



Maui Trip Notes **February 10 – 21, 2011**

This was a six-day hiking trip to Maui with Timberline Tours www.Timbertours.com with a few days tossed in on either side. It's really too far to come for a hike but some of my favorite hiking leaders simply lighted up at the thought of hiking in Maui which convinced me. While the first couple days (mainly on my own) made me doubtful about my decision, at least two separate parts of the hike made the trip totally worthwhile: hiking down into the Haleakalā volcano and the visit and stay in Hāna.

The itinerary changed from that in the catalog as much because we are after-all on Hawai'i-time in easy-going Hawai'i and in one case the state park was simply closed. In another a trail wasn't safe hiking in the current conditions. Our leaders had arrived days before to find substitutes that everyone was more than happy with.

A summary of our actual six-day hike:

Sunday – Lahaina to Pali Trail up a mountain we could see from our seaside hotel and which was topped with windmill turbines. We started at 200' and climbed in the open (and hot) sun to 1600' over a rather technical and rough course and ending at sea-level and in view of the cavorting whales. From above we could see both coastlines of Maui. The 6 miles took us 4.5 hours.

Monday – Waihee Ridge couldn't have been different as it was a rain forest with lots of views, orchids, but steep and slippery in areas. We started at 900' and climbed to 2400' as an out and back for 4.5 miles taking us 3.5 hours. Just as we were feeling like superwomen along comes a young gal who ran barefoot.

Tuesday – Haleakalā National Park became a park in the early 60s and is a huge and inactive volcano for at least 200 years. We had van support up to our start at 9800' at a visitor's center where in the low 40 degree temperatures we started down the Sliding Sands trail to about 6500' to the Halua cabin, and then back up the other side to 8,000' via the Halemauu Trail. While it was only 12 miles, it took us a strenuous 6.5 hours over lots of different terrain. The hike was worth the long trip to Maui just on it's own and parts of it reminded me of the Grand Canyon. The first section of the hike is outlined at www.naturalbornhikers.com/trails/slidingsands.html. Many unique photos are at www.terragalleria.com/parks/np.Haleakalā.html.



Wednesday – Drive the famous Road to Hāna. I'd taken a tourist view with a 7am to 5:30pm guided tour on Saturday before but taking it as a hiker was entirely different. We used the upper road and will probably avoid the lower and unpaved tough road going back on Friday. Once into and past Hāna we went to another Haleakalā Visitors Center at Ohe'o Falls (also known as the Seven Sacred Ponds even though there's some 23) and climbed from 200' up the series of falls and pools via the Pipiwai Trail to Waimoku Falls. The Falls are about 400' high and required careful stone stepping across two wide creeks made wider by the falling rain. Going through a huge Bamboo Forest was a strikingly different view. The entire hike was only 4 miles but took us 2.5 hours.

A full description and pictures can be found at www.naturalbornhikers.com/PiipiwaiTrail/PiipiwaiTrail.htm.)

Also see section on Hāna Highway below.

Thursday – To enjoy our lovely seaside condo we had a late breakfast and start though at least three of us copped out of the kayak and snorkeling trip in order to enjoy the grounds. It was windy and sunny and the water trip would be three hours with no way to return home earlier so we enjoyed the little town of Hāna, the lushly understated and elegant Maui Hāna Hotel grounds, the Hāna cultural center, some shopping, a walk through the black sands beach, and then some quiet time.

Friday – With another delightful breakfast on the porch overlooking the sunrise, we then packed up and headed out to a short couple hour hike along the seaside before driving back to civilization along the Hāna Highway again. A stop at an organic flatbread (pizza) restaurant in the little hippy town of Pā'ia was shortly before saying goodbyes at our post-hotel. This town used to be huge, then fell on hard times, only to be found again by the hippies in the 70s. It is near to the now-famous beach of Ho'okipa which is considered to be the prime board sailing locations in the world.

The little hippy and artsy town of Pā'ia at the early part of the Road to Hāna and again for our lunch stop on the last day.



Why Maui?

Well, because Steve and Nola said so! Also because Maui is noted to be one of the most gorgeous and diverse of the islands and their beaches are ranked as the best on the planet. Some say Maui is flawless (yet I wouldn't ask a local about that since they'd likely answer that they never wanted to be a state.) Maui has been chosen by Conde Nast as the Best Pacific Island for 16 straight years. It's easy to see why.

Maui is small. Were it square it would only be 27 miles on each side. It possesses an amazing natural diversity with two entirely different volcanic masses. Eastern Maui has its enormous volcano capped with a Manhattan-sized basin as well as a space-age research facility. On the western slopes, Upcountry has farming and cattle ranches still worked by Cowboys who live in cabins without electricity or water. The windward slopes have some of the best windsurfing in the world, ancient taro-growing fields and the notorious Hāna Road. Leeward has boomtown Kihei (where we stayed at first) with the planned resort of Wailea and some of the best beaches in the world just a few miles south. West Maui has the older volcano and the colorful Lahaina coastal town. With about 32 beaches to choose from, life is a tough choice on Maui.

Apparently Maui includes the islands of Molokai and Lanai as well as uninhabited Kaho'olawe all of which forms shelter for Maui proper as well as shelter for the constantly returning and very visible humpback whales. Kaho'olawe is uninhabited and is the smallest of the 8 major islands. (The islands are all connected underwater.) It was a center of religious practices in ancient times and is placed on the register of historic places. However, before WWII our Navy appropriated the island for target practice. It was returned by the Navy in the 70s and is in clean up stage now. And we wonder why the Hawai'ians dislike us? (That's a story in itself.) Molokai remains 'pure' with primarily people of Hawai'ian ancestry, no traffic lights, no fast food restaurants and no movie theatres. Purposely.

They work hard at keeping the developers out; the cliffs along the Molokai's coast are among the world's highest. Most of us know it as Father Damien's former leper colony.

Yet -- it's no wonder Maui is considered to be one of the most popular destinations in the Pacific. And no wonder that the locals complain that tourists are overpopulating their fragile island. I tried to find one of the t-shirts that said "Eat, Drink and Be Maui" to no avail. I bet they were bought up by the tourists. Even little Hāna experiences 850,000 tourists going through a year.

It would be a tough choice as to where to stay on Maui if money were no object. I might find the resort that has gondolas carting visitors between hotel rooms, but I'd certainly go out to Hāna again for a few days of uninterrupted quiet and calm with its gorgeous and ethereal views.

Whales – They come to Maui for their own rest, recreation and romance. They birth their 2-ton babies and stay until April when they return to Alaska where we would have seen them this past August. They were easy to spot even from our hotel room. At times we could see and hear the blowing and often we saw the leaping, splashing and cavorting of these 60-foot long creatures that weigh over 100,000 pounds. The day we returned from the week's hiking was an annual parade and festival in honor of the whale. These humpback whales are known for their strange and haunting cries or songs and people claim to hear the song when the air is very still and whales are close to the shore. While whales sing, they hang suspended, motionless and carry on for hours. At the whale sanctuary on my first day they had recordings and films of some of the 'songs' which are said to change each year and build during the season. It's said to be a song more complex than that of a bird and might have 3 to 10 themes to it and could last from a quarter hour and has been recorded up to 22 hours.



Humpbacks in Hawai'i sing the same evolving song as humpbacks in Mexico indicating communication between regional whale cultures. Humpbacks are the third most endangered species of whales with only 7,000-8,000 left in the world and about 500-600 frequent Maui waters. The Hawai'ians never hunted them but if one washed up on the beach it was considered the property of the king.

At the museum center and sanctuary were films and information whereas farther south at a park was a replica and where the Festival of Whales parade would culminate on Saturday.

The hotels

Most of us were not entirely happy with the **Aston Maui Lu Resort** though we appreciated the lush grounds and the fact that it was the first resort on Maui in centrally located Kihei. We had beachfront rooms with continual views of the whales playing. (These would be the same whales I saw in Alaska.) With 28 acres of Maui's oldest coconut groves, the grounds were lovely but the rooms were about as old as the resort and in sad need of upgrade. The second floor rooms were made much better by their open and high ceilings as well as with balconies and best of all, the price was right. Another problem was that it took about 1.2 miles or a 20-minute walk to get anything to eat or drink. I did learn to appreciate this hotel however after searching for a substitute and finding most at ridiculously higher prices and/or in the far too modern and new American enclave called Wailea. Here's some pictures showing how the grounds were lush and the lobby was, as typical, out in the open. The bottom floor rooms needed an upgrade but were not disagreeable just nothing to write home about.



Most of us were thrilled with the **Hāna Kai Maui Condos** with not only lots of room, but modern, well appointed, a size you could live in, outdoor porches and lovely grounds made all the better by the direct seaside view of the famous black sand beaches and roiling surf. To listen to the surf throughout the room, to see the water from every room in the condo, all was just perfect.

My room was “Hāna Kai 207 “Kawaipapa” a large corner lanai and high lofted ceilings afford this unit a spacious and airy feeling. Accommodates 1 - 4 guests with 1 Queen and a Queen Futon.”

See www.Hanakaimaui.com/rooms.html.

Here’s a view from my living room through the porch screen thru to the beach, and from the porch down to the grounds and series of Koi ponds, followed by the living room of the leader’s condo where we gathered for breakfast. See the view from their window?



Most of us were expecting an awful stay for our last and post tour hotel called **Maui Seaside** as we’d been warned by those who stayed there the first night plus by Trip Advisor. But it surprised us by being decent and certainly one of its saving graces was a seaside location in addition to being within shopping and restaurant areas. It was also only a short ride to the airport versus a \$45 taxi ride to the Aston Maui Lu but it was rather remote from anything touristy.

This is after all one of the busiest times of the year for Hawai’ian hotels as evidenced by the number of car rental companies sold out and the awful \$100-plus a day prices of rental cars if you didn’t book far ahead. I’d booked a ten-day rental car with Budget but when I attempted to reduce the number of days, they refused to do anything but cancel the entire reservation and then re-book me at double the daily price. Obviously I gave up on having a rental car which would have been inconvenient anyway.

Eats – Did I gain weight? Surely yes! You just can’t walk off all this food.

So here are my food pictures because that’s what I email to Tom after each meal. I do that since he asks me what was for dinner and I generally forget. I could equally forget about most dinners so long as I had a good lunch, and then a sandwich for dinner would generally suit me well. But sure enough, offer it to me and I eat it need it or not.

Timberline Tours is noted for taking us to the best of all available restaurants and with no limitation on what we order. That is despite their having lived through an abuse of their generosity at least once; they believe that peer pressure usually alleviates such problems. I was recently on a tour where the norm was appetizer (or two or more), a main course, and a desert (or two or more). Were it my company I'd be tempted to form some rules that would be three plates period and no "priced at market" unless it's a known figure first.

Noted places included a dive-looking breakfast place that everybody loved and even wanted to return to and even for dinner, Café O'Lei, LuLu's twice and with entertainment once, and the priciest one of all at Hotel Hāna Maui for our last dinner. A wonderful change of pace was having Steve and Nola cook breakfast for us from their Hāna condo two mornings and being able to watch the sunrise and hear the waves breaking in the cove while leisurely eating breakfast on the deck.



Mini-Brie cheeses in the President's Club suits me fine; a muffin and coffee the first day at Maui Lu Resort where I learned the mosquitoes could and did eat me alive; a grocery store stop in the ritzy shopping center of Wailea for a Hawai'iian Bento Box typically filled with double scoops of brown rice; a Hawai'iian BBQ picnic on the Road to Hāna Tour.



Almost gone Mahi Mahi at LuLu's in Kihei; Half gone braised beef Teraki Asian style at Café O'Lei which was a favorite meal of the trip; a local chunk of filet mignon at Lahaina's Beef and Fish restaurant on the water; a fern salad is a specialty in Hāna where they pick the young tips of ferns. It's a pleasant surprise taste.

Overview Orientation – We flew into an area near to Wailuku and from there begins the Road to Hāna. On my first tourist round we drove that upper road and then came back via the lower road called Pilani Highway which is about an hour of very difficult one lane dirt road which winds around and is like a bumpy roller coaster. (Signs warn that rental cars are not allowed on that road.)

One afternoon and evening we ventured to Lahaina where in 2005 Tom and I entered from our cruise ship and also took the Road to Hāna tour. Some find Lahaina to be rather touristy and it is but look farther and it holds the largest Banyan tree in the world, some lovely old Inns, a unique harbor and the ability to take a walking tour of old buildings now somewhat obscured by touristy junk shops and questionable art dealers and even more weird characters.

In the western central section in green is the volcano and national park.

The Road to Hāna

The Hāna Highway was designated in 1999 as a National Millennium Legacy Trail and in June 2001 most of it was added to the National Register of Historic Places. But it has long been known as one of the nation's most scenic highways and one of Maui's major tourist attractions. It is



also a notoriously narrow, winding road, with hundreds of hairpin curves, dozens of one-lane historic bridges, and typical average speeds of only 15 mph so they say to allow at least three hours from Kahului to Ohe'o Gulch.



From the web: *Even though this legendary road is just 52 miles long (from Kahului to Hāna), it takes around three hours and can be quite a challenge to navigate. That's because it is narrow and*

winding. There are about 620 curves and 59 bridges, 46 of which are one-lane bridges. It can take a toll on one's nerves, especially if one is used to driving on wide, multiple-lane highways. That's why the Road to Hāna is also known as the "Divorce Highway," because it has caused quite a few arguments among some couples. The drive is very much worth it though and offers many scenic views of Maui's northern coastline, rainforests, black-sand beaches, waterfalls and lush, tropical vegetation. The Road to Hāna is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Hāna itself is a sleepy little town. There is a luxurious hotel, the Hotel Hāna-Maui, an art gallery and some small shops, eateries and road stands. So in case you plan to drive yourself, just take your time and make an entire day of this road trip. Stop at the scenic lookout points and take in all the views. Also, stop at some of the roadside stands that sell local foods, including really good banana breads and Hawai'ian coffee. Just south of Hāna Maui is another popular attraction, the Ohe'o Gulch, also known as the Seven Sacred Pools. The road continues as a dirt road, the Piilani Highway.

How many times can you go to Hāna?



In 2005 Tom and I were in Maui having docked in Lahaina from a 15-day Hawai'ian cruise and we took the optional Road to Hāna (long) day trip. I decided to do it again on the second day in Maui thinking it would renew my acquaintance with Maui's far eastern shore and also give me a totally different perspective from a hiking trip. Other than the monstrously difficult drive, that turned out to be good. Here I am at one of their canyons and beaches. It was a long but glorious day from 7am to 6pm.



At a state park and national historical site is a church built of pink coral and cement that withstood an early 1900s tsunami. It is still bordered with a very volcanic and rocky beach and we were blessed with high surf conditions. I enjoyed very much the 1912 bridges built when the road was no more than a one lane dirt road and of course the bridges remain one lane only.



These pictures were taken at the black sand beach near to Hāna. I would return here again later in the week and I'd gladly return here still again. I tried very hard to think of a way to stay over in Hāna a couple days but it was not only impractical but the hotel was sold out.

In Hāna there's little choice for restaurants. The famous Hāna Ranch has a restaurant where we'd eaten before and would again the following Wednesday night. From Hāna we ventured on to the southern route and cow country. Do you know they export quite a lot of live cows? It's really cowboy land in the desert section on the southern seaboard. Oh, and we watched whales from our drive. But before returning to Kihei we stopped at Ohe'o or otherwise known as the Seven Sacred Ponds. It's now part of the National Park and well frequented. I returned here again too later in the week when we hiked through the Bamboo Forest also.

It may be of interest that Oprah has purchased 40 acres in Hāna claiming that she won't develop it as she continues to live in Waimea. George Harrison used to live in the area and would come in and secret away for months at a time. Of course it's Charles Lindberg who fell in love with the area much earlier but oddly his wife didn't like the area at all and either sold or donated his land after he died and was buried there.



The above pictures are all from Ohe'o ponds, also known by the American hotel marketer as The Seven Sacred Ponds though there's nothing sacred about them other than bringing tourists to a lovely spot.



After a walk through the ponds which layer up and up, there was a visit to the gravesite of Charles Lindberg who, as mentioned, loved Maui so much that he asked to be returned to die in Maui. He has a very simple grave marker on a gorgeous hillside. See the picture I took looking down at the road we'd just traveled? All of which meant that we really wanted and needed the winery tour and I asked for double samples then went over to the Recovery Station – a little general store. (They make a pineapple wine that so surprised all of us we each purchased a bottle for about \$11.) This southern road route is clearly marked on maps and in signs that rental car contracts do not allow traversing. It's often one lane only, dirt, really curvy, bumpy and like a roller coaster. Sometimes the tour buses get out there and a little rain falls, covers the roadway and they have to turn back and go up and around back the same upper route. See map above.

From Kihei and my pre-hiking tour days – but a major and long day of walking and acquainting myself with some of the southern coast.



At the craft fair were purses made from coconut shells and silk lined, complete with roosters underfoot. In fact there were roosters all over the island as I learn they are sacred. A rooster saved Maui from a drought. The roosters even frequent the parks but who wouldn't with all the good looking bodies either surfing or laying around. Here's one. I found a lot of eye-candy.



I've never understood why its "Shave Ice" and not "Shaved Ice" but they are consistent and these shops and stands are all over. Nor could I figure out why it's a "Sheep Drop – Use Caution" but I

laughed (it was a Steep Drop actually but no Sheep in sight) and found the beaches sure were lovely, well kept, and with so many facilities I easily spent a full day out in my running clothes and nothing more and did fine. I didn't need these little go-carts for tourist sight-seeing but I did spent 7-8 hours on my feet the first day by walking into Waimea.



Other modes of transportation were interesting from this artsy heap of junk, the old Sugar Cane Train that said FREE, and a woody open car that cruised the main street which follows the shore line for many miles. Well, Maui is only 40 miles wide so it's not difficult to find the road running along the water.



I could have shopped but chose window (and street) shopping for various reasons: I didn't need a copper bathtub, or a bronze lady despite Tom having acquired himself a 5' bronze geisha. I couldn't afford the zillion dollar Koa Wood bench though I really appreciate the beauty of Koa Wood and gave myself a Koa Wood jewelry box on one of my prior trips.



In the exclusive enclave of Waimea of course there would be a huge and elegant shopping center full of many art shops, while outside were 'bring your own container for filtered water' machines. Maui has outlawed plastic bags too, which is commendable but not very convenient for a tourist shopping for provisions and being given a brown paper bag to carry home 1.2 miles in the rain. Down the street were 'Da Beach House' type shops with all the junk you can think of, and far too near to the exclusive shopping center with shops like Louis Vuitton and St John.



I witnessed a wedding on the beach but they didn't ask me to sign as a witness. And remember all those pictures I collected of gated-estates in Honolulu's Marathon? They build artsy gates on Maui too. Maui is said to have wonderful golf courses and I'd agree that they are beauties and there sure are a lot of them.



I skipped the canoe lessons and the surf lessons, all of which were in abundance, and returned to my hotel room which was seaside and within views of the whales. This last picture is from my patio and without a zoom lens. The water was close enough to throw a stone there and maybe one of the saving graces about the hotel.

Timberline Tours

Remember I've been on quite a few of these hiking adventures? And that a pair of leaders, Steve and Nola, convinced me that I wanted to return to Hawai'i again? (I was in Honolulu for a marathon in December.) I've been with Timberline to Yellowstone and Grand Tetons out of Jackson Hole, Death Valley out of Las Vegas, Yosemite National Park out of San Francisco, Canadian Rockies with Banff out of Calgary, Grand Canyon and Havasupai out of Las Vegas, Columbia River Gorge out of Portland, and the Kenai Peninsula out of Anchorage Alaska. Thus I've now had at least eight trips with Timberline.

This year I have booked five trips with them: this Maui trip, Big Bend National Park with Guadalupe and Carlsbad Caverns, Bryce and Zion out of Las Vegas, Glacier National Park and Waterton in Canada out of Kalispell, and Mt Rainier out of Seattle.

The six-day hike - Outlined above, pictured below.



Pat was the first to 'fall' victim of the heat. We were not used to the high -80s and equally high humidity and all suffered on our first day in the full sun and new heat. Pat had only arrived at the airport in the morning which was asking the body to do a lot. Yet we welcomed the hike as the views were awesome from one coast to the other. The trail was technical on the way up and slow going with a need for trekking poles and careful stepping. I did fine with both the trail and with hydration but of course I have a lot of experience with hydration needs. I think my 70 ounce water bladder was depleted! Here's one of our leaders, Nola, enjoying a stop, the view, and a snack.



There is Bill traversing the trail and finding very few trees with none of them offering shade. These are Wili Wili trees – as in 'they are Wili ugly or Wili pretty' when flowers erupt on the tips of the dead looking branches. Was Carol admiring a tree or just wishing for the shade of one? This was one of our few stops, with our other leader, Steve on a rock in the background. We were high on the hill with the windmills where some of them were working and some weren't and I wondered if the bird watchers got them shut down like they did in California.



At the end of the hike and a stop for sodas, we found this character hitchhiking. He took the time to come tell me off when he caught me taking his picture. I apologized, offered to cease and desist and erase but he continued his tangent about rude tourists. He clearly dressed looking for attention

The second picture was equally weird because it was about the size of my iPhone and crawling at my doorstep. I didn't know if he'd make it or if it was safe to help him across the sidewalk so I just photographed him as a reminder that this is a tropical region. I was unable to photograph any of the zillion mosquitoes which attacked me and brought huge welts but which disappeared fairly quickly. Bug spray didn't seem to fully protect me.



The next day was hugely different going through lush forests that were damp and comfortable. We found amazing views of the Lao Valley and of the seaside in the distance. Though steep, sometimes muddy and thus slippery, most of us had trekking poles and did fine. Some had some muddy laundry to deal with when they got home.



I like little towns like Lahaina. History still exists, the hippies aka wishful artists reside here. It's seaside with lots of color, restaurants, and photo opportunities. In Lahaina's case, it used to be the capital and has had to recreate itself. It is still a major docking location for cruises and it still has the island's largest Banyan tree. I took a video of the tree since it was too large to fit into a camera shot being more than 60' high and covering 2/3 of an acre. It was said to have been planted in 1873. We saw the second largest Banyan tree on our way into Hāna.

We traveled the half hour or so to shop and eat in Lahaina. We ate seaside at one of the best steak and fish restaurants. If I had more time and/or that elusive rental car I would have stayed a couple days in Lahaina it being a superb walking town, full of color and mysteries. In the 60s the town was designated a National Historic District and since then there's been an effort to preserve the oldest buildings and try to only allow construction of harmonious new ones. It's an odd blend of seaport, contemporary living, fabulous seaside views and some gaudy schlock.



The old bookstore is colorful as are those who frequent it whether for a smoke or to cart their wagon along. Sand sculptures were immortalized from happy days.



The really special hike, and the one I claim was worthy of the whole long venture across the ocean to Maui, was the trek into the Volcano. We started at over 10,000' and low 40s with lots of wind but soon spent much of the day in near perfect weather. Never did we consider wanting to take the horses/mules into the volcano. The observatory was up higher than we started. It's off limits and called Science City where data is gathered to help scientists map the movements of the Earth's crust. This volcano hasn't erupted for about 200 years and is neither active nor extinct but considered to be sleeping. Haleakalā would be considered the world's largest volcano if measuring from ocean floor to be 30,000'. It is 3,000' deep, 7.5 miles long as the crow flies and 2.5 miles wide with a total circumference of 21 miles. As such, many find its crater to be one of the most impressive spots on earth.



The colors reminded me of the Painted Desert. Pele's Paint Pot is listed as a surreal landscape of brightly colored ashes. The terrain was varied from our sliding sands trail to near technical tip-toeing through lava fields. We found some rare and unusual birds, one called a chukka (sp?) above and the other the Nene goose below which is Hawai'i's state bird. It reminded me of a Canadian goose with more stripes and colors.



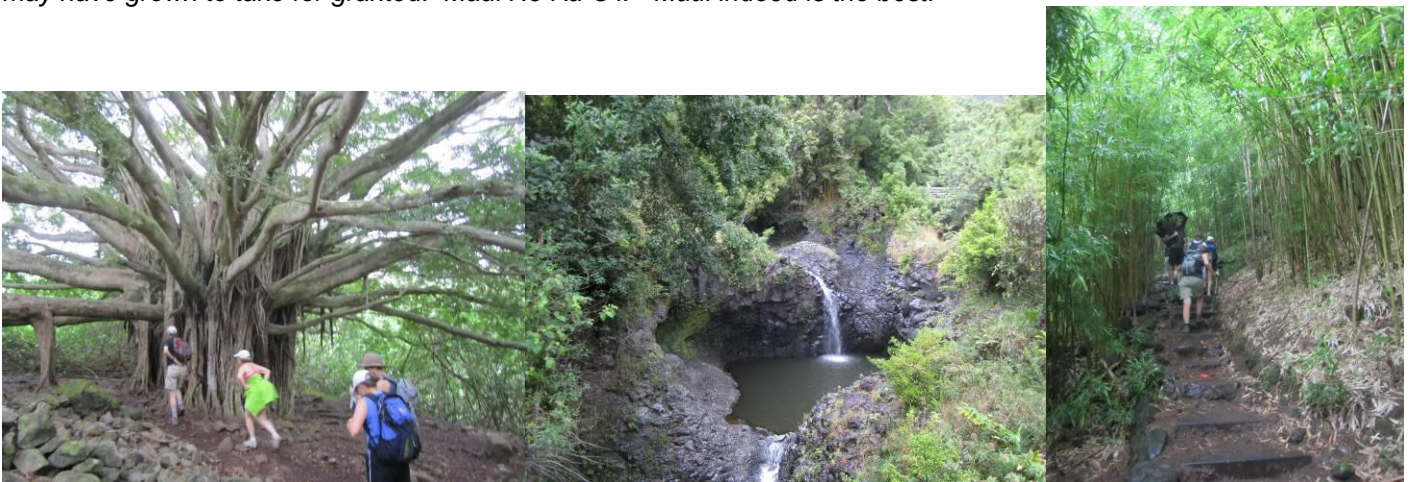


Their 'cabin' wasn't exactly Phantom Ranch but an appreciated stop with picnic table and outhouse. See the trails we hiked? From one side of the volcano, down to the bottom and up those switchbacks.



We were often above the clouds and often within them. Here's Susan in some technical trail hiking cliff-side which she had mixed emotions about. See the rainbow? We were fascinated that we could put our own shadow inside the rainbow and the camera picked it up. That's ME – my aurora in the rainbow. This was within a rain forest with mist swarming up the mountain onto our trail and creating a forest of wood palms.

I later found an explanation of this rainbow effect: *This is a phenomenon called Specter of the Brochen. With the setting sun's orangting light filtering through light clouds and onto the denser fog that has gathered in the crater below, a circular rainbow appears. Suddenly, an apparition materializes in the center of the rainbow. Raise your hand to wave and the spirit responds; call out and you may get an echo in reply. Of course, the specter is your own shadow but the ephemeral quality of this experience – at once both human and heavenly – is a fitting summation of all that Maui is. There the shadow stands, as silent testament to what some, perhaps slightly numbed by daily encounters with this magic land, may have grown to take for granted: Maui Nō Ka O'i. "Maui indeed is the best."*



After driving the Hāna Road still again, we went beyond to the coast and the same Seven Sacred Ponds area I'd been on Saturday before but this time to hike up to the falls. Within the bamboo forest there were areas so dense and dark that pictures were impossible.



To fully view the falls required not only trekking through the dark bamboo forest but tip-toeing across two stream beds made fuller by the off-and-on rainfall. Yes, I made it over both streams and back again with the help of poles and Nola talking and/or leading me through it but I'd cautiously zip-bagged my iPhone and camera carefully before starting over. Here's the bottom of the trek with the last couple ponds falling into the seaside with huge crashing waves.



I'd intended to give a try the day the group went out on ocean kayaks for snorkeling but my better judgment took over. I don't swim -- not a stroke -- and I've never even floated on water. The surf was high, once out I would be stuck for 3 hours on the bobbing ocean and the surf was way up. I was double glad to skip the water sports when I found plenty to do in Hāna and also to enjoy my lovely condo with some of the most perfect views I can remember. The walk of the day started out with Bill and Susan but they went on for shopping to the noted 100-year old general store, one of the only places in town to shop. (Steve paid \$9.50 for a gallon of milk.) We walked through the grounds and complex of the only real hotel in Hāna where rooms start at \$750 a night and go up to \$4800. We would dine there that evening. The grounds were lush and yet the entire place was understated elegance.



Here I am in front of one of the cabins by the seaside and before venturing to some of their churches.



The Hāna Maui hotel's front grounds and across the street is the high hill with a cross in honor of the Hāna Ranch founder. See the red bus? It reminded me of Glacier Park's transport. The courtyard is in the middle of the hotel and again true understated elegance, and again, all out in the open and my body still wasn't too comfortable with the heat and I was glad to be in running clothes.



Even the dining room was open to the elements but many ceiling fans. I was entertained watching the hotel's ground crew trim palm fronds and coconuts from high trees. I walked all along the water, dipping in enough to be sorry to accumulate all the black volcanic powder they call sand, and also walked the streets to find an elementary/high school combo school.



Someone was living in a yurt but then again I'd expect you'd find some of everything in Hāna. The thatched room dwelling was a model of earlier times within a complex of stone bases. See those kayakers off in the rocky cove? I climbed up a trail to look down and see our friends allegedly enjoying their snorkeling adventure. I wonder! One of them didn't hold down their breakfast and I'm sure that would have been me too. I was happy to be walking and hiking instead.



This is part of the Hāna museum and cultural center, with a reconstructed Hawai'ian village, and some museum artifacts in their old courthouse and post office. I then took my little water shoes which made me think of Five-Finger Vibrams out onto the rocky and sandy black beaches. I'd spent the day walking and hiking in them and can see how liberating they make you feel, but the second day thereafter I had some sensitivity in my ankles and shins so I'll limit that liberating feel. The beach came home with me in the form of black sand that was almost dust and still permeates my suitcase.



This was our last day together and before heading back the upper Hāna Highway, to eat in Pā'ia and then finish our tour. I'd been at this state park on the Saturday before and hiked down to the black sand beach and thought I saw the caves but I hadn't at all. They were an easy trek and had a fascinating story about a princess hiding in them. There were a series of clear waters.



We then headed the opposite direction a couple miles farther out than I'd gotten in my limited time before and hugged the rugged coast line through most of the hike. It was lush, then it was remote and volcanic ash but it was always with dramatic and gorgeous views with surf sometimes crashing near enough to us to gratefully feel the mist.



Standing at the edge waiting for the blow hole to grant us the show, some wisely chose to stay back and enjoy the views and skip the very narrow ledge on the way to the fisherman's cabin. Nola talked me through the ledge and I momentarily felt like superwoman to make it.



On the way to the fisherman's cabin and yes this is the trail or what we thought was the trail.



I wanted a picture of the cabin. First I thought it would make a good Timberline catalog shot. Smile. You know Backroads is the pricey hiking group and they show pictures of their hotels? Timberline could tongue-in-cheek brag how they stay in No-Frills hotels where the view is super and the services in short supply.

Then I decided that I so loved Hāna and the coast line that this was where I wanted to be when I became my soon-to-be Bag Lady. I often say that I'm spending my daughter's inheritance and that I'm in risk of being a Bag Lady so here is where I'll come. This must be like Maui 30 years ago, unspoiled, serene and mystical. Maybe Maui's last Hawai'ian place.



Though I guess there's only one real Blow Hole (and it's hugely wider than the one near Diamond Head) there are a number of caves, tunnels, windows of the volcanic rock that all create their own crashing and blowing water. This would be my view from my cabin.

That's all of the six days of hiking but probably plenty and on the day after I wondered how I'd ever add more days onto my next Big Bend hike. I was tired. I slept in. I rested and luxuriated the day with only a wee bit of guilt. I'm trying to get over the much commented "I can sleep when I'm dead."

Flowers – Throughout the trip there were continual sightings of unique plants rarely seen by us mainlanders. I had trouble not stopping to take far too many pictures but others did the same and we were often found hunting the guide books to identify some strange flower, plant, orchid or tree. To see the flowers and plants, you'll need to ask me for the full file. It wouldn't fit on the website within allotted memory. Windswept trees lined the roads. Ferns lined much of Hāna Highway. I wonder if the breadfruit is one reason the Hawai'ians are so roly-poly.

The roots of Banyan trees are said to also go far into the ground. Steve found a huge piece of Rainbow Eucalyptus bark and it was thick and felt soft like chamois.



The Silversword is unique to the volcano region and there were fields of them. They are said to be one of the world's rarest plants but that they only grow (and thrive) in his hostile condition as much because of the cold nights and hot days but also because of the porous ash soil. They take up to 50-years to flower its 7' spike of purple flowers. At one spot we found new silversword grown into old silversword that gave the look of a pot of flowers. They lined our silversword loop hike.

Lichen covered the volcanic rocks in one region giving the appearance of being snow covered. We found berries that were like black pearls. The mongoose were in abundance but refused to pose for my camera.



The bamboo forests were many stories high. From the Seven Sacred Ponds trail we found orchids. In my Hāna room were fresh birds-of-paradise, a flower given to us on Saturday and said to last two weeks easily. On the Hāna hotel grounds I found trees of the fruit called something like Nene and said to be uniquely awful tasting but medicinal. I believe it's possible to purchase in the U.S. this 'snake oil' that cures virtually everything and it should if you can get it down.



At the Hāna Cultural Center I found this butterfly. In the rocky and barren cliffs of the black sand beach were an unusual semi-fern and ice plant making a grip on life.



And as proof that our leaders, Steve and Nola, are really good and kind people, they stopped to admire and talk to the wild and feral cats of Hāna Highway. People who love cats have got to be special folks. Someone had been feeding this flock of cats as we saw at least two dozen reasonably healthy looking cats.

Our fellow hikers: Steve and Nola as leaders. Susan and Bill Lenderking from Washington DC. Carol Mueller from Madison Wisconsin, Pat Fishman and Laurie Hertz both from Chicago, and me. A small but friendly group that seemingly got along very well.

Oceans – As I was walking the last trail on the edge of a cliff with waves breaking at my feet there was suddenly something very familiar . . . and I began to count up the seashores and cliffs I'd experienced just in the recent few months: Tampa, St Augustine, Annapolis, Cape May, Rio de Janeiro, Anchorage, Acadia National Park's Mt Desert Island, Greece, Outer Banks, San Francisco, Honolulu, Charleston, Galveston, now Maui and of course we live within a stone's throw of the Jersey Shore. Pretty incredible, and I'm on my way to Surfside Beach Texas, San Francisco twice more, and maybe a Great Lake at Traverse City Michigan counts too.

The last day on the island was pretty worthless. I was tired of touring or I'd have gotten to the airport and arranged for a helicopter tour or a whale watch trip. One of the gals took a scuba diving or snorkeling trip before departing late evening. The Maui Seaside Hotel was not in the best of locations and there wasn't much available though I did find a couple seaside parks, a Cultural Center with an art show, a huge college campus on the water, two shopping malls, a bookstore with a lot of local color books, some miscellaneous stores, and a Whole Foods with a very large Japanese section where I ate as often as I could. A bit of running might have been good for my legs to remember faster turnover but I wasn't so sure but what I had a couple small glitches that needed rest so it was a very lazy day and a half waiting for my flight while living in a rather industrial area.

Like in the Oscars, can I have a moment to say send my thanks yous?

If I could never hike again, and like I say about my marathons, I believe that I'd be grateful to have gone this many miles. I feel blessed to have advisers who have made it possible: Jeff my weight trainer once said I should do a bit of cardio and that maybe I could run. It wasn't too long thereafter that he said "I didn't meant that much." I remember not so many years ago seeing the inside of my

first-ever health club and learning how he could build up muscles around what I thought were bad knees. Adrienne my massage therapist not only helps fix little glitches but generally knows when I should lay off and when I can keep going. Tom is the world's best husband who always encourages me to 'go for it' even though he has to say 'I don't get it but I support it.' Leaders like Steve and Nola have made it possible for me to have courage to 'go for it' by either talking me through a difficult route or saying 'well, you did Cloud's Rest so you can likely feel comfortable that you can do Half Dome.' I am grateful. I am humbled. I am an example of 'it's never too late.' My 24 marathons in 12 months on top of a number of major hikes and all in my 65th year are more than I deserved and more than I needed. Okay, I'll exit the stage but as a very happy and contented camper.

Sunset – The End but hopefully only to this Maui trip!



Itinerary

Thu Feb 10

8:30am Depart Newark EWR via Continental #1402

11:48am Arrive in LAX

Presidents Club available at LAX in Terminal 6 across from Gate 62

5:05pm Depart Los Angeles LAX via Continental#137

8:50pm Arrive Kahului Maui OGG

Shuttle Speedy Shuttle – 20-30 minutes or 8 miles to hotel for \$28.70 – shuttle desk at baggage; check in even before collecting baggage. 808 242 7777 pre-booked and paid including \$13.93 from Seaside Maui return to airport.

Hotel Aston Maui Lu Resort – 3 nights on own, then 3 nights with tour
575 South Kihei Road, Kihei, Hawai'i 96753
Tele 808 879 5881 Reservations made by Timberline

Yes to a/c, coffee maker, refig but wireless with a fee.

Shopping and restaurants available about 1 mile away

Nearby Attractions: Maui Ocean Center, Iao Valley, Maui Arts & Cultural Center, Wailuku Town, Hookipa Beach, Kahului Airport, Kihel, Wailea Resort, Maalaea

Fri Feb 11

Booking open - Whale watch trip – public bus to Maalaea Harbor where there are shops and restaurants for a 2-hour whale watch trip at 8am, 10:30 or 12:30pm

Can book through Aston Maui Lu Resort's activity desk.

Possible dinner with Steve and Nola?

Sat Feb 12

7:10am Tour pick up at lobby for Hāna Road tour until 5:45pm - booked and paid by Mary at hotel's activity desk

Hike summary from www.TimberTours.com:

Locals on Maui like to wear t-shirts proclaiming "Maui no ka oi", translated "Maui is the Best." Quite arrogant considering the competition offered by The Big Island, Kauai, Molokai and others in the Hawai'ian chain. In all honesty, when we created our Hawai'ian hiking program, we initially excluded Maui, believing that it might be too "touristy." Hard to believe, but we were wrong. Without a doubt, the hiking on Maui is the absolute best. The island of Maui is the result of the eruption of two volcanoes, which first formed separate land masses that were later joined by succeeding eruptions. The island's landscape, as you might imagine, is dominated by one of those volcanoes—Haleakalā (10,023')—"the house of the sun."

Later: The Maui tour has been evolving as we do research and nail down details. Remembering that nothing is cast in stone about our tours because we never know what might happen, here is the current planned tour itinerary:

Day 1: 10 mile (or so) hike in Poli Poli state park on western flanks of Haleakalā.

Day 2: Four mile hike to Waihee Ridge, plus more hiking to be determined (probably IO needle and ???).

Day 3: 12 mile hike in Haleakalā National Park

Day 4: Drive over to Hāna; stop along way to hike Pipiwai Trail (4 miles) and maybe a swim or two

Day 5: Morning kayak/snorkel trip in Hāna Bay. Afternoon free or to be determined (we'll have some options!)

Day 6: 4-5 mile hike along Hāna coast; lunch then drive back to Kahului for end of tour

Sun Feb 13 – Day 1

9:00am Start of hike – from Aston Maui Lu Resort – address above
Arrive dressed for hiking

We'll assemble early morning Kahului at our pre-tour lodge near the airport. We'll shuttle east into Maui's upcountry to Polipoli State Park and hike among the pine, cedar and cypress of the Polipoli Rain Forest. In the course of the hike, the forest often opens to reveal breathtaking views of Haleakalā (8 miles). We'll later head to the Aston Maui Lu Resort on the beach at Kihei, where we'll spend our first three nights.

Hotel Aston Maui Lu Resort – 3 additional nights
Kihei – see address and phone above

Mon Feb 14 – Day 2

We're off to Waihee Ridge and the rain forest of Kanoa Ridge overlooking Waihee Canyon (4.5 miles). Later that afternoon, we'll hike through Waihee Canyon, with its pair of swinging bridges that span the Waihee River (4 miles).

Tue Feb 15 – Day 3

This day is devoted to Haleakalā in the context of what is considered to be Maui's signature hike. We'll hike from the Visitors Center at Haleakalā's summit and descend into the volcano's crater along the Sliding Sands Trail to the Holua Cabin, across the valley floor, only to climb 1,500' on the Hulemau Trail to exit the crater (12 miles).

Wed Feb 16 – Day 4

We'll change pace today and head south to La Perouse Bay, where we'll kayak and snorkel in the sparkling blue waters of the bay. Mid-afternoon, we'll head to Hāna on the spectacular Hāna Highway, an indispensable ingredient in every Maui adventure. 50 miles, over 600 switchbacks, and 50 bridges later, we have arrived in beautiful Hāna, where we'll spend our final two overnights at the Hāna Kai Maui Hotel.

Hotel Hāna Kai Maui Hotel – 2 nights
4865 Uakea Road, Hāna, Maui, Hawai'i 96713
Tele 808 248 8426

Thu Feb 17 – Day 5

The good news is that our hike along the Pipiwai Trail in Haleakalā National Park does not include the Hāna Road. We'll climb through open grasslands and bamboo forests on Pipiwai beyond stunning Makahiku Falls to Waimoku Falls, our turnaround point. We'll return to our trailhead and head for Hāna and an afternoon free to explore this fascinating village. (4 miles).

Fri Feb 18 – Day 6

We'll trace a portion of the ancient Kings Highway from Pailoa Bay in Waianapanapa State Park to Kainalimu Bay. This coastal trail traverses wind-swept cliffs overlooking blowholes, sea arches and tidal pools to an ancient Hawai'ian temple site (5 miles). We'll have lunch in Hāna and return to Kahului. Van shuttle to Kahului.

Hotel Maui Seaside Hotel – 2 nights
100 W. Kaahumanu Avenue, Kahului, Hawai'i 96732
Tele: (800) 560 5552 or (808) 877 3311 info@mauseasidehotel.com

Yes coffee maker and refrig but WiFi with a fee; free WiFi at Burger King nearby
Nearby Attractions: Maui Ocean Center, Iao Valley, Maui Arts & Cultural Center, Wailuku Town, Hookipa Beach, Kahului Airport, Kihel, Wailea Resort, Maalaea

Description: Experience the magic of Maui from the shores of Kahului Bay and the Maui Seaside Hotel. Less than an hour from the popular old whaling village of Lahaina and only 10 minutes from historic and stunning 'Iao Valley. Shopping, dining and first-run theatres are just steps away at Maui's largest shopping mall. Bus, food court and restaurants within 2 blocks

Sat Feb 19

Open for tours

Sun Feb 20

8:00pm Depart Maui Seaside via Shuttle – info above and prepaid
10:10pm Depart Kahului Maui OGG via Continental #194 (snack)

Mon Feb 21

5:45am Arrive LAX for plane change
Presidents Club at Terminal 6 across from Gate 62 - Short connection but there's also an 8:30am flight to Newark
7:10am Depart LAX via Continental #40
3:30pm Arrive NJ

Note: Departing on Fri Feb 25 to Houston, then Surfside Marathon, then Big Bend NP for hiking with Timberline

Packing

Water shoes, Bathing suit, rain gear, sunscreen, Buffs, trekking poles, hat(s).
See clothing recommendation list by Timberline

Tourist

AAA Gems include Haleakalā National Park, Hāna Highway, Old Lahaina and Lu'au and Maui Ocean Center in Wailuku. Michelin gives Maui 2-stars overall.
3-stars to Hāna Highway, Haleakalā NP
2-stars to Lahaina, Kaanapali Beach aka Dig Me Beach, Ohe'o Gulch, Iao Needle, Iao Valley State Park
1-star to Pā'ia, Big Beach and Wailea Beach, Maui Ocean Center and Maui Tropical Plantation

Maui Trip Report by Maryanne Winters

Are you kidding!!! A trip report - who do you think I am - YOU? Just teasing you. I don't do trip reports - wish I did. I'm terrible - I do have a memory book of pics though. We stayed at a wonderful resort - a golf resort that my travel agent found for us - really reasonable and extremely nice. It was within walking distance of the beach, however you have to get a pass from the concierge because it is exclusively for hotel guests only. It was also very close to a top line shopping center and the Marriott in Maui. We went to the Luau at the Marriott - don't waste your money. It was okay, and I took some beautiful pics at sunset. The one thing that we truly enjoyed was having dinner at a restaurant near our hotel, called Mulligan's on the Blue where there was a very well known Hawai'i entertainer, Willie K, - we bought tickets for his show and dinner and it was exceptional! If you have a chance to see him anywhere, should he be on the island, you must see him. He is a fabulous entertainer - can sing any style, simply amazing.

We stayed at the Hotel Wailea, 555 Kaunani Street, in Wailea. It was \$170++ for the night for a wonderful condo. Not bad for Hawai'i. They had the most delicious scones at their continental breakfast. Just scones, fruit, coffee & juice was all they had. But we had a fridge, so we bought our own food for lunch and breakfast. Just went out for dinner each night.

We also drove to Lahaina, not very far from Wailea and went to Kamehameha Iki Park near the famous Banyan Tree in Old Lahaina Town. We did a chartered whale watch. We saw lots of whales, but remember it was January and they were there. But I guess they should still be there in February.

Also drove to the top of Maui's inactive volcano at the top of Haleakalā National Park. That was beautiful. We drove just south of our resort on this little road and found a pristine beach with hardly anyone there. Also lots of lava down there and people were scuba diving around the lava. Very pretty and some very pretty private homes down that way.

I assume you are flying into Kahului Airport in Maui? It's probably at least a 30 minute ride to where we stayed down south of there. I didn't care much for the town of Kahului and I wouldn't recommend staying there - but Wailea is wonderful.

That's about it - we are not big tourists - we laid around the pool a lot and read. It was so beautiful and peaceful. So I hope this little bit gives you an idea. So there you have my "trip report" - hope it helps a bit.

From David Williams: I actually booked my hotel through Hotwire I think or one of the other prepaid deals. Got a good price at the last minute for the furthest south hotel, past the Wailea Marriott (was Maui Prince, now Makena Beach Resort – it had just changed names and was pretty empty). I had good snorkeling right off the beach. Plus boats from the hotel to the nearby snorkeling/dive spot of Molokini. It was kind of far out of the way, but this is Hawai'i so far is not like far in Houston. Old Lahaina was interesting but not that big a deal – mostly shopping which you would avoid anyway. I did get some neat, creative jewelry for Maggie. I drove up the volcano – amazing. A few miles from the beach and you are at 10,000 feet. But when I went up there was a layer of clouds at 5000 and from the top the only things you could see were the clouds and the two volcano peaks on the big island. Cold and windy at the top. Not Alaska but not beach attire either.

East side of Maui – windy, big surf, rainy, tropical (road to Hāna), no hotel. West side has beaches, resorts, cliffs, whales (in season), lots of hotels. On the west side there are two parts – north is Lahaina and other resort area. South is Wailea resorts. In between is a cliff area then low areas with farms, condos, retail, etc. The river empties in the ocean in btwn so the water isn't as good so the hotels are at either end.

<http://www.makenaresortmaui.com/>. Not recommending this per se, but it was OK. And the rate I got online (without knowing the hotel name) was like \$135 or something.