



Maui

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- » Ka'anapali Beach Hotel (p328)
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Why Go?

More visitors flock to Maui than any other Neighbor Island. So many that 'Maui *no ka 'oi*' (Maui is the best) is virtually a mantra here.

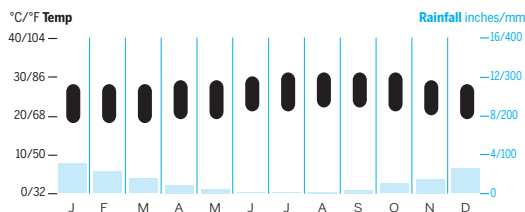
It starts with the beaches, which are drop-dead gorgeous and stretch for miles. And the island boasts top-notch conditions for an oceanful of watersports. With a moonscaped national park looming from Maui's highest peak, exploring on land is stunning as well.

Maui's beachside resorts are in a class by themselves, its secluded B&Bs equally romantic. So many couples tie the knot here that 'getting Maui'd' is another bit of local lingo. Even mating humpback whales make a beeline for Maui each winter.

Have you ever stared up from the depths of a volcanic crater on a full-moon night? Kayaked past frolicking dolphins, snorkeled among sea turtles or dived into a sunken volcano? *No ka 'oi* indeed.

When to Go

Lahaina



Jan-Mar Humpback whales frolic along Maui's shores during the winter months.

July Maui celebrates July 4 with a big rodeo and *paniolo* (cowboy) parade.

Oct-Nov A quiet season with good weather and lower hotel prices.

History

Maui's early history mirrors the rest of Hawaii's, with warring chiefs, periods of peace, missionaries, whalers and sugarcane. At the time of statehood in 1959, Maui's population was a mere 35,000. In 1961 Maui retained such a backwater appearance that director Mervyn LeRoy filmed his classic *The Devil at 4 O'Clock* in Lahaina, where the dirt roads and untouristed waterfront offered a perfect setting for the sleepy South Pacific isle depicted in his adventure movie. Spencer Tracy and Frank Sinatra not only shot many of their scenes at Lahaina's Pioneer Inn, but slept there too, since the inn's two dozen rickety rooms represented the bulk of Maui's hotel options.

Enter sugar giant Amfac in 1962, which sweetened its pot by transforming 600 acres of canefields in Ka'anapali into Hawaii's first resort destination outside Waikiki. Things really took off in 1974 with the first nonstop flight between the mainland USA and Kahului. Maui soon blossomed into the darling of Hawaii's tourism industry.

Its growth spurt hasn't always been pretty. In the mid-1970s the beachside village of Kihei was pounced on by developers with such intensity it became a rallying call for antidevelopment forces throughout Hawaii. Much of the last decade has been spent catching up with Kihei's rampant growth, mitigating traffic and creating plans intent on sparing the rest of Maui from willy-nilly building sprees.

Climate

Sun-worshippers will want to hightail it to Maui's west coast, which boasts dry, sunny conditions from Kapalua in the north to Makena in the south. Hana and the jungle-covered east Maui offer rain forests and gushing waterfalls. The Upcountry slopes, beneath Haleakalā, commonly have intermittent clouds, making for a cooler, greener respite and ideal conditions for land-based activities like hiking and horseback riding. For an islandwide recorded weather forecast, call ☎866-944-5025.

National, State & County Parks

The crowning glory of Maui's parks, Haleakalā National Park embraces the lofty volcanic peaks that gave rise to east Maui. The national park has two distinct faces. The main section encompasses Haleakalā's volcanic summit with its breathtaking crater-rim lookouts and lunarlike hiking trails. In the park's rain-forested Kipahulu section you're in the midst of towering waterfalls, swimming holes and ancient Hawaiian archaeological sites.

Top among the Maui's state parks is 'Iao Valley State Park, whose towering emerald pinnacle rises picture-perfect from the valley floor. For the ultimate stretch of unspoiled beach, head to Makena State Park. On the east side of Maui, Wai'anapanapa State Park sits on a sparkling black-sand beach. To explore a cool cloud forest, head Upcountry to Polipoli Spring State Recreation Area, where lightly trodden trails wind beneath lofty trees.

MAUI ITINERARIES

In Three Days

Plunge into Maui with a plunge into the sea at **Ka'anapali**, followed by a sunset cruise. On day two, stroll the historic whaling town of **Lahaina**, then treat yourself to the **Old Lahaina Luau**. Still got jet lag? Good. Set the alarm early for the drive to **Haleakalā National Park** to catch a breathtaking sunrise and hike into the crater. On the way back, stop in **Pa'ia** for Maui's hippest cafe scene and to check the surf action at **Ho'okipa Beach Park**.

In Six Days

Plan your first three days as above. Day four winds past waterfalls galore on the most legendary drive in all Hawaii, the wildly beautiful **road to Hana**. It's going to be a big day – start early, bring a bathing suit and a sense of adventure. Day five is all about those gorgeous beaches. Begin by snorkeling with turtles at **Malu'aka Beach**, followed by a picnic at magnificent **Big Beach**. In the afternoon pop by **'Iao Valley State Park** to ogle central Maui's emerald gem, and then head over to **Kanaha Beach** for the sailboarding scene. On your last day treat yourself to Maui's splashiest highlight: a **whale-watching cruise**.