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ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP

Randy Son Of Robert

Hawaiian Heiau and History

Hilo, Big Island (Hawaii), 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: A half day of history and discovery that includes directions and visits to several significant historical sites along with an afternoon of lunch, snorkeling, swimming and more.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Big Island (Hawaii), Hilo

DAY NOTE: To beat the heat, start as early as you can and allow at least 5 hours to enjoy a leisurely pace. Wear sturdy shoes for the trails and be sure to take along lots of sunscreen, water, snorkeling equipment and beach gear to cool off in the ocean after a morning of historical sightseeing. From the Kona International Airport at Keahole, expect the drive to the Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site to take about an hour. The park opens at 7:30am and parking is readily available. This site is the site of the largest war temple in the islands. It is one of the most significant sites in all the islands. Kamehameha I launched his efforts to unify the Hawaiian islands. There are trails and lots of ocean views.

The drive from Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site to Ahuena Heiau takes about and hour. Exit the parking lot and turn right and continue south toward Kona past the airport. Turn right on Palani Road and right onto Kaahumanu Place. This heiau is located in the heart of Kona, at the King Kamehameha Kona Beach hotel. It is the best example of Hawaiian sacrificial temple in existence today. The area is used daily for luau and other tourist activities. A short stop to view the area and photo opportunities is really all that is necessary.

Next stop is lunch at Huggo's on the Rocks. An award winning oceanfront restaurant that is both casual and family friendly. To get to Huggo's turn right onto Alii Drive and continue south through Kona . You'll find the restaurant on the right about a mile down the road. Along Alii Drive be sure to take notice of Huliee Palace on the right hand side. This was a summer retreat for Hawaiian royalty. Owned primarily by Princess Ruth 'Luka 'Ke'elikolani and then passed to Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, and later bought by King David Kalakaua and Queen Kapi'olani.

Huggo's on the Rocks is a lively place where the fresh fish rules and the margaritas flow freely. Prices are reasonable. Huggo's also has a fine dining area better for more upscale dining at sunset. From Huggo's, turn right and continue south on Alii drive. Turn right onto Hawaii belt Road and continue south. The drive to the last stop of the day will take about an hour. Turn right onto Puuhonua Rd and continue to the park entrance. This park closes at 8pm so take your time to enjoy the historical sites, trails, tide pools, beach and sunset if you choose to stay that long.

Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site
The Ruins of Pu'ukohola Heiau

Ahuena Heiau
Ancient worship spot

Hulihe'e Palace
One of three palaces

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Day 1 - Big Island (Hawaii), Hilo

QUICK NOTE

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contact:
tel: 808-882-7218
fax: 808-882-1215
http://www.nps.gov/PUHE/

location:
P.O. Box 44340
Kamuela HI 96743

1 Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site

DESCRIPTION: At this site on the Big Island, the Ruins of Pu'ukohola Heiau ('Temple on the Hill of the Whale') are preserved and protected. Facilities within the park include a visitor center with exhibits on the site's cultural and historical significance. The park also offers waysides along the interpretive trail. The park lies on the northwestern shore of the island of Hawaii in the district of South Kohala. The access road to the visitor center is located on 62-3601 Kawaihae Road, off Route 270, .25 mile north of Highway 19 intersection.

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location:
Behind the King Kamehameha Hotel
Big Island of Hawaii HI 96740

hours:
M-Su Dawn-dusk

2 Ahuena Heiau

DESCRIPTION: This ancient heiau is nearly indistinguishable from the other grass huts that were erected nearby for the King Kamehameha Hotel luau grounds. Exuding an aura of mystique and timelessness, it consists of a stone wall, some other stones and a few modest grass buildings. Although no one can enter this Hawaiian holy place, it is possible to go right up to the gates that protect it. Another good viewpoint is from across the Kailua Pier. © wcities.com

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contact:
tel: +1 808 329 1877
fax: +1 808 329 1321
http://www.huliheepalace.org/

location:
75-5718 Ali'i Drive
Hilo HI 96740

hours:
9:30a-3:30p M-F, 10a-3:30p Sa

3 Hulihe'e Palace

DESCRIPTION: This is one of three palaces in the Hawaiian Islands. It is located in the heart of downtown Kailua-Kona, across from the state's oldest church. From the time of its construction in 1838 up until 1925, the structure was passed down among members of the Hawaiian royal family. It was primarily used as a vacation home, but was converted to a museum after the Territory of Hawaii purchased it in 1925. The palace is currently maintained by the Sisters of Hawaii. © wcities.com

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Big Island (Hawaii) Snapshot

Local Info

The island of Hawaii is a collection of contrasts and extremes accented with the aloha spirit. This island is not only the furthest south in the Hawaiian Island chain, it happens to be the newest of the main islands and the location of the southernmost point in the United States. In contrast it is also the location of the highest mountain in the world that offers stunning sunset views. Mauna Kea rises 33,000 feet when measured from the sub-oceanic base and is also home of the highest freshwater lake in the United States. Lake Waiau sits just over the 13,000 ft level near the summit of Mauna Kea and served as an important site for the newborn of Hawaiian royalty. The mountain has been proven by anthropologists to have provided a source of obsidian to make stone tools during the traditional Hawaiian times. Mauna Kea is also where the clearest air is found on the planet, hence many of the world's largest telescopes are located on the summit.

The Big Island is also a contrast of fire and ice. Snow covers the peaks of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa during winter months while the volcanic eruption at Kilauea Volcano has been continuously active for over 15 years and is still creating new land in the Kalapana area below Volcano National Park. Visitors are free to experience the winter snow, which usually follows a substantial rain fall, by driving up the mountain in a four wheel drive vehicle.

North and South Kona

Most visitors to the Big Island first arrive at the Kona International Airport at Keahole. Located in the North Kona, the architecture of the airport is definitively Polynesian. Ticket counters and gate areas are a collection of small buildings resembling groupings of village huts. The open-air setting is unique and provides easy one level access to everything from check-in kiosks to baggage claim and ground transportation.

Turn south from the airport and you will be well in the area that encompasses North and South Kona. This area includes the majority of the original town and tourist district of Kailua-Kona along with the largest business, industrial and commercial area on the Leeward side of the Big Island. Here you will find doctors, big box stores, restaurants, cultural sites, and many shops and boutiques. Some of the must-sees are Laaloa Beach Park, Ahu'ena Heiau and Hulihe'e Palace which are both along the waterfront. Also along the waterfront is the main thoroughfare called Alii Drive. It is the place to browse shops, dance the night away, watch the green flash over a local larger or have a romantic sunset dinner for two.

North and South Kohala

Named after the oldest of the five mountains on the island, the landscape of the Kohala Coast is sunny, hot and dry with beautiful sunset and endless ocean views, numerous lava fields and only a few white sand beaches. There are fabulous views of not only Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, the Kohala Mountains and Hualalai, but on a clear day views of the eastern slope of Haleakala can be seen in the distance. Some of the best and more opulent resorts in the state are located along this coast. The Hilton Waikoloa village is probably the most fantastic followed by the very opulent Mauna Lani, the Fairmont Orchid and the Mauna Kea Beach and Hapuna resorts farther north.

Also noteworthy in the area is Spencer Beach Park and Hapuna Beach Park. These two beach parks are one of the best in the state not to mention the island. If there is one thing that brings people from around the world to the Kohala Coast, it is the golf. Most area courses rank among the top 100 in the United States. Hapuna Golf Course, Francis Brown I& II and the Waikoloa Village Golf Courses are all world-renowned. To the south of Hapuna Beach Park down a dusty, bumpy, yet two wheel drive road is Sixty-Nine Beach. Off the beaten map lies the secluded beach that is much smaller than Hapuna, yet big enough to get some privacy on white sand and enjoy swimming in clear water dotted with colorful tropical fish.

North Kohala feels like a world of its own, dotted with older plantation homes along the coast, and a small historic town with galleries, eateries, and a sense of culture. North Kohala makes for a perfect day trip of shopping in the quaint down, and most importantly, a visit to Pololu Valley, the birthplace of the notorious King Kamehameha, with a steep hike and a beautiful black sand beach.

One of the more unique areas in South Kohala is Waimea. Located at the 2500 foot elevation, Waimea town is cool and green. Breezy sunny days that can have the hint of a chill, and cool nights, Waimea is a combination of local cowboys known as paniolos, scientists and upscale island homes and not just another sleepy Hawaii plantation town. Waimea, or Kamuela as it is sometimes referred to, is a ranching town. It sits adjacent to one of the largest working cattle ranches in the country, Parker Ranch, and is steeped in tradition, culture and history. Waimea is also the location of the administrative support for the Keck and Canada France Telescopes that sit on the summit of Mauna Kea in full view from the heart of town on a clear day.

Hamakua

From the sleepy town of Honokaa to the tiny town of Paauilo, the Hamakua coast is known for beautiful ocean vistas, waterfalls, valleys and lush tropical landscapes. Life is slow, unhurried, and is lived by a combination of the young and old settled in for a lifestyle of peace and tranquility. It is a place where relationships mean more than time and the beep of a car horn is more of a greeting than a reproach. Just a few miles north from the center of Honokaa Town is Waipio Valley. Exploring the valley to view the streams, taro patches, waterfalls, and black sand beach is an island highlight. Valley tours are available to see the valley, as well as a stop at the lookout up top, a strenuous and very steep walk down and up, or a four wheel drive cruise into the valley only to be piloted by skilled drivers. Also a part of Hamakua is the Mauna Kea State Recreation Area. Accessible via Saddle Road from either Kona or Hilo, a visit to the summit would necessitate a four wheel drive and a call to the check on the area weather conditions. The Saddle Road is a site in its own, with views of both Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, various cinder cones, open land and pastures, and state park for cabin stays and picnics, and a general feeling of being in another world.

A drive along the Hamakua coast will take you through eucalyptus forests, pasture lands over bridges and through valleys. It is a relaxing experience and one of the more special parts of the island.

North and South Hilo

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Located just south of Hamakua along the windward side of the island the Hilo area encompasses the area from Ookala to the quiet waterfront town of Hilo. The area is much like the Hamakua Coast to the casual untrained eye, a closer look will reveal some of the most beautiful waterfalls, picturesque parks and charming towns in the state. There are no championship golf courses, wide white sand beaches or mega resorts here, but there is a unique charm just under the thick canopy of tropical vegetation and giant hapuu fern trees. A stop in Laupahoehoe can take just a few minutes, but in those minutes one can visit the historical train museum or visit the lovely seaside park complete with tide pools and beautiful rocky coast line. A short stop in Ninole town cannot be complete without a photo opportunity at the post office. Delightful and charming, it is the smallest in the state and certainly one of the smallest in the country.

Not to be missed is a stop at the Akaka Falls State Park. The paved trails wander through thick vegetation under a tropical canopy. The park is actually home of two of the longest waterfalls in the state. Akaka Falls is the longest more well-known and neighboring Kahuna Falls is almost as long.

Hilo is the largest community on the island and has a long and interesting history that has been shaped my natural events. Hilo has been threatened by lava flows, wiped out by tsunami, hurricanes and earthquakes. Today, it is home to a wonderful farmer's market that takes place on Wednesdays and Saturdays, several museums, botanical gardens, a wonderful astronomy center, and the largest and most renowned hula competition in the world, the Merrie Monarch. Hilo is scattered with delicious eateries, local style boutiques and shops, a mall, several health food stores, and several big box stores.

Downtown Hilo is a wonderful spot to browse through the small shops, have lunch after a morning at the volcano and pick up some fresh orchids or anthuriums. Bayfront, the area of downtown Hilo located along, you guessed it, the bay, is a place where sightseers can start at either Banyan Drive or the new Tsunami Museum to explore an area of town that boasts some of the most hip places to dine and shop. There's also the East Hawaii Cultural Center and Lyman Museum. For information on these attractions and on the outlying areas, visit the Hawaii Visitor's Bureau.

Puna

The Big Islands district of Puna as been known in the past as the"Wild West," even though it is on the east side of the island. With the small former plantation towns of Keaau and Pahoa that are nearer to the ocean than the small towns of Mountain View and Volcano on the slopes of Kilauea, Puna offers everything from chilly nights, forests of ferns and ohia lehua trees to the inexpensive acre lots with ocean views and the sounds coqui frogs at night. Puna has evolved through a history combining plantation life, strong native Hawaiian culture, a strong hippie culture in Pahoa, and the reputation through decades as one of the largest marijuana cultivating locations.

Shipman Beach, a white sand bay where sea turtles and monk seals come to rest is located as the base of the neighborhood paradise park, and is a must see. Lower Puna, the area below Pahoa, offers various hot ponds, steam vents, tide pools, and fresh and hard lava. Puna can look a little rough at first site but a deeper look will discover hidden treasures that cannot be found anywhere else in Hawaii.

Kau

To mention Kau, is to refer to Hawaii's last frontier. Kau is certainly the most rural area on the entire island with miles and miles of wide open land with just a single road bisecting it from South Kona to the entrance of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. This area is home to small country communities, natural beauty and historical significance that has yet to documented. A drive from Kona to the volcano will treat you with glimpses of wild untouched coastline, low-land forests, off the map black sand beaches, cold water ponds, and green sand beaches. Once at the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park a visit to the Kilauea Visitor Center, Volcano Art Center and Jaggar Museum along with a short hike through the Thurston Lava Tube are not to be missed. A visit to the semi-famous Punalu'u Bakeshop and Visitor Center for lunch and the Punaluu Black Sand Beach is also must-do.

To experience the Big Island is to experience Madame Pele's fiery fury at Kilauea, to venture up to snow capped summit home of the Hawaiian Goddess Poliahu at Mauna Kea, to warm up on the sunny leeward shores, to drive through miles and miles of open countryside, hike to gorgeous waterfalls, sit in natural steamy saunas, visit green and black sand beaches, and take in a variety of cultures. The Big Island is a place where direction to the intriguing and exotic sites helps and visitor, and travelers can get lost in the beauty and culture and Hawaii's largest island.

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Fun Facts

Hawai'i(Big Island)

State: Hawaii

Country: United States

Hawai'i(Big Island) by the Numbers:

Population: 148,677

Elevation: 18 feet

Highest Point: 13,796 feet(Mauna Kea)

Average Annual Rainfall: Ranges from 10 inches at Kawaihae to 128 inches at Hilo Airport

Average January Temperature: 73 degrees F

Average July Temperature: 76 degrees F

Quick Facts:

Major Industries: tourism/hospitality/ recreation, sugar, coffee, cattle

Landmarks: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Kealakekua Bay, Kailua-Kona, Kawaihae, Parker Ranch, Waipio Valley

Ethnic Mix: 30.2% Hawaiian, 23.2% Caucasian, 14.1% Japanese, 10.5% Filipino

Electricity: 110 volts, 60Hz, standard two pin plugs

Time Zone: GMT-10

Country Dialing Code: 1

Area Code: 808

Did You Know?

Hawaii's Big Island is the youngest in geologic age, as well as the largest of the Hawaiian Islands and continues to increase

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in size because of Kilauea, the world's most active volcano that is highly active due to its location of the Pacific hot spot.

Orientation:

Hawaii's Big Island is located amongst the Hawaiian Islands in the central Pacific Ocean.

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