

25 TOP EXPERIENCES



Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

I Pack the boots, friends – you'll want them to explore the miles of trails running through this unique national park (p282). Crossing lava flows, old and new, while steam vents huff and native honeycreepers sing in rain forested oases, it's obvious why the Big Island is a world-class hiking destination. Day hikes, lava-tube adventures and backcountry treks (including to the summit of mighty Mauna Loa, p291) are hallmarks here. What the park doesn't usually offer is live lava action – for that, head to Puna (p292). Halema'uma'u Crater

Kaua'i's Na Pali Coast

2 The Na Pali Coast (p524), which can be experienced by land, sea or air, should head everyone's Kaua'i to-do list. Make a gentle oceanic journey by boat, with motors or sails or, for true sea adventure, pit your paddle and kayak against the elements: wind, swell, and sunshine. For hikers, Ke'e Beach is the entry point for the rugged 11-mile long Kalalau Trail. This trek will transport you to a place distant and distinct from all others, with verdant cliffs soaring above a sloping valley abundant with fruit trees, bearded hippies and solace seekers.

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Waikiki's Beaches & Nightlife

3 Waikiki (p99) is back, baby! Hawaii's most famous beach resort may still be a haven for tacky plastic lei, coconut-shell bikini tops and motorized hip-shaking hula dolls, but real aloha has returned to this prototypical paradise. By day beachboys surf the legendary waves. At sunset tiki torches are lit and the conch shell blown at Kuhio Beach Park (p101), where hula dancers sway to ancient and modern rhythms nightly at beachfront resort hotels, bars and even shopping malls and famous island musicians strum slack-key guitars and ukuleles.

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Road to Hana

4 Ready for an adventure? Of all the jaw-droppingly dramatic drives in Hawaii, this is the Big Kahuna. A roller coaster of a ride, the Hana Hwy (p385) winds down into jungly valleys and back up towering cliffs, curling around 600 twists and turns along the way. Fifty-four one-lane bridges cross nearly as many waterfalls – some eye-popping torrents, others so gentle they beg a dip. But the ride's only half the thrill. Get out and swim in a Zen-like pool, hike a ginger-scented trail and explore the wonders along the way. Three Bears Falls

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