

Mountains to Sea: Environmental Connection and Adventure

Week 1: Program Orientation

Meet your group at the Kahului International Airport and drive to a nearby campground with great proximity to ocean beaches and hiking trails. The group will be here for the first 5 days, building bonds, setting intentions, enjoying day hikes to waterfalls, and establishing a strong foundation for the upcoming journey. We will also discuss strategies and best practices for staying healthy and well while traveling during a pandemic.

Weeks 2-3: Organic Farming and Permaculture

The group will head into higher elevation to begin learning about sustainable agriculture. Engaging with a mixture of classroom and hands-on learning for 6-8 hours per day, the group will establish a greater understanding of regenerative small-scale organic agriculture, environmental ethics, community living, nature connection, and permaculture. Hands-on activities will include all aspects of vegetable production from seeding to harvesting, fruit tree orchard design and care, beekeeping and seed saving. Enjoy the tranquility of nature after a hard day's work, cooking and hanging out in the large covered outdoor kitchen area during the evenings.

Accommodation: The group will be camping in personal tents during this time; restrooms and showers will be available.

Week 4: Surfing/Paddleboarding/Canoeing and Outdoor Adventure

The ocean is an integral aspect of life in Hawai'i, and play is an integral aspect of life. We'll take a week to explore the world of surfing, learning from local experts at a location with waves that are perfect for novice surfers. We'll also have some paddleboard time, checking out the abundant marine life and coral reefs, as well as learning how to navigate a traditional Hawaiian canoe.

We'll also spend some time exploring magnificent Haleakalā National Park. *This may include backpacking or 2-3 days of day-hiking, depending on current national park guidelines for COVID-19. There may also be volunteer opportunities within the national park depending on guidelines.*

Accommodation: The group will be staying at an established campground with hot showers.

Weeks 5-6: Conservation: Stream Restoration, Endemic Plants, Coral Reef Protection

Moving to the northern shore, the group will work on a local conservation site that is aimed at rehabilitating streambeds and propagating endemic plants, all of which helps to keep sediments from damaging local coral reefs. The group will work 6-8 hours a day, learning about the interconnectedness of freshwater and marine habitats, endemic plants, soil, and erosion/sediment, and how coral reefs are integral to marine life, protecting island ecosystems, and mitigating the challenges of global warming.

Accommodation: The group will stay in an established campground in personal tents. Restrooms and showers available.

Week 7: Transition to the Big Island

We'll get to know our new environment by checking out some local surf and snorkel spots and visiting Mauna Kea, a sacred site that, from its base in the sea to its peak, is the highest mountain in the world. We'll also visit Volcanoes National Park and look in on Halema'uma'u crater, a place of active lava flows.

Accommodations: camping in personal tents either in an established campground or in the national park itself (if overnight backpacking is permitted at that time).

Week 8: Marine Conservation and Snorkeling

Furthering our conservation learning and action, we'll move our efforts to the ocean. Through hands-on learning with a local educator, we'll explore the importance of coral reef health, which is essential to mitigating the effects of climate change and maintaining healthy marine ecosystems. Hawai'i is home to the highest percentage of unique native species for warm water marine fishes anywhere on earth, so you should see lots of marine life while learning and exploring this underwater world!

Week 9: Student Directed Travel

Throughout the journey, your amazing Overseas Educators have been sharing tips on how to travel responsibly, and it's now time to put your newly acquired travel skills to use! Your group will plan, organize and implement the adventures this week - how you get there, where you'll stay, how you manage your budget, and what you'll do are up to the group to decide. Mountains and hot springs? A week to refine your surfing skills? Swimming with manta rays? What will your group decide?

Week 10: Reflection Retreat

It's nearing the end of our journey, and it's time to settle into a beautiful location designed specifically for reflection, introspection, and insight. We'll spend 5 days in a secluded retreat center, learning mindfulness practices, reflecting on our experiences, exploring the local hiking trails, and discussing strategies for integrating our experiences into life back home. This will be a time to celebrate shared experiences and learning, look back on the joys and challenges of the journey, and to look forward to the next phase of our individual paths.

Accommodation: students will be in a large house with their own beds for the retreat.

****Carpe Diem reserves the right to make changes to the program at any time, and indeed has the responsibility to do so in some instances; changes may be required to provide the best possible experience, protect the safety of participants, or respond to changes in weather or political conditions.***