

TRAVEL

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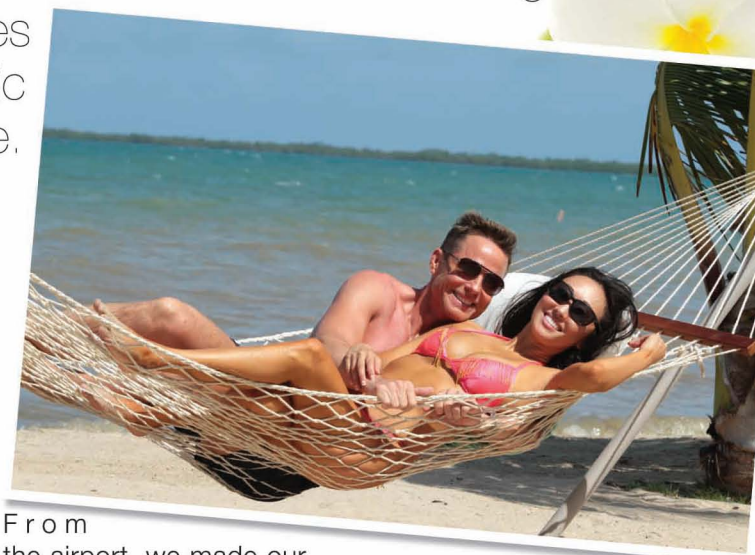
MOST ROMANTIC GETAWAY

*The Garden Island
of Kauai, Hawaii*

Nicknamed "THE GARDEN ISLAND", Kauai is known for its lush, tropical beauty and year-round ideal climate. It is geographically the oldest of the main Hawaiian Islands and is the fourth largest island in Hawaii. So scenic is Kauai, that many movies have been filmed there such as Jurassic Park, North, George of the Jungle, and Pirates of the Caribbean. But perhaps Kauai is most known for being the "Island of Romance" as it provides the perfect backdrop for a romantic getaway for you and your loved one.

My partner and I visited Kauai in the late summer when the temperatures were a perfect, balmy 85 degrees and the light trade winds blew gently. Upon landing, the first thing we noticed was the abundance of wild chickens, even within the perimeters of the airport! The official bird of Hawaii is the Nene goose, but locals joke that it is the chicken! They were originally brought to Kauai by Polynesians and to

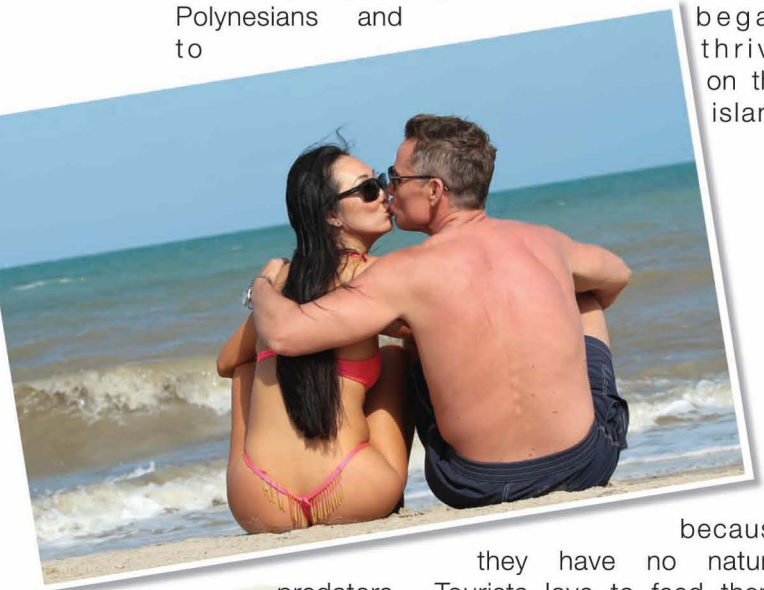
began thrive on the island



From the airport, we made our way to Poipu that is located on the southern side of the Island. This side of Kauai is known as "the sunny side" because most days are sunny and warm as opposed to the north, which is known for sporadic, daily tropical showers. Poipu Beach is a popular tourist destination known for its diving, snorkeling, surfing, and beach combing. Here, the water is a year round 80 degrees and crystal clear. Divers can see an array of tropical fish and many tourists are privileged to view endangered monk seals basking themselves in the warm sun. And perhaps you will be one of the lucky few to find a rare "Sunrise Shell of Kauai". These shells represent the beauty and spirit of Hawaii and are every beachcomber's desire and found only on the island of Kauai.

We were staying at the world famous Grand Hyatt Resort and Spa in Poipu. Here, they offer traditional Hawaiian luaus and we enjoyed live Hawaiian music, dance, and story telling each night.

because they have no natural predators. Tourists love to feed them, so you will see and hear many feral chickens throughout your stay. Some Hawaiians joke that they suffer from "chicken insomnia" because they crow so often and wake up the local population!



musubi, a Japanese rice ball with seaweed.

Hawaii is a mix of Hawaiian natives, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and other races, a true melting pot. And its food reflects the mix of cultures and people. You will find Japanese soba noodles at the local McDonald's. You will see Chinese dumplings in the grocery store. And Hawaii is also famous for its shaved ice that is usually topped with a scoop of ice cream and condensed milk. We had our shaved ice with



What a perfect place to enjoy the company of others.

If you are the more active sort, Kauai also offers zip lining over the jungle canopy, canoeing, off road excursions, horseback riding, hiking, and swimming in waterfalls. There are also world-famous golf courses and shopping. There are so many things to do, but we were just happy to bask in the sun for



homemade macadamia nut ice cream and rainbow ice. What a refreshing treat it was after being in the sun all day!

Life is much slower in Hawaii than on the mainland. And perhaps this is why so many visitors travel each year to this island getaway. "Island time" is a phrase used quite often. It refers to the pace of the island; there is no hurry and you have time to reflect on life, notice things around you, and simply slow down.





The swimming pools on the property were surrounded by a lush, tropical paradise that ended at the ocean's edge. This provided the perfect backdrop for our romantic weekend. We soaked up

town for authentic Hawaiian cuisine. This included a daily "Hawaiian plate lunch". I wondered exactly what this was. To find out, we drove the short 20 minutes to Old Koloa Town where quaint, old

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the sun, lounged in a hammock under two swaying palm trees, drank tropical drinks by the pool, and got the ultimate deep, dark tan.

Most days, we had the opportunity to drive into

plantation buildings have been renovated into shops, restaurants, and a history center. Here, we stood in line each day for a plate lunch that consisted always of two starches, rice and potato salad, plus a main course. And we loved the daily