

## Hawaii To-Do List By Alice Tong

### *Attractions:*

- 1) Waikiki Beach – VERY hot sand (wear slippers/sandals for foot protection), but so pretty ... great view of Diamond Head & the water
- 2) Waikiki – the site to practically all of Oahu's hotels, this is a hard spot to miss. Most of the merchandise and food is overpriced, but it's great to walk around and browse anyway. The International Market is open until late evening, so be sure to look around. Every stand in the International Market probably has a competitor stand, so don't buy the first candle or Hawaiian shirt that you see. In fact, maybe head to the Market after you've done the Swap Meet (see attraction #6). Other good places to see in Waikiki are obviously Waikiki Beach and the other hotels (try Hilton Hawaiian, where some of Baywatch was filmed, plus fireworks show every Friday night). If you need any necessities immediately, go to the nearest ABC store in Waikiki. Otherwise, wait for the next day and go to Ala Moana. For nightlife, this place has a lot of bars.
- 3) Ala Moana Shopping Center – the largest outdoor mall in the country. It has several levels, so it has lots of shade. All the locals frequent this mall and the beach park across from it (Ala Moana Beach Park). Getting here is easy, take any Waikiki trolley that heads to Ala Moana. You can even walk it if you're up to the task. They have department stores in addition to many local stores. This is the place to get good food! They have a food court with Korean, Japanese, Hawaiian (even locals eat Hawaiian food at Poi Bowl). The mall also contains L & L's, which serves great local grinds with heaping portions for cheap (chicken katsu, teriyaki chicken, loco moco) or Zippy's for local comfort food and famous chili.
- 4) Hanauma Bay – snorkeling or not, this is a great place to be surrounded by swarms of fish, costs about \$5 for non-Hawaii residents and there is a trolley that takes people up & down the hill to get to the bay for a small fee. I've walked that hill, so it's totally okay, but not uphill when you're wet and dripping water. Don't take any valuables b/c you'll leave all your stuff on the sand – I just take a plastic bag with towel and sunblock and essentials and dump it on the sand within visible view while in the water. Check the schedule ahead of time because Hanauma Bay typically closes one day a week, and get there early if driving to secure parking!
- 5) Circle Island – you have to go around the island (hence, circle island) at least once, so that you can hit the other great spots on the island. Be careful with the bus schedule though, it can take an hour to catch the next bus at a stop. If there is one stop you have to make, it's in Haleiwa (aka North Shore, hence in the north) for world-famous Matsumoto's shave ice. Matsumoto's is only open in the afternoon, so plan accordingly. Dole Cannery (on the west side of Oahu) is another good stop for a walk of the pineapple plantation, a must try is the Dole Whip pineapple soft-serve ... it is so delicious during the summer! Other stops: Waimea Falls (but you can't get in unless you pay), Sea Life Park (again, tourist attraction so you pay, but it's a great place to spend half-day looking at sea animals and maybe participating in dolphin training), Polynesian Cultural Center (this is the site of many luaus as well as a fun-filled educational tour of the

- different cultures in Polynesia – i.e. Samoa, Tonga). A lot of these attractions come as tour packages, so if you want to make it easier on yourself, book ahead on the Internet before you go.
- 6) Swap Meet at Aloha Stadium – the Aloha Stadium is actually the site of all big football games, like the Pro Bowl, but on certain days they hold a big gathering of little booths/tents that sell everything! If you want to buy cheap authentic Hawaiian items, come here or go to the International Market in Waikiki. Things like puka shell necklaces are probably \$2 a piece as opposed to the commercialized price of \$20 elsewhere. Hawaiian designs (shirts, dresses, luggage, wallets, more) are very very cheap as well. The only downside is not being able to try stuff on. But locals and tourists alike love this place!
  - 7) Sunset Beach – this might be part of your Circle Island stops. This beach is touted as one of the best surfing spots in the world, but it is definitely not designed for novices. Pros always come here to catch some waves in the early morning, and locals like the view during the rest of the day. Days in Hawaii generally go from 6 am to 7 pm, plus or minus an hour depending on the season. So as long as you're there during those hours, you have a good idea of what everyone's talking about.
  - 8) Diamond Head – a now dormant volcano crater. Great for hiking, if that's what you're in the mood for. This is what all those postcards contain a picture of.
  - 9) Ward (mall) – about 5 minutes walking distance from Ala Moana, this is a mega-complex that opened in around 2002. It boasts a 16-plex movie theatre, Dave & Buster's (California transplant), and other shops/eateries. The movie theatre is a popular spot for the locals, since the theatres are sooo comfortable and huge (even retractable armrests if you like a real sofa-feel). Plus the air-condition is a huge advantage. Dave & Buster's is fun for eating as well as being an adult arcade. Another eatery I would recommend is Big City Diner, all the locals eat here, and everything on the menu is *ono* (Hawaiian for “delicious”).

*Food places:*

- 1) Zippy's – the best local spot for Hawaiian and American food. They are most known for their chili, so much so that they sell frozen microwaveable versions to the mainland. If you're not a chili fan, spring for the spaghetti, which uses the same sauce without beans. Other good grinds include their specials of the day, saimin (noodle soup), and fried chicken. It's just too good to pass up! The easiest one to find is in Ala Moana (should be in the Sears food court), but restaurants are scattered all over the island.
- 2) Genki sushi – if you are a sushi fan, THIS is the best *kaiten* (Japanese for conveyor-belt) place I have ever tried in my life! The craze has spread to the mainland US, but the fish isn't as fresh as in Hawaii. The selection is brimming. Locals even stop by for lunch to make bento boxes of sushi to-go. It's much more affordable than most authentic conveyor-belt sushi places, and a little rice definitely goes a long way to fill you up. Located in Ala Moana as a restaurant.
- 3) Shirokiya – this is actually the name for the department store where the eatery is located, but go to the top floor for all the goods. They have tons of yummy

- Japanese food and even a delicious Japanese bakery in the store. Located in Ala Moana, Shirokiya is right across from Macy's on the second level.
- 4) The Pineapple Room – started by a famous Hawaiian chef, this place serves up gourmet food, but with a Hawaiian twist (i.e. mahimahi with mango salsa). It's a little pricey, so don't go if you're on a budget. But the view is beautiful, and the atmosphere is relaxing yet sophisticated. Located in Ala Moana, Macy's 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.
  - 5) Bubba Gump's – I'm just throwing this in for any Forrest Gump fans. Unfortunately, this chain has not quite made its way to Seattle yet, despite being in California and Hawaii for several years. I go for the fun atmosphere and good shrimp and dessert, but it's definitely not Hawaiian. Try it if you want to come back with a story about a fun dining experience. Located in Ala Moana.
  - 6) Legend – excellent dim sum place. Go at lunch for the dim sum, the dinner is typical Chinese food and not as great as the dim sum. This place will be harder to find for tourists, and it tends to get very packed during lunch especially on weekends, be prepared to wait. In Chinatown, edge of Cultural Plaza.
  - 7) Rainbow's – serves up local food for the locals. Heaping portions and great prices can't be beat. The only bad thing is that without a car, you really can't get to it due to its remote location. But if you go, try the loco moco, which is burger patty with eggs and gravy on rice. MmmMmmGood! In Kapiolani.
  - 8) L & L's – several have made their way to the mainland. They serve heaping portions as well and all of the local grinds at a cheap price, easy to find too. Try the chicken katsu, and if you're brave enough, get mac salad (short for macaroni salad) like all the other locals. Make sure that you tell them you want rice instead of mac salad if you're not feeling adventurous, the mac salad is a standard side dish. Located in Ala Moana.
  - 9) Any luau show – you can only get into one through booking yourself a ticket. You can either book ahead of time or wait until you get to the hotel. Either way, this is the typical luau experience that everyone raves about. Hula show, fire dancers, roast pork on the spit, sunset on the beach. How can you pass it up, despite the cost? When you enter the Honolulu Airport, pick up a THIS WEEK magazine (more like a thick pamphlet). It has all the information on tourist attractions, including luaus, and helpful coupons for your trip. They might have a copy in your hotel room as well.

Well, the rest is up to you! Hawaii's a great place to just relax, but if you feel daring, go parasailing or surfing for the first time. Snorkeling is also a very popular pastime, especially if you visit Hanauma Bay. If you have a lot of time on your shoulders and you've done everything on the island, buy a cheap roundtrip ticket for Maui or the Big Island (other islands in the Hawaiian chain) for a day-trip. Don't be afraid to ask once you get there, Hawaii is known for its friendly people. Have a great trip!