

Editor's Note

Aloha! That's a traditional greeting in Hawaii—the state we are featuring in this issue of *English Teaching Forum*. Hawaii is the first of four U.S. states that we will focus on in 2009.

Hawaii is an unusual state for one obvious reason—it consists of a group of islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, two thousand miles from the U.S. mainland. The distance between the U.S. capital, Washington, D.C., and Hawaii's capital, Honolulu, is nearly 5,000 miles. The time difference between the two cities is five or six hours (depending upon whether Washington is on Daylight Savings Time or not—Hawaii does not observe Daylight Savings Time.) Given that great distance, travelers often complain of jet lag when they fly to Hawaii.

But having Hawaii as a destination makes most travelers quite willing to suffer a little jet lag. Hawaii is a unique and wonderful place of exceptional beauty, as you can see by the photo on the cover. Many people, once they've been to Hawaii, long to go back.

I was one such person. The first time I went to Hawaii, it was to work for a week in Honolulu. Astounded by the beauty of Oahu and surrounded by tanned and smiling vacationers, I felt it was some sort of cruel joke that I spent my days in Hawaii working in windowless offices. Because I felt I missed the true experience of Hawaii, I vowed to go back when I could enjoy it.

It took me six years, but I did make it back to Hawaii for a vacation. That was in 2004 when two friends and I spent a glorious week on the island of Maui. We made fresh-squeezed orange juice every morning from oranges we gathered from the yard of the condo we were renting; we waded in the ocean and watched sunsets from the beach. To celebrate one friend's birthday, we went to a luau (you can read about luaus in the feature article), and one day we got up at 3:00 AM to drive in the dark on steep, winding roads up to the summit of a volcano, Haleakala, to view the sunrise. (It was very cold up there in the early dawn at an elevation of 10,000 feet.) That was an unforgettable experience.

Despite (or maybe because of) our satisfying vacation, my friends and I often talk about wanting to return to Hawaii. I hope you will have some sense of how special this state is once you've read about it in this issue.

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