



Visiting Hawai'i

Developed in collaboration with the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center and the Maunakea Observatories

Hawai'i has long been recognized as an exceptional place for astronomical research, but the islands' rich history, cultural heritage, and thriving communities are what make it a truly special place. The AAS is privileged to hold our 235th meeting in Honolulu this winter and, as visitors to the island, we look forward to learning from one another and our hosts in the local community.

Because of controversy surrounding Maunakea and the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) in recent years, additional context — including perspectives from our colleagues local to Hawai'i — is helpful to review ahead of your trip.

- You may hear the activists opposing new construction referred to as Kia'i (protectors) of Maunakea. While the majority of the activists are of native Hawaiian descent, they do not represent a universal position amongst all native Hawaiians. There is a wide range of opinions, so one should not assume a person's position on the TMT based on first impressions.
- The continued tension and uncertainty associated with the TMT's ability to move forward on Maunakea makes this a sensitive, and at times, emotionally charged topic. Conversations on this topic should be approached with care, sensitivity, and mutual respect; adopt a stance of listening.
- Protests may occur during our meeting. Be respectful and avoid engaging with large groups, particularly during pre-planned demonstrations that may be captured on video for social media or by journalists.
- 'Imiloa Astronomy Center — experts in the intersection of astronomy and Hawaiian culture — will be available throughout the meeting to answer questions about Maunakea, the TMT, and the current controversy. Look for their booth in the Exhibit Hall at any point if you would like to learn more.

The people of Hawai'i are diverse, and the culture of the islands is unique. As with other locations we've visited, understanding some nuances of the local culture can help ensure pleasant interactions and fruitful conversations with community members.

- Local culture in Hawai'i is a vibrant blend of ethnic influences.
- The term "Hawaiian" refers specifically to native Hawaiian indigenous identity — not, as in other places, to any person or thing affiliated with Hawai'i. Non-Hawaiian residents of Hawai'i are referred to as local or Kama'āina.
- The complex history of the islands make terminology sensitive when referring to the continental US. In casual conversation, it is commonly referred to as "the mainland" or "the continent" but never "America" or "the States."
- Common attire for local business in Hawai'i is the aloha shirt for men (not referred to as a Hawaiian shirt).
- 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language) is an important part of cultural identity and like English is an official language of the state of Hawai'i; Hawaiian words are commonly used in signage and conversation. You don't need to feel obligated to use Hawaiian language, but [often-used vocabulary](#) helpful to understand includes these words:
 - Aloha: used commonly as a greeting, also refers to love
 - Mahalo: thank you
 - Ma uka: directional term: toward the mountains
 - Ma kai: directional term: toward the ocean
 - Kuleana: responsibility
 - Kōkua: help
 - Mana'o: wisdom, thoughts, or perspective
 - 'Ohana: family
 - Pau: done, finished
- Flower leis are given to honor people in celebration or recognition. Proper lei protocol is to accept the lei, return the hug, and wear the lei with gratitude.
- Always mālama 'āina — care for the land — by avoiding contact with coral reefs and native animals, disposing properly of trash, and avoiding activity that could have an adverse impact on the delicate ecosystem.

We look forward to welcoming all of you to our 235th AAS meeting in Honolulu. Please stay in touch by following [#AAS235](#) and [@AAS_Office](#) for any questions and additional updates.