

This article was first published in the February 2023 issue of the Sylvia Woods Harp Center e-Newsletter. It is part of Sylvia's ongoing series about living in Hawaii.

The Hawaiian Islands

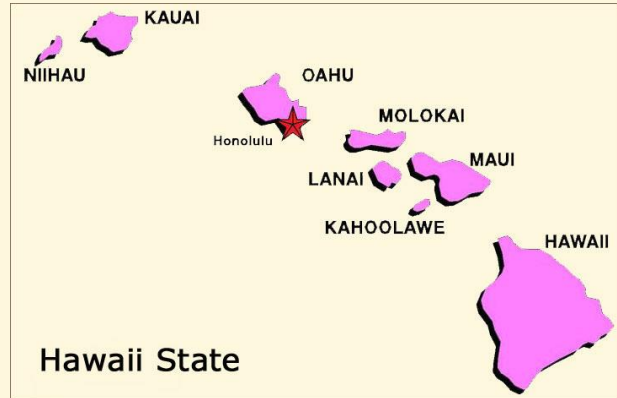
Many U.S. states have nicknames. For example, California is *The Golden State*, Georgia is *The Peach State*, and Minnesota is *The Land of 10,000 Lakes*. Hawaii also has a nickname: *The Aloha State*.

The state of Hawai'i - The Aloha State

When Captain James Cook arrived in the Hawaiian islands in 1778, he named them the *Sandwich Islands* in honor of the 4th Earl of Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty. The name *Hawai'i* for the island group came into prominence in the 1840s, taking the name of the largest island.

Since "Hawaii" is the state's name and also the name of the largest island, this can sometimes be confusing. Therefore, the island is usually called The Big Island or Hawaii Island.

The Hawaiian islands were formed by a volcanic hot spot in the Earth's crust that creates islands as the Pacific Plate moves over it. The eight main Hawaiian Islands are made up of 15 volcanoes. The northernmost islands are the oldest. Only two volcanoes are active, and they are both on the southernmost island, the island of Hawaii. A new island, which has been named Loihi, is growing under the ocean about 22 miles off the southern coast of Hawaii Island. Scientists predict it will rise above sea level sometime between 10,000 and 100,000 years from now.



The State of Hawaii's official 2008 "Facts and Figures" article features the following information.

"Discovered by Polynesian settlers between the 3rd and 7th centuries A.D. and later by British Captain James Cook in 1778, Hawai'i became the 50th state on August 21, 1959.

Described by Mark Twain as 'the loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean,' Hawai'i is a string of 137 islands encompassing a land area of 6,422.6 square miles in the north-central Pacific Ocean about 2,400 miles from the west coast of the continental United States.

Stretching from northwest to southeast, the eight major islands are Ni'i'hau, Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Kaho'olawe, Maui, and Hawai'i. Hawaii's climate features mild temperatures, moderate humidity, and cooling trade winds."

The following section includes information about each of the eight main islands: the island's nickname, land area, population, and a few interesting facts.



language is Hawaiian.

Ni'i'hau - The Forbidden Isle

Area: 69.5 sq mi (180.0 km²)

Population: 84

At about 6 million years old, Ni'i'hau is the oldest of the main Hawaiian islands. In 1864 Elizabeth Sinclair purchased the island for \$10,000 US dollars. Her descendants, the Robinson family, have owned the island ever since. Along with a few native Hawaiians, the Robinsons are the only people allowed to live on the island. A limited number of supervised tours have been permitted since 1987. There are no paved roads on the island, and horses and bicycles are the primary forms of transportation. The primary

Kaua'i - The Garden Isle

Area: 552.3 sq mi (1,430.5 km²)

Population: 73,298

Volcanic eruptions on the island of Kaua'i stopped approximately 3.8 million years ago. Mount Wai'ale'ale, the second-highest mountain on the island, is one of the wettest spots on Earth, with an average rainfall of 460 inches. The Garden Isle is very green and beautiful, and I'm proud and happy to now call Kaua'i my home. There are numerous botanical gardens here, and we even have one with a mini-golf course!





O'ahu - The Gathering Place

Area: 596.7 sq mi (1,545.4 km²)

Population: 1,016,508

The island of O'ahu has been inhabited since at least the 3rd century A.D. Today, about two-thirds of Hawaii's population lives on O'ahu. Honolulu is the state capital and a popular destination for the five million tourists who visit O'ahu each year. Waikiki Beach and Pearl Harbor are both in Honolulu.

Moloka'i - The Friendly Isle

Area: 260.0 sq mi (673.4 km²)

Population: 7,345

Moloka'i is believed to be the birthplace of the hula. From 1866 to 1969, an isolated peninsula on Moloka'i was the home of Kalaupapa, the refuge for Native Hawaiian Hansen's Disease (leprosy) sufferers. To preserve the traditional culture of their Native Hawaiian ancestors, the island's residents have resisted efforts to develop the island for extensive tourism.



Lāna'i - The Pineapple Isle

Area: 140.5 sq mi (363.9 km²)

Population: 3,367

James Dole bought the island of Lāna'i in 1922 and grew pineapples on over 20,000 acres. For much of the 20th century, over 75% of the world's pineapple crop was produced on Lāna'i. The Dole Company phased out pineapple production in 1992, and in 2012, tech billionaire Larry Ellison, CEO of the Oracle Corporation, purchased 98% of the island.

Kaho'olawe - The Target Isle

Area: 44.6 sq mi (115.5 km²)

Population: 0

Kaho'olawe, the smallest of the eight main Hawaii islands, has never been populated due to its lack of fresh water. Beginning during World War II, the island was used by the U.S. Navy as a bombing and testing range. After decades of protests and a lawsuit, the Navy halted their live-fire exercises on the island in 1990. Today, Kaho'olawe is used for native Hawaiian spiritual and cultural purposes.



Maui - The Valley Isle

Area: 727.2 sq mi (1,883.4 km²)

Population: 164,221

Located near the southern end of the island chain, Maui is one of the youngest islands. Its last volcanic eruption occurred around 1790. Maui is a popular island for visitors and has the second-highest annual tourist count of all the islands. The island is basically a valley, with the West Maui Mountains on one side and the Haleakala Crater on the other.

Hawai'i Island - The Big Island

Area: 4,028.0 sq mi (10,432.5 km²)

Population: 200,629

Hawai'i Island is the largest island in the United States, at over 4,000 square miles. It was in the national news a few months ago because two volcanoes on the island were erupting simultaneously. Kilauea, one of the world's most active volcanoes, has been recently erupting for more than a year. Mauna Loa, the world's largest active volcano, standing at 13,681 feet above sea level and 30,000 feet from the sea floor, started erupting on November 27, 2022 for the first time in 38 years.



"The 9th Island"

And now, here's a trivia question for you. There are eight main Hawaiian islands. What city on the U.S. mainland is commonly referred to as "The 9th Island" of Hawaii? I'll let you think about your answer for a little bit. You'll find the answer and more information in a separate section below. Good luck!

The 9th Hawaiian Island

Las Vegas, Nevada, is commonly known here in Hawaii as The 9th Island. One of our local TV channels often includes a 9th Island (Las Vegas) weather report on the nightly news.

According to the 2020 census, Las Vegas has the largest population of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders of any city outside of Honolulu. The lower cost of living is a significant incentive for those who move there from the islands. Due to this growing population, many Las Vegas restaurants now serve authentic Hawaiian food, and there are numerous hula halau groups and cultural and educational programs in the city and surrounding areas.

Every year, over 300,000 islanders visit Las Vegas. One reason for this high number is that gambling is illegal in Hawaii. Another primary reason goes back to one man: Sam Boyd.

In 1975, Sam Boyd opened the California Hotel and Casino in downtown Las Vegas, hoping to attract tourists from California. When that didn't go as well as he had hoped, he turned his attention to Hawaii. He initiated regular marketing trips to the islands and later partnered with the Vacations Hawaii travel company to provide chartered non-stop flights from Honolulu to Las Vegas. The hotel now caters almost exclusively to Hawaiians and is affectionately known here as "The Cal." The hotel advertises on Hawaiian TV and radio stations, and approximately 90% of the staff and guests are from Hawaii.



Here's what it says on the home page of the California Hotel & Casino website.

"Aloha Spoken Here"

The hospitality of the Hawaiian Islands will flower during your visit to the California Hotel Casino. We like to say Aloha is spoken fluently here, and our guests enjoy many Hawaiian touches, ranging from dining delicacies such as oxtail soup to the colorful décor reminiscent of the islands' lush, tropical beauty."