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Active Kauai Getaway: An Invigorating Anniversary Celebration



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An active getaway in Kauai, Hawaii proves to be an ideal way to celebrate this couple's anniversary. Story by Sandy Bornstein, Images courtesy of The Traveling Bornsteins

When my husband, Ira, and I selected a destination for our anniversary celebration earlier this year, we were seeking an island offering a break from our daily Colorado life as well as a location supporting our lifestyle goals. We narrowed our focus to accommodations in the

When we are all able to travel again, our amazing travel advisor partners will be here to help you. Until then, think about where you might like to travel for your 2021 Wellness Vacation. Here's a list of our wellness travel specialists



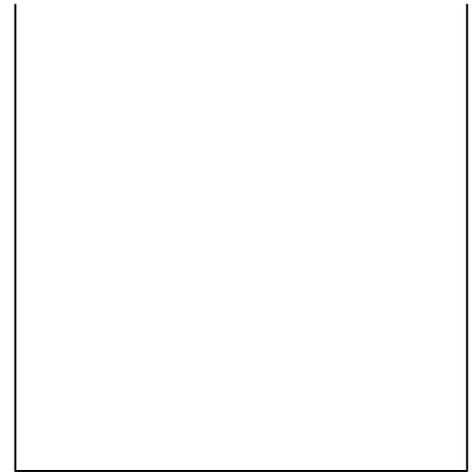
southern region of Kauai, Hawaii so we could enjoy a stress-free vacation with the

opportunity to snorkel in the ocean, sail along the Na Pali Coast, hike in diverse jungle terrains, indulge in local cuisine, and find time to reflect while observing nature’s wonders. Our desire to explore Kauai went hand-in-hand with our belief in the importance of embracing life when faced with an incurable cancer diagnosis. Back in August of 2020, my husband of 45 years endured a craniotomy to remove a glioblastoma tumor, an aggressive brain cancer and subsequently followed the standard of care protocols for radiation and chemotherapy. (Photo: Sandra and Ira Bornstein in Kauai)

Boutique Hotel with an Ocean View Room

Our preference was to stay in a conveniently located luxury boutique hotel with a beach, a pool area, onsite dining, and spa amenities. Our small **Ko’a Kea Hotel and Resort** guest room provided wonderful views of the ocean and pool area. We were able to relax and dine on our veranda as we listened to the waves crashing against the shoreline’s lava rocks.

Disappointingly, spa reservations needed to be made weeks in advance of arrival due to pandemic restrictions and the number of available pool lounge chairs did not adequately match the hotel’s occupancy. Instead of spending time utilizing the hotel’s amenities, most of our time was spent offsite.



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Koa Kea Hotel & Resort Oceanview Balcony View, courtesy of the Traveling Bornsteins

Ni'ihau Coast Snorkeling

Whenever we can snorkel in the ocean, we jump at the chance to view the marine world below the water's surface. In conjunction with a **Blue Dolphin Charters** sailing along the Na Pali Coast, we sailed across the Kaulakahi Channel to **Ni'ihau**, "the Forbidden Isle." This privately-owned island admits a limited number of guests. Our hour-long snorkeling adventure took place in a nearby reef area recognized for its clarity. We were immediately greeted by a Hawaiian monk seal and a pair of manta rays. Scores of smaller fish were visible as we treaded water and swam against the current. While we had no problem adjusting to the bumpier ride back to the Na Pali Coast, some passengers became extremely ill from the turbulent waters.

Sailing Along Na Pali Coast

The safest and easiest way to appreciate the beauty of this jagged ridged 17-mile coastline, known for its secluded beaches, sea caves and waterfalls, is to take a boat ride from

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the Port Allen Marina Center on the west side of the island. As lovers of the outdoors, we oohed and aahed as we admired the unique geological features forming the coast. When we compare our recent digital images to our photos from 26 years ago when we first visited the island, we are unable to detect any noticeable changes.

During this journey, Captain Roy slowed down the boat periodically so we could take photos of notable landmarks. As the catamaran headed up the coastline, we were escorted by a family of playful dolphins. These spinner dolphins jumped in unison as everyone took advantage of an extraordinary photo opportunity.

Hiking in Kauai



Opaekaa Falls from the Scenic Overlook, courtesy of The Traveling Bornsteins

With a limited amount of time and a plethora of easy and moderate trails to choose from, it was challenging to narrow down our choices to three diverse trailheads. While driving through the **Koke'e** and **Waimea Canyon** State Parks, we selected the **Canyon Trail to Waipo'o Falls**. Before the arrival of a tropical storm, the muddy and slippery trail revealed spectacular views of the canyon. The rain started when we were near the trail's

two modest waterfalls. After walking uphill in a swiftly-moving stream of water and mud, we highly recommend a sturdy pair of shoes and a raincoat.

To trek along a shoreline, we followed the **Maha'uлеpu Heritage Trail from Shipwreck Beach** to Maha'uлеpu Beach

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and then returned following the same route. Our route hugged the shoreline so we could maximize our coastal shots. Additional trails zig-zagged into less scenic areas. At one point, we needed to walk on the edge of the Poipu Golf Course and be mindful of nearby golfers.

Eventually, we walked downhill into a lava field and then shortly thereafter approached the Mahaulepu Beach. We located a path leading to the **Makauwahi Cave**, Hawaii's largest limestone cave. After crawling through a small opening, we listened to tour guide, Edward Sills, share some pertinent facts about the cave's history and then retraced our steps back to Shipwreck Beach.

In the East Kauai Region, we tackled the **Sleeping Giant Trail** (NouNou Mountain) from the east trailhead. At various points along this trail, we were able to view the coastal valley and listen to a variety of indigenous birds. Even though we had an early start, overbearing humidity in the heavily wooded forest made our climb a bit more challenging than anticipated.

The AllTrails app states that the trail ends at the picnic shelter, however many trekkers continue to a path leading to a mound of oversized boulders located a bit beyond the picnic shelter. Neither my short legs nor my lack of rotation due to a hip replacement were able to effectively cope with this last segment. Remarkably, Ira scaled the first two portions of this treacherous area to the summit and was extremely proud of his significant accomplishment. After surgery, radiation, and chemo, many glioblastoma patients are hampered with side effects that limit their daily life. Fortunately, Ira's balance, agility, and stamina have not been affected by his cancer or the treatments.

Sampling Kauai Cuisine

Prior to arrival, we had no trouble locating restaurants serving

fresh fish and nutrient-dense foods. However, we struggled to make reservations since some of our preferred choices were not open seven days a week and had limited hours.

After our hikes, **Kauai Juice Company** was our favorite place to pick up healthy snacks and beverages. Our first pick for romantic dinners offering a preponderous of local produce is the **Red Salt** restaurant located in the Ko'a Kea Hotel and Resort. We enjoyed creative fish entrees enhanced with seasonal vegetables and delicious sauces.

Time for Reflection

Evidence of Mother Nature's paintbrush can be found throughout Kauai. At the Spouting Horn Beach Park in Po'ipu, we watched water shoot out of a small hole in a lava shelf. While the best time to visit is at high tide, the blowhole is active throughout the day.

Our love of waterfalls took us to two overlooks—Opaekaa and Wailua— near the Sleeping Giant Trail. While these brief stops were designed for photo opportunities, we took a few minutes to reflect on the majesty of these natural wonders. Other **places to travel to be immersed in nature.**

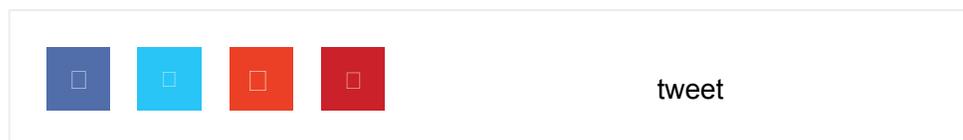
Each evening, we stood on the beach or sat on our veranda to watch the sun's glow dissipate over the ocean. These quiet moments provided time to recall the happy moments we had shared earlier in the day. Our Kauai getaway had invigorated both our bodies and minds.

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When **Sandy Bornstein** isn't trekking in Colorado or writing, she's traveling with her husband Ira. After living as an international teacher in Bangalore, India, Sandy published an award-winning book, **May This Be the Best Year of Your**

Life, as a resource for people contemplating an expat lifestyle and living outside their comfort zone. As an award-winning travel writer, Sandy writes about family, food, history and active midlife adventures highlighting land and water experiences.

The Traveling Bornsteins received a media rate for their Blue Dolphin Charters boat/snorkel tour.



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Wellness Leader, Co-Active® Life
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Online since 2004, Travel to Wellness was the first online travel magazine for the wellness-minded. Thirteen years later we continue to bring you news and information from destinations around the world, wellness retreat and vacation options, travel advice from those in the know, stories and tips on wellness living and more. We also work with a variety of companies in the wellness travel space to bring you the best of what this growing travel sector offers.

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:

editor@traveltowellness.com

ADVERTISING / CONSULTING / SPEAKING:

adimon@traveltowellness.com

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