



Destination Guide: Honolulu



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AAA Destination Guide: Official AAA maps, travel information and top picks

AAA Destination Guide: Honolulu includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Regardless of where in the world you go, the mention of Honolulu conjures similar tropical images: swaying palms, wide beaches and rolling waves breaking on the surface of sparkling azure waters. The paradisiacal ruminations are in no way hackneyed: You figuratively step into a picture postcard the minute you set foot on the island of O'ahu.

Although the surf, sand and mild weather beckon with irresistible allure, Honolulu also thrives as a commercial center in which Asia and America interlock fingers. The "sheltered bay" throbs as the pulse of the Pacific—a great place to get thousands of miles away from it all without sacrificing metropolitan conveniences. Don't pass up the chance to explore the thriving downtown area, marked by busy streets, towering skyscrapers and a bustling port that juggles ocean liners, fishing boats and freighters. Sites around Pearl Harbor reflect on the city's tragic place in wartime history.



Both the state's capital and its largest city, Honolulu lays claim to being the only American city founded by royalty, but there's nothing haughty about it. A laid-back feel floods the lush oasis, where everything moves at a slower pace and "mellow" best describes the enviable way of life.

Essentials

Hop on a body board and ride the gentle waves at Kailua Beach, where the azure waters also attract kayakers and windsurfers. Brave the crowds on narrow Waikīkī Beach and spread a towel on your little sliver of sand in preparation for catching some serious rays.

Stand on the deck of the USS Arizona Memorial and reflect upon the events of Dec. 7, 1941, when Japanese bombers sank the ship, killing 1,177 sailors and propelling the United States into World War II.

Suit up with fins, a mask and a snorkel—all of which you can rent on the cheap from nearby vendors—and go for a swim with the colorful tropical fish in Hānauma Bay. Lace up your sneakers (or hiking boots) and trek to the summit of Diamond Head State Monument, where you'll be treated to spectacular 360-degree vistas of O'ahu.

Play a round at Ko Olina Golf Club, a scenic course distinguished by the 12th hole, which leaves a beautiful impression with a drive-through waterfall just below the elevated tee box.

When the surf's up at Waimea Bay, marvel at the audacity of the surfers who boldly take on the awe-inspiring waves, which can reach heights of up to 30 feet.

Taste unusual foods, listen to the sounds of the barkers and browse the many peculiar goods at the Aloha Flea Market.

Follow the Mānoa Falls Trail, a 1.5-mile round-trip hike that traces Waihi Stream and winds through the vines, ferns and trees of a rain forest en route to the scenic falls.

Haggle for bargains in Chinatown, where you can find beautiful calligraphy, pungent spices, gold jewelry and hand-made *lei*.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Honolulu in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Honolulu.

Day 1: Morning

Bite into the seared poke served with farm-fresh eggs at [Sam Choy's Breakfast, Lunch & Crab](#). Called "Hawai'i soul food" by chef and restaurateur Sam Choy, the fish dish has many variations; often it consists of raw ahi tuna topped with soy sauce and sesame seeds, though some recipes match shellfish with seaweed, tofu or scallions. Or, try a Hawaiian breakfast specialty called loco moco. A hot, gooey heap consisting of rice, then meat (traditionally a hamburger patty, but Sam Choy's also offers loco moco platters with fish or pork as well as a

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#):



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. USS Arizona Memorial

1 Arizona Memorial Place
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 422-0561



2. Diamond Head State Monument

Diamond Head Rd & 18th Ave
Honolulu, HI 96816
Phone: (808) 587-0300

3. Waimea

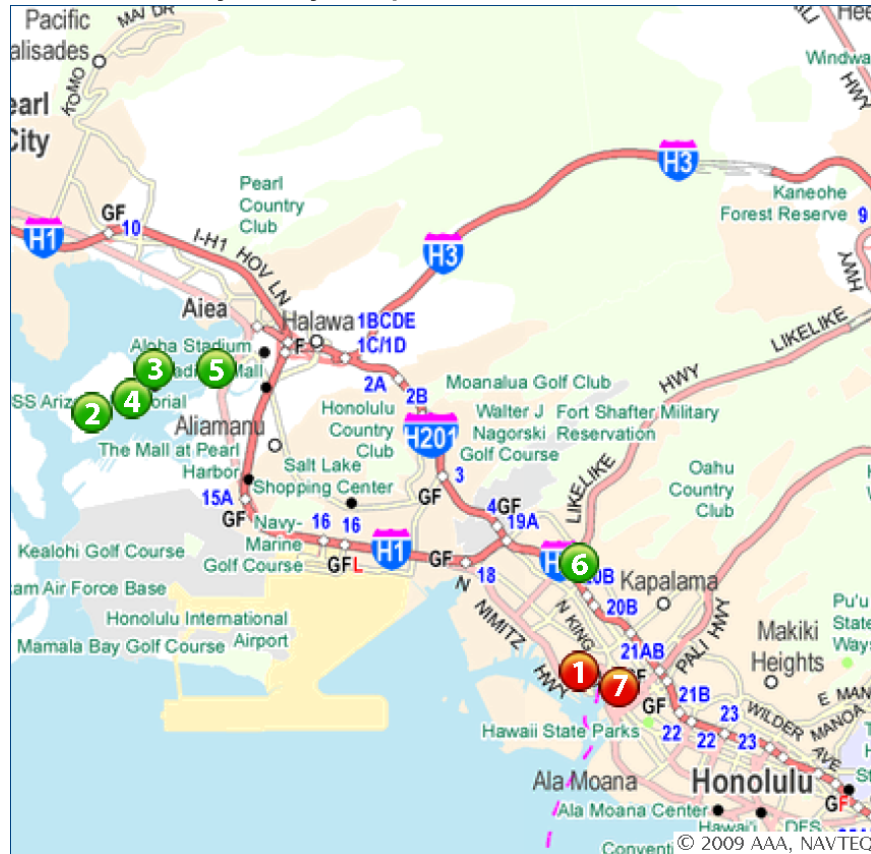
vegetarian option), a fried egg and finally, brown gravy. Although the origins of this favorite morning comfort food of Hawai'i residents are somewhat muddy, it's generally accepted that the meal was created as a mish-mash of American and Japanese cuisines and so named because the first person bold enough to sample it had the appropriate nickname *Loco*, or "Crazy."

Pay homage to the 3,581 Americans killed or wounded at [Pearl Harbor](#) on Dec. 7, 1941, when the Japanese launched a surprise assault on the U.S. naval base and its Pacific Fleet. After the early morning strike, a dozen U.S. ships were either sunken or beached and more than 300 U.S. aircraft had either suffered damages or been destroyed.

Whether you choose to drive or take TheBus (direct routes are Nos. 20 or 42 from Waikīkī and Nos. 20, 42 or 52 from the Ala Moana Center or downtown) to Pearl Harbor, arrive early—some 5,000 somber tourists visit the area daily. Several sites present artifacts from the battle, while interpretive programs and dramatic multimedia displays and films document the "Day of Infamy." Just offshore is the striking [USS Arizona Memorial](#); the white linear structure traverses the final resting place for most of the 1,177 crew members who perished after a devastating armor-piercing bomb hit the battleship. At the [Battleship Missouri Memorial](#), you walk the decks of the "Mighty Mo," where, in 1945, Japanese representatives signed an official surrender agreement ending the

Second World War. Visitors to the USS Bowfin Submarine Museum and Park discover what life was like for the 80 men stationed on this underwater vessel, launched exactly a year after the Pearl Harbor attack. The park also encompasses a waterfront memorial to World War II's fallen submariners.

Honolulu in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Day 1 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#); AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)

- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Sam Choy's Breakfast, Lunch & Crab

580 N Nimitz Hwy
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 545-7979

2. Pearl Harbor

3. USS Arizona Memorial

1 Arizona Memorial Place
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 422-0561



4. Battleship Missouri Memorial

63 Cowpens St
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (877) 644-4896



5. USS Bowfin Submarine Museum and Park

11 Arizona Memorial Drive
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 423-1341



6. Bishop Museum and Planetarium

1525 Bernice St
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 847-3511



7. Indigo Eurasian Cuisine

1121 Nuuanu Ave
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 521-2900

Afternoon

Chow down at family-owned Helena's Hawaiian Food (1240 N. School St.). Typically buzzing with hordes of famished locals who know *exactly* where to go for simple, authentic Hawaiian cuisine, the small, down-home restaurant also has garnered national foodie awards. Order a few regional specialties à la carte and create your own pu-pu platter of exotic morsels. Sample the fried butterfish collar, poi (mashed taro root), home-smoked, pipikaula-style short ribs, and creamy squid luau (squid and taro leaves stewed in coconut milk). Finish things up with a traditional Hawaiian dessert: haupia, a firm, coconut-flavored pudding.

See what love looks like at the Bishop Museum and Planetarium, located just a few blocks away from Helena's. In 1850 Bernice Pauahi Pahi, betrothed to the future king of Hawai'i, chose ardor over royalty when she defied convention and instead wed American businessman Charles Reed

Bishop. She passed away in 1884; five years later her spouse founded the museum—today the state’s largest—as a memorial to his beloved wife. Aside from housing Mrs. Bishop’s personal collection of Hawaiian artifacts, the state’s premier cultural institution also contains preserved specimens of ancient birds and a science center where visitors walk through a mock volcano.

Evening

Make new friends at [Indigo Eurasian Cuisine](#) surrounded by intricate Asian antiques, glowing paper lanterns and colorful draperies. Share some goat cheese wontons, steamed shiitake mushroom and chicken bao buns and lobster potstickers while dining next to a waterfall peppered by lush tropical plants. Afterward, pair a decadent chocolate torte with a lychee martini in the Green Room, one of Indigo’s hip lounge areas. Most nights you’ll find a crowd of young professionals grooving to live music—from jazz to hip-hop to reggae.

Day 2: Morning

Explore downtown Honolulu, where cultural and historic sites are clustered together amid gleaming skyscrapers and tall, bending palm trees. Walk through the [Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace](#) to admire its vibrant stained-glass windows, or browse the metalwork, oil paintings and crafts displayed at the [Hawai’i State Art Museum \(HiSAM\)](#). At the [‘Iolani Palace](#), docents lead you through the country’s only official royal residence; it was here that Queen Lili’uokalani, the last reigning monarch of the Hawaiian islands, was imprisoned in 1893 after being deposed by those in support of Hawai’i’s annexation to the United States. An accomplished musician and songwriter, she composed about 165 songs while confined within an austere room on the second floor of this otherwise opulent palace. Today a bronze statue of the revered queen stands between the palace and another architectural gem, the [Hawai’i State Capitol](#).

Head *ma kai* (toward the ocean) to [Nico’s at Pier 38](#), a low-key, waterfront eatery where you can savor a hearty, skillfully prepared meal for less than \$10 thanks to the restaurant’s proximity to a fish auction.

(It’s right next door, so whether you come for breakfast or lunch, Nico’s is likely to be packed with ravenous auction workers and fishermen.) Hailing from Lyon, France, chef Nicholas Chaize serves up such Hawaiian staples as the plate lunch, infusing dishes typical to the locale with a dash of French gusto. Early risers might try a three-egg fish omelet or the French toast made with sweet bread from a Honolulu bakery. For an afternoon visit, there’s no better choice than the furikake pan-seared ahi, though chef Chaize’s juicy, hand-packed double cheeseburger is hard to pass up, even at a place known for its floppingly fresh seafood.

Afternoon

Emulate one of O’ahu’s most distinctively *dressed* personalities: Magnum P.I. Vibrant Hawaiian shirts—an essential part of the ’80s TV sleuth’s wardrobe—hang throughout Bailey’s Antiques and Aloha Shirts (517 Kapahulu Ave.), their elaborate designs showcasing the plants, birds and culture of Hawai’i. While Bailey’s boasts a selection of more than 15,000 shirts (you can buy a tacky-tourist polyester top for about \$10 or spend a few hundred bucks splurging on a more sought-after vintage piece), the crammed store also sells everything from early 20th-century Hawaiian postcards to Elvis Presley collectibles.

Now that you’re decked in more suitable island attire, the only logical destination is Waikīkī Beach, a 2-mile stretch where sun-burnt vacationers lounge along sandy white shores and surfers ply the waters waiting for a wicked swell. While you might choose to spend the day swimming, building sand castles, or boogie boarding near the Kapahulu Groin (a pedestrian walkway extending into the ocean), if there’s not enough time to get down and dirty by the seashore, do a little sightseeing. In Kuhio Beach Park off Kalākaua Avenue, gaze at the “wizard stones” of Kapaemahu and try to unlock ancient secrets said to be hidden away inside the four boulders. Just east, across from the [Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa](#), place a *lei* on a monument steeped in controversy since its dedication in 1990. Honoring Duke Kahanamoku, an Olympic medal-winning swimmer who helped popularize the sport of surfing in the early 1900s, the statue depicts the

legendary athlete standing with his back to the crashing ocean waves—something a “real” surfer simply would *never* do.

Evening

Sway in your seat (if you can find one) as strolling musicians pluck ukuleles and sing old-school Hawaiian songs at Duke’s at Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach. As the sun sets, sip mai tais with your new ohana (family) while surveying the colorful, ever-changing twilight mosaic dancing above the sea. In the distance the Diamond Head State Monument volcanic crater looms over twinkling azure waters where the eatery’s namesake—Waikīkī’s favorite son Duke Kahanamoku—purportedly rode a monstrous 30-foot wave. With its spectacular coastal views and an open-air bar classically complemented by tiki torches and rustling palm trees, this oasis of a restaurant caters to both tourists and locals alike. But no matter where you reside, you’re sure to return to Duke’s for more of its sinfully delicious fare, whether it takes 15 minutes or 15 hours to come back for seconds.

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;

AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace

1184 Bishop St
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 536-7036

4. Hawai’i State Capitol

415 Beretania St
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0178



2. Hawai’i State Art Museum (HiSAM)

250 S Hotel St
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0300

5. Nico’s at Pier 38

1133 N Nimitz Hwy
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 540-1377

3. ‘Iolani Palace

364 S King St.
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 522-0832

Honolulu in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



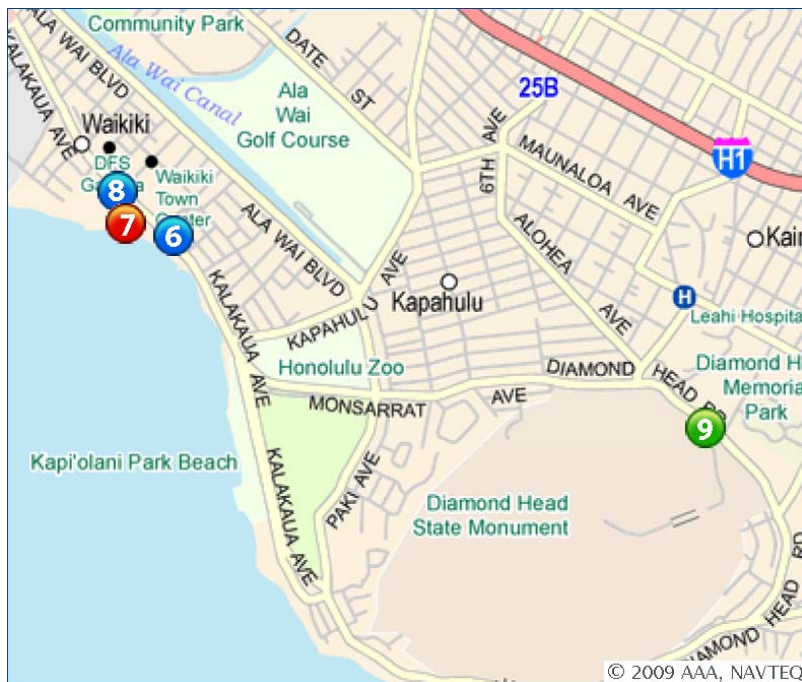
Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](http://TripTik.com)

Day 3: Morning

Get wrapped up in a quilt of sights, smells, sounds and flavors in Honolulu’s Chinatown, a community that is resilient (it survived two fires and an outbreak of the bubonic plague) and diverse (you’ll notice splashes of other Asian cultures, including Filipino, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese). Fringed by N. Beretania, Bethel and River streets and the N. Nimitz Highway, the district encompasses ornate temples shrouded in musky incense and restaurants bustling with steaming dim sum carts. Stroll the area in the early morning, when its many noodle factories are abuzz manufacturing udon and ramen pastas. You’ll also see (and smell) Oahu Market—offering up fresh produce, fish and meats much as it has since 1904—as it springs to life at the corner of N. King

and Kekaulike streets. Another marketplace, its maze of stalls overflowing with colorful trinkets, is on Maunakea Street, a thoroughfare besieged by stores proffering fragrant, handmade *lei*. On a busy day, a *lei* shop can easily go through several gallons of pikake (a type of jasmine) and tens of thousands of tuberose, orchids and carnations. Learn insider tidbits about Chinatown's history and architecture by booking a walking tour through the Hawai'i Heritage Center, (808) 521-2749, or the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, (808) 533-3181.

Honolulu in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



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Afternoon

“Watch out for falling cannonballs,” directs a sign at the Foster Botanical Garden, located about 2 blocks northeast of Chinatown. Similar in size and appearance to a coconut, the fruit of the cannonball tree (*Couropita guianensis*) hang from vinelike stalks covering the tree trunk. Unlike the brown, lackluster “cannonballs” that emit an unpleasant smell once their

casing is cracked, the species' intricate, intoxicatingly fragrant flowers are prized and are said to resemble a sacred Hindu symbol. German botanist and physician William Hillebrand planted many of the rare and imposing trees found on the botanical garden grounds in the mid-1800s. Covering about 14 acres, it also is home to dazzling orchids and primitive plants from around the world.

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

6. Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa 
 2424 Kalakaua Ave
 Honolulu, HI
 Phone: (808) 923-1234

8. Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach 
 2335 Kalakaua Ave
 Honolulu, HI
 Phone: (808) 923-0711

7. Duke's 
 2335 Kalakaua Ave
 Honolulu, HI 96815
 Phone: (808) 922-2268

9. Diamond Head State Monument
 Diamond Head Rd & 18th Ave
 Honolulu, HI 96816
 Phone: (808) 587-0300

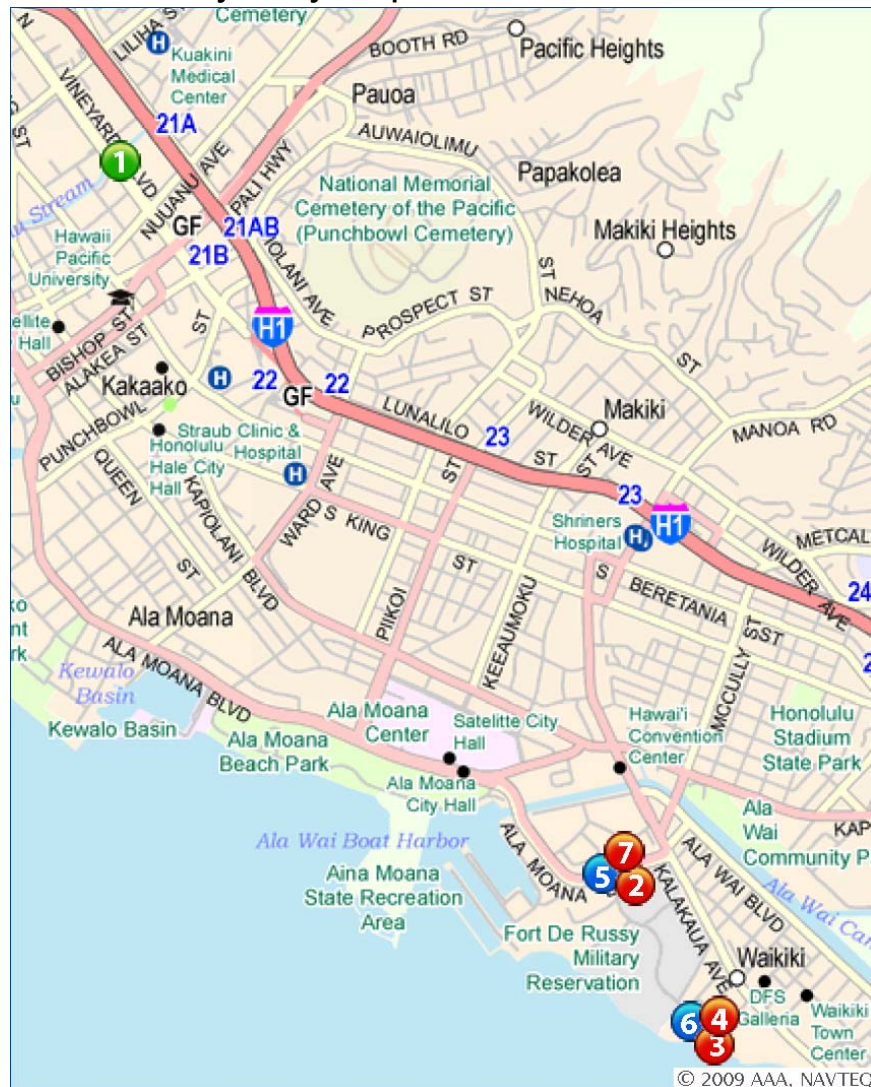
Evening

Leave the flip-flops behind and indulge yourself in paradise. The top-notch chefs at Bali Steak & Seafood, La Mer and Orchids will ensure you're well-fed on your vacation, preparing such dishes as hot and sour eggplant ravioli, steamed Manila clams and Kobe-style beef with bordelaise sauce. No matter where you choose to dine, book early, and, of course, request a table with a view. Refined elegance and heavenly Waikīkī scenery await you at Bali, a AAA Four Diamond restaurant inside the oceanfront Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa. La Mer, a AAA Five Diamond restaurant, and the Four Diamond Orchids present arresting seascapes at the Halekulani hotel. Enjoy a cup of pressed Kona coffee with dessert in one of the chic lodging's distinctive dining rooms, then move to the Lewers Lounge for cocktails and classic tunes.

It's 2 a.m. You've closed down the last bar, when suddenly, you develop an inexplicable craving for pancakes. Fortunately for you, the red neon sign outside nearby Wailana Coffee House is aglow, beckoning weary night owls. Though the menu at the nondescript, 24-hour eatery features

typical diner fare, while in Honolulu, do as the natives do—order (what else?) a side of Spam to accompany Wailana’s fluffy all-you-can-eat flapjacks.

Honolulu in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Day 3 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

1. Foster Botanical Garden

50 N Vineyard Blvd
 Honolulu, HI 96817
 Phone: (808) 522-7066

2. Bali Steak & Seafood

2005 Kalia Rd
 Honolulu, HI 96815
 Phone: (808) 941-2254

3. La Mer

2199 Kalia Rd
 Honolulu, HI 96815
 Phone: (808) 923-2311

4. Orchids

2199 Kalia Rd
 Honolulu, HI 96815
 Phone: (808) 923-2311

5. Hilton Hawaiian Village

Beach Resort & Spa
 2005 Kalia Rd
 Honolulu, HI
 Phone: (808) 949-4321

6. Halekulani

2199 Kalia Rd
 Honolulu, HI
 Phone: (808) 923-2311

7. Wailana Coffee House

1860 Ala Moana Blvd
 Honolulu, HI 96815
 Phone: (808) 955-1764

Restaurants

If you can visit only one memorable restaurant in Honolulu, then make La Mer the one. In the beautiful Halekulani Hotel, the second-floor spot offers stunning ocean views, including glorious Hawaiian sunsets when the place opens. Men must wear a jacket; loaners are provided for those underdressed. Island flavor infuses fabulous French dishes, such as basil-stuffed ruby snapper with crispy skin in exotic, rich sauces. For something more traditional, choose the flavorful filet of beef. Finish your meal with an outstanding dessert presented on an elegant cart.

Chef Mavro—the only independently owned restaurant not associated with a hotel to hold AAA’s Four Diamond Award since 2001—flourishes under the hand of Frenchman George Mavrothalassitis, who worked in many top spots in France and Hawai’i before opening his own easily accessible restaurant just outside of the Waikiki area. For a memorable experience, try the three-, four- or six-course dinners with optional wine

pairings. Succumb to the temptation of a signature dish: award-winning onaga (red snapper) baked in Hawaiian-sea salt crust, Hudson Valley foie gras and Hawaiian lobster in vanilla-coconut sauce. Such exotic flavors as lemon grass, rosemary and Madras curries enhance each dish, and extraordinary desserts are made fresh daily.

Travel past the airport to the [JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa at Ko Olina](#), where you'll find award-winning [Azul](#), a wonderful formal dining room. Appetizers include foie gras, grilled scallops and crab cakes, in addition to outstanding antipasti selections. After your palate is primed, savor grilled beef tenderloin, jumbo tiger prawns or roasted rack of lamb. Two chef's prix fixe menus pair with an impressive wine selection noteworthy for its interesting Italian and Spanish choices.



Locals with big appetites for good food and huge portions love laid-back [Sam Choy's Breakfast, Lunch & Crab](#). In an industrial district outside of the Waikīkī area and near the famed Hilo Hattie store, the warehouse-style restaurant showcases varied local favorites: freshly caught crab, lobster and shellfish, hearty steaks, pork and beef ribs, chicken and even Spam (a Hawaiian staple). Expect a fun, busy spot that's great for families. Try Sam's Big Aloha Beer, which is brewed on the premises. Award-winning restaurateur Sam Choy produces best-selling cookbooks and has his own TV cooking show.

Only one restaurant in Honolulu truly serves some of the best "Hawaiian food": [Ono Hawaiian Foods](#). The tiny restaurant occupies a nondescript strip mall just outside the Waikīkī area. Locals eagerly line up outside, some with their own wine in hand, as this place has no liquor license. Most Ono ("delicious") dishes—such as Kalua pig, chicken and long rice and laulau (pork and taro tops steamed inside ti leaves)—come as combination plates for less than 10 bucks. Poi takes some getting used to, so you might want to instead consider rice. Check out the take-out menu if you don't have time to wait for a table.

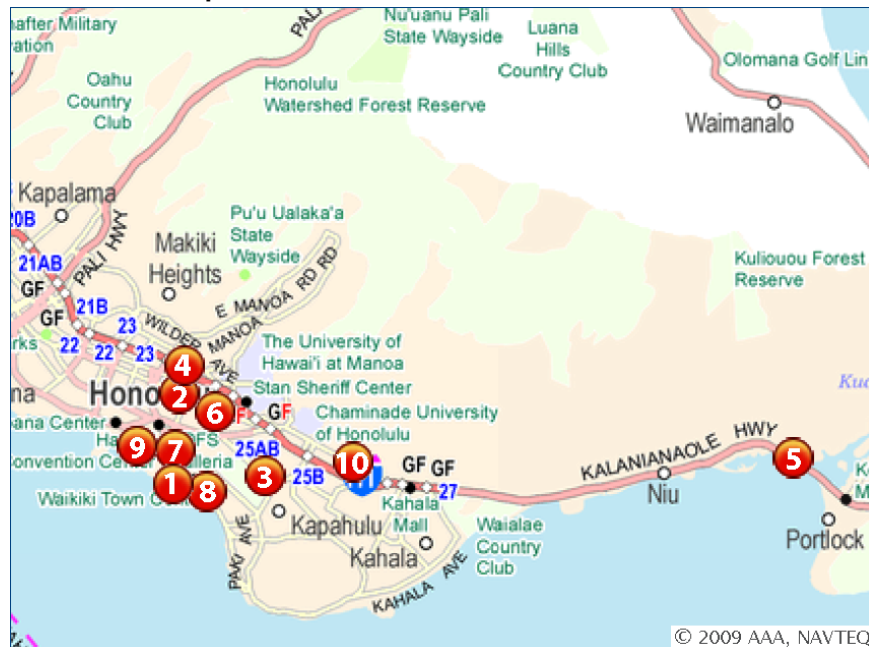
The name Don Ho evokes wonderful Hawaiian images, and that's why his name is on [Don Ho's Island Grill](#). Photographs of the legend with celebrities evoke memories, and he shows up unpredictably for special concerts. The tropics come alive in a fun setting bedecked with bamboo ceilings, a thatched roof and fake palms. Make a meal from pupu platters loaded with such appetizers as ribs, crab cakes, calamari and Chinese pot stickers. To try nearly all of it, spring for the Don Ho sampler. Also worth consideration: pizza, veggie taro burgers, a wonderful assortment of sandwiches and a combination plate with tasty poke (salad with nuts, seaweed and ahi tuna), lomi salmon, pork and, of course, poi.

Just outside the Waikīkī area is one of Hawai'i's longtime favorites, [Alan Wong's Restaurant](#). Long showered with raves and awards from locals and media alike, this place gives you a great taste of Hawai'i Regional Cuisine from a daily changing menu. Innovative dishes employ the freshest locally grown produce and Pacific Ocean ingredients. Menu listings marked with a pineapple designation are signature dishes. Diners can order a la carte, but for the most memorable experience, opt for a menu tasting with or without wine pairings. The dining room can get loud in the popular spot; call ahead to request a quieter table.

When the flagship [Roy's](#) opened in 1988, chef Roy Yamaguchi was hailed as the first chef to mix European cooking practices with fresh Asian and Pacific Rim ingredients. Some called it "Eurasian," but Yamaguchi preferred "Hawaiian fusion." The chef's restaurant conglomerate now includes 22 eateries in the continental United States, six in Hawai'i, three in Japan and one in Guam, but everything started here. The specialty is seafood, but excellent choices also entice die-hard meat lovers. You can't go wrong with a signature dish or the big-time value in the three-course prix fixe menu. The casually upscale dining room features a glassed-enclosed exhibition kitchen as well as exquisite views of Diamond Head and Maunalua Bay.

Since 1944, [The Willows](#) has soothed guests in a magnificent one-acre oasis of verdant gardens with native flowers and waterfalls. After being closed for seven years, it's back serving locals and tourists a scrumptious

Restaurants Map



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buffet lunch and dinner. Load your plate with fresh salad or try prime rib from the carving station. If neither tempts you, try unlimited seafood from the seafood station or items from the sushi bar. Dinner buffets include one whole crispy-skinned suckling pig and dessert, which might include a create-your-own treat from the sundae station or any of an assortment of fresh island fruits, pies and cakes. Those who take the time to try this well-kept secret won't be disappointed.

Top food magazines have sung the praises of [Keo's in Waikiki](#), perhaps the best known Thai restaurant in Hawai'i. Devoted followers crave such tempting and unusual choices as the signature "Evil Jungle Prince," which brings together fresh basil, red chilis, coconut milk and a choice of shrimp or chicken on a bed of cabbage. Salads—such as roast duck, crispy calamari and green papaya—can make a complete dinner by themselves. Right in the heart of the Waikiki area, Keo's is easy to find and also serves daily American breakfasts.

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**

1. La Mer
2199 Kalia Rd
Honolulu, HI 96815
Phone: (808) 923-2311

2. Chef Mavro
1969 S King St
Honolulu, HI 96826
Phone: (808) 944-4714

3. Ono Hawaiian Foods (FYI)
726 Kapahulu Ave
Honolulu, HI 96816
Phone: (808) 737-2275

4. Alan Wong's Restaurant
1857 S King St, 3rd Floor
Honolulu, HI 96826
Phone: (808) 949-2526

5. Roy's
6600 Kalaniana'ole Hwy
Honolulu, HI 96825
Phone: (808) 396-7697

6. The Willows
901 Hausten St
Honolulu, HI 96826
Phone: (808) 952-9200

7. Keo's in Waikiki
2028 Kuhio Ave
Honolulu, HI 96815
Phone: (808) 951-9355

8. Duke's
2335 Kalakaua Ave
Honolulu, HI 96815
Phone: (808) 922-2268

9. Chart House Waikiki
1765 Ala Moana Blvd
Honolulu, HI 96815
Phone: (808) 941-6660

10. 3660 On the Rise
3660 Waialae Ave
Honolulu, HI 96816
Phone: (808) 737-1177

Inside the [Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach](#), [Duke's](#) arguably ranks as the state's busiest restaurant and bar, drawing capacity crowds no matter the time of day (breakfast, lunch or dinner) or the occasion. Named in honor of surfing legend Duke Kahanamoku, this popular watering hole on Waikiki Beach overlooks the spot where Duke caught his biggest wave. Highly recommended seafood preparations, including flavorful fresh fish, set you up for *hula* pie, billed as "the dessert that the sailors swam ashore for." The shareable treat piles macadamia nut ice cream, chocolate fudge, whipped cream and more nuts on a chocolate cookie crust.

For more than 30 years, knowledgeable diners have supported the [Chart House Waikiki](#), where fresh island fish and seafood serve as the basis for such dishes as bouillabaisse, pan-seared herb-crust ahi, prawns

Restaurants Map



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sautéed in Szechuan chili oil and spiny lobster tail. Carnivores salivate over juicy roasted prime rib of beef and filet mignon. Oenophiles will find Italian Pinot Grigio to Californian Cabernets among the more than 100 selections. End your meal on a sweet note with bananas Foster, New York-style cheesecake or the signature mud pie: three layers of chocolate, coffee and vanilla ice cream with decadent fudge in an Oreo crust.

Talented chef Russell Siu, who also owns the wonderful [3660 On the Rise](#), pleases the on-the-go crowd with healthy, budget-priced breakfasts, lunches and dinners at [Kaka'ako Kitchen](#). Don't expect anything fancy at warehouse-like Kaka'ako, which serves good home-style cooking on polystyrene plates. For less than \$10, you can nosh on fried rice with egg or a seared ahi tuna sandwich with soy-wasabi butter. Other good choices are meatloaf and five-spice shoyu chicken. Tasters shower raves on the amazing bread pudding, but you can't go wrong with a brownie or guava bar either.

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);
AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**

11. Azul
92-1001 Olani St
Kapolei, HI 96707
Phone: (808) 679-0079

**12. Sam Choy's Breakfast,
Lunch & Crab**
580 N Nimitz Hwy
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 545-7979

13. Don Ho's Island Grill
1 Aloha Tower Dr, #193
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 528-0807

14. Kaka'ako Kitchen
1200 Ala Moana Blvd
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: (808) 596-7488

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

Island ali'i (chiefs) loved its beautiful beaches, coconut palm groves, exotic foliage and spectacular vistas, all things celebrated in the Honolulu area's many natural attractions. Hike three quarters of a mile to the 760-foot-high summit rim of the [Diamond Head State Monument](#) volcanic crater, where you're treated to a bird's-eye view of nature's splendor.

For other dramatic panoramas, venture to the [Nu'uauu Pali State Wayside](#) and [Pu'u Ualaka'a State Wayside](#). Kamehameha the Great scored a decisive victory in the conquest of O'ahu at Nu'uauu Pali, a 1,200-foot-high gap between 2,000- to 3,000-foot cliffs. Winds on the perch can approach gale-force strength, so hold on tight to anything you're not willing to lose. A popular picnicking destination, Pu'u Ualaka'a (which translates as "rolling sweet potato hill") affords views from Diamond Head clear across to the Waianae Range.

For more up-close-and-personal encounters with nature, wander through the 14-acre [Foster Botanical Garden](#), which began in 1853 and now comprises 4,000 species of tropical trees and plants from all over the

world. Hybrid orchids, primitive cycads and many varieties of palms effectively grab your interest.

The focus remains on botany at [Lyon Arboretum](#), a 194-acre rain forest teeming with native Hawaiian, Polynesian and other verdant plants. Tiny, vibrant flowers contrast with towering breadfruit trees.

[Hānauma Bay Nature Preserve](#) shifts your attention to what lies under the water. In what remains of a volcanic crater below Koko Head, the bay entices scuba divers, snorkelers and swimmers, particularly on weekends.

Home to Pearl Harbor, the island recalls its unfortunate place in World War II history in a trio of AAA GEM attractions. The [USS Arizona Memorial](#) pays haunting homage to the 1,177 sailors who perished during a Japanese air raid on Dec. 7, 1941. Measuring 106 by 608 feet, a stark, rectangular memorial spans the ship's sunken hull, in which most of the dead are entombed. Inside the visitor center, you can tour two theaters and a museum with medals, murals, photographs and ship models.

Just north of the *Arizona* Memorial Visitor Center, you can explore both the [USS Bowfin Submarine Museum and Park](#) and the [Battleship Missouri Memorial](#). The former lets you experience how the submarine's crew lived. The museum's displays and videotapes further document the role and history of submarines, and a memorial honors the 52 U.S. submarines lost and more than 3,500 crewmen who died during the war. The latter recounts the missions of "Mighty Mo," a veteran not only of World War II but also of the Korean and Gulf wars. Wander on the Surrender Deck, where Japan signed the official act of surrender that brought World War II to an end.



Delve into another aspect of Hawaiian history at [Bishop Museum and Planetarium](#), a AAA GEM attraction. Check out the broad collection of natural history and cultural displays, including kings' 'ahu'ula (feathered

capes), Polynesian art, nose flutes and calabashes, then gaze at the Pacific sky from the observatory and planetarium.

For hands-on exploration, visit the museum's sister facility at Kalia, where you can make a *lei*, learn some *hula* moves or beat a shark-skin drum. [Polynesian Cultural Center](#), a AAA GEM attraction, studies the heritage of the South Seas region. Tour the facility on foot or in a canoe, or analyze displays of art, crafts and items related to regional customs and sports.

[Honolulu Academy of Arts](#), a AAA GEM attraction, boasts an Asian collection said to rank among the nation's finest. Japanese screens and hanging scrolls, Buddhist and Shinto sculpture, Chinese furniture and porcelain, Korean ceramics and Indian stone sculpture share exhibit space with Italian Renaissance paintings, Mayan and Greek pieces and creations by American and European masters.

Pull on a pair of floor-friendly booties and take the Grand Tour through ['Iolani Palace](#), which focuses on the islands' royal history. King Kalākaua's 1882 palace houses crown jewels, feathered cloaks and scores of other lavish appointments.

Portraits of Hawaiian royalty hang inside nearby [Kawaiaha'o Church](#), the 1842 coral-block building where rulers once worshiped and commoners give praise today. A 1912 Stephan Sinding statue of a grieving woman tugs at your heartstrings.

Embellished with volcanic rock, the rectangular 1965 [Hawai'i State Capitol](#), a AAA GEM attraction, houses the state's executive and legislative branches of government. The building's architecture exemplifies nature: the reflecting pool, symbolic of the ocean; the conical legislative chambers, symbolic of volcanoes; the perimeter columns, symbolic of coconut palms; and the open-air design, which enables sun, rain and wind to enter.

For out-and-out fun, it's hard to beat the splash and flash of [Wet 'N' Wild Hawai'i](#). The 25-acre water park incorporates water slides, a huge wave

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

pool, a lazy river and a recreation area just for your little ones. The area's animal-oriented attractions also allow for enjoyable adventures.

You'll find some native creatures wandering through [Honolulu Zoo](#), but many of the facility's 1,200-plus residents, including giraffes, elephants and lions, found their way here from other corners of the world. Maximize your memories by participating in the Zoo by Moonlight tour, a behind-the-scenes peek into the way of life of the zoo's nocturnal critters.

Attractions Details - *Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);*



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Diamond Head State Monument

Diamond Head Rd & 18th Ave
Honolulu, HI 96816
Phone: (808) 587-0300

2. Nu'uuanu Pali State Wayside

Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 587-0300

3. Pu'u Ualaka'a State Wayside

2760 Round Top Dr
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: (808) 587-0300

4. Foster Botanical Garden

50 N Vineyard Blvd
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 522-7066

5. Lyon Arboretum

3860 Manoa Rd
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: (808) 988-0456

6. Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve

7455 Kalaniana'ole Hwy
Honolulu, HI 96825
Phone: (808) 396-4229



7. Honolulu Academy of Arts

900 S Beretania St
Honolulu, HI 96814
Phone: (808) 532-8701



8. 'Iolani Palace

364 S King St
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 522-0832

9. Kawaiaha'oa Church

957 Punchbowl St
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 522-1333

10. Hawai'i State Capitol

415 Beretania St
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0178



11. Honolulu Zoo

151 Kapahulu Ave
Honolulu, HI 96815
Phone: (808) 971-7174

12. Waikiki Aquarium

2777 Kalakaua Ave
Honolulu, HI 96815
Phone: (808) 923-9741



13. Sea Life Park



41-202 Kalaniana'ole Hwy
Waimanalo, HI 96795
Phone: (866) 365-7446

Attractions Map



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14. USS Arizona Memorial

1 Arizona Memorial Place
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 422-0561



17. Bishop Museum and Planetarium

1525 Bernice St.
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808) 847-3511



15. USS Bowfin Submarine Museum and Park

11 Arizona Memorial Drive
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (808) 423-1341



18. Polynesian Cultural Center

55-370 Kamehameha Hwy
Laie, HI 96762
Phone: (800) 367-7060



16. Battleship Missouri Memorial

63 Cowpens St
Honolulu, HI 96818
Phone: (877) 644-4896



19. Wet 'N' Wild Hawai'i

400 Farrington Hwy
Kapolei, HI 96707
Phone: (808) 674-9283



If animals of the sea interest you most, the exhibits at the 1904 Waikiki Aquarium won't disappoint. The chambered nautilus—a spiral-shelled mollusk that inspired Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*—merits top billing, but giant clams, Hawaiian monk seals, sharks, sea dragons and a living coral ecosystem also garner interest.

Sea Life Park in Waimānalo allows for observation of penguins, California sea lions, whales and other marine life. You can interact with dolphins, walk amid reef inhabitants and take underwater pictures of varied denizens of the deep. The park's most famous resident is a wholphin named Kekaimalu, one of only two hybrids of a false killer whale and Atlantic bottlenose dolphin living in captivity. Two days before Christmas in 2004, Kekaimalu delivered the other: a three-quarters-dolphin/one-quarter whale female calf named Kawili Kai. To see them, you'll need to schedule a backstage tour.

Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

From early February through early March, the [Cherry Blossom Heritage Festival](#) imbues the island with the heritage of Japan. Celebrants come together for a heritage fair, pageant and coronation ball, as well as demonstrations of the tea ceremony and the Japanese art of flower arranging.



Dancing, music, crafts and demonstrations at several venues citywide help promote harmony between Hawaiians and people of the Asia-Pacific region during the [Honolulu Festival](#) in mid-March. The celebration wraps with the Grand Parade, which wends down Kalākaua Avenue.

Members of the armed forces pay tribute to soldiers who gave their lives for their country during [Memorial Day](#) ceremonies at the [National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific \(Punchbowl Cemetery\)](#).

The [King Kamehameha Celebration Floral Parade](#) kicks off with the draping of 13-foot *lei* on the statue of King Kamehameha I in the Civic Center on the Friday prior to June 11, the state holiday. It continues with a floral parade, entertainment and partying in the streets of Waikīkī.

On the third weekend in June, dancers from Japan, the mainland United States and Hawai‘i swivel, swirl and sway during the [King Kamehameha Hula Competition](#) at Neal Blaisdell Center.

Aloha Stadium welcomes the entertainment, cultural and educational displays, food, games and rides of the [50th State Fair](#) in May and June. Orchids add a splash of color to the agricultural exhibits.

[Aloha Festivals](#)—a huge-scale celebration that incorporates parades, luaus, pageants and entertainment on six islands in September—exposes participants to Hawaiian history and traditions, including food, music, dance and art.

A pair of outrigger canoe races—the late-September [Na Wahine O Ke Kai](#) for women and the mid-October [Molokai Hoe Outrigger Canoe Championship](#) for men—challenge rowers to navigate the 40-plus-mile route across the Kaiwi Channel from Moloka‘i to Waikīkī.

In mid-October, the [Hawaii International Film Festival](#) screens hundreds of productions, focusing particularly on Asian, Pacific Island and U.S. features, documentaries and videos.

The soul-stirring sounds of taps hang in the air during [Pearl Harbor Day Commemoration](#) ceremonies on Dec. 7 at the [USS Arizona Memorial Visitors Center](#). Floral offerings, a rifle salute and a wreath presentation also honor those who perished during the attack.

A thrill for the tens of thousands who lace up their sneakers as well as the cheering spectators who line the route, the [Honolulu Marathon](#) covers 26.2 miles on its way to [Kapi‘olani Regional Park](#) on the second Sunday in December.

Things to Do

Shopping

Honolulu’s several strikingly designed complexes offer shoppers everything from toothpaste to precious black coral and from tube socks to *mu‘umu‘us*. Music, dance and other entertainment are frequent added incentives.

Ala Moana Center, at 1450 Ala Moana Blvd. across from the park of the same name, is the largest shopping mall in both Honolulu and the state. Amid gardens, pools, fountains and sculpture, more than 260 stores sell products from the entire Pacific area. The department stores—Macy’s, Neiman Marcus, Sears and Shirokiya—balance the center’s

establishments of *haute couture*, such as Dior and Escada, as well as other upscale establishments such as Louis Vuitton and Tiffany & Co.

Across from Kewalo Basin at Ala Moana Boulevard and Ward Avenue is another Honolulu hallmark, Victoria Ward Centers. Its six contemporary buildings house about 100 specialty stores and restaurants. Free outdoor events and programs of Hawaiian entertainment are held at Ward Warehouse. Koko Marina Center, 7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy. near Hānauma Bay, offers 60 shops and eateries as well as water sports rentals.

Downtown Honolulu, like mainland cities, is experiencing some urban revitalization. One successful result was the conversion of Fort Street into an attractive pedestrian shopping mall. Chinatown is a 15-block area bounded by N. Beratania Street, N. Nimitz Highway, River Street and Bethel Street; the proudest development of its renovation is Cultural Plaza, where Chinese shops and restaurants are forerunners of what will be a showcase of the multicultural character of Hawai'i.

One of Honolulu's most recognized landmarks is the centerpiece of the Aloha Tower Marketplace, on the waterfront off Ala Moana Boulevard. This 10-story tower, built in 1926, was for decades the tallest building in the city. Residents would line up along the docks and welcome the sailing ships and big steamers with a *hula* dance, music performances and flower *lei*. Today the tower can still be seen from the water, and the observation decks on the top floor provide a scenic view of the Honolulu skyline. The surrounding marketplace includes more than 70 shops and dockside restaurants.

In Waikīkī, the most concentrated shopping district is Kalākaua Avenue. The Royal Hawaiian Center is the area's answer to Ala Moana Center. Stretching three blocks and four stories, the center has more than 110 shops, restaurants and services. Yet more shopping and dining opportunities are found in the adjacent Waikīkī Beach Walk.

There are 50-plus establishments at the Waikīkī Shopping Plaza at 2250 Kalākaua Ave. International Market Place, 2330 Kalākaua Ave.,

combines 130 restaurants, nightclubs, shops and open-air stalls purveying goods from around the world; its centerpiece is a giant banyan tree.

Other Waikīkī area temptations are the slick 70-unit Hyatt Shops complex at Hyatt Regency Waikīkī Hotel, 2424 Kalākaua Ave.; King's Village, off Kaiulani Avenue between Prince Edward Street and Koa Avenue, resembles Hawai'i in the 1890s and boasts 45 shops and restaurants; and Waikīkī Town Center, 2301 Kūhiō Ave., which presents free *hula* shows Mon., Wed. and Fri.-Sat. at 7 p.m. Another favorite is the 25-store Rainbow Bazaar, which brings items from Polynesia, Japan and southeast Asia to the grounds of Hilton Hawaiian Village.

Aloha Swap Meet, at Aloha Stadium, offers great bargains Wed. and Sat.-Sun. 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Admission \$1; free (ages 0-11).

The Dole Cannery, 650 Iwilei Rd., a converted factory, houses nearly 35 specialty shops and eateries. Bus and trolley systems stop at the cannery, which is open Mon.-Sat. 9-5 and Sun. 10-4.

Two large suburban shopping centers are Kahala Mall, beyond Diamond Head via H-1 at 4211 Waialae Ave., and Pearlridge Center, at Pearl City via Kamehameha Highway. Kahala's more than 90 specialty shops and eateries are anchored by Macy's. At the Pearlridge, a monorail connects the center's two buildings which house more than 170 stores, restaurants and services that are anchored by JCPenney, Macy's and Sears. Waikele Premium Outlets in Waipahu off H-1 exit 7, includes nearly 50 stores, including Off 5th Saks Fifth Avenue Outlet, OshKosh B'Gosh and Coach.

Most of O'ahu's shopping centers open daily at 9 a.m.; closing times vary.

Lū'au

A *lū'au* is a Hawaiian picnic featuring traditional food and dance. The *lū'au* food is cooked in an *imu*, an underground oven, which is formed by *pōhaku* (heating rocks) in a pit in the ground. The pit is lined with fresh leaves, filled with native vegetables and the *pua'a*, or prepared pig, then

surrounded by heated rocks that also are placed inside the pig. The whole feast is then covered with leaves or canvas and allowed to cook for about 6 hours.

The pork tends to be salty—a nice contrast with the traditional *poi*, the pounded taro-root dish of which there are many variations. Polynesian entertainment adds flavor to the colorful proceedings.

Found at various locations, *lū'au* last about 3-4 hours and are only by reservation. Adult prices are \$69-\$125, generally with discounted prices for students and children. One of the more established *lū'au* is at Germaine's, (808) 949-6626 or (800) 367-5655, daily 6-9 p.m. Another *lū'au* is at Paradise Cove, (808) 842-5911 or (800) 775-2683, daily 5-9 p.m.

Sports and Recreation

Swimming, surfing, snorkeling and sailing focus, of course, on the beaches, of which Waikīkī Beach is primary. Beginning at Kūhiō Beach, just *diamondhead* (east) of Kapahulu Avenue, it runs the length of the peninsula to the Hilton Hawaiian Village.

Waikīkī is one of the safest beaches on the island, with lifeguards overseeing the activities and beachboys coaching surfing or taking passengers out to run the breakers in an outrigger canoe. Surfboards also can be rented without an instructor. Concessions often are connected with the hotel facing that strip of beach.

Sailing is a good way to see the island. Honolulu Sailing Company, (808) 239-3900 or (800) 829-0114, offers charters, instruction and cruises. Honolulu is also a center for hang gliding.

Scuba diving and snorkeling are particularly rewarding in O'ahu's clear waters. Equipment can be rented by divers who have a certification card, or instruction can be taken at one of several dive shops.

Deep-sea fishing is excellent, particularly during the marlin and tuna runs in late spring and summer. Boats can be chartered for a full or half-day at

Kewalo Basin at the foot of Ward Street. One company that offers fishing charters is SportFish Hawai'i, (877) 388-1376.

Foremost among nonaquatic sports in Honolulu is jogging. It would seem from the number of entrants in the Honolulu Marathon (roughly 30,000) that almost everyone does it. One heavily frequented route encircles Kapi'olani Regional Park; you can learn of others by visiting one of the many shops that cater to runners' needs.

Hiking also is possible within sight of the city; trails traverse Round Top Forest Reserve. Certain trails, particularly those in areas farther from the city, might be frequented by undesirables. Prospective hikers should first obtain information about safety and trail conditions, and trail maps from the Division of Forestry, 1151 Punchbowl St., Room 325, Honolulu, HI 96813; phone (808) 587-0166. The office is open Mon.-Fri. 7:45-4:30; closed holidays. Free park information brochures can be obtained from the Division of State Parks, 1151 Punchbowl St., Room 310, P.O. Box 621, Honolulu, HI 96809; phone (808) 587-0300. This office is open Mon.-Fri. 8-3:30 and is closed holidays.

Touring the island on a bicycle or taking a short ride through Waikīkī can be a rewarding experience. Consult the telephone directory for information about bicycle rentals. Horseback riding can be enjoyed at Kualoa Ranch & Activity Club, (808) 237-8515 or (800) 231-7321.

Golf is both pleasant and challenging on O'ahu's numerous courses. While some are open only to club members, others are open to visitors by agreement with their hotel. Of the public courses, Ala Wai is the closest and therefore has the longest wait to tee off; Hawai'i Kai and Olomana also are popular.

College and high school athletes play baseball, football and basketball in the Neal S. Blaisdell Center, the Aloha Stadium or The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Les Murakami Stadium. Sports events and schedules appear in the daily newspapers.

Performing Arts

Although most visitors do not come to Honolulu to attend a play or symphony concert, the city offers both.

Hawai'i Performing Arts Company presents a season of Broadway and off-Broadway plays at Mānoa Valley Theatre on E. Mānoa Road; Diamond Head Theatre, an established amateur group, does likewise at Makapu'u and Alohea avenues near Diamond Head. The dance and drama departments of the University of Hawai'i give productions in John F. Kennedy Theatre on the East-West Center campus.

The Honolulu Symphony Orchestra and the Hawai'i Opera Theater perform in Blaisdell Concert Hall at Ward Avenue and King Street; the symphony season is September through May, while the opera season runs February through March. Nearby Neal S. Blaisdell Center is the scene of concerts by pop stars. A bronze sculpture of Elvis Presley adorns the front of the center, which hosted his 1973 concert that was aired in more than 40 countries. Plays, films and a concert series are presented at Honolulu Academy of Arts. Movie houses are found throughout the city; some offer only Chinese and Japanese films.

The daily papers and the calendar section of the monthly magazine *Honolulu* carry comprehensive listings of cultural events.

The Changing of the Guard ceremony is staged in colorful late 19th-century uniform nightly at 6 at the entrance to King's Village, off Kaiulani Avenue between Prince Edward Street and Koa Avenue.

Wednesday and Friday mornings at 10 and 11, the Urasenke Foundation of Hawai'i at 245 Saratoga Rd. presents public demonstrations of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony known as *Chado*, or the Way of Tea. Rooted in Zen Buddhism, the centuries-old ritual is an important part of Japanese culture. Visitors to the foundation watch a 15-minute videotape before witnessing this simple yet profound ceremony; admission is \$3 and reservations are recommended. Phone (808) 923-3059.

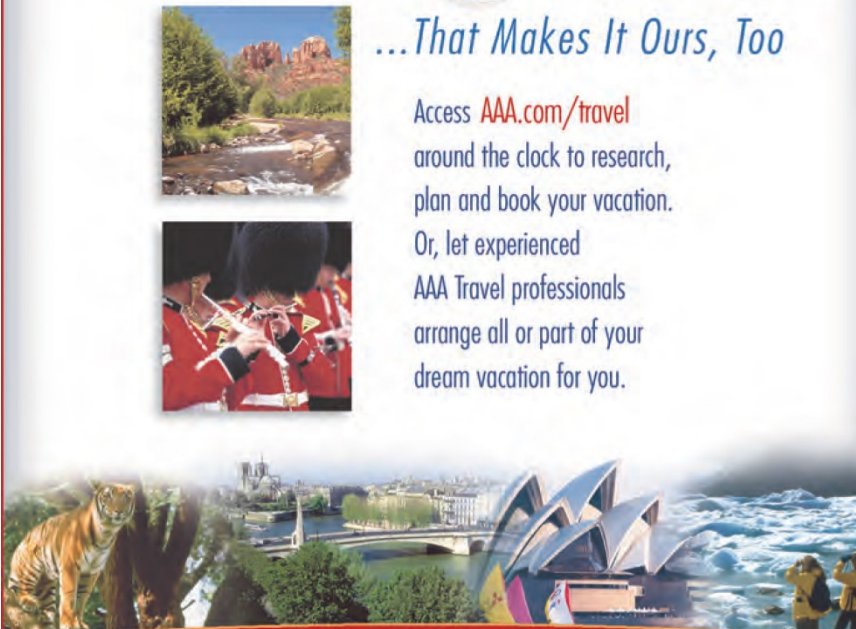
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