

The Bishop Museum in Oahu: Things to Do While Visiting Aulani

by Cheryl Pendry, *PassPorter Featured Columnist*

If you're staying at Aulani, there are plenty of things to do and places to visit on O'ahu, and in this series of articles, I'll be exploring some of them.

These articles also aim to give those of you lucky enough to be on the Disney Wonder sailings in September, which head for Hawai'i an idea of what you could do either after or prior to your cruise, because of course you will be adding some time on to explore O'ahu, won't you?

One of the places I knew I wanted to visit was the Bishop Museum or to give it its full name the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, which is in the outskirts of Honolulu. If you want to visit the museum and you're coming from Aulani, you'll either need to take a taxi or have a rental car, as the only buses that run here come from Waikiki, where most of Oahu's hotels are located. It's not cheap at \$19.95/adults, \$16.95/seniors aged 65 and over, \$14.95/children aged 4-12, although it is free for children aged 3 or under.

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□It sounds like a lot of money, so is it worth it? Undoubtedly yes. To give you some background on this place, it was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in honour of his late wife, Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, hence the full name of the museum today. As her name suggests, she was a member of royalty, but more than that, she was the last descendant of the royal Kamehameha family. As such, she had a massive collection of Hawaiian heirlooms, and artefacts, and that's what the museum was first established for. Of course, over the years, the collection has grown considerably.

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□The place to head for in this complex is the stunning Hawaiian Hall, a beautiful building that's home to a multitude of items that take you through the history of the islands. We started out by learning about the kahili, otherwise known to us as the feather standards of the chiefs of the islands. The display also talked you through the history of the Hawaiian royal family, fascinating, especially given it was America's only taste of Royalty.

The picture gallery of the Hawaiian Hall is the centrepiece of the museum, rising three floors high around the sides, with a massive central area. Look up and you'll see life size fish and sea mammals hanging above you. It's an impressive sight, and as we walked in, I could just imagine those first Victorian visitors coming in here, jaws dropping

in amazement at what awaited them.

□ We wandered around the first floor, learning all about the Hawaiian gods, legends, and beliefs of the islands before there was any contact from the outside world. It certainly brought home to us just how isolated Hawai'i is from the various maps, showing its location, and it's no wonder that it was undiscovered for so many years. One floor up, and you learn about people's lives and their work, and then on the third floor, it takes you through key moments in Hawaiian history. Personally, I found this floor to be the most interesting, learning about changes in the recent past, and it gave me a really good understanding of the history and heritage of this amazing part of the world.

□ The Pacific Hall is the museum's newest offering, and here it widens out to look at more than just Hawai'i, exploring all the islands of Polynesia. I have to confess that this is a part of the world that I didn't know much about, so I certainly learnt a lot from this exhibition. Before we went through this, I had no idea how many islands made up Polynesia.

□ There was a lot more to explore at the Bishop Museum, but I need to say here that we were visiting on a holiday, Memorial Day, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the place was packed. In fact, when we'd arrived, not that long after opening, the car park was already full, which gives you an idea of just how popular a place this is for visitors. It's also worth knowing that this is somewhere that's perfect for kids. It may not sound like it from my description, but bear in mind that as a party of just two adults, we wanted to learn about the history of the islands, and the temporary exhibitions, which tend to be more family orientated, didn't hold much interest for us.

□ At the time of writing this article, to give you an idea of the type of temporary exhibits they have, the Bishop Museum was hosting Dinosaurs Unleashed, home to more than a dozen life-like animatronic dinosaurs, sure to be popular with the younger members of the family. Previous exhibits have included Scream Machines, which looked at the science of roller coasters, and LEGO Travel Adventures.

□ One thing I will say here is that the food offerings weren't fantastic. We ate at the Cafe Pulama, which wasn't easy to find, and what we ate here wasn't great either. It's also a very small place, so be sure to try and head there out of peak period. We ate before 11:30am, and already it was packed out.

□ It's also worth knowing that, from the Bishop Museum, you also get some amazing views of the Honolulu skyline in the distance, which

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makes sitting outside, if it's a pleasant day, a very nice experience.

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□All in all, while it's pricey to visit, the Bishop Museum is a fascinating place to explore, particularly, if like us, you want to learn more about the history of the Hawaiian islands.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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