

# DISNEY DOES HAWAII – AND HOW!

**Aulani provides your clients with idyllic family vacations celebrating the destination's beauty, history and welcoming spirit**

by Katherine Rodeghier

**T**he first thing your clients should know about Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa is this: It's not in a theme park. Aside from character breakfasts and dinners, your clients may never see Mickey and friends.

What they will see at this sophisticated property, which is set on the leeward coast of Oahu, is an authentic slice of Hawaiian culture. Guides leading walking tours of the resort point out the property's pieces from one of the world's largest collections of native Hawaiian art, as well as elements of Hawaiian architecture and decorative motifs.

Aulani's two 15-story towers form a "V" facing the ocean and share a sheltered beach with the Four Seasons Resort Oahu next door. Guests are removed from the crowds of Waikiki yet close enough to enjoy the wonders of the island.

**Fanciest and Most Common Accommodations:** In all, the resort houses 351 guestrooms, including 16 suites, and offers 481 villas, which are part of the Disney Vacation Club. The largest accommodations are the three-bedroom grand villas, which measure 2,100 square feet and sleep 12. The smallest standard rooms measure 382 square feet and sleep four.

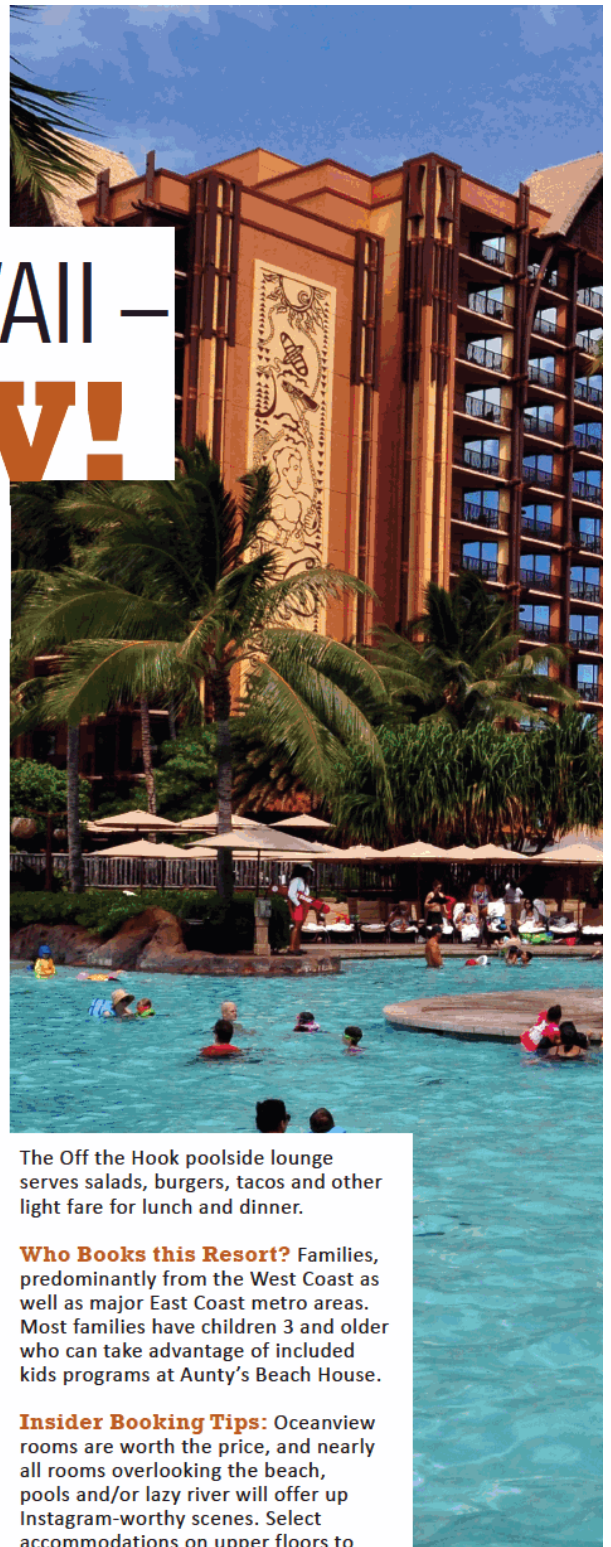
Families with two or three small children will be most comfortable in a 750-square-foot, one-bedroom villa with a king-size bed, sofa bed or twin-size Murphy bed or foldout chair. One-, two- and three-bedroom versions come with portable cribs and highchair, and feature full kitchens, dining areas and washer/dryers.

**What's Included:** Rates include supervised activities for kids 3-12 at Aunty's Beach House from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily; Wi-Fi; use of pools, beach and sand toys; and such activities as nighttime storytelling around a fire pit, ukulele lessons, movie nights, high-tech scavenger hunts and guided walking tours of the resort and grounds.

**Best Entertainment:** Family-friendly evening luaus on the lawn begin with demonstrations of such Hawaiian crafts as lei making, taro pounding and tattoo body painting. Buffets feature carving stations that include prime rib and suckling pig; there are also seafood choices, salads and a spread of desserts. The luau show delves into Hawaiian legends presented through song, dance and storytelling.

The Olelo Room open-air lounge presents shows by Hawaiian musical artists performing traditional Hawaiian music and contemporary takes on island classics.

**What's for Dinner?** Makahiki sets out a lavish buffet with daily Disney character breakfasts and character dinners three nights a week. Be sure to have clients make reservations. For quiet meals, direct them to 'AMA'AMA, Aulani's fine-dining restaurant with oceanfront table service, which features contemporary island cooking that focuses on fresh, sustainable fish and seafood options, farm-raised salmon and Harris Ranch Angus beef. Ulu Café, an all-day grab-and-go dining spot, has specialty pizzas and lunchtime poke bowls.



The Off the Hook poolside lounge serves salads, burgers, tacos and other light fare for lunch and dinner.

**Who Books this Resort?** Families, predominantly from the West Coast as well as major East Coast metro areas. Most families have children 3 and older who can take advantage of included kids programs at Aunty's Beach House.

**Insider Booking Tips:** Oceanview rooms are worth the price, and nearly all rooms overlooking the beach, pools and/or lazy river will offer up Instagram-worthy scenes. Select accommodations on upper floors to avoid daytime noise from these areas and from nighttime entertainment in lounges at ground level.

Families planning to use the children's activities at Aunty's Beach House must pre-register online at least two days prior to check-in.

Guests with a taste for soft drinks should consider purchasing resort mugs



Set on Oahu's leeward coast, Aulani features 351 guestrooms, including 16 suites, and 481 villas. All photos by Katherine Rodeghier.

## JUST THE FACTS

- ✓ **Resort Name:** Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa
- ✓ **Size:** 351 rooms and suites, and 481 villas set on 21 acres
- ✓ **Year Opened:** 2011, with a major expansion in 2013
- ✓ **Facilities:** Two restaurants (one buffet, one table service), three lounges, quick-service food outlets and pool-side snack bars. Supervised children's program, spa and fitness center, beach, private snorkeling lagoon, lazy river, water slides, swimming pools and hot tubs (some for adults only). An excursion desk books such off-property trips as horseback riding, catamaran cruises and waterfall hikes.
- ✓ **Price:** Rates range from \$484 for the smallest guestrooms in the off-season to \$3,699 for the largest villas during high-season, school-holiday periods, which include summer, Christmas and spring break.
- ✓ **Base Commission:** 10 percent commission on accommodations and 13 percent on Walt Disney Travel Company packages.
- ✓ **Contact:** [disneyaulani.com](http://disneyaulani.com)

for \$18.99 and refill them at three mug stations throughout their stay.

Tell your clients not to miss out on Rainbow Reef, Aulani's saltwater snorkeling lagoon, which is stocked with tropical fish. There's a charge for admission and equipment rental.

The first-ever spa operated by Disney has an outdoor hydrotherapy garden and treatments for the whole family, including a separate spa for teens.

### Key Selling Points:

Walt Disney Imagineers worked with local artisans and cultural experts to create a resort inspired by the natural wonders and rich traditions of Hawaii. Aulani is the ultimate family getaway, celebrating the beauty, history and welcoming spirit of the island.

**Agent Assistance:** College of Disney Knowledge training courses, print collateral, site visit opportunities, educational programs and social media resources via the Disney Travel Professionals Facebook page.



Kids can try their hand at such Hawaiian crafts as pounding taro into poi.