



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HANDS-ON CULTURE: FIVE WAYS FOR GROUPS TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN CULTURE**

**HAWAII** – The Hawaiian Islands offer pristine beaches, unparalleled views and year-round tropical weather for meetings and incentive groups to engage with its strong cultural connection and feel the presence of the aloha spirit statewide. Groups headed to the 50<sup>th</sup> state will find tangible, hands-on ways to interact with the thriving lifestyle known to the Islands. Here are five different ways to make sure groups experience Hawai'i beyond its iconic views of tropical paradise.

- 1) Engage in cultural classes found specifically in the Hawaiian Islands.** Many of the event spaces within Hawai'i have cultural practitioners on-staff who can welcome groups with an *oli* (chant of greeting) to ground the meeting or event in a Hawaiian sense of place, and also provide insights when planning the events. Through the agenda, planners might want to include various activities like floral lei-making, *lauhala* (pandanus leaves) weaving, *'ukulele* lessons for attendees musically-inclined, or *hula* lessons for participants eager to learn the stories and culture of Hawai'i through indigenous Hawaiian dance. For those interested in immersing themselves further in the history and culture of these islands, guest speakers can be brought in to talk about Hawaiian concepts and values, as they pertain to the group's needs such as experts in wayfinding, *lā'au lapa'au* (traditional medicinal practices), and *ho'oponopono* (practice of reconciliation).
- 2) Explore regenerative wellness offerings and mix sustainability and engagement into an integrated activity.** While in the Hawaiian Islands, wellness-focused groups are able to weave tradition and innovation into their next event in a multitude of ways such as *pa'akai* (sea salt) harvesting (never heard of this) and treatments or group wellness activities that are unique to Hawai'i. Cultivated in centuries of ancestral knowledge, groups learn how the people of Hawai'i collect *pa'akai* from the Pacific Ocean and incorporate the findings into a restorative spa treatment using those exact salt-collecting methods. For yoga-centered events or participants, options are endless throughout Hawai'i where yoga with horses, goats, during sunset on a catamaran or even with a 9-iron golf club are options to consider. Attendees on any of the Hawaiian Islands can also enjoy a *lomilomi* massage, a traditional Native Hawaiian massage that promotes personal harmony.
- 3) Volunteer with non-profit organizations to give back to Hawai'i with Corporate Social Responsibility.** As interest in ecotourism and voluntourism while traveling on business continues to grow, Hawai'i leads the charge by expanding the ways for corporations to give back. Visit Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park on the Island of Hawai'i where groups venture into lush forests and remove invasive Himalayan ginger plants to allow the native plant species within the forest to flourish under the canopy. Attendees who seek the sand, surf and sea of the Islands, can participate in morning or afternoon beach cleanups through Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii.

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From the mountain to the ocean, there are multiple ways for meeting and incentive groups to give back to Hawai'i and *mālama* (take care of) these incredible islands. Groups can immerse themselves in activities such as harvesting kalo from a traditional Hawaiian *lo'i* (irrigated agricultural terrace) or helping to restore centuries-old *loko i'a* (fishpond). Group participation in these types of activities can foster creative thinking and expand individuals world view.

- 4) **Visit iconic statewide landmarks.** Throughout the dozens of national parks and national historic sites within the state of Hawai'i, each iconic location showcases a piece of history and culture federally-preserved to continue educating those looking to learn more. For the history buffs seeking to learn more about the history of Hawai'i, if traveling to O'ahu, the very first stop to make should be at the 'Iolani Palace – the only official royal residence within all of the United States. State park enthusiasts can soak in the lush flora and splendor of Maui's 'Iao Valley, where in 1790, King Kamehameha I clashed with Maui's army in his quest to unite the islands. For groups on Hawai'i Island, visit Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and witness the exciting and expansive changes to the park since Kīlauea's eruption.
- 5) **Experience Hawai'i's diverse festival and event scene celebrating the melting pot of today's Hawai'i.** The native people of Hawai'i have such an incredible story to tell and do so through countless events like Prince Lot Hula Festival, the largest non-competitive hula celebration. This festival honors Prince Lot Kapuāiwa, who later became King Kamehameha V and reprised hula in the 1850s. Hawai'i is also the home to a mix of various festivals and events that celebrate its diverse local culture like Honolulu Festival, a celebration of the Pacific Rim through art, culture and dance or the Hawai'i Food and Wine Festival. For any group headed to the Hawaiian Islands, explore the many events and festivals offered and learn how Hawai'i is home to many ethnic groups and cultures.

As the hosts to truly one-of-a-kind opportunities, experiences and activities, the state of Hawai'i provides multiple ways for culture to be included into any meeting or incentive event without losing the convenience of traveling outside of the United States. For additional information or ideas on how to plan your next visit, please visit [www.meethawaii.com](http://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 Teams 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. For information about Meet Hawai'i and the hosting of meetings, conventions and incentives, please visit [MeetHawaii.com](http://MeetHawaii.com).

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