

**Yep!!!! I finally made it to Hawaii!!** What a great trip it was too! Bob & I left home on October 22nd and drove up to Bethlehem, PA to join John & Barbara Marciano. We spent the 23rd hanging out together, getting ready. Then Saturday the 24th, we traveled to Newark Airport, via car service and bus. Once we checked our baggage for the bus at Lehigh Valley Airport, we didn't see it again until we got on board the ship.

Everything went smoothly, including the plane ride. It has been years since I have flown. It was ok, but I am not one to sit still very long, so I was glad when we got to San Francisco. To the right is a picture of the Grand Princess and a picture of us outside of our rooms on our balcony. We sailed out of the harbor, under the Golden Gate Bridge and out into the Pacific Ocean.

We were at sea for four days before stopping at four Hawaiian Islands. The first one was Hilo (Hawaii), the second was Honolulu (Oahu), then Nawiliwili (Kauai) and the fourth was Lahaina (Maui). On the return trip we stopped at Ensenada, Mexico, which was a puzzle, until we learned about a law established in the mid 1800's that required ships sailing between US ports to make at least one stop at a foreign port. We stopped there for only 4 or 5 hours, before returning to SF. We did not get off the ship.

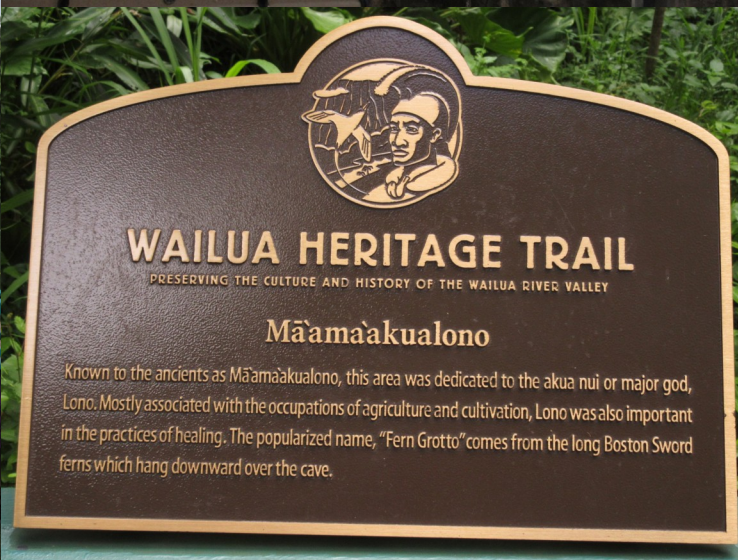
At the first stop, **Hilo**, we signed up for a volcano tour. This is Kilauea's Eastern Slope, the East Rift Zone with craters and cones. There seemed to be steam coming out of the earth everywhere. The next adventure was walking through the Thurston Lava Tubes. Amazing!!

The second stop, **Honolulu**, on Oahu, had much to offer. The tour we selected, took us to the *Pali Outlook*, the site of the Battle of Nu'uuanu, uniting the Islands in 1795. It is also on the Pali Road Cliff Trail (1800's) which was used to travel between Honolulu and Kaneohe, located on the windward side of the Island. The original road is closed now. The Island is also the site of the Memorial for the USS Arizona and Pearl Harbor which was bombed by Japan in 1941. Their were 1,177 men on board during the attack. The remains of deceased crewmen remain on board the Arizona as part of the memorial. Very moving experience!



Of course we can't forget Waikiki Beach. We really didn't have time to go swimming on the beach with the tours we chose, but did check it out.

The third Island visited was *Kauai*, where we participated in the tour to the *Wailua River & Fern Grotto*. We were taken by boat to this location where there was a demonstration of the "Hawaiian Wedding Song." This was also the tour where we participated in a Hawaiian Luau! This Luau was a family run business in a beautiful location on the Island. This was a first for me! The pig was roasted, there was entertainment, and there was a ceremony where anyone who wanted to renew their wedding vows, could do so. John & Barbara had planned on doing so for their 50th wedding anniversary, and we did so as well. Very nicely done!



The food picture on the left is my dinner plate. The small cup contains authentic Hawaiian Poi, which Bob says was watered down from how they usually eat it. Very bland.

The last Island visited was Maui. We didn't sign up for any tours on this Island. We took a tender from the ship to the pier on this Island. Once on shore, we were close to shops, so guess what? Yep, we went shopping! It was here that we picked up a few things to bring back for friends. We walked around the various shops and street vendors, had a delicious lunch and took the tender back to the ship. Below is a picture as we came into the port of Maui early in the morning with the sun showing itself behind some early morning clouds. If you notice on the very top of pages 2 & 3, some striking pictures taken of sun and clouds over the Islands in early morning.

One thing we didn't talk about much yet was life on the ship in between ports. For one thing we were on board to celebrate Halloween. Below, is a picture of a Halloween display prepared by the kitchen staff. We observed this when we went on a tour of the kitchen and other staff work areas. There were cooking demonstrations by the chefs throughout the cruise. The picture on top right is one example and at another demo I was able to get a picture of our waiter, who assisted the chef. His picture is in the corner. In the next picture the people in the back, (tinted in blue) are guests who took advantage of classes in playing the ukulele. In front of them, are members of a Hula class. They put on a show one night. Then at the end of the cruise, most of the cruise ship staff put on a show for us, as well, demonstrating their many talents.

