



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOUR WAYS TO ASSURE YOUR GROUP EXPERIENCES HAWAII'S ALOHA SPIRIT WHILE IN THE ISLANDS

Beyond its beautiful beaches, breathtaking scenery and diverse assortment of outdoor activities made possible by its year-round warm weather, the Hawaiian Islands offer meetings and incentive groups unique opportunities to connect with Hawaii's sense of place and history, and experience the stories of its indigenous Hawaiian culture and multicultural population. Whether learning the skill of pounding *kalo* (taro) into *poi*, participating in an outrigger canoe paddling adventure, or simply taking in the scent of fresh flora while taking part in a *lei*-making class, your group will find in Hawaii the only place in the world with authentic, engaging experiences showcasing the Aloha Spirit while connecting to a fascinating historical tapestry unique to the Islands. Here are four ways to make sure your group experiences Hawaii beyond its sand and scenery.

- 1. Set up some group time for unique out-of-the-box team-building exercises you'll find only in Hawaii.** Hawaii offers the perfect environment to meet outdoors and engage with nature as a group while learning much about its Native Hawaiian culture. Cultural activities everyone can participate in include everything from ocean skills practiced by early Hawaiians, such as outrigger canoe paddling and throw-net fishing, to immersive cultural experiences like harvesting *kalo* from a *lo'i* (irrigated agricultural terrace) or helping restore a centuries-old *loko i'a* (fishpond). Group participation in these and similar Hawaiian cultural activities fosters creative thinking among participants and helps them establish a deeper connection and understanding of Hawaiian culture, Hawaii residents and the Hawaiian Islands
- 2. Craft one of the most beloved expressions of the Aloha Spirit by learning the art of lei making.** Lei, a garland most-often crafted with flowers and other flora, shells or feathers, are offered in Hawaii as an expression of affection and *ho'okipa* (hospitality). Commemorate your group's adventures and experiences in Hawaii by inviting members to participate in a lei-making class that also educates them on the history and art of crafting lei. Your group will not only leave the class and the Hawaiian Islands with a memory and memento of creating something very much a part of Hawaiian culture, but knowledge on why the craft is still perpetuated and what the sharing of lei really means
- 3. Experience the Hawaiian art form of hula and understand the discipline and dedication required of those who practice it.** Many of the *mele* (songs) and *oli* (chants) utilized in hula are reflective of moments in Hawaii's history, places in the Islands, and the Hawaiian culture itself. Both on their own and combined *mele* and *oli* pay homage to generations of *kūpuna* (ancestors) that have passed and share their stories. The beauty of the dance is found in its ability to appear simple and effortless to those who observe it rather than drawing attention to the years of dedication, practice and emotion its practitioners pour into each movement. While in Hawaii, encourage your group to participate in an authentic hula lesson to get a sense of the discipline required of each dancer in a *hālau hula* (hula group) to move together as one with their fellow dancers.
- 4. Tour iconic attractions sharing Hawaii's rich Native Hawaiian and multicultural history.** From Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the island of Hawaii and Haleakalā National Park

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on Maui, to Kalaupapa National Historical Park on Moloka'i and 'Iolani Palace on O'ahu, encourage your group to spend time exploring these and other historically-rich places throughout the Islands to learn more about the people, events and cultures that shaped Hawai'i's history. At Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, guests are encouraged to hike the park's lava tubes and miles of trails, explore its rainforests and volcanic craters, and, occasionally, even witness the rare wonder of lava flowing from Kīlauea volcano into the Pacific Ocean. Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park shares the stories of the Hawaiian fire goddess Pele and her continuing influence on Hawaiian culture and life in the Islands. On Maui, the 10,023-foot elevation volcano-summit and sea-level visitor centers of Haleakala National Park are excellent starting points for knowledge of the botanical, geological and human histories of their surrounding acreage, as well as hiking trails into their wonderfully diverse natural landscapes. Located on a breathtakingly scenic north Moloka'i peninsula, Kalaupapa National Historical Park preserves structures marking the area's darker century-long history as a colony isolating Hawai'i residents afflicted with Hansen's Disease (leprosy). Established in 1866, Kalaupapa is one of Hawai'i's most isolated settlements. The park now shares the compelling stories of the afflicted once forced to reside there upon being exiled from society, as well as those of canonized Catholic priest Father Damien and religious sister Mother Marianne Cope who tended to Kalaupapa residents. On O'ahu, 'Iolani Palace, the royal residence of Hawai'i's monarchy following its completion in 1879, is a structure of understated opulence, intriguing innovation and political intrigue. Showcasing the years when Hawai'i monarchs King Kalākaua and his sister and successor Queen Lili'uokalani resided in the palace, knowledgeable docents assure visitors continue to feel the presence of royalty as they guide tours through its celebrated rooms and share stories of its royal residents, visitors from around the world, and history in the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy.

As hosts to a variety of unique cultural attractions and one-of-a-kind experiences, the islands of Hawai'i offer countless amazing ways to craft a rewarding itinerary filled with cultural experiences without having to lose the conveniences of traveling within the United States. For additional information or ideas on how to plan your next visit, please visit www.meethawaii.com.

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About Meet Hawai'i

Meet Hawai'i is a collaboration of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), HTA's Global Marketing Team and the Hawai'i Convention Center (HCC) to reinforce the brand of the Hawaiian Islands as a world-class destination for global business meetings, conventions and incentive programs. The marketing efforts of the Meet Hawai'i team are overseen by HTA, the state of Hawai'i's tourism agency. HTA was established in 1998 to ensure a successful visitor industry well into the future. Its mission is to strategically manage Hawai'i tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with the state of Hawai'i's economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires and visitor industry needs.

Special note to media: HTA recognizes the use of the 'okina ['] or glottal stop, one of the eight consonants of the (modern) Hawaiian language; and the *kahakō* [ā] or macron (e.g., in Hawai'i place names such as Lāna'i). However, HTA respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.

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