

Hawaii's Less-Traveled Islands Have Much to Offer - Part 2

If you're looking for true luxury resorts, erupting volcanoes, and the perfect cup of coffee, you're headed to the Big Island of Hawaii. Hawaii is not only the name of our 50th state, but also the name of its largest island. It's here that you'll find the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. You might choose to drive the rim of Kilauea Caldera where you'll view fresh lava flows, steam holes and scenic overlooks. Continue to the summit of Mauna Kea where between 6pm and 10pm daily you can stargaze at the Onizuka Visitors Center. The Kona Coffee Belt unfolds in a long stretch of coffee farms where each fall brings the Kona Coffee Fest. If the frontier is more your spirit, make a visit to Parker Ranch and visit with real Hawaiian cowboys. Cross over to the east for a day trip to Hilo and visit Rainbow Falls or stroll the pleasant streets lined with restaurants, shops and historic Victorian homes.

For those looking for a little adventure without the crowds, visit the tranquil beauty of Lanai. Once the island plantation for the Dole Company, pineapples were grown here from the 1920's until the early 1990's. It was James Dole who planted the Cook Island Pines that still dot the landscape. Few pineapples are still grown here today. The Lodge at Koele and the Manele Bay Hotel bear the imprint of billionaire James Murdock. Here you'll find a variety of both land and water sports as well as service that is very British in style. Thus is some of the appeal that attracts celebrities to the island who enjoy the isolation from tourists and crowds. Beyond the resorts, the island is wide open for exploring. Venture northwest on a jeep road from Koele and you'll encounter an arid landscape strewn with boulders. This is the Garden of the Gods where the remains of ancient volcanic eruptions are touched only by the softening island light. Experienced hikers and four-wheelers can ascend the Munro Trail to the summit of Lanaihale, the highest point on the island where you can enjoy the five-island-view.

If you really want to get away from it all, then the island of Molokai may be just what the doctor ordered. Here, you'll find miles of wide, unspoiled beaches and wonderful serenity. Everything moves at a slower pace. The island is relatively undeveloped where no building can be taller than a coconut tree and stoplights simply don't exist. Land and water sports abound. Tour a coffee plantation or a macadamia nut farm, or visit the pristine Moomoni Dunes on the North Shore. The scenic Halawa Valley on the northeast tip of the island offers a dramatic landscape of folded walls draped in green. Along the stunning coastline, you may encounter the incredible Kahiwa Falls which cascades 1,750 feet into the Pacific Ocean.

There is so much Hawaii out there just waiting for you! My best advise is to not try to do it all in one trip, unless you have at least two full weeks, or you're booking a really good

escorted tour or a cruise that stops at each island. If you've only got a week to spend in paradise, I recommend not more than two islands. Ten days will get you three.

Aloha!

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