

Understand Hawaii

HAWAII TODAY 576

Growing pains are par for the course in paradise, where self-reliance and sustainability point the way forward.

HISTORY 579

From Polynesian wayfarers and Hawaiian royalty to missionaries, sugar barons and the US military, this is Hawaii's story.

HAWAII'S PEOPLE 592

Bust the myths and stereotypes about island life, far from 'da mainland' at this multicultural Pacific crossroads.

HAWAII'S CUISINE 598

Go find fresh seafood shacks, plate-lunch trucks and chef's farm-to-table restaurants, then sip mai tais by the beach.

HAWAII'S ARTS & CRAFTS 607

Discover the islands' soulful side: lilting Hawaiian music, sensuous hula dancing, artisan handicrafts and dramatic stories.

LEI 615

Learn to speak the secret language of these fragrant garlands, symbolizing the spirit of aloha that animates the islands.

LAND & SEA 618

Delicate coral reefs, red-hot lava flows, icy volcano summits, mist-laden cloud forests – it's Hawaii, naturally.

GREEN HAWAII 628

Earth's most remote archipelago is a living laboratory for conservation and eco-conscious living. Here's how you can help.

Hawaii Today

The state motto, 'Ua Mau ke Ea o ka 'Āina i Ka Pono' (The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness), is not just an idealistic catchphrase. Hawaii's modern sovereignty movement, eco-sustainability initiatives and antidevelopment activism are rooted in *aloha 'āina* (literally, love and respect for the land), a traditional Hawaiian value deeply felt by almost everyone who calls Hawaii home. This belief has nurtured widespread cooperation and commitment to overcoming the 21st-century challenges facing these ancient islands today.

Best on Film

The Descendants (2011) Contemporary island life, with all of its heartaches and blessings.

From Here to Eternity (1953) Classic WWII-era drama leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack.

Blue Crush (2002) Cheesy, but a local favorite for its surf cinematography.

50 First Dates (2004) Silly rom-com shot on gorgeous Windward O'ahu beaches.

Blue Hawaii (1961) Romp poolside with a ukulele-playing Elvis during Hawaii's tiki-tacky tourism boom.

Best in Print

Shark Dialogues (1994) Kiana Davenport's multigenerational family saga, stretching from ancient times into the plantation era.

Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers (1996) Lois-Ann Yamanaka's short-story novel about growing up local and speaking Hawaiian pidgin.

Hotel Honolulu (2001) Paul Theroux' satirical tale about a washed-up writer managing a Waikiki hotel.

'Ōlelo Noe'au (1997) *Kupuna* (elder) Mary Kawena Pukui's bilingual collection of Hawaiian proverbs and sayings, illustrated by Dietrich Varez.

Staying Hawaiian

Evolving from ancient Polynesian traditions, Hawaiian culture was attacked and suppressed in the two centuries after first Western contact with Captain Cook in 1778. But beginning with the Hawaiian Renaissance in the 1970s, a rebirth of Native Hawaiian cultural and artistic traditions, as well as the Hawaiian language, has taken hold. For more than three decades, there have been Hawaiian-language immersion programs in public schools, and Hawaiian-culture-focused charter schools have been popping up all over the islands.

Today Hawaiian culture is about much more than just melodic place names and luau shows. Traditional arts like *lauhala* (pandanus leaf) weaving, *kapa* (pounded-bark cloth) making, and gourd and wood carving are all experiencing a revival. Healing arts like *lomilomi* (loving touch) massage and *la'au lapa'au* (plant medicine) are being shared with students – both within and beyond the Native Hawaiian community. Ancient *heiau* (temples) and fishponds are being restored, native forests replanted and endangered birds bred and released back into the wild.

Being Hawaiian remains an important part of the identity of the islands, reflected in ways both large and small – in spontaneous hula dancing at a concert, an *oli* (chant) sung before important occasions such as political inaugurations or development ground-breakings, the *lomilomi* treatments given at spas, or listening to the word of the day in '*ōlelo Hawai'i*' (the Hawaiian language) on local radio stations.

Although few island residents can agree on what shape the fragmented Hawaiian sovereignty movement should take (or even if it should exist at all), its grass-roots political activism has achieved some tangible results. Decades of protests and a federal lawsuit filed by sovereignty activists finally pressured the US military