

My Hawaii Itinerary

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Hi, I'm Lisa. Find all my writings about Hawaii here:

<http://www.andhawaii.com/>

and be sure to [sign up for my newsletter](#) if you find this useful – I've written tons more stuff like this to help vacationers plan their trips to Hawaii.

The intention of this article was to share what someone who KNOWS Hawaii would choose to do on her vacation there. My friend Cindy wrote this. Like me, she lived in Hawaii for several years.

I'll be chiming in here and there with my own opinion. Our opinions will probably be similar but her kids are older and she's a bit more eco-oriented than I am. See more from Cindy at [Coconut Roads Hawaii Eco Travel Magazine](#).

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My Ideal Hawaii Itinerary

When my friend and sometimes editor, Lisa, asked me to write an article for her website about my ideal Hawaii vacation, I readily accepted – Not only is Hawaii one of my favorite places

in the world and one-time home, but it's not often we give ourselves permission to plan a vacation as if there were no constraints – no budget to hold me back, no 8-day limit – woohoo!

Even though this is just a make-believe itinerary, I am approaching the article with a great sense of adventure and am especially curious how my “Ideal Hawaii Itinerary” will turn out. I wonder how much of my dream vacation will include places and things to do I have recommended when writing about budget travel in Hawaii, as I often have for my website and ebooks.

I am also curious how much my itinerary will veer from eco type activities and places. Nature, camping, eco-friendly places to stay, tourism that supports the islands and the environment are all big on my list because that's just who I am.

It's the reason that over a decade ago I founded CoconutRoads.com , a Hawaii Eco Travel online magazine.

Given the choice of things to do in my everyday day life I usually choose the hike, sitting outdoors on a summer's evening, horseback riding, enjoying a garden, that sort of thing. I can

also be a sucker though for a scrumptious meal in a romantic restaurant, a concert, shopping for new clothes, and all those sort of things.

Mostly while living and vacationing in Hawaii I appreciated the natural beauty of Hawaii and its culture...

Having lived there for over 14 years – three different times, two different islands between 1988 and 2010, I already have ideas of places that I want to see again and things I want to do – many of these were free but others were those things that aren't cheap and you do once, promising yourself someday you will splurge and enjoy them again – which I fully intend to do vicariously in this assignment.

And since I believe in the law of attraction, I won't be surprised if this does someday become a “real vacation.”

Sooo to answer to complete the assignment, "If I were going to Hawaii right now and could do anything I wanted, here's what I would do and see and what island(s) I would go to and where I would stay..."

A Bit About The Hawaiian Islands to start off these itinerary ideas

Each of Hawaii's islands has its own charm, and since this is an ideal vacation, I know I will want to visit all of them.

I think since I have lived the longest on the Big Island (only six months on Oahu and part time on Kauai), I will spend more time on the other islands. I haven't seen much of Maui at all, so that's one I want to explore, including a day or maybe overnight trip to Molokai.

Oahu has so many people and cities but there are fun things there that are found nowhere else, and while I would never want to live in a big city or spend day after day in one, I enjoy a few days in Honolulu, enough that I'm sure to visit there.

They say Kauai is a nature lover's paradise, and it is to me – there's something else about Kauai that attracts me that I can't quite pinpoint.

When I remember days on the Garden Island, where I spent almost every weekend one year, the first things that come to mind are the smell of flowers – this is true for any of the islands I have visited from the mainland, but my time on Kauai was spent while living in Hilo, orchid capital of the world, so I think that Kauai has its own floral scent.

Kauai is definitely greener than the other main islands. The other thing that comes to mind is the friendliness of the island and the joy of being able to travel between two places, each very unique from the other in climate, terrain, everything...in a very short time.

It's true that you can drive around the Big Island in a day, but on Kauai you can drive from one side to the other and engage in activities and have plenty of time left over to relax, enjoy lunch, etc. Of the islands I've visited, Kauai has always been my favorite.

Seeing lots of humpback whales is a must-do. The whales arrive in December and leave in April. Some may leave in March, but there will still be hundreds, including lots of babies !

During whale watching season, March is best for the weather. Anytime of year is lovely but since many things I want to do are on the windward sides of the islands, less rain is better.

(Places on the south and leeward sides of the islands like Kona Big Island and Waikiki Oahu are almost always sunny.)

I also may want to attend some of the [Merrie Monarch Festival](#) (the world hula competition) on the Big Island. This takes place the week preceding Easter (April 8 in 2012). Spring Break for most of the U.S., including many of Hawaii's schools is mid-March.

And I plan to spend three weeks. While this is an unlimited budget itinerary, I don't want to stay away from home and family too long. We will be missed.

My fiance and I work from our computers running our eco travel websites, and while most of our work is more like play than work, other than blogging a weekly vacation updates and pictures, this is going to be a Get Away from responsibilities. Since we'll be married by then, it will be a honeymoon of sorts.

We'll start with Kauai on the south end of the island chain and travel north to the Big Island . Since I enjoy flying with [Hawaiian Airlines](#), and their website lets you choose multiple destinations, we'll fly straight home from the Big Island rather than returning to Kauai.

Choosing Airlines to Hawaii

In “real life” I first look at the [Hawaiian Airlines](#) site for fares and then at [Hotwire.com](#)

I don't especially like that at Hotwire.com I don't get to know the exact airline I'll be on until after I purchase my tickets, but I love the deals I have found there. Sometimes I've found better deals at Hawaiian and other times at Hotwire.com

I haven't tried Priceline yet, but I have studied their site after Lisa recommended them and will try them in the future. The drawback is that as with Hotwire you don't know exactly what hotel you're going to get.

Lisa taught me some tricks though, like looking at the Priceline forum and finding out where your favorite hotels are more likely to come up as far as ratings, amenities and locations – things you do know upfront.

As for hotels and rental cars, it varies. I have probably used Hotwire.com the most for rental cars. I also have gone directly to rental car companies, such as Hertz on Oahu (because they accepted debit cards).

Years ago I booked at a local travel agency. Then came Cheap Tickets over the phone – still back in the old days, and I found great deals with them.

Now I only book online (*note from Lisa - me too, I use [expedia](http://expedia.com) almost exclusively, unless I can use [Hawaiian](http://Hawaiian.com)*) – not just for the savings, but for the same reason I will book online for this dream trip – because I can more easily get what I want. I can search a site like Hawaiian Airlines to my heart's content with all sorts of different configurations.

Logistics out of the way, I am excited to put this itinerary together! First stop...

Kauai Itinerary - How I Would Plan my Activities on Kauai

Los Angeles to Lihue, March 7 – 14, Rental car pickup at the airport.

Lihue

[Wailua Falls](#) – The famous twin falls featured on Fantasy Island is a four-mile drive out of Lihue.

[Wailua River](#) – Kayak tour up this peaceful river to visit the sacred sites along the river's banks.

Air tour of the island with [Air Ventures Hawaii](#). With less environmental impact than a helicopter and views of Na Pali where we'll see hundreds of waterfalls (coming down from Mt

Wailialali, one of the “wettest spots on Earth”) and Kauai's miniature Grand Canyon, Waimea Canyon.

[Hamura's Saimen Stand](#) - When I went to Lihue a couple decades ago with a bunch of other teachers to attend a workshop, they were all very excited about getting saimen at Hamura's, a little hole-in-the-wall place on Kress Street.

Ever since then it is a must-do on Kauai for me. Bob's not into Asian food, but he'll like the teriyaki chicken and their famous lilikoi chiffon pie.

[Kauai Museum](#) - Lots of Kauai history here with artifacts, as well as contemporary art.

[Kauai North Shore](#)

[Kilauea Lighthouse and Wildlife Refuge](#) is visited by lots of birds including frigates, boobies and albatross and overlooks a marine preserve. If they still have their “buy a brick” fundraiser, I will buy a memorial brick honoring my grandparents who loved Hawaii, wildlife and this lighthouse.

[Na Pali](#) - Two days here! We'd take the days and camp at the end of the trail but it's too rugged and too much off a cliff hanger for me. We will though hike to the first beach, stopping at the pretty little waterfalls and stream along the way.

Even though you climb up hundreds of feet, the trail is wide enough and stable, a family friendly sort of trail with amazing views!

Lisa's note - Yes, Na Pali is amazing. You must check it out if you are going to Kauai. Drive up to the lookout or hike some of the trail. There's even areas to camp here where you have to be dropped off by boat to get there!

[Na Pali Snorkeling Cruise, Makana Charters](#) This is run by an old Kauai family with roots going back to the last kanaka maoli (those of Hawaiian descent) to have farmed in the Na Pali's Kalaulau Valley.

We'll explore sea caves, snorkel in the warm waters of one of the island's most treasured reefs (Nu'alolo Kai) and learn about

legends, local lore and natural history from our guides. I'm sure we will see some humpbacks too. I'm so excited thinking about it!

Lisa's Note - *The Na Pali Boat tours are the best on the island - if you can only get on one boat on Kauai, it needs to be a na pali tour. There are so many dolphins and turtles in this area - it's awesome.*

However, there has been a bit of a brouhaha lately with the boats. Because of environmental concerns, many of them have been forced to switch their operations to leaving from Port Allen.

This makes their trip to the Na Pali Coast a LOT longer. I would probably choose to sail with someone leaving from Hanalei, like [Na Pali Catamaran](#).

Years ago, when I went we went on the super-fast zodiac rafts that are really close to the water, but those all leave from the other side now too. :(

[Ke`e Beach](#) - Near the start of the Na Pali's Kalaulau Trail, this beach is perfect for snorkeling when calm.

Along the way we'll stop at the overlook to Lumahai Beach (the nurses beach in South Pacific. Often "South Pacific" is traced in the sand. Anini Beach a little south of here is very pretty and has calm shallow water on its lagoon side. We'll swim there if it's sunny and warm.

[Hanalei](#) – Pastoral with taro patches and a pretty harbor. Every time I see this place the song "Hanalei Moon" plays in my head.

This is also the Hanalei of "Puff the Magic Dragon." If the moon is full we will walk along the pier under it. We'll grab a bite to eat at Tropical Tacos because we both love Mexican food and seafood. We'll have to also try Hanalei Mixed Plate, a local favorite with the local style Hawaiian foods I like and a hamburger or hot dogs for Bob. Hanalei is on the way to and from Na Pali so we'll make a couple stops most likely.

[Limahuli Garden and Preserve](#) Haven't been here yet but the garden but the American Horticultural Society did select this

natural botanical garden as best in the U.S. for environmental practices and its rare plant conservation, so it should be interesting. Lots of history too.

[Na Aina Kai](#) - I'm really excited about visiting this garden because it is a wonderful blend of nature and the arts.

I love the bronze statues with the children and musical instruments that I saw on their website. I want to see all the gardens here – both the formal and wild gardens. The children's garden too! Will be taking lots of pictures here :-)) If we were getting married in Hawaii, this would be one of my top picks.

[Kauai's Royal Coconut Coast](#)

Hotel Coral Reef – I know money isn't a consideration and this small resort is one of Kauai's best deals, but I really would love to stay here from what I've read about it and viewed on their site.

It's Kauai's oldest hotel, upgraded just a few years ago and has a gorgeous blend of rich wood furnishings and greenery. I appreciate the kitchenette and jacuzzi too. We'll book the oceanfront king suite and stay here.

Kapa`a Grocery Run – On our way back to Lydgate Campground we'll grab a bite to eat at Papayas Natural Foods and add some goodies to the cooler. After the natural food and vegetarian stint though Bob's going to want a steak – we'll stop by the Foodland supermarket and get some barbecue fixin's.

If we're here on Wednesday we'll shop at the Sunshine Market (Kauai's name for their farmers' markets). There are produce stands and farmers' markets on various days around the island, so if we don't hit this one we'll stop at some others.

[Coconut Marketplace](#) – I don't plan to spend a lot of time shopping but I love this outdoor mall. Lots of unique shops, cultural activities, entertainment and good food.

South Kauai

[Poipu Beach](#) – One of those “best in America beaches.” Golden, and in some areas, pinkish, soft sands, gentle surf, gorgeous

sunsets and a good chance of spotting one of Hawaii's rare and endangered monk seals.

Grand Hyatt Resort, Koloa, Poipu Rd . – Since money's not an issue...:-) We'll stay here a night or two. I've strolled around the grounds here but never stayed.

I love the 1920s-30s architecture, the pool with waterfalls and lush garden settings and can't wait for Bob and me to toast each other and the sunset from the Seaview Terrace, an oceanfront, open air lounge in a Polynesian setting.

Indoors we'll soak up some jazz and atmosphere in Stevenson's Library (the bar is carved from Koa). We'll check into a deluxe ocean view room. The rooms reflect Hawaii's golden era and have beautiful wood décor, greenery, private lanai, over-sized bathtub,

Dining - Lots of great restaurants in this area, and the town is so pretty at night. We're not into crowds for the most part, but the Poipu Beach Broiler with its surf theme sounds fun – I'm

most interested in their mac nut crusted mahi-mahi, and Bob's probably going to want the prime rib or a steak.

Keoki's Paradise (owned by the same people that bring us Duke's) also sounds fun. Tiki theme with dining outdoors, tiki torches, and their world famous Hula Pie - which I have never tried yet! Bob will like it to because they have steak and burgers.

The lagoon, outdoor setting with tiki torches and lush gardens is absolutely beautiful, as are the meal presentations – and the lobster – wow! My dream vacation really isn't all about dining, so moving along LOL

Allerton, a National Tropical Botanical Garden was a favorite retreat of Hawaii's Queen Emma. An artist and an architect maintain the European meets Hawaii grounds. This is a soothing, very lovely place to spend a little time with numerous water features, bronze mermaids and other statues and a significant collection of tropical plants.

West Kauai

[Waimea Canyon State Park](#) – Hike in the canyon dubbed by Mark Twain, “Grand Canyon of the Pacific. From above it looks like a southwestern scene, but below there's lots of green, including waterfalls.

Also visit [Kokee Museum](#), and hike some other trails in the park, breathe in the eucalyptis scented cool refreshing air (probably about 60 degrees in March and 40s at night) and enjoy the view from this side of the Na Pali – the way the clouds continually roll in and out, hiding and then revealing the towering velvet green sea cliffs is magical.

Camp Sloggett: We'll stay here for a night or two. We'll rent the cabin for privacy and enjoy campfire with other guests. This is super close to Waimea Canyon and the Kokee Museum. There's also a 1925's lodge fireplace and dining areas.

Hanapepe – Friday Art Night if we're in this area then. Great little town, old plantation homes.

Oahu Itinerary - How I Would Plan my Activities on Oahu

Fly, [Lihue to Honolulu](#), Pick up rental car at airport.

We will stay a few days on Oahu, just long enough to check out some of the cultural sites, do some shopping (sorry Bob), enjoy a luxurious hotel and camp up at [Malaekahana](#). We'll rent a car but take the Waikiki Trolley to many of the places in Honolulu rather than hassle driving.

Windward Side

[Friends of Malaekahana Campground](#) – I love this campground! I already know the tent site I want to reserve. It's ocean front yet secluded in a group of small trees that open up just enough to provide an unobstructed view of the water and beach, which is practically deserted on school days.

[Lanikai Vacation House](#) – We'll rent a small cottage with a lanai that has an ocean view and twin hammocks :)

This will be in a quiet area and will have a kitchen, bedroom with a pillow top mattress, jacuzzi, ceiling fans, plasma screen TV, barbecue, tropical décor and lots of ambience and comfort because we are going to do lots of relaxing here. Very nice neighborhood here.

[Lanikai Beach](#) – One of the prettiest beaches I've ever seen (and I've seen lots). We'll relax here under a beach umbrella, go for a swim, grab some smoothies. It's often deserted early in the day too.

[Polynesian Cultural Center](#) - We'll tour the villages and go to the show and luau. The luau's not the best but it's decent and the show is fantastic.

Waimanalo – I lived in this cowboy town years ago. Now I'll get to buy some art at [Patrick Ching's Gallery](#) – wonderful horse paintings.

[Byodo-In Temple](#) – In Kaneohe at the foot of the Koolau Mountains, this is a very tranquil place Bob tells me. From what I've read about it, I am really looking forward to visiting. It was

built to commemorate the first Japanese immigrants and is a Buddhist temple that welcomes those of all faiths.

“Byodo-In” means “Temple of equality – not to discriminate” There are gardens, several koi ponds and a big “Peace Bell.” I know I will love it here.

North Shore

A few minutes up the road from the campground, we'll visit the surfer/artist/hippy town of [Haliewa](#), grab a bite to eat and do a little shopping (sorry Bob). [Waimea Bay](#) might be calm this time of year and if so we'll swim, if not we'll watch the surf and relax in the sun a bit.

Then we'll dine at Jameson's by the Sea and enjoy one of those famous North Shore sunsets!

Honolulu

Where to Stay in Honolulu – So many choices here! Bob likes infinity pools, so we'll book an ocean view room for a couple

days at the [Sheraton Waikiki Hotel](#). The Helumoa water playground makes me wish I was a kid!

And they are also known for award-winning cuisine. I've always been fascinated with the gracious 1920s charm of the [Royal Hawaiian](#), the "Pink Palace of the Pacific." So maybe we'll stay a night here too. It's at Waikiki Beach but very insulated.

[I`olani Palace](#) – We'll take the full tour here. It's a fascinating and very beautiful place.

King David Kalakaua, a huge patron of the arts and known as the Merrie Monarch, designed the palace. This is where Queen Lili`uokalani spent her last ruling days before the Hawaiian Kingdom was illegally overthrown. Also will watch the Royal Hawaiian Band concert on the lawn.

[Bishop Museum](#) – Lots to see here. The Hawaii exhibits cover the entire line from Polynesian voyagers through modern day Hawaii. The Hawaii in Hollywood exhibit will be fun for Bob and me, and he loves history so we'll probably spend almost a day here. They have a nice courtyard where we can have lunch.

U.S.S. Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor. A must-do.

(Note from Lisa, honestly, I never did do the Arizona Memorial, although we went to the [USS Bowfin](#) and the [Mighty Mo](#) - which are on the same base - several times. If you have young kids, I definitely recommend the bowfin and mighty mo over the memorial.)

Waikiki, Honolulu Itinerary Activities

Outrigger Canoe Rides – This is I think the only place in Hawaii where you can surf the waves on the canoes. The beach boys take care of you and it's completely safe. No skill required. Other than the canoe rides we probably won't spend much time on Waikiki beach except for night walks ... it's just too crowded.

Note from Lisa - I love LOVE Waikiki beach. I would recommend [surfing lessons](#) here, and it's great if you have young kids (the baby beach part). It is crowded, but that never bothered me.

I'm not a big fan of crowded beaches on the Big Island, but hey, that's part of Oahu's charm, is how many people there are. If you don't find a way to appreciate it, you might not want to go to Oahu.

Drive up to the Diamond Head Lighthouse and watch the sunset, or [hike Diamond Head](#) and bring a picnic – or both!

[Hilton Hawaiian Village](#) – We'll stroll through the gorgeous gardens, enjoy the art and see the penguins.

Entertainment! - Bob comes from a very musical family and he is really into listening to music – all kinds if it's good. I am too, so we'll catch some of the great shows here like Olomano, Brothers Cazimero and some of the other oldies but goodies.

Also we'll attend the [Honolulu Symphony](#). And we'll see one of my favorite comedians, Frank Delima. Also we'll book reservations for the [Society of 7](#) show at the Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach hotel.

[Honolulu Magazine](#) says it's the best show in Waikiki, and it sounds like fun. Mostly I want to see Hawaiian musical acts that I don't normally get to see on the mainland, and many of Hawaii's most famous entertainers are either based in Honolulu or regularly perform here, so we'll check out the calendars.

Shopping - I'm not super into shopping but will do some shopping at the Ala Moana Mall, International Marketplace, and we'll go to the Kapiolani Community College's big farmer's market. We'll be taking the trolley around Waikiki and get off to shop when the mood strikes.

Lisa's note - a few of the things Cindy has mentioned are included on the [go oahu card](http://www.andhawaii.com/go/go-oahu-card.php), so if you might be interested in that, see my [go oahu card review](http://www.andhawaii.com/gooahucard.html) here. It's kind of like a big coupon.



[Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve](#) - Shallow waters over a coral reef makes this an easy place to snorkel and see lots of colorful fish. It's also where Elvis and his leading lady in Blue Hawaii went for their moonlit swim. I wonder if they are open at night :-)?

Leeward Side of Oahu

[Wild Dolphin Foundation Tours](#) – Eco friendly and dolphin-friendly, I can trust that if we do get to swim with dolphins its because the dolphins approach us. We'll get to see dolphins and sea turtles from the boat and learn lots about them. We will likely see whales too since this is March!

Lisa's note - [Wild Side Tours](#) is also very eco and dolphin friendly - a comparable alternative if you needed one.

Maui Itinerary - How I Would Plan my Activities on Maui

[Fly Honolulu to Kapalua](#) (Located near Lahaina, serving inter-island flights only), also you can choose Kahului - Pick up rental car at airport

Lahaina - Whale city!

[Pacific Whale Foundation Whale Watching Ecocruise](#): I love whales and I like the idea of taking a whale watching cruise that is both eco-friendly and supports this nonprofit. The largest population of the humpbacks that winter in Hawaii like hang out around Maui, and we will see many of these gentle giants on the cruise – probably even swimming under our boat! If you look at the pictures on this site, you will see why I am excited:
<http://www.pacificwhale.org/>

Pacific Whale Foundation Sunset Cocktail Cruise – This just sounds very romantic, and I love the ocean at this time of day.

Pacific Whale Foundation Private Charter: If I've got my new SLR and lenses by vacation time, we might take this marine wildlife tour also to get some of those shots you miss when on a boat with lots of people. They use a boat for this one that gives a smoother ride too which is why photographers like it.

[Maui Ocean Center](#): I've not been yet and really looking forward to it. This is a state-of-the-art aquarium with a 850,000 gallon aquarium and outdoors exhibits.

[Lahaina](#) Walking Tour: We'll enjoy walking around this picturesque and historical town.

Maui Arts and Cultural Center Two of my favorite and the world's favorite Hawaiian musicians live on Maui – Keali'i Reichel and Keola Beamer – and often perform here as do many other musicians.

Old Lahaina Luau - This is one the best and most authentic luau in Hawaii. They've one at least six Ilima ("Keep it Hawai'i") awards and have all sorts of other honors.

Many luau in Hawaii feature other islands, such as Tahiti, but this one tells the story of the Hawaiians using hula, chant and music and moving from ancient to contemporary Hawaiian music and dance. The buffet features both Pacific Rim and traditional Hawaiian foods. I've been to community luau but only one commercial luau, so I've researched the luau thoroughly and this is one of my top picks.

Hana Highway – This is a must-do. Bob's a good driver, so I won't be too nervous. It's a beautiful drive I hear and am looking forward to the views and short hikes to waterfalls and views of the beaches, including a black sand beach.

On the way to Hana Highway we'll stop at Mana Foods in Paia for organic and island grown picnic treats. At the end of our road trip we'll go to the general store in Hana to buy souvenir t-shirts and soak up the quiet, small town atmosphere.

Haleakala – If, and it's a big IF, we can get up early enough, we'll drive up to watch the sunrise from the summit. I'd love to see that.

Upcountry Maui - I love this area! What I remember best are the soft, green pastures, pine trees, miles of eucalyptus and awesome views of the Pacific. The main town up here, Kula is small and friendly. Lots of strawberries, pink protea flowers and other plants and produce you see at the farmer's markets are grown up here. It's just a very pretty place.

Accommodations: We'll stay at a B&B in upcountry Maui. It's just so pretty and we'll enjoy the quiet. We'll go horseback riding up here and eat lots of strawberries :-)

Hyatt Regency at Kaanapali Beach – We'll spend a few nights here, one of Hawaii's most romantic resorts. We'll have a private lanai with cushy twin lounge chaises and a room with Hawaiian décor, ocean view and a king size Plush Grand Bed™ just all those amenities that help you to unwind and enjoy each other, including romantic restaurants with poolside dining.

The resort integrates Hawaiian culture...from the “Drums of the Pacific” luau to their spa. The spa includes outdoor massages under seaside cabanas and they base their treatments on Hawaiian values such as maluhia (peace) and ikaika (strength), practices like lomi massage and natural Hawaiian botanicals.

Their Cirque Polynesia show also sounds exciting. The ocean front pools sound really nice too, including one for quiet swims and another with an adventure playground (swinging bridge and more fun). We can also relax in the whirlpool, and this is all right at one of the most gorgeous beaches in Hawaii, Kaanapali Beach. Long stretches of golden sand, sunsets, a boardwalk and lots of ways to relax and have fun.

Molokai Activities Itinerary

We'll take the [ferry](#) (more whale watching) to Molokai and spend a few days here on the island's quiet beaches, and we might take the [mule ride to Kalaupapa](#).

We'll enjoy the slower pace of this “most Hawaiian” island and I might try sport fishing with Bob or at least go for the ride. We'll stay at at the Kepuhi Beach Resort in an ocean view loft suite. Or we might rent a cottage. Either way we will enjoy the star filled skies and old Hawaii here.

Big Island Itinerary - How I Would Plan my Activities on the Big Island

[Fly from Molokai to Kona](#) (*Lisa's note - I would probably take the ferry back to Maui and then fly to Kona*) - Pick up our rental car at the airport.

Since I lived on the Big Island for about 14 years, I'll spend the least amount of time here as there are so many other places I've not seen yet or only had the opportunity to spend a little time at on the other islands.

Since Bob has only been to Oahu, I do want to share some of my “second home” with him and there are some really exciting things to do here, along with relaxing.

[Volcano National Park](#) - The Visitor Center with movie about how the island was formed, Kilauea Lodge (if open after renovations) with the lounge overlooking Halemaumau Crater,

Jaggar Museum, the walk through the song bird forest and then the lave tube and adjacent cave.

If Chain of Craters Road is open we'll drive around the Park. Then we'll drive over to Volcano Winery and Volcano Village and the art center there. I love it up here as long as it's not voggy, and it's usually not. The air is crisp, there are cedar trees, nene geese and lots of song birds.

[Lava Viewing Helicopter Tour](#) - This or the boat tour is the best way to see the lava flows. Sometimes you can see the lava flowing into the sea from the Kalapana Viewing Area, but from the sky you can see much more.

We'll go with [Blue Hawaiian Helicopter Tours](#) since they are as eco-friendly as you can get with these types of tours, they have a great safety record and National Geographic seems to like them.

[Kapoho](#) – We might rent a vacation home fronting the Kapoho Tide Pools. It's often sunny here when it's pouring elsewhere here on the Windward side.

We can drive from here to the volcano and other places in Puna district, like the hot pond at Ahalanui Park (the warm ponds). Really it's not hot but it's often warm, and the setting is very pretty. We'll go on a weekday to avoid crowds.

The drive here is very pretty with lots of big trees along the road. We'll stop in Pahoa at Island Natural Foods for some healthy snacks. The Kalapana Lava Viewing is a fun short hike at night, and we might do that too.

Hilo

Richardson's Beach - My favorite beach on the Windward side with black sands and a nice, protected coral reef for snorkeling. We'll also walk to the back and hike around on the black lava cliffs where the aqua and turquoise waves crash below – awesome views!

Hilo Downtown - Will go to the famous Hilo Farmer's Market for island fresh foods. We might find some nice handmade crafts here too. We'll walk around downtown, stop for lunch at

one of the many restaurants, check out the book and map store and stop at the tsunami museum. Orchids – Bob and I both love orchids and Hilo has lots of them! We'll shop around at some of the nurseries and maybe the big one the tour buses stop at up by Volcano. We'll learn what we can and try our hands with them at home.

Merrie Monarch Festival – We'll be here for the parade and some of the competition. There's also a huge crafts fair at the stadium where they have the hula. This is a really big competition with hula halau coming from all around the world to compete.

[Mauna Kea](#) – View the sunset from above the clouds, and then star gaze. The tour provides hot cocoa and jackets since it's very cold up here.

Hamakua Coast

This is a beautiful drive, probably almost as amazing as Hana. We'll stop at [Akaka Falls](#). Very pretty walk to the viewing area.

Waimea

We'll go horseback riding at Parker Ranch and tour the museum here. Will have a good steak dinner in this paniolo town and check out the art galleries. I hope to find a Hawaiian quilt to bring home. We'll also take an ag tour with Merriman's Restaurant and sample island honey, vanilla and other yummy farm fresh Big Island foods.

Kohala

From Waimea we'll drive down the hill to one of my favorite beaches in all of Hawaii, Hapuna. We'll enjoy the warm, turquoise waters and I'm renting a boogie board! (If the waves are small).

Bamboo Restaurant – After watching the sun set at Hapuna we'll drive up to the Bamboo Restaurant in North Kohala for Pacific Rim cuisine and Hawaiian slack key.

Lots of ambience here - “Old Hawaii” setting and they support local farmers.

Kohala Accomodations - Will have to toss a coin...or two....

The Four Seasons at Hualalai This is a gorgeous resort that reflects Hawaii's natural beauty. It has a wonderful cultural center and six beach-side pools. The spa has won numerous awards.

Mauna Lani - This is also a very Hawaiian, culturally sensitive resort. It's built around an open air, tropical atrium and blends well with the historical environment, including ancient fish ponds. The resort faces two white sand beaches, one that is usually calm. There's an outdoor, thatched roof spa too.

Mauna Kea

– Also culturally and environmentally sensitive, this resort fronts a very pretty beach. Conde Nast named it twice "Best beach in the world." It's a crescent white sand beach with calm waters and sea turtles. If we don't stay here we'll drive over one morning. They limit the visitors from outside the hotel to about 30 per day to protect the beache's pristine sands and preserve the coral reef.

Kailua-Kona

Deep sea fishing. I've never been. Bob would love to go, and I'm sure I'd have fun just being out on the ocean and watching him catch a big one. Kona's like the deep sea fishing capital of the world.

Pu`uhonua o Honaunau (Place of Refuge) This is a nice place to take a walk and enjoy a picnic. It was once a sanctuary where those kapu breakers could escape punishment. The re-created coastal Hawaiian village is interesting, and there's a pretty lagoon.

April 7 Kona Airport to LAX

And that's it – that's be my entire itinerary from day one to the last day. Sounds like such a great time! 😊

Find all Lisa's writings about Hawaii here:

<http://www.andhawaii.com/>

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