

Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

You can arrange your own air or we may present group air later in our Trip Tips. Virgin and Hawaiian Air have good rates. (Only one group airport transfer can be provided and we'll coordinate times later.)

Dec 03 – Aloha Maui! (Land portion begins)

Touch down in Magnificent Maui and receive a traditional aloha greeting of a fresh flower lei. Remember that Tahini smell because it will be a favorite as we explore this land of rainbows, ocean views, and gentle trade winds. We immediately head to the spectacular Sheraton Resort and Spa on the legendary **Kaanapali Black Rock Beach**. This 5-star property is simply stunning. It's understandable why it's such a popular backdrop for photos and weddings. Hotel has free area shuttle, full-service spa, 4 restaurants, 2 poolside bars and nightclub. It's a 5-minute walk to Whalers Village and museum with great food and stores.

Conde Nast readers voted Maui as "Best Island in USA". You'll have free time to explore the lush, tropical grounds and walk the white sand beaches. Early evening we'll witness a nightly ritual dating back to the last chief of Maui, Kahekili. The nightly Lele Kawa or Cliff Diving and torch lighting is truly a spectacle like no other. The massive black cliffs are just a 10-minute walk from our resort. Legend tells us Kahekili proved his spiritual strength by leaping from sacred **Pu'u Keka'a** (Black Rock) to the Pacific. As the orange and purple sunset paints the sky, a young cliff diver honors his heritage each evening by re-tracing footsteps in the sand on Kaanapali Beach. Drums and old Hawaiian chants accompany him as he makes his journey up Puu Kekaa, leaving a path of glowing torches along the way. The trumpet of a conch signals his arrival as he offers his final torch to the ocean below. Casting his lei into the darkening waters, he makes the breathtaking 2 story dive from Black Rock into the rolling surf below.

The cultural celebration continues with the Maui Nui Luau. A must do, this luau is listed among the best in the islands. Not just for its food, but for the authenticity of its traditional songs, dance, hula and even fire knife dancing – all of which help explain many Hawaiian beliefs as to how the islands and her people came to be. The luau takes place on the beach at the base of Pu'u Keka'a and includes an authentic Hawaiian Imu ceremony in which an entire pig is roasted. You will even have the opportunity to participate if you'd like, learning to sway your hips in the hula to tell your own story! Eat to your heart's content, savoring the scrumptious island food offerings. Local artists will also be on hand to show you lei making and other crafts.

Overnight: Sheraton Resort and Spa (D)

Dec 04 – Haleakala Summit & Winery by Bike

Early morning we head up Maui's **Haleakala volcano** for a downhill biking adventure. This is an easy trek. It's downhill all the way and offers some of amazing bi-coastal panoramas of Maui's central valley and West Maui Mountains. Haleakala means "House of the Sun." The summit of Haleakalā is believed by Hawaiians to be home to the grandmother of the demigod Māui. Maui is said to control how long the sun stays in the sky each day. Have your cameras ready for this one! We'll be more than a mile above sea level and the views are breathtaking as we wind our way down.

While we get outfitted with helmets and windbreakers (yes, it gets a little chilly at the elevation of 6400 feet), we'll have a small continental breakfast and some hot beverages – then on to the Mountain! The safari van will shuttle us to the top of Haleakala Ranch just outside of the National Park entrance where we will start our glide down the volcano.

Not to worry. There will be several photo-op stops along the way to capture the stunning landscape. Haleakala safari guides will point out Maui highlights and unique features of the mountain. We end our bike adventure coasting through eucalyptus forests, beautiful lavender farms and Jacaranda tree-lined roadways, ending at the upcountry community of Kula above Pukalani.

A bus take us to the expansively beautiful **Ulupalakua Ranch** – meaning “breadfruit ripened on the back.” The 200-year-old property was originally owned by the legendary sea captain James Makee. The 20,000 acre Ulupalakua has long been a farm and ranch and now includes a wildlife habitat as well as Maui’s only winery - the Tedeschi Winery. Walk around the grounds of the vineyard and enjoy a free tasting of local wines. In addition to its award-winning wines produced in the European tradition, Tedeschi is known for its Maui Blanc Pineapple Wine.

Your afternoon and evening is free to enjoy the resort or the local area. Head to town for the great shopping and fun bars. There’s submarine tours, horse rides, fishing options as well as spectacular scenic helicopter tours (must be booked in advance. See Maverickhelicopters.com) in addition to the beaches and pool. The resort offers scuba opportunities and includes a world class spa.

Overnight: Sheraton Resort and Spa (B)

Dec 05 – Molokini and Turtle Town - Sailing and Snorkel

After breakfast, we board our boat for a snorkeling adventure exploring the indescribably beautiful **Molokini Crater**. The partially submerged volcanic crater is teeming with colorful tropical sea life and there is no better place on earth to observe it! Molokini features some of the clearest waters for snorkeling in the world. The shape of the crater offers a haven to more than 250 species, protecting them, as well as swimmers from waves and strong currents. It’s like swimming in an aquarium stocked with every colorful sea creature you could imagine. There are boundless underwater photo ops!

And if that’s not enough, let’s throw in some of Hawaii’s majestic green sea turtles! **Turtle Town** is made up of underwater lava formations and a beautiful coral reef that is animated by a wealth of colorful fishes, starfish, and many other aquatic beauties. The gentle giant turtles are naturally curious and may swim right up to you. This aqua-safari will stay with you forever.

You will have worked up an appetite and there is plenty to eat a freshly prepared beachside BBQ lunch with open bar of local wines and beer.

We return to our hotel for another afternoon free and yet another amazing Hawaiian sunset.

Overnight: Sheraton Resort and Spa (B, L)

Dec 06 - Maui to Kona

Welcome to Hawaii’s oldest island graced with stunning scenery. After a relaxing morning, we leave Maui and transfer to airport for Hawaiian Air flight 2:15-3PM to the **Big Island of Hawaii** and the quaint, seaside town of Kona. Kona was the place Hawaiian royalty would come to vacation and you will understand why. This is the island of the always active Kilauea Volcano, lush, tropical jungles and black sand beaches.

We arrive midafternoon and transfer to our hotel, the luxury **Sheraton Keauhou Bay**. Keauhou Bay is where King Kamehameha III was born in 1814. Hawaii’s longest reigning king was credited with bringing modern ways to his people. (It’s best we just call him King Kamehameha because his full name was Keaweawe‘ula

Kīwala‘ō Kauikeaouli Kaleiopapa Kalani Waiakua Kalanikau Iokikilo Kīwala‘ō i ke kapu Kamehameha! Or call him Key for short.)

The afternoon is free. Enjoy the resort. Visit Kahaalu Beach Park, do a dolphin sail, Atlantis submarine, zodiac rafting or more.

Optional - Sunset Manta Snorkel Experience. Set sail into the sunset from Keauhou Bay aboard the 45-foot trimaran (sailing times vary according to sunset). Hawaiian sunsets are especially notable for the opportunity to see the elusive green flash as the sun disappears below the horizon.

After the sunset, we drop sail and head for the World Famous **Manta Ray Village**. The Travel Channel rates it as “one of the top ten things to do in your lifetime.” It’s a rare opportunity to get up close and personal with these majestic manta rays. Equipped with snorkel gear, you will climb aboard a special "manta floatation device." The floating raft has a light on the bottom that attracts microscopic plankton on which the mantas come to feed. Watch the gentle creatures as they sail through the waters below, coming in waves and gliding beneath you. Time will fly through the 45-minute experience. Once back aboard the sailboat, you will enjoy some light snacks and drinks. Sail back to Keauhou. (\$138.00)

Evening is free.

Overnight: Sheraton Keauhou Bay Hotel (B)

Dec 7 – Kona and Twilight Volcano Adventure *Let the lava flow!*

Morning free. Kona is known for its great shops, cafes, and bars. Our beach is outstanding. You may want to visit a coffee farm for some famous Kona coffee to bring home.

Hawaii was formed by volcanoes and legend has it, Pele, the Hawaiian goddess of fire and volcanoes resides right here on the Big Island. Today, you will greet her at her doorstep and get a proverbial front row seat to one of Earth's most incredible natural wonders- an erupting volcano.

We explore the island’s incredible geological makeup as we head to **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park** and Mount Kilauea. This is sacred land for Hawaiians and it is easy to see why. It is truly like no place else on earth. The terrain bears witness to past eruptions. As you head down Chain of Craters Road towards the coast, you pass old lava flows, craters, rainforests, and cinder fields, as well as active lava tubes and steam vents.

But the true highlight of our adventure comes after darkness falls and the red glow of the lava becomes apparent. It is truly an epic viewing experience! We will dine on a picnic dinner graciously lit by the glow of Pele herself.

Overnight: Sheraton Keauhou Bay Hotel (B, D)

Dec 08 - Fly Kona to Oahu

We fly at noon to 1PM. Welcome to Honolulu! We say goodbye to the Big Island and head to Oahu and the legendary beaches of **Waikiki**. Our hotel the Pacific Beach is right in the heart of Waikiki, close to shopping and restaurants – at least if you can tear yourself away from the beach and its beautiful views of Diamond Head in the distance.

You'll have the afternoon free to explore. Somethings to do: The Polynesian Culture Center, a scenic walk on Diamond Head, Shark Dive, Duck Tour, Foodie Tour by Bike, Coco Crater and more. Our evening includes a dinner at a wonderful restaurant at the center of Waikiki, just in time for sunset.

Welcome Dinner! We transfer by coach for a sunset buffet dinner tonight at Shore Bird restaurant.

Overnight: Pacific Beach Hotel (B, D)

Dec 09 - Pearl Harbour and Circle Island tour

Today is all about exploring Oahu. We start by paying tribute to the events of December 7, 1941 by visiting **Pearl Harbor**, which came under Japanese attack that day, pulling the U.S, into World War II. A ferry takes us first to the Arizona Memorial, atop the sunken USS Arizona where 1,177 sailors died. You'll also have a chance to visit the USS Oklahoma Memorial, which stands as a monument to the 429 sailors who died when that ship capsized during the attack.

Following Pearl Harbor, we have a full circle tour to all of the highlights of Oahu. This includes the Dole Pineapple Plantation Visitor's Center which features a massive pineapple maze you may want to get lost in. We'll visit the famous beaches of the North Shore, noted for their mammoth waves drawing surfers from all over the world. We'll get sweeping panoramic views of the windward side of the island from Nu'uuanu Pali Lookout. Oahu's beautiful coral and white sand beaches will make you want to lay down your blanket and stay... overlooking the tiny island of Molohai, known as "Chinaman's Hat. We'll explore "the Beverly Hills of Hawaii" – Kahala and make other stops including Halona Blowhole & Lookout and Hanauma Bay Lookout.

The evening enjoy a Farewell Dinner at Shorebird restaurant. Later there's options for entertainment venues from sunset sailing to booze cruises. There's a new edge on great culinary exploration in HNL.

Overnight: Pacific Beach Hotel (B, D)

Dec 10 – Depart Honolulu for Home

Our Island Paradise visit comes to an end as we bid Aloha to Hawaii. Transfer to airport or consider extending a few extra days on own.

Level Two - I have no trouble walking and if necessary, can walk for 3+ miles. Uneven surfaces are not a problem. I do not need a cane or walking device.