

A Day Trip to Maui from Aulani: An Aulani Resort Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Previously in this series of articles, I've looked at our day trips from Aulani to both the [Big Island](#) and [Kauai](#).

In this final installment, I look at our last destination, and the one that turned out to be our favorite, **Maui**.

Our first priority on our visit to Maui, as lovers of America's national parks, was Haleakala (try saying that after a few drinks!). Like much of Hawai'i, this park is really a volcano, and it's certainly one that towers above the rest of the island. As you drive there from Kahului, where the airport and the cruise terminal are located (for those of you lucky enough to be on the visit from the Wonder in fall 2015), you can immediately see why it's called the steepest climb in the world. You move from sea level to the 10,000-foot summit in a mere 37 miles.

□
□At first, the gradient doesn't seem that bad, then the road really starts to rise up dramatically, and as it does, you encounter one switchback after another. While it is a stunning drive, it's something your driver really does need to concentrate so, and even more so in our case, as our rental car was having issues with the gears. Be prepared for dramatic changes in the weather. We knew that the temperature could drop dramatically the further up we ascended, but despite having layers with us, I ended up getting another sweatshirt at the visitor center, such was the change in the climate. You may also ascend above the clouds or pass through fog, as we did on our journey.

□
□So was it worth all the trauma of getting there? In one word, yes! However, I will add several caveats. If you're on a one day visit to Maui, the thing you really come up to the summit of Haleakala for is the view. We had quite a wait for the clouds to clear, but my goodness, it was worth it to see the rest of the island laid out in front of us! Also, from the visitor center, which marks the end of the road up here, the only way to explore the park is by foot, and you may not have time for hiking on a fleeting visit.

Given that our rental car was having severe issues that day, we didn't stay any longer than we had to, as we wanted to return it back to the company at the airport, something we really didn't need on such a short visit. Once we had a convertible to take out, we made our way out to our other major destination for the day, the beautiful town of Lahaina, on the westernmost coast of Maui. The second we drove along the main

road, it reminded us of Key West, both in terms of architecture and the laid back atmosphere.

□ If you want to shop, and experience unique Hawaiian shops, this is the place for you. Front Street, which runs throughout Lahaina, is lined with shops, restaurants, and cafes. It has everything a visitor could need and I did make a dent in the bank account with quite a few purchases. All proved to be great buys, although it did make for some fun getting it all back to O'ahu on the plane!

□ Because of the variety of the businesses along Front Street, it's easy to forget that it runs right along the coastline, and there's a beautiful beach, of which you occasionally catch glimpses. As soon as we could, we made our way towards the water, so that we could take in the dramatic views out to sea. The late afternoon sun was casting some beautiful light, and we were able to stand there and enjoy the sight of surfers out on the waves, and sailing boats bobbing up and down. It was one of the most wonderful sights I've ever seen, and both of us stood there, just soaking in the scenery and enjoying the truly relaxed feel to the island.

□ This may have been our highlight, but there's plenty more to see in Lahaina. Sadly, we were too late, after our rental car problems, to visit the Baldwin Home, which dates back to 1834. We were able to enjoy the Lahaina Museum in the old courthouse. We were really impressed; not only was it very informative and packed with historical artifacts, but it was also free, which was a pleasant surprise.

□ Outside the courthouse is something else not to be missed in Lahaina, and it is hard to miss it. The Banyan Tree was planted back in 1873 and today it's 60 feet tall and covers an amazing two thirds of an acre. It really is something to see and marvel at. Right next door is the historic Pioneer Inn, the first hotel to open in Lahaina. It dates back to 1901, and it's still a beautiful sight today.

□ I'm sure there are many wonderful restaurants in Lahaina, but the one we opted for had to be booked weeks in advance. Fleetwood's on Front Street is Mick Fleetwood's restaurant. Given my husband is a big fan of the co-founder of Fleetwood Mac, I thought it would be perfect. Not only was there a wonderful variety of items from the band's rich musical history, but we were blown away by the quality of the food. It was a superb choice, and based on our experience, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it. In fact, if our hoped for return trip to Aulani comes off in a couple of years' time, we'll be booking a return visit there again.

□ Our return visit would also take in the Road to Hana, which is

.....

supposed to be spectacular, and certainly the photos I've seen of it seem to justify that. Sadly, as we had such a short time on Maui, we had to choose between that and Haleakala. The road network isn't exactly conducive to quick trips between these major attractions, as you need to backtrack, but as we Disney fans always say about the theme parks, it just gives you a reason to return.

□

□That's certainly the case for us, and I can't wait to get back to the relaxing beauty of Maui on our next trip to Aulani. For those of you heading there on the Disney Wonder next year, you really are in for a treat. Can I say jealous?!

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

Article last updated: 11-27-2014

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/maui-from-disney-aulani.html>

Copyright by Cheryl Pendry. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>