



Hawaiian Islands Trip Notes – Hiking Kauai & Big Island **February 17-29, 2012**

Last February I hiked in Maui and was more than a little impressed with the hike down into the volcano as well as the trip to Hana, my third and best trip there. The prior December we were in Oahu for the Honolulu Marathon and before then we had a quick “fly by” view of the islands through a Holland America 15-day Hawaiian cruise. Let’s see, what’s left? The more pertinent question might be what’s left of my legs? It meant testing the legs in the remaining islands of Kauai and Big Island.

So far the legs continue working; already this year I’ve managed marathons at Disney’s Goofy marathon-and-a-half, Baton Rouge, Tallahassee and Jacksonville. I’m hoping they continue for marathons in Red Rock Canyon, Yakima River Canyon, Paris, Capon Valley 50K, Lenox and finally Stockholm (or maybe Ayres Rock if I can’t finish Stockholm) for my 100th, my 10th of the year, my 10th international, and for my 67th birthday.

Last year I managed five hikes with Timberline Adventures and there is a possibility of five more this year.

Weather

In some ways this trip was lucky as evidenced by this later news article: *“Rain brings flooding, spill, slides to Kauai - A weather watch remained through the night for Oahu and the Garden Isle. A weather trough west of the state disrupted atmospheric conditions over Kauai and Oahu Sunday, resulting in heavy showers and a host of weather-related emergencies. The National Weather Service initially issued a flash flood watch for Kauai on Saturday in anticipation of heavy rain that could contribute to flash-flood conditions.”*

From Kauai hiker Lorraine wrote right after we left: *We have had monsoons here, setting a 50 year record on Sunday with 6.40 inches at Lihue and lots of flood warnings. It wasn't too bad yesterday, but more rain again today and it is pouring tonight again.*

Though we left before the worst of the weather, we were headed to Hilo and some of the wettest areas in the world. It would not disappoint us and there wasn’t a day we didn’t need our rain gear. Off and on.

Anti-American Sentiments on the Islands

Anti American sentiments are alive and well on both these islands. We learned first in Oahu and then on Maui that the Hawaiians feel like we unfairly took them over. That we had guns and they only had spears. Yet they readily partake of the American tourist scene which doesn’t fit, does it? I heard there are only about 1000 pure Hawaiians remaining on the islands but you’d think they were the

majority by all the books and talk and billboards with Go Home American sentiments. Fortunately there's not much of this in the pure tourist areas but get on the far side of any of the islands and it's very prevalent.

Hawaiian Diet

We had a couple on our hiking trip that had pretty odd diet habits too, but nothing like the Hawaiian's who really show their diet deficiencies. They are BIG and LOOSE. Our hikers were young enough that they weren't yet . . .

As an example, we had a heck of a time getting vegetables and maybe Subway was again our best source though fortunately our guides added carrots, peppers, avocados and spinach leaves to our sandwich offerings. Once when we asked a restaurant for vegetables they looked at us like we had two heads and immediately responded "We don't have vegetables." In one fancy restaurant, almost within sight of the sea, there was NO seafood except \$44 lobster (which three or four of our folks immediately ordered.) A gallon of milk was sometimes \$12. There were double scoops of sticky white rice with most plate meals. Sticky rice was a mainstay for breakfast. It was a real treat when our last hotel had a buffet breakfast with real fresh fruit and some of us pigged out with 4 or 5 big wedges of papaya – each! The Hawaiian diet is generally simple carbs and more simple carbs. So when one of our hikers ordered pancakes with a side of hash browns, I thought he'd make a good Hawaiian.

I was ready to eat like a Hawaiian when I learned about their Mufibi – remembering that the Hawaiians learned about Spam during our WWII and still consume a lot of it – they have this \$1.50 cheap food called Mufibi which is a slice of spam in between rice which is then wrapped in seaweed Sashimi style. I'd have tried it I'd have found it.

Fri Feb 17 – Day Zero Hour

Getting up at 4am was painful but got me in the mode for early starts which I'm sure not used to. Tom is always agreeable about taking me to the airport. I thought that I'd built in 1 ½ hour for security but it took most all of that and I just walked on the plane after many had already been boarded. I hate that – it makes suitcase storing a challenge. (I don't check luggage.)

The 7:30am departure went off fine and in Los Angeles with a very long 4-hour layover I searched for a good meal which was not to be found. Wolfgang Puck Express was the best recommendation and I walked three terminals and spent some time in two different United/Continental airline clubs. Air travel looks like bus travel was when I was young. I was surprised to get first class upgrade as much because foreign travel generally requires paying for it with a System Wide Upgrade or paying up in miles or dollars. Guess this is considered domestic but it's pretty foreign to me.

The 7:15pm arrival plus 5 hours time difference meant I had been up a very long time but I prevailed after a taxi ride and check in to walk the resort grounds and have a Mai Tai in the ocean/pool side open bar and then dinner. By the time I found my bed I'd been up 24 hours and thus slept very soundly. To my view this is the best way to deal with jet lag but it doesn't always work.

The hotel had been an old one recently taken over by Courtyard by Marriott and the renovation was just completed fortunately retaining all the old dark woodwork which might have been their famous

Koa wood or more likely an old darkened mahogany. The usual open-space hotel was very Hawaiian so a pleasant surprise as was the coolness requiring a jacket. There are no shuttles and the hotel is about 7 miles from the airport so a rental car or a \$26 taxi ride is required. I fortunately had a very American surfer-looking guy who emigrated from California five years ago and now gives tours for the cruise ship folks. (He would be only the first of many Californian emigrants to the Islands I met.) The hotel was within a short walk to a trail leading to the Marketplace where I met our tour leaders for a BBQ dinner. The day before I'd walked the trail in the opposite direction for a few miles.

The hotel



It is not unusual to find hotels on the Islands changing hands often. Our last hotel had seemed to change hands about each third year.

Summary of what we'd encounter once the tour started

Day 1	Group assembles; van shuttle to Poipu Beach.; Poipu Beach Coastline Trail	4 miles
Day 2	Waimea Canyon – Kukui Trail	6 miles
Day 3	Kee Beach - Kalalau Trail – Hanakapiai Beach – Hanakapiai Falls	9 miles
Day 4	Nonou Mountain – Sleeping Giant (4 miles); inter-island flight to Hilo, HI	4 miles
Day 5	Hike Kilauea Iki—Thurston Lava Tube	6 miles
Day 6	Crater Rim Trail – Halemaumau – Kilauea Caldera	10 miles
Day 7	Napau Crater Trail – Puu Huluhulu – Napau Crater (8 miles); van to Kona	8 miles
Day 8	Captain Cook Trail to Captain Cook Monument (4 miles); snorkeling program concludes late-afternoon	4 miles

Total Hiking Miles - 51 miles

Sun Feb 19 – Day 1

The tour started at 9am in the lobby of Kauai at Coconut Beach recently converted into a Courtyard by Marriott and we were all dressed for hiking. The small attendance had grown by three additional last minute hikers who had already lost out on the main hotels and would be staying a few blocks away in most cases during the hike.

We headed to Poipu Beach, a no-nonsense approach to quality beach time from the “get-go.” Our coastline walk of Poipu along the Shiprock Beach Trail and climb to a promontory gave us an incredible panoramic view of the cinder cones and lava tubes that extend into the ocean as evidence of Kauai’s most recent volcanic activity. This was



short at 4 miles and I often think they start with short hikes to get a feel of our abilities. Later that afternoon we drove to these fantastic old cottages near to Waimea Canyon called the Waimea Plantation Cottages where we spent two nights. I always hope for multiple nights in one location so as to reduce the wasted and tiring motions of moving.

From their website: *Island plantations were the core of Hawaiian life in the 1800's, the place where Polynesian, Asian, and European influences blended to form the unique local culture of contemporary Hawaii. Waimea Plantation Cottages, hidden away on the quiet, western coast of the Garden Isle of Kauai, is a nostalgic glimpse into a simple life found at a sugar plantation. Guests enjoy this unique ocean front experience unlike any other in all of the Hawaiian Islands. This cluster of authentic plantation homes, set in a peaceful coconut grove, has been carefully restored with period-inspired furniture and modern conveniences. Every cottage has a full kitchen and a front porch overlooking the grassy lawn, but each one has a personality and decor all its own. Treat yourself to a full range of services at our day spa, enjoy our onsite restaurant, and convenient Wi-Fi hotspot. Our Managers estate on the ocean is the perfect location for celebrations - weddings, family reunions, and corporate events. Our close proximity to Waimea Canyon and the Napali Coast makes the Cottages perfect for ecotours, adventure, health and wellness vacations. Make historic, award-winning Waimea Plantation Cottages your home away from home on the magical island of Kauai.*



The property is part of the lands owned by Kikiaola and Company, Limited, a family company created by the heirs of Kauai sugar pioneer Hans Peter (H.P.) Fayé who came from his native Norway in the 1800's to settle as a young man on Kauai. In addition to planting sugar, H.P. Fayé started a copra plantation and it is on nearly 30 acres among those original trees that Waimea Plantation Cottages is located. Today there are ironwood, keawe and banyan groves and large expanses of lawn lined with beds of colorful and fragrant tropical flora. Relaxation is a major activity at this serene accommodation destination. Enjoy our beachside pool. Stroll or jog along the black sand beach, and discover the shady hammocks and lawn chairs placed among the trees.



I loved this place. So did others as it had received various awards from most romantic to most Hawaiian. It reminded me of a church camp or my favorite Capon Springs resort in WVA. But it wasn't all perfect: what was romantic and colorful didn't help sleeping when the wild roosters crowed

all night. Now, how stupid is that? Or as Tom who loves roosters replied “Roosters should be seen and not heard.” The first night my fire alarm went off. It rained heavy. My alarm automatically reset itself to NYC time (again, how stupid is that?) We had to meet at 6:30am which is also stupidly early and I protested but lost. (I don’t like any mornings even if they start at 10am.) And on my way to meet at 6:30am it was pitch dark and I didn’t see the big heavy-duty sprinkler and got drenched. But off we went up to the edge of Waimea Canyon where it required a couple layers and we were still cold. But cold didn’t last for long as this is the Grand Canyon of the Pacific and hiking has a way of warming you up.

A note on breakfast and fixing lunch

The usual method of Timberline Tours is to meet in the leader’s cabin to fix sandwiches and fixings for the day and pack them into our backpacks. They are very generous sandwiches with offerings like avocado, sprouts, and spinach leaves to add to a few selections of meats and cheeses. Also plenty there are always plenty of offerings for the vegetarians to include peanut butter and humus. Energy bars, fresh fruit, Gatorade, whatever, are in abundance and no one would need to lose weight even with all our hiking energy output.

Then it’s off to breakfast and if the hotel doesn’t offer a hearty enough breakfast we are driven somewhere that does and with no limitations on what we order. It’s rare for anyone to abuse the system but it has happened.

Mon Feb 20 – Day 2

Magnificent Waimea Canyon (that’s the panorama picture at the top) was the beginning of our second day and it was along the Kukui Trail that drops 2,000 feet to the canyon floor; we were clear that there would be no miracle and that we’d eventually have to climb back up that hill to the canyon rim. Some might say five miles isn’t very much but with that kind of drop, let me tell you it can be enough to equal a marathon and that’s both for going down and what it does to your quads and going up for what it does to the lungs and calves.

Actually I think that this was the day we had an alternate and additional hike that leader Steve hadn’t done for a few years, really wanted to, but was concerned about the steepness and fall off of one wash out cliff area. About half of us chose to do it (I’d only do so with Steve’s blessing) and it was a doozy but the final overlook was well worth the effort. I was a bit embarrassed at being near the end and holding up the rest of the hikers.

It is entirely possible that I got some days mixed up as there were changes and switches due to weather but you’ll get the idea and picture.

Note sent home to Tom: We started easy as much because it was going down. Easy if you don’t mind doing a lot of it on your butt. This red clay is very slippery and we were just out the backdoor of the wettest place in the world. After a super view of the Waimea Canyon and some of the Na Pali coast we were to turn back and that would have been plenty. But Steve had another 6 mile diversion that most were afraid of and he even discouraged those with fear of height and especially of a landslide area with just inches of loose walkway. Half of us chose to go with this Ironman. He knows me well and felt I could handle it. He may have been sorry when I drug my ass at the back of the

pack. It was glorious to see the Na Pali coast from a far out promontory. But getting back up the mud hills was almost beyond my ability. Yet it got done and I feel like I did a marathon. We watched the helicopters coming onto our canyons. And probably wondered if they weren't the smart ones for seeing it in that method. Tomorrow is hiking the actual Na Pali coast.

Hawaiian trails

I can't think why, but let me tell you that the Hawaiian mentality is to get their hiking trails the shortest possible which means without the switchbacks we are used to. My trekking poles were needed both to keep me from sliding down (it didn't always work) and to pull myself up (sometimes requiring pulling myself up by rocks or roots instead). I generally use poles anyway to save on the joints but in Hawaii they were a requirement for me.

The bigger problem on Kauai is the red slippery rocks and mud that made slipping inevitable and worrisome for someone on the edge of osteoporosis and none too young. I came home with a hip I couldn't sleep on and a couple major bruises, all left over from that second day's hike.

A note on my health

I'd had another trip to my doctors to check on the lungs she didn't like before the two Florida marathons and when she threatened me with probable pneumonia. Well, they were fine but the cough was still keeping me up at night so she sent me on my journey with prescriptions "just in case" but another bottle of cough syrup with codeine for sure. With a morning cough suppressor pill I was pretty much okay until about the middle of dinner hour when it became a lesson in removing myself from the table and/or drinking a lot to keep the coughing under control. It all worked. The doctor said she liked brandy better than cough syrup but I doubt she expected me to drink as much as I did.

A note on my balance and hiking abilities – NOT!

There were many hikes where I managed to bang up either my knee or my butt a couple times. Once a leader laughed that I'd just evened out the dirty butt by falling on the other side. I came home with bruises and a hip that still didn't want to sleep on one side. And I should be embarrassed to say, that was with decent hiking shoes and with trekking poles. But sometimes both feel just went out from under me. I am sure that hiking UP is easier and safer.

Tue Feb 21 – Day 3

Following a second night at the Waimea Plantation Cottages which overall I greatly loved, we headed across the island beyond Hanalei to begin our exploration of the magnificent (and gruesome!) Na Pali Coast. We hiked the remarkable Kalalau Trail, though NOT to its terminus at Kalalau Beach which would have required overnight camping and Spiderman abilities. It was tough enough as it was. We started at Kee Beach and alternately climb to overpowering views from high cliffs only to again descend, first to Hanakapiai Beach and then into the rain forest of Hanakapiai Valley. It was up and down continually and if you've seen a picture of the Na Pali Coast, you'll know why. After the mud and slippery conditions took up much of the day we skipped going onto Hanakapiai Falls but instead stayed at the creek crossing to enjoy our picnic. The creek crossing was momentous for me as I balked and refused to jump the one rock to another that looked just too slippery and too far apart for my abilities and instead I just walked through the knee-to-hip deep area to avoid falling into deeper

and rushing water. I think this was about 10 miles but again – a very strenuous 10 miles in area where you don't hike, but rather you pick your way from rock to rock.

One can only see the Na Pali Coast by feet, or air, or boat. You can't drive there. It is remote, difficult, dangerous, etc. We would only traverse the easy portion though I admit I didn't think it was easy and managed to fall a couple times in the muddy red clay that was very slippery.

We'd packed up our suitcases in the morning (my least favorite activity and especially since I so enjoyed the Plantation Cottages) and we moved back to the hotel where we'd started. This was so as to be nearer to the airport too for our departure from Kauai to the Big Island later in the day. It was one long and tough day and even much tougher for our leaders who had additional pack up and ferrying duties.

Note to send to Tom on Day 3: Just done w/ Na Pali hike. Some very good weather and some rain. Slippery and technical in part but worth it. No one could talk me into jumping the rocks to cross a stream so I simply waded in and through and never over knees anyway. I figured if I could do the 50k with dozens of stream crossings that I was best off not risking falling into deeper water and having a stroke.

Wed Feb 22 – Day 4

They call a huge hillside of rocks The Sleeping Giant which awaited us as the start of our day. We'd get there via the Nounou Mountain trail for what some call one of Kauai's finest hikes. We climbed to the Giant's chin and nose and beyond we could go to his forehead along a narrow ridge reminiscent of the final ascent to Angel's Landing in Zion which this time I avoided -- as much since I'm slow on rock ledges and also because I'd really "shot my wad" the couple days before and was feeling the remnants of the double hike and my wee boo-boos. We had packed our lunch and ate it at the Marketplace near to our hotel and then headed directly to the Lihue airport for our inter-island flight to Hilo on the Big Island. Well, after stopping at the public rest rooms to do a bit of public clean up. Our flight was at 3:21 but had been delayed so we were all put on two different earlier flights at around 2:30 and then connected through Honolulu (on the pleasant Hawaiian Airlines) to land in wet Hilo at 5:47pm.

A unique hotel

It was first music to my ears that we'd have three overnights no matter where it was but at the Kilauea Lodge, adjacent to Volcanoes National Park in Volcano Village, it was a double treat. At first I balked at the small room but it was well appointed and most comfortable with a fireplace and anything one could need. They supplied drinking water and begged us to be careful with their water supply which

came from a huge tank and mostly from rainwater. Best of all our hotel was close to our hiking and set among a jungle setting – with only sculpture roosters in the gardens so no crowing in the middle of the night. Our next three days would be devoted to the Park.



From the web: *Kilauea Lodge is located in the quiet village of Volcano a mile from Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The Park, home of Hawaii's active volcano Kilauea, offers miles of scenic overlook and trails. Stunning vistas and both hot and cold lava make touring the park an experience to remember. Within the park and surrounding areas are endangered birds such as the Nene, l'iwi and Amakihi. The Lodge, built as a YMCA camp in 1938, now serves the community as a popular country inn and restaurant. Albert and Lorna Jeyte purchased the property in 1986 and are the owners and hosts during your stay. Their pets, Meatloaf and Spaetzle, patrol the grounds day and night.*

Volcano Village is a small artists' community of roughly 2000 residents located just outside of Volcanoes National Park. At 3000 to 4000 ft. altitude the town of Volcano and most of the Park enjoy a cooler climate. The village is situated on a small loop that diverts away from the highway, secluding it from highway noise and traffic. Local business includes small shops, a grocery/gas station, restaurants and an internet cafe. Kilauea Lodge is in the heart of Volcano Village and the small grocery and stores are within easy walking distance from the Lodge property.

Thu Feb 23 – Day 5

This day would give us an easy hike to the floor of Kilauea Iki, one of Volcanoes' premier hikes. From the crater overlook we descended into the heart of the crater and walked across its floor as steam curled from the many fissures in the lava surface. We then returned up to the forest on the crater's eastern edge for a moderate climb back to the rim all of about 4-6 miles. At the rim was the easy walking treat of going through the Thurston Lava Tube. Here I am with Samuel at the crater's rim waiting for the faster guys to add a few more miles onto their daily mileage. My trip back was particularly pleasant as I started out alone and stayed that way for at least half of the hike giving opportunity to explore the different rock formations caused by the volcano as well as different plant species. I didn't dally at the steam pits for the warm however as our evening overlook at the active volcano (bright red!) resulted in a couple hours of continual coughing. I did join the group on their added mileage up a short cliff for an overview of where we'd just been.



Varied terrain

The oddest thing was the extremely varied terrain. We'd be on lava flows with razor sharp rocks and nary a green leaf anywhere and next we'd be in a jungle setting. We'd be in bright sunshine sweating profusely when a cloud burst would come along and we'd be shivering and layering up in rain gear. Over and over in the same day. Thus our packs were very useful and contained whatever we'd need for heat or cold. Wet or dry. We'd either run out of water or be carrying far too much up the hill.

Fri Feb 24 – Day 6

We returned to the park early and devoted the day to the massive Kilauea Volcano. Our hikes were always



contingent upon the conditions at the crater and direction from the Park Service since they vary on a daily basis and that's just the nature of this active volcano.

One of the evenings we drove to the crater's edge at night to experience shivering not only from the rain and cold but also the view of red lava flows and smoke billowing up. The pictures from my little camera were somewhat useless but the memory is captured in my brain quite indelibly.

Earthquakes

Quakes are not unusual for this area but the swarm of activity was and we would feel a 9pm and a 4am quake of 4.1 and 4.3 – enough to move objects in our room but not enough for any damage. These are not plate shifts but rather like volcanic actions and generally result in some more steam vents opening up and/or lava flow, which did happen on our next to last day and encouraged me up into a helicopter to see for myself again. It however never gave the lava flows like we'd seen in 2005 even entering the ocean with huge red fire flows.

Earthquake Swarm Continues Between Kilauea and Mauna Loa Volcanoes - HAWAII ISLAND, Hawaii – The U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO) has recorded more than 100 earthquakes in a swarm that began around 1:17 a.m., HST, on Wednesday, February 22, 2012. The earthquakes are located about 5 km (3 mi) north-northwest of Kilauea volcano's summit, near Namakanipaio in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, at depths of 2–5 km (1–3 mi). The largest earthquakes of the ongoing swarm have been a magnitude-4.1 quake at 9:02 p.m. last night and a magnitude-4.3 quake at 3:52 a.m. this morning. These earthquakes were widely felt on the Island of Hawai'i. As of 9:00 a.m. Friday, the USGS "Did you feel it?" Web site (earthquake.usgs.gov/eqcenter/dyfi/) had received 74 felt reports for the 9:02 p.m. earthquake and more than 60 felt reports for the 3:52 a.m. event. The initial magnitude of the 9:02 p.m. earthquake was estimated at 4.1 by HVO's automated software system, but then increased to magnitude-4.3. After close review by HVO seismic analysts this morning, the earthquake's magnitude has been calculated to be 4.1. The effects of the early morning magnitude-4.3 earthquake were evident at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory building, which is located less than 4 km (2.5 mi) from the swarm's center. HVO staff noticed that a few books and other items had fallen off shelves and some small ceiling fixtures were dislodged. Several residents of the Volcano Golf Course subdivision, located about 3 km (2 mi) from the earthquake epicenter, also reported items falling from shelves, causing some minor breakage. As of this morning, the seismic swarm has also included 3 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3.0 and 3.9, and 25 earthquakes with magnitudes of 2.0 to 2.9. The magnitudes of another 88 located earthquakes are between 1.0 and 1.9. The earthquake swarm is located at the north end of the Ka'oiki Pali, near the boundary between Mauna Loa and Kilauea volcanoes. This area has experienced previous seismic swarms in 1990, 1993, 1997, and 2006, each of which lasted from 1 day to several weeks. According to Jim Kauahikaua, HVO's Scientist-in-Charge, it's likely that high rates of seismicity could continue in this area for several days. He added that the earthquake swarm has not caused any obvious changes in Kilauea's magma plumbing system or ongoing eruptions, but that the magnitude-4.3 earthquake did cause a small rockfall in the active vent located within Halema'uma'u Crater at the summit of Kilauea.

All of which prompted Judy who has a great sense of humor and is from Atlanta to write: *GEE WILLIKERS (that's southern for omg) are u ok?? I know u lived in Viet Nam during the war, but let's not push your escape act stories...*

Sat Feb 25 – Day 7

Was it this day or the day before that we hiked the Napau Crater Trail? It traverses lava fields to Puu Huluhulu, and then to the observation point above with its views into the volcano's fern-filled crater and the rain forest beyond. We should have been able to see the smoking hulk of Mauna Ulu but I doubt we really did as weather was not cooperating.

One of these days we were not able to do one of the short hikes and instead we spent time at the museum and then drove to Chain of Craters Road and then onto our next hotel destination. On the way we'd have a stop at the historic site of Pu'uhonua O Honaunau National Park (Place of Refuse) and watch the marine life and sea turtles after taking the self-guided tour of the site. I was amused that they were almost Catholic – find your way to the Place of Refuge if you were convicted of a crime and you would then be forgiven.

We checked into the Outrigger Keauhou Beach Resort just on the outskirts of Kona. For me it would be for 3 nights though for some it was only for one night. This was an okay hotel, most of us had ocean views, and the grounds were very special and most pleasant. Because it was about 6 miles from Kona and a bit out of the way the price and convenience was good. I might have chosen to stay in Kona instead but we would have a couple evenings there anyway.



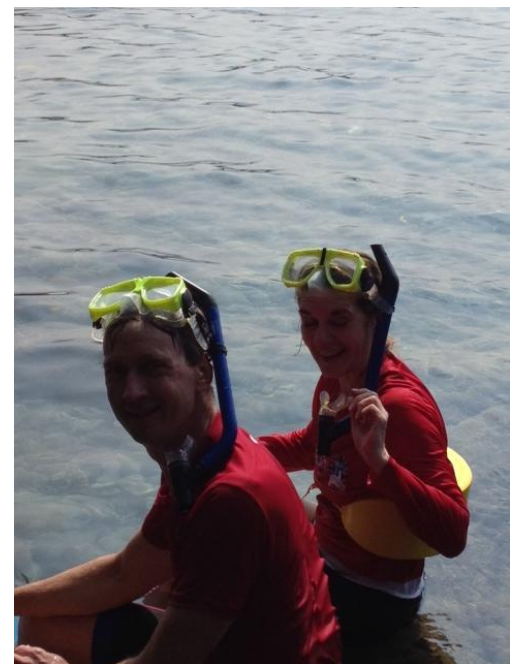
Sun Feb 26 – Day 8

Our final day for the hiking tour was in some ways a big change of pace. We were promised a treat with a healthy dose of leisure and an intriguing change of pace all of which was an understatement. Our hike was a rocky trail with about a 2000 foot drop over 2 miles taking us into the pounding surf below – carrying extra water, a packed Subway lunch, towels, extra clothing and all our snorkel gear. One of us had an extra item in case we went into the water: a float tube to go around my waist.

This was a beautiful and remote black sand and volcanic rock beach that offers some of the best snorkeling on the island. It is a marine sanctuary and the only way to get there was by boat or foot. And the only way out of course was UP and UP and UP in the strong heat with no shade.

This was also the home of the Captain Cook Memorial. When he landed and discovered the island(s) they thought he was a god but when his ship was heavily damaged they decided he couldn't be a god so he was slain. There have been plenty of stories revealing that the Hawaiians are not such peace loving folks they claim to be and the kings were always warring with someone.

The big event for me was getting myself into the water with snorkel gear. I didn't intend to go out very much or far but I was barely into a float (which I'd never done before) when a hand took mine and encouraged me onward. The marine tropical fish and corals were magnificent and I only hyper-ventilated part of the time and I NEVER let go of the hand that turned out to be Steve's. When I motioned to return to shore Steve fortunately ignored me and pointed out many unique fish. I really don't know if I was out for minutes or a half hour



but when I returned someone took a picture of me for proof, which for some that proof will be needed as I'm known to avoid water at all costs.

The strong swimmers and experienced snorkelers ventured about a half a mile out to experience the Spinner Dolphins coming up to them. I know I'm a City Girl and I can admit to probably being a Zoo Girl too – it will be easier to see them at a zoo.

Ultimately, we got ourselves back up the hillside – again without switchbacks and again making my calves super sore later the next day – to shuttle to Kailua-Kona and the end of our hiking adventure. Some would fly out that evening and we all shared out hotel showers with them.

That evening most of those departing to the airport would join the leaders for a fast dinner in town. I was totally spent and had indulged in far too many restaurants and far too many strenuous hikes so begged out and took it very easy. Call it dead. They were probably not surprised since everyone knew that the hill climb up really kicked by butt. Besides, I needed to rest up in preparation for my busy last day yet to come - smile.

Mon Feb 27

My last full day was filled full and it was very expensive, but don't be jealous as it wasn't as hot as it had sounded. It wasn't bad but it sure wasn't anything to write home about. But I will anyway.

My morning 10:30am cultural tour offered by the hotel WAS super. It was all around the hotel complex and covered history, plants, architecture, how land was divided, how the artesian wells worked, etc., and it was led by a very big Hawaiian woman that anybody could love. She even chanted for us and chanting was something I'd just learned about and bought a CD so that was a treat.

Then I had a 12:45pm shuttle to the airport for a helicopter tour of two hours. I'd decided to do basically the same helicopter tour Tom and I took in 2005 since all the recent swarm of quakes had caused the lava to flow. But it was vuggy (smog from the volcano) and I'm not so sure it was fair of them to go ahead and run it. We did see some red flame volcano flow and a lot of smoke but not all that much – nothing like we saw in 2005 and nothing has gone into the ocean for a long while and that's a dramatic scene I'll never forget – from the helicopter and from the ship.

The cute young pilot didn't talk as much as I think he should. The other four passengers might have thought he was busy being a pilot but I saw that he was busy messing with his iPhone and playing music. So as you can guess, I did have front seat again and apparently the smaller the person the better chance of a front seat. Some old gal might have known that because she found me in the rest room and said she saw that I'd been weighed without my bag and that could be a problem. I doubted my 1 ½ to 2 pound handbag made a difference but to ease her concern I went back and got re-weighed and told them why. And then went back to reassure her. Guess I was still less weight than she was

I won't subject you to my foggy helicopter pictures but will point to page 4 of www.TomsKoi.com photo shows of a good helicopter ride with excellent lava flows.

After another shuttle from airport to town I had an hour or so in town and saw Betsy and Bernie from the hiking trip for the 2nd or was it the 3rd time of the day. They were just exiting the whale watching boat and finally saw whales at the very end of their journey. I would later see B & B again back at the hotel late evening as they were getting picked up by the shuttle. They must think I was following them!

The Kona dock is where the famous Ironman starts and finishes. I walked around the park and historical grounds before boarding the glass bottom boat at 5:30pm. It was full of old mid-western looking folks from the Minneapolis area who were traveling via boat and bus for two weeks. We didn't leave the dock until 6pm and I was counting on the rocking to end when we got going. I should have left the boat before I got my optimism in full gear. It was brutal. I got through a small part of my dinner and half of my wine (and drats – it was an open bar!) before having to go downstairs. It was a glass bottom boat with underneath lights and was to highlight nocturnal marine life. NOT. A zoo would have been much more interesting. There was good and live music, Hawaiian dancing, and a very live audience with many anniversaries being celebrated including a 50-year one. Plus a newly-wed Japanese couple and she wouldn't dance but he got up with the Hawaiian/Tahitian stage dancer who could hardly control his enthusiasm or get him off the stage. I suspect he's in trouble already.

I was green and thus the bartender told me where to sit, brought me a ginger ale and advised to NOT go into the bathroom if I felt ill since it would be smelly and claustrophobic and I'd be sure to be sick. She pointed to the back of the boat and said to lean over there and "feed the fishes" but fortunately I calmed; I only "wanted" to get ill. I limped off after 2 ½ grueling hours and found a taxi home. The taxi wasn't the \$10 expected but rather \$22. The \$2 trolley had stopped running an hour or so before. I would be given another lecture from the taxi driver about the unfair takeover by Americans of the unfortunate and unarmed Hawaiians.

When I arrived at the hotel I would find Bernie and Betsy again. And again they found me in a green-mode. They were packed and ready for their airport shuttle for a night flight home like most of the others had done the evening before.

This was my final night and I had a big dirty suitcase to pack up after all the hiking and sweating. You just can't get clothing clean in a hotel sink even though I tried. Even my backpack looks filthy and I guess it will have to get the washing machine treatment with the hope it doesn't fall apart.

Tue Feb 28

The hotel is a bit far from the airport – a \$50-\$60 taxi ride – so most of us chose the Speedy Shuttle at about \$20.

My 2pm flight would take me through San Francisco for a plane change and fortunately via first class and I would arrive to Newark at 7am Wednesday morning. Tom surely is a Saint for being willing to transport me at some ungodly hours.

That's all my adventure. A big one for me not only for the time but for the unique hiking and the water adventure too. It would also be new and unique that I'd be home for almost a week before departing again, this time with Tom to join me.

Now for the pictures

I didn't add them within the narrative since it's too easy to get confused as to where you are, where you'd been, etc. even though I try to make place markers. And if you're considering the trip, I'd be glad to send you an unedited CD of all the 450 pictures.



The first hotel, now a Courtyard by Marriott, with seaside view from my balcony. Steve and Nola explaining the upcoming agenda. The first hike where we'd go out to the far point and see sea turtles in the surf among an outrigger/kayak race going on in the strong ocean currents.



Sometimes the waves washed over the kayak – crazy? The Hyatt Resort probably accommodates tourists who never need to leave. Some of the resorts have water taxi's within the resort and this might be one of them.



A view from the Plantation Cottages dining room. Yep, I earned this view since I'd traversed over the narrow rock ledges even rougher than this last picture – I'd been too spooked to take the first picture.



This is a red headed cardinal. Hawaii has a zillion species not found elsewhere – birds, animals and plants. Yes, we walked that narrow slippery red ridge and yes, that’s a rainbow down below between two peaks with a bit of surf in between.



A trail up to never-never-land. The roosters were everywhere apparently let loose during a hurricane and since there are no natural predators they are next to impossible to control. There isn’t even much road kill. Here I am with the Na Pali Coast in the background. Tilley’s hat to shade me and long pants to hide the bruises and keep from more scrapes.



This first cute little thing was our youngest hiker and she’d never have made it over these rocky slopes on her diet of ice cream, shave ice, chips and not much else had she been anything but young. The pheasant is a rare Hawaiian bird and I suspect the colors of ferns in the last picture are not seen often either unless it’s on lava fields. It’s all one fern in various stages of life – or death.



At Volcano National Park an original hotel is now an art shop full of wonders. One was this wood table with wood tablecloth complete with a wooden bowl of cherries. The hike continued with what I found to be art work – cairns (sp?) to guide the way made interesting. Doesn't this look like a person? When we were in heavy smoke from the volcano the cairns were very close together so you could find them through the smoke. The last one is art by Mother Nature in the form of lava flow, with a cairn on top.



Lots of sunrises and sunsets. These pair of goose looking birds are the endangered Nene. The dancing frogs in the garden of our Volcano Village Lodge were pretty cute too.



From the Place of Refuge we probably saw the most turtles, followed by the hotel. The thatched hut was part of the tour of the Place of Refuge. This last picture is the site of our snorkeling day with nearby known as the Captain Cook Memorial – where he was slain when the Hawaiians decided he wasn't a god after all.



The Captain Cook Memorial. Our hotel during the Cultural Tour followed by the tour guide. No, she wasn't explaining the size of Hawaiians but rather how they allocated land lots. This last picture shows a fish pond or possibly the bathing pond of the queen as that is the King/Queen's home moved to the hotel grounds and restored. The historians aren't sure about the pond's use.



I've always been assigned the front seat of a helicopter tour and the pilot says it's allocated to the smallest person. Here's a rotten view of spewing lava and smoke. To see better Hawaiian pictures to include this same helicopter tour with lots of lava, go to www.Tomskoi.com and click on photo shows. It is at page 4.



From the helicopter (and I'll save you the rest of the vogy pictures) this is as we entered one of the canyons with the most waterfalls. The last picture is a big deal – it's the start and finish of Kona's famous Ironman.

Since my fingers are tired, I'm working on carpal tunnel syndrome (smile), I'm done with pictures but would be most willing to send a CD of all 400 unedited pictures to anyone considering this trip or having been there and needs a few more shots.

More?

At the very end you will find my trip notes on the 15-day Hawaiian adventure from before.

At www.TomsKoi.com under Photo Shows on page 4 you'll find the past trip's photo show and especially good pictures from our helicopter tour of the active volcano.

What's next? I need to finish this trip report and add it to the website www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com along with the rest from 2012 which already number quite a few. What's the hurry? Because I'm off to run my 10th anniversary of my very first race called the E. Murray Todd half marathon where I was paced by Bosco who has since died but left an important legacy with his www.Boscobuddies.org. Then it's onto Las Vegas for the Red Rock Canyon Marathon followed by Tom joining me for another Bellagio Hotel stay.

Notes about and prior to the trip

All the places you have listed are the places we stayed last year. Kauai's airport is LIH (Lihue) and Kona's airport is KOA so it looks like you have that correct. The interisland flights we want to take (on Wed 2/22) are Hawaiian Airlines flights 374 and 360, which depart LIH at 3:21 pm, connect through HNL and arrive Hilo at 5:47 pm. Looks like that ticket is about \$135 right now.

As to rental cars, I'll describe hotel environs and let you make call on whether you need a car... The Kauai hotel has lots of restaurants, shopping, commercial establishments (including a low-key open air strip mall we really like) within walking distance. There is a nice multi-mile paved walking/biking/running path along the ocean that starts about 3/4 mile from the hotel (getting there is along a busy but walkable road). There aren't really any noted tourist destination-type stuff within walking distance of hotel. Hotel is about 8 miles from airport.

The Kona hotel is a full-service resort with pool, lovely grounds (with paths to stroll about), two restaurants, gift shop, etc. There are some shopping and other restaurants/food opportunities within walking distance but not much (much less than Kauai hotel). There is a big public beach park right next door. It is about 5 miles from "downtown" Kona along Alii drive where the real food and shopping action is. There is some type of tourist bus that operates along Alii drive but I don't know anything about it. If you want to run/jog, what more famous road in the world can you want than Alii drive and lots of folks do so! Hotel is also about 13 miles from airport.

Reports by and about others

Judy is working diligently to get all her carbs in. Annette prefers wine. Diane suggests Merlot Ice Cream. We'll all be at Red Rock Canyon working on our carb loading. Here's Judy getting her dose of carbs with two-fisted ice cream cone consumption.

Next is some disdain for Facebook. Though I will never say never I still find it about as amusing as the following entitled "Should I really join Facebook?" Priceless. Yes, I know there is some good to Facebook but there's some serious waste of time happening here too and I'm fearful I'd be one of the worst of the time wasters.

When I bought my Blackberry, I thought about the 30-year business I ran with 800 employees, all without a cell phone that plays music, takes videos, pictures and communicates with Facebook and Twitter. I signed up under duress for Twitter and Facebook, so my seven kids, their spouses, 13 grandkids and 2 great grand kids could communicate with me in the modern way. I figured I could handle something as simple as Twitter with only 140 characters of space.

That was before one of my grandkids hooked me up for Tweeter, Tweetree, Twhirl, Twitterfon, Tweetie and Twittererific Tweetdeck, Twitpix and something that sends every message to my cell phone and every other program within the texting world. My phone was beeping every three minutes with the details of everything except the bowel movements of the entire next generation. I am not ready to live like this. I keep my cell phone in the garage in my golf bag.

The kids bought me a GPS for my last birthday because they say I get lost every now and then going over to the grocery store or library. I keep that in a box under my tool bench with the Blue tooth [it's red] phone I am supposed to use when I drive. I wore it once and was standing in line at Barnes and Noble talking to my wife and everyone in the nearest 50 yards was glaring at me. I had to take my hearing aid out to use it, and I got a little loud.

I mean the GPS looked pretty smart on my dash board, but the lady inside that gadget was the most annoying, rudest person I had run into in a long time. Every 10 minutes, she would sarcastically say, "Re-calc-u-lating." You would think that she could be nicer. It was like she could barely tolerate me. She would let go with a deep sigh and then tell me to make a U-turn at the next light. Then if I made a right turn instead. Well, it was not a good relationship. When I get really lost now, I call my wife and tell her the name of the cross streets and while she is starting to develop the same tone as Gypsy, the GPS lady, at least she loves me.

To be perfectly frank, I am still trying to learn how to use the cordless phones in our house. We have had them for 4 years, but I still haven't figured out how I can lose three phones all at once and have to run around digging under chair cushions and checking bathrooms and the dirty laundry baskets when the phone rings.

The world is just getting too complex for me. They even mess me up every time I go to the grocery store. You would think they could settle on something themselves but this sudden "Paper or Plastic?" every time I check out just knocks me for a loop. I bought some of those cloth reusable bags to avoid looking confused, but I never remember to take them in with me. Now I toss it back to them. When they ask me, "Paper or Plastic?" I just say, "Doesn't matter to me. I am bi-sacksual." Then it's their turn to stare at me with a blank look. I was recently asked if I tweet. I answered, "No, but I do toot a lot."

We senior citizens don't need any more gadgets. The TV remote and the garage door remote are about all we can handle. Signed: Live long, laugh often and love much!! Amen I say.



Charlotte at Myrtle Beach.

And also in the news at

www.starnewsonline.com/article/20120221/ARTICLES/120229920/1233/

Disney and Miss Piggy



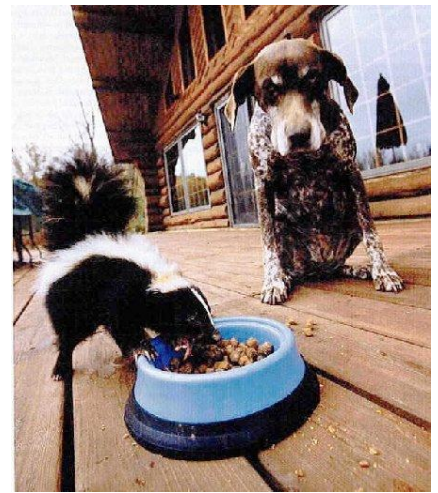
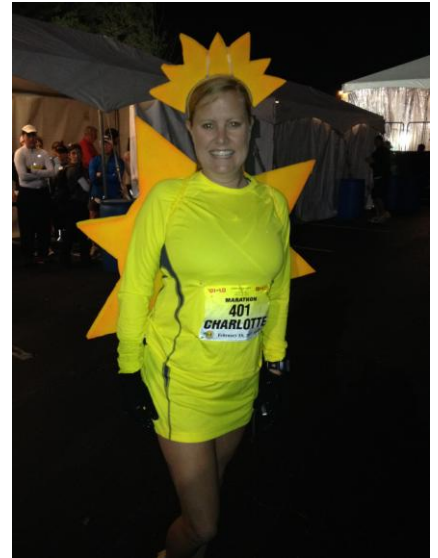
My report on Goofy was sent to only a couple folks and one was Jim who did it with us in 2007. He saw where I was unable to get a decent Miss Piggy picture in Liberty Lady headgear this year and thus has supplied one. But the report is already published so here is our 3rd Triplet. She is atop a fountain.

Two of the greatest qualities in life are Patience and Wisdom. I'd say the puppy here was handling both as well as possible.

Just for fun, the Wal-Mart Song:

<http://www.youtube.com/v/6RzcvFLPg1A?version=3%22%3E%3Cparam>

Quite the collection with some I'd not seen before.



Itinerary - 5 hours earlier

Hawaiian Island Classic: Kauai & The Big Island
February 17-29, 2012

Fri Feb 17

5:30am Depart home !
7:30am Depart Newark EWR via CO#91
10:34am Arrive Los Angeles LAX for plane change

2:55pm Depart Los Angeles LAX via CO#867
7:14pm Arrive Lihue-Kauai LIH Hawaii

No hotel shuttles – use taxi or airport shuttle hotel is 7 miles from Lihue airport

Hotel Courtyard by Marriott - Kauai at Coconut Beach - for 2 nights
650 Aleka Loop, Kapaa, Kauai, HI 96746 Tele 808 822-3455
Reservation by Timber; yes coffee pot

Summary of Daily Itineraries

Day 1	Group assembles; van shuttle to Poipu Beach.; Poipu Beach Coastline Trail	4 miles
Day 2	Waimea Canyon – Kukui Trail	6 miles
Day 3	Kee Beach - Kalalau Trail – Hanakapiai Beach – Hanakapiai Falls	9 miles
Day 4	Nonou Mountain – Sleeping Giant (4 miles); inter-island flight to Hilo, HI	4 miles
Day 5	Hike Kilauea Iki—Thurston Lava Tube	6 miles
Day 6	Crater Rim Trail – Halemaumau – Kilauea Caldera	10 miles
Day 7	Napau Crater Trail – Puu Huluhulu – Napau Crater (8 miles); van to Kona	8 miles
Day 8	Captain Cook Trail to Captain Cook Monument (4 miles); snorkeling program concludes late-afternoon	4 miles

Total Hiking Miles - 51 miles

Sun Feb 19 – Day 1

9:00am Tour starts, meet in lobby of Kauai at Coconut Beach and dressed for hiking

We'll assemble in Lihue mid-morning of Day 1 and head directly to Poipu Beach, a no-nonsense approach to quality beach time from the "get-go." We'll walk the coastline of Poipu along the Shiprock Beach Trail and climb a promontory for an incredible panoramic view of the cinder cones and lava tubes that extend into the ocean as evidence of Kauai's most recent volcanic activity (4 miles). Later that afternoon, we're headed for the Waimea Plantation Cottages, where we'll spend our first two nights.

Hotel: Waimea Plantation Cottages – 2 nights
9400 Kaumualii Highway, Waimea, Kauai HI 96796 Tele: 808 338 1625

Mon Feb 20 – Day 2

Magnificent Waimea Canyon is our plan for Day 2 along the Kukui Trail that drops 2,000 feet to the canyon floor and (in case you were hoping for a miracle) inevitably rises again to the canyon rim (5 miles).

Tue Feb 21 – Day 3

Following a second night at the Waimea Plantation Cottages, we'll head across the island beyond Hanalei to begin our exploration of the magnificent Na Pali Coast. We'll hike the remarkable Kalalau Trail, though not to its terminus at Kalalau Beach. We'll begin at Kee Beach and alternately climb to overpowering views from high cliffs only to again descend, first to Hanakapiai Beach and then into the rain forest of Hanakapiai Valley. We'll hike along the valley floor to Hanakapiai Falls and then return to our trailhead (9.2 miles). We'll return to Kapaa and spend the night at the Resort Quest Kauai Beach at Makaiwa.

Hotel: Kauai at Coconut Beach – 1 night and same as pre-tour hotel
650 Aleka Loop, Kapaa, Kauai, HI 96746 Tele: 808 822 3455

Wed Feb 22 – Day 4

The Sleeping Giant awaits on Day 4 and we'll head to Nonou Mountain for one of Kauai's finest hikes. We'll climb to the Giant's chin, nose and beyond to his forehead along a narrow ridge reminiscent of the final ascent to Angel's Landing in Zion (4 miles). We'll have lunch and head for Lihue and our inter-island flight to Hilo on the Big Island.

3:21pm Depart Lihue via Hawaiian Air #374
3:54pm Arrive Honolulu for plane change

4:56pm Depart Honolulu via Hawaiian Air #360
5:47pm Arrive Hilo

We'll spend our first of three overnights at the Kilauea Lodge, adjacent to Volcanoes National Park, with the next three days devoted to the Park.

Hotel: Kilauea Lodge – 3 nights
19-3948 Old Volcano Road, Volcano Village, HI 96785 Tele: 808 967 7786

Thu Feb 23 – Day 5

Our plans for Day 5 include a hike to the floor of Kilauea Iki, one of Volcanoes' premier hikes. From the crater overlook we'll descend into the heart of the crater and walk across its floor as steam curls from the many fissures in the lava surface. We'll return to the forest on the crater's eastern edge for a moderate climb back to the rim (4 miles). At the rim, we'll walk through the Thurston Lava Tube and then return to the Chalet.

Fri Feb 24 – Day 6

We'll return to the park early morning of Day 6 and devote this day to the massive Kilauea Volcano. Our hikes this day will be determined by conditions at the crater and direction from the Park Service.

Conditions at Kilauea fluctuate on a daily basis—that's just the nature of this active volcano and we're able to adapt and adjust as the need arises.

Sat Feb 25 – Day 7

On Day 7, we'll hike the Napau Crater Trail as it traverses lava fields to Puu Huluhulu, and then to the observation point above with its views into the volcano's fern-filled crater and the rain forest beyond. Also visible is the smoking hulk of Mauna Ulu. Our trail soon passes into the dense rain forest and we'll continue to vast Napau Crater (7 miles). At dusk, we'll return to Chain of Craters Road and drive to road's end to view the awesome red glow of the fiery lava that still spews from Kilauea and flows into the sea.

Hotel: Outrigger Keauhou Beach Resort – 3 nights
78-6740 Alii Drive, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740 Tele: 808 322 3441
Note internet shows free tour if 3 nights; free breakfast buffet; yes coffee pot

Sun Feb 26 – Day 8

Day 8, our final day, is a treat with a healthy dose of leisure and an intriguing change of pace. We'll hike the Captain Cook Trail, a 4-mile round-tripper that includes an awesome 1400-foot descent to the pounding surf below. We'll hang out for much of this day on a beautiful black sand beach that offers some of the best snorkeling on the island. Ultimately, we'll shuttle to Kailua-Kona, where our program concludes late afternoon.

Tue Feb 28

1:52pm Depart Kona KOA via CO#736
9:03pm Arrive Los Angeles LAX for plane change
10:25pm Depart Los Angeles LAX via CO#282

Wed Feb 29

6:55am Arrive Newark EWR (sorry Tom! – was I gone long enough that you want to pick me up at this awful hour?)

Trip Report/Hawaiian Islands March 2003 (oops – thought it was 2004 or 2005)

Sailing on the Holland Line Statendam out of San Diego to Hawaii for a 15 day cruise with stops in Hilo, Honolulu, Kona, Kauai, and Lahaina Maui from March 6 through 21, 2003, as written and submitted to epinion.com by Tom.

Book a suite if you can because they're gorgeous. If not, do a mini-suite with a verandah – the whole end of the cabin is glass and has a decent sized sitting area outside – great for watching the sun come up or down as it glides beneath the surface to light up another part of the world. Book as far ahead as possible to get the best deal no matter what your budget. The lesser cabins are fine, but can't come close to the other two for a feeling of space. However, the public areas are so beautifully designed and appointed with marble, wood, brass, glass, lighting, art work, etc., staying out of the cabin is rewarded with plenty of activities, entertainment, games, movies and what most people seem to enjoy the most – THE FOOD!! However, if one is looking or expecting fine dining, that's in short supply. Considering the numbers to feed, the food is quite good but not fine dining. However, an upgrade from the normal fare is certainly available in The Pinnacle restaurant with seating for about 36 to 40 people at an additional cost of \$20 per person (plus wine of course – just like in the main dining room). That's not to say that the food isn't abundant and very good – for me, on a scale of 1 to 10, it gets only about a 6 to 7 (some meals were better than others) but I have a jaded pallet having had the good fortune to have eaten in some of the best of the world (in France) and do all the cooking at home so know and understand a bit about food. Please don't think I'm trying to come across as a connoisseur or know-it-all – perception is reality so this is just my perception.

I'd heard about how cruises were for the geriatric crowd but was still amazed at the number of people over 60 (of the 1200 or so on board) -- they numbered maybe even 70% -- followed by 45-60 at 20% - - followed by 20 to 45 at 8% -- followed by the under 20 at 2%. The other thing that sort of surprised me, even in light of the statistics on the number of Americans that are now considered obese, was the actual number of folks on the cruise who fit that description -- maybe 60 to 70%!! Those who were less than obese but still quite overweight -- another 25%! Slender, healthy, and fit people were severely outnumbered -- only a handful. But of course, I guess no one ever came on a cruise to diet. That's what a major portion of the cruise dollar goes to I'm sure and the fish along the way really make out like gang busters with the (legally) jettisoned leftovers.

The ship's crew, the extravaganza shows a couple of nights, the hired entertainment, the lectures, the movies and all the rest – first rate. Coffee bar with free specialty coffees and teas all day – well patronized and received. The ship's captain not only a tall handsome Dutchman with a great sense of humor, but in charge of a highly competent staff of Dutch, American, Philippine and Indonesian folks who's only aim is to please (and do).

At this time of year, the temperature doesn't cooperate until about a day out of the first landing so a light sweater or jacket is de rigueur and will be handy and appreciated if you take one of the excursions to the higher altitudes where they say the temperature can drop 30 degrees or more from sea level.

As for excursions –

Hilo – The Mauna Kea 6 hour Summit Adventure at \$153 is recommended for those reasonably fit. However, ours was canceled and we took the Rainforest and Nature Walk which turned out to be not very much walking after all and very overpriced, but fortunately was in a mini van instead of a bus and with folks who weren't incapacitated.

Honolulu – The volcanic coastal excursion of 3 ½ hours at \$49 per person is a good choice. We had one of the best guides I've ever had – talked the full tour with info on history, in depth knowledge on flora and fauna, and anecdotal stories that were factual and sometimes humorous as well. The scenery was spectacular which started with the inside crater of Diamond Head as well as the view over Honolulu.

Kauai – The 50 to 55 minute helicopter ride is well worth the \$192 as this is the place that gets some of the most rain in the world which makes for very lush vegetation and deeply eroded canyons with amazing waterfalls. These canyons are known as the Grand Canyons of the Pacific. A video was included.

Lahania – The 9 ½ hour Road to Hana is an ADVENTURE to say the least – rough road, rugged terrain, desert, rain forest, spectacular coastal scenes, but worth it at \$139 a person. The added attraction was the sighting of many whales.

Kona, our second landing on the Big Island – The two hour helicopter trip at \$364 seems a bit steep but to see an active volcano and lava flows up close and personal then fly down to Hilo and along the windward coast, is a once in a lifetime experience. It is the only way to see the Na Pali coast line other than by boat. A personalized video, with your own pilot and your pictures, was available for an added cost and irresistible.

Diana's Top Ten Lists

Hawaii Cruise Top Ten Reasons To Go:

1. Food and drink was abundant and very good, though only 'bordering' on good, to use Tom's words, and it was always available and served often. Generally you could request virtually anything and everything to eat. Chocolate lovers will delight in the Chocolate Dessert Extravaganza with a block long of chocolate delicacies and chocolate sculptures certainly worth the 45 minutes they allowed for picture taking. Coffee bar was available for lattes, cappachinos, teas, cookies, and it was available much of the day and evening and all without cost.
2. Hopping from island to island is delightful and you don't have to repack for each move. Shopping both on board and on each island is convenient. (It is humorous but true that there is a shuttle to not only a Hilo Hattie on each island but also one to a Wal-Mart.)
3. Shows were abundant and spectacular considering there were only 1200 passengers to prepare for. They were quite varied with everything from a ventriloquist, a comedian, a piano player, dancers, singers, and a famous old harmonica player. Some of the shows were replayed on the cabin TVs.

4. A comfortable and modern movie theatre with plenty of fairly new films was showing twice a day and served popcorn and was just outside the coffee shop. Without an added cost. If you didn't want a movie or a show, you could gamble at slots or poker or roulette whenever out of port
5. Lectures were arranged twice a day on sea days and included a marine biologist, a writer talking about Islam versus Terrorism, etc. There were Q&A sessions with the entertainers. All without cost, but unfortunately they were sometimes scheduled incorrectly and/or overlapped.
6. Library was quiet, well appointed with a sea view, supplied with a large variety of books to check out. Until the Norwalk Virus showed its ugly head, there were magazines, pocketbooks and newspapers.
7. Health club was excellent with top Cybex equipment, top of the line treadmills, and classes in Yoga, Pilates, Stretch & Relax, etc. The views from the health club were great as it was at the head of the ship on an upper deck. Services included two trainers who were with good resumes, but of course their services included a cost as well as some classes.
8. Dressing up is encouraged with four formal nights on our 15 day cruise. Shorts and jeans are prohibited in the dining room.
9. If you want a good photograph or memento of your trip, your chances are excellent as photography was taken everywhere. When you embarked, at all dinners, before cocktail parties, whenever you wished outside the photo studio, when you exited the boat for excursions. The pictures available for sale were on display the next day.
10. You can't feel guilty about goofing off as you have no choice on board.

Hawaii Cruise Top Ten Reasons Not to Go:

1. Food is such a priority that whale watching is not for only outside of the boat. One can eat in their cabin 24 hours a day with room service and apparently most do. One can eat in any number of restaurants most all day and apparently most do. One can have snacks and midnight dinner and apparently most do. At least 90% of those on the cruise ship look like they eat at every one of the offerings and have done so for many cruises.
2. Vegetables are downright hard to acquire unless they are stewed, sauced, fried, sautéed or in some way polluted. Ask the wok buffet server (alias the Wok Nazi) to fix some simple vegetables and he pretty much insists on adding gunk. Three wok full's later with one pollutant or another added and my insisting that I wouldn't take that wok full and to try again, he finally relented and gave me steamed and plain stir fry vegetables – but not without an sneer and announcing that my onions weren't cooked sufficiently.

3. Fruits were available if it was cut up cantaloupe, honeydew, banana or watermelon but try to get an uncut piece of fruit and it was pulling teeth.
4. Lines were abundant. Waiting around was the normal course of events and at embarkation we learn quickly. First there is a line to sign in. Then you're given a number that will be called when you are to stand in another line, followed by another line for security, followed by a line for picture taking, followed by a line to board. One lives with lines: a line of 1 ½ hours to get a table assignment; a line to set up a spending account; a line for dinner; a line to go get off the boat at each excursion; a line to get on the tender; a line to pass through security again. Ditto for the final debarkation. Or for a 7:30 am excursion, show up ten minutes early then wait until 8:00 am for the tender to show up then wait for customs to pass us then wait for the bus to show up.
5. Norwalk virus and/or food poisoning and/or water contamination is apparently a greater problem than generally acknowledged. After our ship had 16 removed and sent home in Hawaii, we often heard that such occurrences were not unique. With viruses, life on board changes: the Jacuzzis are closed down; buffets become non-buffets and one waits for service; no salt and pepper or butter on the table; the men hired to dance with the single women would only dance if rubber gloves were worn. After my family was quarantined, I knew not to admit to my problem which may have been food poisoning anyway.
6. If you're a runner, forget it for the cruise duration. The indoor 4x around track had big signs that prohibited jogging. The outdoor 14x around track was on the top deck and blew you apart and lifted you off your feet, besides getting dizzy running around such a tiny track. The treadmills can be downright dangerous in roiling seas and thus one must hold on which is quite doable for walking but not for running.
7. If you're young, expect to find the majority of cruisers to be over 70 years old. Many of those 70 year olds appear to be going on 100. This is depressing, but maybe it's also an encouragement to keep moving, and as one friend mentioned, it took your appetite away to see what happens to old folks.
8. Stateroom sizes are a joke. Holland America is known for their rooms being 25% larger than other cruise ships so I'd hate to see another ship. What is called a mini-suite with 284 SF might as well have been a trailer (only in Kyoto have we had such a little room and small bathroom.) The Jacuzzi tub might have held a Japanese person were they in a fetal position.
9. One is continually accosted to spend money. Flyers with deals arrive under the door a couple times a day. One price for all your laundry. One price for all your pressing. Want to use your computer? Only with their slow and tedious computers at the internet café at 75 cents a minute or some deals if you commit to \$100. (The \$200 deal for unlimited time has been discontinued.) Drinks costs. Tips are expected at the end of the cruise. Corking charges for your own bottles and extra fees for booze bought and consumed on board. Health club services and classes. My usual \$18 manicure was \$40 and when the bill came there was an extra \$15 for polish. Buy your photograph for \$12.95 each and include a folder for another \$9.95. A better restaurant for an added \$20 each.

10. Excursions are overpriced and start at \$65 but go to \$384 and aren't always what they claim to be. They reserve the right to cancel them which they did on 2 of ours, and both we found out about by accident (one was credited on our bill). Excursions were open to even near invalids which caused some delays. The planners make for plenty of shopping stops where overpriced merchandise is sold.

11. Obtrusiveness was everywhere: Casino and bingo announcements were frequent and too loud and broadcast throughout the ship to include the staterooms (during nap time even!) Restaurant service staff somehow had the mistaken idea that we wanted to have a discourse with them at every meal.