

Affordable Aloha!

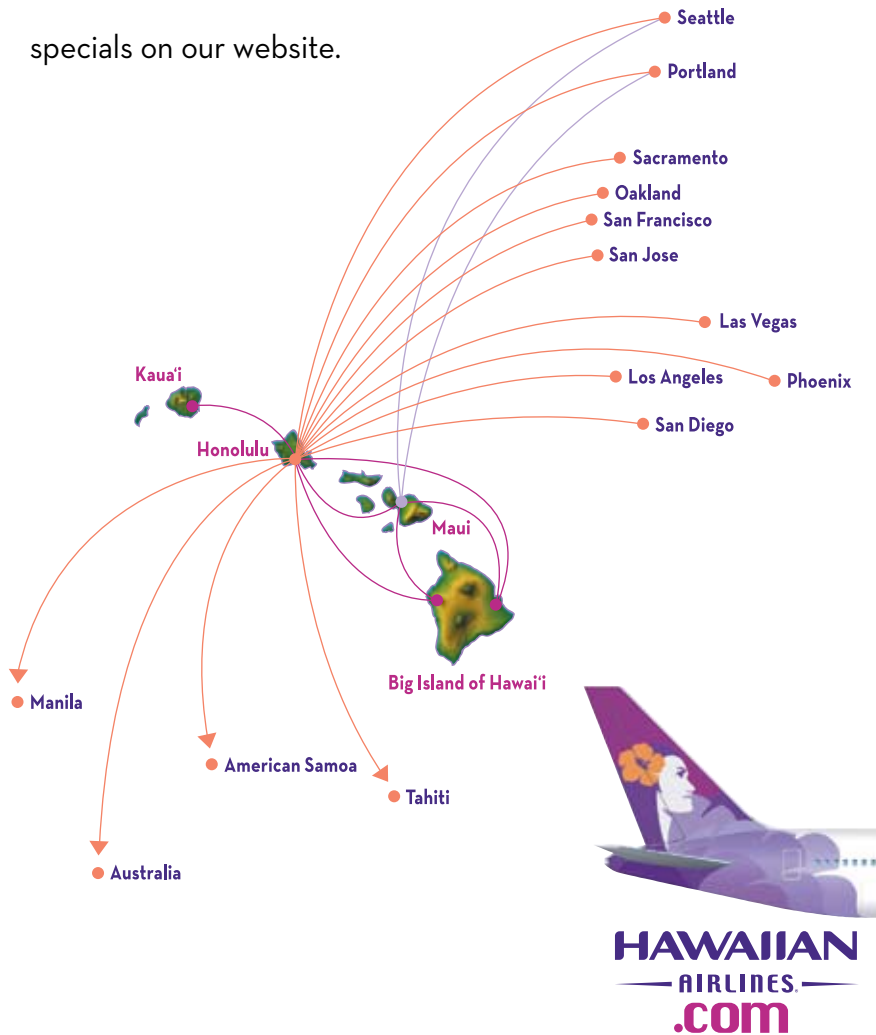
by Bekah Wright

When seasonal blues hit

and it's hard to remember when the sky wasn't a shade of gray, the urge for a warmer climate becomes irresistible. The islands of Hawai'i make it easy to give in with attractions, activities, restaurants and hotels that won't break the bank, making spring the perfect time to invest in a future of tropical memories and a bounty of Aloha.

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HAWAII ISLAND

When flying above Hawai'i's Big Island, it's easy to see its extreme landscape contrasts from lush, tropical rainforests to stark lava fields. Nowhere are these more evident than in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Experience the terrain from fern forests to lava tubes by circling Kilauea Caldera on the 11-mile Crater Rim Drive (Crater Rim Drive is currently closed due to elevated levels of sulfur dioxide. Please check the NPS website at www.nps.gov/havo/planyourvisit/craterdr.htm before visiting). Along the way, stop at the Thomas A. Jaggar Museum to bone up on seismology. Yearning for more? Allot time for exploring the park's 150 miles of hiking trails.

For some Big Island nightlife, pack a picnic and join the blankets on the lawn of the Eva Parker Woods Cottage at the Mauna Lani Hotel and Bungalows for the monthly Twilight at Kalahuipa'a series. Held during a full moon with the cottage's front porch serving as a stage, guests are entertained for two hours with talk story, hula, slack key guitar and singing.

Enjoy the night sky at the Onizuka Center for International Astronomy. En route to the summit of Mauna Kea (home to telescopes from 11 different countries) is the Visitor Information Station (VIS) where telescopes await for nightly stargazing



PHOTO COURTESY HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY (HTA) / RON DANLQUIST

sessions. Later, say goodnight to the moon from the Fairmont Orchid, sleeping peacefully with an Ocean View Room package that offers a third night free and a \$200 room credit at checkout. Staying longer is even easier with the Garden or Partial Ocean View Room package that offers a fifth night free and daily buffet breakfast for two.

KAUAI

Thrillseekers will find many of Kauai's offerings right up their alley. Coupling history with an inner-tube ride is Kauai Backcountry Adventure's

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expedition through the irrigation ditches, open canals, tunnel system and flumes of Lihue Plantation. Founded in 1870, the plantation devoted 130 years to sugar cane farming. More recently, instead of seeing farm workers, tourists can be spied donning headlamps and snapping photos while floating through five different tunnels.

Another way to cool down is with Outfitters Kaua'i's "Kipu Falls Zipline Safari." Starting things off is a two-mile kayak trip through the Hule'ia National Wildlife Refuge, past the 2000-foot shield volcano of Haupu Mountain Range before ending at Alekoko Fishpond, where Hawai'i's Menehune, or "magical little people," once lived. From here, a covered wagon transports guests across the 4000-acre Kipu Ranch to a tree house in a Banyan tree. Still to come—ziplining above the tree tops past views of Kamapua'a Falls and Hule'ia River.

Afterwards, head home to a ResortQuest Hawaii property where sweet deals such as the 20% off "Warm Weather, Cool Savings" make stays a breeze. Topping it all off is the "Kids Stay, Play & Eat Free" program for kids under 17.

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a must. And where better to take a sunrise jaunt than to the "House of the Sun" or Haleakala. Drive through Haleakala National Park to this volcano's 10,023-foot-high summit to watch the sun make its

daily ascent over its Manhattan-sized crater. Later, duck into one of the Visitor Centers to procure a map of the park's 38 miles of trails. A guided trek to join—the Waikamoi Cloud Forest Hike. Splurge on

adrenalin-pumping outings like tours into the crater through Pony Express Tours or Maui Eco-Adventures Heli-Hike or a Maui Downhill Bicycle Safari from 6,500 feet to the park entrance.

Check out the historic, laid-back oceanfront town of Lahaina chockfull of shops, galleries and restaurants, not to mention one of the world's largest banyan trees. Nearby at the Royal Lahaina Resort is a view of another sort—couples exchanging vows with Kaanapali Beach serving as a backdrop. Making it easy to join in Maui's romance are the resort's "Aloha" rates that start as low as \$149 per night.

A favorite destination for families is Kaanapali Beach Hotel. Kids will love the nightly hula show and children's program. Grown-ups will cheer about the "Room, Wheels & Meals" package, which includes partial ocean view accommodations, buffet breakfast and a compact rental car for \$245 per night.

Another great option is the Kapalua Villas. Fairway and Pacific Ocean views aren't the only stunners on the property. The Villa Values Package offers a 20% discount off villa rates for a stay of four or more nights as well as a \$150 credit towards everything from ziplining to championship golf.

Maui is known for its outstanding beaches, among them, Polo Beach, which fronts The Fairmont Kea Lani in Wailea. Let the sound of the ocean bring on blissful slumber by booking a four-night stay in a

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Rates listed are seasonal and vary by travel date. Rates shown are for a Royal Kona Resort Standard View and a Royal Lahaina Resort Aloha Saver Room. Rates are per room, per night based on double occupancy and do not include tax. Some restrictions and blackout dates may apply. © 2009 Hawaiian Hotels & Resorts.

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one-bedroom suite and receive fifth night free. Couple with other packages to get added perks such as a deluxe buffet breakfast for two and the use of a rental car. After all, there's still another infamous road trip to undertake—the Road to Hana.

O'AHU

Perfect for big city types in need of a getaway but who still want a metropolitan vibe is O'ahu. Downtown Honolulu beckons with museums and culinary delights aplenty. Plan visits to the Bishop Museum, Honolulu Academy of Art and 'Iolani Palace. Enjoy further immersion into the arts and culture scene with free classes held at the Royal Hawaiian Center in everything from 'ukulele and hula to lomilomi massage and Hawaiian quilting. Don't forget to check out the free weekly and monthly concerts and performances.

Blending nightlife and the arts is First Fridays—a monthly celebration during which galleries in Chinatown open their doors and a party atmosphere prevails in the streets. When sleep can no longer be held at bay, check into the Wyland Waikiki with a deal that's easy on the wallet like a one-category upgrade, free Internet access and continental breakfast. The best part—art lovers can surround themselves with modern art from the famed artist via the \$4 million art collection that's throughout the hotel and bronze



PHOTO COURTESY HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY (HTA) / JOHN DEMELLO

sculpture garden.

Ideal for families on spring break are the Sheraton Waikiki's family packages as well as freebies for children such as rollaway beds, in-room movies and complimentary meals for those under age 12. It's just one of many ways to enjoy an affordable island vacation that the whole family won't soon forget.

Affordable Aloha

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