

My Project Week Trip to Hawaii

By Juliana Zigman '19

When we left our homes for the airport, we had no idea what would come hours later when our plane landed. All that we did know was we were going on a trip we would never forget.

When we landed in Hawaii, we picked up our luggage and walked outside to discover a glimpse of the paradise we had ahead of us. We boarded a bus that took us to our hotel, Ohana East. It is located in Waikiki and is about a 10-minute walk to Waikiki Beach. We met our tour guide, Bea, as soon as we got to the hotel. We were also given instructions on security from a guard who works at the hotel. Everyone separated to their rooms, and did what was asked and unpacked some items.

The lounging time was nice to have, but we were all hungry and excited for the pizza party that was scheduled. There was an array of facial expressions when a Hawaiian pizza -- toppings: pineapple and ham -- was placed down in front of people.

Back at the hotel pool, the hot tub was the safe bet because it was warm as opposed to the ice-cold pool beside it. Looking up, the stars were visible, and there were palm trees swaying. It was something out of a movie; it was too pretty to be real.

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Our first official day began with breakfast at Appetito, a restaurant that was beside our hotel. This restaurant has the thickest and fluffiest pancakes I have ever witnessed. From here we walked to the catamaran. Before getting on we spent some time in the water and took pictures. The catamaran took us about 10 minutes out and prepared us for swimming with the turtles. We did wind up seeing a few turtles. We went on a long ride after, and despite someone feeling seasick we still took pictures, and we all got to have a "lemme drive da boat" moment, posing at the helm.

We attempted getting lunch on our own, but the group I was with got a bit lost and we wound up scrambling at the end to get lunch. That day I had a mango smoothie for lunch. We got back to the hotel and got changed for the beach. The beach was filled, but we managed to find a spot. Eli rented a surfboard and went out with a few people. It

was this day some of us realized that if you flow with the wave, it doesn't hit as hard, and that a slap in the face from salt water is not kind at all.

For dinner, we were on our own during a scavenger hunt. I was part of Eli's group, and we decided to get dinner first. We wound up deciding on tacos. We attempted our scavenger hunt list, but we also got distracted by a group of street performers who were doing backflips. We stopped at a store on our way back, and a few of us bought some things, but after that, we returned to our rooms in the hotel for bed check. We had experienced our first full day in Hawaii, and after what we had seen we were prepared for all the rest to come.

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The following day we went to Hard Rock Cafe for breakfast and ate buffet style. We filmed some unforgettable mukbangs, such as our debate between biting open a fortune cookie or cracking it open with your hands.

From here, we took a bus to Pearl Harbor. On our journey there we stopped at the King Kamehameha I statue and took pictures. We saw the State Capitol, Washington Place, Iolani Palace, Punchbowl National Memorial Cemetery, and even the high school Bruno Mars attended.

When we arrived at the visitors center, a group of us got to take a picture with a survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Becky even got to talk to him and have him sign the book she purchased. We saw a video that explained Pearl Harbor in great detail, and then boarded a boat that took us to see the USS Arizona Memorial, which was unfortunately shut down while we were there for safety reasons. We learned that the Arizona is still leaking oil to this day because it had a full tank when it went down in 1941. We enjoyed a lovely lunch with the ducks while being given a history lesson, and then toured the USS Missouri.

That evening, after some quick shopping, we had a hibachi dinner at Tanaka of Tokyo next door to our hotel. We all got to relax from our day here and just talk. Afterward, we had free time. A group of us went to the mall, and in the middle of the shopping center there was a hula class going on. We got ice cream, and on the way back to our hotel, Eli caused a scene by pretending to propose to Becky. He made her drop her ice cream.

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After breakfast at Maui Brewing Company, we departed for Sea Life Park, stopping first at the Amelia Earhart stone that marks her last known location. We also stopped at Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve, where we saw a lot of chickens walking around. At Sea Life Park, we got to feed the turtles they had. This was an experience none of us will ever forget because there was something ethereal and magical about doing it. We saw penguins, sea lions, and dolphins. We were lucky enough to see the dolphin show. We went to an area behind the dolphin location to take pictures because there was a beautiful view of Manana Island, a.k.a., Rabbit Island. We made a brief stop at Halona Blowhole Lookout.

We then departed for our hotel to change quickly, and then go to dinner at Hard Rock Cafe. Immediately after dinner, we went to Kapiolani Park for our astronomy event. We were able to witness stars and learn their names. We were even given the opportunity to see the Seven Sisters through the telescope. They appear the way a diamond does when sunlight shines on it. By bedtime, we were exhausted from the day outside.

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This is the day I discovered the most amazing banana pancakes ever. Duke's Waikiki was where we had breakfast this particular morning, and we had a view of the ocean beside us. We departed to Diamondhead after this and began our hike. I do not recommend this if you are extremely claustrophobic. I tried it and well, let's say that Simone guided me through it. However, it was worth it because the view at the top of Diamondhead is absolutely breathtaking. There is really nothing like it, and there are no words that could do it justice.

After Diamondhead we went to an aquarium for a coral lesson. We got to see rare fish, jellyfish, and seahorses. For dinner, we headed to Germaine's Luau, which featured a variety of hula dances, the ceremony for the cooking of the pig, and Becky, Tim, and Eli going on stage for hula lessons. The ride back, most of us were passed out on the bus, and barely woke up when we arrived at the hotel.

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We started our last full day sad but prepared to take in every minute. We had breakfast at Duke's Waikiki once more, and yes, I had banana pancakes. Becky and I even had a whole conversation about them. It was a bit of a rainy day, so I suppose it reflected how

we were all feeling about leaving. So while we waited for our tour of Iolani Palace to take place we stood outside under a tree in the rain. We filmed a music video as well.

The inside of Iolani Palace was beautiful -- well, until Mrs. Drown took a photo of a painting of the queen and the princess and her phone detected that one of them blinked! Then it was time to get out as fast as we could. Afterward, we toured the University of Hawaii.

From there, we had lunch on our own, got smoothies, and our final activity for the trip was a dinner cruise. On our way to the boat, we saw coral with fish surrounding it and were greeted by hula dancers from the boat. The dinner cruise consisted of Hawaiian rolls, virgin mai tais, table pictures, people airdropping memes, hula dancing lessons with grass skirts, an array of hula dances from the performers on the boat, and a conga line at the end with a beautiful sunset in the back.

Back at the hotel, after a quick trip to the store for snacks, we played UNO in Kennedy's room. Then we all had to deal with the heartbreaking reality of packing up to depart to Chicago the next day.

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Waking up to leave was surreal. When I got up, I stood outside on the balcony to take in one last glance of the palm trees nearby and the mountains and the city behind them. Our breakfast was at Appetito's and was a very quiet one at that. It was time to go home.

The flight back went by much quicker than the one there. It was devastating to walk outside and embrace the cold air that Chicago had to offer at five in the morning, after spending all of that time in the sun.

Our entire trip felt like a movie. The thing none of us were prepared for was the aftereffect. Everything about Hawaii was so perfect and magical that our entire time there felt like a dream. When we landed it had felt like we had never left home.

When faced with the reality that Hawaii really did happen, we recount our time there and we smile about our memories. Some of us made new friends, others got closer to people they were only acquaintances with, and some of us found a new love: Hawaii.