

“ A trip out West allows one to touch the hand of Mother Nature, invoke ancient Hawaiian customs, and relax on a beach so idyllic that Hawaiians still believe in its eternal power.

ming side by side with wild dolphins is a truly unforgettable thing. Everyone is giddy with excitement as we dock at the harbor, struggling to remember every detail of the day in correct order. With gratitude, we leave the top-notch crew of Wild Side Eco-Adventures and the fortuitous volunteers of the Wild Dolphin Foundation to visit our next stop, the Kaneaki Heiau in Makaha Valley.

Enveloped in a canopy of trees and light, the beautifully rebuilt Kaneaki Heiau (temple) is a sacred Hawaiian place. This heiau was erected for the Hawaiian god of war, Ku, and though it is breathtaking at a glance, it was also the site of human sacrifice. Only open from 10AM to 2PM, this multi-tiered, stacked-stone structure now sits within a gated community and commemorates ancient Hawaiian beliefs and rituals. Spending an hour here, among the carved deities and wild peacocks, is a rare Hawaii that few ever see.

Making our way out of Makaha Valley, we drive along a road filled with brightly colored

bougainvilleas woven into the landscape of dry brush. We pass the giant cave at Makua, the shaded shanties of the displaced, and arrive at the end of the road to relax and swim for the remainder of the day.

Yokohama Beach marks the beginning and end of Oahu, and incidentally follows the direct path the Japanese fighter planes took to bomb Pearl Harbor. Ancient Hawaiians referred to this place as a lele, a jumping off place for wandering spirits to crossover into the afterlife. We watch the sun dip below the horizon on this gorgeous beach, delivering the perfect ending to a brilliant experience on Oahu's West coast.

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