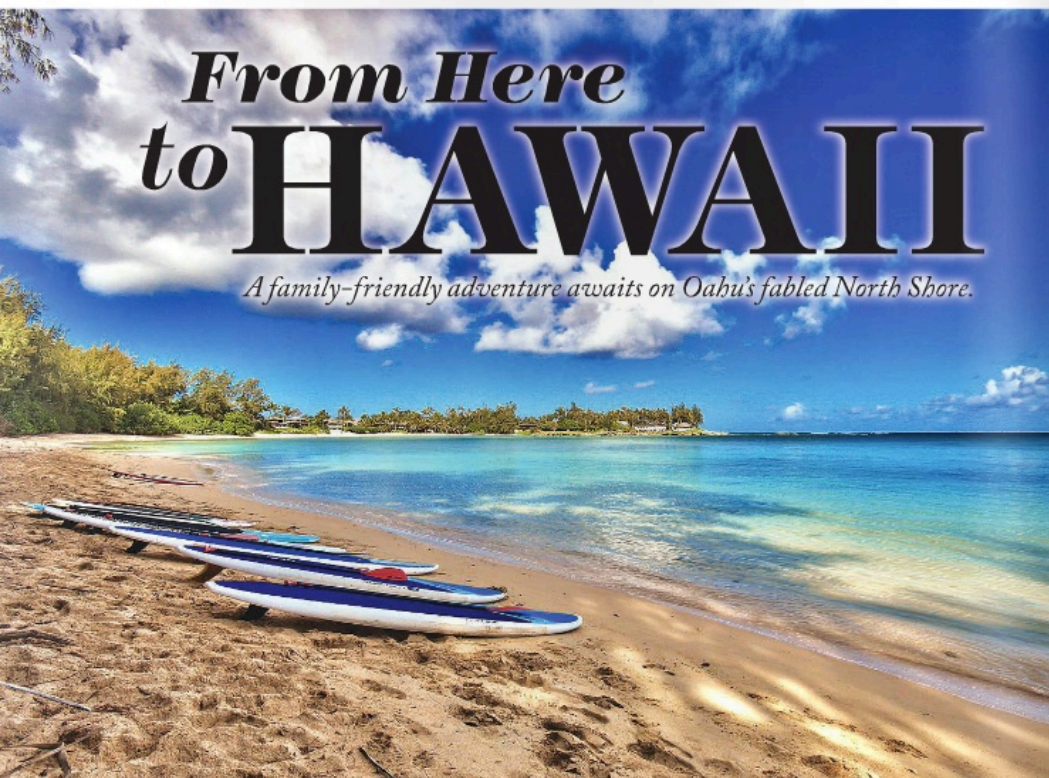


# From Here to HAWAII

*A family-friendly adventure awaits on Oahu's fabled North Shore.*



When I passed by baggage claim at the Honolulu Airport, I had this feeling that I'd forgotten something. This trip, I was traveling lighter than usual—98 pounds lighter to be exact (the combined weight of my two young children).

When the chance to take a solo trip to the North Shore of Oahu presented itself, no one had to twist my arm. Known for its near-perfect waves and balmy temps, as any over-worked mother would agree, an injection of Hawaiian air, outdoor adventure, and a fresh perspective is always welcome.

Two sundresses, flip-flops, a swimsuit, and a bright green rash guard fit neatly into my carryon bag. I was traveling light for the first time since having children and it felt liberating. I was already in a sublime state of mind when Seth Casey, a representative from the Polynesian Cultural Center

(PCC), welcomed me with an "Aloha" and a colorful lei.

We drove *Mauka*, which means towards the mountains, leaving Honolulu and the beach-loving crowds of Waikiki behind as we headed for the North Shore, roughly 22 miles north of Honolulu.

The area immediately struck me as paradise. Quite possibly, it's as close to heaven as it gets. But, before you wax your surfboard or plunge into the crystal waters to swim with the sea turtles, a day at the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) will help you appreciate more than just the beauty of your surroundings. Home to 42 acres of villages, lagoons, waterways, attractions, and live shows, it offers an in-depth look at the rich history of the area.

Seth pointed out the PCC as we headed to Turtle Bay Resort. Located in the town

of Kahuku, the resort is but a short drive to the PCC, where I'd be heading during my trip to learn more about island culture.

When you arrive at Turtle Bay, the glory and splendor of the North Shore is on full display. The resort completed a \$50 million head-to-toe renovation in 2015 with the opening of 42 upscale beach cottages offering oceanfront views from private lanais, island-chic décor, spa-like bathrooms with luxury soaking tubs, and an exclusive in-cottage spa menu. Complete with all the amenities, spa services, and dining options that you'd expect, for additional wow, Hawaii culinary pioneer Chef Roy Yamaguchi is introducing Roy's Beach House as the resort's new destination restaurant on the sand overlooking Kuilima Cove this summer.

I was intrigued with all the activities Turtle Bay Resort had to offer—ocean



kayaking, snorkeling, horseback riding along the shoreline, guided Segway tours, and SUP (stand up paddle boarding). Tempting all, but nothing is quite as epic as a 40-year-old mom of two surfing the storied North Shore. So, a private surf lesson at Hans Hedemann Surf School was in order.

I surfed! The proof is on my Instagram. There, standing up on a surf board, riding a fabled North Shore wave for the first time, I knew I'd have to come back to this paradise with my family in tow. My kids would love to take a surfing lesson and hang with Turtle Bay Resort's resident surf pup, Hina. "When I bring my dog Hina to the resort, kids see a dog surfing and then they are not afraid. They want to try surfing with Hina and forget all about their fears," says Rocky Canon, pro surfer and lead guide at Turtle Bay Resort.

With all this talk about kids, I began missing mine. I had learned on my visit to the PCC that *Obana* means family in Hawaiian. Family is considered a crucial component for survival throughout Hawaiian history. The PCC's in-depth look at Polynesian culture is brought to life with seven island nations—Samoa, Aotearoa, Fiji, Hawaii, Marquesas, Tahiti, and Tonga. Featuring realistic villages and exhibits highlighting the unique cultural mores of each, visitors are treated to a feast for the senses.

All paths lead to the Alii Luau at sundown. The sound of the conch shell horn lures visitors to their table to indulge in Hawaii's famous feast of bright purple taro rolls, poi, and the kalua pig, as the men of Polynesia unearth the perfectly seasoned and cooked pig from the *imu* or underground oven. One can't help but sway side to side to the powerful beat of the *pahu*, the drum, as dancers pay tribute to the Royal Court by dancing the ancient form of Hawaii's famous dance, the hula kahiko. People of all ages enjoy story-telling and at the PCC, a cast of over a hundred take to the stage to tell the story of life in the spectacular evening show, *Ha: Breath of Life*.

Looking around, I saw children's eyes fixated on the colors, flames, and drums, and I knew I'd be back to share this priceless experience with my own family.

## STAY

- THE TURTLE BAY RESORT  
[turtlebayresort.com](http://turtlebayresort.com)  
(808) 293-6000  
57-091 Kamehameha Hwy., Kahuku, HI

## VISIT

- THE POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER  
[polynesia.com](http://polynesia.com)  
(800) 367-7060  
55-370 Kamehameha Hwy., Laie, HI

## EAT

- POUNDERS GRILL  
[hukilaumarketplace.com](http://hukilaumarketplace.com)  
(800)-367-7060  
55-370 Kamehameha Hwy., Laie, HI
- THE FIJI MARKET & CURRY KITCHEN  
(808) 293-7120  
56-565 Kamehameha Hwy., Kahuku, HI

## SHOP

- HUKILAU MARKETPLACE  
[hukilaumarketplace.com](http://hukilaumarketplace.com)  
(800)-367-7060  
55-370 Kamehameha Hwy., Laie, HI
- FULL FATHOM FIVE  
[fullfathomfivehawaii.com](http://fullfathomfivehawaii.com)  
(808) 788-6680  
56-931 Kamehameha Hwy., Kahuku, HI