



Sightseeing In The Pacific

Korea



Songtan City

Just outside Osan AB, Korea, Songtan City is synonymous with “discount shopping”. Many new arrivals hear the tales of shopping heaven: shop after shop of inexpensive name brand items. You begin to see evidence of such trips as you stroll around Yokota: Liz Claiborne clothes and accessories; Nike sportswear and shoes; sports jackets, etc. Soon, you too begin to feel the tug on your shopping bone and words like “EML” creep into your conversation. As a novice (only two trips), I give you some insights on things to expect on your first “Shopping Experience”. I leave the details of EML and flights to the experts at the Terminal. Oh, yes. Remember that AMC travel is the world’s largest unscheduled airline: anything can happen. Just remember: semper gumby—always flexible, and you will actually enjoy the experience.

Now, arriving at Osan Terminal: You **MUST** fill out a customs declaration form. Wives, if you go with your husbands, let him fill it out while you get luggage and get in line for Immigration. Have your passports and military ID ready. There are only two agents and the line gets **VERY** long. If you travel alone, sorry. Once your passport is stamped, your luggage is checked by an agent. While this is being done, confirm the date and time your EML/travel orders were faxed. This is used as your number for a return flight. If you wait, 100-300 people will stamp in ahead of you. Believe me, when you go to

the “flight raffle” in a few days, it will mean the difference between getting on a return flight or not.

Well, now you’ve cleared customs and want a hotel room. No problem. Go out the double doors (ignore the hotel hawkers for now; you can check Billeting but it’s usually full) and visit the USO office inside the main terminal. There you will find helpful handouts such as a map and hotel listing. Whatever anyone may say about the hotels in Songtan may really be true. Looks are deceiving. Some hotels look nice outside but that may be a facade. Still, others look pretty bad, but may be adequate. Notice I said adequate. Remember, you will only **SLEEP** there, and it will only be a few days. You can stand anything for two or three days. Once you’ve been there, a Motel 6 looks like the Ritz. I like one close to the main gate, because you do a lot of walking to the base and back. Why? Well, if you value your gastrointestinal serenity, then eat on base. Dunkin’ Donuts and Burger King look inviting, but you cannot verify the hygiene. *Note:* You may not be able to enter the BX or Commissary for other supplies as locally issued ration cards are required (you might be able to get them with advance paperwork).

Once you decide on a hotel, one of the “hotel hawkers” will be more than happy to take you in the hotel van, free of charge. Remember too, some hotels will let you hitch a ride to the base so be sure to ask. At your hotel you may find a small refrigerator with a glass and pitcher of water. Remember this word: potable. You must only drink potable water, found in tanks in the lobby or in the hallways. The water is tanked in from the base. If you brush your teeth, don’t rinse your mouth or toothbrush with water from the spigot, you may regret it. If off base, drink only bottled or canned liquids; wipe the rim off first.

Don’t worry about buying Korean currency as you probably won’t need it. Get plenty of cash before you leave, as there is a daily check-cashing limit at Osan clubs (\$500/day at the O’Club). Oh, you don’t think you’ll spend that much? Ha! I can tell you’re not a shopper!

Songtan is famous for purses, luggage, stuffed animals and sportswear. If you want better clothes, head to Seoul and Itaewon. Go there first, before you “blow it all” in Songtan

City. Taxi or walk to the Base bus terminal and hop on a bus to Itaewon for the day.

Back to Songtan. Remember to keep your military ID, passport, and orders with you, and your cash. There is little security in your hotel. Wear a "fanny pack" and go light (cash, ID, tissue and lipstick). Beyond that, go for it. Don't let the shopkeepers bully you. Be firm with your no. Try to bargain: always ask the price and go a few dollars below. Some shoppers try, "I saw this in a shop yesterday for—I can't remember which shop it was. Sorry, I'll keep looking." This keeps them bargaining for sure. If the shopkeeper won't dicker on the price, you get the message. Just walk away, you can always find it for less somewhere else, or you can come back later.

MPS is the magic word during your shopping trip. Every few stores, you will see a fellow who will box, wrap and strap your goods for \$4. There is a Post Office Annex just to the left, inside the main gate. (Remember, MPS is not insured!) You can also take one box onto the plane with you as extra baggage. (If you are a true shopper you will have taken a suitcase with only a change of undies and sleepwear; lots of extra space for purchases. You can always wear what you buy as change of clothes!)

Remember, if you want custom-made items, order them the first day you are there, as some places need 24-36 hours to have you in for fittings and to complete your items. Meanwhile, you can shop. Get receipts or claim tickets for items left for personalizing or completion. If the item is not ready when you need to leave Osan, arrange to have it mailed. Finally, think about the weather before you leave and dress appropriately. Korea is closer to Siberia! Also, do not forget that Mother AMC's Travel Service doesn't always have heated planes. Be SURE your teenager repeats this back to you after you tell him/her. It will give you a great deal of satisfaction when you tell him/her you will not give them your sweater or coat.

Well, international traveler, are you ready to go? Try it once, and you will get hooked. It will amaze you how much shopping you can do in a few days when faced with the challenge; just take a lot of cash and go for it. Remember, "flexibility is one key to air power".



Seoul

One popular shopping trip is going to Seoul's East Gate, perhaps the largest market in Asia. If you have never been, it can be confusing and overwhelming on your first trip. (And maybe even on your second or third trip too!)

The map is not drawn to scale, but hopefully it will help you locate certain areas. Some popular spots are diagrammed, although there are probably more to be discovered. Most buildings contain aisles of individual stalls with widely varying merchandise. Many products are seconds, so check your purchases carefully. When buying clothes, look for flaws and see if the seams are strong. Try on an item if possible and do not go by the sizes on the label. Almost no English is spoken and if you bargain, you may get the price down. Get the seller to write down the price on paper because you may think he's saying 5,000 won but it's really 50,000 won and vice versa.

If interested in sewing, start in the Fabric Building. The second floor contains a wide choice of fabrics plus stalls of buttons, lace, decorative cords and ribbon. When buying fabric, most stalls use the measurement of a "ma" which is 91.4cm or almost the exact length of a U.S. yard. The Pyong Wha Market has many stalls of scarves, ties, Korean clothing, hair accessories, and costume jewelry. The Export Buildings are so designated because they contain outlets for clothing made for export. The 2nd and 3rd floors of the Sweater Building are favorites for many of us. The 2nd floor of the Family Building has leather. The Silk Road building has this name due to a stall on the 3rd floor called by this same name. In the area around this stall are others that specialize in silk dresses, blouses, etc. The second floor has lots of Korean children's clothing.

No one should miss the fun of the Toy and Stationery Alley. The Koreans are truly creative in their office supplies and toys. This alley is great for party favors, gift-wrap, greeting cards, erasers, crayons, etc. It is usually very crowded and gets worse as the day goes on. It may be a good idea to take a friend along, not only for morale, but in case you get lost?! Some buildings are so large, sometimes you feel like you're in a maze and you can get disoriented. It can be very crowded; don't be surprised if you get jostled and bumped around. Don't forget to bring lots of won...Happy Shopping.

DIRECTIONS: There are several ways to get there. You can take the Myung Jin bus up to Yongsan and take the subway. If the adventurous type, you can drive to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Compound, park and take a short walk to the shopping district. And also remember local Family Support Centers offer tours to East Gate; a great way to find out where everything is and what they sell.

SUBWAY DIRECTIONS: If you leave from Yongsan, the closest subway stop is Samgakchi on the blue line. Go out Gate 5, cross the street and turn right. Follow the street around a bend to the left. The Samgakchi traffic circle will be on your right. You'll see the Commercial Bank of Korea to the left and stairs on the right leading to Samgakchi. Your subway ticket (to Tongdaemun) costs 250 won (or more). You can buy this from a machine by pressing the button labeled "SINGLE" and inserting your money. Once past the turnstiles, go in the direction of Sanye. There are no transfers needed. Just get off



at the stop labeled “Tongdaemun” (East Gate), several stops down the blue line. Climb the steps to exit the subway, which will put you at the picturesque East Gate.

Deb Chilcote; reprinted from the Orient Express, Osan Officers’ Wives’ Club.

Kyongbok Palace

Ask anyone about their recent trip to Korea and they will tell you about the great shopping, the wonderful items they bought, and the terrific “deals” available. Korea is indeed a fine place to shop, but it is also a delightful place to play “tourist”. If you spend any time sightseeing in Seoul, make it a priority to visit Kyongbok Palace. It’s beauty, peace, and harmony can take your breath away.

Kyongbok Palace was built in 1395 by the founder of the Yi Dynasty, King Taejo. The main palace was burned down during the Japanese invasion of 1592, but was rebuilt in 1867. Subsequent invasions resulted in the partial dismantling and burning of several buildings, but those, which remain, and the surrounding grounds are worth seeing. The buildings are built up off the ground and are remarkable for detailed ornamentation. Delicately carved scrolls decorate the ceilings, and statues of real and mythical animals decorate roofs, walls, walkways, and fence posts. All the buildings have been beautifully preserved. Some buildings sit in the middle of beautiful main-made lakes, which are iced over during the winter. The gardens are designed to show the natural differences between man and the various elements of the land. They are not symmetrical or meticulously landscaped, and so have their own wild, natural beauty.

Situated on the palace grounds is the Folk Museum, which displays traditional Korean handicrafts. We met two students who showed us around to “practice” their English. Their tour of the Folk Museum helped us better understand the crafts displayed, and they taught us a little about Korean heritage. The National Museum is also located on the palace grounds and displays works of Korean art and royal artifacts.

There really are beautiful places to see in Korea, and if you want to take a break from the strenuous demands of shopping, visit Kyongbok Palace.

Marybeth Norcross

Korean Dishes to Try

- *Kim Chee*: These are pickled vegetables that have a distinct aroma and can be spicy. There are many types including cabbage, spinach, cucumber, radish, turnip, and bean sprouts.
- *Duk*: Rice cake with red sauce.
- *Duk Kuk*: Rice cake soup with beef broth and onion.
- *Duk Mandu Kuk*: Mandu soup with beef.
- *Bulgogi*: Grilled steak marinated in soy sauce, garlic, and sesame oil.
- *Kalbi*: Marinated beef short ribs.
- *Kal Bi Tung*: Beef short rib soup.
- *Mandu*: Wonton filled with pork, onion, carrot, spinach, and sprouts.
- *Mandu Kuk*: Beef soup with mandu, egg, and onion.
- *Chap Chae*: Stir-fried vegetables and beef mixed with noodles.
- *Bi Bim Bap*: Carrots, squash, mushrooms, and vegetables on rice.
- *Kim Bobp*: Seaweed roll with vegetables and rice.
- *Pop*: rice.

Karen Ozment 11/93

Other Attractions near Osan and Seoul

There are three large amusement parks near Osan: 1) Yongin Farmland has rides and a children’s zoo. During winter, there are sledding hills. 2) Seoul Grand Park consists of a large landscaped zoo, and neighboring Seoul Land is similar to a small Asian-style Disneyland. 3) LotteWorld, an amusement park half indoors and half outdoors including a roller coaster under a dome roof. There are two raccoons named Lotte and Lori who greet children throughout the day.

There are also the Korean Folk Village, Freedom Park, Panmunjom (the Demilitarized Zone on the border with North Korea), the Secret Garden, Kangwha Island. Check with the local community center, family support center, and/or USO for detailed information.

Diane Trempe; adapted from the Orient Express, Osan Officers’ Wives’ Club.



China

Hong Kong

Hong Kong is many parts; the larger are Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories. You can travel easily throughout the area using taxis, buses, subways and ferries, but it's just as easy to walk.

Battenburg lace, cashmere clothing, birdcages and jewelry are items most shoppers seek. "Comfortable" shopping can be done at the many malls and shopping centers similar to those of the USA. Some of the biggest are found along Canton Road (Ocean Centre, Harbour City and Silvercord). You can shop "til you drop", dine and go to the disco without ever going outside! Mall prices are generally higher than "outside", but the quality is usually better.

Repulse Bay is a pleasant trip (crowded on weekends) and it has some spectacular sights. Statues at one end of the beach depict a Chinese legend. Touching the statues brings good luck or a happy marriage. If a female touches the Baby Buddha, she will become pregnant. Touch the standing Buddha and wealth you should get. You'll extend your life by three days each time you cross the bridge by the pavilion.

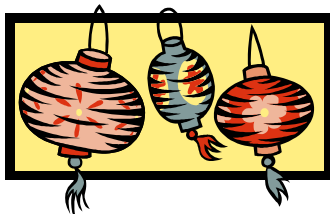
Must See/Do:

- Take the train to the top and walk around Victoria Peak or have coffee and enjoy the view.
- Ride the Star Ferry
- Go to Aberdeen, see (and maybe eat at) a floating restaurant
- Have a Dim Sum Lunch
- Got to the night market, Temple Street, Kowloon
- Ride a double-decker bus
- Visit Stanley

Thora Davidson-White

Eating Out in Hong Kong

The food in Hong Kong is wonderful and varied. The food is delicious and most every palate can be satisfied. A dinner cruise is a fun way to enjoy the Hong Kong night-lights. McDonald's has the cheapest breakfast in town. Chinese restaurants are really best when you have a crowd (so you can order more dishes) and there are lots of American and European style restaurants, too. The **Peninsula Hotel** is a must for high tea. It is served downstairs in a less formal setting or upstairs for a slightly higher price and a fabulous view.



Visas & the Chinese Embassy

You can get a visa from a travel agency in Japan or if you want to save some money you can go to the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo. I did this. It is easy and affordable.

Here is the original response I got from the Chinese Embassy and their web address:

For a tourist visa to China, you need to submit to the Embassy of China in Tokyo, the following items.

1. Your present passport;
2. One photo similar to that on your passport;
3. One visa application form, which you can obtain and fill in at the Embassy of China.

The application takes you 4 days, and the fees are allocated as follows,

for a 1-entry tourist visa, 4000 Japanese yen;

for a 2-entry tourist visa, 6000 Japanese yen;

for a multiple-entries tourist visa within 6 months, 8000 Japanese yen;

for a multiple-entries tourist visa within 1 year, 12000 Japanese yen.

The office hours are from 9:00 to 12:00, every weekday.

The Chinese Embassy address: 4-33, Moto-Azabu 3-Chome, Minato-ku, (106-0046) Tokyo.

For details, please visit their website at <http://lsb.china.jp>

You can also register on-line with the American Embassy in Beijing, China. Their web site is <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/english/>.

Directions to the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo:

Go to the Hiro-o subway stop (this is the one located near the New Sanno). You could also take the bus to the New Sanno. Take exit #3 from the Hiro-o subway stop. Turn right out of the exit and walk up the street. At the second light take a right (this is a narrow one way street). At the top of the hill (1st light) turn left. The Chinese Embassy will be on your right. Follow the signs to the "Consular Section Chinese Embassy". (This is a side door not the main entrance to the Embassy.) Visa applications are on the first floor. You usually need the name of the hotel where you will be staying and a contact name and phone number in China. Double check before you go to the Embassy.

China is an exciting country full of history and definitely worth the time and money to visit! There are several options when considering a trip to China. Camp Zama has a China tour as well as Nite Flight (outside the Fussa Gate). I would encourage you to look at all the options and see what works best for you and your family. It's less crowded and less expensive in the winter, but it's also pretty cold in Beijing in January. We went in October, which is the peak touring time.

Dawn Leach

Beijing Travel Agency

Several people at Yokota have used a travel agency in Beijing and have been extremely pleased with their trips.



The name of the travel agent is Andrew and he is based in Beijing. His web page is <http://www.bhats.com>. One of the e-mail addresses I have for him is: hats@bhats.com. Also, Shelley is the lady who was our actual tour guide in Beijing. She was excellent. She works at the Beijing office and also has an e-mail address so you may want to e-mail her as well. Her address is luxiaoli7072@sina.com. If there are particular things you want to see, Shelley will go out of her way to accommodate you. Just be sure to agree on a general itinerary beforehand so she can plan things for you.

Dawn Leach



Singapore

Singapore is hard to describe. It is a city with an illustrious background and an exotic present. There are tall modern buildings, aged temples and mosques. There are fast-food restaurants and old fashioned family favorites. There are tiny market stalls and huge air-conditioned malls. Singapore is a city with it all: great cuisine, great shopping, and great attractions.

The people are proud of their food and will ask a visitor what he has eaten before they ask what he's seen! The best places to eat are the infamous hawker centers consisting of stall after stall of various foods: Japanese noodles, Indian chicken and mutton, seafood, satay, tropical fruit, and so forth. The most famous meal is chili crabs. This dish is found only in Singapore and my husband says they're the best. If you eat at one, find a table after browsing. While one person stays, the other should order the desired dishes. The chef will cook the food and deliver it to the table where you will pay. Prices are cheap, ranging from S\$2.00 to S\$5.00. Hawker centers are clean and the water safe; recommendations are Lau Pa Sat (in Telok Ayer market) and Newton Circus. The Banana Leaf Apollo is a personal favorite for Indian food. If you crave western food, your choices include Brannigan's, Hard Rock Café, Denny's, Ponderosa, Pizza Hut, KFC, Long John Silver's, McDonald's and Burger King, just to name a few. And the good news about tipping is...you don't! A 10% service charge and 4% tax is already added to the food bills.

Before you begin your shopping spree, keep in mind licensed moneychangers will have the best rates. They are located in shopping centers and there are many on Orchard Road. Most stores are open 9am to 9 or 10pm, seven days a week. Souvenirs, stationery, clothes, electronics, jewelry, leather, shoes, and other goods can be found in any center. Marina Square is the size of seven football fields three levels high.

Batik can be found everywhere. Fashioned into ties, shirts, skirts and pants, it is either hand printed or machine made. Hand printed is naturally more expensive and one can tell the difference by looking at both sides of the cloth. If both sides are dyed and the pattern more intricate, it is probably hand-printed. Arab Street is well known for its batik, as is Tang's department store. RISIS, a gold-plated orchid, is found only in Singapore. A real orchid is gold-plated and made into charms, earrings, pins and cufflinks. RISIS can be found in most souvenir shops

as well as most department stores. Although more common in Malaysia, pewter is also found. Selangor Pewter is well known and the company has a showroom and museum on Duxton Road. It is also sold in Raffles City.

There is a plethora of attractions. Arab Street and its surrounding area has not only shopping, but is the home of the gold domed Sultan Mosque. Jurong Bird Park is the largest in the region and has over 5,000 birds of 45 species. A visitor can breakfast with parrots, experience a tropical thunderstorm and walk through the world's largest aviary. Jurong Crocodile Paradise boasts over 2500 crocodiles. Attractions include crocodile wrestling shows two times daily. Mandai Orchid Gardens is Singapore's largest commercial orchid garden and is next to the Singapore Zoological Gardens.

Raffles Hotel is a historical landmark that should not be missed. I recommend the Long Bar where the "Singapore Sling" was invented and Somerset Maugham wrote. There is also a museum, a multimedia show in Jubilee Playhouse, and Seah Street Deli. Walk down and take a look at the Merlion Fountain. This symbol of Singapore is half lion and half fish. The Statue guards the mouth of the Singapore River.

Mt. Faber offers spectacular views of the harbor and the city. This is also the location of the cable cars for the World Trade Center and Sentosa Island. Sentosa, a Malay word for "peace and tranquility", is one of Singapore's most popular attractions, island or otherwise. It boasts beautiful beaches, three museums, a theme park, nature trail complete with a man-made dragon and bones, a musical fountain, a Colarium with over 2000 exotic shells and coral, a butterfly park with over 3000 live butterflies, and Fort Siloso.

One attraction is the Underwater World, a 100-meter acrylic tunnel allowing one to see marine life including sharks, stingrays, eels, and puffer fish. There are over 5000 fishes of 350 species. Visitors can touch small sea animals including starfish and stingrays in the Touch Pool.

Sentosa also has two golf courses, Southeast Asia's largest roller skating rink, and canoes, pedal boats, sailboards and aqua bikes can be rented. I highly recommend spending at least one full day at Sentosa Island.

There are numerous other attractions in Singapore including: Asian Village, Big Splash, Guinness World of Records, gardens, Kranji War Memorial, Changi Prison Chapel and



museum, Parliament House, Singapore Science Museum, Alkaff Mansion, Bird Singing Concert, CN West Leisure Park, Chinatown, St. Anders Cathedral, as well as galleries and museums.

If you wish to venture further, Johor Bahru is less than one mile across the causeway. The Malaysian lifestyle is more relaxed, and there are various things to do, depending on how far you want to travel. Many tours are available not only for Johor Bahru (easy on your own), but also for Malacca, Kakup, and Kuala Lumpur.

Singapore has a multitude of hotels and a list of names and numbers can be obtained from the military terminal. Like Hong Kong, Singapore is not an EML location, but one can take a military hop with his or her sponsor. Commercial flights are plentiful. Getting around is easy. Many places are within walking distance. The MRT subway system, and buses are simple to use and cost effective. Taxis are convenient.

There is a reason why Singapore is a clean city: Fines. Littering of any kind is subject to a S\$1,000 fine for a first offense and S\$2,000 for repeat offenses. Chewing gum is illegal and the importation, selling, manufacturing or chewing of gum on public transportation is punishable. Smoking is not allowed in public places and smokers can be fined. Forgetting to flush the toilet will cost you S\$150. Even jaywalking has a regulation against it—crossing the road within 50 meters of an underpass or pedestrian bridge or crossing will find you with S\$50 less in your pocket. It sounds strict, but it doesn't affect many of us and seeing such a beautiful, litter-free city is worth the effort!

Other things to keep in mind: when visiting a mosque or Indian temple, wear discreet clothing and remove shoes before entering; if taking a bus, have exact change ready; the weather is always hot and humid; the dress is normally casual; Singapore uses 220-240 volts, 50 cycles, so bring an adapter and transformer in case your hotel does not supply them; there is no eating, drinking or smoking on any public transportation.

For more information, contact a Tourist Information Center. One is located in Scotts Shopping Center, open 9:30am-9:30pm daily. Another is located in Raffles City and open from 8:30am-6pm. MWR at the U.S. Naval Base in Singapore arranged our hotel in Singapore, flights to and from Kuantan, Malaysia, and our hotel in Malaysia. Call commercial at 65-750-2539, or military 325-2539.

MWR booked the best hotel offering a military discount: Royal Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, 25 Scotts Road, for \$130 per night for a twin (room with two double beds). This is an elegant hotel with live music on weekend evenings. It's just ½ block from Orchard Road and the MRT (the very clean and efficient subway). I hear the other Holiday Inn (Holiday Inn Park View, 11 Cavenagh Road) offers a room for \$150 including breakfast, which appears to be a great deal. Our hotel's breakfast buffet was almost \$20 per person. We only ate there once.

Because breakfast was expensive (so is beer and wine), we found an alternative, Delifrance. There are chains located everywhere, and they serve delicious French coffee, croissants, French breads, eggs, orange juice and sandwiches at very reasonable prices.

Our favorite place to eat dinner was along the Singapore River at the Boat Quay (MRT stop is Raffles Place). There are more than 20 restaurants along a walkway, with tables outside right on the river. Coming from Misawa, the choice was overwhelming and fun. The best Italian meal in all of Singapore can be had at Pasta Brava, 11 Craig Road, Tanjong Pagar. This restaurant is a couple of blocks from the Tanjong Pagar MRT station and in an area on the edge of Chinatown. Entrepreneurs are buying the old shop houses and renovating them to make the area very quaint. A friendly and attentive Italian family runs the restaurant, and the ambiance made the delicious food even better. For four of us, including a bottle of wine, appetizers and dessert, it cost \$95.

There are so many interesting things to do in Singapore, but our favorites included: breakfast with an orangutan at the zoo, the museum at the Raffles Hotel, and an afternoon at the Terror Club, U.S. Naval Base, Singapore. The base has a beautiful pool and clubhouse where food is cheaper, plus it's in a quiet, lush area that is a pleasant change from bustling Orchard Road. To get to the base, take the MRT north to the last stop, Yishun. From there we took a taxi (tell driver "Sembawang Terminal"); 7 minutes, \$3.50. Buses run from above the Terror Club to Northpoint Mall (where Yishun MRT is located) and cost only \$.50 per person. The Northpoint Mall is a very nice place for shopping.

Karen Ozment



Malaysia

We were looking for a place to relax, and we found a true heaven on earth at a reasonable price. The Cherating Holiday Villa Beach Resort, 45 minutes by taxi from Kuantan (on the eastern side of peninsular Malaysia) is a lovely mix of European creature comforts and Malaysian hospitality. We stayed in a chalet 10 feet from the pool and 150 feet from the ocean for \$70 per night. There were tennis courts, 2 pools, lounge chairs along the beach, a bar, coffee shop and a Swiss/Italian Restaurant for fine dining. We stayed for five full days, doing nothing but reading, eating (a mix of Malaysian and European food) and sleeping. There are excursions up a river to see all sorts of jungle life (maybe you will get lucky and see a snake or iguana), snorkeling on a nearby island, parasailing, jet skiing, and endless miles of deserted beach. The first Club Med in Asia is just a few miles north. (The Cherating Club Med charts \$90+ per person per day, which includes all meals and some activities). This area is also famous for the turtles who lay their eggs on the beach between June and September.

Getting to Kuantan and Cherating takes a little time and effort, but it's well worth it. The quickest route is a 45 minute flight from Singapore to Kuantan for \$127 round trip for adults and \$137 for children under 12. The 45-minute taxi ride from Kuantan Airport to Cherating costs \$20. The drive from Singapore to Cherating takes about 8 hours, and the bus is quite cheap, but takes much longer. There is no train service.

If you prefer more excitement and activity, the western side of Malaysia may be more to your liking. On a previous trip (1975) we took the train from Singapore to Malacca, then on the Kuala Lumpur. From there we trained to Tapah, then took a taxi up the winding road to the Cameron Highlands and stayed at the quaint Ye Olde Smokehouse. Back on the train, we again headed north to Butterworth and stayed just a short taxi ride away, right on the beach on Penang Island. We then took the sleeper train on up to Bangkok.

If you only have a day to spare and would like to get just a quick feel of Malaysia while you are in Singapore, one-day excursions can be arranged at the better hotels. A friend of mine went to Malacca on an all-day trip, with about 5 hours there to look at antiques, mosques, and old Dutch colony and interesting back alleys. This trip cost about \$100 per person including lunch.

Anne Bowers 9/95



Guam

Imagine it: White, sandy beaches, swaying palm trees, azure, clear water, sensational sunsets, signs in English, and American food. Sound good? You have all of this and more on a tropical island named Guam. Located at the crossroads of the western Pacific, Guam is the largest and southernmost island of the Mariana archipelago and it is the westernmost possession of the United States. An EML location, the island is 1,500 miles southeast of Tokyo on a three-hour flight (five hours on a C-130) to paradise.

Guam is for sports lovers with its consistent 84-89F day and 74-78F night temperatures. Its gorgeous beaches are the main attraction and are perfect for windsurfing, snorkeling and reef walking or for just kicking back and soaking up rays of sunshine. The most "famous" beaches are on Tumon Bay but a short drive will take you to your own beach.

If you snorkel, this is the place to do it! Masses of coral and a colossal variety of marine life provide an inconceivable underwater utopia. Visibility averages about 100 feet and Guam boasts more than 400 species of coral and 90 varieties of fish, making it the richest marine habitat of any U.S. territory. Sunken wrecks along with other artifacts from World War II can also be seen in some spots. There are many dive shops. Tours, rentals, repairs, equipment sales and all levels of instruction are readily available.

A great deal of dining out and nightlife centers around the hotels, but an array of food can be found all over the island. Some of the more familiar American establishments include Taco Bell, Subway Sandwiches, Pizza Hut, Shakey's Pizza, Wendy's, Tony Roma's, Sizzler's, KFC, El Pollo Loco, McDonald's, Burger King and Popeye's. There are also Thai, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Italian, Mexican, Filipino and Chamorro restaurants. Special entertainment hits the island frequently and upcoming events are advertised in the Pacific Daily News and on base. Evening hot spots include Tahiti Rama, Tree Bar, Century Disco, Lights, Ten-4 and Tourist Night Club.

Shopping is almost as convenient as in the Mainland States. The Micronesia Mall in Dededo is the largest in the region and it has a department store, grocery store, drug store, food court and over 50 specialty stores including Benetton and Crabtree & Evelyn. The Hafa Adai Exchange (north of the ITC building on Marine Drive) is an interesting place. One can find everything from clothing and compact discs to luggage, souvenirs and pots and pans!

The islanders of the Pacific are known for their handiwork and Belau's storyboards can be bought at Colorful Creations in Agana, along with prints, pottery, and other decorating items. The Melanesian Trading Company on Airport Road has jewelry and clothing from all over Asia, and China Arts located on Marine Drive offers jewelry in ivory, jade, pearls, gold, silver and cloisonné for women and men. Whereas Guam prices are not cheap, there are bargains to be found so take time to look around.

Where to stay: Andersen AFB is located in the north area of the island. Its beach is considered the best on Guam and it has picnic and camping areas plus a volleyball net. Billeting is next to impossible to get on Andersen when on leave, but the island has many hotels to accommodate visitors. Prices range from \$80-\$200 per night.

Getting around: Taxi service is limited and rates are high (no base taxis). Off-base taxis must be called and the Main Gate Security Police briefed. AAFES car rental, located in the passenger terminal, is the best way to view the island and cars average \$25 a day. They are open 8am-5pm (362-2181). To drive in Guam you must have a home state driver's license or an International driver's license. Unless otherwise posted, the speed limit on all of Guam's roads is 35 mph.

There are a lot of places to visit and sightsee while in Guam. For more information contact the Guam Visitors Bureau at P.O. Box 3520, Agana, Guam 96910.



Hawaii

Sources: Guam-Newcomer's Guide, Welcome to Guam, Karen Ozment

Honolulu

Why not go to Hawaii? Well—why not? Consider these facts: You are closer to Hawaii than most of the U.S.; flights to paradise are available; and, military installations there provide fine services at great prices. While we will not give you all the details, we will give some basic data and, hopefully, point you in the right direction.

How to get there

- Commercial air, round trip from Narita. Don't laugh—this may not be as expensive as it sounds. You see, Hawaii is a major destination for Japanese tourists, especially newlyweds and golfers—somewhere between 12 and 20 747s leave Narita daily for Honolulu. Travel agencies book blocks of seats on these flights and, if the seats are not filled, you may find bargains. Check with on-base and off-base travel agents. Advantage: You can schedule when to depart and arrive: Disadvantage: Can be expensive.

- Space-A. Flights may be available; a medical evacuation C-141 flies from Yokota to Hickam regularly and seats might be open. Check with the terminal. As with any other Space-A travel, be prepared to pay your own way back. Upon arrival, check in with Hickam Terminal to sign up for Space-A return. Advantage: The price is right. Disadvantage: Cannot (really) schedule departure; cannot guarantee arrangements.

- Circuitous travel in conjunction with PCS. This method of seeing the world is a little-known benefit. Consider: Your Uncle Sam, having sent you to Yokota, is obligated to get you to your next assignment by the most direct manner—but, you do not have to go directly. If you want to detour, you may do so, provided you clear a few bureaucratic requirements and reimburse Uncle for the difference in cost. Let's say you receive PCS orders. Go immediately to TMO and tell them you want circuitous travel, with leave enroute, through Hawaii. They will arrange your departure from Japan, arrival in Hawaii, and departure from Hawaii to your next station. They will give you a cash collection voucher for the difference in cost to the government for flying you and the family through Hawaii. Disadvantages: You may run into a clerk who does not believe it can be done. Must use up leave. Must pack accordingly.

Where to stay in Hawaii

There are hotels of every size, price and quality. For our purposes, though, there are many lodging facilities operated by the military. WARNING: Don't even think about zipping to Hawaii on a Space-A flight and waltzing into a suite at the Hale Koa with no notice. The same goes for any other accommodations. The press of TDY personnel, active and retired people on leave just like you and people stationed in Hawaii using the facilities is such that advance reservations of weeks or months are always needed no matter where you want to stay. CALL FIRST. Here are descriptions of military lodging facilities.

- *Hale Koa Hotel*, 2055 Kalia Road, Honolulu, HI 96815-1998. 808-955-0555 (1-800-367-6027 from CONUS only). <http://www.halekoa.com/> High-rise hotel on Waikiki beach. Excellent restaurants; tours, ticket services; exchange; beach equipment rentals.

- *Bellows Recreation Center*, Reservation Office, 220 Tinker Road, Waimanalo, HI 96795. 808-259-8841. At Bellows AB, 16 miles from downtown Honolulu on the windward side of Oahu. 102 cottages, with kitchens, available year-round; beautiful beach, tennis, driving range, etc.

- *Barbers Point Naval Air Station*. 808-682-2019. 30 minutes west of Honolulu. Excellent beach, furnished cottages with small kitchens. Golf course, riding stables, children's playgrounds.

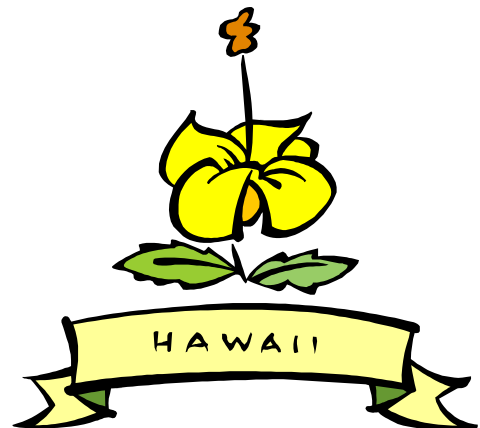
- *Waianae Army Recreation Center*. 808-696-2494. Far out on Oahu's west coast, it's an excellent beach facility. All cottages have oceanfront views and decks.

What to do

Are you kidding? This article is not allotted enough space. Each facility has some combination of golf, tennis, water sports, tours, etc., available. Rec centers have discount tickets for shows, fishing trips, sightseeing tours and the like. Water sports abound, such as swimming, sailing, snorkeling, scuba, and surfing. If you do not know how or forgot your equipment, lessons and rentals are available for bicycling, camping, fishing, and hiking. Eat, drink, and be merry or relaxed at an uncountable variety of restaurants. Museums, movies, concerts. Then, of course, there is always the option of lying on the beach and doing nothing.

Foremost among military facilities on Oahu is Pearl Harbor, where the Navy runs guided tours of the Arizona Memorial. Pearl also features an excellent Navy Exchange. Hickam AFB clubs are grand places in beautiful settings and the HQ building at Hickam still has bullet marks from the December 1941 Japanese attack. Tripler Army Medical Center—the great pink building on the mountain—provides superb care for all U.S. military in Hawaii.

Visit the underwater park in the submerged crater of Hanauma Bay (by 7am if diving). Snorkel gear can be rented from Hickam's MWR. Take a tram ride or walk down the cliff to enjoy face-time with reef fish, turtles, and eels.



Shopping

· *Ala Moana Center*, on Ala Moana Boulevard. Walk or take a bus from Waikiki. Plan half a day just to reconnoiter the place. Features Liberty House, in the style of the grand old vanished department stores; Sears and Penney's; upscale shops include Laura Ashley, and designer shops with unpronounceable names. Don't miss the Nature Company or the Honolulu Book Store. On the lower level is Makai Marketplace where the food is good, the service quick and the prices low.

· *Tower Records*. One block behind Ala Moana Center, going away from the beach. If it has been recorded it's at Tower.

· The shops around the hotels on Waikiki. While many of these cater to tourists and the prices show it, you can find that special gift somewhere on Waikiki.

· *Ward Center* on Ala Moana Boulevard. Much smaller than Ala Moana Center, easy to overlook. Several specialty shops; lots of restaurants on the first and second levels. A couple of blocks down the street is *Ward Warehouse* with lots of shops including a great kitchen specialty shop; restaurants on the first and second levels.

· *Aloha Tower Marketplace* in the downtown dock area off Ala Moana. Eat, drink, and shop in an open-air covered mall by the water.

· *Pearlridge Center*. Beyond Pearl Harbor, divided into three groups with two connected by a monorail. Typical state-side mall. Next to the section with Liberty House is a building full of restaurants, including Tony Roma's Ribs and ChiChi's Mexican.

· AAFES exchanges at Hickam and Schofield Barracks.

· Weekend flea market (a big one) in Aloha Stadium near Pearl Harbor. Every weekend.

· *Jamison's by the Sea* on the North shore boasts the best gift shop on the island where authentic crafts can be purchased reasonably. Lunch or dinner here is also recommended.

How to find everything

Check the library and bookstore for travel guides. Have friends who are there send you guides. Or, send a check for \$3.50+ to the Hawaiian Military Exchange Guide, 1142 Auahi Street, Suite 2207, Honolulu HI 96814 for a nice guide.



What to take

Depends on what you plan to do. Swim-suits, shorts and sandals are required. Golfers take your clubs or rent. Dressing up in Hawaii means "aloha wear"—Hawaiian shirts with the tail out and slacks for men, muu-muus for ladies. Don't have the shirt and muu-muu? No problem, buy them there in the exchanges, at Hilo Hattie's factory on Ala Moana Boulevard, or in any one of a thousand shops. Otherwise, the more casual the better. Take sun block and lip cream (insect repellent if you go hiking). Camera and film. Tote bag for shopping and going to the beach. Money (cash checks at exchanges and clubs, within daily limits).

Bringing it back

Pack-and-wrap shops are available and you can mail packages from post offices—sorry, you cannot use the MPS free postage. You should have no problem bring fruit or flowers into Japan provided you buy them at the hotels or the airport, packed and inspected for shipping. Finally, we have two suitcases, one which fits inside the other. We fill the smaller one with clothes and put it in the larger one—which we then fill with treasures there.

Joe Schlatter, Suzanne Perini 8/97

Kilauea on the Big Island

Having wanted to see a live volcano, I had learned DoD ran Kilauea Military Camp (KMC) in Volcanoes National Park on the Big Island of Hawaii and DoD employees could stay there inexpensively. Using an EML, my spouse and I flew to Hickam AFB. Opting to go straight to the Big Island, we took a taxi to the airport and waited for the inter-island terminal to open at 4am. After looking through various brochures but not really learning anything due to jet lag, we took the first flight. A military discount did not apply to Hawaii Airlines' early bird flight of \$50 one way. (If you reserve rooms, KMC can assist with round trip fares of \$80.)

We rented a car at the Hilo airport (military discount at Hertz), and visited the Suisan Fish Market, since most places did not open for breakfast until 6am. We walked around the neighboring park overlooking Hilo Bay before breakfast. Once business hours started, we called the camp and were told to come check it out.

It felt great to drive on an empty highway in sunny lush Hawaii. We paid our entrance fee to Volcanoes National Park and stopped briefly at the Visitor Center before parking in front of the KMC office. Because the classic stone cabins were occupied, we chose a one-bedroom apartment with kitchenette for \$57 per night.

During our three days at the park, we hiked several trails including the short Devastation Trail, the longer crater rim and Halema'uma'u trails around and through Kilauea crater. The scenery varied from the lush Thurston lava tube to arid desert amount recent lava flows and patches of molten rock, smelling of sulfur, in the crater.

We drove out to where beaches and Kalapana town used to be and are now covered by still warm lava. At the end of the road outside the park, we walked across deep cracks in the lava. At the end of the road inside the park, we used flash-



lights and binoculars to walk out and watch the lava flow into the ocean at night. We also took a hike out to see ancient petroglyphs threatened by the lava flows.

As advised, visitors should wear long pants and sturdy shoes to protect against sharp edged lava. (Pregnant women and those with asthma should avoid areas with fumes. And it does get cold at dusk following the daily afternoon rain shower.) Although a shoppette is available, for more variety, buy supplies in Hilo first.

We left KMC early one morning for Kona (also called Kailua-Kona), stopping along the way to visit Honaunau where Hawaiians were once granted sanctuary, and the Painted Church where a priest painted the inside of his church to look much grander using techniques from Michelangelo's era. We had a light early lunch at Wakefield Gardens, the recommendation of a local friend and conveniently located near the Painted Church. Our next stop was the two-story Hulihee Palace in Kona and a brief stroll through nearby shops.

Our hotel that night was the Waimea Country Lodge owned by descendants of the Parker Ranch family, a huge cattle spread started by an ex-new England whaler and his royal Hawaiian wife seal generations ago. The Parker Ranch spreads across nearly a quarter of the Big Island and is the main employer of the area. Its history is interesting; the original Parker was hired by King Kamehameha to control an expanding cattle population (from just 3 cows given to the king). Since he really wasn't a rancher, the Hawaiians later brought over three Mexican cowboys who started the paniolo tradition. To learn more, visit the museum in the Parker Ranch

Shopping Center and the former Parker homes

The following day, we drove to an overlook above Pololu Valley where a series of beautiful valleys extends to Waipio bordering the coast, accessible only by foot or horse. We then headed back out and down the coast, stopping at Lapakahi State Park, where a village has been semi-reconstructed into an educational historical display. In contrast to Honaunau and its buses of tourists, we were the only people at this park aside from a ranger. Going south again, we visited Kawaihae Harbor for lunch, finally finding the remains of the temple where Kamehameha sacrificed his final rival in unification of the islands.

Having been told Waipio Valley was a must, although strenuous hike, we selected Sunday, when tours into the valley were not operating. As warned, it was along difficult walk down the extremely steep, 4-wheel drive road. The surfers were up early and we watched them before briefly exploring the stream area. Not being true backpackers or campers, we did not venture into farther valleys.

After the climb back up the road, we headed to Hilo via scenic Akaka Falls. A small city, most of downtown Hilo was closed Sunday afternoon. As a result, it was difficult to acquire information about Molokai's Kalaupapa National Historical Park. Over a hundred years ago, Hawaii forced its victims of leprosy into isolation by abandoning them on a beautiful but remote peninsula on Molokai. Non-patients, even spouses, were not permitted free access and had to go through several layers of bureaucracy to visit the settlement. Even

now, because there are still Hansen's Disease patients in Kalaupapa, access is limited and visitors must receive advance permission.

Father Damien, a Belgian priest now under consideration for sainthood, went to live in Kalaupapa to assist Hawaii's lepers. He helped nurse the ill, and constructed a hospital, living areas, and water pipelines before dying of Hansen's Disease himself. It was later discovered that only a small percentage of people is even susceptible to Hansen's Disease, which is controllable through sulfone drugs. Having read about the colony in Michener's Hawaii years ago, I wanted to see the place myself.

In Honolulu, on Oahu, we made arrangements at the Hale Koa (no discounts) for the Molokai Mule Ride which included round trip airfare, airport transfers, lunch and the guided tour for \$230 per person (our most expensive but most memorable part of this trip; to save about \$75 per person you can also hike down the mule trail and pack your own lunch). The next morning, we woke early and were taken to the inter-island terminal (in the dark!) before taking a commuter plane to Molokai.

Later we were introduced to our mules. When the guides found out I had ridden horses, I was designated to lead our group down the hour and a half long, very steep trail of 26 switchbacks. Mainly, this meant keeping Blackjack from eating grass along the way and keeping him focused on the descent while our three escorts assisted the inexperienced riders. The weather was great and the scenery stunning. I tried not to look directly down the cliff and think of how risky this actually was whenever I felt and heard Blackjack slipping (of course, we signed disclaimers).

When we reached the bottom of the trail and entered Kalaupapa (besides small plane or boat, the mule trail is the only way in), a Damien Tours, former yellow school bus, met us. The local sheriff was our driver and guide, telling us of how it was to grow up on Kalaupapa. We had a sandwich lunch in a secluded site near the former leprosarium with a few horses and cats keeping us company. Next, we visited Father Damien's church and drove around the settlement. Then it was back on the mule for another hour to make it up the cliff to the stables before a rainstorm hit. Although we were sore for a couple of days afterward, we had a wonderful time. We are even thinking of returning to Kalaupapa, but maybe by foot.

Teresa Negley 10/96

Kilauea Military Camp
Armed Forces Recreation Center
Attention: Reservations
Volcanoes National Park, HI 96718
Tel. 808 967-8333, Fax 808 967-8343
From Oahu, call 438-6707



Notes:

