



Hawaii Vacation with Mom & Dad
September 22 - October 7, 2022



Mom, Dad, Curie, and I, took an 11-night cruise upon Royal Caribbean's *Radiance of the Seas*. We spent the first half traveling from Vancouver, Canada, to Hawaii before island hopping for the remainder of the cruise. Then we spent 3 days in Honolulu. Including travel days, we had 16 days of vacation!

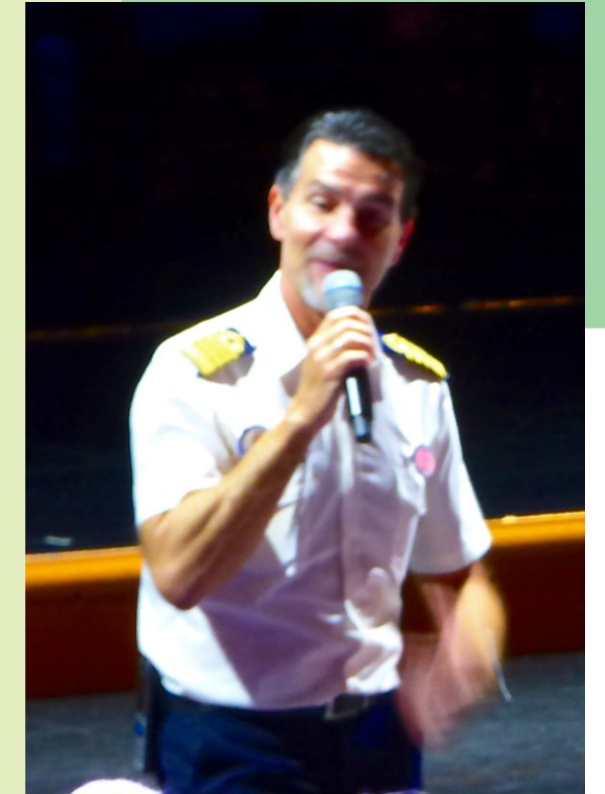
We made it!

It was a bit of a rough start with needing COVID testing and clearance for Curie to enter Hawaii. However, that was compounded upon learning that my passport card couldn't be used to fly into Canada. I had to find to a bus ride at the last moment after trying to check in at the Seattle airport! Thankfully, we were scheduled to arrive the day before embarkation from Canada so it all worked out! We were sure happy to get on the boat though!



Keeping Busy at Sea

As the ship left Vancouver, Canada, and headed to Hawaii, we kept busy! Mom and I colored pictures in the Solarium and went to a card making class. Dad and I played mini-golf. We all went to a cake decorating demo (where the Cruise Director drank more of the liqueur than he put on the cake!) and I went to the Q&A in the Aurora Theater with the Captain of the ship. The Q&A had a lot of people because the seas were rough and most of the decks were closed!



Scavenger Hunt

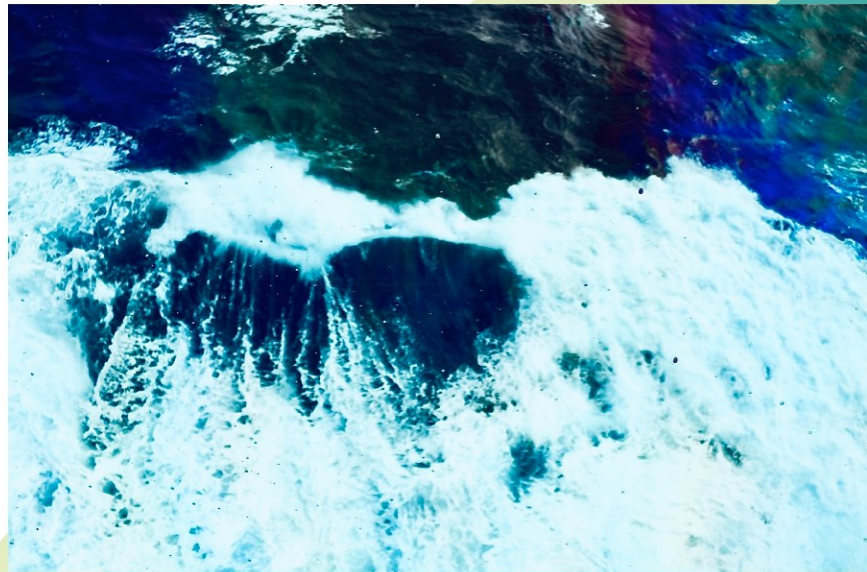
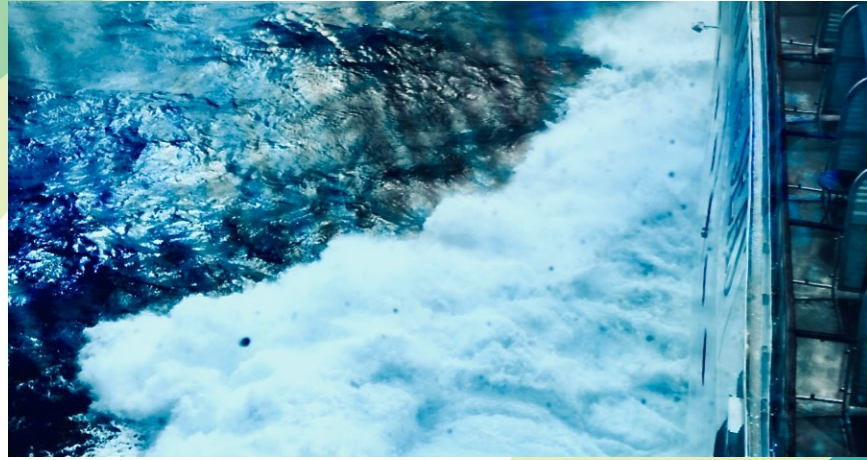
Curie and I did a photo scavenger hunt. We needed a picture with the captain - or be creative if we couldn't find him. So we got photos with this good natured fellow traveler with a captain's hat on, in the rain by the pool, and both of us (now very wet) holding a cup from one of the stores.



Looking Out

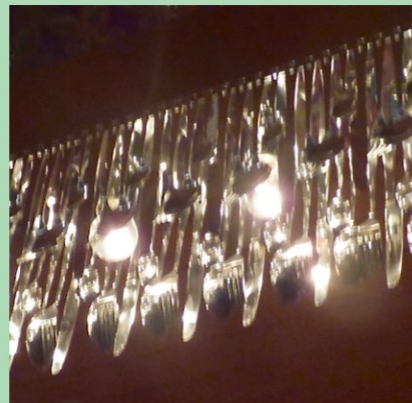
The ocean was pretty smooth with not much to see most days...





... but one day had up to 20 foot waves with the pools sloshing everywhere and the front of the boat causing big splashes! Decks were closed so all photos had to be taken from inside! On a different day though, Dad and I had fun floating on all the big waves in the pool!





Chef's Table

Curie and I got dressed up for a six-course dinner (with paired wines). I loved the chandelier made of silverware.



Menu:

- * Lemon-pepper garlic bread
- * Scallop Carpaccio with Attems Pinot Grigio (Friuli, Italy)
- * Smoked Tomato Soup with Conundrum White Blend (Napa)
- * Maine Lobster, Hearts of Palm, Pineapple Salad with Peter Zealand Sauvignon Blanc (New Zealand)
- * Roasted Branzino and Zucchini with Chablis Premier Cru Chardonnay (Chablis, France)
- * Grilled Filet Mignon, Truffled Potato Puree, and Bordelaise Sauce with Sequoia Grove Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa)
- * The World Ice Cream Dessert with Salted Caramel Espresso Martini



The peanut butter ganache, caramel gelato, and chocolate mousse were served in a hard chocolate "world." Then wait staff poured hot caramel over each one to reveal this melting delicacy.



Taste of Royal Lunch
We got to taste a variety of Royal Caribbean's specialty restaurants' entrees at this luncheon.

Menu:

- * Saint Peter's Spritzer (elderflower liqueur, prosecco, and other ingredients)
- *Garlic bread loaf
- * Citrus Seas Tuna Tartare with mini parmesan crisps (mom had shrimp cocktail)
- * Mascarpone Cheese Risotto with Crab Meat

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Cupcake Decorating Class

I took a cupcake decorating class and Dad kept me company. It wasn't quite what we expected but the frog was cute!



Menu (continued):

- * Filet Mignon and Spicy Jumbo Shrimp (Mom had non-spicy shrimp and dad had branzino sea bass instead of the steak)
- * Fried Cheesecake with whipped cream and caramelized popcorn



*"The Big Island" (western side):
Kalua Kona, Hawaii*

Our first stop was after 6 full days at sea. Due to local regulations, Curie could only look at Kona, but couldn't disembark so she stayed with Grandma while Dad and I went on shore. Then Curie napped with Papa in the afternoon after he returned to ship. We had a beautiful view of the *Radiance of the Seas* from shore after taking the tender to get there!





Historical Sites

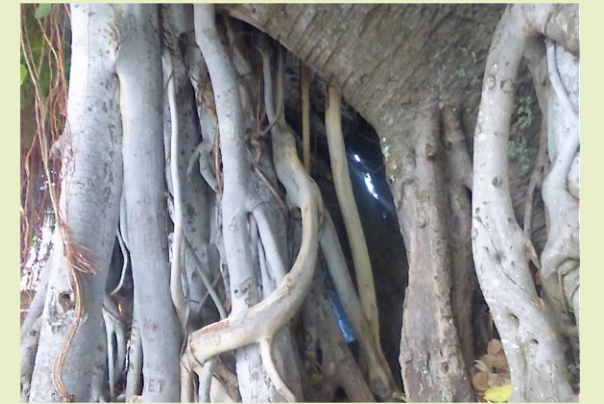
The Hulihee Palace was built in 1838 from coral, lava rock, and native woods and became the home of many Hawaiian Royalty. In 1927 it was restored and established as a museum.

We also saw Moku'aikaua Church, the first Christian church in Hawaii which was established in 1820.



Wandering Around

Dad and I enjoyed a Macademia Nut Kona Iced Coffee and enjoyed seeing the lizard - only to realize there were two when looking at pictures later! The trees were also interesting and a dog riding around on his own stand-up paddle board. I also walked into a shop and realized it was Craig Villarubia's from the ACIM Conference! So fun and unexpected to see him! I knew he lived in Hawaii with a shop but had no idea which island he was on or which store it was!





Swimming in Kona

After having lunch with Mom and Dad, I went back and swam for a bit and tested out my new underwater camera. There was a great little beach right next to the dock so I could swim then head back to the ship before departure time! It was my first time using the full face snorkel and I loved it! I could breathe and see without fogging up (which I took a selfie with while under water).!



Naiwiliwili, Kauai, Hawaii

Kilohana Plantation

We had to wait for a Hawaiian veterinarian to get on the boat and examine Curie which took all of about 5 minutes and cost over \$500! Once she was cleared, we went for a walk.

Later, Mom, Dad, myself, and Curie, went to the Kilohana Plantation which included a train ride around the property. There were lots of animals to see! Chickens run wild over much of the island, and April the Horse as well as Eddie Murphy the Donkey, came to visit as we passed by as well as some cows and bull.



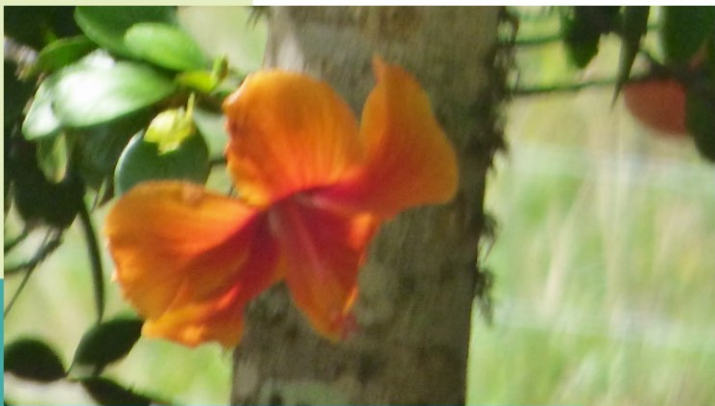
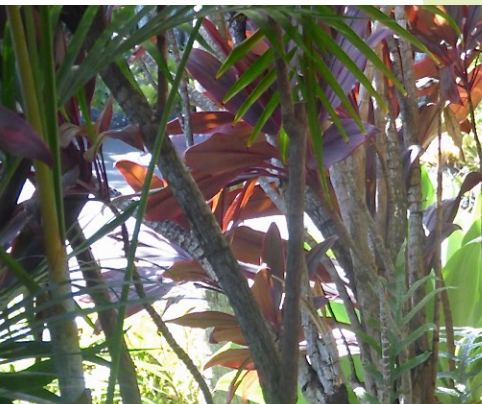
There are over 100 wild pigs that live on the plantation. As many were being born smaller in size, a project to expand the genetic pool has been started with Big Red (top left) being the stud at the plantation while other males were relocated. All of young pigs we saw were his offspring. The larger pigs would take the tortillas and carrots from the babies, so many of the smaller pigs would run away when they got something to eat. Over 350,000 wild pigs live on Kona in the interior areas where the government has limited public access and disallows all development. The striped piglet seemed to be about the smallest and stayed away from most of the other pigs.



Turmeric, apple bananas (about half the size of Chiquitas), coconuts, and other fruits and vegetables, from the plantation fields and gardens are used for research by the Hawaiian University in developing new types, but given away to those in need such as schools, churches, or families. They had a gift store where I got a stuffed (toy) chicken and a rum store where dad found rum cake!



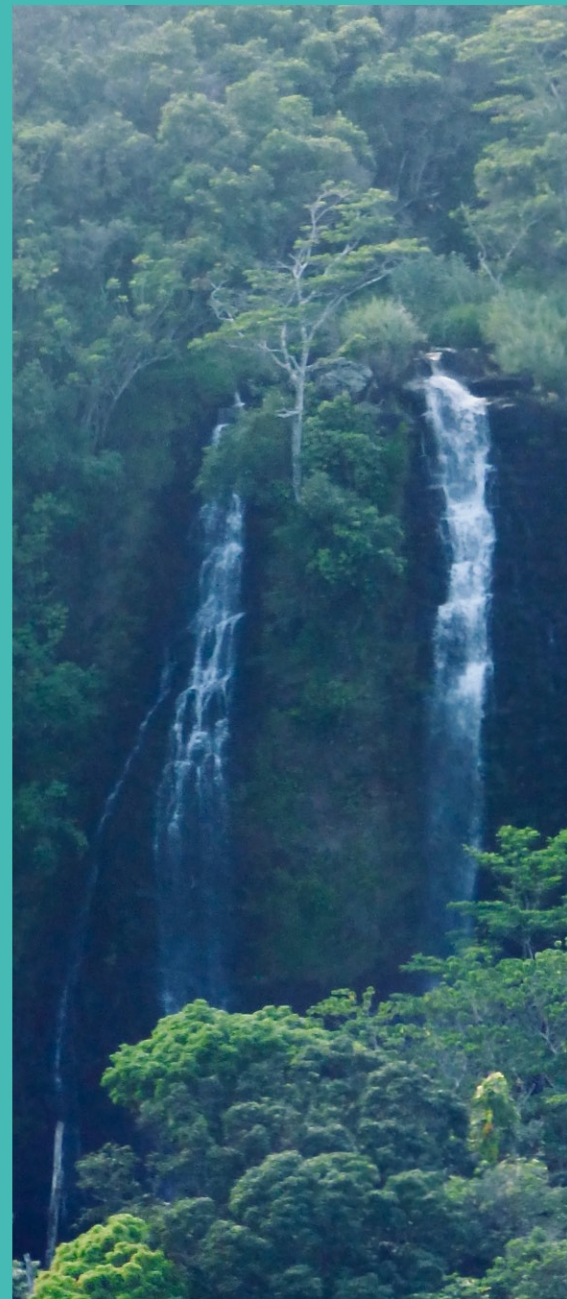
The plantation had a forested area as well with a plethora of beautiful flowers.





Wailua Heritage Trail Area

We saw again many chickens and roosters, a “lava”-ratory (i.e. bathroom made of lava rock), the Wailua Heritage Trail (bottom left), and a 150-foot waterfall on the way back. The Wailua Heritage Trail is considered to be the “naval” of Kauai. Its peak, Kawaikini is the highest point of the island at 5,243 feet. It is one of the worlds wettest spots with 400-600 inches of rain per year. As the tour bus was a few minutes late getting back to the ship, and it took us a bit longer to unload, we were the last ones to board before setting sail for our next island!



“The Big Island” (eastern side): Hilo, Hawaii Secrets of Puna Tour

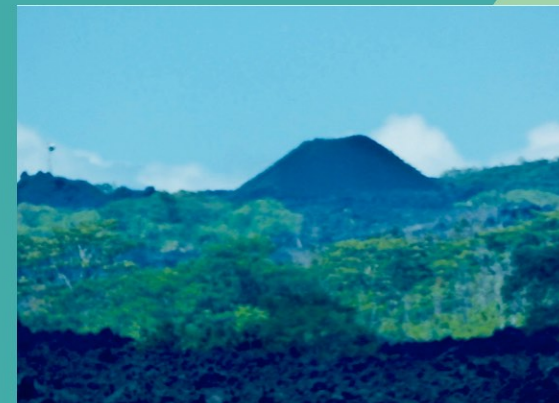
This tour focused mostly on the lava fields created by the 2018 lower Puna volcanic eruption. Over 700 homes were destroyed, 13.7 square miles were covered, and 875 acres of new land added to the island as the very rapidly moving flows moved across the island.





Mackenzie Park

Named after Park Ranger Albert MacKenzie who planted many of the trees (though he died at age 21), It seemed peaceful while we were there. I later found out that the Native Hawaiians consider it a sacred spot where lost souls roam and many visitors have experienced unexplainable events (noises, sleeping bags moving, campfires,...) while no one else was there. Curie enjoyed getting out to stretch plus giggle at the signs.



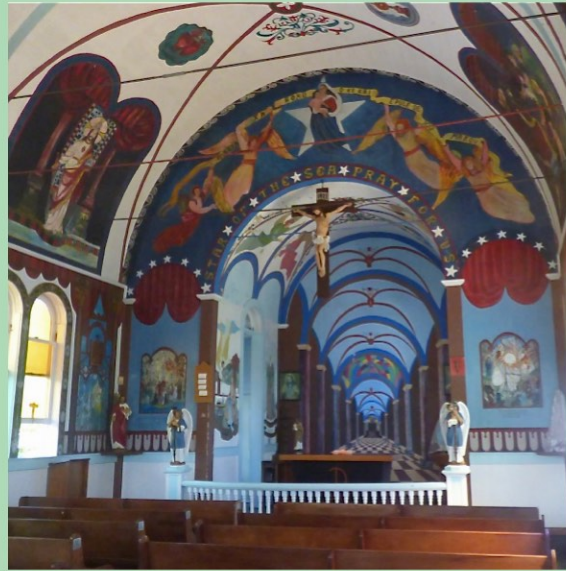
A couple of the volcanic cones from 2018 were visible from the road. Lava flows buried parts of Mackenzie Park, including merely putting an end to the one roads. Wildlife though has already begun to regrow and return.



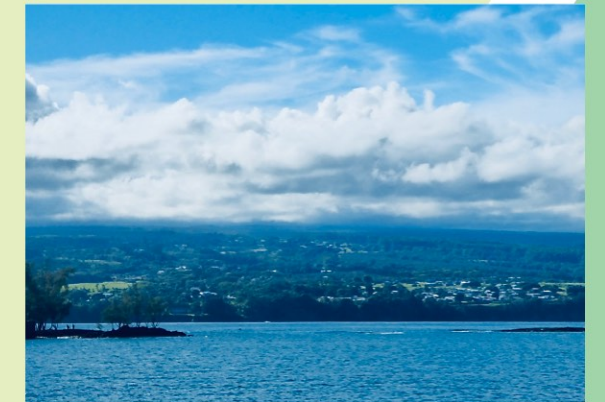


Star of the Sea Painted Church in Kalapana, Hawaii

Built in 1927, Father Evarist Gielen (a missionary priest for the Belgian Catholic Church), oversaw the building of the church and painted the interior himself. Visitors in 1960s and 1970s added to the paintings. In 1990, the church was relocated to avoid a lava flow.



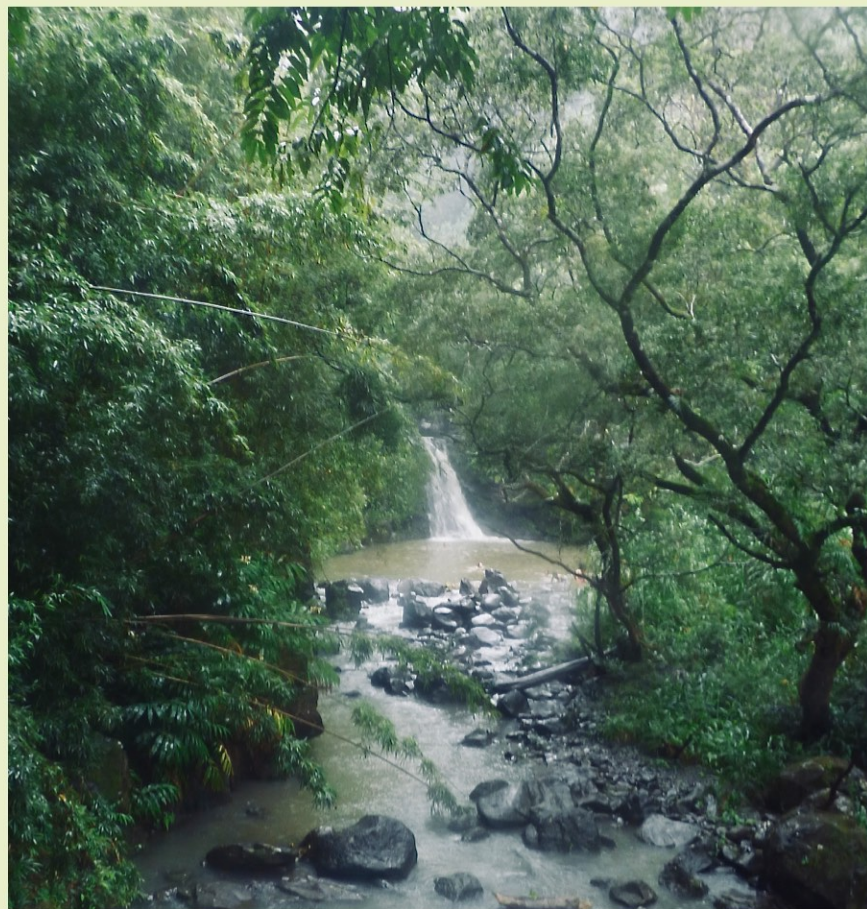
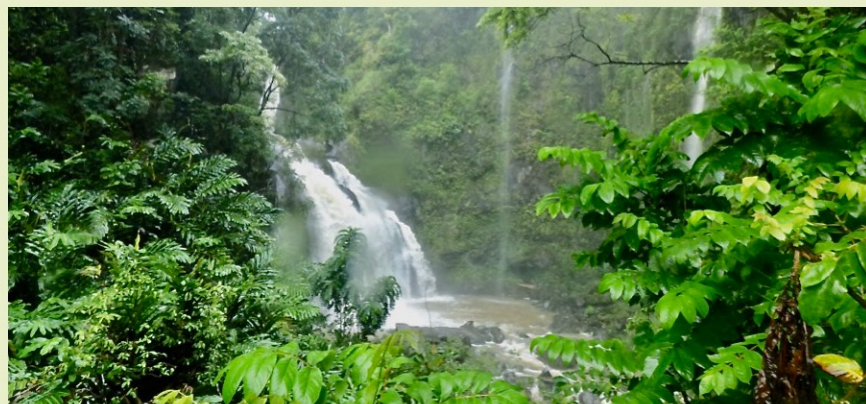
At the end of the tour, we had the option to go snorkeling or shop at the tour company's gift store, but Curie and I just opted to relax on the shore.





Maui, Hawaii *Adventure to Hana Tour*

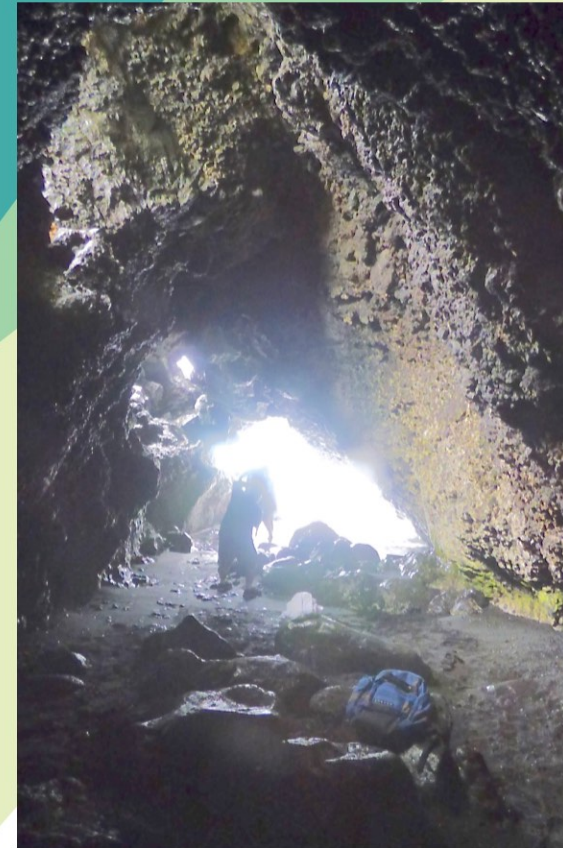
There was lots of scenery including the three bears waterfalls (papa baby and mama), though it rained in the morning. The tour guide picked Strawberry Guava fruits for us to eat on the way.



We made several stops including a banana bread/snack stop, souvenir shop featuring local artists, a church which was the only building to survive the April 1, 1946 tsunami, and our guide picked some red ginger. Some said God saved the church though our driver thought the 2-foot thick stone walls factored in. Unfortunately, 159 people died. More could have died had it been earlier in the day as most were awake when it hit but many thought it was an April Fool's joke so went to the beach to play after there were warnings of an impending tsunami.



We had lunch at this waterfall and climbed into a lava tube at another stop.



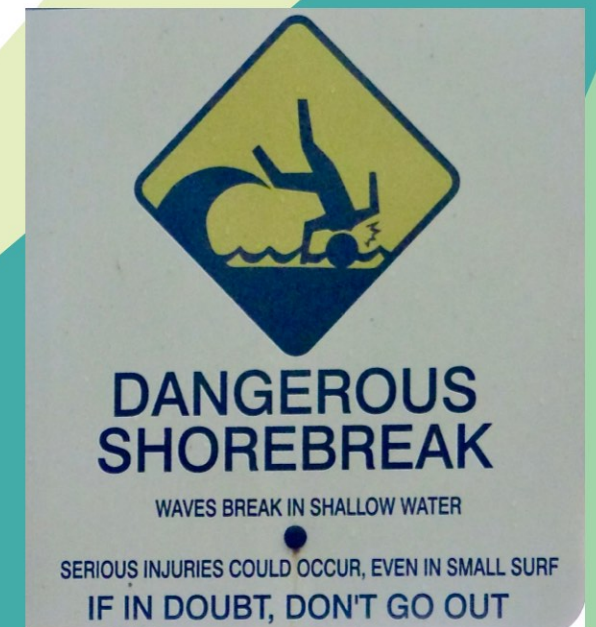
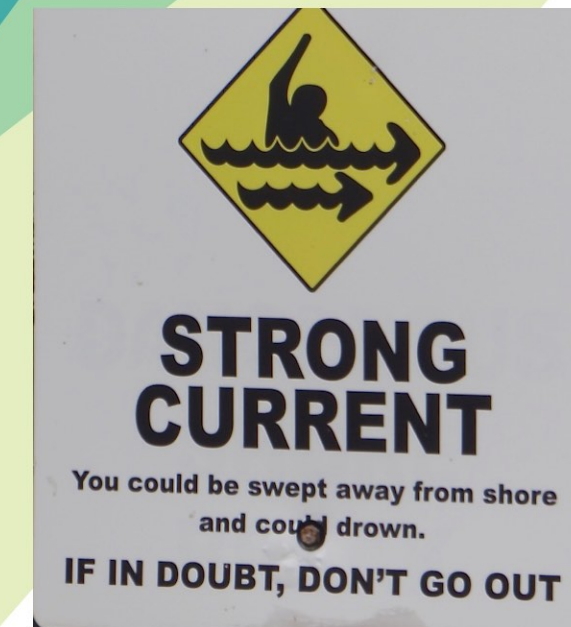
Wainapanapa Beach

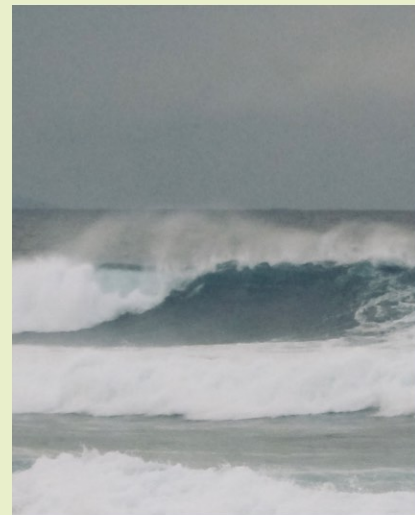
There were amazing views (next page), and also a beautiful molting Hawaiian monk seal (highly endangered), a lava tube that was tricky to climb into but then opened up to the sea for photos, and a private cemetery. The cemetery includes ancient burial grounds with grave sites marked using lava rocks and coral.





At the park was an adorable (feral) kitten as well as several signs that though serious, were amusing in their presentation.

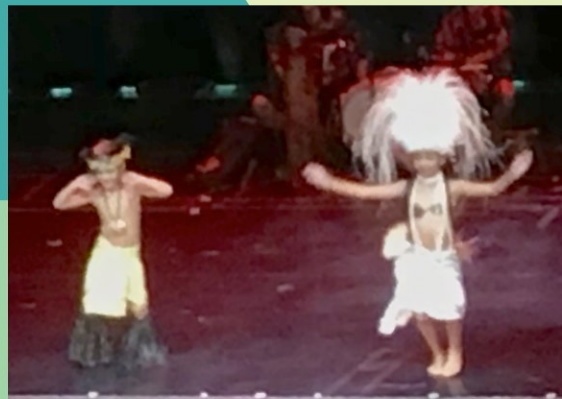




The ride back had some amazing views including waterfalls and streams that testified to how much it had rained that morning as well as beautiful crashing waves and surfers.



The finale was seeing these huge turtles on the beach. Initially we thought they were large rocks (most looking to be 3-feet or more across) but after walking to the other side of the beach, we saw that many of the rocks had faces, fins and tails!



"Welcome to Maui" Show (On Ship)

Mom and Dad enjoyed this show as performers from the island of Maui performed many of their traditional dances including two kids who were ages 8 and 10. I was able to join them after getting off the tender (having been on the Road to Hana Tour) which was a challenge as the sea had gotten very rough and the deck dropped about 14" right as I started to step off!



On-Board Miscellaneous

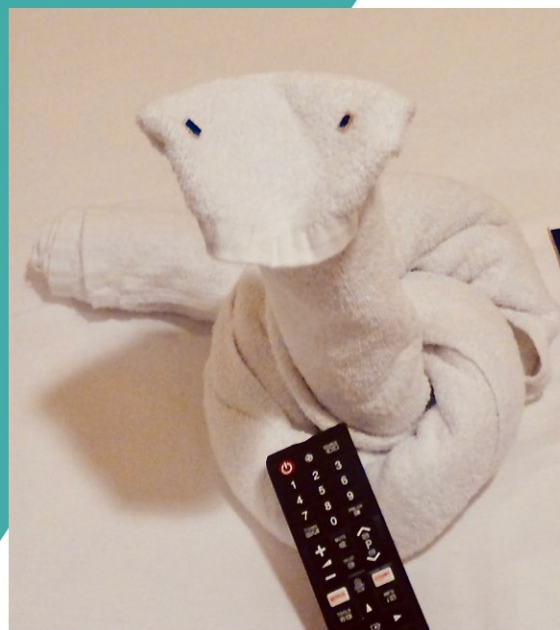
Food was more than plentiful as is always on a cruise ship and not only the captain, but the designers of the cruise line's signs had a pretty funny sense of humor! Mom also thought that the illuminated wall when you exited the 13th floor elevator was pretty neat!





Towel Critters

I always love the humor shown by the room stewards in how they arrange the towel animals that they left for us to find many days! Apparently he thought we would definitely go looking for the television remote so he always left the change-of-timezone reminders on it!



Honolulu, HI

After disembarking, thanks to Dad's Quarter Century Card with Marriott, we were able to stay right on the beach at the *Marriott Resort and Spa*. The room was huge with three beds and two bathrooms! Dad and I went swimming while Mom and Curie rested on the beach. The "breakwater" did cause the waves to break, but it sure didn't keep them out and a lot of the time, the break was totally submerged (see below)!





I was able to take a lei making class and the instructor gave me an origami bird that flapped its wings when you pulled the tail. When we went to M.A.C. 24/7 restaurant for breakfast, Dad and I shared a 5+ pound stack of pancakes topped with bananas foster, chocolate chips and chocolate syrup! We didn't even get close to finishing after having 2 large wedges each!



Ka Moana Lu'au at Sea Life Park

We were able to get upgraded seats to the luau thanks to Groupon. Unexpectedly though, we also got put at the very front of the section so were right next to the stage! The hostess/master of ceremonies kept mentioning Curie, the "hula dog." Curie did look good in her grass skirt, lei, and coconut bra! We also watched paragliders before the show!





There was an abundance of drinks including sodas, water, tea, coffee, and mai tais (especially since we got 3 adult beverages each with our package!). The program began with a coconut tree climber, a conch being blown, and the uncovering of the roasted pig by two guys who liked to pose!



One dancer used just stones and a coconut to start a fire which they then danced followed by several more dances from various Polynesian regions.



Mom and Dad got called up front for having been married the longest of the people there. They were serenaded with *Can't Help Falling in Love with You* from Elvis Presley's movie *Blue Hawaii*, followed by a "re-marrying" ceremony where they exchanged white leis and kissed.



Then more dancing and some with fire! Some were very fast!



Indigo Hawaiian Tours - Swimming with Turtles and Dolphins

I squeezed in a final excursion while everyone else including Curie slept at the hotel. When I arrived at the dock, there were no feral cats to be seen but they flocked in once they heard the van since the driver always brings food with him.



As we departed shore, the crew was amazed at being able to see Kauai in the distance (middle top photo). They said the last time that happened, there was a huge storm a couple of days later. And 4 days after we left, Honolulu was on a flood watch! We also could see the bottom of the ocean for quite a ways but eventually at 3000 feet depth, it was not possible. The crew was a lot of fun!



Everyone kept an eye out for dolphins - plus we had a baby dolphin swimming along side the boat for a bit (first photo). Once the crew thought we'd be able to swim with them, the captain cut the engine and we'd jump out, trying to get everyone into the water in less than a minute before the dolphins swam off! If there were seats available, I tried to stay at the back of the boat so i was one of the first to jump in.



The tour boat company had a professional photographer who got these awesome shots! I didn't get to really see this pod much other than shadows and a fin above water. Since they had a baby with them, they were pretty hesitant to come near humans.



The pod of four however I got to see and they swam right under me at one point! We also jumped in for this pair on the bottom but I was later getting off the boat and missed them.



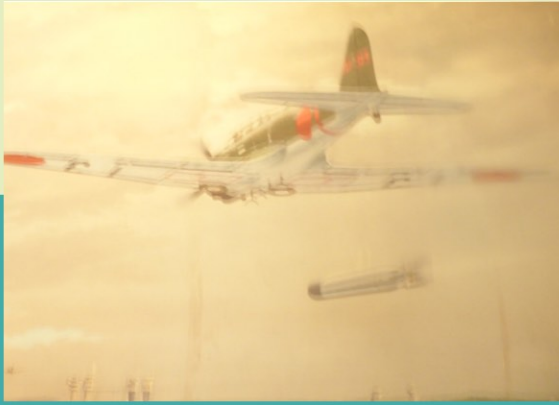
After seeing the dolphins, we moved the boat to an area where we could swim with giant turtles and I got to pet a very small 7-legged octopus that a crew member had picked up!



I had gotten an underwater camera and got some photos but not as clear as the professional's big camera. You can see however my view of the four dolphins as they went under and near me.



The crew made sure we had fun on the way back including encouraging everyone to try to do a back flip (which they termed mine to be more of a back dive since I went in head first), taking group photos, and lots of snacks including a rice and pork bowl with purple potato.



Pearl Harbor National Memorial

Built to remember and honor those affected by the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, that was the catalyst for the United States to enter World War 2. We went inside the museum and then took photos of the USS Arizona and its' memorial.



I also briefly walked by the Remembrance Circle and this “Tree of Life” sculpture. It was made by the *USS Arizona Memorial* architect, Alfred Preis, which he designed in order to inspire contemplation.



Heading Home

Curie was exhausted as we all were and happy to be heading home. I think the deer had a camera on the house since as soon as we got back, they were there looking for corn!



Dear Hawaii,

You were incredible. I don't know when we'll be back but thank you for the amazing memories!

*Love,
Mom, Dad, Curie, and Kelly*

