

# Condé Nast Traveler

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APRIL 2022

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# WHY WE TRAVEL > ON THE GROUND

## HERE'S TO HONOLULU

With a refined new food scene and cultural spaces embracing the city's heritage, Hawaii's capital has way more to offer than just Waikiki. Though that's pretty great too

Yes, it's got the famous surf breaks, swinging beach parties, and the Le'ahi, or Diamond Head State Monument, the picturesque volcanic cone that rises just south of Waikiki. But Hawaii's capital has always been about more than its postcard image. Sitting at the crossroads of the Pacific, it has midcentury-Americana touches that adjoin Buddhist temples from the early 1900s and a polyglot food scene influenced by Filipino, Japanese, and Korean cuisine.

For decades, however, key voices have been missing from the city's narrative: those of Native Hawaiians. That's changing, with new spaces and initiatives that embrace Indigenous culture and lend a platform to the islands' artists. The Hawai'i Triennial 2022, on exhibit through May 8, brings this trend to the forefront, inviting local leaders and international artists to explore concepts of in-betweenness throughout Honolulu.

The conversation continues at restaurants in revitalized neighborhoods like the artsy Chinatown and modern Kaka'ako, refreshed hotels in Waikiki (still the best place to stay in the city), and new experiences that promise to connect travelers with the traditions of Oahu's original Polynesian inhabitants. Everything you thought you knew about Honolulu is here—but there's a whole lot more to discover. MARTHA CHENG

Waikiki Beach, which became a major resort destination in the mid-1900s, with views of Le'ahi

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT HARDING/ALAMY



## Why Waikiki Is Still the Place to Be

On one of Hawaii's most famous beaches, new resorts and reborn classics keep the scene buzzing

**Halekulani** Dating back to 1907, this iconic hotel is one of the original resorts that made Waikiki synonymous with vacations in the American consciousness. A recent refresh has kept the classic feel, gussying up the rooms in subtle hues of white, to amplify the views of the ocean and Diamond Head from the private balconies. The best hangout is still by the central pool, nursing a Halekulani cocktail, a rare bourbon-based tiki drink said to have been invented here in the 1930s. *From \$635; halekulani.com*

**Halepuna Waikiki** Consider this the laid-back little sister to the Halekulani. The two hotels share warm, impeccable Hawaiian service and an appealingly simple approach to design. But this groovy newbie has a fabulous infinity pool and a garden with a reflexology path high on the eighth floor, providing stellar city and Pacific views. Its public art program showcases local work echoing Hawaii's landscape, with iron and gold opihi (limpets) right in the lobby. *From \$329; halepuna.com*

**Kaimana Beach Hotel** On the quiet end of Waikiki, where the locals congregate, this year-old boutique spot has playful midcentury vibes, most noticeably in the pops of turquoise and pink in the lobby. The best rooms have endless ocean views, but the biggest selling point is its beachside restaurant, where you can tuck into hamachi in the shade of a 100-year-old hau tree. Surf- and paddleboards are provided for guests inspired to catch a wave. *From \$249; kaimana.com*

## THE INSIDERS

Josh Kopp and Chrissie Pinney, the owners of trendy Hana Koa Brewing Co., on where they eat and drink around town

### > COCKTAIL SPOT

"Heyday is an awesome hideaway tropical bar at the newly renovated White Sands Hotel. It feels like you're walking into *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* with the '70s-style layout and circular bar with swings."

### > WINE SELLER

"Village Bottle Shop & Tasting Room has been something of a second home. Tim Golden and his team are always fun to hang out with, and the selection of draft beers and bottles is unbeatable."

### > PIZZA FIX

"Stewbum and Stonewall Brewing Co. in Chinatown serves up BBQ beef short-rib pizza and Reuben pizza along with their great selection of beers. It's a supercool spot to watch games."

### > BEER AND TACOS

"Broken Boundary Brewery came onto the scene during the pandemic. On top of stellar beers—the Kölsch is a must—it cranks out our favorite tacos on the island."