

TRAVEL  LEADERS®

# Postcards

SUMMER 2012

## SOUTH AFRICA

Safari and More

## EGYPT

AN ANCIENT  
LAND RENEWED

*Island  
Hopping in  
Hawaii*

Your Dream  
Golf Vacation

AMAZING  
AMSTERDAM



# ISLAND HOPPING

THERE'S MORE TO HAWAII THAN THE BEAUTY OF THE BIG ISLAND AND MAUI. TAKE IN THE ADVENTURES THE ISLANDS OFFER, FROM LANAI TO KAUAI.

BY JESSICA COLLEY

bit into a slice of pineapple with the taste of salt still on my lips. Juice ran down my chin as I moseyed to the water's edge, rinsing my sticky fingers in the surf. There were no radios or giggling children, no waiters carrying trays of frozen drinks. The day was a haze of swimming, sleeping, reading and digging into the cooler for snacks. And as I folded up my beach blanket after sunset I realized I hadn't spoken a word to anyone all day.

This is one of Hawaii's simplest pleasures, but there are many more to discover. Some travelers find a favorite destination and remain loyal for a lifetime—but why not date around? The six main islands of Hawaii each have their own character, style and temperament. Who says a cottage rental steps from the surf and a fine dining getaway have to be mutually exclusive?

I set out for Hawaii to find the sweet spot between relaxation and an invigorating vacation. Over the course of my island-hopping tour, I experienced the vibrant culture of Oahu, the peace of Molokai, the romance of Kauai. I had made a date with each sibling of the Hawaii family and would pick my favorite only once I gave each island the chance to make me swoon.

## WELCOME TO OAHU

My first date was with Oahu. Many island-hopping itineraries begin here, as the capital city of Honolulu is a popular arrival point for international flights. What was once a playground for Hawaiian royalty is now Waikiki, the island's main resort area. This is the place to satisfy a craving for classic Hawaiian activities like a first surf lesson. After the sun goes down, Waikiki entertains with art galleries, fine dining and nightlife.

My excursion began with a focus on sophisticated pleasures. First up was sampling the latest spin on Hawaii Regional Cuisine, a farm-to-table movement that utilizes the freshest local ingredients. After dinner, I browsed the art galleries in Waikiki with a burst of energy before bed. I was starting to unwind and soon was ready to leave the thrum of Waikiki behind for the quieter side of Oahu.

## THE NORTH SHORE OF OAHU

After a one-hour drive, I exchanged high-rise buildings for small historic surf towns full of boutiques and tiny art galleries.

My first stop was Waimea Bay, home to surfers performing impossible tricks on the backs of glassy waves. This coast is home to seven miles of golden beaches and floral-scented air. After just a few hours, the North Shore was having an unexpected effect on me: Not only was I relaxed, but maybe even ready to get outside of my comfort zone.

While Oahu is certainly spectacular from the ground, it is, so the locals told me, even more impressive from the air. After an evening at a casual beach bar (no shoes required), I found myself standing beside a biplane. This historic vehicle dates back to 1941 and offers simple scenic tours as well as daredevil aerobatic rides. I chose a historic tour over Pearl Harbor, but more adventurous visitors might opt for a ride full of upside-down loops and rolls with the green valleys of Oahu below.

Just the idea of this adrenaline-inducing flight made me want to grab the nearest lounge chair and sunbathe all afternoon. It was time to jet somewhere even more serene.

## HELLO KAUAI

A cottage rental on the beach. Waking to the sound of the surf. That's what I wanted from Kauai.

A quick 25-minute flight connects the northernmost island of Kauai to Oahu. On Kauai—where it is often said that no building is taller than a coconut tree—carefree days are spent snorkeling, kayaking and browsing farmers markets. You can wake early or sleep in late. You can hike to a waterfall with a picnic on your back or exert yourself only by rising from a beach chair to cool off in the surf.

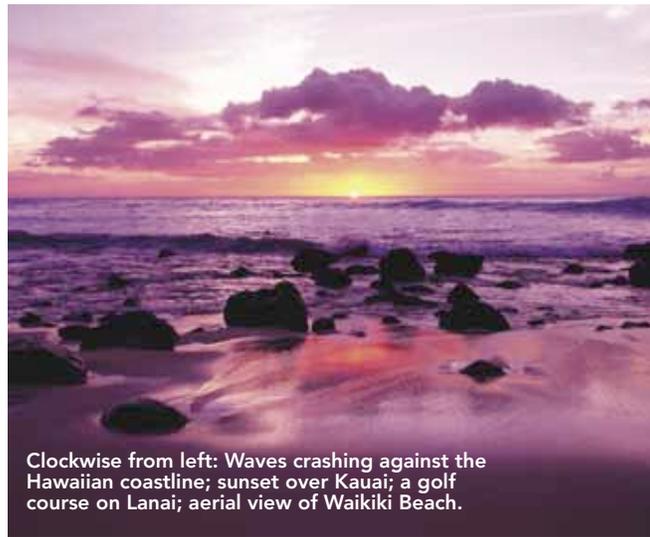
My exertions varied by day. One day I thumbed through an entire novel with my toes in the sand, and the next I was back in the air, this time in a helicopter, to admire a bird's-eye view of the Waimea Canyon and cliffs of the Napali Coast. Setting foot on Kauai only piqued my interest in continuing on the rest of my tour of the islands. What would I find as I ventured further off the beaten Hawaiian path?

## THE FRESH FACE OF MOLOKAI

Molokai is the least commercial of the Hawaiian islands. I spent a morning sport fishing in a boat bobbing off the coast, then an afternoon napping under a coconut tree. After seeing the



Sunset over Molokai



Clockwise from left: Waves crashing against the Hawaiian coastline; sunset over Kauai; a golf course on Lanai; aerial view of Waikiki Beach.



canyons and cliffs of Kauai from the seat of a helicopter, I wanted to see Molokai up close and personal. That’s how I found myself on the back of a mule in the Kalaupapa National Historical Park.

There, a 2.9-mile trail weaves along cliffs teetering 1,700 feet above the Pacific. My grip loosened over the course of 26 switchbacks; I was clearly in the hands of an expert who knew every inch of this historic trail. Without the necessity to look down at my feet, I could focus on the cliff side wild with brush and the expanse of ocean below. Molokai is often called the Hawaii of the past, providing a glimpse into what the islands were like decades ago.

### THE DUAL PERSONALITY OF LANAI

I saved the smallest island with the dual personality for last. Lanai has a luxurious side, with championship golf courses and upscale spas. Yet the island is also quite rugged, with unpaved back roads and unexpected adventures. I spent one indulgent day getting facials and massages in the spa, and the next, tied on my boots and hiked up to a scenic point overlooking iconic Sweetheart Rock and Hulopoe Bay.

During the final stop of my tour I watched playful dolphins, kayaked into secluded coves, and held on tight in a four-by-four vehicle bound for the rocky, lunar landscape of Keahiakawelo,

also known as Garden of the Gods. As I hiked, it was difficult to comprehend that this barren, beautiful rock garden could be on the same island as the lush coastline and white beaches of Hulopoe Bay.

It was on Lanai, this island free of traffic lights, that I found myself on secluded Polihua Beach biting into a piece of fresh pineapple. This is where I washed my sticky fingers, where I sat in the sand with not another person in sight. After the helicopter tours and mule rides, I was content to sink deeper into the sand with only the company of the surf washing over me and sweeping back out to sea.

### AND THE WINNER IS...

Which island won my heart in the end? After a short rendezvous with each sibling of the Hawaii family, I couldn’t choose a favorite. Each island matched a specific mood or whim. Next time a certain craving strikes, I’ll know which Hawaiian island I should make a date with. **TL**

**Travel Leaders will help ensure your island-hopping adventure is smooth from start to finish. Contact your Travel Leaders agent to book your Hawaiian vacation today.**