

Travel Facts

Spinner dolphins are commonly seen from day boat charters throughout Hawaii



CLIMATE

Hawaii's climate is considered one of the most pleasant in the world. It is comfortably balmy and warm year-round, with northeasterly trade winds prevailing most of the year.

Average winter and summer temperatures vary by only 7°F (4°C). Near the coast, temperatures are between 68° and 83°F (20° and 28°C), though highland temperatures can be much cooler. Water temperatures range from a low of 72°F (22°C) in January to a high of 82°F (27°C) in August.

Generally, high mountains throughout the island chain block the trade winds and moisture-laden clouds that blow in from the northeast. These winds bring abundant rainfall to the windward

side of the islands, while the leeward areas tend to receive only 10in to 25in (25cm to 64cm) of rain a year. The rainiest time of year for most of the islands is December to March, except along the Kona Coast on the Big Island, which experiences its wettest season during July and August.

LANGUAGE

English is the official language of Hawaii, though it is peppered with a mixture of colorful Hawaiian phrases and words borrowed from the various immigrant languages. It is also common to hear islanders use pidgin (a modern and ever-changing local slang based on a simplified form of English) to communicate with each other.

The only place where Hawaiian is still the primary language is on the privately owned island of Niihau, but many Hawaiian names, words and expressions are still commonly used throughout the islands. In fact, some 85% of all place names in Hawaii are in Hawaiian and often have interesting translations and stories behind them. Though Hawaiian words may seem long and complicated, the written language has just 12 letters. Pronunciation and meaning are indicated through glottal stops (ʻ) and macrons (short, straight lines over some vowels), though these are often omitted in modern texts.

GETTING THERE

Hawaii is a major transportation hub for the Pacific, connecting distant shores on all sides. Nearly all flights to Hawaii enter via the Honolulu International Airport on Oahu, which is serviced daily by major carriers from the US mainland, Asia, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Some of the outer islands also have direct flights to the US mainland and Asia, but the schedules are less reliable and change with demand.

GATEWAY CITY – HONOLULU

Honolulu (population approximately 400,000), is the state's capital and center of business, culture and politics. Honolulu's ethnic diversity can be seen on every corner.

Its eclectic mix of sleek high-rises and Victorian-era buildings combine well with the Spanish-style City Hall, the missionary churches and the Royal Palace. Many interesting and historic sites are within walking distance of each other. Though the greater Honolulu area has seen tremendous growth during the 20th century, the downtown area near the harbor remains the heart of the city.

Since the late 1700s, Honolulu has provided a safe harbor for international travelers, many of whom have made this their home. Honolulu International Airport and Honolulu Harbor are Hawaii's busiest ports.

Just south of downtown Honolulu is Waikiki, a 1.5 mile-long stretch of golden beach lined with countless hotels, restaurants, bars and shops. As Hawaii's first tourist destination, Waikiki still accommodates nearly half of the state's visitors.



Honolulu is the gateway city to the Hawaiian Islands