



A Self-Guided Automobile Tour

**Hilo Bay Shoreline
& Onomea Bay**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS

HILO AUTO-GUIDE

THE HILO AUTO - GUIDE

A Self-Guided Automobile Tour

of

Hilo Bay Shoreline

and

Onomea Bay

This self-guided automobile tour of the Hilo Bay Shoreline will take from one to three hours, depending on how much you wish to explore. It is self-paced and can be interrupted or continued at your own time. Be sure to bring a camera and extra film.

Since you will be taking this tour on your own, you should read the instructions carefully. You may want to read them more than once before you drive. Be sure to drive safely. Your safety is important.

Section 1A will give you a general overview of the Hilo Bay Shoreline. It will describe the area and give you a general idea of what to expect. The first step will be to read the instructions carefully. Then you will drive to the area and park. After you have parked, you will explore the area and take pictures. Then you will drive to the next area and repeat the process. The information about each area is given in the following sections.

Written by
RITA B. JOHNSON

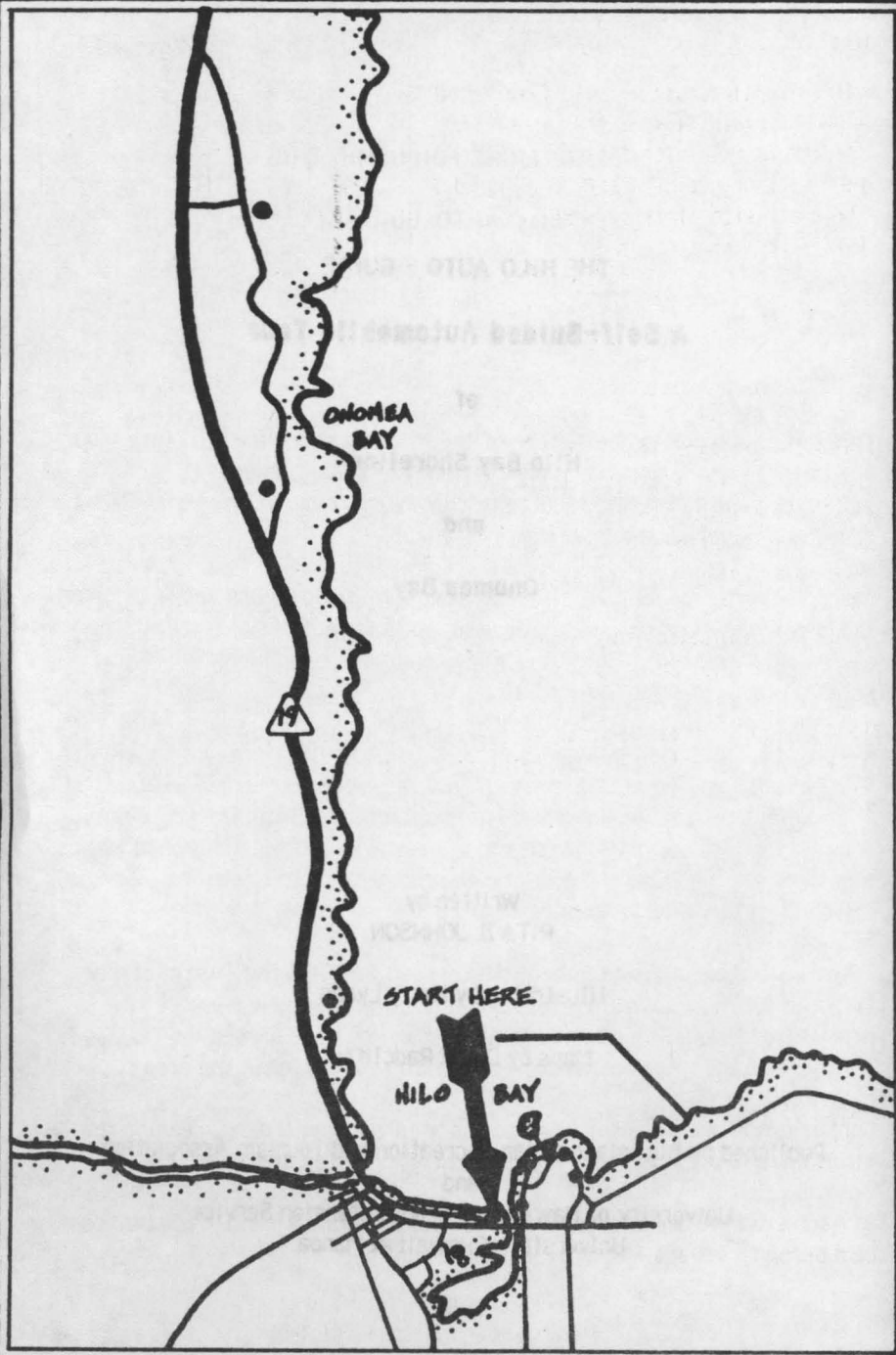
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This is a map of the route you will be taking on your self-guided auto tour of Hilo Bay Shoreline and Onomea Bay. You will be stopping to explore twelve points of interest along the way.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS

HILO AUTO-GUIDE

This self-guided automobile tour of the Hilo Bay shoreline will take from one to three hours, depending on the time you wish to spend. It is self-paced and can be interrupted or continued by you at any time. Be sure to bring a camera and extra film.

Since you will be taking this tour on your own, follow each set of **Driving Instructions** carefully. You may want to read each set of instructions more than once before you drive. Be sure to have them handy while you drive. Your safety is important to us.

Section **1a** will give you directions to get to each location, and section **1b** will describe what you can see when you get there. For example, the first step will be to read **1a. Driving Instructions to Boat Docks**. Then drive to the area and park. Once you are parked, read section **1b. Bridge and Boat Docks**. Then explore the environment. (Don't read the information about each area ahead of time.)

After you have explored the boat docks, read **2a. Driving Instructions to Reed's Bay**. Consult the map and make certain you know your destination before you begin to drive. After you have parked the car safely, read the information provided in **2b** to learn about the area.

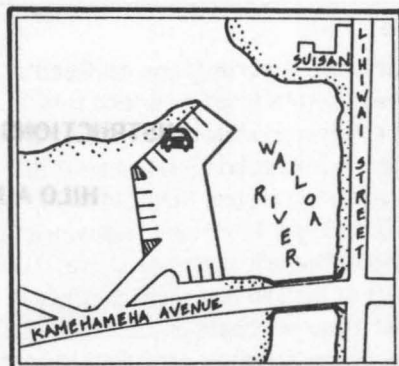
Continue this process of driving to the area, parking the car, reading the information and exploring the environment, one step at a time.

At each stop you are encouraged to get out and walk around. Your trip can be a personal voyage of discovery! Have fun!

1a.

Driving Instructions to Boat

Docks: Take the Kamehameha Avenue highway to the Wailoa River Bridge. Park your car in the parking lot closest to the water on the north side of the docks (see map.)



1b. Bridge and Boat Docks:

When you look towards the harbor you can see the channel marker which marks the passageway for boats going in and out of Hilo Bay. Commercial fishing boats, sport fishing crafts and sailboats use this marker as a guide into the docks.

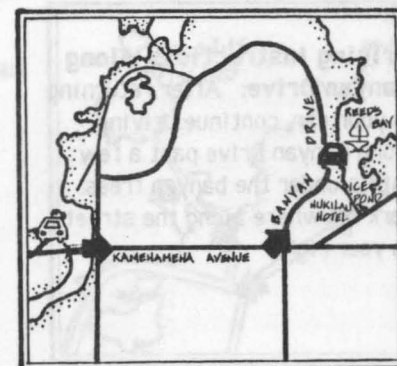
Walk along the dock to Wailoa Bridge on the Kamehameha highway. Without crossing the street, walk to the center of the bridge and look out over the railing. When you face the harbor you can see the Suisan docks and warehouse. Every day except Sunday thousands of pounds of fresh fish are unloaded from the small commercial fishing boats that line the docks. Ice is obtained and the fish are sorted for sale and auction to restaurants and retailers.

The bridge is named for Wailoa River, a spring-fed estuary, which means "long stream or extended river." From the bridge you can usually see people fishing off the docks, working on their boats, or making preparations for trips out to sea.

2a.

Driving Instructions to Reed's

Bay: Return to your car and turn left when you leave the parking lot. Continue east on Kamehameha Highway to the second light signal. To the right is Volcano Highway 11 and to the left is Banyan Drive. Turn left at Banyan Drive and continue until you see boats on the right. Park along the street or next to the beach at Reed's Bay (see map.)



2b. Reed's Bay:

In the bay sailboats are moored. Members of the Hilo Sailing Club and the Hilo Yacht Club use this small bay for recreational purposes. A few of the boats you see are likely to have arrived recently from Tahiti, Honolulu or San Francisco.

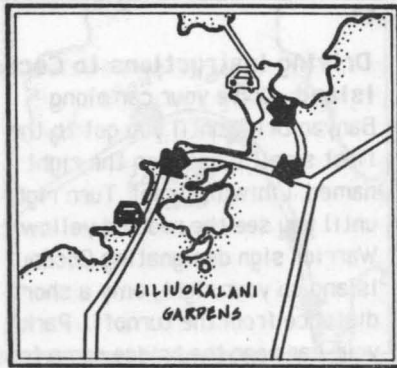
Walk over to "Ice Pond" (see map). This is a local "swimming hole" that is frequently used by snorkelers. It gets its name from the temperature, due to fresh cold water flowing into it from many underground springs that come from the cooler highlands.

Beyond "Ice Pond" and to the right is the Hukilau Hotel and restaurant where you can see colorful carp in fishponds near the entrance. They are held in high esteem in Japan and are reputed to live over a hundred years. The public is invited to walk over to the front entrance of this hotel to enjoy the carp pool and garden.



5a.

Driving Instructions to Liliuokalani Gardens: When you leave the parking lot, turn right along Lihiwai Street and drive along the water to your right. Note the ponds and bridges in the park to your left. Park your car on the street or in any parking lot that borders the shoreline (see map.)



5b. Liliuokalani Gardens:

The Japanese artifacts in Liliuokalani Park (located across the street) were donated by Japan to the town of Hilo. You may wish to walk across the bridges, picnic on the grass or feed the birds. If you wait a little you are likely to see large fish (mullet) jumping out of the center of the ponds.

If you see people catching anything in the ponds, it is usually used as bait for fishing. The Japanese Tea House on the other side of the park is used during Urasenke Tea Ceremonies, about once a month.

Look across Hilo Bay and you can see the Hamakua coastline, famous for its green sugar cane and macademia nut fields, its lush forests and waterfalls. On a warm sunny day you can expect to see sail boats or outriggers racing in the water. Mauna Kea may be seen each morning in the distance, topped by its gleaming white observatories, or snow, depending on the time of year.

Across the road at the far end of the park is Nihon Restaurant. This is also rated as a Japanese cultural center. It is on land donated to the county by someone who wished to show his appreciation to the people of Hilo for hospitality offered when he first arrived. The public is invited to climb the stairs and see the free Japanese cultural display in the lobby.

6a.

Driving Instructions to Suisan Fish Auction: Continue along Lihiwai Street in the direction of Nihon Restaurant on the right. Continue until you get to any of the parking areas that adjoin the Suisan Building on the right side of the street. Park along the street and walk over to the Fish Auction area next to the water.



6b. Suisan Building and Fish Auction Site:

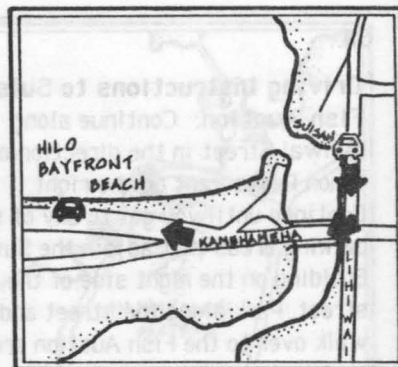
You can come here any morning, except Sunday, around 8:00 a.m. and watch a lively auction of fish conducted for the benefit of local Hilo fishermen and retailers. Large numbers of colorful fresh fish are displayed for sale, including mahi mahi, ono and ahi (tuna.) The auction is usually noisy, crowded and exciting to watch. It is a lively affair that is reminiscent, on a small scale, of the famous Tsukiji Fish Market of Tokyo.

If you walk over to the fishing boats in the water you might be able to get a closer look at some of the commercial activities that take place at the boat docks. You are now standing in front of the Suisan Building, on the opposite side of the docks from where you first started this tour.



7a.

Driving Instructions to Hilo Bayfront Beach: Continue driving on Lihikai Street and turn right at Kamehameha Highway, at the signal. Cross Wailoa Bridge and then bear right at the HAMAKUA COAST sign so that you can drive along the water. Park in a marked parking space on the right side of the road, past the canoe club racks.



7b. Hilo Bayfront Beach:

This is a black sand beach which was hit twice by major tsunami or tidal waves (around 1946 and 1960.) In modern times the area was converted to parks. Look for the breakwater in the distance on the right.

Canoe clubs use this harbor and the Hilo Sailing Club meets here for day sails. Drills are organized for boys from the Hilo Boys Club. On special days you might see dozens of catamarans sailing in the breeze, their brilliant rainbow sails billowed in the wind. On other days you can watch a half dozen paddling teams racing their Hawaiian canoes in the bay.

Farther along, amidst the coconut palm trees that line the parkway on the left, are a large pavilion, bleachers, and baseball field for outdoor community meetings, musical and sporting events.

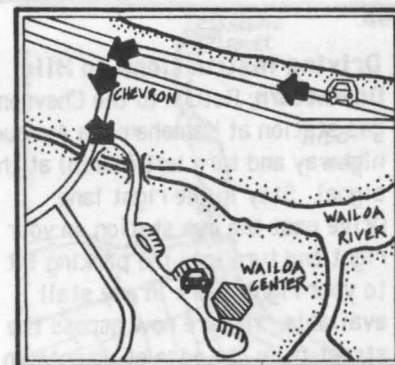
Note the black sand beneath your feet. Many years ago lava oozed out of a nearby volcanic crack, cooled, hardened, fractured and fragmented. The lava rock was worn down by wave action until the area became one of Hawaii's black sand beaches.

Early visitors to the island wrote of how much Hawaiians enjoyed riding horseback on the beach. Women and children collected driftwood for firewood and gathered limu (seaweed) along the shoreline. Fishing by "drawing a net up unto the shore" is called Hukilau fishing and was practiced at this bay. King Kamehameha and his favorite wife Ka'ahumanu were also trained in board and canoe surfing.

Fish were caught in numerous ways, with basket traps, hook and line, by use of hands, with crab or shrimp nets, with a pole, a scoop net, or by driving fish into nets by splashing. Squirrel fish, wrasse, surgeon fish, squid and mullet were among the fish caught.

8a.

Driving Instructions to Wailoa Center: Leave the beach and continue north along the parkway. Move into the left lane immediately and turn left at the first turnoff. Continue through the signal crossing, past the Chevron station on the left. Turn left at the first turnoff by the WAILOA CENTER sign. Drive to the Wailoa Center parking lot which surrounds the circular building.



8b. Wailoa Center:

You are now at an exhibit center that offers free cultural displays to the public. Local artisans and craftspeople are featured each month. Visit this center, enjoy the beautiful building and read about the history of the region in the downstairs lobby.

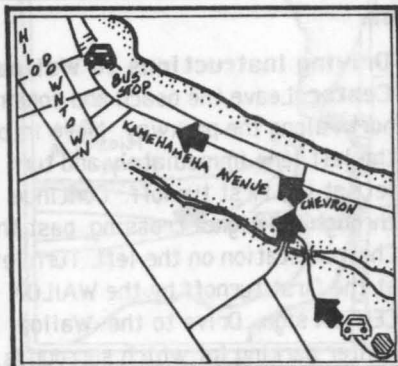
As you leave the building, visit the Tsunami Memorial and notice the many ponds formed by waters of the Wailoa River. This estuary is the largest public mullet fishing pond in the state. Across the way you can see Wailoa State Park with its public pavilions and high arched bridges. Hawaiian coots, mynah birds, doves and ducks enjoy its waters.



9a.

Driving Instructions to Hilo

Downtown: Return to the Chevron gas station at Kamehameha Avenue highway and turn left (north) at the signal. Stay in the right lane. Drive past the bus station on your right and turn into the parking lot to your right. Park in any stall available. You are now across the street from the edge of downtown Hilo.



9b. Hilo Downtown Area:

The downtown area is undergoing renovation and plans are underway for its revitalization. On some other day you may wish to learn of this area's history by taking a "walking tour" of downtown Hilo. A copy of this tour may be obtained from Lyman House Memorial Museum on 276 Haili Street. The tour takes from one to two hours. At that time you may also want to visit the Museum (there is an admission charge) to see their cultural and scientific exhibits.

Someday you may also wish to visit the East Hawaii Cultural Center on 141 Kalakaua Street (no admission fee) which houses the Center Stage Art Gallery. EHCC with the help of local volunteers is converting the former police station and district court house into a place for theater, art, dance and musical productions.

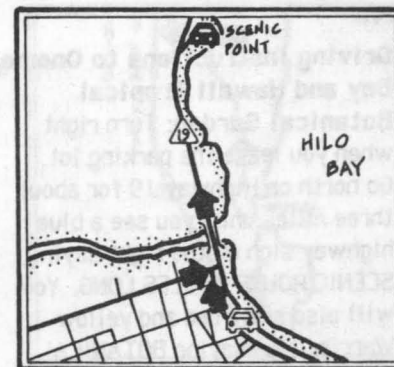
When you leave downtown you will be going north again and returning to the shoreline (see map.) At that point you will be crossing Waianuenue Avenue. This is a major street on which you can find a post office in the Federal Building, the public library, public schools and the Hilo Hospital. Rainbow Drive branches off from this street and will take you to Rainbow Falls (Waianuenue means, "rainbow seen in river waters.") On another day you may wish to visit this area.

Stop now and cross the street to browse through shops, or continue to take the coastal driving tour below.

10a.

Driving Instructions to Scenic Point

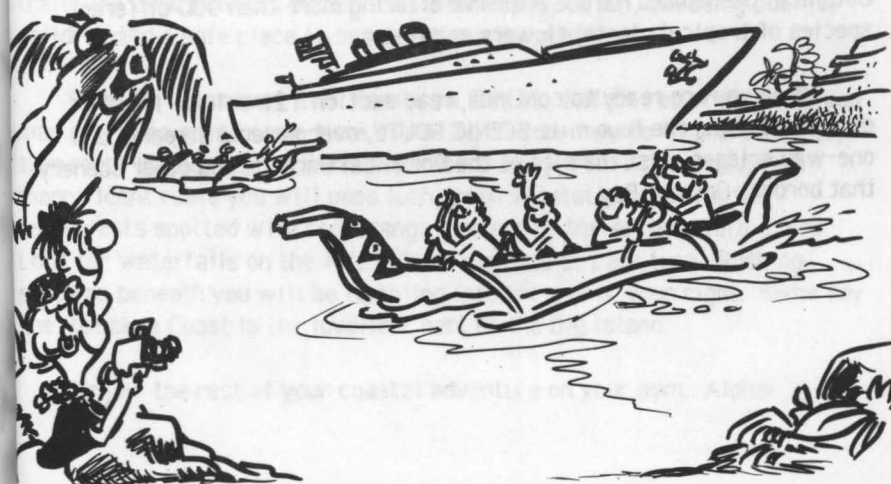
When you leave the parking lot turn right (north) along Kamehameha Ave. Then turn right at the signal to get back on Highway 19. Veer left, continuing north with the ocean on your right. Drive across "Humming Bridge" over Wailuku River (named for its sound.) On the left you can see the river rushing down from the mountains into the sea. Continue north until you reach SCENIC POINT, about a mile past the bridge. Turn in and park at SCENIC POINT.



10b. Scenic Point:

Look out across the bay and you can find the breakwater connected to the shore on the other side. The "Love Boats" (named the Oceanic Independence and the Constitution) can be seen on certain mornings every week entering Hilo Bay. If you stand here on certain nights you can see one of the ships leave the docks around 11:00 p.m., lit brilliantly against the dark sky, to cruise the islands and beyond.

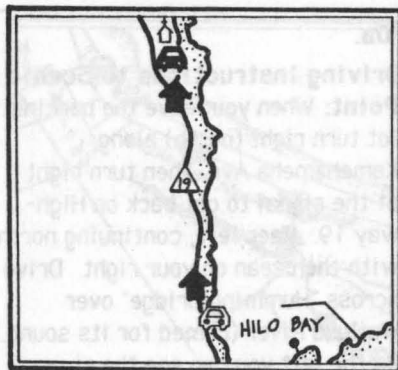
Thus far you have traveled along Hilo Bay. Instead of turning back we suggest you take a short ride north to Onomea Bay and Valley, about three miles from here.



11a.

Driving Instructions to Onomea Bay and Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden:

Turn right when you leave the parking lot. Go north on Highway 19 for about three miles until you see a blue highway sign on the right saying, SCENIC ROUTE 4 MILES LONG. You will also see a red and yellow Warrior sign saying BOTANICAL GARDEN. Turn right until you reach an old historic yellow church on the left (3/10ths of a mile.) A sign will say HAWAII TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDENS. Park anywhere in the lot.



11b. Onomea Bay and Valley:

Enter the Guest Registration Office and Museum of HAWAII TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDENS. There you will obtain free information about the area. The GARDEN is described by visitors as one of the most beautiful areas in Hawaii. If you decide to visit the GARDEN (there is an admission charge) you will see coastal trails and tropical displays along a spectacular shoreline. Take about an hour, or longer, and be sure to bring a camera.

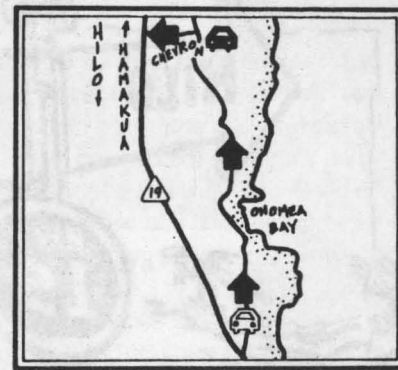
Long ago this area was a fishing village and once the home of the original Hawaiians. Then in the 1800's, the early settlers anchored sailing ships in the Bay to unload cargo. This beautiful valley is now a Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve offering more than 900 different species of tropical plants, flowers and trees.

When you are ready to continue, read section 12a below. It will direct you along the four mile SCENIC ROUTE, over several streams and one-way bridges, past the site of the Botanical Gardens and other scenery that borders Onomea Bay.

12a.

Driving Instructions to Complete

4 Mile Scenic Route: Continue along the Scenic Route for 3.7 miles to your next stopping point. Park this side of the green sign which says SCENIC ROUTE with an arrow pointing left.



12b. Completing the Tour:

To complete your tour, turn left at the SCENIC ROUTE sign and return about 1/2 mile to the Hawaii Belt Road, Highway 19. (This is the highway that brought you here from Hilo.) At the highway you may choose between two routes. Before deciding, read the options below.

Plan A: Returning Home. Turn left at Highway 19 and you will be returning to Hilo. On another day you may wish to drive to your starting point at the Wailoa River Bridge. Then continue (the coast is on your left) along the golf course on Kamehameha Highway, past Banyan Drive and the Highway 11 turn-off. You will run into Kalaniana'ole Avenue which veers to the left.

Kalaniana'ole Avenue is a four-mile strip of land sprinkled with condominiums and homes. There you will see many picnic and outdoor recreational areas. Near the end of the strip, stop in to visit the interpretive center at RICHARDSON OCEAN PARK with its aquariums, shell and fish displays. In addition to outdoor ponds, tidepools and coastal trails the park provides access to a small sandy beach, a wading pool for children and a safe place to snorkel along the reefs.

Plan B: Discover the Hamakua Coast. Before returning home you may prefer to spend some time exploring on your own to the north. If so, turn right at Highway 19, and drive north away from Hilo. Along this magnificent route you will pass lush green vegetation and tropical rainforests spotted with red-orange flowers of the African tulip trees. Look for waterfalls on the left side of the road at each turn. Rushing streams beneath you will be tumbling into the sea to your right. Some say the Hamakua Coast is the loveliest part of the Big Island.

Enjoy the rest of your coastal adventure on your own. Aloha!

