



MINI SEMESTER



**pacific
discovery**
inspiring educational adventures

Hawaii Mini Semester Program

SUSTAINABLE LIVING, CONNECTING
WITH THE LAND AND SURFING

www.pacificdiscovery.org

Overview

Experience epic surf, golden beaches, the aloha spirit, and active volcanoes on this gap year program in Hawaii!

There is an endless list of things to do in Hawaii. From learning to smash open coconuts and making beautiful leis, to stargazing on top of a dormant volcano and heading out to one of only four green sand beaches in the world. Immerse yourself in Hawaiian culture as you discover its fascinating ocean and mountain landscape and explore the incredible jungle, volcanoes, and beaches.

During this six-week program, a key focus will be to connect yourself to the land and the sea. You will learn about sustainable living from local non-profits and roll up your sleeves at a permaculture farm practicing Hawaiian farming techniques. From the land, we'll move on to the sea. You will not only experience the turquoise water of the ocean during surf lessons and a snorkel excursion, but you will also have the opportunity to delve deep into marine conservation with a fishpond restoration project, learning how to protect and encourage the fragile sea life in these pockets of the ocean.





Safety

With our 20 years of operation and more than 100,000 student days in the field, we have an excellent safety record.

We even got voted as one of the Top Gap Year Providers for Safety by students on Go Overseas! Safety is something we pride ourselves on at Pacific Discovery, so it feels amazing to be recognized for the efforts we go through.



Accreditations

We have had our safety management systems assessed and accredited by the Gap Year Association (USA), Year Out Group (UK), and OutdoorsMark (New Zealand). Assessors have commented that our systems are among the best they have observed.



Who We Are

We are an accredited gap year provider that offers experiential gap semester and summer programs to some of the most amazing places on earth. Our programs are deliberate overland journeys, blending authentic immersion in diverse cultures, meaningful service-learning projects, rewarding adventures, wilderness exploration, and personal development.



Our Programs

Our programs are more than simply a travel, time-out or study abroad experience. Each is instead an overland journey of discovery, where students are immersed in a facilitated learning environment, designed to maximize the educational and life-skills potential.



Our Philosophy

We want to make the world a better place by providing extraordinary learning adventures that assist students in gaining the skills, confidence and insight to realize their potential in an increasingly global society; developing empathy for other cultures; furthering understanding of international issues; and heightening appreciation for the earth's wilderness and diversity.

Core Educational Components

Our programs are as much a journey of personal development as they are a physical journey, and participants are supported in reflecting together and thinking about their values, goals and what they wish to gain from the program experience.

PRE-PROGRAM

Prior to program start, participants are asked to create some goals for the program – this is personal and unique to each individual group member. Participants are given a suggested outline of skills and competencies that they can choose to focus upon.

DURING PROGRAM

At program orientation, goals participants have identified are discussed in a meeting with the program leaders. Throughout the program, ideas, tools and strategies are discussed that can be useful to help participants achieve their goals both on the program and for the rest of their lives. Participants are encouraged to journal during the program to assist them in clarifying their thoughts and define what they are learning.

TRANSFER AND FOLLOW UP

At the conclusion of the program, participants give a presentation to their group and leaders, summarizing how they've been challenged, what they've learned, how they've grown and how they intend to apply what they've learned to their lives after the program.

Towards the end of the program participants are also asked to write a letter to themselves imagining where they want to be in 6 months' time and identifying behaviors, habits and changes they wish to put in place. These letters are sent to them 6 months after program conclusion, helping reinforce the learning that has occurred.



Program Design

Each of our programs incorporate the following six core program components. These six interdependent components, provide immense opportunity for students to learn about themselves, to push their boundaries, question their assumptions, to stimulate problem solving and inquiry skills.



EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

Our programs are experiential education programs, meaning that learning is hands-on and tangible. For example, students will learn about a country's history and culture by immersing themselves in it, meeting local people and hearing life stories.



ETHICAL TRAVEL & SUSTAINABILITY

Students show respect for local customs, develop meaningful cross-cultural relationships, learn minimum-impact grassroots travel techniques and come to understand social and ecological issues on a deeper level.



OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

Immersion in the wilderness is an opportunity for students to become grounded, teaches appreciation for wild places and provides us the opportunity to explore local environmental issues and relate these issues to global environmental themes



SERVICE LEARNING

Volunteer elements built into our programs allow students to really immerse themselves in a place and share an experience with local people, bridging the gap that often exists between visitor and host.



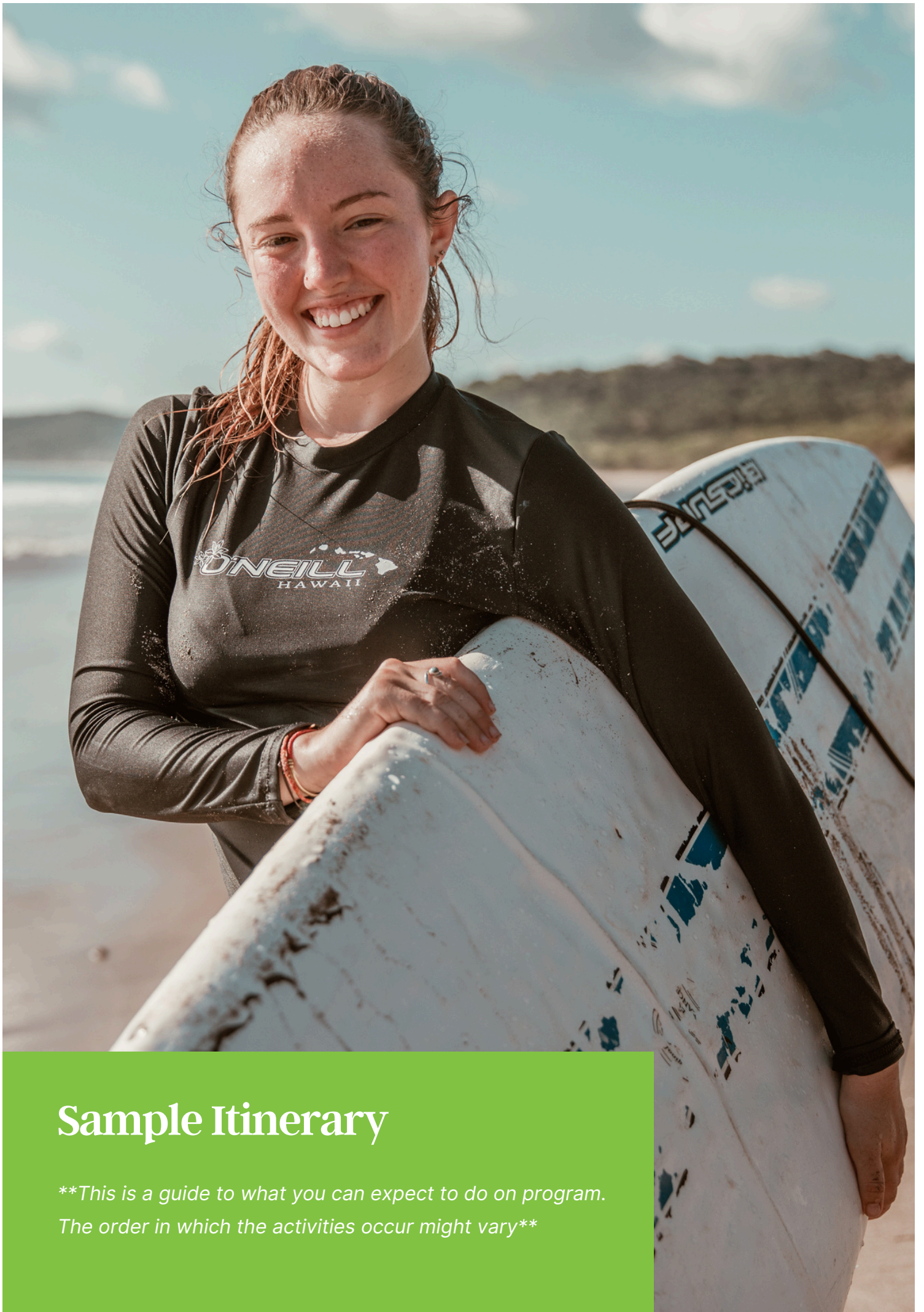
CULTURAL IMMERSION

We immerse students in the local culture, through homestays, volunteer projects and language study. Students learn empathy for other cultures and build bridges of shared understanding.



PERSONAL & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the program, students are given leadership opportunities from facilitating reflection to coordinating the daily schedule.



Sample Itinerary

***This is a guide to what you can expect to do on program.
The order in which the activities occur might vary***

WEEK 1 | ORIENTATION, & HAWAII CULTURAL FEAST

Aloha! On arrival in Hilo, you will be met by your program instructors. We are taking a trip to the small town of Pahala in the district of Ka'u, where we will have a comprehensive program briefing and take a deep dive into native Hawaiian traditions, from making beautiful and delicate leis from the local trees to learning the importance of Hawaiian history and how that has shaped the place we are visiting today. We will even learn the basics of Hawaiian language to get a more connected experience.

Pahala is known for its black sand beaches and abundant wilderness, fuelled by the warm sunny days and nightly rainfall that is common on this side of the island. It's also time to fully embrace one of the oldest Hawaiian traditions, the Imu, a form of underground oven. We'll ground taro leaves, set the stones and prepare the food whilst sharing stories with our local hosts and when it's ready, we'll get to work taking the food from the ground to the table, ready to feast!

There are so many unique landscapes on this environmentally rich island, and the next few days have you exploring one of the coolest! This is sure to be an adventure of otherworldly perceptions, with self exploration and hiking throughout Volcanoe National Park, one of the most unique landscapes in the world.

In 2018, it was also the primary location of a volcanic eruption, which has led to extremely rugged, largely underdeveloped infrastructure. We learn about the impacts the lava flows have had on the local farming practices, and explore the still-cooling lava rocks as well as the stunning seaside cliffs on the coastline. We will walk through barren lava fields and experience exceptional views of the active volcano Kilauea Caldera and a volcanic crater. The adventurous spirits even get the chance to end the day with an evening hike to watch an unforgettable sunset and see lava glow from a crater!

By the end of the week, we will have grasped the value that native Hawaiian's hold for their local land. It provides them with the food which they eat, the water which they drink, and the energy which they cultivate. We will explore one of only four green sand beaches in the world to take in all its beauty.



WEEK 2 | **SWIMMING WITH MANTA RAYS & AGRICULTURE WORKSHOPS AT A PERMACULTURE FARM**

This week, we will travel to the beautiful island of Kona. We'll kick things off with a hike to the Captain Cook Monument, where we will be treated to breathtaking views and a glimpse into the island's rich history. After the hike, we'll spend some time snorkeling in the crystal-clear waters, exploring vibrant coral reefs right off the beach.

In the evening, we'll camp by the beach, enjoying the sound of the waves under a starlit sky. To cap off the week, we'll go on an unforgettable manta ray tour at sunset. Swimming with these graceful creatures in the warm waters as the sun dips below the horizon will be an experience we'll never forget.

Next, we'll drive to Hamakua, an area that used to be covered with sugar cane, and continue with our exploration of local agriculture. The region is also known for the most beautiful stretches of scenery on the island, and you will be amazed by the stunning vistas, tranquil green valleys, and trickling waterfalls.

This week will be a whirlwind of experiences. We'll spend some time at a permaculture farm and learn about the local area's farming techniques and the medicinal properties of plants, hike to the sacred Waipio Valley, and meet the local coconut master who will teach us how to smash open coconuts and use every single element—from the skin to the shell. We will also use some of the vegetables and nutrient-rich ingredients that we harvest on the farm to create a delicious vegetarian meal for the group, while also learning about the importance of minimizing our carbon footprint and building relationships with local farmers.

Seeing the ocean every day might make you wonder about the fascinating living ecosystems that make up the coral reefs beneath the water's surface, so it's the perfect time to learn more about marine biology with a workshop. We'll even get the opportunity to make our very own reef-safe sunscreen!

WEEK 3 | **VOLUNTEERING AT A LOCAL NON-PROFIT**

We head to Kohala, where we will learn about the importance of the canoe in the local communities. Much in the way that the hula is not just a dance, canoes are not just boats in Hawaiian culture. Polynesian voyagers first discovered the Hawaiian islands, and canoes played a key role in the flourishing of Hawaiian life. We learn how canoes were an important part of everyday life, especially for traveling and fishing, and how locals are still heavily involved in canoe voyaging clubs, keeping this ancient tradition alive for future generations.

We are very lucky to be able to spend some time in this area of Hawaii. While we're here, we will roll up our sleeves and get involved in the efforts of a local non-profit, working alongside passionate community members and learning about the legends and land from Auntie K. This hands-on non-profit was founded for research and educational purposes to

discover and understand how Hawaiians sustained rain-fed intensive farming for centuries. By learning about ancient techniques and their connection to the land, we'll gain insight into how these methods can inform our current efforts to live sustainably, bridging the gap between past wisdom and modern-day environmental challenges. Our time here will be both eye-opening and inspiring, as we contribute to preserving these invaluable cultural practices and sustainable methods for the future.

WEEK 4 | **STARGAZING ON TOP OF A VOLCANO & SUSTAINABLE FARMING**

We made it to Hilo on the eastern side of the island, with its rainforests and lush green landscape, it's a much different vibe and energy. We'll spend our days exploring the Japanese Gardens and Coconut Island, hiking to some spectacular waterfalls like Akaka Falls, getting fresh fruit at the local farmers market, and venturing down the mysterious Kaumana caves. We've scheduled our yoga sessions for the morning to allow for relaxation, and to start our days present and fulfilled.

We've also been given an incredible opportunity to get out into the water with a locally run community organization that focuses on fishpond restoration and ocean conservation. We will be working alongside experts learning about the marine ecosystem and how to protect and encourage sea life in these beautiful pockets of the ocean that surround Hilo. We will get to learn about sustainable fishing techniques as well as testing our own skills and trying our hand at throwing fishing nets. Prepare to get stuck in mud and get a little wet over these days!





We will also feel like we're on top of the world... or, at least, on top of the island. Mauna Kea, a dormant volcano, sits at nearly 14,000 feet above sea level. The majority of the volcano is underwater and when measured it is right around 33,500 feet tall, topping it as the tallest mountain in the world. It is known as one of the best stargazing skies in the world, and we will have the opportunity to lay on its summit and view it for ourselves!

WEEK 5 | SURFING LESSONS & RESTORING WILDERNESS DIVERSITY IN OAHU

Time to reset and refresh at our new home base: Oahu Island! We make our way from Honolulu to Haleiwa because, let's be honest, can you consider yourself to truly understand the culture of Hawaii if you don't get on a board and walk the walk? Or more aptly, surf the surf?

For three days we will have surf lessons from a local legend, who is sure to get even the clumsiest and most unathletic of us at least skillfully wobbling on the waves. We'll learn to laugh at ourselves as we no-doubt tumble into the turquoise waters and we'll learn to trust ourselves as we slowly develop the skills and strengths needed to master this graceful art. These days are physically exhausting, so the afternoons will be quite a bit of rest and relaxation, so we've got plenty of time to recharge our batteries. We will also get the chance to go snorkeling in the reef-protected Shark Cove, which did not get its name from unwanted visitors, but from its shape that resembles a shark.

Having traveled around two of Hawaii's islands by now, the Big Island and Oahu, we will discuss the contrasts between the two and the impact tourism has had on Hawaii. We'll spend these days partnered with local communities and experts maintaining and restoring wilderness diversity on Oahu. Prepare yourselves to learn about habitat creation and maintenance, the different species of flora and fauna that live on the island and learn about invasive species removal and its importance in conservation. We'll be getting outdoors and learning all there is to know, expect to get grubby and a little wet during these days of service!

WEEK 6 | SNORKELING, KAYAKING & PROGRAM WRAP

Back in Honolulu, we will be treated to an experience unlike any other - what goes on when a museum is closed (Okay, fine, otherwise known as Night at the Museum. But funnier. And cooler. Unless you thought it was funny and cool, in which case this is it).

We will also give a helping hand to the Hawaiian food bank, which serves food in a variety of ways depending on the needs of the communities. These include food pantries, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, domestic abuse shelters, rehabilitation centers and more. We can make a difference by inspecting the food products, sorting them and boxing them for distribution. We will feel good knowing that we have played a part in ensuring no one in Hawaii's 'ohana' (family) goes hungry.

We will visit Hanauma Bay, a Natural Preserve, a protected marine life conservation area. "Hana" is the Hawaiian word for Bay, and "uma" refers to curves of the indigenous canoes. We will learn about marine life, preservation, and snorkeling with hundreds of tropical fishes and marine life.

At the end of this incredible adventure, we admire the Moana Falls as they cascade 150 feet down the mountainside, and walk around gardens that boast a collection of 5,660 thriving tropical plants and trees. When our feet have grown tired, we will give our arm muscles a workout during an afternoon of ocean kayaking. We will search for secret spots throughout the bay, keep our eyes peeled for marine life and give 'kayak surfing' a go when paddling back to shore.

Sadly, the time has also come to begin processing the once-in-a-lifetime experiences that the last 42 days have taken us on. We are sure that you will reflect on how amazing it was to have a chance to take a break from everything, learn about ourselves, but also prioritize time to experience and have gratitude for our own beautiful and historic culture and environment.

**Each week there will be some designated free time so that you can catch up on email, do laundry, rest, and explore independently with others in the group.*

***Pacific Discovery reserves the right to alter and/or change the order of the itinerary, the focus of the projects, or the activities themselves due to dates, availability, and safety precautions.*



Program Highlights

- Hike through Volcano National Park and watch the lava glow from a crater after sunset
- Explore black and green sand beaches, waterfalls, caves and some of Hawaii's hidden gems
- Snorkel with majestic manta rays in the reefs of Kona
- Kayak around islands off the shores of Honolulu
- Stargaze on top of the highest peak in the world, Mauna Kea
- Learn about conservation and sustainable living from a local non-profit
- Protect and encourage sea life while working alongside experts in ocean conservation
- Practice your surfing skills with the help of a local legend





COUNTRY INFORMATION

The Hawaiian Culture is a rich and ancient blend of ethnic influences and traditions. From them, you will learn the importance tied to many of their traditions, from Hula dancing and lei-making, to outrigger canoe paddling and playing the ukulele. You will also get involved in their conservation efforts, gaining insight into the importance of their relationship with the land. The tropical beaches combined with the magical rainforests of Hawaii will surely blow you away. Uncover the history and culture that accompanies these incredible landscapes as you explore with your group.



CLIMATE

Fall Temperature - Average min/max 70/80°F and very light rain
Spring Temperature - Average min/max 65/80°F and low rain



MEALS

While in your mind you might conjure up wonderful images of tropical fruit platters, sumptuous salads, ceviche and gourmet seafood delicacies, the reality can be quite different on the Big Island of Hawaii. As it is remote and most food has to be shipped from the mainland via Oahu, much of the available food tends to be long-life, tinned or dried, or junk food. While fresh fruits and vegetables are grown locally, they won't have the same array that you will be used to at home, and anything not grown locally can be expensive. Any snacks are at an additional cost, which we recommend budgeting around \$15 per day for. On our Hawaii programs there is a lot of student-led cooking, where in small groups the students plan, budget and cook for the others, teaching them planning and cooking skills, as well as managing a budget. Our instructors will be there to lend a hand with the planning and suggest recipes suitable for the group, and we find that the student-led approach is a great step in personal growth and development, especially in preparation for college life. Your Instructors will lead you here to learn to budget by purchasing bulk foods, purchasing non-branded items and focusing on local foods.

Regular food to expect:

- Breakfast: self-made from cereal, milk, oatmeal, pancake mix, bread, peanut butter, local fruits, cinnamon rolls, granola bars, and eggs
- Lunch: self-made sandwiches or wraps (PB&J, turkey, hummus, veggies), salad, leftovers from dinner, fruit, mac and cheese, rice poke bowls
- Dinner: hot dogs, veggie burgers, salad, chili, corn bread, roasted potatoes, corn and bean salad, rice, curry, poke bowls

Local Hawaii Cuisine notes: Rice is a popular staple and there's plenty of fruit such as locally grown avocados and tropical fruits like apple bananas, papaya, and dragonfruit. Seafood, sushi, fresh fish, shrimp, SPAM - spam sushi (musubis!), and spam or fish poke bowls! Hawaii cuisine has a strong asian influence so you'll find lots of ramen and kimchi.



TRANSPORT

We will be traveling in our own group van with a luggage trailer for the duration of this program.

SUITABILITY

Gap programs are intended for students aged 17 - 22. This program is suitable for anyone of average fitness with an enthusiasm for conservation and new experiences. There is always a volunteering component in our programs, so we can give back to the places that give so much to us. You need to be prepared for some physical work during this volunteering portion of the program; i.e. trail building, tree planting or painting. You don't need to have had previous experience with travel or any of the activities offered.

ATTITUDE

The program is a shared group experience. We would like you to join the program with an open mind and a willingness to work together with your group mates to make the program an amazing experience. The programs focus on group cohesion. We appreciate you for being open to learning and challenging your ideas and assumptions in order to get the most from this summer abroad experience.

GROUP SIZE

Group sizes vary per program and are generally 12-14 students, accompanied by two experienced and qualified Pacific Discovery program instructors. Local guides assist with interpretation of some historical sites, cultural experiences, and activities.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

We have selected a dynamic team of inspiring, supportive, resourceful, and highly experienced instructors to lead our programs. Our program instructors are committed to putting your welfare and safety first. They are people in whom you can trust and confide, who remain objective whatever the circumstances, and who take a genuine interest in your well-being. They implicitly understand the importance of balancing the needs of individuals with group objectives, facilitating a high level of group cohesion, inspiring a genuine appreciation for the areas visited and an awareness of minimum impact travel ethics. All of our instructors have Wilderness First Responder (WFR) first aid certification, and extensive group leadership and risk assessment/management training.

ACCOMMODATION

Our accommodation will be a mixture of comfortable and clean hostels, lodges and campsites. Accommodation is diverse, comfortable and carefully chosen to fit our needs and varies per program.



FREE TIME

Programs are heavily scheduled so that we are always on the move and having lots of structured fun; but we highly value rest and reflection. There will be some designated free time in a town or city each week so that you can catch up on email and laundry and rest.



HEALTH

One component of all of our programs is outdoor adventures like hiking, biking and kayaking, so while you don't need to have done any of these before, you will need to be prepared and have the fitness level to give them a go. If you have any queries regarding health recommendations for travel, please contact your doctor, or a travel doctor, to discuss this. For further information refer to: [http:// wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/) We also recommend you be up to date on specific vaccinations that are required to travel in this region.

We recommend that you carry a personal first-aid kit as well as any personal medication. Please be aware that for legal reasons, our program instructors are prohibited from administering any type of drug. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.



SPENDING MONEY

Spending money usually goes towards drinks and snacks, personal shopping, laundry, email, entertainment, and optional activities. We recommend you budget approximately \$100 a week for this, but this varies per student and per program. The amount of spending money you bring depends on your budget and shopping habits. You need to bring this money yourself.

Optional activities are available on many programs that can add to this cost, such as skydiving, bungee jumping, extra surfing lessons, etc.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

Our students value the opportunity to wind down, immerse in their surroundings and talk to each other. We encourage students to self manage their phone use, and we strongly encourage flight mode. This allows students to still take photos and send updates to family when in wifi, but allows them to be fully connected to the locals, service work and community when they're out and about. You are able to purchase a SIM or use international roaming plans if you wish. The easiest option is to use the WIFI available at places we stay in main cities and towns. Family and friends will also be able to keep in touch and follow your adventures through Pacific Discovery's social media pages, and through an online Facebook album for your group (which your instructors will upload photos to each week).



PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Travel abroad requires a passport. If you don't have one, you need to apply for one as soon as you apply for this program.

US Government Passport website: <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>

If you already have a passport, it must be valid for more than 6 months after program end, otherwise you need to get a new one issued before joining the program. Pacific Discovery will contact you regarding visa requirements and arrangements after you apply for the program.



TRAVEL INSURANCE

Pacific Discovery requires all students to purchase a comprehensive travel insurance policy for the duration of the program. Travel insurance provides cover in the event of medical expenses due to illness, injury, and emergency medical evacuation. Travel insurance may also include cover for loss of baggage or personal effects, and trip cancellation or trip curtailment.

To arrange your policy, [click here to go to our website](#).



COVID-19

COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives greatly, and Pacific Discovery has developed rigorous policies for safety based on professional advice and endorsement. The health of our students is of the utmost importance at all times. We are working closely and regularly with health professionals on our COVID-19 policy, as the situation continues to develop.

[Read our full COVID-19 policy here.](#)



PEACE OF MIND

Pacific Discovery is an educational travel organization accredited with American Gap Association (USA). Since its inception in 2001, Pacific Discovery has taken several thousand students, graduates, faculty, family and special interest groups, on experiential travel and volunteer programs, utilizing a staff of experienced and qualified program instructors. We have an exemplary safety record, comprehensive Risk Management Systems and a database of alumni, parents, advisors and faculty, who are happy to be contacted for feedback. The program carries public liability insurance, and student funds are held securely until disbursement.

Program Tuition & Costs

A \$500 application fee is due when you apply. Upon acceptance onto program, a deposit is due within 14 days. Balance of program cost to be paid 60 days prior to departure.

Included in Program Tuition

- All in-country travel and transport
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All activities, excursions, entry fees and adventure travel as described in the itinerary
- Informal lectures from resident experts on conservation and sustainability, history, and culture.
- Experienced program Instructors and local guides.

Not Included in Program Tuition

- Travel (international flights) between your home and the program
- Internal flights
- Visas
- Spending money (we suggest allowing \$15 per day for drinks, snacks and personal expenses)
- Travel insurance
- Optional academic credit
- Optional activity costs ie skydiving, bungee jumping, and additional surf lessons.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Students should not book their travel until after they have received the flight confirmation email from Pacific Discovery with the program flight requirements and travel agent details. This is sent out 2-3 months ahead of program departure. This information is also made available in the student portal login section of our website.

Our preferred groups travel agent, [The Travellist Co.](#), can assist you to arrange international flights from your nearest regional airport, and return home. We prefer you to arrange your flights through our group travel agent to simplify arrival logistics, and so that you are traveling to and from the program with others in your group.





College Credit

Our programs are a structured syllabus with clear learning outcomes that offer true personal growth and global awareness. As a reputable gap year provider since 2001, we have developed strong industry connections, including two educational institutions which we offer college credits through for our programs.

Pacific Discovery partners with Seattle Central College to offer college credit, a recognized educational provider who offers exceptional study options for students. We have been running college credit options for students for several years now with this provider, and as long as requirements are completed, the system has been an excellent option for students in regard to continuation of study, deferment and easy transfer to other institutions.

If you're keen to explore this option further, please reach out to us using the contact details provided at the end of this catalogue. We'd love to help you identify what options are available to you and support you throughout the process.

Scholarships & Financial Aid

We want to make our programs as accessible as possible. Although we charge the minimum we can for our programs, we recognize that they can still be difficult to fund for many families. Please note that these scholarships go directly towards the tuition costs for the program and do not include assistance towards the cost of international flights. We expect scholarship recipients to demonstrate their commitment to this opportunity by fundraising for their international flights, personal spending, and the balance of tuition.

Our students supplement the program costs in a variety of ways. We encourage you to get creative! Create a Kickstarter, find a part-time job, fundraise. Think big and small. Each dollar adds up to one amazing adventure abroad.

- Exploration Scholarship
- Diverse Voices Scholarship
- Financial Need Scholarship
- Gap Year Ambassador Fellowship

To apply, please go to pacificdiscovery.org/need-to-know/scholarships-financial-aid



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