



Waikiki's "Central Park" - Fort DeRussy Armed Forces Reserve Walk to See A World-Class Collection of Hawaii's Heritage Trees

Duration: 45-90 minutes **Distance: 1.1 miles** Copyright © The Outdoor Circle Waikiki Branch

Right in the center of Waikiki, this beautiful parkland is a must-see for all tree lovers. Kept to perfection by the US Army's adjacent Hale Koa hotel park staff, you will see a huge variety of tropical trees, an Army Museum, Hawaiian historic markers and one of the best local beaches.

(A) Start under the shade of the Banyan tree left of the entrance to the large parking lot (fee) off Kalia Rd. (bus routes 8, 19, & 20). Cross the street in front of the Army Museum, with a helicopter on the roof & tanks etc. outside, and walk around the side of the museum to the beach (where the only bathroom on this walk is located). Note the nearby Museum historic marker **(B)** that includes the story of 110 year-old Battery Randolph which now houses the Army Museum. Along the beachfront here are tables shaded under a magnificent trellised grove of Hau trees. Walk along the beach path past the various vendor stands and turn right into the park with many stately Palm trees and picnic tables. Ahead left on the pathway is a perfect Indian Banyan tree **(C)** with views of the many Heritage trees in the park nearby. Back on the path to Kalia Rd. you come to the Kalia Ponds historic marker **(D)**. Walk up the left

sidewalk while noting more excellent specimen tropical trees and shrubs. Cross the street at the traffic lights where you will see the bronze Kuroda Field military marker **(E)** under the Chinese Banyan tree with vast views across the open field. The path curves right to see more spectacular trees. On the right you will see the Bo tree **(F)** next to the sacred Hawaiian Ground with its three stone markers. Return to the left path until you reach the imposing Military WWII Memorial square **(G)** with its imposing statue and many fact-filled bronze markers. In front of here is Kalakaua Ave., Waikiki's fabulous main street with a glorious Indian Banyan tree on the corner. Return back to the park path by the tennis courts and see Hibiscus shrubs along with Banana and Monkeypod trees. Walk back to the start **(A)**



Cook Pine (*Araucaria columnaris*)

These straight narrow trees were prized by early ocean explorers, including Captain James Cook who described it the first time, for making masts and spears etc. The bark peels off in paper-like sheets or strips. Often confused with Norfolk Island Pines which are wider and more pyramid-shaped. Cook Pines are the much more common of the two species.

Image: Dave'sGarden.com



Sausage Tree (*Kigelia africana*)

A native from Africa, the Sausage Tree is one of our most fascinating imported species. The large dark red orchid-like flowers hang down in groups on stout stalks and then drop off all around the base of the tree. The mystery is the nature of the huge solid fruits that resemble giant sausages. They may weigh well over ten pounds and are extremely hard. It is dangerous to sit or lie under a fruiting sausage tree as falling fruits could crack a skull.



Bo "Bodhi" Tree (*Ficus religiosa*)

Much revered as the Tree of Wisdom in India and now also in Hawai'i. In 1913, Anagarika Dharmapala took a sapling from the sacred Buddhist tree of the Sri Maha Bodhi to Hawai'i, where he presented it to his benefactor, Mary Foster, who had funded much Buddhist missionary work. She planted it in the grounds of her house in Honolulu, by the Nu'uano stream. On her death she left her house and its grounds to the people of Honolulu, and it became the Foster Botanical Garden. A semi-evergreen growing to 50-90ft. The leaves are quite distinctive, somewhat heart shaped, with a noticeable extended tip. The plant is extremely long-lived, with earliest known specimens dating over 2200 years old.

Image: Original Bodhi tree at Foster Botanical Garden

Other Trees to Watch For in This Park: *Ulu, Rainbow Shower, Indian Banyan, Coconut, Hau, Royal Poinciana, Bananas*

ADDITIONAL SIGHTS:

Army Museum

This building once housed a massive artillery gun that was installed to protect Honolulu harbor. Now it is the site of the much-visited US Army Museum of Hawaii.

War Memorial

The large four-part "Brothers in Valor" World War II memorial can be found along the Kalakaua Avenue side of Fort DeRussy park.

Kuroda Field

Named in Honor of Staff Sergeant Robert T. Kuroda who died leading his 442nd Regimental squad in battle in France on 20th October, 1944. He was posthumously awarded the Medal Of Honor.

This expansive field remains the largest stretch of open parkland in central Waikiki and is much admired by residents, visitors and military families.



Waikiki Branch

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