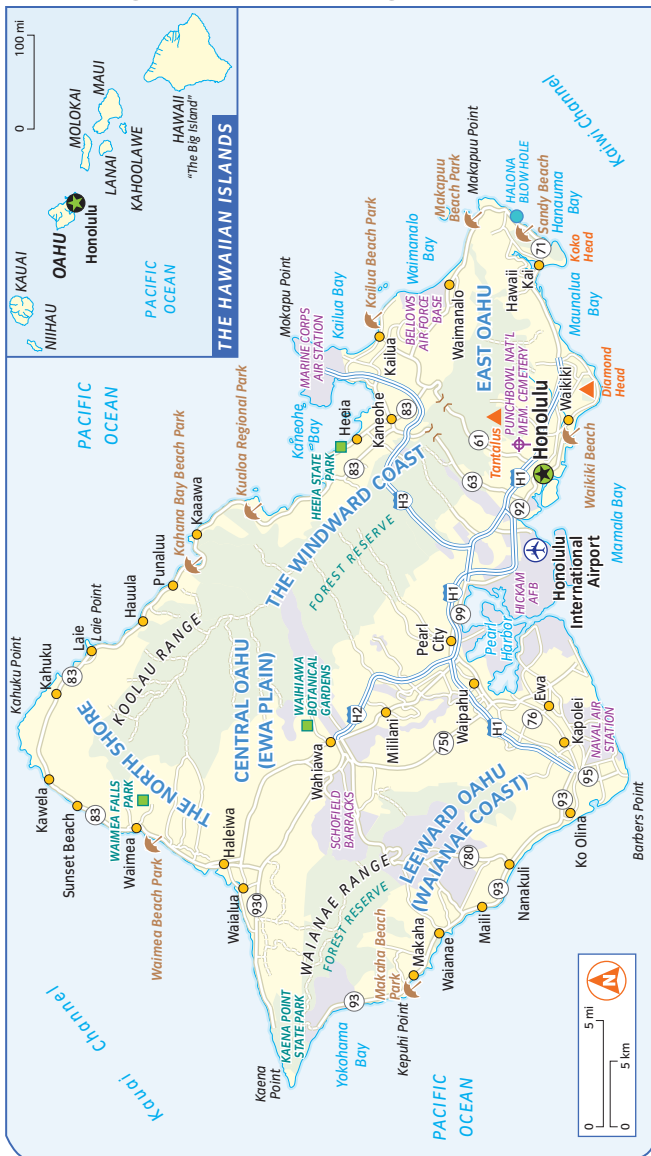


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Strategies for Seeing **Oahu**



Strategies for Seeing Oahu



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Oahu may be an island, but it's a good-sized island, and your vacation time is precious. There really is just one cardinal rule: relax. Don't run yourself ragged trying to see absolutely everything—take the time to experience the magic of the island. In this chapter I have several suggestions for making the most out of your time.

Rule #1. Go in the off season.

Not only will you save a bundle, but there will be fewer people, you'll get better service, the beaches will be less crowded, and you'll be able to get into your favorite restaurants. The "off season," September 1 to mid-December and March to June 1, is also when the weather is at its best (not too hot, not too rainy).

Rule #2. To get the best deals, do some research.

In this book, I'll give you my favorite picks of hotels, restaurants, activities, and airlines, but use that as a starting point. Go online and check out airfares, hotels, and package deals (airfare plus accommodations and sometimes car rental). Find out what prices are being offered before you book.

Rule #3. Think about how you want to spend your vacation.

Is this a lie-on-the-beach vacation or a get-up-early-and-do-an-adventure-every-day vacation? Or a combination? If you are traveling with your sweetie, be sure you have a plan that makes both parties happy (such as plenty of golfing plus lots of shopping). If you're bringing your family, make sure that everyone gets in on the planning—it makes for a vacation that everyone can enjoy.

Rule #4. Don't over-schedule.

Don't make your days jam-packed from the time you get up until you drop off to sleep at night. This is Hawaii: Stop and smell the plumeria. Allow time to just relax. And don't



Stop and smell the plumeria.

forget that you will most likely arrive jet lagged, so ease into your vacation. Exposure to sunlight can help reset your internal clock, so hit the beach on your first day (and bring your suntan lotion).

Rule #5. Allow plenty of time to get around the island.

If you glance at a map, Oahu looks deceptively small—like you could just zip from one side of the island to the other. But you have to take traffic into consideration; from 6 to 9am and 3 to 6pm the main roads will be bumper-to-bumper with rush-hour traffic. Plan accordingly: Sleep in late and get on the road after the traffic has cleared out.

I highly recommend that you rent a car, but don't just "view" the island from the car window. Plan to get out as much as possible to breathe in the tropical aroma, fill up on those views, and listen to the sounds of the tropics.



A relaxed drive along a winding coastal road may be a highlight of your trip.

Rule #6. If your visit is short, stay in one place.

Most places on Oahu are within easy driving distance of each other, and checking in and out of several hotels isn't easy. There's the schlepping of the luggage, the waiting in line to check in, the unpacking, and more . . . only to repeat the entire process a few days later. Your vacation time is too dear.

Rule #7. Pick the key activity of the day and plan accordingly.

To maximize your time, decide what you really want to do that day, then plan all other activities in the same geographical area. That way you won't have to track back and forth across the island.

Rule #8. Remember you are on the island of aloha.

Honolulu is not the U.S. mainland. The islanders' way of life is very different. Slow down. Smile and say "aloha"; it's what the local residents do. Ask them: "Howzit?" (the local expression for "how are you?"). When they ask you tell 'em "Couldn't be better—I'm in Hawaii!" Wave at everyone. Laugh a lot, even if things

aren't going as planned (hey, you're in paradise, how bad can it be?).

Rule #9. Use this book as a reference, not a concrete plan.

You will not hurt my feelings if you don't follow every single tour and do absolutely everything I suggest in the itinerary. Pick and choose according to your interests—don't feel like you have to follow all my suggestions to the letter. ●

Attending a Hula competition is a great way to experience Hawaiian culture.

