



Maui



The last couple of months, I have written about visiting Oahu and Hawaii with Brendan Vacations on an escorted tour, and the next island on our trip to the Hawaiian Islands was Maui.

Each island made wonderful memories that may very well have been our favorite place. Maui was the place where we learned the importance of organic farming in Hawaii. Many of the people we visited mentioned the "farm to table" concept that encourages getting healthy, organic food from farms to restaurants in Hawaii, so there are many farms on the islands.

Resources:

<http://www.iomaui.com/>
<http://www.503frontstreet.com/>
<http://www.hilohattie.com/>



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by Jan Ross, Staff Writer

We flew into Maui on one of the inter-island flights, which are quick and wonderfully easy, boarded our bus and headed to a local organic farm called Kahanu Aina, tucked right in the middle of a suburban neighborhood. I am really interested in the whole urban organic farm concept so it was pretty interesting to visit this place. The idea of this little farm in the middle of a neighborhood, growing delicious and healthy food was just incredible. After our visit to the tiny farm, we got to taste the food at the Io Restaurant, in the 505 Front Street Shops, located right on the beach. Seated by French doors which opened out onto a lovely beach and gorgeous water, we were served fresh salads with the sprouts we had just seen growing at Kahanu Aina, prime rib that melted in your mouth and buttery, delicious lobster. The strawberry sorbet for dessert tasted like they had just whipped it up, which they probably had done.

After our sumptuous lunch, we headed to the Royal Lahaina Beach Resort which amazed us with its fabulous location. Not only is this gorgeous resort set among 27 acres of palm trees and gorgeous flowers, it also has a prime beachfront location along an exclusive half-mile stretch of Kaanapali Beach. This was one of the most beautiful beaches I saw the entire time we were in Hawaii and, not only that, it was very family-friendly. Big trees grow right down to the beach, so there are plenty of shaded areas for families to keep babies and small children out of the sun and the shallow water and gentle waves are also perfect for kids.

The Royal Lahaina Beach Resort has 333 beautiful guestrooms and 17 suites in the 12-story Lahaina Kai Tower where we stayed, as well as cute garden and beachside cottages. I saw several families in these cottages, enjoying their beachfront location and even having some ice-cold watermelon on their patio!

The beautifully decorated rooms in the resort where we stayed have a contemporary look and feel, with lovely, dark teak wood furnishings. We were really pleased with our 32" HD Flat-Screen TV, high speed Internet access and mini-refrigerator. There are also one-bedroom suites available, with a living area, separate bedroom and the capability of converting into a two-bedroom family suite when connected with an ocean view guestroom — perfect for those families who need a little more space.

A lovely buffet breakfast was included with our Brendan vacation at every hotel and the Royal Ocean Terrace Restaurant at the Royal Lahaina Beach Resort had a wonderful spread every morning. Although we didn't take advantage of every possible place to eat at this resort, there are two restaurants, three bars and an ice cream parlor, which we intended to visit and, to our chagrin, ran out of time. There was also a great little sundry store that was right across from the main entrance where we purchased all kinds of snacks and drinks to stock our mini-fridge.

The beautiful resort has tons of beach activities such as snorkeling, and they also offer rentals of beach equipment as well as beach cabanas. There are also have three swimming pools, 11 tennis courts and two golf courses nearby, so you certainly won't get bored. The resort is located in the Kaanapali resort area with several other resorts, so it's a beautiful, park-like area with lots of walking and jogging paths. It's only a few miles away from Lahaina, and it's very easy to get to town.

One of our best days was when we hopped on the free shuttle, which runs daily and stops at many different places, one of which is right in front of the sundry shop by the entrance to the resort, and went into Lahaina. You can just ride the shuttle throughout the Kaanapali Resort area, right to the Whaler's Village shopping center, then catch a bus to town for only \$1 per person. If you want, you can stop at the Whaler's

Village and do a little shopping before you head into town. This three-level, open-air shopping center is packed with shops and restaurants and is a great place to hang out for a few hours. The city bus makes several stops in town, but get off in front of the post office, then cross the street to Hilo Hattie.

This large store is a great place to buy T-shirts, macadamia nuts and candy, as well as other souvenirs. But the really cool thing about Hilo Hattie is that they give you a free shell necklace when you walk in. After you have wandered around town, shopped and marveled at the lovely harbor and incredible, huge banyan tree in the middle of town, have lunch at the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company, where we were amazed to find that Corona actually comes in a can as well as a bottle. We also learned here that you have to flip a metal sign on your table to get service from your waiter, which took us a while to figure out. I realize this a chain restaurant but we had never eaten there and were pleasantly surprised by the delicious food. We sat right by the beautiful harbor in Lahaina and had crispy, fried shrimp and wished with all our hearts that Bubba Gump would build a restaurant in Kentucky.

If you stay at the Royal Lahaina Beach Resort, you must go to the fabulous luau they offer every night called the Myths of Maui. Everyone should experience an authentic Hawaiian Luau and this resort does it very well. Even though there was a large crowd of people, they had everything well organized and there was plenty of wonderful food for everyone. This unforgettable cultural celebration of the dances, music and traditions of the Hawaiian and Polynesian people is held in the oceanfront Luau Gardens.

There are many other activities available in Maui so it was hard to leave after just a few days. On the plus side, we know we will have plenty of things to do when we return!

About the Author:

Jan Ross is a freelance writer specializing in social media.

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