



Above: Tahitian dancers slowly float down the main lagoon performing to traditional island music during the afternoon canoe pageant.

Below: Chief Sielu demonstrates the fire-knife dance in the evening show "Horizons! Where the Sea meets the Sky."

Polynesian Cultural Center

Catch the spirit of all the islands in one place

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 Photos courtesy of the
 Polynesian Cultural Center

Whether you're new to the island and looking for a way to learn about local cultures or have just been here a while and are trying to find a way to spend a fun day with the family, the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) might be your solution.

The center offers samples of seven South Pacific islands displayed throughout its beautifully landscaped 42-acre setting. Visitors will find themselves exploring Fiji, Hawaii, Samoa, New Zealand (Maori), the Marquesas, Tahiti and Tonga in a day-long, island-hopping type without stepping foot out of the center.

Guests who arrive Monday to Saturday after 12:30 p.m. when the center opens, can stroll themselves through distant and exotic villages, and be greeted by friendly guides dressed in colorful costumes offering a kind "welcome" in their native tongue. Or they may find themselves riding a canoe through a lagoon, participating in ancient customs, or watching in amazement as fiery knives are tossed high into the air.

The question now becomes: which to do first?

After making your way through the ticket office, acquiring your official PCC guide and map, and taking advantage of the chance to dress up "native" for a souvenir photo (expect to be offered many cameras throughout the day in case you forgot yours), you might find yourself wandering into the Samoan Village to catch one of the center's most popular shows. Watch as your island guide teaches you how to create fire, crack open a coconut the "old fashioned" way and climb barefoot up a tall coconut tree to acquire its tasty fruit. If you're lucky, you may even be "volunteered" to come up and sample the fresh milk straight from the coconut shell. If you're not chosen, don't be disappointed - you can always stop at one of many refreshment stands and purchase your own coconut milk or a homemade non-alcoholic pina colada.

From there, you might travel into ancient New Zealand to learn the history behind body tattooing. If you're feeling brave (or particularly tribal), you can even leave with your own temporary tattoo to impress (or scare) your friends and family.

The PCC offers countless activities to fill your day. Learn how to hula in

Hawaii, play bamboo drums in Fiji, weave a coconut leaf headband in Marquesas, go fishing in Tahiti or learn to juggle "Tongan style" as you wander leisurely around the center's man-made fresh water lagoon.

When you hear the drums begin to beat, make sure you find good seats along the main lagoon as most of the center shuts down for the 2:30 p.m. colorful canoe pageant "Rainbows of Polynesia." This show demonstrates a medley of myths and legends of Polynesia with island music, vibrant costumes and song and dance performed on canoes, decorated with colorful flowers native to the island.

Afterwards, continue your journey through the rest of the villages trying new things as you go. Observe a war dance, attend an island wedding, play local island games, swing poi balls to a tribal beat or learn how to carve Tiki figures, to name just a few of the numerous activities.

If you decide you want to take a break, or are looking for a quick visit back into modern civilization, head for the air-conditioned, state of the art, "IMAX Polynesia" theater, Hawaii's first IMAX theater for a larger than life movie.

You can choose from two films: "The Living Sea", a film which celebrates the ocean - its beauty, diversity and importance to life and earth - the film is narrated by Meryl Streep, and features music by Sting, or the new IMAX

film "Dolphins," which is narrated by Pierce Brosnan, and again features music by Sting.

You might also make your way over to the shopping plaza where you'll find a wide range of souvenirs and authentic Polynesian handicrafts made within the center or imported from the different islands within the South Pacific. Many of the products cannot be found anywhere else in Hawaii. The marketplace is open 11 a.m.-9 p.m. daily except Sunday.

Want to get off your feet for a while? Take an informative 15-minute canoe ride up the lagoon; it's filled with history, culture and a touch of humor. If you want something extra, take a special 30-minute "musical tour of the islands" canoe ride anytime between 6-7 p.m.

By now the sun's probably going down and you're getting hungry. The Polynesian Cultural Center offers a wide selection for dinner. Enjoy the spacious Gateway restaurant, the largest restaurant in the South Pacific, which comfortably seats 1,000 diners. Or sample the fine dining buffet at the Ambassador with its traditional Hawaiian fares.

But if you want the full Polynesian experience you might consider the Ali'i Luau, an authentic Hawaiian luau, served nightly.

Your setting includes a tropical lagoon, a 15-foot waterfall and a traditional "imu" (or underground Hawaiian-style stone oven) where the luau pig is baked. Dine in a Polynesian-style hut and watch as the cooked pig is lifted out of the "imu" before sitting back to enjoy a special presentation of music and island entertainment. Of course this is just a taste of what is yet to come.

Finish off your Polynesian experience with the 90-minute evening show "Horizon! Where the Sea meets the Sky." The show takes place in the Pacific theater, a 2,770-seat amphitheater. The backdrop for the show is filled with fiery volcanoes, colorful fountains and multilevel stages filled with more than 100 performers wearing over 600 costumes - each with the unique character and creative spirit of the different islands of Polynesia. Enjoy as they show off their islands' history and traditions with their native costumes and festive dancing, topped off with the daring firewalkers and a spectacular fire-knife dance to complete your unforgettable day.

The Polynesian Cultural Center sums up a visit best with their slogan - "All the spirits of the islands, all in one place."



The Polynesian Cultural Center offers local residents, including military stationed here, a special deal!

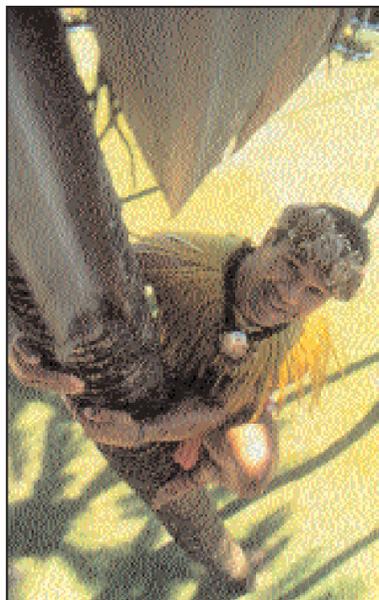
"Kama'aina Annual Pass"

This includes one year's unlimited admission into the seven villages, an IMAX movie and the Horizons night show each visit. Plus entrance to several special activities including the Annual Fire Knife Dance Championships and several concerts.
 \$15.95 (adults and children)

Pick up your "Kama'aina Annual Pass" at the PCC ticket area or the Pearl Harbor Information, Tourist and Travel office (ITT). ITT also makes reservations if you have family or friends visiting the island who would like to experience the Polynesian Cultural Center. They offer special "package" deals ranging from basic admission into the villages, an IMAX movie, dinner and the evening show for \$49 (adults), \$32 (children 5 -11). The deluxe package includes all this plus a "lei" greeting, a VIP luau, a souvenir program and video, and preferred seating to the evening show for \$95 (adult) \$63 (children).

For details, call ITT at 473-1190 or the PCC at 293-3333

The PCC is located an hour from Honolulu in Laie on the scenic North Shore and is open from 12:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily except Sundays.



An islander demonstrates how to gather coconuts in the Samoan village.