

# Hawaiian Islands

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Captain Cook was reported to say that the most beautiful islands in the world were the Hawaiian Islands. Having traveled much of the world myself and seen many places of beauty, I have to agree with him. This group of islands has everything anyone could want. They are all very different and delightful in their own way. Definitely a vacation destination for excitement, nature or romance.

Oahu is a large metropolitan city complete with a variety of non-stop night life, world class shopping, restaurants and beach activities. It offers the biggest and best of fishing and surfing. It attracts tourists from all over the world. This is the gathering place for the young to be seen. Since the 60's Bill and I had many layovers in Honolulu. That was when you could see open beaches and the biggest hotel was a two story building fondly known as the Pink Palace. Within a decade Honolulu became over built and continues to attract more people than it can handle. Now most of its beauty can only be seen between the skyscrapers. The stores all cater to tacky tourist delights and the charm of small local restaurants has long since disappeared. But...a must for the party goers and younger crowds.

The BIG Island is not the most beautiful to me but certainly might be the most interesting. It is covered in volcanic rock, it's landscaping and rugged seashores shine with black beauty. Here is where you can find the Black Sand Beach. Driving around you can often see puffs of steam coming out of tiny holes in the earth's surface; or BIG eruptions of hot lava when one of its volcanoes goes into action. As little as the next day all can witness the power of this gift from nature as new land is formed by the hour. This land is fertile and gives home to cattle, agriculture, fruits and flowers. Hawaii is called the Orchid Isle and gives the a visual history of its origins.

Maui called the Magic Isle and caters mostly to high end business pleasure and the romance of newly weds. It is tremendously expensive but also true, it has the beauty that makes it so romantic. Maui keeps just enough of it's culture and spirit of it's past to probably be the best selling example of the total package of what the Hawaiian Islands convey in their travel brochures.

But for many, many years, Bill and I went in search for an island less traveled. One with an emphasis on nature and that had an unhurried atmosphere. Kauai. This island is called the Garden Isle. It is covered with lush tropical beauty and sparkling white beaches. Hidden hikes, caves and hot springs. Kauai is about family owned restaurants and tiny fruit stands. We took our vacations there every year when our son was young and it has remained our favorite since the first time saw it.

Now in retirement we own a Marriott time share there. It's called our do-nothing paradise vacation. It's built up just enough to offer luxury accommodations, fine restaurants and a few attractions but is still rural enough to keep the masses away. This island is perfect. I hear the song of Hawaii's past in its soft breezes, blue skies, birds and flowers. Here we share our vacation with best friends and actually relax.

