of rice, 1 scoop of macaroni salad and your choice of about a dozen different entrees. We highly recommend the pork teriyaki plate or the “loco moco”. Right next door get some delicious Shimazu shaved ice for dessert. Just down the road is Leonard’s Bakery with its world famous malasadas. Malasadas are a Portuguese pastry similar to a doughnut but no hole. Leonard’s offers your choice of the classic malasada, custard filled, chocolate crème filled, and the very special haupia (coconut pudding), all cooked fresh while you wait.

Best Luaus (Hawaiian show and dinner)

The Hale Koa Hotel www.halekoa.com
Centrally located in Waikiki so very convenient and pretty good quality.

Polynesian Cultural Center www.polynesianculturalcenter.com
This is basically an all-day event. Disney like Polynesian villages from various island cultures, inter active events, etc., and big stage luau show in the evening. About 1.5 hours from Waikiki, bus transport available.

Neither of these is on the ocean.

Best Oceanside, Hawaiian styled luaus, both offering Hawaiian culture based activities:

Paradise Cove www.paradisecovehawaii.com
Located at the 5 star Ko'Olina Resort area in west Oahu. We regularly do weddings next door at Lanikuhonua Beach (Also known as Secret beach), or right there at Paradise Cove, sometimes timed so that the couple and guests celebrate right at the luau right after the ceremony. 45 minutes to an hour drive from Waikiki, charter bus transport included in pricing.

Germaine's Luau www.germainesluau.com
Another highly rated luau with an oceanside setting. Slightly less expensive than Paradise Cove but not located in a resort area. On the other hand, perhaps just a little bit more "authentic" in some ways.

More tips are on the way!!!