On December 1, 2014, David Y. Ige became the eighth governor of the State of Hawai‘i. He is also the first governor of Okinawan descent in the State and the nation. There are eight islands that make up the State of Hawai‘i: Niʻihau, Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, Maui, Kahoʻolawe and the Big Island of Hawai‘i. Honolulu is the capital of the State of Hawai‘i. There are four counties in the State: Honolulu, Maui, Kauaʻi and Hawai‘i. On August 21, 1959, Hawai‘i became the 50th State. Statehood Day is an official state holiday in Hawai‘i. The nickname for the State of Hawai‘i is the Aloha State. The official State motto, Ua Mau ke Ea o ka ‘Āina i ka Pono, is written at the bottom of the State seal. It means the life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness. King Kamehameha the Great conquered and united the eight major Hawaiian Islands in 1810. He ruled the kingdom until his death in 1819. A life-like statue of King Kamehameha stands prominently in the historic Capital District of downtown Honolulu. Captain James Cook, an English explorer, made his first visit to the Hawaiian Islands in 1778. He named the group of islands the Sandwich Islands in honor of the Earl of Sandwich. ‘Iolani Palace is the only royal palace on American soil. It was built by King David Kalākaua and later occupied by his sister, Queen Liliʻuokalani. By law, a building on Kauaʻi can be no taller than a palm tree. The Hawaiian Islands were formed by volcanic activity. Kauaʻi is the oldest of the eight islands, formed about 5 million years ago. The Big Island is the youngest island, formed over 600,000 years ago.
Maui is home to Haleakalā, the world’s largest dormant volcano. Haleakalā means "House of the Sun."

Located on the Big Island, Kīlauea is the world’s most active volcano with documented eruptions since 1823.

Mauna Loa is the largest active volcano on earth, spanning 75 miles. Mauna Loa means “Long Mountain.”

Mauna Kea is the world’s tallest volcano, measuring from the bottom of the ocean floor to its peak above land.

Hawaii is the only state with a tropical rainforest.

Hawaii is the only state that is rabies-free.

To protect the island habitat, some animals are prohibited in Hawai‘i, such as snakes, hamsters and ferrets.

Hawaii has more endangered species than any other state.

The hoary bat is the State land mammal.

The monk seal is the State marine mammal.

The nēnē or Hawaiian goose is the State bird.

The State flag features the British flag in the corner and eight stripes which represent the eight islands. The use of the Union Jack in the flag design is symbolic of the friendship between Britain and the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Parker Ranch on the Big Island is the largest contiguous ranch in the U.S.

Hawaii is one of only four states that have outlawed billboards. The others are Alaska, Maine and Vermont.

Hawaii does not observe daylight savings time.

The people of Hawaii consume the most Spam per capita in the U.S.

Hawaii has the longest life expectancy in the U.S.

Hawaii is the only state with two official languages, English and Hawaiian.

There are twelve letters in the Hawaiian language — five vowels and seven consonants. The ‘okina mark (similar to an apostrophe) and kahakō mark (line above a vowel) are used to clarify pronunciation.

The State stone is black coral although it is actually an animal.

Duke Kahanamoku, Hawaii’s native son, was a legendary surfer, hero, Olympic gold medalist, Honolulu sheriff, and the 50th State’s official greeter.

Queen Lili‘uokalani, last monarch of the Hawaiian Kingdom, was a talented musician who composed “Aloha ‘Oe” (“Farewell to Thee”). She attended the Chiefs’ Children’s School, which is now Royal Elementary School in Honolulu.

In 1879, Joao Fernandez, a Portuguese immigrant, introduced the braganha, a four-string musical instrument, to the Hawaiians, which they renamed the ukulele.

A lei is a traditional Hawaiian gift made with flowers, leaves, seeds or nuts. It is a symbol of love, friendship, gratitude, appreciation and honor, often used as greetings or at celebrations.

The yellow hibiscus is the State flower.

The kukui nut tree is the State tree.

The State bird is the State fish.

Hula is a traditional Hawaiian dance performed by both men and women.

A luau is a feast. Many families in Hawaii celebrate a child’s first birthday, graduation or weddings with a luau.