

Just suppose your ship docks in Honolulu and you have just 12 hours to see as much of the city as you can. Here are just a few recommendations. If you're senior enough to remember what you were doing on December 7, 1941, you may want to make a trip out to Pearl Harbor and visit the USS Arizona Memorial.



The old battlewagon is still there, not quite entirely underwater, often with little bubbles of fuel oil breaking the surface. The visitor center is just above it, a wing-like white building. Inside you can see many World War II artifacts and the names of all the USS Arizona's Navy men who died during the Japanese sneak attack on that peaceful December day.

Whenever you see any ad or movie about Honolulu, the first scene is always of Diamond Head. Its name doesn't come from its impressive angular shape as it reaches above the city and its beaches, but from the first European explorers who hiked up to the extinct volcano in search of endless riches. They were wrong, but beautiful Diamond Head and all of the Hawaiian Islands are certainly jewels of the Pacific in many wonderful ways. Hikes up to the top of Diamond Head is available to visitors, although it can be quite a trek for the elderly.

Be sure to visit Waikiki Beach, where the white sand blends with the blue of the Pacific. If you use your imagination and ignore all the tourists and waders while looking at the ocean waves rolling in, you may see the ghosts of Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr as they replay their torrid beach front love scene in "From Here to Eternity". And if you listen real closely, you'll hear Sinatra singing the film's theme song.

In the center of that white sand oceanside paradise for boaters, swimmers and surfers sits the historic Royal Hawaiian Hotel. The six-story, 400-suite hotel was officially opened in 1927. The elegant structure's pink stucco and Spanish-Moorish style were very popular then, hinting of the romantic appeal of Rudolph Valentino movies.

Child actress Shirley Temple created a stir by strumming the ukulele on Waikiki Beach while staying at the Royal in the 1930s. That led to the introduction of the famed Shirley Temple cocktail. During WWII, to greet GIs, Marines and Navy veterans returning from the Pacific war zone, the hotel set up a fountain that flowed with free pineapple juice.

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin described the newly opened Royal Hawaiian then as "the first resort hostelry in America." The description still fits today. So, now your 12 hours in Honolulu is up, and you'd better hurry back to your ship before she sails without you.