

GEOGRAPHY ON THE BIG ISLAND

DAY 1 LONDON TO HILO, HAWAII

Fly from London to Hilo via Honolulu. (Depending on the flight schedule, may need to overnight in Honolulu and fly to Hilo the next morning.)

DAY 2 KAHUNA FALLS & AKAKA FALLS STATE PARK, HAMAKUA COAST

This morning we will head out along the northeast coast of the Big Island, making stops at Kahuna and Akaka Falls with some free time to explore the park. Along the way, we will see magnificent cliffs and valleys and flat lands.

DAY 3 ASTRONOMY & OPTIONAL FLIGHT ABOVE PULAMA PALI OR MAUNA KEA STAR GAZING

This morning we explore the quaint town of Hilo. A visit to the new `Imiloa Astronomy Center is a must-see. The \$28 million, 40,000-square-foot exhibition and planetarium complex is located on nine acres in the University of Hawai`i's Science and Technology Park, above the UH-Hilo campus. In the afternoon, you will have free time to explore on your own. You may want the option to join a light aircraft tour and fly over Pulama Pali for some spectacular overhead views of the volcano and/or head up Saddleback Road to the peak of Mauna Kea. At over 4200m it is the highest point in the state of Hawai`i. As part of this optional tour, you will do some stargazing with an experienced guide. It will almost certainly provide you with some of the best stargazing you will ever witness.

DAY 4 RIVER STATE PARK & HISTORIC HILO

This morning we will visit the Wailuku River State Park where we will see the iridescent water flowing from Rainbow Falls, followed by the bubbling water of the boiling pots. In the afternoon, we will begin with a walking tour of the historic town, and will make a visit to the Pacific Tsunami Museum, which holds great exhibits on the science and history of tsunamis in Hawai`i.

DAY 5 VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK I

Today we will explore Volcanoes National Park with an expert volcanologist. Here we will find Kīlauea, an active volcano, which together with five other shield volcanoes formed the island of Hawai`i. It is presently the most active volcano and certainly the most visited active volcano on the planet. Starting at the Visitor's Center, we will walk to the steam vents and sulphur banks. Next, we will make a trip to the top of Kīlauea where we will visit the Jagger Museum and observatory. We will spend some of the afternoon taking a walk to Halema`uma`u Crater within Kīlauea Caldera where we will have spectacular views of both the inside of this amazing volcano and the surrounding area below. After our walk we will pay a visit to the Thurston Lava Tube for an amazing look at one of volcanisms most interesting sculptures. Later in the evening, we will be walking atop the cooled lava flows and if we are lucky, we can get to some of the areas with "Active Lava Flows". Depending on the flow of lava during our visit, we may be able to see the lava produce a glow as it slowly moves across the landscape.

DAY 6 VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK II

Today we have our second exploration in Volcanoes National Park. This time we will hike inside the Caldera at Kilauea and walk to the edge of the crater. Here we can see the layers of the lava flow left by the 1974 eruption. We will also walk along Devastation Trail which will give us an idea of the re-growth process in this area.

DAY 7 BLACK SAND BEACH & SOUTH ISLAND DRIVE TO KONA

Today depart Volcanoes National Park to Kona on the west side of the island. This morning we will take a scenic drive around the Southern Coast of The Big Island stopping at a black sand beach for a picnic lunch and turtle-watching. The sand was formed from ground lava flows that covered the landscape millions of years ago. After some beach time, we will continue to Kona and have the afternoon to relax on the beach and to swim in the warm blue water.

DAY 8 CLOUD FOREST HIKE, TIDEPOLS & MARINE SNORKEL STUDY

We will begin our day with a hike into a cloud forest to study the botany and eco-systems there. Next, we will return to the water and study marine life along the Kona coast. Here we will also have the opportunity to snorkel among the tropical fish and turtles.

DAY 9 OPTIONAL BIKING, RAFTING/SNORKELLING OR STARGAZING

A day to explore on your own. You may want to sign up for a biking excursion or a half-day rafting/snorkelling adventure to Kealahou. You will also have another chance to go up to Mauna Kea for stargazing! Or just enjoy walking around the quaint, historic town of Kailua-Kona.

DAY 10 DEPART KONA, HAWAII

Today you transfer to the airport for your flight back to the UK.

DAY 11 ARRIVE UK

Your flight arrives back in the UK this morning.