



Home to Hawaii's only major airport, Oahu is the perfect destination for shorter trips

Hop a flight to paradise and spend your days learning how to surf, paddleboard, snorkel, and more.

BY ALICE OGLETHORPE

THE BEAUTIFUL SANDY BEACHES OF OAHU will definitely tempt you to lie on a towel all day with a good book and a frozen margarita. But with 112 miles of coastline and forest-covered mountains, the Hawaiian island is just as suited to working up a sweat as it is to working your way through the latest bestseller. All you need to pack is an adventurous attitude and this weekend guide. What are you waiting for?

FRIDAY

You're going to feel like stretching your legs after the flight, so drop your bags off at your Honolulu hotel, then hop in a cab and head over to the **Diamond Head State Monument** (open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Pay \$1 at the trailhead (the fee increases to \$5 if you're parking a car there), and start climbing. Built in 1908 by the U.S. Army (you can still see the old concrete bunkers and lookouts), the



Stick to one—frozen drinks are high in sugar and calories!

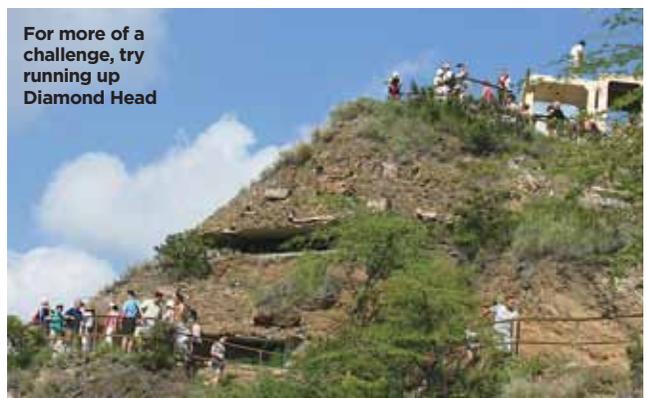
0.8-mile path is a zigzagging route that includes 74- and 99-step stairways, as well as a tunnel. The walk is short (a round trip takes about an hour), but because you climb 560 feet in elevation, some parts of it will get your heart rate up. At the summit, enjoy the breathtaking panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and downtown Honolulu. On your way back to town, swing by

the **Diamond Head Cove Health Bar** (3045 Monsarrat Ave.), a favorite of locals. All of their food is made from scratch when you order it, and the owner catches much of the fish served himself. Try a Da Cove bowl—a blend of frozen açai berries, bananas,

strawberries, blueberries, granola, and honey—for a light but filling snack.

Complete your transition into island life by outfitting yourself at **T&C Surf Designs** in the International Market Place (2330 Kalakaua Ave.). There you'll find swimsuits, board shorts, rashguards, and other beach and surf necessities. Established in 1971, this store is packed with well-known clothing brands, like Billabong and Hurley, in addition to unique made-in-Hawaii gear.

Change into your suit and head to **Waikiki Beach Services**, located in the Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach hotel, for a stand-up paddleboarding lesson (\$50 for a one-hour beginner session; 2335 Kalakaua Ave.). The sport involves balancing on a board while pushing yourself with a paddle, and it's fairly easy for beginners



For more of a challenge, try running up Diamond Head

Stroll on the sand to see thousands of shells



to pick up. Plus, it may be the most fun you'll ever have sculpting your abs!

You've had a pretty active day, so spend the evening unwinding at the elegant **House Without a Key** in the Halekulani hotel (2199 Kalia Road), which features traditional Hawaiian musicians and hula dancers on a large outside patio until 8:30 p.m. Sip one of their signature cocktails, like the mai tai, and nibble on a few small plates, like chicken tikka kebabs or lobster salad rolls. With the smell of flowers in the air and the sound of waves

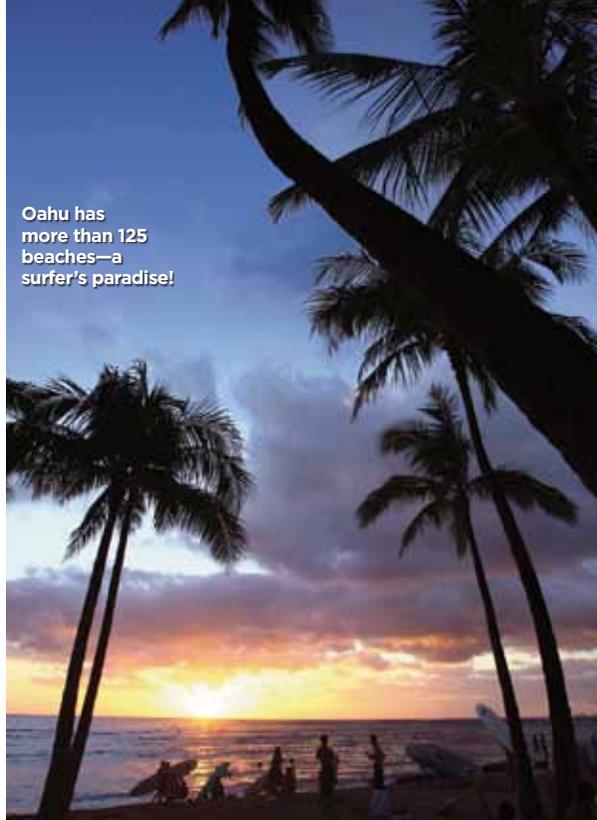
crashing nearby, it will be the perfect ending to your first day in paradise.

SATURDAY

Jet lag will be on your side, so wake up early and head over to the **KCC Farmers Market** (open Saturdays only from 7:30 to 11 a.m.; 4303 Diamond Head Road) for breakfast. Sure, there are the standard fruits and veggies on offer, but the 50 to 60 vendors at this market also sell lots of healthy prepared food. First, stop at the Koko Crater Coffee Roasters and get an iced coffee made from Hawaiian-grown beans. Then wind your way up and down the aisles, stopping to pick up some reduced-sugar pineapple oatcakes or a fruit smoothie. Don't forget to grab a few jars of local honey or bags of Hawaiian sea salt (perfect for cooking) to take home for your foodie friends—and yourself!

If you'd rather kick off the day on a more active note, grab a banana or granola bar and walk to

Oahu has more than 125 beaches—a surfer's paradise!



the **Chocolate-Pineapple Sports-Yoga Studio** to take the sunrise class, Waikiki Beach Yoga (\$20; 2255 Kuhio Ave., Suite 205). The 90-minute, beginner-friendly session starts at 6:30 a.m. and takes place on the sand as well as in the shallow water.

You can't visit Oahu without at least attempting to surf. (The island's North Shore hosts the annual Vans Triple Crown of Surfing competition.) Sign up for the 9:30 a.m.

lesson with the **Hawaiian Fire Surf School** (\$109; 3318 Campbell Ave.) and ride the waves with off-duty firemen (their lifesaving training makes them the perfect teachers for safety-conscious beginners!). Each lesson includes 45 minutes on the sand, where you get comfortable

with the techniques you'll use in the water, and 75 minutes in the ocean, where you put into practice what you've learned. There's a good chance you'll stand up and ride a wave, but the only guarantee is that you'll have a blast.

You haven't seen much of Honolulu yet, so take some time this afternoon to walk or jog southeast on Kalakaua Avenue, heading toward **Kapi'olani Park**. This route goes through Oahu's shopping district (home to high-end stores like Gucci) and Waikiki Beach, one of Hawaii's most legendary surfing spots. At Monsarrat Avenue (the road ends at the park), tear your eyes away from the action on the water and keep heading straight. Make a left at the end of the park and another quick left onto the treelined Paki Avenue. Finish the four-mile loop by turning left onto Kapahulu Avenue and

Paddle-boarding works your core, arms, and legs



Hawaiian Fire Surf School lessons are on a secluded beach, making learning less intimidating





Oahu's clear waters are perfect for snorkeling

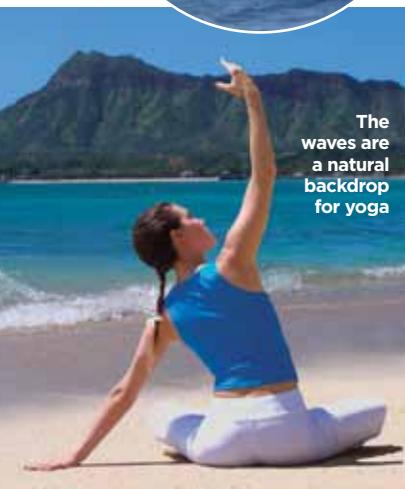
right back onto Kalakaua Avenue.

Your weary muscles will be crying out for some R&R, so treat them to a traditional Hawaiian lomilomi massage at the **SpaHalekulani** (\$180 for 55 minutes; 2199 Kalia Road). The spa's natural design features bamboo, pebbles, and tropical grasses, as well as an outdoor room where you can relax with a cup of tea and some nibbles.

You've earned a delicious dinner, so stop



Spinner dolphins are known for their playful nature



The waves are a natural backdrop for yoga

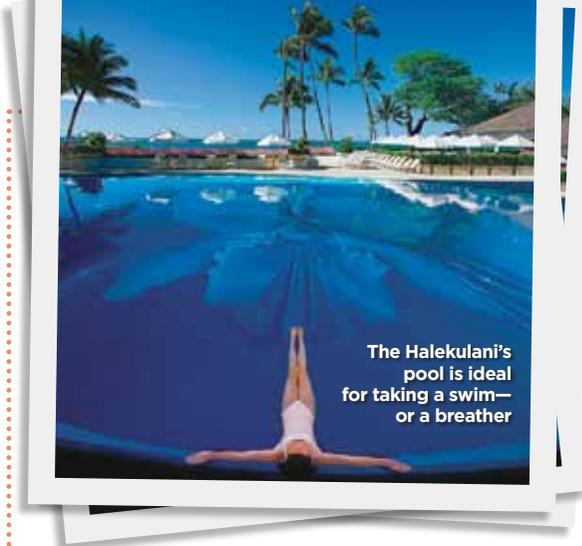
by the bare-bones **Side Street Inn** (1225 Hopaka St.). Frequented by the island's top chefs on their days off, the restaurant serves up local comfort food on plain tables and has TVs showing sports games. Go with a gang of friends to enjoy family-style dishes like blackened ahi tuna and steamed clams.

If you have any energy left after finishing your meal, head to **Bar 35** (35 N. Hotel St.), a lounge in Chinatown that has an outdoor patio and serves more than 100 types of beer. Just don't stay out too late—you have another busy day tomorrow!

SUNDAY

Ask for a late check-out (many hotels will let you stay until 5 or 6 p.m. for a fee) and spend your last day seeing the underwater scenery. Reserve a spot on the 8 a.m. wildlife cruise with **Wild Side Specialty Tours** (\$115 per person; 85-371 Farrington Highway). On your way there, fuel up with an egg-white vegetarian omelet or whole-wheat pancakes at the **Ka'aha'aina Cafe** (86-260 Farrington Highway). It opens at 7 a.m., so get there early to snag an outdoor table and enjoy the amazing view along with your breakfast.

You'll need the energy because, depending on the day, you might find yourself snorkeling along coral reefs with giant sea



The Halekulani's pool is ideal for taking a swim—or a breather

Around town

✓ **WHERE TO STAY** Give yourself the star treatment by booking one of the 453 rooms at the **Halekulani** (from \$460; halekulani.com). With its three restaurant options, heated freshwater pool, and beachfront location, you'll never want to leave.

For a budget-friendly option that doesn't feel that way, head to the newly renovated **Waikiki Parc** (from \$269; waikikiparc.com). Just a short walk from the ocean, the hotel has a young, urban vibe and features a rooftop pool and free Friday night happy hours.

✓ **WHERE TO EAT** It may be located in the Ala Moana shopping center, but **The Pineapple Room by Alan Wong** (1450 Ala Moana Boulevard; alanwongs.com) is no food court restaurant. The menu showcases local items, like beef from the Kuahiwi Ranch on the Big Island, and mixes flavors from the entire Pacific region. If being surrounded by water has you craving sushi, make a reservation at **Doraku Sushi** (in the Royal Hawaiian Center at 2233 Kalakaua Ave.; sushidoraku.com). Each roll comes with its own twist, like the snow crab and black caviar in the chef's roll.



The New Style Doraku roll combines crab, avocado, and tuna

turtles and schools of colorful fish, or in the deep with spotted dolphins. Don't worry if you've never snorkeled before; the experienced guides will make sure you feel comfortable, and you'll wear a flotation device around your waist that will help you swim near the surface with ease.

After hours spent in the sea and sun, it will

be time to make your way back to Honolulu and grab your bags. As you settle into your seat for the flight home, you'll have sore muscles, some unbelievable stories, and a plan to come back as soon as possible.

Alice Ogleshorpe, SHAPE's senior lifestyle editor, has considered buying her own stand-up paddleboard to take out on NYC's Hudson River.