

Lahaina Historic Walking Tour

Attention, history and culture buffs! Don't deny yourself this fun, free tour of Lahaina's rich and interesting past. Stroll present day Front Street while enjoying a look into the past of the former capital of Hawaii. Colorful characters, natural beauty and unique lifestyle make this area of one of the most interesting and scenic in Maui.

Before you start your journey take note of the following:

- **Start:** On the corner of Front and Dickenson streets in Lahaina Town.
- **Time:** One or two hours, depending on how long you stay at each location.
- **Things to Note:** Get started in the morning as Lahaina heats up in the afternoon. There are public bathrooms located at the South end of the harbor.
- **Things to Bring:** Camera, Water, Sunblock, Cash for souvenirs and small entrance fees to specified locations.



#1 The Master's Reading Room

This was once a store room for missionaries. In 1834, it was converted by whaling ship captains into an officers club for sailors and their families to stay. View the original coral block and field stone construction.

Immediately next door to this is:

#2 The Baldwin Home Museum

One of the oldest buildings in Lahaina, this building was used by Harvard-educated physician Rev. Dwight Baldwin and family from the 1830s-1868. Rev. Baldwin was a missionary involved with Lahaina's Waiee Church and hugely influential in the local community. He served as one of the local medical doctors, and was a prominent businessman. Visitors can find many artifacts inside. Open 10am-4pm. Small admission fee.

On the other side of the Baldwin Home Museum is the former site of the:

#3 Richards House (site only)

Reverend William Richards was the first Protestant missionary to arrive in Lahaina. His home, where only the site remains today, was the first coral stone home built in Hawaii. He was a firm believer in Hawaiian sovereignty and helped to draft Hawaii's constitution and acted as king's envoy in travels abroad, seeking independence for Hawaii. His remains lie in Waiee Churchyard.

Fun Pit Stop: This is a great time to fuel up with a cup of delicious coffee and pastry from Maui's Bad Ass Coffee. They are located in the Pioneer Inn, facing Front Street. Or, next door to Bad Ass Coffee you'll find home made cookies and locally made ice cream.

From here, cross Front Street and walk along the small street leading toward the ocean, with the Lahaina Public Library on your right and the Pioneer Inn on your left, until you see the:

#4 Taro Patch (site only)

The lawn in front of the Lahaina Public Library was once a taro patch, called Kapukaiaio, that stretched all the way back to the Baldwin home. It remained visible until the late 1950s. The taro plant was a staple of the Hawaiian diet

and is the key ingredient for poi. Kamehameha III is said to have worked here to show his subjects the dignity of labor.

Fun note: Try Poi at a luau! It's a thick, starchy purple paste that is great for dipping meats into. Or, find it on a "mixed plate" at places like Da Kitchen or Aloha Mixed Plate.

Facing the ocean, walk right and away from the Lahaina Harbor toward the edge of the lawn, where you'll see the:

#5 Hauola Stone

This was used by ancient Hawaiians as a healing place. There is a brass marker that directs you to the stone that is visible in the water. Kahuna (priests) of medicine used stones like this to help cure illnesses.

Turn around and walk back toward the Pioneer Inn; there is a concrete depression in the ground, which is all that's left of the:

#6 Brick Palace (site only)

This structure was begun in 1798, and is believed to be the first Western-style building in Hawaii. It was made from locally produced brick. King Kamehameha I ordered it to be built as a palace for his wife, Queen Kaahumanu. It was once a 20'x40', two-story brick structure, the interior walls were constructed of wood and the windows were glazed glass. It is said that Queen Kaahumanu preferred a grass hut nearby.

Look toward the ocean and you will see:

#7 The Old Lahaina Lighthouse

This lighthouse was the first in all of Hawaii. Commissioned in 1840 by Kamehameha III, it was built to light the way for incoming whaling boats. For its first 20 years, this wood tower only stood 9 feet tall, until it was increased to 26 in 1866. And of course, the locally produced whale oil of the time, was used to keep it burning. The lighthouse was then rebuilt in 1905, and dedicated by the US Coast Guard in 1916.

Directly behind you is the:

#8 Pioneer Inn

If these walls could talk...This is still a working hotel, where numerous old Hollywood films have been shot, and where Frank Sinatra once graced the interior courtyard. The side fronting the ocean is original and was built in 1901. The hotel has seen bawdy sailors and many unique guests. Until the 1950s, the Pioneer Inn served as the only hotel in all of West Maui. Step inside to find the old house rules posted on the walls.

From here, head south to cross Hotel Street, while continuing along Wharf Street, which borders the harbor. On your left is the famous:

#9 Banyan Tree

The Lahaina Banyan Tree is truly a landmark throughout all of Hawaii. This amazing feat of nature covers an entire acre. It was planted in April, 1873, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Protestant missionaries in Lahaina. It has been the site of numerous celebrations, rallies, and events.

Fun note: Visitors will often find frequent art and craft fairs happening under its enormous branches.

Fun Tip: This is an excellent place to relax in the shade and enjoy the view.

Continue along Wharf Street to find the:

#10 Courthouse

This spot is most notable for the lowering of the Hawaiian flag in 1898, followed by the raising of the American flag, marking the formal annexation of Hawaii by the United States. The courthouse served as a palace for King Kamehameha III in the early 1800s, before being rebuilt after a storm, to later act as a courthouse, post office, and other government offices. There is a gift shop on the lower level; and upstairs, visitors will find the Lahaina Heritage Museum. FREE entrance.

Tour Tip: There is an elevator and restroom located in the Courthouse building and another larger public restroom at the south end of the harbor, that is usually less crowded.

Continue along Wharf Street until you reach Canal Street. Here on the corner you will find the remains of:

#11 The Fort

The fort was built in response to an attack of cannon balls that were launched at Lahaina from sailors in the bay, who were protesting the new restrictions that had been imposed by missionaries. The most notable of which, prohibited the native women from swimming out to “greet” the sailors on their ships. The fort was finished, two years later in 1832, out of coral blocks from the harbor. Its walls were 20-feet high and it covered an entire acre. Documented as “showy” by some of the time period, it was also used as a prison up until 1850, when its blocks were hauled to the new prison location at Hale Paahao on Prison Street.

Cross Canal Street to the:

#12 Canal and Government Market (site only)

Also known as “Rotten Row”, this was the site of commerce and trade with ships anchored off shore. Lahaina, unlike Honolulu, has shallow waters that made docking a ship near shore dangerous. Smaller boats were necessary to bring sailors ashore, and rough tides could sometimes make even this a challenge. In the 1840s, a freshwater stream canal was dug on behest of the U.S. consular representative, which would allow for a safe passage. There was a fee charged for canal usage and to obtain fresh water.

In 1833, Princess Nahi’ena’ena wrote an edict concerning the Government Market, “overcharging, underselling...wrangling, breaking of bargains, enticing, pursuing, chasing a boat, greediness... I hereby forbid women from going to the market enclosure, for the purpose of sightseeing or to stand idly by...” “These are the things which I strictly forbid,” Despite her best efforts, the area was known for its seedy activities and earned the title, “Rotten Row”. The canal was filled in 1913, to make way for Canal Street.

From here, turn right and continue down Front Street. Pass by the Kamehameha III Elementary School and on your right you will come to the:

#13 The Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church was founded by the first Episcopal missionaries in 1862. The original church was built across the street, and was then moved to its current site in 1909. King Kamehameha I’s daughter lived on the site where the current church sits today. Visitors will enjoy the Hawaiian Madonna painting at the altar.

Follow Front Street further, and at the next open field, look toward the ocean for a grouping of white stones. This marks the former site of the:

#14 Hale Piula (site only)

In true Hawaii style, King Kamehameha III snubbed this “iron-roof house,” when it was built in the late 1830s. The building was set to be a 2-story palace and courtyard for the king, but was never finished, as the king preferred to sleep in a small thatch hut nearby. The building was used as a courthouse for a time, and was destroyed by a powerful windstorm in 1858. Its stones were then used to build the current courthouse on Wharf Street.

Fun Tip: 505 Front Street, coming up on your right, is a good spot to refuel at either the ABC Store, or one of the restaurants located within. There are dining spots in the back of the center with ocean views!

Continue down Front Street; look to the left across the street from the 505 Front Street building to find:

#15 Maluuluolele Park

What now holds a park, ball field and tennis court, is the profound location of an important spiritual and political seat for ancient Hawaii. In the early 1800’s this area looked much different. A village, known as Mokuhinia, surrounded a sacred pond. In the middle of which, was a small island called Mokuula, home to many chiefs and Hawaiian alii (kings). Kamehameha I,II, and III resided here and honored the spirit of a moo (lizard) said to reside in the pond.

With the onset of progress, the area was forgotten about, and finally drained and leveled in 1918, to build a community park. When it was rediscovered in 1990, archeological studies began, and further plans for unearthing the area are being developed.

Learn more about the project here with [Friends of Mokuula](#).

From here, turn Left onto Shaw Street walking away from the ocean. Take your next Left onto Waine’e Street. Continue just past the cemetery and look to your left to find:

#16 Waine'e Church (Waiola)

Now called Waiola Church, this was the first stone church built in Hawaii. It was originally constructed between 1828 - 1832. It has been rebuilt multiple times, once after the 1858 windstorm, which blew off the roof and dropped the church’s bell a whopping 100 feet away. It stood again until 1947, when a fire took its toll, and then again in 1951 after another ominous windstorm. In the back of the church yard is a row of some of the oldest palm trees in Lahaina.

And next door is the Wainee Cemetery:

#17 Waine'e Cemetery (Waiolo Churchyard)

This cemetery holds special reverence in Hawaii, as it contains the grave of Queen Keopuolani, first of Hawaiian royalty to convert to Christianity. She was wife to King Kamehameha I, and mother of Kamehameha II, Kamehameha III, and Princess Nahi'ena'ena. Established in 1823, this sacred ground offers an amazing glimpse into West Maui's history. Headstones reveal that of missionaries, towns people, sailors, and chiefs.

Walk along Waine'e Street until it intersects with Luakini Street to view the:

#18 Hongwanji Mission

An early gathering place for Lahaina's Buddhists. The current temple was built in 1927, where a language school was also offered to followers.

Fun Tip: Buddhist O Bon Festivals take place all around the island in late summer. This temple offers public festivals for their O Bon Service in August, during their New Years Eve Celebration, and on Buddha's birthday in April.

Continue down Waine'e Street, to the intersection of Prison Street. Just before the intersection on the left, you'll see a historical marker for:

#19 David Malo's Home (site only)

David Malo is the author of the renowned book, Hawaiian Antiquities, which is considered a classic source for ancient Hawaiian culture. A graduate from Lahainaluna High School, he was a philosopher and scholar who helped shape The Constitution

Fun Tip: His grave can be seen on the hillside over Lahaina, just look up for the big "L" painted white. There is a strenuous hike that leads up to the 30 foot tall "L", where the Lahainaluna High School students hike every year, in remembrance and to give the "L" a fresh coat of paint. David Malo's stone covered grave sits just above. There are immense views of Lanai and Molokai

Cross Prison Street. On the corner of Prison and Waine'e is the:

#20 Old Prison

In the later half of the 1800s, if you were caught being drunk and disorderly, dangerous horse riding, deserting ship, or working on Sunday, you could be "Stuck in Irons House" or Hale Paahao. Built out of coral block from the old harbor fort, this prison used the standard wall shackles and ball and chains restraints.

The grounds are now used for private parties and weddings.

Continue along Waine'e Street, past Waianae Place, to discover:

#21 Episcopal Cemetery

Another burial ground that is rich with history, this yard holds the remains of many early Anglicans. Queen Emma, wife to King Kamehameha IV, encouraged the Archbishop of Canterbury to form a church in the islands. Those buried here are some of the first Hawaiians to convert.

Just next door you'll discover:

#22 Hale Aloha

Hale Aloha, meaning "house of love", was an offering to God in appreciation for Lahaina escaping the smallpox epidemic in the 1800s. It was finished in 1858, after 5,000- 6,000 citizens on Oahu lost their lives to smallpox. The structure you see was restored in 1974.

Follow Waine'e Street and then make a left onto Hale Street. Take your next right onto Luakini Street. On the right you'll see:

#23 Buddhist Church

Reminiscent of the plantation era, this simple wooden green building is a wonderful example of many temples that Japanese laborers built during the time period. It's full name is the Buddhist Church of the Shingon Sect.

Continue along Luakini Street to the corner of Dickenson, and look for a historical marker for:

#24 Luakini Street

This street is the site of a traumatic love story between Princess Nahi'ena'ena and her brother King Kamehameha III. The Princess, a recent Protestant convert, agonized over her now forbidden love for her brother and her desire to keep the royal blood line pure. They had a child together in August, 1836; the boy lived to be only a few hours old. Heartbroken, the queen died that December at age 21. The funeral procession walked along through koa trees and breadfruit, until she was laid to rest. A Luakini (sacrificial) Heiau (temple) is an ancient Hawaiian ceremonial structure in which sacrifices were made. The route was name Luakini, to reference the sacrificing of the lovely young princess to the gods.

Option 1: Take a left on Dickenson Street toward Front Street to return to your starting point.

Many visitors end their tour here, and grab a bite to eat on either Dickenson or Front Street.

Option 2: Keep going for more fun. Take a Right on Dickenson Street to the corner of Waine'e to find:

#25 Maria Lanakila Church

There has been a Catholic church on this site since 1846, the first being constructed from wood. The first mass was celebrated on Maui in 1841. The concrete replica that you see here today was finished in 1928.

Just a little further up Waine'e street is the:

#26 The Seamen's Cemetery

Author of Moby Dick, Herman Melville, has a cousin buried here, along with one of Melville's own shipmates. The poor souls died of "disreputable disease" at the nearby Seamen's Hospital. Many of the graves are indistinguishable.

Continue along Waine'e Street and make a left on Lahainaluna Road. Follow Lahainaluna up to Front Street and take a right, soon on your right hand side, you will see:

#27 The Wo Hing Museum

Like a snapshot from Chinatown, this interesting building was built in the early 1900s for the many Chinese immigrants to congregate. It is affiliated with a worldwide Chinese fraternal society known as the Chee Kung Tong.

The hundreds of Maui members discussed commerce and politics here, and were instrumental in shaping early Lahaina. Museum open daily, small fee.

Trail Tip: The next location is a 15- 25 minute walk. Should you opt to end your tour here, there are many fun Lahaina restaurants to indulge in. Visit our [Lahaina Dining Guide](#) for recommendations.

About three blocks down on the right at 1024 Front Street is the:

#28 The U.S. Seamen's Hospital

With the influx of sick and injured seamen from 1820 - 1860, it was necessary to have a proper medical house on Front Street. It was built in 1833.