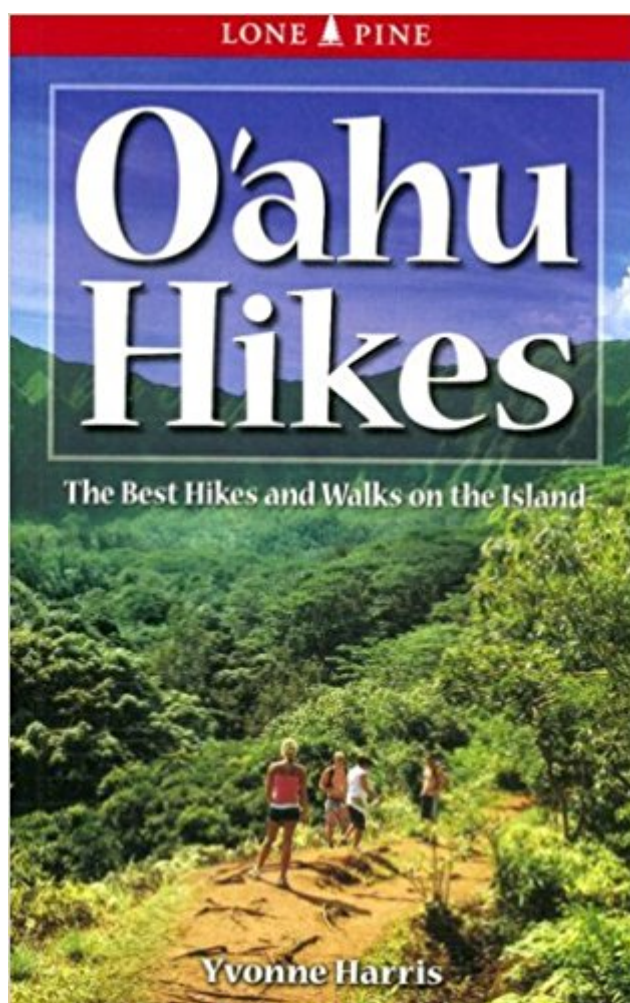




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Oahu Hikes: The Best Hikes And Walks On The Island (Lone Pine Guide)



Synopsis

Book by Harris, Yvonne

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Book by Harris, Yvonne

I think that the author's efforts were worthwhile and can help non-locals (and even some locals) get to know O'ahu better. However, while most of the cultural information she included is accurate, there are a few things that seem like tidbits she got from the internet or speaking with mistaken locals and Hawai'ians (Is that even a word? I'm Hawaiian and I don't use it.) She should have better checked her sources to verify the cultural information she included. Some examples: P. 32

"Hawaiians use the (ki) leaves, called luau, to wrap food for cooking." (Ti leaves are not "luau". The leaves of the kalo (taro) plant are "luau" and the ki (ti leaves) are wrapped over the luau leaves.) p. 212 "Built as Hawaii's first major hotel, the Royal Hawaiian Hotel..." (I'm not sure what the author considers "major" but for the majority of us, the Royal Hawaiian Hotel was not the first major hotel in Hawaii. The Moana Surfrider was. It opened in 1901.) I also agree with the other reviewers that some of the information is outdated. Overall, the book is okay.

While the author is not a resident of Hawaii, she has indeed selected the best of the trails for the visitor. The photos are plentiful and succeed in showing the beauty and diverse flora of

Hawaii. There is some information that is not up to date. Some of this information was changed years before publication, for instance, lighting in the Diamond Head tunnel. None of this will significantly affect a hike or walk. But the reader should beware that a hike labeled moderate, may be so for most of the hike, but may have some dangerous cliffs. For instance, while Manoa Cliffs is an easy walk, a misstep in the mud can take you to your death. The map on page 66 is my idea of a good map for the hiker because it shows intersecting trails and page 67, which faces it, shows what the numbers mean. For most of the trails, though, the intersecting trails are not shown and to understand the numbers, you have to flip forward. The numbered locations and the intersections can be of more help to the hiker than the contour markings. While the pictures are worth a thousand words, I think any of these trails is worth more description found here or any other of the trail guides. There is lots to report from more detail on the ecosystems to the crediting the many who maintain these trails. For instance, a current guide book might include UH research on the Judd trail (why are trees numbered in blue?) or projects to reestablish native ecosystems (on various trails: why have these trees been chain-sawed?). I'm not sure what initiatives were begun, in process or completed when this book was written, but there were surely some to provoke the curiosity of the hikers who pass them.

I have just come back from Hawaii and used Oahu Hikes as my primary source for hiking around Oahu. I found it bit ironic that the author is from British Columbia while I am from Alaska, writing this review about a hiking book on Oahu! There are several good things about this book that I liked. I found the writing easy to read, the book comes with many nice colorful photographs, great looking hiking maps blown up so we can see better and they are all on contour maps. The book is well organized and I found it easy to find the trails I like to do. The author also does a pretty decent job telling the reader how to get to the trail heads although some of her directions is slightly outdated. On this, I don't blame the author as traffic environment on Oahu is an ever changing evolution. The author also included some side information on Hawaiian history, plants and other assorted facts connected to the trails that I found interesting. As good as all that sounds, I also found many troubling elements about this book that resulted in my two star rating. For one, the book really doesn't tell you anything about the trail, the steepness of the hike, what kind of trail profile to expect or the general nature of the hike. The author's rating system is so subjective, it relatively meaningless. What may be easy to her may be terribly hard for others and vis versa. Some of the trails listed can be outright dangerous when it wet or muddy while others may not. The book tells you how to complete the hike but nothing more. Many of the information given about the trails are

badly outdated for a book that came out in September of 2007. Good examples can be found where the author stated that flashlights may be needed in the dark places like the spiral staircase along Diamond Head trail hike as you hiked into the military bunker complex. Anyone who done this hike during the past couple of years knows that Hawaii State Park puts lights into these dark places (tunnels and staircases) and nobody,,,nobody uses or bring flashlights to this hike anymore. I done this hike over 50 times during the past 4 years and I have never seen anyone uses or bringing a flashlight unless they came before dawn to see the sunrise. Even then, the lights were working inside and the flashlights were for the outside. The lights came on line in 2004!! (It probably don't help that the section where Diamond Head hike is described, there is a very nice photo of a great view - from Makapu'u Point. Obviously a wrong photo inserted there.) Another outdated fact lies in another popular tourist hike, trail to Makapu'u Lighthouse. Here the book tells you that you have to park along the highway to get to the trail Another sheer silliness since there is a nice large parking lot off the highway next to the trail-head. I first notice this during my visit in March of 2006! There are many more like this throughout the book but obviously, it is questionable when or if the author ever hiked these trails recently. (Recently would be within the past two years of the publication date.) Some of the mileages given also appears to be very questionable. Prime example is the Kaunala Loop Trail where she gave a "3 miles" of total hiking while most of the other Oahu hiking books gave it close to 4 to 5 miles of total hiking. Why is this? I figured out that the author only counted the loop itself and nothing more. While this may work if the author only wrote about the loop, her section on this trail have her starting out at the parking area next to the Boy Scout camp where you have to walk around or over two gates to get on a four wheel drive road that will take you to the loop. That is still a good amount of walking before you get to the loop. All other books counts those distance as part of the hike but this author does not even although she start her description from the parking lot. This is misleading as I was led to believed that the entire hike from the parking area and back was "3 miles" as stated when it was more closer to five miles. This type of misinformation is not very helpful to anyone. I also thought it was funny that the author in her section on Kaena Point trail (south), she did not mentioned the erosion of the trail that have totally eaten away the entire section. That part of the trail could still be crossed during the recent years but with certain amount of care. Now, in my recent visit (two weeks ago to this writing), additional part of that erosion have been lost and locals been hiking over and around it that part, creating a goat trail. (This is not the sea cave part that the author described in the book.) Overall, it is hard to recommend this book to anyone looking for a good hiking book on Oahu. My basis for this is clear, I am not really sure if the author actually hiked these trails and if so, when. Her information is often outdated

(for Sept 2007 book) but also inaccurate and misleading. There are several good books out there that may not be as colorful as this one but it probably is more accurate and describes the trails in greater details. (In fairness though, I do admit that her information on Manoa Falls and Maunawili Falls trails appears to be accurate enough.)

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