



# Hawai'i the Big Island

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Annie's Island Fresh Burgers (p197)
- » Hilo Bay Cafe (p269)
- » Sansei Seafood Restaurant & Sushi Bar (p218)
- » Holuakoa Gardens & Café (p193)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows (p223)
- » Holualoa Inn (p192)
- » Volcano Rainforest Retreat (p295)

## Why Go?

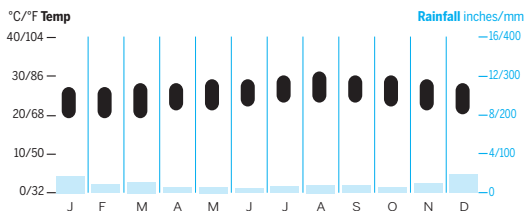
Our boat captain summed it up neatly as we rocked in 4ft waves watching live lava pour into the sea: very few have set eyes on new earth being created in such a fiery display of raw power. Sunrise rainbows and romping dolphins aside, it's all about the lava here – from palm-fringed black-sand beaches to lava tide pools teeming with Technicolor life.

But it's the people, as much as the land, that keeps legends like Pele the volcano goddess pulsing on the Big Island. Ancient chants accompanied by sacred hula are still performed here, fish are netted in an old-fashioned *hukilau*, and the Big Island work day ends in *pau hana* (happy hour).

Hawai'i is so big (twice as big as the other islands combined), it's the only island where you feel you're on a road trip.

## When to Go

### Kailua-Kona



**Jan** Surf's up and summits are snow-capped during the Big Island 'winter.'

**Late Mar-early Apr** Catch the world's greatest hula at Hilo's Merrie Monarch Festival.

**Oct** Tenacious triathletes compete in the legendary swim-bike-run race born in Kailua-Kona.

## Big Island Highlights

**1** Hike the smoking craters and lava terrain of **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park** (p288)

**2** Watch the sun set and the stars blaze from **Mauna Kea** (p243)

**3** Snorkel in **Kealakekua Bay** (p204), the state's top underwater spot

**4** Lounge with wild horses and surfers on a black-sand beach in **Waipi'o Valley** (p252)

**5** Brush bellies, almost, with **Pacific manta rays** (p178), while snorkeling

**6** Enjoy fun in the sun (and surf) at **Hapuna Beach** (p225), one of the island's all-round top beaches

**7** Be transported by traditional hula expertly executed at the **Merrie Monarch Festival** (p268)

**8** Commune with the ancients at **Pu'uhooua o Honaunau National Historical Park** (p207), and snorkel at stellar **Two-Step** (p208)

**9** Feel the spray as giant **Akaka Falls** (p258) plummets through the forest

**10** Explore the underground realm of **lava tubes** in Ka'u (p302) or Puna (p274)

