

# *Hawaii – Here We Come!*

By Mike DuBose

**Aloha!** You will be heading out to the **Island of Oahu** (it means The Meeting Place) and we will be staying in the city of **Honolulu, Hawaii**, one of the largest cities in America. Remember that Hawaii is one of the 50 states and when you are in Hawaii, refer to back home as “the mainland.” We have visited the Hawaiian Islands twelve times, so we want to relay some information that may be useful in preparing and traveling to and from Hawaii. I am writing this article for three different classes of travelers: (1) those who have never flown; (2) those of you who have flown and traveled a little but may need a few suggestions; and (3) advanced travelers who know their stuff, but may need a little insight into the trip.

It took me four trips before I figured out some of these suggestions. You will spend about \$150 per day (excluding hotels and car rental), so start saving your money now. You don’t want to come back after having a terrific time only to face credit card charges for the rest of your life! Save a little every week and then spend wisely so that you will return debt-free.

## **How to Prepare and What to Buy Before Leaving**

**Luggage:** You will be allowed two pieces of luggage (not to exceed 40 pounds per bag) and two carry-ons. You will have to carry your luggage sometimes, so it is best to have pieces with pull-out handles and rollers. It is almost guaranteed that the airlines will nearly destroy your luggage, so we suggest buying something economical from K-Mart or Wal-Mart. Purchase luggage in colors like red or tie a colorful ribbon on yours so you can identify it when as it comes off the conveyor belt since most luggage looks alike. A word to the wise: pack lightly and conservatively as outlined below and do not place valuable items into your checked bags since they will be opened and inspected. Most likely you will be renting a car, and if you obtain a convertible, you will find there is little space for bags. Be sure to leave your luggage unlocked unless you want your locks broken by security people when they are inspecting it.

**Carry on items:** Most airlines allow two carry-on items, including one personal item like a briefcase, laptop, or purse and one small piece of luggage, (you cannot carry on two luggage items). Be sure to take one carry-on with enough clothing for a couple of days (in case your luggage is lost); key personal items such as medicine and hygienic products; and valuables such as cameras, electronic equipment, etc. This piece of luggage is not weighed but can be no larger than 9 X 14 X 22 inches. Try to board the plane as soon as possible because the interior overhead storage bins fill up fast and if there is no space, that carry-on luggage may have to be checked. You can store your carry-ons under the seat in front of you, but you will need all the leg room you can devise! Therefore, place your carry-on in the overhead bins.

**Clothes:** Hawaii is known for its relaxed attitude towards clothing. You will not see very many suits, but Hawaiian shirts are common. I do not recommend going out and buying a bunch of clothes, but look at K-Mart and other low-cost stores to buy your Hawaiian shirts before you travel. They will be more expensive in Hawaii. Knit shirts are common, but for the most part Caribbean- and Hawaiian-like dress for warm-hot weather is the norm, even in nice restaurants. On our first two trips to Hawaii, we took too many clothes and used about a third of them. I

would avoid taking really nice clothing like a suit – just think casual, beach, hot weather, and 40-pound luggage limit when you are buying or packing.

**Electronic equipment:** On the flight there, you will have access to movies, but the airline will charge you \$2 for cheap earphones. We suggest that you purchase some earphones with airline adapters before going. Ideally, you want some that will cover your ears. I own an excellent set called *Plane Quiet* earphones. These can be ordered at [www.travelessentials.com](http://www.travelessentials.com), and they are selling for under \$50. These earphones are specially designed to be noise-canceling and shut out a lot of the airliner jet noise and increase the quality of sound. They also come with airline adapters that you can plug into the airline's audio system. They do require *batteries* so buy some extra batteries as well.

I also suggest that you bring a CD player with some of your favorite CDs. I purchased an Apple I-pod so I can store my CDs on a smaller device that is not as bulky as a CD player. Another item may be a DVD player. Some laptops have DVD capabilities, but I recommend a DVD player with 5" and, preferably, a 7" screen. Try to purchase a name brand like Polaroid, Sony, etc. It's great for children and adults on a long flight! Be sure to purchase a *Y splitter* from Radio Shack for two headsets if you are traveling with a companion so the two of you can view a DVD at the same time. Your earphones will be great for this as well.

Another item you may want to carry is a digital camera since you will see some beautiful beaches, sunsets, etc. Of course, the more megapixels the camera has, the better the camera but also the higher the cost. Be sure to obtain a high-storage memory card (512 MEGS) since graphics take up so much memory. Transferring pictures to a laptop or other device frees up the memory card for additional pictures.

**How much money to save for the trip:** Hawaii is expensive because nearly everything is imported. If you want to save some money, pack some nonperishable and light-weight food that is sealed. There is also a K-Mart on the island, and its prices are not too bad. Consider the following as a conservative estimate of meal spending per person per day: \$10 breakfast, \$10 lunch, and \$50 dinner.

I have seen some folks take a large, packed metal cooler with rollers loaded with food. While on the island, they use it as a cooler for icing down drinks and for sandwich items and other food; on the way home, they use it to pack dirty clothes or gifts. Considering that you may want to purchase other items and gas, I would budget somewhere between \$100 and \$150 per adult each day, but you can get by with less as outlined in this article. We suggest that you tell your relatives and friends that you will not be buying them any mementos and presents, but rather you are going to have a good time! Too often we go on trips only to get stressed out looking for presents! If you play it right, find the stores with the best prices, and spend wisely, you can have a great time within a reasonable budget.

**Your ticket:** Be sure to have a picture ID with you or you will be thumbing to Hawaii. I always carry a second ID in my luggage in case one gets lost.

**Going to the airport:** Leave home in plenty of time and prepare for a flat tire on the way to the airport. (Dr. Murphy is always lurking about!) Plan to arrive at the airport at least 1 to 1 ½ hours before your flight. Security lines are longer now. We suggest that you have someone take you to

the airport to save on expensive long-term parking fees. (You cannot leave your car unattended outside the airport when unloading luggage.)

If you are not in a rush when you arrive, go into the terminal and take your luggage to the ticket counter. You can also check in your luggage outside. Attendants will require your driver's license and your electronic ticket. You will also need to tip the attendants outside, usually \$1-\$2 per bag. After checking your luggage, you will proceed to security. You will go through several checks where you are asked for a photo ID and your ticket. Only passengers can go beyond security so here is where your friends and relatives stop. I suggest that you wear no jewelry or metal objects that will set the metal detector off. Wear comfortable slip-on shoes (you may have to remove them for security). Avoid taking any scissors, knives, or sharp metal objects through security. Once you reach your departure gate, you do not need to check in – just be sure to go to the right one! When it is time to board the plane, passengers will be called by zone (1, 2, 3, etc.), which is the section of the plane where you will sit.

### **On the Plane**

I suggest that you wear a jogging outfit on the flight since it will be cold on the plane and airlines may not be giving out blankets like they used to in order to save money. It is very important to dress comfortably for the long, ten-hour flight. Ideally, stow some shorts in your carry-on so that you can slip these on prior to landing in Hawaii since it will be 85 degrees when you land.

Don't worry about having a good window seat. Once you are in the plane, you will see very little. The flight to Hawaii from Cincinnati or Atlanta is about 4,500 miles.

While on the plane, get up and walk around every hour for a few minutes. Do not stay in your seat for long periods of time since this can cause circulation problems. To avoid blood clots that can kill, drink lots of water, walk around the plane every two hours, and flex your legs ten times every half-hour to keep the bloods pumping.

I usually take a baby or low dosage aspirin (80 mg) when I leave Cincinnati or Atlanta to thin my blood. Of course, check with your physician before taking any medicines. If you do take medicine, we suggest that you obtain an original prescription from your physician prior to leaving for security and in the event you need it in Hawaii. Store all medicines in your carry-on.

Prior to leaving on the plane, we suggest that you purchase a small tube of petroleum jelly. Coat the interior of your nostrils with it. While this sounds unpleasant, it will keep your nose moist and reduce the chances that you will pick up some germs from the people near you. Air is re-circulated and so are the germs! Be sure to also keep your body hydrated and drink lots of water. Bottled water aboard the plane is free. The plane is always sold out on the way!

Be aware that too much alcohol doubles your jet lag. While sodas are free, alcoholic drinks aboard many airlines are \$5. However, try not to drink alcohol as you near Honolulu because you will probably be driving a vehicle and you do not want a DUI upon arrival. Some research indicates that you can consume more alcohol in a pressurized cabin but that it has a more significant impact when you leave the plane.

Smoking is not allowed on the flights. However, you will be able to smoke in the airport at specially designated areas. Do not attempt to take any gas lighters onboard since security will confiscate them.

We recommend that you take plenty of reading materials and something to keep you occupied for 10 hours. You will not have access to the Internet, although you will have the option of watching a movie on board for a charge. However, if you have your good earphones with airline adapters, there is no cost.

I recommend that you purchase some eye covers or eye masks (like the movie stars used to wear). These sell for about \$5. I like the ones by Lewis N. Clark ([www.lewisnclark.com](http://www.lewisnclark.com)). Consider, too, an inflatable (to conserve storage) neck pillow. I also suggest that you purchase soft ear plugs, which can cut down on the noise. I like the Flents QUIET! PLEASE foam ear plugs. Get the ones that have a 29 or higher NRR rating or decibels. The higher the number, the less rumbling and jet noise you will hear. I prefer the foam ear plugs because they fit well in your ears and are comfortable. These are highly recommended! Most drugstores sell the ear plugs. If you are prone to ear problems on a plane, take some gum and chew it on take off and landings.

I would suggest that you also take some snacks in your carry-on since food is not the best on planes. If you require a special diet, call the airline. Have your flight information available. There are many different diets you can order.

On the way, as you near Hawaii, you will be asked to complete some paperwork for Hawaii so have a pen available. It is mostly travel-related information and questions about whether you are bringing in any deadly plants or disease.

## **In Hawaii**

Try to adjust to Hawaiian time when you arrive! Don't forget this 6-hour time difference when calling people back home! Try your best to stay up until 11 PM (Hawaiian time) and then go to sleep. That will tough but it will help your body change to Hawaiian time. Try to set the flight time so you can have a little time for fun on Day 1.

**Cell phones:** Check with your carrier before going since roaming charges can eat you alive! Mark everything like your cell phone with some identifying information in case you lose it. Also, remember to bring your cell phone charger. I suggest taking both AC and DC chargers.

**Arriving at the hotel and what to do the first two days:** I recommend that you try to stay in the local vicinity of your hotel the first two days – maybe shop or hang out to recover from jet lag and lie out on the beach.

**About Hawaii:** The official Hawaiian Islands web site is [www.gohawaii.com](http://www.gohawaii.com), and that will provide you with lots of information. Remember that there are six different Hawaiian Islands. Let's review some facts about the island of Oahu:

Honolulu is the capital, and the city has over 1 million people who live in 600 sq. miles.

There are 112 miles of shoreline, and the average annual temperature is 79 degrees with low humidity.

The island receives about 23 inches of rain so you may have a little shower or two.

5 million people visit the island every year.

Waikiki is one of the world's prettiest beaches.

300 state parks are located here.

There are no active volcanoes, although the island has an inactive one. The active one is on the big island of Hawaii.

They have serious traffic problems, and Honolulu has the highest density of cars per capita. There is one car per person!

The 50-foot waves can be seen in late January at North Shore.

**Pearl Harbor** is the most visited site. It includes the USS Arizona, bombed by Japan in WWII and now a memorial; the USS Missouri (Big MO), where the declaration of surrender with Japan was signed; and a WWII submarine. Everyone should visit this!

It is a very diverse society, and people are very friendly.

Crime is low, but stealing is a common problem. Never leave your valuables exposed since a thief can rip into a convertible. We also suggest that you take some travelers checks and cash stored in different locations in your belongings. One of those body fanny packs really helps. You can also use ATMs in Hawaii and secure money as you need it. We suggest that you check with your bank online to find their locations in Honolulu.

**Visiting other islands:** If this is your first visit to Hawaii, I would generally not recommend visiting other islands. You will have plenty to do in Oahu for seven days. However, since I have visited the other islands, here is a short synopsis if you decide to visit any of them:

Island	Population	Description
Kauai	1 million	Jurassic Park filmed here. Very plush green island. Other than a few things, I was not impressed too much with what I saw.
Maui	2.2 million	This is the second largest island and is a good one to visit. The area Kehei is where the locals hang out, and eating areas are good here. This has some of the best snorkeling.
Lanai	3,100	This is our favorite island but not one to visit for a day trip since there is little to see except two first class hotels.
Hawaii	1.2 million	This is also one of our favorites because of the Hilton hotel there and the great snorkeling at Captain Cook's reef. It is called "the big island" since it is the largest of the Hawaiian islands and it has an active volcano. But it was not very active when we flew over it

		by helicopter. The big island is where Kona coffee (there is a small town of Kona), and macadamia nuts are grown. If you are going to do a tour, this is the island I would pick for this trip.
Molokai		Not recommended. It is like a cattle ranch, and there is little to see.

If you are interested in seeing the other islands, go to the Hilton Hawaiian Village and look for the travel agents next to the registration desk. Trips range in price from \$87 to \$200 per person and include your flight aboard Hawaiian or Aloha Airlines. All sorts of tours are available. Look for the weekly booklets at the hotel such as *What is Going On in Hawaii This Week* or *Aloha Gold*. They are helpful and have a variety of trips and discounts. American Express is located as you enter the Village on your left, near the restaurant and outside bar area and the shops. Be careful; I picked out the cheapest trip that included a flight, transportation, and lunch for less than \$100. But the transportation was in a worn out van! American Express may cost more, but the quality may be better as well. If you take a trip, you will be expected to be out in the transportation area of the Hilton Hotel around 6 AM and you will return around 6 PM. Beware of hotel tours and time share offers. They are just a waste of your time.

**Weather:** The weather will contain few, if any, showers, and if it does rain, it will only be a brief time. The island has low humidity, which means it feels in the mid-70s when it is in the 80s, but the sun can burn in a minute! The sun, while it feels good, is very intense, and running around in a convertible will bake your arms and head. You do not want to get burned in Hawaii and then not be able to lie out on the beach. The bottom line: use sun screen in all areas!

**Things to do, places to go, where to buy, and what to see:** We recommend buying the book *Oahu Revealed* on Amazon.com for around \$15. This book became our guide, and it is worth every penny. It contains very clear road maps for every area of the island and, more importantly, it has a detailed street map of the Honolulu/Waikiki Beach area. One of the most important things to do is ask locals where they would hang out. We got tons of suggestions from the parking valet at our hotel and they weren't very touristy at all. Word-of-mouth from someone who lives there is the best there is! You will have a choice while in Hawaii: try to see everything and return worn out, or take it easy, enjoy the pleasant surroundings, and take in some key items as outlined below.

**Golf:** Hawaii has some of the best golf courses in the world. But if you play, be sure to go early in the mornings because the trade winds pick up around 2-3 PM to 30+ MPH. Ask your hotel about golf packages. Google "Oahu Golf Courses" for detailed information. You can rent clubs on the island.

**Polynesian Cultural Center:** This includes a wide variety of events about the Hawaiian culture, but it is located about an hour's drive from Honolulu. I have not heard any favorable comments on this nor have I visited it.

**Dole Plantation:** As you know, pineapples are one of the main crops of Hawaii. I have never visited here because once you have seen one pineapple, you have seen them all. The plantation will provide transportation through the Pineapple Shuttle to the farm which is about an hour's drive and it costs \$20.

**China Town:** This is an interesting part of Honolulu, and it includes shops where you can generally pick up some low-cost items.

**Waikiki Beach:** This means “*Playland of the Pacific*” and is one of the top five beaches in the world. The sun shines 300 days each year! The water is fairly warm year-round, and the drinking water is good in the area. You can generally surf (on the small waves, and boards are available for rent) or you can do some general but low-grade snorkeling off the beach. There is also a restaurant located oceanfront at the Hilton where you can eat lunch for around \$10 and have a nice drink. Be sure to find a table in the shade. There is usually entertainment such as a guitar player, so this is a great place to get a good book and read while snacking.

**Atlantis Submarine,** which goes down 100 feet, is located at the Hilton restaurant mentioned above. Tell them you want an AAA discount and you will get 20% off, or look for coupons in the island magazines. This is a good trip but runs about \$70 for an adult. Be sure to go in the morning since the trade winds whip up the seas and the visibility is not as good later in the day. I enjoyed this underwater trip.

**Luau:** Everyone needs to go to at least one luau while in Hawaii. If you are interested in a luau, go to [www.royal-hawaiian.com](http://www.royal-hawaiian.com), call the **Royal Hawaiian Hotel** (808-931-8383), or have your hotel concierge make a reservation. Luau's are pretty neat, and you will eat a lot of traditional Hawaiian food and see the fire twirlers perform. **The Star of Honolulu** is a ship that has a dinner cruise. I have not gone on it but have heard a few good comments. Call 808-983-7827 or go to [www.starofhonolulu.com](http://www.starofhonolulu.com).

**Alcohol consumption:** It is really fun to order those cute drinks with the umbrellas in them. However, those cute little drinks can add up in a hurry at \$6-\$8 each. You may want to secure some plastic glasses that match the bar and pour your own in the room.

**North Shore:** This is north of the island and is the location where you see those 50-foot waves in late January. Unfortunately, this is not the case in April-November when the waves will be small (1-5 feet). There are several villages up that way that are great stopping places for a sandwich and buying some local Hawaiian wares. A few miles down the road there is a place called *Turtle Beach* (not marked but on the maps in *Oahu Revealed*) that was recommended by an acquaintance. If you like sea turtles and a nice beach, this is a good place to stop. She saw dozens of sea turtles just frolicking on the shoreline. The beach is identifiable only by the dozens of cars that will be parked across the street in a makeshift parking area that borders private property so there is a fence adjacent to the parking. It is just south of Waimea (why-a-may-a) Bay but north of the popular beach town of Hale'iwa. There is a great restaurant called *The Breakers* that serves a pineapple macadamia nut mahi-mahi to die for and has a lot of good food on the menu. THE PLACE for burgers is *Kua' Aina* (coo-a-eye-na) but it doesn't take credit cards. The food is really “ono” (delicious) there. It is almost directly across the street from *Rosie's Cantina*. Park in their lot and just walk across the street. Prices are about \$6.50 for 1/3 lb burger. If you like shrimp, stop by *Giovanni's Shrimp Truck* or *Amy's Shrimp Truck*, which are parked on the side of the road on the east side of the island as you head up towards the North Shore. These are very well-known places to eat and very yummy. A plate of shrimp and 2 scoops of rice was \$12, almost enough for two people.

**Circling the island by car:** When we visit, we rent a car and circle the island along the shoreline. Gas prices will average \$3.50+ per gallon, so don't be shocked by the price. You will

see some of the most beautiful beaches with no one on them and beautiful lookout points and gorgeous cliffs along the way. In order to do this, you take H-1 to highway 72 and then right on 61 to 630 then to 830 and then to 83. This is a full day's journey with the top down so you will need to take sunscreen, good sunglasses, snacks, cap or hat, camera, and an inexpensive cooler. You will pass the North Shore and the **Dole Pineapple Plantation** on the way back to Honolulu. You can also pay for a trip or tour aboard an air-conditioned bus that tours the island. The hotel concierge can help you with this.

**Food Land and K-Mart:** *Food Land* is the best store in Oahu to purchase alcohol, sodas, and other food. It is difficult to find, but it is located on the interior first floor of the large mall in Oahu off Ala Moana or about 1-2 miles west of the Hilton. *Food Land* operates like a *Sam's Club*. Pick up a free, quick, and temporary membership card since you receive discounts with the card. *K-Mart* is the best location to purchase hygiene products, over-the-counter drugs, beach items, clothes, macadamia nuts, and Kona coffee.

**Roads:** Considering that whoever designed the grids for the streets, interstates and exit ramps must have been smoking some "Maui Wowie," a good map is essential. Having been there twelve times, I still get lost, and the road system is very difficult to maneuver. On average, 85% of the street names are Hawaiian and start with a "K", so until you get used to the pronunciation of the double vowel street names and begin to recognize familiar streets, a navigator is very helpful and a map will be your best friend. Many streets are one-way, and there is some construction going on. There are a few major roads to know. H-1 is the main interstate that runs east/west. H-2 runs north/south and the H-3 cuts through the mountains so you can get to the east side of the island quicker. H-3 will take you from the H-1. Follow the signs for Hwy 83, known as the Kamehameha (or Kam) Highway. Highway 83 will take you all around the east side of the island from Kane'ohe (kah-nay-oh-hay) up to Hale'iwa. If you leave Hale'iwa and want to go through the center of the island and head back to Waikiki Beach, you would take 83 until it meets up with Highway 99 and take 99 to the H-2. The H-2 will lead you to either H-1 or the Nimitz Highway. Nimitz Highway runs parallel to the H-1 for a distance and then changes names and turns automatically into Ala Moana Boulevard.

**Cruises:** We strongly recommend taking a sunset catamaran cruise (sometimes referred to as a Booze Cruise). We went on a 1 ½ hour cruise at sunset for \$30. It included all you can drink: soda, beer, wine, margaritas and tropical fruity drinks. It was relaxing and very fun as there are people of all ages, good music, and a view that was priceless! It leaves from in front of the beach at the Outrigger Reef Hotel. Reservations for this can be made at 808-922-2210.

**Snorkeling:** If you are into snorkeling (and Hawaii is one of the best places in the world if you go to the right place), there is the popular but over-rated **Hanauma (Ha-Naw-Ma) Bay** that is a marine sanctuary. It is great for beginners, but we rated the snorkeling to be below average. But it is also known to have its good days. Always go early in the morning for the best snorkeling and always go with a group – never alone. It costs approximately \$8 to rent snorkel equipment, \$5 to get into the park, and \$1 or \$2 to park. The parking on the weekend is more difficult to maneuver, so go during the week while public school is in session. Another snorkeling place near the North Shore is **Sharks Cove** (no sharks there), which can be found on any map. There is a really nice person who rents snorkeling equipment from his beach house across the street at *Shark's Cove Rentals*. There's a *Food Land* grocery store almost across the street. It is a bit tricky to get down to the cove (you have to walk down a path and then climb over some rocks), but it is worth the trip for the snorkeling. *Snorkel Bob's* is another location to rent snorkeling gear.

Snorkeling is interesting in that the water magnifies. Thus, you may not need to wear glasses when snorkeling.

**Cheap gifts:** If you want to buy some cheap gifts that do not weigh much, consider t-shirts. As you are walking towards the main entrance to the Hilton Hotel at the main entrance on the busy street, take a right and walk down the main street. You will find Hawaiian t-shirts, 5 for \$10. And you can ask some of these merchants for a discount if you buy a lot (e.g., offer \$50 for \$65 worth of merchandise). *Hilo Hatties* is the store that will advertise the most, but most gifts there are little more expensive.

**Other restaurants:** *Benihana Japanese Restaurant* is located near the Hilton entrance and is very good, but reservations are required. *Roy's* is an excellent restaurant with great food, but a little expensive. We particularly liked the seafood platter. We always like *Ruth's Chris*, but that is a steak chain and is expensive. You will find all of the fast food restaurants nearby. Ask anyone what a Malasada is and they will tell you to go to *Leonard's Bakery* on Kapahula Avenue. They are drool-inducing Portuguese donuts that they make fresh on the spot, fry, and coat with sugar. They are awesome!

**Fireworks and Hawaiian ceremony:** The Hilton has a very good fireworks display in front of their Rainbow Towers near the ocean on Friday nights at dusk. You want to see these when the locals dress up in their native, traditional Hawaiian dress. Be sure to ask the Hilton when they will have their various ceremonies near the pool area. These include fire twirlers, and it is very informal around the pool area at the Hilton.

**Airplane and helicopter rides:** A friend took a one-hour air tour of the island and recommended it. Visit [www.islandseaplane.com](http://www.islandseaplane.com). *Blue Hawaiian Helicopters* are some of the best for helicopter rides and you can visit [www.bluehawaiian.com](http://www.bluehawaiian.com). Rides vary in length and cost from \$110+ for a 45-minute ride and up. You can generally find cheaper helicopter rides by looking in the Yellow Pages and the local advertising. Be sure to inquire if the plan includes a pilot!!

**Hawaiian ranch:** If you like a bit of adventure, you should visit **Kualoa (Coo-a-low-ah) Ranch**. It is on the east side of the island, and the scenic landscape is featured in many movies and TV shows. If you have ever seen *LOST* on ABC, they film many of the open valley shots there with the mountains in the background. Parts of *Jurassic Park*, *Godzilla*, and almost all of *50 First Dates* were filmed there. You can rent an ATV for \$52 a person for the 1-hour ride. They also have horseback riding, kayaking, and much more. The website is [www.kualoa.com](http://www.kualoa.com).

### Coming Back

Yuk! This is the worst part of the trip – the long flight back. This is where listening to the seasoned travelers will make your flight a little less painful. When you are coming home, you will gain six hours which is torture on the body. Be sure to arrive at the airport at least two hours prior to your departure. If you need to return a rental car, drive to the rental agency and then catch the shuttle bus back to the airport terminal. Be sure to fill the rental car with regular gas at a local gas station where gas prices are a little lower compared to the airport where they are very expensive.

When you arrive at the terminal, you will need to send your bags through the inspection area at the Hawaiian Agricultural Unit located right inside the airport near the Delta stand. If you are traveling with a companion, you may want to drop off your luggage and your companion at the departing area and go on to return the rental car. You can ride the shuttle back to the departure area. Don't try to bring back any fruit!

When your luggage is re-tagged with those pink inspection stickers, you can take your bags to check in. Then proceed to your departure gate. It is always best to check to see if your flight is departing on time. As you get ready to board the plane, think about what I said about traveling out to Hawaii. While it will be hot in Hawaii, now is the time to put that jogging suit back on because the airplane will be cold. Many airlines allow you to bring food aboard the plane, and there will be fast food restaurants on the way to your gate. As soon as you get into the plane, go ahead and run your watch forward by six hours. That will help you gauge sleep. Also, if you are flying coach, watch for empty seats. When the plane's doors shut, if you see three seats vacant, jump in the middle of the three seats and put your belongings on the other two. When you are ready, these three seats beat first class and you can make a short bed by pulling up the arm rests.

You will be served a limited meal and have some snacks. There will be a different movie shown on the way back. Some travelers tell me that they take some *Tylenol PM* when they want to go to sleep, while others will have a few drinks. You will need to try to go to sleep around 10:00 PM because you will be landing 9 ½ hours later in Cincinnati. You definitely need to get some sleep (at least four hours) on the way back. The eye masks or covers, neck pillow (to keep your head straight in the airline seat), and the ear plugs (to reduce the noise) are definitely recommended. You will be awakened at 7-8 AM for breakfast.

Hope this helps! Mahalo!

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