

Hawaii: Exploring the sea cliffs of Molokai

By **MARCO GARCIA**
Associated Press

MOLOKAI, Hawaii — A visit to the island of Molokai offers a window on a unique and tragic chapter of Hawaiian history. For about a century beginning in 1866, some 8,000 individuals afflicted with leprosy were quarantined to live out their lives on the remote Kalaupapa Peninsula on Molokai’s northern shores. Their stories are told at Kalaupapa National Historical Park.

About 100 people still live in the community, mostly government workers along with a few patients who chose to stay after the quarantine policy officially ended in 1969. Unless you’re invited by a resident, you can only visit the park on a guided tour with a permit.

There are several options for getting there. My wife Yukako and I booked a package with Makani Kai Charter Tours that included a flight from Honolulu to the main airport at Molokai, a bus tour of the park plus lunch, and a return flight from a tiny open-air airport inside the park.

We also planned a hike down Kalaupapa’s steep sea cliffs before our park tour. We headed to the trailhead from Molokai’s mountaintop airport, sharing a 15-minute taxi ride with two people who’d been on our flight. Our fellow passengers were heading to the cliffs for mule rides. We were told to start ahead of the mules as the trail narrows in some spots and the mules make it tougher to navigate. (We planned our flight home from the park airport so we wouldn’t have to hike back up.)

At 1,664 feet up, the mountaintop offered an incredible view of the Kalaupapa Peninsula — though it would have been even more spectacular if there hadn’t been storm clouds and vog (what locals call volcanic smog).



In this Feb. 6 photo, hikers overlook a bluff on the Kalaupapa Peninsula in Kalawao, Hawaii.



In this Feb. 6, 2016 photo, a wild goat appears along the trail leading to Molokai’s Kalaupapa Peninsula near Kalaupapa, Hawaii.

As we began the roughly 3-mile hike, we were immersed in a loud chorus of tropical birds. We also

caught a few glimpses of the ocean rumbling below at spots where the thick foliage thinned out. As

we made our way down, I spotted huge spider webs above in the trees and Yukako found tiny flowers and moss-covered rocks. Colorful plants abounded along with guava, noni and Brazilian pepper trees heavy with red bundles of peppercorns. Farther along, a wild goat ignored us while quietly munching on the noni fruit, also known as Indian mulberry.

The uneven concrete and boulder steps began to jolt our knees so we took a break every few switchbacks. Needless to say, there’s no cell service here, and hikers must bring their own snacks and water. As mules use the trail daily, mule droppings are found at every turn. That aside, the hike was peaceful with hardly anyone else on the trail.

Storm clouds broke an hour into our hike. The rain was brief but heavy, turning the trail into a slippery mud bath. Footholds filled with water and water spilled in streams off the concrete steps. We’d

packed raincoats but got soaked to the bone anyway. Yukako took a small stumble and I had a few close calls, ending up with muddy hands from catching myself on the rocks. We tried to dry ourselves off but with no sun and a strong breeze, we were chilled for the rest of the hike.

About three-fourths of the way down, the mules caught up with us, passing us on a wide switchback.

Near the bottom, the trail opened up to a view of the stormy Pacific. Rough seas slammed onto shores lined with boulders, palm trees and ironwood trees. The hike took about two hours total, but would have gone faster if the rain hadn’t slowed us down.

We met our tour near the beachside mule corral, joining a few other hikers, a group of retirees and the mule riders who’d passed us, including our fellow taxi passengers, who looked just as wet and worn as we did. An old yellow school bus transported us to the national park.

We visited structures built in the late 1800s by St. Damien, the Belgian priest who devoted himself to the colony and was eventually canonized, and also saw the gravesite of St. Marianne, the nun who cared for female patients of the colony and who also was made a saint. Our guide pointed out an ancient Hawaiian altar called a heiau, and we visited two turn-of-the-20th century churches still in use. Some of St. Damien’s remains are interred at St. Philomena Church. Along the way there were deer, wild pigs and dozens of feral but friendly cats who were accustomed to being fed by the bus driver.

We picnicked on a blustery field overlooking the peninsula’s cold, rough waters before being taken to the airport for our flight out. It was sobering to consider that ships once anchored here to unload passengers who would never leave.

Go green with avocado pasta sauce

By **MELISSA D’ARABIAN**
Associated Press

Avocado is far more than just guacamole, club sandwiches and California omelets. This creamy, fatty, filling fruit (technically, it’s a berry), also is a great source of healthy fat, making it an excellent replacement for other fats.

Why have fat at all? Because research is clear that our bodies need fat to absorb other nutrients. Not to mention that they taste good and leave us satisfied. When I eat healthy fats with my meals, I am far less likely to dive into a sugary-carby treat later on. It’s that simple. When I find myself craving a sweet in the afternoon, it’s almost always a sure sign that I didn’t eat enough healthy fat at lunch.

Avocado is nutrient-dense, which means the per-calorie nutritional game is solid. Avocados are packed with vitamins and minerals. And they are incredibly fiber-rich. Who would guess given how lusciously creamy they are? Know that nutrient-dense also means calorie-dense. So downing a large bowl of guacamole at happy hour probably is not wise. I aim for an ounce or two a day, which is about a quarter or a third of a medium avocado.

What do I do with avocado? I use it when I want to swap out cheese, such as adding decadence and creaminess to morning egg whites. Or I use it as a healthy boost for my kids’ morning smoothies, adding vitamins and filling fiber and fat to jumpstart their day. Avocado also is a great substitute for heavy cream; I blend it up to make salad dressings, silky-rich sauces, even puddings and baked goods.

Today’s recipe is a quick creamy pasta sauce that needs no cooking. It’s as fast as whizzing up a few ingredients in the blender and letting piping hot pasta bring all the heat necessary for the pasta sauce flavors to bloom. You won’t miss the cream!

Food Network star Melissa d’Arabian is an expert on healthy eating on a budget. She is the author of the cookbook, “Supermarket Healthy.” <http://www.melissadarabian.net>



This photo shows pasta with speedy no-cook avocado sauce and fresh cilantro.

AVOCADO PASTA SAUCE

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 6

- 12 ounces whole-grain pasta
- 1 large avocado, peeled, pitted and roughly cubed
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 scallion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves and soft stems

- Kosher salt and ground black pepper

Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions, then reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water,

and drain.

Meanwhile, in a blender combine the avocado, lemon juice and zest, garlic, scallion, olive oil, Parmesan and Worcestershire sauce. Blend until smooth. If too thick, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of water. Once smooth, add the red pepper flakes and cilantro and pulse to mix, but not completely blend. Seasoned with salt and pepper. Pour into a large serving bowl.

Once the pasta is cooked, immediately add it to the sauce let sit for 30 seconds. Toss to coat the pasta, adding a bit of the reserved cooking water, if needed, to thin the sauce.

Nutrition information per serving: 320 calories; 100 calories from fat (31 percent of total calories); 11 g fat (1.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 135 mg sodium; 47 g carbohydrate; 7 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 8 g protein.

Alaska air traffic resumes as volcano eruptions wane

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A remote Alaska volcano rumbled and sputtered Wednesday but was no longer spewing the massive ash clouds that disrupted airline traffic earlier in the week.

Researchers observed intermittent puffs of ash from Pavlof Volcano, but they weren’t going much higher than the summit, said U.S. Geological Survey geologist Chris Waythomas, who is part of the Alaska Volcano Observatory.

“There’s still elevated seismicity, but we haven’t seen anything conclusive for ash emission,” he said.

The volcano 625 miles southwest of Anchorage on the Alaska Peninsula erupted

Sunday and sent an ash cloud soaring to 37,000 feet.

The cloud drifted across interior Alaska and by Tuesday had crossed into northern Canada.

Some of the ash rained on villages, turning rooftops and car windows black. Nelson Lagoon urged residents to stay inside for a time as one-eighth to two-thirds of an inch of ash fell on the tiny community about 55 miles northeast of the volcano.

Volcanic ash is sharp and abrasive and can cause jet engines to shut down.

Alaska Airlines canceled 41 flights Monday and 28 flights Tuesday, but normal service to six Alaska communities

resumed Wednesday, spokeswoman Bobbie Egan said in an email.

“We’ve also added one extra section between Anchorage and Nome and one extra section between Anchorage and Kotzebue to get passengers and cargo out to those communities,” she said.

Pavlof is one of Alaska’s most active volcanoes. Historically, eruptive episodes have ended abruptly or trickled on for years, Waythomas said.

“The one thing I think we’ve learned so far with the eruptions of Pavlof is that when it shuts off, it shuts off,” he said. “It really quiets down.”

Pavlof erupted intermittently for more than two years, from

April 1986 to August 1988. Like Kilauea Volcano in Hawaii, Pavlof has an open magmatic system, Waythomas said.

“There’s a big supply of magma and it’s easy for it to get to the surface,” he said.

An explosion that sends ash into the air typically is governed by the amount of gas in the magma, he said.

The volcano observatory lost one of its seismic stations in Sunday’s eruption. The doghouse-size fiberglass huts hold electronics and batteries inside and an antenna mast and solar panels outside, which allow it to transmit data.

The station was on the north side of the 8,261-foot conical mountain.

Seven creative things to do with your slow cooker

By **ALISON LADMAN**
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Think all your slow cooker is good for is cranking out pots of chili and beef stew? Think again! This versatile kitchen workhorse can be put to use for all manner of things you probably never realized. So we’ve gathered seven of our favorite slow cooker hacks to help you get the hang of making the most of yours.

• **FRUIT SAUCE:** Combine 3 pounds of cored and sliced apples (or other fruit) with 1/2 cup matching fruit juice, a pinch of salt and 2 tablespoons butter. Cook on high for 3 to 4 hours or low for 6 to 8 hours. Puree or process with a blender, immersion blender or food processor to your desired level of smoothness. Optionally, stir in 1 teaspoon of cinnamon and 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg or 1 tablespoon vanilla extract or cognac. Serve over pancakes, waffles, ice cream or oatmeal.

• **COBBLER:** Combine 2 pounds frozen peaches or mangoes with 1/3 cup packed brown sugar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon ground dry ginger, 1 tablespoon cornstarch and a pinch of salt. Top with canned or homemade biscuit dough and cook for 2 to 3 hours on high or 4 to 6 hours on low.

• **MULLED CIDER OR WINE:** Combine 1 gallon apple cider or 3 bottles of red wine with 1/2 cup brown sugar, 1/4 cup lemon juice, the zest of 1 orange peeled into long strips with a vegetable peeler, 4 cinnamon sticks, 1 tablespoon cloves, 1-inch chunk of fresh ginger, sliced, and 1 teaspoon whole allspice. Cook for 1 to 2 hours on high or 3 to 4 hours on low.

• **HOT CHOCOLATE:** Combine 1/2 gallon whole milk, 2 cups heavy cream, 12 ounces each of milk chocolate chips and dark chocolate chips, and a vanilla bean, split and scraped. Cook on low for 3 to 4 hours or on high for 1 to 2 hours, stirring once or twice to mix the melted chocolate thoroughly with the milk and cream.

• **CHOCOLATE-PEANUT BUTTER SNACK MIX:** Combine 4 cups Corn Chex cereal, 4 cups Cheerios, 2 cups miniature pretzels and 2 cups peanuts with 12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips and 1 cup smooth peanut butter. Cook on low for 3 hours, stirring 1 to 2 times per hour. Spread evenly on a parchment-lined baking sheet and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

• **OATMEAL:** Combine 2 cups water, 2 cups milk, 1 cup steel-cut oats and a pinch of salt in the slow cooker. Cook on low for 4 to 6 hours. Add fruit, spices, brown sugar or maple syrup as desired.

• **COCONUT RICE PUDDING:** Combine a 15-ounce can coconut milk with 2 cups water, 1/2 cup light brown sugar, 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg, a pinch of salt and 1 cup short-grain white rice. Cook on low for 3 to 4 hours.

Alison Ladman is a chef, food writer and recipe developer for The Associated Press. She also owns The Crust and Crumb Baking Company in Concord, New Hampshire.