



From top: Panoramic view of sundry activities to try at Waikiki Beach. *Photo by Jens Karlsson.* People have been grooving to the music of the Royal Hawaiian Band since 1836. *Photo by Daniel Ramirez.*

IT'S OFTEN SAID THAT MONEY CAN'T BUY you love, or happiness, for that matter. While money can help, especially in a place with a high cost of living like Honolulu, Hawaiians prove that some of the best things in life really are free. Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Survey measured elements of the “good life”—from job satisfaction to physical well-being and emotional health—and for the fifth year in a row, Hawaii topped the list as America’s happiest state in 2015. Here’s how you can discover happiness in Honolulu.

APPRECIATE THE ENVIRONMENT
Ask any local what they like about living in Hawaii and they will undoubtedly cite the weather as a top perk. An average daily temperature of 84 with sunny

Honolulu: Land of the Happy

Learn a thing or two in Honolulu, the most populous city of Hawaii: America’s happiest state. By JILL KOZAK

skies (and maybe an occasional rainstorm leading to a beautiful rainbow) means you have the ability to get into the great outdoors any day of the year.

Start the day out at **Lanikai Beach** in Kailua. Made famous by President Barack Obama, the sleepy town of Kailua is a short drive through the lush Ko’olau Mountains to the prettiest stretch of beach in the world. White sand is the perfect place to lie down and soak up some valuable Vitamin D—a lack thereof has been linked to depression!

Book yourself a snorkeling adventure, and keep your eyes peeled for the vast variety of underwater life. You can even bring your mask and snorkel in the reef of famous **Waikiki Beach** for your chance at an encounter with a Hawaiian green sea turtle.

Trudge up **Koko Head Crater** before dawn in Hawaii Kai, just east of “town” and Waikiki. This steep climb is not for the weary, though, as to reach the top, hikers must climb

nearly 1,050 consecutive steps. The payoff is worth the pain, as sweeping views of urban Honolulu come to light at sunrise.

NURTURE YOUR BODY

Relax your body, mind, and spirit all in one place at the **Moana Lani Spa** within Moana Surfrider, a Westin

The ultimate way to channel Hawaii’s happy energy is to live Aloha.

Resort & Spa in Waikiki. Happiness is the only word that comes to mind when you treat yourself to a traditional *lomi lomi* (Hawaiian massage) overlooking the peaceful Pacific.

After the massage left you floating, pick up an açai bowl from the aptly named brunch house **Heavenly**. Açai berries, a superfood



Clockwise from top left: Lanikai translates to “heavenly sea,” a name fit for a beloved beach. Photo by Joel at frikitikiproductions.com. Visitors take in as much activities right until the sun sets. Photo by Steven Worster. While the fun part in taking the Koko Head Trail is its rocky trek (photo by Leonard S. Jacobs), there are developed paths if you’re in for the view (photo by Kanaka Menehune). Fresh servings at Heavenly capture the island’s light, idyllic charm.

from Brazil, are churned into a thick smoothie, and topped with granola, fresh island fruits, and honey.

FOLLOW THE LAW: LIVE ALOHA

The ultimate way to channel Hawaii’s happy energy is to live Aloha. The word goes beyond a simple greeting. It translates to “the joyful (oha) sharing (alo) of energy (ha) in the present (alo),” serving as a reminder to conduct yourself with love and get love in return—so inculcated within the culture that it is actually defined by law.

According to Section 5-7.5 of the **Hawaii Revised Statutes:**

“Aloha Spirit’ is the coordination of mind and heart within each person. It brings each person to the self. Each person must think and emote good feelings to others.”

- The letters stand for:
- A Akahai (kindness)
- L Lokahi (unity)
- O Oluolu (agreeable)
- H Haahaa (humility)
- A Ahonui (patience)

Music is a chief source of happiness and inspiration in the islands. Venture to **Kapiolani Park** on a Sunday afternoon to listen to the Royal Hawaiian Band perform for free. This beautiful 500-acre park features trees that are over 100 years old.

Exploring Hawaii’s more gentle side is an easy way to feel happy at heart. Take a trip to **Ala Moana Beach Park** to watch a sunset. Pack a blanket, some local snacks, and settle in for nature’s show as the sky changes colors before your eyes. You can observe surfers catch a late set and feel contented to know that you’re among some of the happiest people in the world. ■



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