

Elvis' love affair with Hawai'i

- First travelled to Hawai'i in November 1957 where he held his first concerts on O'ahu at the old Honolulu Stadium and Schofield Army Barracks. Elvis Presley was born in Mississippi and lived in Tennessee, but for many fans, this musical legend is known as "the last Hawaiian king".
- From a blog entry on Graceland.com from 2017: "Elvis loved the beauty of Hawai'i and the state's laid-back atmosphere so much that he brought it home to Graceland. The lush greenery, peaceful waters and island feel fueled Elvis to redecorate the den at Graceland—a room we know today as The Jungle Room. Not only did it become a favourite place to hang out, but Elvis also recorded music in that room, too."

Movies	Film locations in Hawai'i
Blue Hawaii (1961) https://youtu.be/Z7n2Y29KY6E	Locations used for these films on O'ahu include Ala Moana Beach Park, National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Waikiki Beach, Ala Wai Yacht Harbor, the road leading to Mount Tantalus, Hanauma Bay, the old Wai'oli Tea Room (now Wai'oli Kitchen & Bake Shop) and the Polynesian Cultural Center in Lā'ie. https://youtu.be/f1wAJlinUw A few scenes of "Paradise, Hawaiian Style" were shot at the Sheraton Maui Hotel Resort & Spa in Lahaina, as well as the private airstrip near the Royal Lahina Resort on Maui. For "Blue Hawai'i" scenes were filmed at the waterfalls at Wailua River State Park and Lydgate Park on Kaua'i, and the famous wedding scene was shot at the Coco Palms Resort on Kaua'i, which closed after being severely damaged by Hurricane 'Iniki in 1992 and then a fire in 2014.
Girls! Girls! Girls! (1962)	
Paradise, Hawaiian Style (1966)	

So now you know
where to go when
you visit Hawai'i!

- One of Elvis' most famous performances took place at the Bloch Arena on the Pearl Harbour naval base on March 25, 1961. The performance helped raise money to build the USS *Arizona* Memorial in honour of those who died in the bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941. Elvis earned no money from the show, held on March 25, 1961. In fact, he made his own donation to the cause. The event raised more than \$60,000, which contributed to the memorial's completion the following year.

- **Aloha from Hawai'i** – facts and myths (51st anniversary this year - 2024!)
 - Original idea for the show came from Colonel Parker after watching President Richard Nixon's 1972 state visit to China live on TV, transmitted by a satellite.
 - NBC's director for the show was Marty Pasetta (who was also responsible for staging the Academy Awards Show). He came up with new ideas like the catwalk, mirrors on stage, and a lavish light installation. He also told Elvis he needed to lose weight and that his shows were boring – he needed to move more on the stage!

Pasetta said he told Presley at their first sit-down meeting, attended by two bodyguards, he had to lose weight before the concert.

"He sat straight and the guys on either side of him took out their guns and laid them down on the table," said Pasetta. "And if you don't think I was scared, you're crazy.

"I said, 'I want you skinny because I'm going to use close-ups,' which wasn't very popular in television in those days. I said, 'I'm going to go from your neck to the top of your head. That's going to be your sex (appeal) on the tube, along with your voice, and it's going to make a landmark.'

"He jumped out his chair. He grabbed me, put his arms around me and said, 'You're the first person who was ever honest to me.' He said, 'I will lose the weight for you,' and he lost 20 pounds in two months."

- What the world reads again and again about the show: "In 1973, Presley made history at Honolulu International Center (HIC), now called the Neal S. Blaisdell Center, as the first solo entertainer to broadcast live via satellite. More than 1 billion people in 40 countries tuned in to the Aloha From Hawaii concert. Remarkably, audience members paid no set ticket fee. Instead, they donated whatever they could afford, with proceeds going to a local cancer fund honoring one of Hawaii's own stars, Kui Lee."

In fact, only 21 countries were actually involved in the television broadcast, 6 of them live and 15 more countries delayed (some of them for several weeks or even months). The number of actual viewers between 150 and 200 million would be most likely.

<https://www.elvis.com.au/presley/aloha-from-hawaii-via-satellite-fact-fancy.shtml>

- The rehearsal show took place on January 12 at 20:30, while the main show took place on the following night, at 0:30.
- More about the 'Kui Lee Cancer Fund': a donation fund in honour of the Hawaiian singer and songwriter Kuiokalani 'Kui' Lee, who died of lymphoma cancer on December 3, 1966, whose most famous song 'I'll Remember You' was presented by Elvis in both shows. According to Elvis' announcement, each show raised \$ 75,000.
- Mindy Campbell 'Aloha' flight attendant remembers Elvis 1973
<https://youtu.be/BqOaLxSLLUw>
- *Had Elvis lived, the world could have hypothetically experienced the joys of a New Wave Elvis album, Elvis standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Bob Dylan and Michael Jackson at the "We Are The World" sessions, Elvis joining the Traveling Wilburys in 1989 and Elvis working with Rick Rubin in the 1990s on a stripped-down comeback album for American Recordings. He'd be 83 today and could conceivably still be on the road. Sadly, Aloha From Hawaii stands as the final document of a time where the future still looked bright for Elvis Presley. [Rolling Stone Magazine]*



A rare photo of Elvis carrying the crown given to him at the conclusion of the *Aloha from Hawaii* concert by a fan in the audience.

- Two hours before the show was due to start, the lights in the hall started flickering - disappeared - and then returned. The navy was contacted and, with sirens wailing, they came to the rescue with equipment to upgrade the electricity supply - only minutes before Elvis was due to come on stage.
- Elvis' costume became the most recognized example of the elaborate concert garb with which his latter-day persona became closely associated. As described by Bobbie Ann Mason, 'At the end of the show, when he spreads out his American Eagle cape, with the full stretched wings of the eagle studded on the back, he becomes a god figure'. The accompanying double album, released in February, went to number one and eventually sold over 5 million copies in the United States. It proved to be Elvis' last U.S. number one pop album during his lifetime.



- **Hawaiian music**
 - The influence of Hawaiian instruments: Perhaps the most distinct feature of Hawaiian music, apart from the lyrics and the melodic structure, is the instrumentation and especially the steel guitar and the ukulele. When the sound of these two instruments is heard, you always know where you're headed. But one of these instruments, the steel guitar, is also the media, through which Hawaiian music has made its most consistent, lasting and indirect contributions to American popular music in general.
 - The steel guitar was invented in Hawaii in 1885 by Joseph Kekuku, who developed the playing method of sliding a steel bar against the strings above the frets. Though technical adjustments and improvements were made along the way, the basics of the steel guitar are still the same today as 100 years today.
 - Around 1920 country music pioneers such as Jimmie Rodgers, whom Elvis greatly admired, and Cliff Carlisle began accompanying themselves on steel guitar. The man generally credited as the inventor of the electric steel guitar is Bob Dunn. From there it was only a short step to putting pedals on the instrument, and thus turning it into the pedal steel guitar, pioneered by Leon McAuliffe and later most admirably practiced by Jerry Byrd, one of the foremost Nashville session men of the '50s and 60's who also played on many of Elvis' Hawaiian recordings.
 - Throughout his entire career, Elvis performed - whether at home, in the recording studio or on a concert stage - Hawaiian or Hawaiian-influenced songs.
 - The first recording by Elvis to showcase his love for Hawaiian-influenced music, was actually also the very first attempt at recording commercially, that he ever did, as 'Harbor Lights' was recorded before 'That's All Right' on July 5th, 1954. The recording remained unreleased until 1976, when RCA finally released it on Elvis - A Legendary Performer Vol. 2. The guitar playing of Scotty Moore contributes greatly to the Hawaiian feel of the performance and it's impossible to imagine that he didn't consciously try to imitate the sound of a Hawaiian guitar. <https://youtu.be/oH-WrEfB32Q>
 - Elvis' recording of 'Aloha Oe' ('Farewell' in Hawaiian) marks one of the few times that Elvis recorded a genuine Hawaiian song in the sense that 'Aloha Oe' was actually written in Hawaii and in the Hawaiian language. The song, one of the most famous and popular Hawaiian songs of all time, was written in 1878 by Queen Lili'uokalani, the last reigning queen of Hawaii. It was a major hit in 1936 for Bing Crosby, who sang it in the very popular movie 'Hawaii Calls'.
- There can be no doubt that both Hawaiian music and the islands of Hawaii themselves played an important and mostly overlooked part of Elvis' career. Hawaii, together with Las Vegas, was Elvis' favourite place for private holidays. It is interesting to note that he did on several occasions go there right before major artistic events in his life: right before '68 Comeback Special, from May 18th to June 2nd, 1968, and in June 1972 before the Madison Square Garden concerts.
- Elvis made his last visit to Hawaii in 1977, from March 5th to 12th, with his girlfriend Ginger Alden, whom he wanted to see the islands. A visit to the U.S.S. Arizona, that Elvis helped erect in 1961, was cancelled because of illness, and the party returns home before Elvis leaves on another tour. At this point, there was no return for Elvis, and all that's left to say is: 'Aloha' - 'Go with peace'.

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- [Flashback: Elvis Presley's 'Hawaii' Concert Was His Last Great Moment – Rolling Stone](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/flashback-elvis-presleys-hawaii-concert-was-his-last-great-moment-20130510)