

Beyond Oahu

Don't overlook Hawaii's other islands

By Penny Musco

MANY PEOPLE ENVISION Honolulu and its world-renowned beach, Waikiki, when they think of Hawaii. But skip the islands that make up the rest of the state and you'll miss out on much of its exciting aloha spirit. Inter-island flights whisk you to the main cities while providing a panoramic glimpse of each island, and renting a car allows you to discover these less-populated locales at your own pace. So, think outside Waikiki.

Maui: the Magic Isle

If you're hungry when you land at Kahului, consider stopping at Zippy's Restaurant. Try the loco moco—chili over rice, topped with a beef patty and eggs—and malasadas, two-bite doughnuts filled with custard.

In late afternoon, zigzag up to the Haleakala summit, as my family and I did, (bring a jacket—it's chilly) to walk the rocky paths around the crater while watching the sun sink over the Pacific. Most people come at sunrise, but evening is just as beautiful (and much less crowded).

The Hana Highway, famous for its curves, ocean views, waterfalls and sparkling pools, can be tackled on your own; better yet, hop aboard a tour bus to enjoy the sights without distraction.

The small town of Paia, with shops carrying local crafts, clothing and art, is a good place to visit afterward. Here you can get an introduction to Hawaii Regional Cuisine, a movement blending the state's ethnic flavors with world cuisine. Beverly Gannon, one of the 12 chefs who established this culinary movement emphasizing local fruit, vegetables, meat and fish, runs the Hali'imaile General Store restaurant.

After a short hike in peaceful Iao Valley in central Maui, head over to the former whaling village of Lahaina for whale watching, historic sites and art galleries galore. Old Lahaina Luau promotes its traditional luau—

hula dancing, kalua pork, poi and lomi-lomi salmon included.

In nearby Kaanapali, we ate at CJ's to sample the Hawaiian specialty known as plate lunch—meat or fish, plus two sides, usually macaroni salad and one other salad plus rice. Don't miss the daily sunset cliff-diving spectacle at Black Rock on Kaanapali Beach.



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(Top) The hikable Na Pali Coast on Kauai, as viewed by helicopter. (Above) Enjoying a shave ice is a highlight after a day of exploring the Big Island.

Hawaii: the Big Island

It's not called the "Big Island" for nothing. Driving distances may be long, but the adventures are worth it. En route from the island's west coast to Kilauea, one of the world's few active volcanoes, stop for provisions at Punalu'u Bake Shop, the southernmost bakery in the U.S. Continue on to Punalu'u Black Sand Beach; coming from another state that borders an ocean, we found it fascinating to walk on finely crushed lava instead of the smooth white powder we're used to. And it was a thrill to get close to sea turtles (no touching!).

At Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, we stared out at the dark, rocky volcanic landscape, drove around the rim and along Chain

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of Craters Road, and trekked all over ropy lava mounds from past eruptions (check out the Thurston Lava Tube).

We came back in the evening to visit the Jaggar Museum, with a sheltered view of the caldera and main crater, Halema'uma'u; the overlook outside the building offers an incredible view of the volcano with interpretive displays about Kilauea, one of the world's most active volcanoes.

In Hilo, east of the park, learn about another natural phenomenon at the Pacific Tsunami Museum. Farther east, in Waimea (*paniolo*, or cowboy, country), Merriman's owner is another of the founding members of Hawaii Regional Cuisine.

We finished the day in Kona with Tropical Island Flavor's shave ice. It's so much more than a snow cone—the ice is finely shaved, with tropical flavors such as guava, pineapple, coconut or kiwi; occasionally a scoop of vanilla ice cream or bean paste is put in the bottom of the cup, and sweetened condensed milk drizzled over the top for a more intense flavor and a creamier, smoother texture. Yum!

Kauai: the Garden Isle

Verdant Kauai is the ideal location for honeymooners and those seeking a more laid-back vibe. You can pick either an unhurried boat ride or an exhilarating helicopter flight for a bird's-eye view of the Na Pali Coast's spectacular cliffs.

Kauai's southern shore is calmer, and Poipu Beach is the best place not only for a swim, but also to spy humpback whales and endangered monk seals (and if you still haven't had enough Hawaiian fusion, a Roy's restaurant is nearby).

Generally flat terrain makes biking the Ke Ala Hele Makalae trail a leisurely pleasure. Farther west, wind your way up to the 3,600-foot deep Waimea Canyon and then into Kōke'e State Park for scenic overlooks, lush vegetation and stunning waterfalls.

If you're into golf, there are 10 courses from which to choose, including ones designed by Jack Nicklaus and Robert Trent Jones, Jr. Or just sit back, relax and take in the island sights during a six-hour movie-inspired tour to see where films such as *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Blue Hawaii* and *Jurassic Park* were made. 📺

Penny Musco (www.pennymusco.com) enjoyed her trip to Hawaii, especially its national parks.