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A Quiet Aloha



The beaches of Maui. Helicopter tours. Volcanic explorations. Late-night luaus. Places teeming with tourist traps, surfers, and sand volleyball games. These are not what we were seeking when we booked our ten-year anniversary trip to Hawaii. So...instead of the popular Maui destination, we chose the quiet north shore of Oahu. Our stay at Turtle Bay Resort was a relaxing week in paradise.

If you're looking for an amazing get-away to enjoy the beauty of Hawaii in a more secluded quiet setting, this is the spot. We went mid-June, and enjoyed nice weather, low crowds, and great service. Here's what you can look forward to if you decide to journey there:

Nature trails – We took three long hikes, and barely retraced our steps. The resort includes hundreds of acres, with several trails to explore a variety of landscapes. From beaches, to rocky shores, to banyan tree forests, it's all gorgeous. I was enthralled with the foliage, so different from Chicagoland. The huge banyan trees were intriguing and a bit creepy all at once. Yes, you may feel like a *Lost* character at some point on your hike.

Sea turtles – These captivating creatures are right nearby. Our hikes along the shoreline included a couple very close encounters. If we had our swim suits on, we may have jumped in and swam with them.

Seclusion – The resort grounds are expansive. The location is away from the high-traffic areas of the island. The result: At times, we felt we had paradise to ourselves. On one hike,

we stumbled upon a small beach that we had to ourselves for the entire afternoon. Yes, we did have to share restaurants with other patrons, but we never had to wait for a table. Turtle Bay seemed to be the spot to avoid crowds and enjoy tranquil paradise.

Luau Dancers – While we did not attend an all-night pig roast with a three-story bonfire on the beach, we did enjoy a more low-key show at the resort. We simply walked out to the patio area, got some smoothies from the bar, and sat back to watch the costumed performers show us several traditional dances. Audience participation was encouraged. My husband was asked to join the dancers...but declined.

Snorkeling – A Christopher Pike novel I read when I was a teen turned me off from scuba diving forever. However, I wanted to give snorkeling a try. It was amazing. Our resort stay included snorkel gear rental, and we were glad we took them up on it. The coral and fish were gorgeous. Be sure to include time for this in your itinerary. And, if you go in from the beach, as we did, walk backwards as you enter the water with your flippers on. It's much easier.

Pearl Harbor – The one tourist thing we did (other than staying at a tourist resort!) was visit Pearl Harbor. My husband has a degree in history. We weren't going to pass this up. I did find it fascinating too, though somber. As this is on the other side of the island from Turtle Bay, I recommend going on your way to or from the airport. We made this our last stop. Pay the small fee for the audio tour. It's worth it. Take time to explore the grounds, getting hands-on in a sub control room or pose for a pic shooting a massive gun. Learn a little. Live a little.

Eats – Fruits and fish abound. You'll be able to get anything you want, but if you're in Hawaii, try the fish at least once. I had a particularly tasty grilled ahi sandwich one day. The state fish is the humuhumunukunukuāpua'a. If you're going to order it though, I recommend using the English name, reef trigger fish.