

The Holidays and Island Fever in Hawaii

The holiday season is a unique time for those living in the Hawaiian Islands, and its impact on the phenomenon known as “Island Fever” can be both positive and negative, depending on individual circumstances and perspectives. Island Fever, a term used to describe feelings of isolation, restlessness, or claustrophobia experienced by those living in geographically confined locations, often fluctuates with the year’s rhythms. During the holidays, the effects of this condition can become particularly pronounced. For anyone who experiences [Island fever](#), [Hawaii](#) can be challenging at the holidays.

For various reasons, the holiday season can exacerbate Island Fever for some residents. Many islanders have family and friends living on the mainland or in distant countries, and the holidays traditionally emphasize togetherness and large gatherings. For those unable to travel or who are separated from loved ones due to cost, distance, or travel restrictions, feelings of isolation can intensify. The abundance of festive advertising and social media posts showing large family get-togethers elsewhere may further heighten the sense of missing out, making the island’s boundaries feel even more restrictive.

Additionally, the influx of tourists during the holiday season can be a double-edged sword. While tourism boosts the local economy and brings a lively atmosphere, it can also lead to overcrowding, traffic, and higher prices. For some residents, the sudden hustle and bustle may feel overwhelming, intensifying the desire to escape or find solitude—ironically difficult on a small island. This can make the feeling of being “trapped” more acute during what is supposed to be a joyful time. Conversely, the holiday season can also provide relief from Island Fever, depending on individual circumstances.

Many island communities have close-knit traditions and festive events that foster a sense of belonging and togetherness. Parades, fireworks, communal meals, and arts and crafts fairs offer residents opportunities to connect and celebrate their unique culture. Ultimately, whether the holiday season makes Island Fever better or worse depends on individual outlook and circumstances. For some, it is a time of heightened loneliness and restlessness; for others, a season of community and contentment. Embracing local customs, reaching out to neighbors, and finding joy in small moments can help.