

AlaMoana/Kaka'ako

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Michael Zimmerman enjoying the spectacular views from the Wiliwilinui Trail.

Photo by Toni Zimmerman

These views don't cost a million dollars

Story submitted by Michael Zimmerman

As a real estate agent, more often than not, “a view” is important to my clients when deciding which home to buy. Many homes with a breathtaking view cost more than one million dollars and not everyone can afford that. Shortly after moving to Oahu five years ago, I found hiking was a magnificent way to experience the island's visual riches.

Whether you've lived here your entire life or just arrived, you may be asking yourself, “why should I go hiking?” Simply put, hiking provides several benefits we all can appreciate. First, you'll get a great cardio work out without punishing your body. Many of the trails I prefer require three hours to complete the round trip and that's great for my health and helps me maintain my weight. Next, you'll genuinely feel you accomplished something. Reaching the trail summit is exhilarating and viewing the island from a whole new vantage point handsomely rewards your efforts. Additionally, I believe everyone needs more time with their family or friends and a long hike enables me to spend several hours of uninterrupted, quality time with those who are close to me. Hiking also provides the opportunity to meet new friends. You never know when you'll meet someone who is like-minded on the trail or if you hike with a club, you'll spend time with people who share similar interests. Finally, hiking gets you Above and Beyond the noise and congestion of the city. Spending a few hours on a peaceful trail is exactly what we need after a long work week.

There are well over 50 hiking trails on Oahu, each with its own distinct challenges and rewards. Before you set out, take some time to find a trail that's right for you. Some trails are quite long and difficult while others are short and perfect for the beginner. There are several web sites (backyardoahu.com and hawaiitrails.org are two) dedicated to Oahu hiking. They provide valuable information such as directions to the trailhead, a detailed description of the trail, maps, access information and other notices.

My personal favorite trail is named Wiliwilinui. This is a 5-mile round trip ridge hike that features a 1300 foot elevation gain; its danger is considered low and it's perfect for novices or those with

intermediate experience. The summit view of the windward coast to Waimanalo is spectacular.

If it's your first time out, I suggest you select a trail that's reasonably short and less demanding. You can always tackle the tougher trails after gaining some experience. In addition, I highly recommend you read a few internet sources to help you prepare for your hike. Things to consider are the hiking terrain, weather conditions, minimizing hiking weight and what type and quantity of supplies to bring.

If you're looking for that million dollar view, head out to one of our gorgeous hiking trails. You'll be glad you did!

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