During the summer of 2021, my family went on vacation to Hawaii. We went with my daughter's best friend's family and stayed at the same hotel. Masking and distancing were still required in enclosed spaces, so we wore masks on the flight. We were allowed to pull down our mask while eating and expected to pull it back on when chewing or swallowing. Considering how crowded planes are, I'm unsure how much help a mask provided since people were pulling their masks down during food. There were strict rules about how long to eat, and they offered fewer snacks and drinks during the flight.

During the flight home, there was a passenger who was very lax in making sure her toddler stayed masked. She and her child were in the row behind me, so I was very aware when the flight attendant would stop by and remind the woman that her toddler had to stay masked at all times. These were during non-food times, so the mother was breaking the rules. After the third warning, I started to worry that the mother would push back, and I remember exchanging a worried glance with the flight attendant. Fortunately, she just pulled the toddler's mask back up. This was during a time when videos were everywhere of people refusing to wear masks on flights and getting into shouting fights and even physical fights with flight crews throughout the United States. I am grateful that I did not have firsthand experience with that.

During our time in Hawaii, most people wore masks inside, but it was a rarity on the beach or in outdoor restaurants. The lobby of our hotel offered masks and hand sanitizer at all times. Employees wore masks, like bartenders or lifeguards, unless they had an outside job. Because we were traveling so close to lifting the travel ban, everyone was taking things very seriously. My husband and I debated the whole concept for a few weeks before we made our final decision. We had a lovely time, and I hope our vacation there benefited the tourism community since that is Hawaii's number one industry.