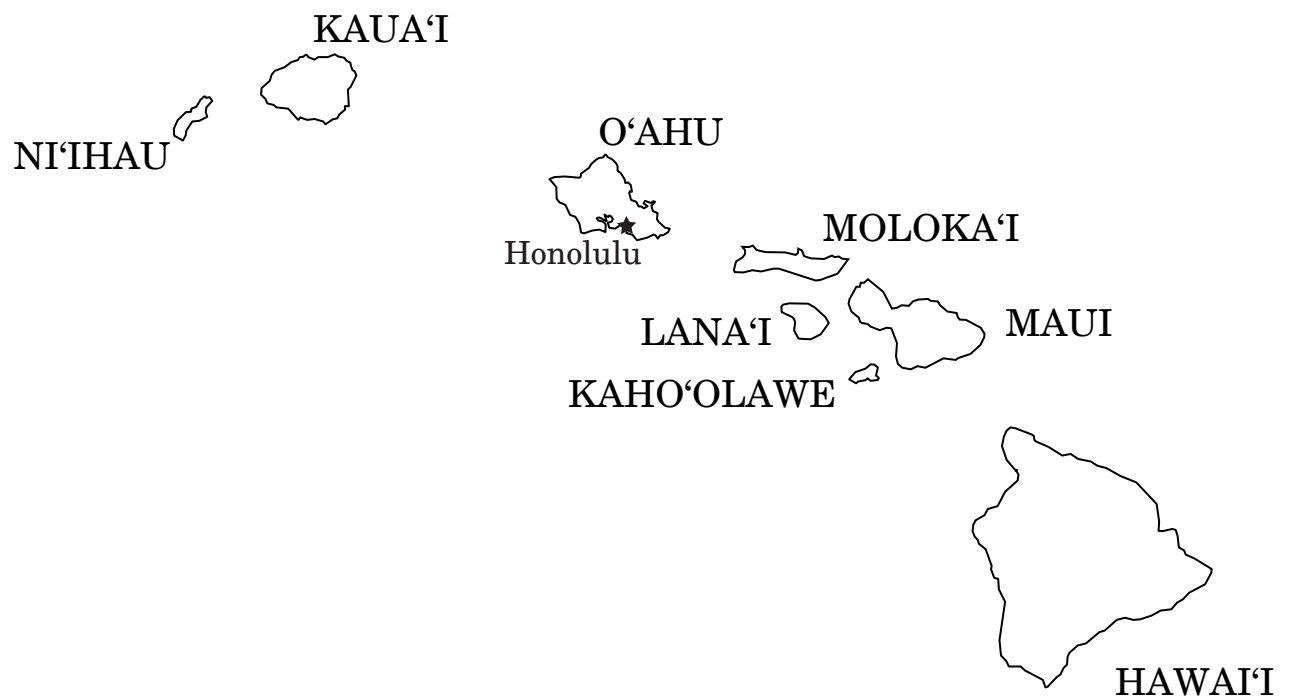


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THE HAWAI'IAN ISLANDS

PACIFIC OCEAN





Polynesian Hawai‘i

Hawai‘i* is more than flower leis, hulas, and lu‘aus. Hawai‘i has a rich heritage with many accomplishments. Exposing children to this traditional Polynesian Hawai‘ian culture will give them insight into the ways of an ingenious and highly skilled people, while fostering an appreciation for those who differ from us in surroundings, aspects of daily living, traditions, beliefs, and values.

Islands—The State of Hawai‘i is comprised of more than 124 islands and islets. The familiar eight major islands are called the High Islands; the remainder, mostly uninhabited lava reefs and coral shoals, are the Leeward Islands which constitute the Hawai‘ian Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

Area—The total land area is 6450 square miles (16,706 square kilometers). This figure continues to rise as volcanism and coral accretion form new land.

Population—Everyone in Hawai‘i is a member of an ethnic minority: no single group constitutes more than one-third of the population. The 1,112,100 people of Hawai‘i can trace their ancestry to many ethnic groups in the world—Polynesian, Asian, and European, among others.

Language—The native Hawai‘ian language, a Polynesian dialect, is the official state language as is English, which is universally used. Many other languages are heard throughout the Islands including Japanese, Chinese, and Pilipino.

Religion—Hawai‘i’s religions are as diverse as its cultural heritage. Along with Christian churches, there are also Chinese temples, Japanese shrines, and Jewish synagogues.



** In deference to the traditional Polynesian Hawai‘ian culture, the above spelling of Hawai‘i has been incorporated throughout this book.*



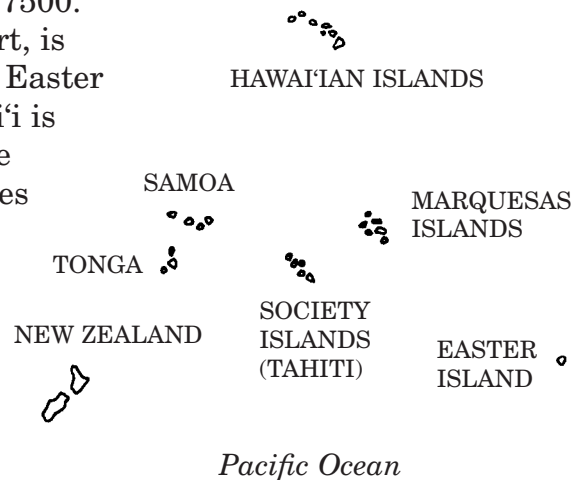
Origins of Hawai‘i

Geography

Sea/Fire/Wind

The Pacific Ocean is vast! It is by far the single largest feature on the face of the earth with an area of more than 70 million square miles. It contains half of the world’s water. In the region of Hawai‘i, the Pacific Ocean is about 18,000 feet deep. At its deepest, it is nearly twice that depth, measuring 35,000 feet near Guam in the western Pacific.

The islands of the Pacific are estimated to number 7500. Polynesia, of which the Hawai‘ian Islands are a part, is triangular in shape with New Zealand in the west, Easter Island in the east, and Hawai‘i in the north. Hawai‘i is more than 2000 miles from the nearest point on the North American continent and more than 2000 miles from the nearest major island group to the south. This makes the Hawai‘ian Islands the most isolated archipelago in the world.



In the Beginning—

“Born was the island
 It budded, it leafed, it was green
 The island blossomed on its tip, ’twas Hawai‘i
 This Hawai‘i was an island.”

(from Betty Dunford’s *The Hawaiians of Old*)

The ancient Hawai‘ians believed that the islands were children of the gods and that the gods made everything.

Modern geologists know that millions of years ago, cracks opened up on the floor of the sea, and hot lava spilled out from the interior of the earth. Slowly, over millions of years, the hot lava built volcanic mountains which grew above the level of the sea. Once the volcanoes became inactive, the mountains were worn down by erosion. Rains created ravines and valleys. Waves eroded the edges of the island volcanoes, creating cliffs and beaches. Tiny sea animals built coral rings around the islands. Very gradually, eight major islands evolved. They are Kaua‘i, Ni‘ihau, O‘ahu, Maui, Lana‘i, Moloka‘i, Hawai‘i, and Kaho‘olawe. (James Michener’s *Hawaii*, chapters 1 and 2, provides a vivid account of the geological history of the islands. See the Additional Resources section.)