



101 FREE* THINGS TO DO ON OAHU

* Or under \$10 per person

OAHU – Oahu is an affordable, family-friendly tropical destination with over a hundred things to do, see and experience for FREE or less than \$10 per person. Discover the sights, sounds, art, culture, history, nature, and adventure of the island of Oahu. Load up on family fun without having to unload your wallet!

Art, Culture and History

1. Enjoy one of more than 100 festivals and events throughout the year that celebrate culture, community, music, and art, such as the Hawaii Dragon Boat Festival, Chinese New Year lion dances, Lantern Floating Hawaii, Waikiki SPAM® Jam, and Roy Sakuma Ukulele Festival, just to name a few.
2. Visit the Hawaii State Art Museum (HiSAM), one of the few state-sponsored art museums in the country, and view the finest collection of works from Hawaii's best artists.
3. Learn about the history of Waikiki on the Waikiki Historic Trail walking tour.
4. Explore Hawaii's maritime history, from voyaging canoes to the Matson steamships, at the Hawai'i Maritime Center.*
5. Visit "Hyatt's Hawaii" at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Resort & Spa to see displays of Hawaiian arts, crafts and memorabilia.
6. Discover the history of surfing through photos and memorabilia on the walls of Duke's Waikiki at Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach.
7. Walk through Chinatown for a fascinating look at noodle factories, herbal shops, markets, and gift shops, or take a guided walking tour hosted by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.
8. Attend one of the many arts and craft fairs held at Thomas Square, Kapiolani Park and Ala Moana Beach Park.
9. Witness the culture and beauty of the islands as you watch a traditional torch lighting and hula performance on the beach of Waikiki near the Duke Kahanamoku statue at sunset.

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10. Stop in at the lei stands that line Maunakea Street in Honolulu’s Chinatown and see firsthand how these intricate lei are created.
11. Explore the history of Waikiki on a historical tour of the Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort. You’ll see old pictures and collectibles lining the lobby of Waikiki’s oldest hotel, dating back to 1901.
12. Learn about Princess Kailuani, Hawaii’s last and most beloved Princess, on the Princess Kaiulani historical tour at Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Hotel.
13. Stroll along the new Waikiki Beach Walk and stop in Mana Hawai‘i – Spirit of Hawaii Nei, which features authentic art and crafts produced in Hawai‘i. Local artists and cultural practitioners are often on-site for demonstrations including ukulele classes, lomi lomi massage and lauhala weaving.
14. Experience the tranquility of the Valley of the Temples and watch the peacocks show off their colors.
15. Take a scenic drive over the Pali Highway stopping at the historic site with panoramic views at the Nuuanu Pali Lookout.
16. Visit the ancient fishponds in Heeia and Kahaluu on the windward side.
17. Travel around the world through the diverse art exhibits at the Honolulu Academy of Arts.*
18. Walk through the Mission Houses Museum to see how the first missionaries lived when they came to Hawaii.* Free printing demonstrations are offered Wednesdays at noon.
19. Learn more about taro and enjoy storytelling, music, dancing, arts and crafts, and a farmer’s market at the Pacific Island Taro Festival at Windward Community College in August.
20. Visit Pearl Harbor and the USS Arizona Memorial, a monument built to honor the men who died on the USS Arizona the day before World War II began.
21. Discover the people and faces of Hawaii and the plantation era at the Hawaii Plantation Villages.*
22. Experience the fun and excitement of the Aloha Festivals’ Downtown and Waikiki Hoolaulea celebrations each fall.
23. Learn how to make traditional Hawaiian quilts and lei using fresh tropical flowers at the Royal Hawaiian Center.
24. Visit The Contemporary Museum on the third Thursday of every month for free admission.
25. Honor soldiers from the Spanish American War to the Vietnam War at the Memorial of the Pacific National Memorial Cemetery, formerly known as Punchbowl.

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26. Visit the Father Damien Museum and discover the history of Kalaupapa, Molokai.
27. Learn about the history of pineapple in Hawaii through the multimedia “James Dole Story” at Dole Cannery Square.
28. Ascend to the top of Aloha Tower, Honolulu Harbor’s famous clock tower, which at one time was the tallest building in Honolulu.
29. Take a self-guided tour of Oahu’s historic heiau (places of worship).
30. Visit Iolani Palace, the only royal palace on American soil, or visit the Queen Emma Summer Palace.*
31. Visit Fort DeRussy Beach where in addition to picnic tables, volleyball courts and excellent surf, you’ll find Battery Randolph Museum on the military grounds.
32. On the first Friday of every month, art galleries in downtown Honolulu open their doors from 5-9 p.m. at no charge. This event is wildly popular with art enthusiasts of all ages.
33. Find inner peace at the Byodo-In Temple, which houses a 900-foot Lotus Buddha. Be sure to ring the Peace Bell before entering the temple for happiness and longevity.
34. Visit the Manoa Heritage Center, a beautiful site that consists of Kukaoo Heiau, a Native Hawaiian garden, and Kualii, a historic home. Both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*
35. Take ukulele or hula lessons at the Royal Hawaiian Center.

Nature and Adventure

36. Tour the Waikiki Aquarium and discover the marine life of the Hawaiian waters and the South Pacific.*
37. Snorkel among the brightly colored reef fish of Hanauma Bay and look for Hawaii’s state fish, humuhumunukunukuapuaa.*
38. Meet the komodo dragon and other inhabitants of the Honolulu Zoo.*
39. Race through the “World’s Largest Maze” at Dole Plantation and enjoy its signature Dole Whip on the way to the North Shore.*
40. Keep your eyes open for humpback whales off Makapuu on Oahu’s South Shore or Kaena Point on the northwest side of the island from November through April.
41. Boogie board at the local favorite spot in Waikiki called “The Wall” or at Waimanalo Beach on the windward side of the island.

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42. Hike to Manoa Falls beneath the canopy of the tropical rainforest.
43. Count the waterfalls along Highway 3 (H-3) after a beautiful refreshing rain.
44. In the summer, snorkel at Shark’s Cove on the North Shore, a marine conservation zone with a cove filled with fish, coral formations and lava caves.
45. Hike to the top of Mt. Leahi (Diamond Head), Hawaii’s most famous landmark.*
46. Sit under a tree at Kakaako Waterfront Park and watch the ships and surfers go by or roll down the hill with childlike abandon.
47. Nap under towering trees at Fosters Botanical Garden.*
48. Hike up to the Makapuu lighthouse passing Madame Pele’s chair and following the dramatic cliff-lined coast.
49. Drive to the windward side of the island to the charming towns of Kailua and Lanikai to discover why the soft, white sand of these beaches makes them two of the world’s best beaches over and over again, according to Dr. Beach.
50. Visit the Oceanarium Restaurant at Pacific Beach Hotel, where an incredible three-story, 280,000-gallon saltwater fish tank holds hundreds of Hawaii’s tropical fish.
51. Swim alongside the honu (turtle) in front of the Sheraton Waikiki, at Turtle Bay Resort or at many of Oahu’s 125 beaches.
52. Wear reef shoes and in low tide walk to Goat Island in Laie to explore the tide pools teeming with life.
53. Hike the Maunawili Trail on the Pali Trail or one of many other well-marked trails throughout Oahu.
54. Pick hibiscus and plumeria along the side of the road and wear them in your hair.
55. Watch the Friday night sailboat races from Magic Island at Ala Moana Beach Park.
56. Feel the awesome power of Waimea Bay in the winter months as you watch the magnificent winter waves, and in the summer as you swim in the calm turquoise waters.
57. Explore the knee-deep tide pools and the wonders of snorkeling in Shark’s Cove, named for its shape, not its inhabitants!
58. Build sandcastles for fun family competition or watch student designers compete in the University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Architecture’s annual sandcastle building contest in February.

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59. View world-class surfing competitions at Banzai Pipeline, Sunset Beach or Waimea Bay on the North Shore.
60. Watch the sunset from high atop Tantalus as Honolulu city lights begin to twinkle in the dusk.
61. Watch the windsurfers at Kailua Beach.
62. Enjoy views from Magic Island of boats and outrigger canoes with Diamond Head and Waikiki as the backdrop.
63. Feel the sea spray from the blast of the Halona Blowhole, just around the bend from Sandy Beach.
64. Watch the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa’s wildlife specialists feed the animals, including the hotel’s very own penguins and flamingos.
65. Take a walk along the beach at sunrise and see the ocean come to life with early morning surfers and swimmers.
66. Explore the USS Bowfin, a World War II submarine and imagine what life on board must have been like for her 80-man crew.*
67. See the daredevil hang gliders make their way off Makapuu Point.
68. Trek up to the summit of Koko Head at sunset for sweeping views of the South Shore.
69. Keep your eyes and ears out for Hawaii’s colorful birds in Kapiolani Park, Moanalua Gardens and other parks throughout the island of Oahu.
70. Catch a ride on an outrigger canoe with the Waikiki Beach Boys.*
71. Hike above the leeward side along the ‘Aiea Heights Loop Trail overlooking Pearl Harbor.
72. Learn about the different varieties of pineapple at the Dole Varietal Garden located outside of Wahiawa.
73. Find the four Wizard Stones on Waikiki Beach and learn about the legend behind them.

Sights and Sounds

74. Learn about Hawaii’s culture while listening to popular local musicians as part of Waikiki Beach Walk’s Hawaiian music concert series, *Na Mele No Na Pua*, “Music for the Generations.” Embassy Suites hosts the concert series, as well as a permanent, extensive exhibit showcasing Hawaii’s rich music history.
75. Listen to the Royal Hawaiian Band at Iolani Palace on Fridays from 12-1 p.m. and at Kapiolani Park on Sundays from 2-3 p.m.

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76. Relax harborside at Aloha Tower Marketplace and listen to the island’s most popular entertainers at waterfront stages at Gordon Biersch or Don Ho’s Island Grill, as boats, barges and cruise ships float past.
77. Fly a kite or eat a plate lunch at Kapiolani Park in Waikiki. Then stroll through the park and see all of the activities from soccer games to craft fairs to live entertainment.
78. Enjoy “Sunset on the Beach,” as Kapahulu Pier is transformed into an outdoor movie theater with live entertainment, food booths and free blockbuster movies shown on a 30-foot screen.
79. Take a stroll through International Market Place, a bazaar of clothes, jewelry and souvenirs from the island’s colorful merchants set under the shade of a large banyan tree.
80. Stop by Ala Moana Center’s Centerstage, the hub for more than 500 performances annually, from keiki (children) hula to rock, from chorale music to street dancing.
81. Close your eyes and relax to the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra during its pre-season concerts around the island.
82. Stroll Kalakaua Avenue and enjoy live Hawaiian entertainment and food from several Waikiki restaurants at “Waikiki by Moonlight,” a street fair that occurs each summer.
83. Enjoy the colorful parades that float down the streets of downtown Honolulu and Waikiki during the Aloha Festivals, King Kamehameha Celebration, Honolulu Festival, and Chinese New Year celebrations.
84. Marvel at the “Honolulu City Lights” which illuminate the sky from the financial district to downtown celebrating the holidays in December and then stop in Honolulu Hale to enjoy the display of decorated Christmas trees.
85. Listen to Hawaii’s best local entertainers performing in the hotels and on the streets of Waikiki.
86. Take a self-guided tour through Manoa, Kapahulu and Kaimuki, some of Honolulu’s oldest and most charming neighborhoods.
87. Pick a team to root for at a polo match at Waimanalo Polo Grounds.
88. Meet Hawaii’s local fishermen at the early morning Honolulu Fish Auction at Pier 38, where the fresh catch is displayed and auctioned off to island chefs and merchants daily at 5 a.m.
89. Watch top local, national and international athletes compete in any of the dozens of sporting events such as the Hawaiian Mountain Tour, Tin Man Biathlon, Waikiki Roughwater Swim, Tour O’ Hawaii Cycle Classic, and Honolulu Marathon.

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90. Visit Ward Warehouse for free hula lessons on Tuesdays, country line dance classes on Thursdays and live Hawaiian music every first Sunday of the month. While there, check out Ward Centers’ great locally-owned boutiques for special and affordable Hawaii souvenirs.
91. Spend a day at the Children’s Discovery Center in Kakaako.*
92. Learn more about Hawaii’s melting pot of cultures at any of the Chinese, Okinawan, Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese, and Korean festivals held throughout the year.
93. View the work of local artisans at the Art on the Zoo Fence along the fence of the Honolulu Zoo.
94. Sit in on a Sunday service conducted in the Hawaiian language at Kawaiahao Church.
95. Admire the architecture and say a prayer at any of Honolulu’s many spectacular churches: St. Andrews Cathedral, Central Union, St. Clements, and Lutheran Church of Honolulu.
96. Watch in awe as fireworks explode into beautiful colors on Friday evenings in remembrance and celebration of King Kalakaua’s Jubilee at Hilton Hawaiian Village.
97. Drive to the North Shore for Matsumoto’s famous shave ice, a juicy Kua Aina hamburger and garlic shrimp from a roadside shrimp truck.*
98. Dedicate and float a paper lantern for a special cause or in memory of a loved one at the Lantern Floating Hawai‘i Ceremony, held every May at Ala Moana Beach Park.
99. Browse the booths at the Aloha Stadium Swap Meet for affordable made-in-Hawai‘i souvenirs on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 6 a.m.-3 p.m.*
100. Enjoy locally-grown produce and meats, fragrant flowers and tasty treats at the Kapiolani Community College Farmers’ Market on Saturday mornings.
101. Watch films made and produced by Asian, Pacific Islander and Hawaiian filmmakers at the Hawai‘i International Film Festival in October.*

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Special note to media: The O‘ahu Visitors Bureau (OVB) recognizes the use of the ‘okina [ʻ] or glottal stop, one of the eight consonants of the (modern) Hawaiian language; and the kahakō [ā] or macron (e.g., in place names of Hawai‘i such as Lāna‘i). However, OVB respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.