



AGENTS OF YOUR DREAMS · BROKERED BY EXP REALTY

New to *O'ahu*

The insider magazine to island living — neighborhoods, beaches, hikes, the best local eats, picnics, markets, and the tips you only learn once you're here.

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ALOHA



NEW TO O'AHU · THE MAGAZINE

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WELCOME

Aloha, and *welcome home.*



Moving to O'ahu is one of the best decisions you'll ever make — and a lot less overwhelming with a local in your corner. This is the same insider tour I give every client relocating to the island: where to live, where to play, where to eat, and how to settle in like you've always belonged.

Inside you'll find my honest take on the island's neighborhoods, beaches, hikes, food, and the little things that make life here special — plus the practical tips every newcomer wishes they'd known sooner.

When you're ready to find your place, I'd be honored to help — no pressure, just real local guidance.

"The agent to make your Hawai'i home dreams come true."

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29 REVIEWS

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01 WHERE TO LIVE

Neighborhoods at a Glance

O‘ahu is really a string of small towns, each with its own pace, price, and personality. From walkable glass towers in town to country roads up north, here's a deeper look at where you might feel most at home.

Town & Urban Core

Kaka‘ako. The island's hippest urban core — glass towers, murals, breweries, and Saturday farmers markets, with Ala Moana Beach a short walk away. Ideal for a modern, lock-and-leave condo lifestyle.

Ala Moana. Anchored by the world's largest open-air mall and a beloved swimmable beach park; high-rise living minutes from both downtown and Waikīkī.

Waikīkī. Iconic beachfront energy with surf and dining at your door — and a strong rental market, making it a popular investment or pied-à-terre.

Downtown & Chinatown. Historic buildings, galleries, and some of the island's best food; lofts and value-priced condos for those who love an urban beat.

Mānoa & Makiki. Leafy, cooler valleys by the university — classic single-family homes, frequent rainbows, and quiet, all minutes from town.

East Honolulu


Kāhala. O‘ahu's most prestigious address — gracious estates beside the ocean and a serene, established feel.

Hawai‘i Kai. Marina living around a scenic bay; family-friendly and active, beloved by paddlers, boaters, and hikers.

‘Āina Haina to Kuli‘ou‘ou. Settled east-side valleys with strong schools, calm streets, and an easy commute to town.

How to choose your neighborhood

Start with your commute and your must-haves — beach mornings, school zones, single-family vs. condo, town energy vs. country calm. Tell me your wish list and I'll match you to the right pockets of the island.



01 WHERE TO LIVE · CONTINUED

Across the *Island*

Cross the Ko'olau range and the island changes character entirely — greener, slower, and often a better value. Here's the rest of O'ahu, region by region.

Windward Coast

Kailua. Postcard beaches, a charming walkable town, and the island's most sought-after laid-back lifestyle — priced accordingly.

Kāne'ōhe. Dramatic mountains and bay views with more home for your money, and a genuine local feel.

Waimānalo & Lanikai. Country windward living — soft sand, big skies, and small-town aloha.

Central O'ahu

'Aiea & Pearl City. Central and value-friendly with easy freeway access — a commuter's sweet spot near everything.

Mililani. Master-planned, family-favorite suburbia with parks, top schools, and cooler upcountry air.

Waikēle & Waipi'o. Convenient central living near outlet shopping, golf, and growing job centers.

West / Leeward

'Ewa Beach & Kapolei. The booming 'Second City' — newer homes, more space, beaches, and Wai Kai, at relative value.

Ko Olina. Resort-style lagoons, championship golf, and luxury — a vacation-every-day enclave.

Makakilo. Hillside West-side homes with sweeping coastline and sunset views.

North Shore

Hale'iwa & the North Shore. Country living, legendary surf, and a slow, soulful pace — for those who want to truly unplug.



02 THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Best Hikes on *O'ahu*

Lace up — these are the trails that will make you fall in love with the island, from sunrise ridgelines to rainforest waterfalls.

1. Diamond Head (Lē'ahi). Iconic · easy–moderate. The crater-rim classic, with skyline and ocean views. Reserve ahead.

2. Lanikai Pillbox (Ka'iwa Ridge). Sunrise · moderate. Short, steep, and unreal over the Mokulua islands.

3. Koko Head Stairs. Leg day · hard. 1,000+ railway ties straight up, for a brutal, unreal payoff.

4. Makapu'u Lighthouse. Family · easy. Paved and stroller-friendly; whale watching in winter.

5. Kuli'ou'ou Ridge. Workout · moderate–hard. A forested climb to a panoramic east-side summit.

6. Wiliwili Ridge. Views · moderate. A ridgeline walk straight into the clouds above town.

7. 'Aiea Loop Trail. Mellow · easy. A shaded, family-friendly forest loop in the central hills.

8. Ka'ena Point. Coastal · easy–moderate. A wild, flat trek to the island's western tip — seals and seabirds.

9. Olomana (Three Peaks). Advanced · scramble. Knife-edge ridgeline thrills and 360° windward views — for experienced hikers only.

10. Pu'u o Hulu (Pink Pillbox). Moderate · short. A West-side climb to a bright-pink bunker and big ocean views.

11. Crouching Lion. Moderate · steep. A quick, rewarding windward summit above Kahana Bay.

12. Hawai'i Loa Ridge. Moderate · views. A lush, less-crowded ridge to sweeping east-side panoramas.



02 THE GREAT OUTDOORS · CONTINUED

Chasing *Waterfalls*


Before you go

Waterfall trails cross streams and get slick — wear real shoes, check for flash-flood advisories, cover cuts (leptospirosis), and never dive into unknown pools. A few require permits.

After the rain, the whole island seems to turn to waterfalls. These rainforest treks reward you with cascades, swimming holes, and some of the greenest scenery on O‘ahu.

- 1. Mānoa Falls.** Easy · 1.6 mi. The island's most popular waterfall walk — lush rainforest to a 150-ft fall.
- 2. Waimea Valley.** Easy · paved. A botanical-garden stroll to a lifeguarded waterfall you can swim in — perfect for families.
- 3. Maunawili Falls.** Moderate · 2.5 mi. A green, river-crossing trek to a swimmable pool (check trail status).
- 4. Lulumahu Falls.** Moderate · 2.5 mi. A hidden gem past bamboo groves and an old reservoir (permit area).
- 5. Likeke Falls.** Easy · 1.5 mi. A short windward-side walk to a mossy, photogenic cascade.
- 6. Waimano Falls.** Moderate · 3 mi. A central-O‘ahu favorite with rope-assisted descents and swim pools.

Chase the falls — just respect the mountain that makes them.



03 EAT LIKE A LOCAL

Where to Eat on the Island

Skip the tourist traps. The best meals on O‘ahu often come from a window, a food truck, or an unassuming strip mall — here’s where locals actually go.

Plate Lunch. Rainbow Drive-In & Highway Inn — the two-scoop, mac-salad classic.

Poke. Ono Seafood & Maguro Brothers — and yes, Foodland’s poke is elite.

Hawaiian Food. Helena’s Hawaiian Food — k‘alu‘a pig, lomi salmon, and haupia.

Garlic Shrimp. North Shore shrimp trucks — Giovanni’s and Romy’s, butter-and-garlic heaven.

Malasadas. Leonard’s Bakery — hot, original, or filled with custard.

Shave Ice. Matsumoto’s and Waiola — add ice cream and li hing.

Spam Musubi. The island’s perfect snack — grab one at any Foodland or 7-Eleven.

Liliha Bakery. A local institution — the Coco Puffs are non-negotiable.


Ramen & Udon. Marukame Udon in Waikīkī — worth the line, every time.

Side Street Inn. Local pūpū done right — fried rice and pork chops the locals swear by.

Zippy’s. Chili, saimin, and dobash cake — comfort food, island-style.

Açaí & Smoothies. Diamond Head Cove and Sunrise Shack — post-hike fuel.

The best plate lunch is the one you're eating right now.



04 SUN & SAND

Best Beaches on *O'ahu*

From world-famous shores to quiet local secrets, this is the island's greatest collection. Find the one that feels like yours — and plan your weekends around it.

Lanikai Beach. Powdery sand and turquoise water — arguably the most beautiful beach in the world.

Kailua Beach Park. Wide, soft sand and calm water; kayak out to the Mokulua islands.

Waikīkī Beach. Gentle waves perfect for first-time surfers, with the city right behind you.

Hanauma Bay. A protected snorkeling cove teeming with fish (reserve ahead).

Waimānalo Beach. Long, soft, and uncrowded — a local favorite for a reason.

Bellows Field Beach. Ironwood-shaded sand and a gentle shore break (public access on weekends).

Ko Olina Lagoons. Calm, family-friendly West-side lagoons — and the best sunsets on the island.

Waimea Bay. Summer calm and cliff jumps; legendary big waves in winter.

'Ehukai / Pipeline. The world's most famous surf break — a must-watch in winter.

Sunset Beach. Huge winter surf to watch; mellow swimming all summer.

Sandy Beach. A powerful bodyboarding shore break — for strong swimmers and great people-watching.

Makapu'u Beach. Bodysurfing with a lighthouse-and-cliffs backdrop on the east side.

Ala Moana Beach Park. A calm, swimmable lagoon and huge park minutes from town.

Hale'iwa Ali'i Beach. A laid-back North Shore town beach with surf and sea turtles.

Sans Souci (Kaimana). A quiet locals' beach tucked beside Diamond Head.

Pōka'i Bay. Calm, protected West-side water — gentle and family-friendly.

Find the beach that feels like home — I'll help you live near it.



05 GOLDEN HOUR

Sunset & Picnic *Spots*

There's no better way to end an island day than dinner on the sand. These are the spots where the sky puts on its nightly show — bring a blanket.

Ala Moana Beach Park. Calm water, wide lawns, and a front-row sunset minutes from town.

Ko Olina Lagoons. The West side's golden-hour magic — glassy, kid-safe, unforgettable.

Magic Island. A peninsula of pure sunset, with Diamond Head as your backdrop.

Lanikai & Kailua. Soft sand and pastel skies on the windward side.

Tantalus (Pu'u 'Ualaka'a). Sunset over the whole city — bring a blanket and snacks.

Kaka'ako Waterfront Park. Grassy bluffs, murals, and an unobstructed ocean horizon.

Spitting Caves (Portlock). Dramatic cliffs and one of the island's quietest sunsets.

Diamond Head Beach. Surfers, tide pools, and pastel skies below the crater.

China Walls. A locals' ledge for watching the surf glow at dusk.

Want it done for you? Turn the page. →

A LOCAL FAVORITE

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06 LOCAL FINDS

Farmers Markets & Hidden *Gems*

Eat fresh, shop local, and meet the makers behind the island. Then mark your calendar — O’ahu celebrates all year long.

KCC Farmers Market. Saturday mornings at Diamond Head — the island’s best, from ahi to honey.

Kaka’ako Farmers Market. Trendy makers, flowers, and food trucks on Saturdays.

Pearlridge & Kailua Markets. Weekend finds, produce, and local crafts closer to home.

Hale’iwa Farmers Market. A North Shore Thursday market — produce, food trucks, and crafts.

Wai’anae Mall Farmers Market. A West-side Saturday-morning market — fresh produce, plants, and local grinds.

Windward Mall Farmers Market. An indoor Kāne’ohe market, rain or shine — produce and island vendors.

Events & Festivals

Honolulu Festival (March). Pan-Pacific culture, parades, and a fireworks finale.

Lei Day (May 1). Lei-making and Hawaiian music island-wide.

King Kamehameha Celebration (June). Floral parades and lei draping honoring the king.

Prince Lot Hula Festival (July). The largest non-competitive hula event.

Made in Hawai’i Festival (Aug). Hundreds of local makers, food, and live music.

Aloha Festivals (Sept). Statewide Hawaiian culture and the Waikīkī floral parade.

Vans Triple Crown (Winter). World-class surf on the North Shore.

Honolulu Marathon (Dec). One of the world’s largest marathons.



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07 FAMILY TIME

Family Fun on *O'ahu*

Adventures the whole 'ohana will remember — from cultural villages and movie-set ranches to water parks and easy days by the sea.

Polynesian Cultural Center. Six Pacific island villages, a lū'au, and a stunning night show — a full-day must.

Wai Kai. Hawai'i's huge lagoon and the Wai Kai Wave in Kapolei — surf, SUP, and beach-club fun.

Kualoa Ranch. Movie-set tours, ziplines, ATVs, and jungle expeditions — a full day of adventure.

Sea Life Park. Up-close marine encounters with a Makapu'u coastline backdrop.

Honolulu Zoo & Waikīkī Aquarium. Easy, fun, and right by the beach — perfect for little ones.

Bishop Museum. Hawaiian history, culture, and a planetarium under one roof.

Pearl Harbor National Memorial. A moving, must-do piece of American history.

Dole Plantation. Pineapple everything — plus the world-famous garden maze.

Wet'n'Wild Hawai'i. A West-side water park with slides and a lazy river for the whole crew.

Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden. Free, jaw-dropping mountain backdrops, easy trails, and catch-and-release fishing.

Kapi'olani Park & Kite Field. Wide-open lawns for kites, picnics, and weekend festivals by Waikīkī.

Atlantis Submarine. A real submarine dive to reefs and shipwrecks off Waikīkī.

Coral Crater Adventure Park. Ziplines, ropes courses, and off-road fun on the West side.

Tips for *Newcomers*

Fee Simple vs. Leasehold

The single most important thing to understand before you buy on O'ahu. Fee simple means you own the land; leasehold means you lease it. I'll walk you through every word.

A few things every new resident learns — some sooner than others. Start here and you'll settle in like you've always belonged.

Microclimates are real. It can pour in Mānoa and be sunny in Waikīkī — choose your neighborhood for the weather you want.

Plan around traffic. Town-bound mornings and country-bound evenings get busy — live near where you work.

Budget for island costs. Shipping, utilities, and groceries run higher; we'll plan realistically together.

Ship your car & goods early. Matson and movers fill up fast around big moves.

Respect the 'āina. Reef-safe sunscreen, stay on trails, and never turn your back on the ocean.

Handle the paperwork. Get your Hawai'i license and registration within the required window.

Learn a little Pidgin & Hawaiian. A warm 'aloha,' 'mahalo,' and 'shaka' go a long way here.

Sundays are for 'ohana. Beach days, potlucks, and slowing down — embrace island time.

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