

Moving to Paradise

By Tara Puckey



Kayak sits in ocean. Photo © Tor Johnson

Hawaii

In 1959, the United States officially welcomed the 50th state as the “Aloha State.” It is rich in culture and beauty, with its Polynesian history dating back more than 1,500 years. A chain of more than 124 islands, Hawaii is known for its beautiful climate, amazing scenery and high cost of living. A wonderful vacation spot for certain, but relocating there means adapting to different rules, policies and customs.

For example, your four-legged friends will have to comply with Hawaii’s import requirements for cats and dogs by participating in an inspection and possible quarantine upon arrival. Also, if your love for animals is more the exotic type, you’ll probably be disappointed to know that private individuals cannot possess ferrets, gerbils, hamsters or bearded dragon lizards. For all the animal info, check out Hawaii’s Department of Agriculture site, <http://hawaii.gov/hdoa/>

Once you’re settled in, or waiting on the rest of your belongings to be delivered, why not use the time to get familiar with your surroundings? In 2009, the centennial for the U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii, the Tropic Lightning Museum staff and

25th Infantry Division created a driving tour podcast that highlights information on historical sites found around Schofield Barracks. Download the tour at www.garrison.hawaii.army.mil/sites/podcasts/tropiclightningcentennial.asp

Guam

Guam is surrounded by coral reefs, boasts steep coastal cliffs and narrow plains with low hills and tall mountains, all packed into 212 square miles. The culturally rich and historically significant island was almost destroyed during World War II and is now a world-renowned diving destination and a cultural melting pot of ethnic backgrounds like Chamorro, Filipino and Caucasian.

With such a small island, space is at a premium and storing your goods stateside is a good idea. Like Hawaii, Guam is rabies-free and has strict policies on importing your pet family members. When moving your personal firearms onto Guam, they’ll be inspected and you’ll need to register them within 30 days to avoid criminal penalties. Check www.govguamdocs.com to make sure you have everything you need to complete the firearm registration ahead of time.

If you’re looking for ways to become familiar with your new home, check in with the Guam Historic Resources Division. They list historic sites around the island, information about how to preserve and protect Guam for the future and even suggest walking trails should you feel like an adventure.

Moving with children can always be a challenge, but check out the Kid’s Corner for language lessons, coloring books and more fun activities to make moving less stressful. The homepage is at www.guampdn.com/guampublishing/kidscorner/home.html

Japan

A country home to beautiful coastlines, towering mountains and twisted valleys, Japan invites visitors and residents to explore the peaceful beauty of nature. The cultural mecca boasts dozens of traditional annual events like the Tamasereri, or Ball-Catching Festival, where groups of men covered in loincloths compete for an 8-kg “treasure ball” under a shower of cold water.

To absorb more culture and history, visit one of the 200 Tourist Information Centers scattered all over the country. Pick up pamphlets

and directions to some of the country's most beautiful attractions. A list of the centers can be found at www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/essential/v_office/v_office.php

While you're taking in the scenery, don't forget that Japan is one of the most earthquake-prone regions in the world, evidenced by the massive earthquake and tsunami in early 2011. Taking necessary precautions and having an emergency plan and contact information is essential.

Before you travel across the ocean, ready your kids for the move. Kids Web Japan has a wealth of information; from insight into Japan's advanced rail technology to new bugs they'll see to the latest in Japanese children's fashions. Find more information at <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb>

Okinawa

Once an independent kingdom, the Okinawa prefecture is comprised of more than 140 islands. Commonly referred to as the Ryukyu Islands, the area is rich with its own culture and is very different from Japan's mainstream.

Okinawan is a Northern Ryukyuan language spoken on the island that is often indistinguishable to many living on the mainlands of Japan. Kunigami is also spoken on the island, though generally in Northern Okinawa. Both languages are listed as endangered, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

If you're planning on owning a vehicle in Okinawa, you'll need to plan on the road tax. Each year, the Okinawa Automobile Tax Office collects the tax based on the engine size of the vehicle and uses it to maintain prefecture roads.

As with language and culture, cuisine in Okinawa differs from Japan as well. Pork is one of the

most important ingredients of traditional diet and every portion of the animal is used, from feet to ears to tripe (stomach). Check out www.japan-guide.com/e/e7128.html for more information about dining.

For military history buffs, don't forget to visit the Battle of Okinawa Historical Society Museum. With relics on hand to touch and feel, the museum relies solely on donations for support. More information can be found at <http://okinawarelics.com/museum.aspx>

South Korea

A crowded country, South Korea is home to roughly 1,300 citizens for every square mile. Resting on a peninsula, the country is surrounded by thousands of islands and features beautiful beaches and sprawling forests. Natives are heavily influenced by Confucianism, a Chinese philosophy based on respect and morality.

Full of culture, the country features architecture and traditions dating back centuries. From palaces to fortresses, to royal tombs and shrines, make sure you see everything the country has to offer while you're there. Visit http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/CU/CU_EN_8_8_6_1.jsp for a list of some of the most treasured heritage sites.

Bringing pets to South Korea is much like the process for other Pacific destinations. Documentation for shots is always required and there is a quarantine period for all animals entering the country, but the length depends on recent shots the animal may have received. Don't forget that overpopulation of pets is a problem in South Korea. Consider adopting once you are settled. Visit Animal Rescue Korea at www.animalrescuekorea.org ●

FUN FACTS HAWAII

How do you take yours? Cream, sugar? Be ready to answer that question. Hawaii is the only U.S. state that grows coffee and celebrates on a regular basis with the **ANNUAL KONA COFFEE CULTURAL FESTIVAL**. Jam packed with nearly 50 events over a 10 day period, there's something for the all the 8,000 visitors and residents who usually attend.

If you're asking for directions, you might want to remember some key phrases. "**MAKAI**" will take you toward the ocean, literally meaning "towards the sea." If you should be heading inland, you'll likely hear "mauka," which means toward the mountains.

Learning advantages? The **HAWAIIAN ALPHABET**, adapted from the English alphabet by American missionaries to print a Hawaiian bible, is complete with only 12 letters. Vowels: A, E, I, O, U
Consonants: H, K, L, M, N, P, W

No matter how long you live in Hawaii, you can't leave without attempting to conquer Dole Plantation's giant **PINEAPPLE GARDEN MAZE**. The huge labyrinth stretches over three acres and is crafted from more than 14,000 colorful Hawaiian plants. Best part? Military discount and if you're lucky enough to be a fast finisher, your name could end up on a sign at the maze's entrance.

If you' end up being such a fan of the islands and want to look into some ownership opportunities, don't worry. "**OCEANFRONT**" property starts at just \$39.95

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on the **LOIHI**, a volcanic seamount slowly rising from the ocean floor that is being sold off by online jokesters. As long as you're fine with waiting until its "surfacing" date of about 5997, the price is a steal.

GUAM

Feel like a **"BOONIE STOMP"**? Don't worry, it's just a guided hike with an experienced person who can show you the best of what the small island has to offer.

Have you ever driven on a precious resource? In Guam, you will be. **SAND ON THE BEACHES IS GROUND CORAL** and is used for mixing with concrete to create roads, rather than importing real sand from other countries.

If you're a fan of "Blue Light Specials", you'll be in heaven on Guam: Home to the **WORLD'S LARGEST K-MART**

An island of body parts. Many places in Guam are **NAMED FOR BODY PARTS**. In the Chamorro language, Agana, Guam's capital, means blood. Essentially, the capital city is the "lifeblood" of Guam.

JAPAN

Almost four-fifths of **JAPAN IS MADE UP OF MOUNTAINS**. Running down the center of the largest island are the Japanese Alps with its highest peak,

Mount Fuji—a cone-shaped volcano that is often considered sacred.

CLAUSTROPHOBIC? Maybe you shouldn't ride the train. Because of overcrowding, railway staff sometimes cram passengers inside with a nudge or two.

BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR FEET CLEAN!

Why? You'll need to take off your shoes if you enter a traditional home, inn, shrine or temple in Japan. If you plan on visiting a gym, you'll need to take a pair of sneakers to be worn exclusively inside. Keep them squeaky clean, too.

OKINAWA

VENDING MACHINE HAVEN! According to some guesstimates, there is one vending machine for every seven people in Okinawa. In addition to regular staples such as snacks and sodas, you might also stumble upon an Orion vending machine, which dispenses premium draft beer.

Tug-of-War, anyone? A large local festival, the **"YONABARU GREAT TUG-OF-WAR,"** has continued for almost 400 years. In the Udun-yama Youth Square, a rope-pulling phenomenon complete with drums, bells and flags takes place every year, followed by live bands, fireworks, games and, of course, food.

You, too, can be the Karate Kid. It is believed that karate's original style was created from the integration of Okinawa's

unique traditional martial art **"TI"** and China's **"KUNG FU"** sometime after the 14th century.

Pulitzer Prize-winning war correspondent **ERNIE PYLE** was killed on the island of Ie Shima off the coast of Okinawa. A monument exists there, reading: "At this spot the 77th Infantry Division lost a buddy..."

SOUTH KOREA

TECHNOLOGY AND "SMARTS." South Korea has the most sophisticated IT infrastructure in the world, possibly because it also has the world's highest estimated national IQ as declared by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Man's best friend? In 2005, South Korean scientists created **THE FIRST CLONED DOG**. Snuppy, an Afghan hound, took forever to "create," using nearly 2,000 eggs to make roughly 1,000 embryos, which, in the end, produced one single puppy.

The president of South Korea resides in Seoul on a site long affiliated with the leadership of South Korea. The name of the complex? **THE BLUE HOUSE**.

Love to sing? You're in luck. **KARAOKE** is an incredibly popular pastime among South Koreans. To them, it's called "noraebang," which is essentially karaoke in private rooms among friends. Slightly less embarrassing? ●