

## Waikiki

Built on a reclaimed swamp,  
Waikiki

is very nearly an island, all but separated from Honolulu between the sea and the Ala Wai canal (which provides the drainage to make its incredible highrise profusion possible). Once home to Kamehameha the Great, the site may be venerable, but these days its raison d'être is rampant commercialism. You could, just about, survive here with very little money, buying snacks from the omnipresent ABC convenience stores, but there would be no point - there's nothing to see, and the only thing to do apart from surf and sunbathe is to stroll along the seafront Kalakaua Avenue and shop.

The most striking thing about the parallel  
Waikiki Beach

is how narrow it is, a thin but nonetheless attractive strip of shipped-in sand. Compared to other Hawaiian beaches, it's overcrowded and small, but the fact that it's lined by a pedestrian walkway, with several pleasant gardens en route, make this, relatively speaking, a refuge from the resort frenzy nearby.

Two possible diversions on the eastern fringes of Waikiki are  
Honolulu Zoo

(daily 8.30am-5.30pm; \$6), where you can walk through a mock African savannah set against the magnificent backdrop of Diamond Head, and the more expensive oceanfront Waikiki Aquarium (daily 9am-5pm; \$7) which, as well as holding sharks and monkfish seals, has a tank devoted to the many-hued reef fish of Hanauma Bay.