

LIBERTY CALL

M_{anoa} F_{alls}



Less than a half hour from the noisy, crowded streets and shops of Waikiki, a hiker enjoys the greenery, silence and solitude of a hike through the Manoa Falls trail deep in Manoa Valley.

Manoa Falls offers an 'easy' hike, spectacular views, fun for the whole family

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What is it about a waterfall that makes people go out of their way, tramping through mud, around and over rocks, through dense vegetation and rain forests to get to one?

It could be its calming effect, its romantic appeal, a communing with nature or it could just be the novelty and opportunity for a Kodak moment.

Whatever the reason, avid and novice hikers take every opportunity to heighten their experience with a trek that ends with a waterfall.

One such trek is to Manoa Falls near the base of the Ko'olau mountain range on Oahu's leeward side. Located at the very back of Manoa valley, the hike is only two miles round-trip. It's been rated as an "easy" hike, a good outing for the entire family. The waterfall is seasonal and varies in strength from a trickle in the dryer season to a full picturesque waterfall in the wetter months.

Unlike the Diamond Head hiking trail, it's not paved or as steep. It's an all-dirt path that is frequently muddy, but at the end of the trail there is a shallow pool created by the fall.

As with any hiking adventure, beware of posted signs and be extra careful of falling rocks from above the waterfall.

Next to Diamond Head, the hike to Manoa Falls is one of the most popular hikes on Oahu. The trail head is located just past Paradise Park. Visitors should be aware that

this is a high theft area and should take the necessary precautions that may include parking a little further away from the trail head.

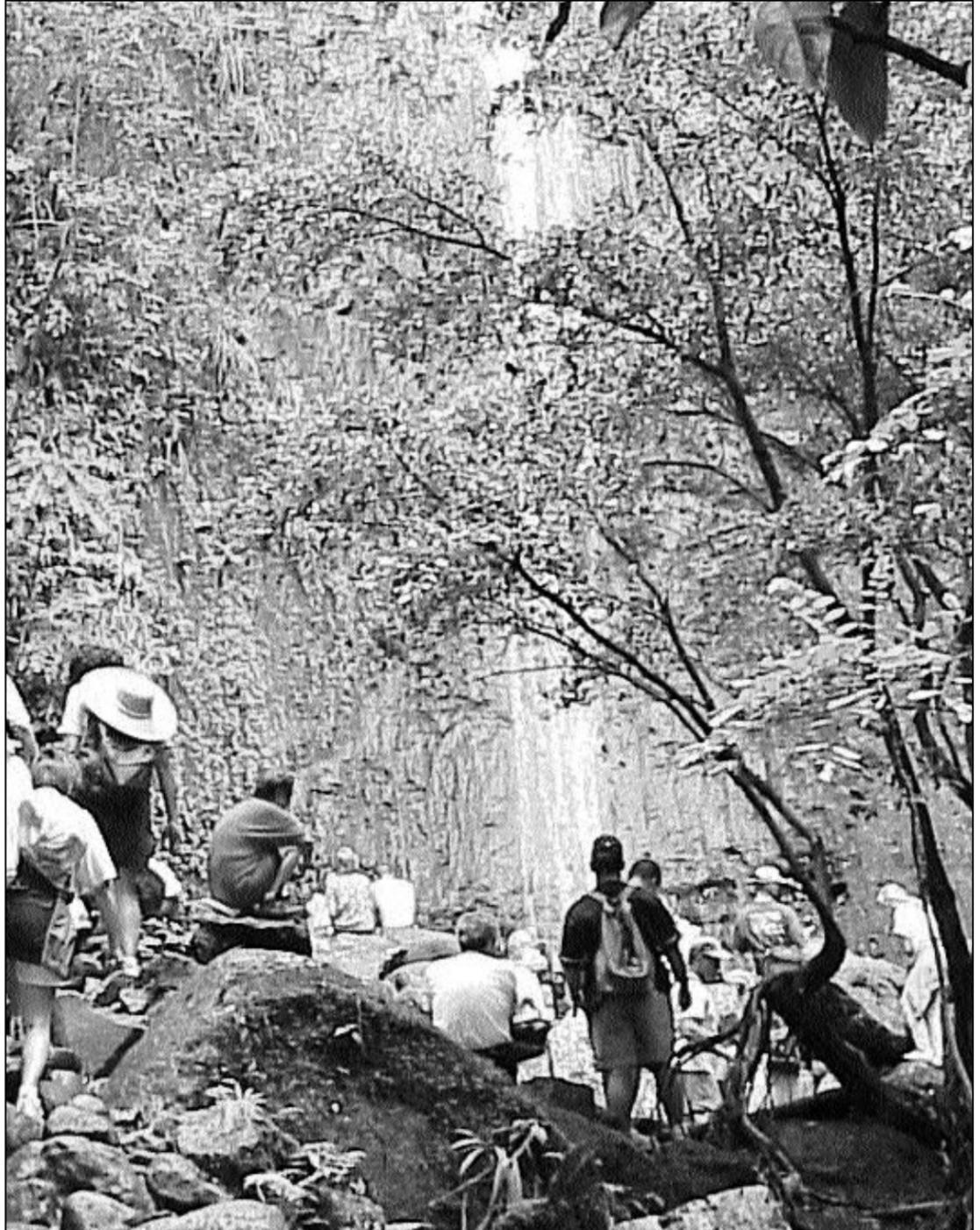
Once on the trail, visitors should have an easy time following it. The trail is forest lined. There are some short rocky sections and some man-made sections. If you're a nature buff you'll be excited to see various types of tropical flora and fauna along the way. A travel handbook of local plants, trees and birds will make the trip more enjoyable.

Depending on the day, you'll probably meet varying groups of people along the way and at the fall. There are some who take the time to pause and look, meditate or actually get under the water for a refreshing fresh water shower.

Although there are some more advanced trails along the Manoa Falls trail, visitors should stay within their ability and let safety be their guide.

A picnic lunch is a nice touch and a good reason to spend more time with nature in a beautiful surrounding. Hikers should wear sturdy shoes, comfortable clothing, bring their own water and a cell phone - if possible.

A hand-held Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) device is optional, but might be good to have, if not for the practical use at least for heightening the experience of being in the great outdoors - even if you're just a few miles from Waikiki. Hikers may also want to bring a swimming suit and towels if they plan to get into the waterfall and they for placing on the car seats and floor upon their return.



Thousands of visitors make the two-mile round trip hike to Manoa Falls every year. Hikers, shown above, rest at the foot of the fall in front of a shallow pool. Next to the Diamond Head hike, Manoa Falls is the most popular hike on Oahu, mostly because it's classified as an 'easy' hike that can be enjoyed by the entire family.



A group of hikers pass over a man-made bridge along the Manoa Falls trail. There are a few man-made sections of the trail including stairs to help hikers at some of the trail's more difficult terrain. The path is well worn and marked, due to its frequent use.

Photos by Suzan Holl