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The Costco Connection

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By Kate Parham

IT'S NO SURPRISE that Hawaii, with its pristine beaches, gorgeous mountain views and relaxing lifestyle, is one of the world's top travel destinations. But it can be tough to decide which island to visit first. (Hint: The best Hawaiian vacation involves stops at several islands.) So *The Costco Connection* sat down with two Hawaii experts—Les Enderton, executive director of the Oahu Visitors Bureau, and Keli'i Brown, director of public relations for the Maui Visitors Bureau, to take the guesswork out of planning a Hawaiian vacation. Here's what you need to know.

Costco Connection: *Oahu is home to the state capital, the legendary waves of the North Shore and Waikiki Beach. But what makes Oahu truly different from the other islands?*

Les Enderton: What's really different is the town-and-country effect. Honolulu is a major city with close to a million people, but it's surrounded by country. You're always 10 minutes away from a beach, a tropical rain forest, the mountains or the city.



MAUI VISITORS BUREAU

CC: *Maui, the second-largest island, is home to incredible beaches, Haleakala and the winding road to Hana. But what really sets Maui apart from the other islands?*

Keli'i Brown: Maui combines the best of Oahu—top-tier shopping and restaurants—and one of our remote and more relaxed islands, like Kauai. You can watch [the] sunrise atop Haleakala in the morning and be lying on the beach sipping a mai tai by noon. We have incredible lush and verdant valleys, spectacular sunsets and fantastic beaches.

CC: *Fill in the blank: Maui is the perfect place to visit if you like ...*

KB: Pristine and accessible beaches.

CC: *Oahu is the perfect place if you like ...*

LE: To experience a complete island getaway. There's so much to see and do, with a very complete range of activities, sights, great places to stay and eat.

CC: *Oahu is known for its ...?*

LE: Dining scene. People travel on their stomachs, and we recognize that. We've got tons of restaurants outside the tourist areas, and a large element of choice. From lunch trucks to five-star, James Beard Award winners, like Alan Wong's, Town and Roy's.

CC: *And what about Maui?*

KB: The humpback whales who visit every winter to mate and give birth.

CC: *On a recent trip to Maui, I really enjoyed taking in the beauty at Haleakala National Park, snorkeling with the sea turtles and driving the winding Hana road. What are some of Oahu's most popular attractions?*

LE: Travelers really love to see the USS Arizona Memorial and Pearl Harbor, which is the largest natural harbor in Hawaii and the only naval base in the U.S. to be designated as a National Historic Landmark. The USS Missouri Memorial is also really popular.

CC: *In Maui, certain hotels cater to different travelers, with romantic, luxury resorts, more family-friendly spots or remote spots to really unplug and relax. Do the same rules apply in Oahu?*

LE: Definitely, we've got something for everybody. You can stay at an economical hotel or condo, or really go the limit at [a] luxury resort. Some specialize a bit more in family resorts.

CC: *What are some of your favorite dining spots in Maui?*

KB: My personal favorites include Ko at the Fairmont Kea Lani, Pineapple Grill, Lahaina Grill and Sarento's on the Beach. 🍷

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