

## HAWAII

Aloha! My name is Catherine and I come from the beautiful state of Hawaii. Hawaii was discovered by Polynesians between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. It was later explored by British Captain James Cook in 1778. Hawaii became a U.S. territory in 1898, and the 50<sup>th</sup> state of the U.S. on August 21, 1959.

When most people think of Hawaii, they think of Honolulu and our famous Waikiki Beach. We'll get to that in a minute, but did you know that Hawaii actually consists of 137 islands? Most people will only visit a few of the main 8 Hawaiian Islands. They are: O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Moloka'I, Lana'i, Ni'ihau, and Kaho'olawe. The most populated island is Oahu where the capitol city of Honolulu is located. It also happens to be my home island, and is nicknamed "the gathering place."

I'd like to give you my Hawaii Top Ten! These are facts, places, and experiences that I think make my Hawaii unique.

Number 10: Hawaii is known as the land of aloha shirts and mu'umu'us. Both aloha shirts and loose dresses called mu'umu'us have bright Polynesian patterns.

Number 9: Many people only know Hawaii by what they see on TV and in movies. Classic American TV shows like Magnum PI and Hawaii Five-O were set in Hawaii. What about Jurassic Park, Avatar, and the hit TV show LOST? Hawaii's landscape has inspired many a film and TV producer.

Number 8: A vital part of the Hawaiian culture is hula. Hula is a Hawaiian form of dance that is accompanied by chanting or song and tells the stories, traditions, and culture of the Hawaiian people. Hula is performed in big fancy luaus for tourists, as well as in backyards at pretty much any special occasion. For example, I danced a hula at my wedding, a common practice at Hawaiian weddings today.

Number 7: If you come to my state, you can visit the only royal palace in the US that was used by a reigning monarch- 'Iolani Palace. In 1810, King Kamehameha, chief of the Big Island of Hawai'i, united all the Islands into one kingdom. In 1893, the monarchy was overthrown by American businessmen and a provisional government was established. Today, 'Iolani Palace is open to the public as a historic museum and shares the history of the Hawaiian Monarchy.

Number 6: The Dole Pineapple Plantation. In 1901 the Hawaiian Pineapple Company, now Dole, was established and the first pineapples were planted in Wahiawa. Other important crops in Hawaii include sugar, macadamia nuts, coffee, flowers, and seeds. I encourage you to try one of my favorite snacks, chocolate covered macadamia nuts. They are *ono*! That means delicious in the Hawaiian language.

Let's move on to Number 5: The U.S.S. Arizona Memorial. It marks the resting place of 1,102 sailors that were killed on the USS Arizona during the attack on Pearl Harbor by

Japanese forces on December 7, 1941. In 1949 the Pacific War Memorial Commission was created to build a permanent memorial in Hawaii. The US Navy insisted that it be in the form of a bridge floating above the ship.

Now we come to Number 4: Surfing! The first known occurrences of surfing come from the ancient Hawaiian tradition of he'e nalu, or wave sliding. In the early 1900s news about surfing had made its way to California, and in 1915, famed Hawaiian surfer and Olympic swimmer Duke Kahanamoku introduced surfing to Australia. In the 1950s surfers started tackling the big waves of the North Shore of Oahu, and today competitions are held at Banzai Pipeline, Sunset Beach, and Waimea Bay.

Moving on to Number 3: Hawaii is known for its active volcanoes. Hawaii emerged from the sea millions of years ago, forged by the power of volcanoes. If you visit the Big Island of Hawai'i, you can visit Maunaloa or Kilauea at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, where you can come face to face with an active volcano.

Number 2! I'd like to tell you a little about native Hawaiian food. Today, you can find a fusion of many cuisines, but traditional Hawaiian food is still popular and delicious. If you visit my state, I encourage you to try poi, made from the starchy taro root. You can try kalua pig, a favorite at most luaus. Kalua pig is traditionally cooked in an imu, an earth oven in which the pig will roast and steam for about 12 hours!

Number 1 is the famous Waikiki Beach. Waikiki was once the playground of the Hawaiian Royalty. The name, Waikiki, means "spouting waters" and is Oahu's main hotel and tourist area. Here you can find world class restaurants and shopping, as well as one of the busiest beaches in the Hawaiian Islands. If you want to try a more gentle surfing lesson than you'd find on the North Shore, Waikiki is a good starting point.

That brings us to the end of our Hawaiian journey! I hope you've enjoyed hearing about my state, and that one day you'll decide to visit. E komo mai and aloha!