

HAWAIIAN CRUISE 2018

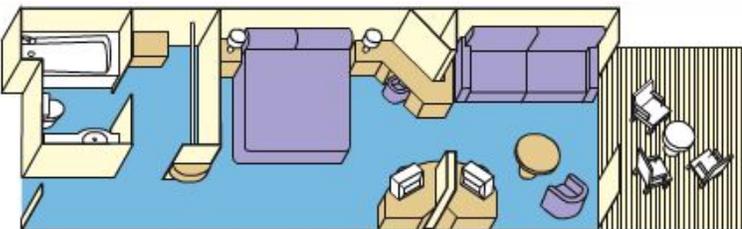
This trip started, as many of ours have, with something we got in the mail. We received a Princess Cruises brochure celebrating their 50th anniversary. We had planned to go to Hawaii for our 10th anniversary, but had to cancel due to some health considerations.



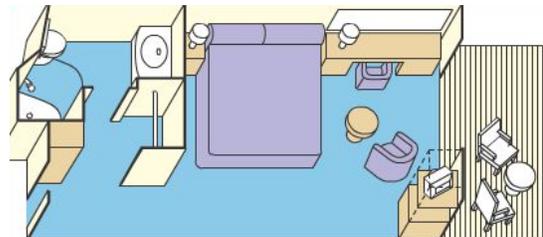
The cruise leaves from Los Angeles on our 11th anniversary and returns there 15 days later. There will be NO airports!

Our travel agent worked her magic, and found us a mini suite in a good location on the starboard of the ship. We normally select a balcony cabin, but for a cruise this long, especially with 9 sea days we felt we needed the extra space. We figured that the minisuite was about the same size as a motor home. The mini suite has a sitting area and a bathtub, plus more clothes storage.

Mini suite



Balcony cabin



Since we are now “Elite” passengers on Princess, we get free laundry service as one of the perks! This means that we can bring fewer clothes and just have them laundered. We also get a bar setup of 8 miniatures plus some mixers. We get them exchanged for rum and brandy.

Princess has a new thing called “Club Class”. We will have our own entrance to the dining room, and will also get 2 half bottles of wine (whoopee). We will have to trade the red wine for a bottle of white, though,

Those bottles pale in comparison to the 10 liters of box wine we are bringing. Remember, this is a 15 day cruise, and that works out to 2 glasses of wine per person per day

One thing we were worried about on a cruise this long was contracting the dreaded Noro virus. Kathy did some research on the internet, and we got on armed with wipes and a big can of Lysol spray to disinfect the room before we touched anything!

Since we had been to Kauai, Oahu, and Maui previously, we did not have plans to take any of the ship’s shore excursions. However, I do want to fly out to Hana on Maui, rather than taking the horrendous road trip. In fact, they sell t-shirts that say, “I survived the road to Hana”. KL had a t-shirt she got in 1984 when she did “The Road” with her late husband. He never forgave her for talking him in to doing the trip.

The Hana Highway has **620 curves** and 59 bridges, some of which are one lane wide.

The one excursion I do not want to miss is a helicopter flight over the volcanoes on the island of Hawaii (Pele permitting).

BOARDING

We had a very easy trip from home to the ship, as it was Sunday and traffic was light. It sure beats flying into the port!

We got settled in our mini suite, and waited for our luggage to appear. Two suitcases showed up pretty soon, and the third one arrived an hour later. We were a little concerned that our box of wine was discovered.

As we sailed out of the harbor, I took a photo of the Los Angeles Harbor Lighthouse, which was the last land we would see for four days.

In looking through the coupon book in our mini suite, we discovered that there was a coupon for one of the specialty restaurants we like, it offered a buy one dinner; get one free only on embarkation day. Since it was our anniversary, we made reservations for dinner. Dinner was great, starting off with beef tartare and shrimp bisque. For our main course we both had a surf and turf, which was excellent. For dessert we had the chef's sampler, which were small samples of all four desserts.

Since it was our anniversary, they brought us a beautiful cake with the Princess logo on a chocolate card.



The rest of the days were uneventful, and I was surprised at how much I enjoyed sea days. We both had our readers loaded with books, and Kathy had a lot of music loaded, so we listened to the music while sitting on our balcony.

We really enjoyed the Club Class dining. We entered the separate entrance to the restaurant, and there is no waiting to be seated. They offer the regular menu, along with a special dish of the evening.

We really enjoyed the hassle free dining. Our wait staff was great, consisting of Robert, Ramon, Michelle, and Crysalle. I joking called them the Four Musketeers.

We also met a nice couple from New Jersey, Kip, and Mary Kay, and dined with them many nights. On the last night before we arrived in Hawaii, we were left some chocolate covered strawberries. We ate them in the morning, as we were pulling into Hilo. It does not get any better than that!

HILO

On my bucket list was a helicopter flight over the volcanoes. We went with Blue Hawaii helicopters. You haven't truly seen the Big Island of Hawaii until you've explored it from the air! We climbed into our helicopter for an extensive aerial tour of the island's magnificent beauty.

We flew over Kilauea's most recent eruption sites and followed the surface activity down to the devastated village of Kalapana. It was once a thriving fishing hub, but in 1990, Madame Pele changed the landscape of Hawaii dramatically. That year, lava flowed relentlessly, burying the town under molten rock. It is a dramatic sight and a testament to Mother Nature's power.

Six months prior to our departure, Kilauea started erupting violently, and lava poured out of a number of fissures, destroying some houses and blocking a road. Hopefully, by the time we get there in November, the activity will subside. Unfortunately, the activity subsided so much that the lava withdrew down the mouth of the volcano, so all we saw was a big hole. The summit crater floor sunk 1,500 feet (460 meters), and the overall Kilauea caldera widened — expanding more than 1 square mile, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. It quadrupled in size as lava drained out of the active vent.

During Eruption



Now



Photos of the lava flows were just not interesting from the air. They just looked like big patches of black.

HONOLULU (OAHU)

I just learned there was a Hawaiian Railroad Society on Oahu. I went to their website and found we will be there on the day they give train rides. I also found they operate a switch engine very similar to the one I am restoring. I offered them the manual I had for their engine, and in return, got an invitation from the Operations Manager to tour their facility.

We took Lyft from Honolulu to Ewa, where the railroad was located. I had not used the Lyft app that often, so I just put the town in instead of the railroad site. The map on the RR site showed the road straight, but it wound around quite a bit.

We did find the place, finally, and met with one of the members. He took me on a tour of the engine house, and after looking at their switch engine, it was apparent it was unlike ours.

I did take some photos, however of the control panel and the electrical compartment. I then toured the rest of the site, and took photos of some of their historical display engines.



After touring the trains, we got on the open air carriages to ride on the “Ice Cream Train”. It was a delightful 2 hour ride, stopping at the “Two Scoops” ice cream parlor. The turnaround point was near a park with a great view of the mountains in the background.



KAUAI

We had vacationed 3 times on Kauai previously, and loved it. We found out that Enterprise has shuttles every 15 minutes from the pier to their rental car lot. We booked a Mustang Convertible again, but did not have to worry about our luggage this time.

We drove west from Lihue, and stopped at a lookout over Waimea canyon. In our 3 trips here, we never stopped for some reason.



We then continued to Port Allen, where Kathy needed to buy some hair spray. Unfortunately, like a lot of businesses; it was closed because it was Sunday. To make lemonade out of the situation, we found a local restaurant and enjoyed a nicely prepared and seasoned lunch.

From there we drove to Poipu, on the southern coast, where we had stayed on previously. We drove some of the local roads, reminiscing about past visits, and then headed back towards Lihue.

On our way back, we stopped at the Kilohana Plantation to speak to the man who does the maintenance on their switch engine. He had previously written me when I was looking for advice on restoring a similar switch engine.

I met both Lou, the maintenance man, who gave me a contact for parts in California. I also met Bruce, who was the engineer, and let me climb into the cab to take some pictures.

After meeting the trainmen, we headed back to the Enterprise drop off. I am still learning things on my smartphone, and discovered a GPS app that got us back to the drop off place with no problem. We were lucky enough to catch the hourly shuttle back to the ship.

After we got on board, we discussed coming back to Kauai on vacation again, as we enjoy the island so much.



LAHINA (MAUI)

Rather than taking a horrendous 9 hour round trip in a van from the ship to Hana, I have arranged for Maui Aviators to fly us there in 20 minutes. Since it was an hour drive from Lahaina to the Kahalui Airport, I thought we could be picked up at the Kapalua Airport, which is very close to Lahaina. Unfortunately, the airport is off limits to General Aviation airplanes, so we have to go to Kahalui. I contacted Lyft, and they confirmed they have drivers in Hana. We will be picked up at the Hana airport and can take some time to wander the town. After that we are going to take a scenic air tour of Maui, similar to the one we took when Kathy's son was married.

Well, the wheels came off a bit, as there is NO cell service in Hana. We tried booking a car in Hana with Lyft, but had no luck. We still plan to land there to see if there is any transportation into town.



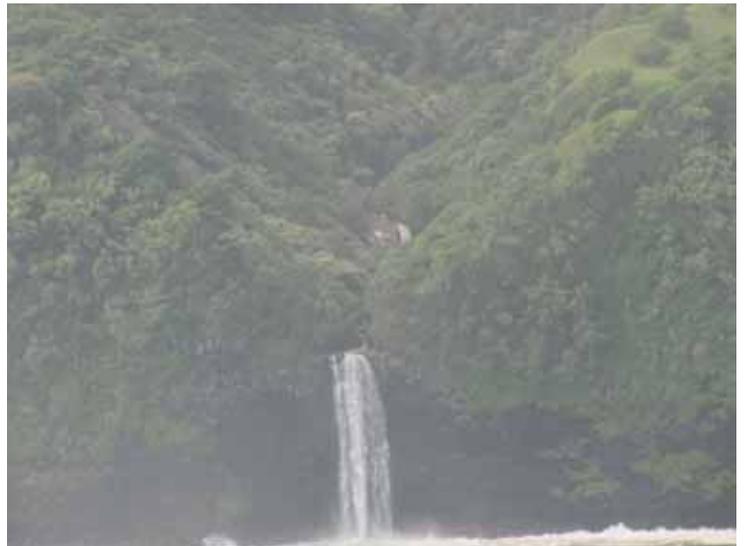
We climbed into the plane, with me in the back, and Kathy in the copilot's seat. We took off and headed east around the shore of the island. It was a beautiful, sunny day, and very smooth. We first flew past Paia beach, then Ho'okipa Beach



Continuing around the island clockwise, we passed Kapakulua Point and Huelo Beach



There were many beautiful waterfalls along the coast, and below is a sampler of four of them.



Kathy loves waterfalls, and seeing the double ones and the one with multiple cascades was a treat for her.



One of the most interesting formations was called "Jurassic Rock". It is a small island offshore that looks like a brontosaurus.



We landed at the Hana Airport, and our pilot went into the little terminal to see about transportation. Kathy and I discussed the issue, and decided it was too risky to depend on some locals taking us to and from the town. So we got back in the plane after I took a photo of the "terminal" and continued clockwise around Maui.

I was lucky to get a photo of the lower of the seven sacred pools, which is always a stop on the road tour.



I also got some photos of the “Road to Hana”, one showing a gentle curve, and the other showing a sharp curve and one of the over 50 bridges.



We then flew over the central valley of Maui, and landed back at Kahalui Airport. All in all, it was a fantastic flight, costing less than the road trip and we got to see so much more.

We then took Lyft back to Lahaina for lunch, eating at a restaurant near the tender dock. We both had Kalua pork sliders, and fish tacos, which were delicious.

After lunch Kathy visited some nearby shops and bought a mumu and a lei for our granddaughter's birthday. She also found a cute outfit for herself.

We sat in the restaurant waiting for the tender line to shorten, and then motored back to the ship. That was the last land we will set foot on for five days, until we arrive in Ensenada,

AT SEA

We had 5 sea days on the way to Ensenada, so a group organized a “Slot Pull” one day. We had 28 people join, and it was a lot of fun, with everyone cheering each player on. We each put in \$15, and got 5 pulls. We let the total ride, until after the last player finished, and we ended up with over \$500! The money was divided up, and we each got \$18! The one player who won the most on his pulls also got the difference between \$504 and the total winnings.

ENSENADA

The only reason we stopped at Ensenada is because of an 1886 stupid law called the Passenger Vessel Services Act. This law was enacted to prevent foreign flagged vessels from carrying passengers from one US port to another. It was designed to protect US flagged vessels from foreign competition.

Well, other than river steamboats and one Hawaiian ship there are no US flagged vessels. The law requires a stop at a foreign port, so Ensenada being the closest to Los Angeles, we have to stop there.

There are 2 famous bars in town, Hussongs and Papas & Beer. On a previous cruise that stopped in Ensenada, I watched a young lady literally being poured back on the ship and wheeled to her cabin.

FINAL THOUGHTS

All in all, it was a great cruise, and we found we could deal with the sea days. As usual, the food was well prepared, well presented, and bland. One menu item that had not changed since my first cruise on Princess in 1988 was the sweetbreads in a patty shell. It was served in a cream sauce with mushrooms, and I think I found 2 small pieces of sweetbreads.

The best seasoned meals we had were on shore, one on Kauai, and one on Maui.

This Hawaiian trip story will be the last one to be posted on this website because the web development software we used here is being cancelled.

We would have to create a new website from scratch to include all of our past travels and because we will not be traveling as much, it is too much trouble to do that.

After 12 years, 41 countries, 51 trips, 500 travel days, and 17 cruises, we are done with lengthy travels. All our previous trip stories will remain here, however. We thank everyone who has had the interest to read them, and travel with us.

We are not done with traveling, but we will take short trips paced at our leisure.

“Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.”

Enjoy your own journeys as we have enjoyed ours.

Fondly

Steve & Kathy

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