

OREGON COAST JOURNEY · FREE GUIDE

The Hawaii Cruise Guide

Four islands, one trip — volcanoes, waterfalls
& beaches, planned the smart way.

*How Hawaii cruises work, when to sail, what makes each island
special, and how to see the most without unpacking twice — from an
advisor who plans these every week.*

YOURS FREE

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Hawaii, without unpacking twice

A Hawaii cruise is the rare trip that lets you wake up at a new island each morning — volcanoes on one, waterfalls on the next, snorkeling coves after that — while your hotel sails with you and you unpack exactly once. It's the easiest way to sample the islands and decide which one you'll come back to.

This guide covers how these cruises work (there's a wrinkle worth knowing), when to sail, and how to make the most of each island. And planning it with me is **free** — I'm paid by the cruise line, never by you, and your fare is the same as booking direct (often better, with perks).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Skim the contents, land on what matters, and keep it handy while you plan. When you're ready, the button on the last page opens live Hawaii fares — or just reply to any of my emails and I'll do the work for you.

What's inside

- 01 **How Hawaii cruises work** — the two kinds, and when to go
- 02 **Which cabin** — longer sailings change the math
- 03 **The islands** — Oahu, Maui, Kauai & the Big Island
- 04 **Don't-miss experiences** & how to book them
- 05 **What to pack** for island days
- 06 **Make it easy** — simple tips for a smooth trip
- 07 **Ready to sail** — book direct & get in touch

SECTION 01

How Hawaii cruises work

There are two very different ways to cruise Hawaii — and one detail that surprises people.

1. Round-trip inter-island (from Honolulu)

These sail entirely within Hawaii, visiting four islands in about a week with almost no sea days — you're in port nearly every day. It's the most island time for your week, and it runs **year-round**. The trade-off: you'll fly to Honolulu to start.

2. Round-trip or repositioning from the mainland

Longer sailings (often from a West Coast port) that include several **sea days** each way plus island stops. More relaxing days at sea, no flight to Hawaii required, but fewer days actually in the islands.

THE WRINKLE WORTH KNOWING

Some Hawaii itineraries include a brief stop in a foreign port (often Ensenada, Mexico) to satisfy U.S. maritime rules. It's normal — just don't be surprised to see it on the map. I'll explain what any given sailing includes.

When to go

APR – MAY, SEP – OCT

Best value

Shoulder seasons: great weather, thinner crowds, better fares. My favorite windows.

DEC – MAR

Peak & whales

Warm escape and humpback season (especially Maui). Most popular and priciest — book early.

SECTION 02

Which cabin

Hawaii sailings run longer — so comfort matters a little more here.

On inter-island cruises

You're off the ship exploring nearly every day, so you don't live in the cabin. An **interior or oceanview** is plenty for most, freeing budget for excursions on four islands. Choose a balcony if you love a quiet sunrise with coffee before a big island day — on a port-heavy week it's a nice-to-have, not essential.

On longer mainland sailings

With several sea days each way, you'll actually *use* the cabin more. Here a **balcony earns its keep** — sunsets at sea, fresh air, and a private spot to relax on those slower days. If the budget allows on a long sailing, it's worth it.

Quick rule

Port-packed inter-island week → save on the cabin, spend on the islands. **Longer sailing with sea days** → a balcony is worth considering. Not sure which itinerary fits you? That's exactly what I help with.

SEASICKNESS NOTE

The open Pacific crossing on mainland sailings can have some motion. Pick a mid-ship, middle-deck cabin and pack relief just in case. Inter-island hops are short and generally smooth.

SECTION 03

The islands

Each has its own personality — here's how to spend your day on each.

THE GATHERING PLACE

Oahu (Honolulu)

Waikiki, Pearl Harbor, Diamond Head, and the North Shore. History, city energy, and famous surf all in one island.

THE VALLEY ISLE

Maui

The Road to Hana, Haleakala's summit, snorkeling at Molokini, and prime winter whale-watching. Many say their favorite.

THE GARDEN ISLE

Kauai

The dramatic Na Pali Coast, Waimea Canyon ("the Grand Canyon of the Pacific"), waterfalls and lush green everywhere.

THE BIG ISLAND

Hawaii (Hilo/Kona)

Active volcanoes at Volcanoes National Park, black-sand beaches, coffee farms, and otherworldly lava landscapes.

PLAN THE MARQUEE ISLAND

Most itineraries give you a full day (sometimes overnight) on Maui or the Big Island — the ones with the biggest bucket-list sights. Book those excursions first; they sell out.

Don't-miss experiences

The ones people come home talking about — and how to book them smartly.

- **Volcanoes National Park (Big Island)** — steam vents, craters, lava fields; nature at its most dramatic.
- **Road to Hana (Maui)** — a legendary drive of waterfalls, rainforest and coastline; go guided so you just enjoy it.
- **Snorkel Molokini (Maui)** — a sunken volcanic crater with crystal water and reef fish.
- **Na Pali Coast boat tour (Kauai)** — towering emerald cliffs you can only see from the water.
- **Pearl Harbor (Oahu)** — moving and historic; a meaningful half-day.
- **A luau** — food, music and hula; the classic Hawaiian evening.

My go-to for booking tours

Independent operators are frequently the same tours for less than the cruise line charges. I curate trusted, well-reviewed Hawaii excursions so you're not gambling on a random listing:

[Browse Recommended Hawaii Tours »](#)

Powered by Viator, a Tripadvisor company. Free cancellation on most tours up to 24 hours before.

SECTION 05

What to pack for island days

Sun, sea and the occasional summit — a few right items cover it all.

You'll be in and out of the water and up mountains in the same week. Pack light, but pack smart. (The links below are things I recommend; as an Amazon Associate I may earn a small commission at no cost to you.)

Island essentials

- [Reef-safe sunscreen](#) — required by Hawaii law, and the sun is strong. Bring plenty.
- [Your own snorkel gear](#) (optional) — more comfortable and hygienic than rentals if you'll snorkel a lot.
- [Water shoes](#) — for rocky and lava beaches and reef entries.
- [A waterproof phone pouch](#) — for boat tours, beaches and waterfalls.
- [A light rain jacket](#) — Hilo and Kauai are lush for a reason; quick showers are common.
- [A warm layer](#) — summits like Haleakala are genuinely cold at altitude.
- [A refillable water bottle](#) — long, active island days go through water fast.

TWO QUICK RULES

Pack a **day bag** for each island (sunscreen, water, swimsuit, cash) and comfortable walking shoes. One nicer outfit covers dinners and a luau.

SECTION 06

Make it easy

A few habits keep a four-island week smooth and stress-free.

- **Book big excursions early** — the marquee tours (Road to Hana, Na Pali, volcanoes) sell out first.
- **Know each all-aboard time** — you're in a new port daily; the ship won't wait. Pad independent tours generously.
- **Fly in a day early** if your cruise starts in Honolulu — never risk missing embarkation to a delayed flight.
- **Rent a car only where it helps** — great for self-touring some islands, unnecessary on others. Ask me which.
- **Respect the aina (land)** — stay on trails, keep your distance from wildlife (turtles, monk seals), and tread lightly.
- **Get travel insurance** — inexpensive peace of mind, especially on longer sailings.

THE EASY BUTTON

Tell me your must-see islands and I'll match you to the right itinerary, pre-plan excursions in the best order, and handle the details — so all you do is show up and enjoy it.

SECTION 07

Ready to sail to Hawaii?

Two easy ways to take the next step — both free, both no-pressure.

You've got the playbook. Here's how to turn it into a trip:

OPTION 1 · SEE LIVE HAWAII FARES NOW

Book Direct & Browse Hawaii Cruises

Search real, current sailings and prices for Hawaii — the same booking engine I use, with my advisor support behind every booking.

Browse & Book Your Hawaii Cruise »

Option 2 · Let me do it for you

Tell me your rough dates, who's coming, and your must-see islands — I'll find the best sailing at the best price, perks included, and hand you a simple plan. No fee, no obligation.

Get Your Free Hawaii Plan »

Or reply to any email from me — I read every one myself.

Refer a friend — you both win. Know someone dreaming of the islands? When they book a cruise through me, **you both** get a thank-you. Just have them mention your name.

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