

Hawaii

Bert Gets Us Started

It's Bert and I have one thing to say to you: "Ha-wa-ii?, Ha-wa-ii?, Ha-wa-ii?" Once you tell me how you are (Ha-wa-ii), I'll tell you where we're going this month if you haven't already guessed. That's right, it's Hawaii and the Front Porch Travelers are very excited to be taking a trip to "The Aloha State." And so, without further ado, pack your grass skirt and let's head to the most exotic of all the United States.

Hawaiian History – Truman

The Hawaiian Islands were formed thousands of years ago by erupting volcanoes. Because of the unique way the islands were formed, they continue to grow. As volcanoes erupt, masses of land emerge from under water making Hawaii the only state in the United States still increasing in size. The Hawaiian Archipelago consists of over 130 different points of land stretching some 1,600 miles in length from the Kure Atoll in the north to the Island of Hawaii in the south.

The Hawaiian Islands have the distinction of being the most isolated yet inhabited areas of land in the entire world. Located some 2,400 miles from California and 3,800 miles from Japan, Hawaii welcomed its very first settlers around 300 - 400 AD. They were the Polynesians and they traveled over 2,000 miles of the open ocean to get there. They did this without the aid of navigational instruments. They relied solely on their keen observational skills and the superb handling of large double-hulled canoes.

Hawaii was one of the last places discovered by settlers from the New World. In 1778, British explorer Captain James Cook, during one of his many voyages, came across the islands, which he named the "Sandwich Islands" in honor of one of his sponsors, the Earl of Sandwich (and, yes, he was the same person who invented the sandwich). In 1794, Hawaii was placed under Britain's rule and, in 1795, King Kamehameha I unified the islands and reigned supreme until his death in 1819. His son, Liholiho, inherited the throne and paved the way for Protestant missionaries to convert many Hawaiians to Christianity.

Because of Hawaii's strategic location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it has been a highly sought after prize of the Americans, British, Japanese, and Russians. Hawaii has had a fascinating history, including being at one point an independent nation governed by American businessmen. On August 21, 1959, Hawaii became the 50th state of the United States and we've been a better country for it.

Hawaiian Trivia - Nell

Hawaii is an incredible place to visit, and from what we hear, an even better place to live. Unlike Truman, who is big on history, I am big on trivia and Hawaii has lots of interesting facts for me to share with you. Did you know that:

- Hawaii is the only U.S. state whose land area is increasing (from volcanic eruptions).
- Hawaii is the only state in the United States where coffee is grown.
- Hawaii is also a big producer of pineapples – about 320,000 tons a year.
- There are only 12 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet (Vowels: A, E, I, O, U and consonants: H, K, L, M, N, P, W).
- Hawaii has the highest life expectancy in the U.S. (75 for males and 80 for females)
- The state flower is the hibiscus and the state bird is the nene (Hawaiian goose).
- Hawaii has its very own time zone known as Hawaiian Standard Time. There is no daylight savings time. The time runs two hours behind Pacific Standard Time and five hours behind Eastern Standard Time.
- Believe it or not, the tallest mountain in the world is in Hawaii. Mauna Kea is over 30,000 feet tall when measured from its ocean base to its summit, which is several hundred feet higher than Mt. Everest.
- Renowned writer Herman Melville worked in Honolulu in a bowling alley as a pin setter in the mid-1840s. He was there at the height

of the whaling years and collected valuable information for his future literary masterpieces.

- During the California Gold Rush of 1849, as amazing as this might sound, the miners would send their laundry to Honolulu because it was cheaper to have it done there than in California.
- Second to the U.S. territory of Guam, Hawaiians are the largest consumers of SPAM than in the United States – over 10,000 cans every single day!
- There are a number of things Hawaii doesn't have – such as snakes, seagulls and billboards.

Focusing on Maui - Bert

There is so much to see and do when visiting the Hawaiian Islands. You are well advised to carefully plan your trip in advance to avoid spinning like a top trying to figure out what to do first. According to the majority of resources, there are eight main islands of Hawaii. Listed from the largest to the smallest, they are: Hawaii, Maui, Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, Niihau, Lanai, and Kahoolawe. They all boast lots of volcanoes, romantic settings, hiking, and incredible beaches. Don't forget to pack your bathing suits and hiking boots.

We decided to spend our time on the island of Maui, one of the most popular of the islands, also known as "The Land of Rainbows and Smiles." Now, who can resist that? Maui is named after the demigod by the same name who, according to legend, drew the Hawaiian Islands up from the ocean and also captured the sun. In doing so, he secured the promise of long days for the enjoyment of inhabitants and visitors of these islands. Today it is said the sun resides in the beautiful mountains of Haleakala known as the "House of the Sun."

Surrounded by 120 miles of coastline, Maui has over 30 miles of beaches with sparkling white sand (a few are graced with red or black sand). All of Maui's beaches are known for their crystal-blue waters, refreshing tropical trade winds, and breath-taking azure skies. If you are a surfer, you will think that you have died and gone to heaven. The Front Porchers are a bit long in the tooth for such a strenuous activity as surfing, but they sure enjoyed watching. Snorkeling and beachcombing are more our speed and there is plenty of opportunity for both.

Maui is the second largest island in the Hawaiian chain and boasts diverse cultures, climates, and landscapes. You will want to spend time on the sun-kissed beaches and the pastoral village of Heavenly Hana. Waterfalls can be found at every turn. Don't trip and fall as you gaze up at the grandeur of the soaring sea cliffs. You will want to linger by the peaceful sacred pools where it is quite easy to forget the hustle and bustle of life. Maui has something for everyone. A favorite saying on the island is, "There is nothing like doing nothing on Maui."

Maui Trivia - Maude

- Maui is the second largest of the inhabited Hawaiian Islands (727.3 square miles).
- The largest dormant volcano in the world is on Maui. It is called Haleakala, which means "house of the sun." It last erupted in 1790 and is expected to erupt again sometime in the next 200 years.
- Underwater valleys once connected the islands of Maui, Molokai, Lanai, and Kaho'olawe. Shallower than the surrounding ocean, they provide excellent shelter for an abundance of marine life (including Truman's favorite, the Humpback Whale).
- You will not want to miss Wailua Falls, Hawaii's highest waterfall (80 feet high). Located near a roadside lookout, it is wonderfully accessible and especially magnificent early in the morning when the sun is shining. If you were a fan of the television show *Fantasy Island*, you would have seen the falls featured in the opening scene of each show.
- Part of the appeal of Maui is the excellent climate, with temperatures ranging from 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit all year round.
- Maui's official flower is the lokelani (a beautiful pink rose).
- Maui's official color is pink.
- There are so many interesting places to visit in Maui. We especially enjoyed 'Ohe'o Gulch, the location of the Seven Sacred Pools, and Pipiwai Trail, known as one of the best places to hike in Maui.

Welcome to the Luau – Ethel

Truman and Bert had their hearts set on having a traditional Hawaiian luau, but the rest of us forbade them to roast a whole pig in a hole dug in the backyard. Even without the pig, Hawaiian cuisine is a delightful fusion of American, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Polynesian, and Portuguese.

If you live in Hawaii you are most likely a big fan of the Hormel company's most popular product, SPAM. That's right, you heard me correctly. When was the last time you ate SPAM? If you travel to Hawaii, it might just be the perfect opportunity to revisit this tasty concoction of canned processed pork luncheon meat. Yum Yum! Hawaii was first introduced to SPAM by American servicemen during WWII. It became an important source of protein during the war when fishing around the islands was prohibited. In 2006 alone, Hawaiians consumed more than five million cans of SPAM, making them the second largest consumer of the product in the world, following Guam.

If SPAM is not your favorite thing, then how do you feel about tuna? Tuna is the most important of all the fish in Hawaiian cuisine. If you don't like tuna, how about some of these selections? First you have to guess what they are.

- Char Siu - red spareribs (thanks to Chinese immigrants).
- Chicken Katsu - Japanese fried chicken with Tonkatsu sauce.
- Haupia - Coconut flavored dessert often described as "stiff pudding."
- Kim Chee - A Korean dish great as a dip or a stand-alone dish made of fresh island cabbage, chili peppers, ginger, garlic, and other seasonings.
- Pipikaula - Hawaiian-style beef jerky.
- Poi - Taro pounded to a thick, purple-colored paste and used in many dishes or as a stand-alone. It is a Hawaiian staple.
- Pupu - A platter of hors d'oeuvres, island-style and a favorite of many luaus.

- Kalua Pig - Featured at every luau, this is a whole pig slow-cooked in an underground oven (imu) for many hours.
- Ti Leaves - Used to wrap foods that are to be cooked.
- Taro Dinner Rolls - The moistest, most delicious rolls you will ever eat!

Mabel ends the journey with a teaser for next month

And so the Front Porch Travelers bid you "A hui hou" (or goodbye) until next month when they travel to a place where Bert and Truman have often been consigned to by Ethel and Nell. It is a place known for its vastness, isolation, and frigid temperatures. Can you guess where we are going?