

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

OAHU

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(1) Oahu: a small island southwest of the California coast with a diversity of people and their cultures. When someone mentions Hawaii, exotic images of jungles, muumuus, flower leis, and sunny beaches fill the mind. Oahu offers the tourist two basic options, depending on what activities he enjoys. On the southern side of the island, Honolulu, a sprawling city teeming with activity and excitement, is literally a tourist's paradise, complete with shopping malls, beaches, theaters, and sight-seeing tours. Oahu's north shore Laie, is known to the kamaainas (locals) as surfers' paradise. Here you will find challenging mountains to hike or climb, as well as deserted stretches of beach, excellent surfing conditions, and coral reefs, perfect for snorkeling or scuba-diving.

(2) Honolulu, with its glass and concrete buildings, offers a potpourri of sights and activities to keep a haole (newcomer) happy. Waikiki is one of the first places that tourists like to visit. The shops along Waikiki Boulevard, which runs parallel to the beach, sell anything from popsicles to puka shells. Bikini-clad women and bronzed, handsome men are common sights across the road at Waikiki Beach. In the water, cruise boats with gaily colored sails offer rides to passers-by. Outrigger canoe trips are also available if you would like to experience the ancient Hawaiian mode

of travel.

(3) Spending the first day in Hawaii at the beach may not be a good idea since the sun is intense in the tropics. Instead, sign up for a sight-seeing tour of Oahu. Your tour-guide will probably take you to Punchbowl Crater, also called the Cemetery of the Pacific, where soldiers are buried. Most of the graves are from World War II (the Pearl Harbor attack). Leis and flowering trees decorate the monotony of the green mounds, their bright colors breaking the solemnity of the plots. The Pali Lookout is next on the itinerary. Mist-wrapped columns of earth that jut from the base of a mountain remind locals of the fate of King Kamehameha's warriors, who, rather than surrender to Captain Cook's men, plunged to their deaths in the beautiful valley below.

(4) The state capital, which is built to resemble a volcano, gives tribute to the legendary goddess Pele, who is said to have caused the volcanoes to erupt, forming the Hawaiian Island chain. The S. S. Arizona, a monument to the battleship that sank during the Japanese raid in W. W. II, stands in Pearl Harbor. Aloha Tower is a constant reminder of the old ways of trade and the whaling ships that frequented the islands years ago.

(5) When you visit these historic sights, you may be tempted to buy some souvenirs, but don't spend your money at these overpriced stalls. Ala Moana shopping center, centrally located in Honolulu, is the best place to go. In addition to sight-seeing and shopping, there are also other activities like dining at Honolulu's excellent restaurants. After dinner, most people go to shows that are geared especially for tourists: Don Ho, Andy Bumatai, and Danny Kalekini are the more popular ones. Or, you may want to spend a day at Castle Park, an amusement park near Pearl Harbor, and

maybe even jog at Kapiolani Park in the afternoon. Paradise Park is a must for tourists since it displays the most beautiful tropical birds and plants native to Hawaii. After a big day on the town, a nice relaxing dip in the ocean is the perfect way to end the evening.

(6) On the other side of the island is Laie, a lush garden isle, remote from the concrete jungle of the city. Here, too, are different scenes that you must choose among. The sand that winks at you because of the sun's brightness is set against the background of dark, brooding mountains. The mountains offer the visitor a lot of activities. Those who are brave enough may scale the heights of these monsters, but there are also tamer trails for hikers. There are many trails to follow into the recesses of the mountain, but the prettiest is the one leading to Sacred Falls. As you follow the trail, you can hear the rushing river. Solid rock walls on either side of the trail are covered with fern and moss. You can feel the air slowly become cool as you ascend. If you're lucky, you may be in time for passion-fruit season. They grow wild along the trail and you can enjoy their juicy sweetness as you trek up the mountain. There is a tricky bend before you finally get to the falls, but once you make it, you will probably never want to leave because Sacred Falls is such a beautiful place.

(7) The mountain tops offer a picturesque panorama of the countryside. From your high perch, you can see the Dole pineapple plantation, sugarcane fields, rural homes, and the vast stretches of wonderful beaches. When you descend from the high places, you may want to visit the Polynesian Cultural Center, which typifies the ancient Hawaiian, Samoan, Tahitian, and Portuguese cultures--some of the first to settle in Oahu.

(8) Instead of hiking or sight-seeing, you may enjoy just a lazy day at the beach, sunning yourself and watching the surfers ride the waves. Body surfing, wind surfing, and snorkeling are also enjoyed in the shallow water. Scuba diving in the coral reef area is available to those who are licensed divers. However, you must always keep an eye out for reef and nurse sharks. Off-shore fishing and deep sea fishing are popular activities, too.

(9) Early in the morning, before anyone else is awake, you can watch the sun warm the waves as they roll towards the shore. Perhaps later on that day you can pack a picnic and go to the beach, just to watch the people. You can usually hear the soft, guttural sounds of Samoan or Hawaiian ladies singing lullabies and folk songs as they gently strum on their ukeleles. When the stars finally come out, you can stroll along the beach and let the sand melt between your toes.

(10) Living like a kamaaina on the north shore makes you appreciate Hawaii because you know about the people and see the places that tourists never really get to see. You discover more about Hawaii by being around people not directly involved with tourism. On the other hand, Honolulu also has unique activities to offer. The choice is up to you but, either way, you will enjoy yourself as you get to know this little tropical island in the Pacific.