

Destination Hawaii

It is easy to see why Hawaii has long been synonymous with ‘paradise.’ Just look around – at the sugary beaches and rustling palms, at the sculpted emerald cliffs, at the coral reefs and smoking volcanoes. The natural beauty of these scattered islands in the cobalt blue Pacific Ocean is heavenly without the need for promotional embellishment.

Hawaii is that rare place where uniqueness abounds. It is certainly the USA’s most unique state, but even within Polynesia it stands out. The islands’ Native Hawaiian culture distinguishes it, of course, but nowhere else will you find its particular blend of ethnicities, its pidgin tongue, its amalgam of East and West. Almost halfway between continental Asia and North America, Hawaii lives at the edge of both, yet fashions its own fluid center in the middle of the sea.

What is unique, though – what is endemic to a particular ecosystem – can be easily knocked out of balance and lost. Hawaii has never been more aware of its own fragility. This applies to its environment, which modern industry and invasive species threaten daily; to its economy, which is not built for the long-term sustainability of either the land or its residents’ quality of life; and to its multiethnic society and its ‘aloha spirit’ – that much-abused shorthand for the inherited ancient Hawaiian traditions of reciprocity, openness and mutual loving care.

These issues are not unique to Hawaii, but Hawaii’s island ecology makes them unusually urgent. Like a canary in a coal mine, Hawaii is sounding a warning about the need to adopt a self-sustaining island mentality. For half a millennium Hawaii existed in complete isolation and its people flourished; today the state imports over 85% of its food and fuel, and residents like to ask, ‘Could we survive if the boats stop coming?’ The answer, right now, is ‘no’. But Hawaii sees what it must do to change, and there has been no greater validation of its perspective than the 2008 election of Hawaii-born Barack Obama as the 44th US president.

Hawaii is naturally proud simply to have one of its own in the White House – someone who appreciates shave ice and can bodysurf like a local. Born and mostly raised on O’ahu, the child of a white American mother and a black Kenyan father, Obama attended the exclusive Punahou School, where he graduated from high school in 1979 (for a tour of Obama’s old neighborhood, see p126). After that, he left Hawaii, getting a law degree at Harvard and a political education in Chicago, but as First Lady Michelle Obama has said, ‘You can’t really understand Barack until you understand Hawaii.’

For Hawaii residents, a lot of what that means is understanding the dynamics of a multicultural household and a multiracial heritage. Hawaii was the last state to join the Union in 1959, largely because of US political reluctance to embrace its ethnically mixed population. Now, 50 years later, President Obama’s calls for consensus-building and respect for diversity, his emphasis on renewable energy, his hopes to build a balanced economy that sustains all peoples and environments – these national aspirations also exemplify, and may in part arise from his upbringing in, Hawaii.

Sustainability is the mantra on every Hawaii politician’s lips. Since 2005, the state has been developing a comprehensive sustainability plan – called Hawai‘i 2050 – that, when passed, will be used to help guide the legislature in its decision making. As much as its specific proposals, the novel, statewide effort to define sustainability – agreeing to a vision of Hawai‘i’s ideal self and

FAST FACTS

Population:	1,288,198
Gross state product:	\$63.4 billion
Median household income:	\$63,750 (5th in the US)
Miles of coastline:	750
Size:	6450 sq miles (the USA’s fourth smallest state)
Percentage of marriages that are interethnic:	about 50%
Percentage of residents who want mandatory recycling:	over 80%
Energy produced from oil:	89%
Energy from alternative sources:	5%
Average number of tourists in Hawaii each day:	180,000
Cans of Spam consumed in Hawaii annually:	7 million

then establishing concrete ways of measuring it – is helping instill that ethic in every community.

Hawaii's economy is overdependent on tourism, construction and real estate – three entwined activities that take a heavy toll on the environment and are particularly sensitive to recession. When recession then swept the nation in 2008, Hawaii's tourism nose-dived and construction stalled, and by year's end state revenue shortfalls had soared to nearly \$2 billion. Much like President Obama, Hawaii's governor Linda Lingle has proposed that Hawaii spend its way out of trouble, and she's offered a \$1.8 billion stimulus plan to fund a host of public works. New highways and bridges are the main focus, but improving Hawaii's communication infrastructure, to attract high-tech industry and help diversify the economy, is another goal. Supporting small-farm agriculture, and emphasizing a 'buy local' mentality, will also hopefully increase economic stability by decreasing Hawaii's reliance on others.

Though the recession will clearly slow certain changes, one area where Hawaii is not waiting is energy. In 2008 Governor Lingle signed the Hawaii's Clean Energy Initiative (HCEI), which sets the goal of having a 70% clean energy economy by 2030. Hawaii is the USA's most oil-dependent state (spending \$7 billion annually on foreign oil), and it has the high utility bills to prove it. With HCEI, it's now pursuing every renewable and clean energy option available – wind farms on Maui, geothermal and biomass on the Big Island, electric cars on O'ahu, in addition to remaking its electricity grid. If it succeeds, Hawaii would become the first economy based primarily on clean energy (see <http://hawaii.gov/dbedt/info/energy/hcei>).

This would be revolutionary. However, lower bills and less pollution won't solve Hawaii's dire fight against invasive species. In fact, recession-inspired budget cuts may gut eradication efforts, despite the fact that Hawaii's unique ecosystems – in which 90% of all species are endemic – cannot survive intact without human intervention.

Intertwined with these issues is the one of quality of life. Tourism brings in about 7 million visitors annually, five times the state population. This impacts on everyday life – crowding the roads, the beaches, the surfing spots and driving up the price of real estate. Among cities, Honolulu has the third-highest cost of living in the country. While residents accept with equanimity a certain 'paradise tax,' there's the uncomfortable sense that costs have become too high.

Maintaining Hawaii's cultural identity is intimately linked to the health of the Native Hawaiian community, whose income levels and educational achievements typically fall below state averages. Recent years have seen some improvements (like increased dispersal of Hawaiian Home Lands and the continued funding of Hawaiian Charter Schools), but state programs like these aimed solely at helping Native Hawaiians have given rise to controversies over race-based preferential treatment. Many feel the solution to this is for Native Hawaiians to be federal recognized as an indigenous people who could, similar to Native American tribes, maintain some form of sovereign self-government. Legislation asking for this, the Akaka Bill, has sat before the US Congress since 2000. Yet there is now excited hope that it might soon be passed because the nation's new president is someone who 'understands Hawaii' and has pledged to support it.

Ask locals about all this and they freely acknowledge the challenges facing their state. They are also quick to add that they wouldn't live anywhere else. Hawaii may be endangered, but it possesses a beauty and spirit that can be found nowhere else. Plus, if Hawaii can achieve a sustainable balance, it may do more than save itself. It may become a model for the nation.

Getting Started

As tropical getaways go, Hawaii couldn't be easier or more varied. It's not always cheap, and it's a long way from anywhere, but whether you want to trek an urban jungle or a cloud forest, a snowy mountain or a nude beach, it's here.

With so many possibilities, and so many ways to blow a budget, careful planning is essential. To make the best use of your time, a good rule of thumb is to allow at least four to seven days for each of the four main islands. It's much more satisfying to see one island well than to madly island hop to fit more in. In fact, on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and the Big Island even a week can feel rushed; you won't be sorry to spend two weeks on any of these islands.

Visiting two islands, even in only a week, is easy to do. However, we don't recommend trying for three islands in less than two weeks, and going for four islands really increases logistics and costs. For instance, the islands are small, but unless you're sticking to a resort, you'll need a car to get around. How many cars do you want to rent? The only place where Hawaii's public bus system is good enough to dispense with renting a car is Honolulu. For itinerary suggestions, see p30.

Also, as you know, Hawaii is popular. Make reservations early for the things you don't want to miss, particularly in high season. That said, if you're flexible, it's also possible to wing it; there's usually a hotel room somewhere, and many outdoor activities need booking only a day or two in advance. If you have kids, no worries; it's easy for families to travel in Hawaii.

WHEN TO GO

There is no bad time to be in Hawaii. The busiest seasons are mid-December through March and June through August – but this has more to do with weather and vacation schedules *elsewhere*. The weather in Hawaii varies only a little year-round – a bit rainier in winter, a bit hotter in summer.

For certain activities, however, the seasons are a consideration: the biggest waves hit the islands in winter, which makes it prime time for surfers. Windsurfers will find optimal conditions in summer. Whale watching happens mainly from January to March. For more on activities, see p73.

Bargain hunters should target April to May and September to mid-November, when you have the best chance of netting off-season rates in lodgings, plus everything is a little more relaxed.

Prices spike around the big holidays – Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and Easter – and during special events. Unless you specifically want to see the North Shore's Triple Crown of Surfing (p189) or Hilo's Merrie

See Climate Charts (p563) for more information.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Beach clothes and sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, UV shirts; and, you know, a swimsuit
- Light jacket, fleece layers and rain gear for evenings and inland adventures
- Binoculars for wildlife watching, snorkel gear, and flashlights for lava tubes and hiking
- Rubbah slippahs and hiking boots (for safe hiking gear, see p86), because beachwear and trail-wear don't mix
- A takeout meal kit: reusable utensils, paring knife and plastic bags for leftovers
- Canvas bag for farmers markets and groceries
- A spirit of aloha and a hang-loose attitude

Monarch Festival (p294), avoid these places at these times. For Hawaii's top festivals and events, see p27.

COSTS & MONEY

Hawaii, as a rule, is an expensive destination: most things come at a premium – flights, groceries, gas, hotel rooms – but budget travelers can still fashion an economical trip to paradise. It all depends on your needs and style of travel.

The cost of flights has varied wildly recently, due to oscillations in the US economy and fare wars. In general, flights from the mainland USA (p572) run from around \$500 to \$1000. Interisland flights (p573) run from \$60 to \$90, but advance-purchase discounts can make them cheaper. For more on airfares, see p571.

On average, Hawaii travelers spend \$180 per day per person on everything else. For a couple, that means budgeting \$360 a day, and this gets you an enjoyable midrange trip with a few splashy meals and/or guided trips. It's very easy to spend more (particularly in Honolulu and Waikiki, and at resorts), and it's also easy to spend half that – bring a tent and a camp stove. When comparing islands, O'ahu is more expensive than the Neighbor Islands, and the Big Island is the least expensive.

Rental cars cost from \$160 to \$240 per week (see also p576); the only place to even think of doing without one is Honolulu.

Each island has the full range of sleeping options (see p560). All have state and county campgrounds costing \$10 a night or less; Maui and the Big Island have excellent national parks with free camping. Hostel dorm beds run to around \$20. In hostels, rural B&Bs and spartan hotels, you can find private rooms for \$60 to \$80. For nice midrange hotels, expect to pay from \$120 to \$200-plus nightly. At deluxe beachfront hotels, rates start around \$250 and go up. Celebrating that special romantic occasion? Hawaii has some of the world's finest hostelries, and they are yours for \$250 to \$1000 a night. Some places offer weekly discounts (always ask), and weekly or monthly condo rentals offer good value.

Where you eat has a big impact on your budget. Since Hawaii has the highest grocery prices in the US, cooking your own food (whether camping or in a condo) isn't always *that* much cheaper than a diet of plate lunches, saimin (local-style noodle soups) and local *grinds* (food). However, inexpensive farmers markets are common. Midrange dinners run from \$20 to \$30 per person, and gourmet cuisine comes with gourmet prices – but you know that. For more on food, see p61.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

'Sustainability' is the buzzword in Hawaii today, particularly when it comes to tourism. Green travel and ecotourism is booming, and all travelers to Hawaii can do their part – by buying local, choosing less-polluting activities (like hiking over helicopters), and patronizing ecofriendly businesses.

For Hawaii's own definition of sustainability, see p97. For a general overview, pick up *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save Hawai'i* by Gail Grabowsky.

The **Hawaii Ecotourism Association** (www.hawaiiecotourism.org) certifies and lists green businesses – particularly hotels and tour operators – and keeps a list of further resources. Local communities are also establishing their own certification programs, such as the Big Island's **Kuleana Green Business Program** (www.kona-kohala.com/kuleana-green-business-program.asp). In this book, check out the GreenDex (p614), which lists the ecofriendly businesses we recommend, and for a short list of ways to go green, see p26. For advice about low-impact activities see p94.

Agricultural tourism in Hawaii is growing along with the increasing number of organic small farms. The **Hawai'i Agritourism Association** (www.hiagritourism.org) facilitates farm visits and stays, and it maintains a list of farmers markets. When

HOW MUCH?

Aloha shirt \$20-70

Mai tai \$5-7

Hawaii Regional Cuisine
dinner for two: \$120-160

Shave ice \$2.50-5

Half-day snorkel cruise
\$90-110

shopping in grocery stores, the 'Apple Mountain' brand designates local products, and check out the product directory of the **Hawaii Organic Farmers Association** (www.hawaiiorganicfarmers.org). See also Hawaii's Locavore Movement, p63.

Takeout food containers seem like a little thing, but they are a nightmare for Hawaii's limited landfills. Look for, and patronize, places that use biodegradable takeout-ware. Two companies that make it are **Sustainable Island Products** (www.sustainableislandproducts.com) and **Styrophobia** (<http://styrophobia.com>); their websites list participating restaurants. On Maui, the town of Pa'ia has gone the whole hog and banned plastic bags (www.nomoplasticbag.com).

To play a more active role in sustaining Hawaii, there are a wealth of volunteer opportunities that can fit inside a standard vacation. See p570 for a list of recommendations and contacts.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

In 1866 Mark Twain traveled to the 'Sandwich Isles' and sent back rollicking dispatches from paradise, now collected as *Letters from Hawaii*. Twain's wit and wisdom remain as dry as ever – whether he's turning up his nose at raw fish, visiting 'Pele's furnaces' or witnessing the 'lascivious hula-hula.' There's even a primer on whaling slang.

In *Blue Latitudes* (2002), Tony Horwitz sails in Captain Cook's wake over 200 years later. As he hops around the Pacific Ocean, ending in Hawaii, Horwitz evaluates Cook's impact and legacy while contrasting Cook's then with his own jet-assisted travels through Polynesia's now.

David Gilmore did what most only fantasize about: moved to Puna on the Big Island to build his dream home in Hawaii. However, too cynical for paradise, Gilmore's dream became a nightmare of contractors, coqui frogs and local Punatics, a hilarious tale he relates with good gay humor in *HomoSteading at the 19th Parallel* (2007); see also www.nineteenthparallel.com.

In the compelling, poetic memoir *West of Then* (2004), Tara Bray Smith searches for her homeless, drug-addicted mother in the public parks of Honolulu. To unravel and understand how mother and daughter came to this, she carefully places her family's sugar-plantation heritage within 20th-century island history. This is unlike any other depiction of Hawaii you'll read.

For a glimpse of Native Hawaiian culture today, pick up *Voices of Wisdom: Hawaiian Elders Speak* by MJ Harden. In it 24 *kupuna* (elders – including well-known folk like Herb Kawainui Kane) discuss nature, activism, hula, spirituality, music and more.

Exploring Lost Hawaii (2008) by Ellie Crowe ties ancient Hawaiian history to the preserved cultural sites you can visit today, mixing in interviews with locals and modern travel tales. It's a nice, personable companion.

It sounds incongruous, but *Hawaii's Best Spooky Tales*, a long-running series edited and collected by Rick Carroll, is ideal beach reading. These goofy, short, modern-day 'chicken-skin' stories are told by locals, and every one is real! Okay, well, maybe some are a *little* exaggerated.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Alternative Hawaii (www.alternative-hawaii.com) A one-stop site for ecotourism, with hotels, restaurants, info and more.

Hawaii Ecotourism Association (www.hawaiiecotourism.org) This nonprofit organisation certifies and lists outfitters, tours and hotels committed to ecotourism.

Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau (www.gohawaii.com) The state's official tourism site.

Honolulu Advertiser (www.honoluluadvertiser.com) The state's main daily newspaper.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Hawaii travel news and links to other useful web resources.

Resource 4 Hawaii (www.resource4hawaii.com) Check out the gorgeous 360-degree-view photos of Hawaii beaches and sights.

TOP PICKS



BEACHES

Let's make this simple. Go here. These are the top beaches by island. Of course, many, many more beaches deserve your attention, but you can't miss at these sandy beauties.

- O'ahu, Kailua Bay (p174)
- O'ahu, Waimea Bay (p185)
- O'ahu, Makaha Beach (p198)
- The Big Island, Hapuna Beach (p254)
- The Big Island, Makalawena Beach (p245)
- The Big Island, Waipi'o Valley (p282)
- Maui, Big Beach (p386)
- Maui, Ho'okipa Beach (p388)
- Maui, Malu'aka Beach (p385)
- Kaua'i, Hanalei Bay (p516)
- Kaua'i, Po'ipu Beach (p530)
- Kaua'i, Ke'e Beach (p524)
- Moloka'i, Halawa Beach (p453)
- Lana'i, Hulopo'e Beach (p432)

WAYS TO GO GREEN

It's easy to go green in Hawaii – and getting easier all the time. Here are some specific suggestions that show just how simple it is. For more on sustainable travel, see p24.

- Sleep off the grid on the Big Island: go primitive at Lova Lava Land (p325) or plush at Waianuheha B&B (p278).
- Rent a biofuel car on Maui: drive an eco-friendly VW Beetle from Bio-Beetle (p368).
- Learn about Native Hawaiian culture in Honolulu: visit the Bishop Museum (p126), take a class at Native Books/Nā Mea Hawai'i (p131) and attend Waikiki's Kuhio Beach Torch Lighting & Hula Show (p160).
- Use foot, pedal and wind power on Kaua'i: walk the Na Pali Coast (p525), bike the paved Ke Ala Hele Makalae trail (p502) and sail in a Polynesian canoe (p518).
- Become a locavore: get yourself some lunch at a farmers market (for a multi-island list, see p68).
- Give back: count whales or weed invasive plants...lots of organizations could use volunteers (see p570).

WILDLIFE WATCHING

By wildlife we mean the big fellas – humpback whales, dolphins – and endangered native species like the nene (native goose), Hawaii's state bird.

- Whale watching: Maui's West Coast (p334), the Big Island's Kona Coast (p220), Kaua'i's West Side (p540).
- Bird watching: Maui's Kealia Pond National Wildlife Refuge (p372); O'ahu's James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge (p185) and Goat Island (p184); Kaua'i's Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge (p507) and Alaka'i Swamp (p556); the Big Island's Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (p314) and Hakalua Forest National Wildlife Refuge (p270); Moloka'i's Kamakou Preserve (p455).
- Manta ray gawking: the Big Island's Kona Coast (p218), Maui's Molokini Crater (p379).
- Sea turtle spotting: Maui's Malu'aka Beach (p385), the Big Island's Punalu'u Beach (p322) and Hilo-area beaches (p292), Kaua'i's Po'ipu Beach (p530), Oahu's Hanauma Bay (p166), Lana'i's Polihua Beach (p435).
- Monk seal spying: Maui's Wai'anapanapa State Park (p396), Kaua'i's Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge (p507) and Po'ipu-area beaches (p530).
- Dolphin glimpsing: Maui's Makena Bay (p385) and Honolua-Mokule'ia Bay (p358), the Big Island's Kealakekua Bay (p234).

Events Calendar

Hawaii is an almost year-round festival, with far too many to list. Here are some of the state's major festivals and cultural highlights. For more, see the destination chapters. Also check out the events calendars maintained by the **Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau** (www.gohawaii.com) and **Hawaii Magazine** (www.hawaiimagazine.com/events). For holidays, see p566.

JANUARY–FEBRUARY

CHINESE NEW YEAR mid-Jan–mid-Feb
In Hawaii, everyone is Chinese for the Chinese New Year! For a week or two expect parades, street fairs and firecrackers – and lots of cleaning house. Honolulu (p131) is the biggest, but Lahaina on Maui (p343) and Hilo on the Big Island are notable.

KA MOLOKA'I MAKAHIKI late Jan
The ancient *makahiki* festival – a time for sporting competitions and harvest celebration – still lives on in Moloka'i (p446).

WAIMEA TOWN CELEBRATION mid-Feb
For two days Waimea (p547) on Kaua'i hosts over 10,000 folks for the island's biggest festival – with canoe and foot races, a rodeo, lei and hula competitions, live music and much more.

GREAT MAUI WHALE FESTIVAL Feb
Maui celebrates its famous humpback whales with a diverse slate of events throughout the month (www.mauiwhalefestival.org), including a fun run, parade, whale count and kids' activities.

MARCH–APRIL

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL Mar
Though there are cherry blossom celebrations island-wide, this Japanese-culture festival is biggest in Honolulu (for details, see <http://cbf.hawaii.com>). Events begin in February, but the biggies – the Heritage Fair and Festival Ball – are in March.

HONOLULU FESTIVAL mid-Mar
For three days, this festival (p131) in Honolulu and Waikiki promotes the harmony of Pacific Rim cultures; it's a uniquely Hawaiian blend

of Japan, Tahiti, China, Korea, the Philippines, Australia, the US and more, culminating in a huge parade.

MERRIE MONARCH FESTIVAL from Easter Sun
The Big Island's renowned Merrie Monarch Festival starts on Easter Sunday in Hilo (p294). This week-long celebration of Hawaiian culture culminates in the Olympics of hula competitions; hula doesn't get any better. Reserve your hotel room early!

EAST MAUI TARO FESTIVAL weekend in Apr
On Maui, the Hawaiian town of Hana throws its biggest party (p398) for two days in April. It's a great introduction to Native Hawaiian culture, with outrigger canoe races, poi (fermented taro) making, hula dancing and lots of Hawaiian music.

WAIKIKI SPAM JAM late Apr
How much does Hawaii love Spam? Apparently, residents consume seven million cans a year. This one-day festival (p153) probably accounts for 10,000 all by itself, prepared hundreds of ways. Thankfully, there's no Spam-eating contest!

MAY–JUNE

MAY DAY LEI DAY May 1
Across Hawaii, the ancient, beautiful tradition of lei making gets its own day on May 1. On Kaua'i, Lihu'e holds a festival and competition (p484), and Hilo on the Big Island (p294) hosts lei demonstrations, hula and more.

MOLOKA'I KA HULA PIKO mid-May
According to oral history, Moloka'i is the birthplace of hula, and this three-day hula festival (p446) is one of the best on the islands for its sacred, traditional hula performances and Native Hawaiian *ho'olaule'a* (celebration).

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CANOES 2 weeks in May
Lahaina hosts Maui's biggest cultural event (p344), which features master carvers from around the Pacific carving outrigger canoes, then launching them. There are lots of festivities, but don't miss the Parade of Canoes.

PAN-PACIFIC FESTIVAL 1st weekend in Jun
True to its name, this three-day festival in Honolulu and Waikiki (p131) combines celebrations of Japanese, Hawaiian and South Pacific cultures, with hula, *taiko* drumming, a craft fair and a block party.

KING KAMEHAMEHA HULA COMPETITION early Jun weekend
For traditional hula, this is one of Hawaii's biggest contests (p132), with hundreds of dancers.

JULY–AUGUST

INDEPENDENCE DAY Jul 4
Across the islands, Fourth of July celebrations inspire fireworks and fairs, but the most fun is had at the July 4 rodeos held in the *paniolo* (Hawaiian cowboy)-friendly towns of Waimea on the Big Island (p266) and Makawao on Maui (p406).

PINEAPPLE FESTIVAL Jul 4
This festival (p430), celebrating Lana'i's special relationship with the pineapple, is the island's main bash. But guess what? They now have to import their pineapples.

PRINCE LOT HULA FESTIVAL late Jul
One of Hawaii's premier Hawaiian cultural festivals, Prince Lot (p132) is notable for its noncompetitive hula event, which gives it an even more graceful, traditional feeling.

KOLOA PLANTATION DAYS CELEBRATION late Jul
On Kauai's south shore, this nine-day festival (p528) is a huge celebration of sugar-plantation heritage and island life. It's like a state fair, Hawaii-style, with diverse events including a parade, rodeo, canoe race, *keiki* (children's) hula, music and much more.

HAWAIIAN INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH TOURNAMENT late Jul–Aug
Kailua-Kona, on the Big Island, is the epicenter of big-game fishing – particularly for Pacific blue marlin – and for 50 years this has been Hawaii's grand tournament (p221). It's accompanied by a week of festive entertainment.

MAUI ONION FESTIVAL weekend in Aug
For a weekend in August, Maui's famously sweet onions inspire delicious events, appealing to gourmet and gourmand alike. It's held in Ka'anapali's Whalers Village (p353).

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER

ALOHA FESTIVALS Sep–Oct
Begun in 1946, Aloha Festivals is the state's premier Hawaiian cultural festival, an almost nonstop, two-month series of events across the islands. On each island, the signature event is a Native Hawaiian royal court procession; these occur at 'Iolani Palace (p116), Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (p318) and Lihu'e (p484), among others. For a complete listing of events, see the website <http://alohafestivals.com>.

QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI CANOE RACE Labor Day weekend
Outrigger canoeing is alive and well, and fall is the season for long-distance events – beginning with the Queen Lili'uokalani (p208), two days of outrigger canoe races along the Big Island's Kona Coast.

KAUAI MOKIHANA FESTIVAL mid-late Sep
On Kauai, the week-long Mokihana Festival includes an exceptional three-day hula competition in Po'ipu (p534), and in Lihu'e, the Kauai Composers Contest & Concert (p484). Both are fantastic opportunities to experience contemporary Hawaiian artistry and culture. The festival culminates in a royal court procession.

NA WAHINE O KE KAI late Sep
This is the all-women sister event (p446) of the all-male Moloka'i Hoe (opposite). Both are legendary long-distance outrigger canoe races that traverse the 41-mile Ka'iwi Channel between Moloka'i and O'ahu.

COCONUT FESTIVAL early Oct
You can't call yourself a Coconut Festival (p502) and not get a little nutty. In fact, Kapa'a on Kauai gets downright silly, with two days of pie-eating contests, coconut crafts, a huge cook-off and entertainment.

EO E EMALANI I ALAKA'I early Oct
On Kauai, Koke'e State Park (p557) reenacts Queen Emma's historic 1871 journey to Alaka'i Swamp, with a one-day festival full of hula and Hawaiian music and crafts.

IRONMAN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP early Oct
On the Big Island (p221), this legendary triathlon is the ultimate endurance contest, combining a 2.4-mile ocean swim, 112-mile bike race and 26.2-mile marathon. Watch 1700 athletes wear themselves to the nub. (For more triathlons, see p87.)

MOLOKA'I HOE

mid-Oct

Like Na Wahine O Ke Kai (opposite), this is the men's version of the grueling outrigger canoe race (p446) between Moloka'i and O'ahu.

HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

late Oct

This highly regarded celebration of Pacific Rim cinema screens some 150 films in a dozen venues statewide. The focus is on Asian-, Polynesian- and Hawaiian-focused and -made films, by emerging filmmakers. The main action is in Honolulu (p132); see www.hiff.org for more details.

HALLOWEEN

Oct 31

On Maui, Lahaina's Halloween celebration (p344) was once so huge it was dubbed 'the Mardi Gras of the Pacific.' It's been scaled back, but it still includes a great street festival. Other towns also celebrate All Hallow's Eve.

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER**MOKU O KEAWE**

early Nov

This new, three-night international hula competition on Hawai'i the Big Island (p250) has a sister hula festival in Japan and it draws top Japanese hula troupes.

KONA COFFEE CULTURAL FESTIVAL

early Nov

For a fortnight during the harvest season, the Big Island celebrates its renowned Kona coffee with parades, concerts, a cupping competition, a coffee-picking race, block parties and lots more (p221). For complete details, see www.konacoffee.fest.com.

'UKULELE & SLACK KEY GUITAR MASTERS CONCERT

early Nov

On the Big Island, Waimea hosts two nights of concerts with Hawaii's ukulele and slack key guitar legends, who also hold workshops and master classes (p266).

TRIPLE CROWN OF SURFING

Nov-Dec

The North Shore in O'ahu— specifically Hale'iwa, Sunset Beach and Pipeline – hosts three of surfing's ultimate contests from November through December, which are known as the Triple Crown of Surfing (p81); for complete details, see <http://triplecrownofsurfing.com>.

E HO'OULU ALOHA

late Nov

In Wailuku on Maui, this concert (p369) – its name means 'To Grow in Love' – features Hawaiian singers and ukulele masters, as well as hula, crafts, food and more.

HONOLULU MARATHON

2nd Sun in Dec

The Honolulu Marathon (www.honolulu-marathon.org) is without a doubt Hawaii's biggest and most popular, attracting 23,000 to 25,000 runners every year, making it one of the top 10 marathons worldwide. Anyone can enter. (For more marathons, see p87.)

CHRISTMAS SEASON

Dec

Hawaii hosts a range of Christmas celebrations. Honolulu has Honolulu City Lights, starting in early December with a parade and concert and greeting New Year's with fireworks. Other towns, notably Holualoa on the Big Island and Lahaina on Maui (p344), have tree-lighting festivals.

Itineraries

On the four main islands, one to two weeks allows a full experience of each island. To create your own multi-island trips, combine the shorter itineraries suggested in each chapter.

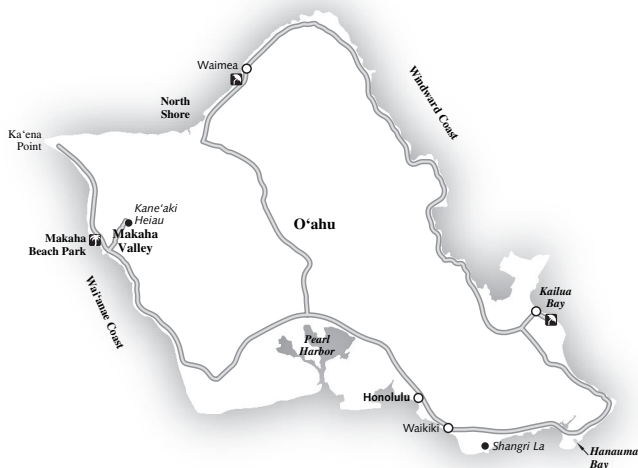
CLASSIC ROUTES

O'AHU

One to Two Weeks

Immerse yourself in **Honolulu** (p113) and **Waikiki** (p145) for four days. Between sessions at Waikiki's beaches (p149), eat your heart out in the city, tour **Chinatown** (p130), visit the **Bishop Museum** (p126) and **'Iolani Palace** (p116), see **Pearl Harbor** (p141), enjoy some live **Hawaiian music and hula** (p160) and tour Doris Duke's incomparable **Shangri La** (p165). Now relax. Heading east: spend a day snorkeling at **Hanauma Bay** (p166). Then surf, kayak or windsurf at the beaches along **Kailua Bay** (p174). Wind your way along the rural **Windward Coast** (p169), saving a day or two to enjoy the **North Shore** (p184) and the famous beaches around **Waimea** (p185). In winter, watch big-wave surfers carve; in summer, snorkel with sea turtles. If the clock's run out, drive along the scenic Kamehameha Hwy through **central O'ahu** (p195) and hit the airport; otherwise, veer west on H1 and explore the **Wai'anae Coast** (p197). Hike to **Ka'ena Point** (p200), watch (or join) the surfers at **Makaha Beach** (p198) and give thanks to the gods at **Makaha Valley's** beautifully restored sacred site, **Kane'aki Heiau** (p199).

A week or two on O'ahu gives unrepentant urbanites a chance to combine big city and big waves – enjoying world-class snorkeling, windsurfing and, of course, surfing without sacrificing gourmet grinds (food), hula, ancient heiau or the concrete jungle. You'll drive 125 miles or so.



THE BIG ISLAND

One to Two Weeks

The Big Island can fill two weeks and then some. Base yourself in **Kailua-Kona** (p214) the first four days or so, combining trips to the beach – specifically, **Manini'owali Beach** (p246), **Kahalu'u Beach** (p226), **Hapuna Beach** (p254) and **Kauna'oa Bay** (p254) – with the art galleries and coffee farms in **Holualoa** (p228), the ancient mana (spiritual essence) of **Pu'uhoonua o Honaunau National Historical Park** (p239), and a snorkel at **Kealakekua Bay** (p234). Then, spend two days in **North Kohala** (p257): hike into **Pololu Valley** (p263), visit **Mo'okini Heiau** (p259) and enjoy great eats in **Hawi** (p259). Or sightsee in North Kohala and save your appetite for **Waimea** (p263), which also has a nice selection of B&Bs. Is that a week already? Well, keep going. Take a leisurely drive along the **Hamakua Coast** (p277), making sure to at least peek into **Waipi'o Valley** (p279). Spend two days in **Hilo** (p285), exploring its downtown area, the farmers market and the excellent museums, particularly **'Imiloa** (p288). If you have extra time, detour either up to **Mauna Kea** (p269) for an evening of stargazing or venture into **Puna** (p300), lingering along **Red Road** (p304) and perhaps getting naked at **Keheha Beach** (p305). But leave at least two days for **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park** (p306): hike the **Kilauea Iki Trail** (p315), drive along the **Chain of Craters Road** (p313), and hopefully trek to see some **hot lava** (p309). While adventuring, stay in one of the lovely **Volcano B&Bs** (p319). We understand that some have a plane to catch, but with another day or two for **Ka'u** (p321), you can admire sea turtles at black-sand **Punalu'u Beach** (p322), get in a last hike to **Green Sands Beach** (p324) and say good-bye from moody **Ka Lae** (p324).



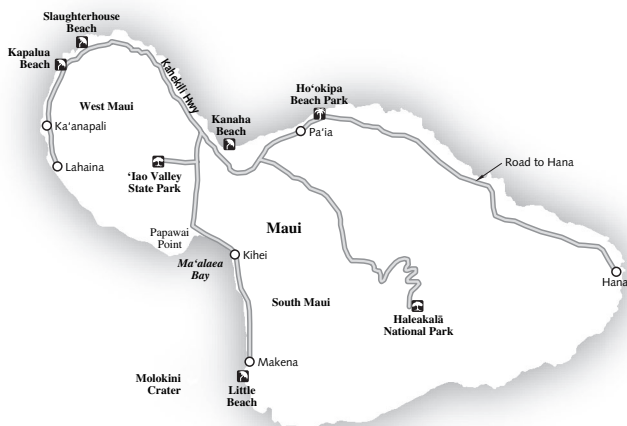
The Big Island offers a continent's diversity within an island's circumference. In 320 miles, go from rain forests to snowy summits, from pastureland to dolphin-filled bays, from green-sand to black-sand to white-sand beaches, from artists villages to a working-class city, and from volcanic craters to hot lava.

MAUI

One to Two Weeks

You're on your honeymoon, right? Well, we're not waiting around for laggards. Just keep up. Start off in the old whaling town of **Lahaina** (p336) and explore its treasure trove of **historic sites** (p342), perhaps celebrating your special occasion with the superb **Old Lahaina Luau** (p347). Head north into **west Maui** (p348). In winter, spot whales breaching offshore, particularly at **Papawai Point** (p350) and take a **whale-watching tour** (p343). Naturally, at a time like this, money is no object, so indulge in a resort at **Ka'anapali** (p351) and enjoy its excellent beaches; spend two days (three if you're really in love), but then let's go! Drive around the peninsula, stopping at gorgeous **Kapalua Beach** (p358), and, OK, snorkel with spinner dolphins at **Slaughterhouse Beach** (p358), but eventually get on the scenic **Kahekili Highway** (p361). Stop to admire the legendary jade spire of **'Iao Valley State Park** (p371), then keep going to **south Maui** (p374): book a snorkel cruise to **Molokini Crater** (p379), check out more whales at **Kihei** (p375), and either snorkel around **Makena** (p385) or perhaps sunbathe au naturel at **Little Beach** (p386). Oh my, look at the time – only a day left!? Get thee to **Haleakalā National Park** (p413) before you go. Those staying longer should spend two days **hiking** (p417) this awesome crater and catching the **sunrise from the summit** (p419). Then drive the cliff-hugging **Road to Hana** (p392), stopping frequently to gape in wonder. Those smart enough to stay the full two weeks can lounge around at hip **Pa'ia** (p388), enjoying delicious eats and admiring the daredevil windsurfers at **Ho'okipa Beach Park** (p388); overnight in **Hana** (p396); and do some windsurfing yourself at **Kanaha Beach** (p365) before departure time. And by the way, congratulations!

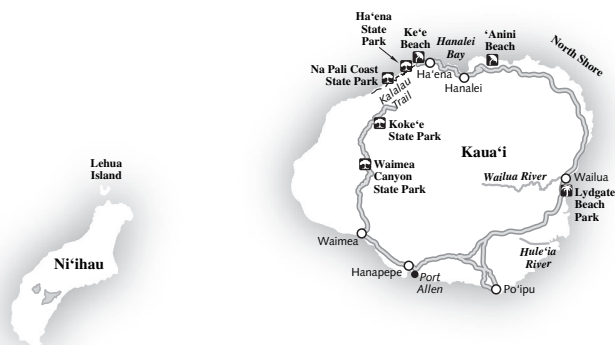
For an adventure-packed holiday that doesn't skimp on the pampering, Maui combines comfy resorts with splendid beaches, whale watching, unbelievable snorkeling and windsurfing, the world's largest volcanic crater and the harrowing Hana Hwy. Activity hours: 300-plus miles of driving.



KAUA'I

One to Two Weeks

If you've chosen Kaua'i, you're looking for adventure, but let's start off nice and easy in **Po'ipu** (p530). Nap off your jet lag for a day or two on the sunny beaches here. For a taste of where we're headed, go to nearby Port Allen for a **Na Pali Coast snorkeling tour** (p540); scuba divers can take this chance to dive into the waters around **Ni'ihau** (p533). Now, lace up your hiking boots and spend the next two (or three) days in **Waimea Canyon State Park** (p550) and **Koke'e State Park** (p553): trek the bogs of the **Alaka'i Swamp** (p557), traverse knife-edge 2000ft cliffs on the **Awa'awapuhi Trail** (p556) and wear yourself out on the **Kukui Trail** (p551). If you aren't camping, then stay in **Waimea** (p545) and eat and shop in funky **Hanapepe** (p542); if it's Friday, chill out in **Hanapepe's art galleries** (p544). Well rested, head east: hit **Wailua** (p488) and kayak the **Wailua River** (p492) or the less crowded **Hule'ia River** (p482). If you have kids, don't miss **Lydgate Beach Park** (p489). If time is tight, skip Wailua and giddy-up to the **North Shore** (p507), which deserves three or four days. Get in some snorkeling and windsurfing at **'Anini Beach** (p511), and check out the surf-bum town of **Hanalei** (p516), while surfing and kayaking in **Hanalei Bay** (p516). Scenic drives hardly get more scenic than driving the 'End of the Road' to **Ha'ena State Park** (p524); mix in snorkeling at **Ke'e Beach** (p524) with a visit to beautiful **Limahuli Garden** (p524). OK, ready? **Na Pali Coast State Park** (p525) is all that's left: if it's May to September, **kayak** (p519) 17 miles along the coast; otherwise, hike the **Kalalau Trail** (p525). Either way, you've saved the best for last and have your story to dine out on.



Kaua'i is Hollywood's ready-made set whenever it needs a 'tropical paradise.' This faceted jewel of canyons, cliffs, waterfalls, rivers, bays and beaches is more than a backdrop for pretty actors, however. It's one of Hawaii's best, most soulful adventures. You'll drive 175 miles.

ISLAND HOPPING

You've got time, you've got money and you want culture, outdoor adventure and peaceful relaxation in equal measure.

Combine O'ahu, Maui and Lana'i – half the time, you won't even need to drive. You get Hawaii's only metropolis, its fluffiest beaches and its quietest island. It's 300 miles, more or less.

O'AHU, MAUI & LANA'I

Two Weeks

This trip is for lovers, culture vultures and anyone happy to spend a little more for plush lodgings and gourmet eats. Start on O'ahu, basing yourself in **Waikiki** (p145) for a week. Among the major cultural sights in **Honolulu** (p113), don't miss the **Bishop Museum** (p126), **Iolani Palace** (p116), the **Honolulu Academy of Arts** (p123) and **Pearl Harbor** (p141). Along with time spent on Waikiki's beaches, snorkel at **Hanauma Bay** (p166) and hike the **Mt Tantalus** (p129) and **Makiki Valley** (p128) trails, after visiting the **Lyon Arboretum** (p125). End each day exploring **Honolulu's dining scene** (p132) and enjoying lots of good **Hawaiian music and hula** (p160).

Now go to Maui for four or five days. Again, make it easy: get a nice room, for the duration of your visit, at **Lahaina** (p336) or **Ka'anapali** (p351). Immerse yourself in Lahaina's whaling history in town and at Ka'anapali's **Whalers Village Museum** (p352), enjoy some old-school aloha at the **Old Lahaina Luau** (p347), take a **whale-watching cruise** (p343), and for a thrill, try **ziplining** (p353). As for beach time, make do with **Kapalua Beach** (p358), **Ka'anapali Beach** (p351) and **Honolua Bay** (p358), and take one afternoon to visit **Haleakalā National Park** (p413).

Finally, stay in one of **Lana'i's world-class resorts** (in Lana'i City, p430; at Hulopo'e and Manele Bays, p433) for three or four nights. Things have been a little hectic so far, so play a round of **golf** (p430), snorkel at **Hulopo'e Beach** (p432) or take in the vistas from the **Munro Trail** (p436). To really get away, rent a 4WD and head for the **Garden of the Gods** (p435) and **Polihua Beach** (p435).

See the Transportation chapter for details on island hopping by air (p573) and/or boat (p575).



THE BIG ISLAND, MOLOKA'I & KAUA'I

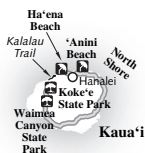
Two to Three Weeks

This trip is for those who consider a six-hour hike a half-day's work and who prefer their 'view lanai' to be a patch of grass outside their tent flap. Don't camp the whole way; mix in enough hotels to keep this a vacation. Start on the Big Island and get a comfy B&B in **South Kona** (p230) for a few nights. For ocean adventures, hike to secluded, gorgeous **Makalawena Beach** (p245), kayak and snorkel at **Kealakekua Bay** (p232) and snorkel or dive at night with **manta rays** (p219) around Kailua-Kona. In **Ka'u** (p321), bunk in a **VW bus at Lova Lava Land** (p325), and go **caving at Kula Kai Caverns** (p325), hike to **Green Sands Beach** (p324), and take the **Road to the Sea** (p325). Then spend three nights camping and hiking in **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park** (p306). Spend a night or two in **Hilo** (p285), and day-hike one of the big mountains, either **Mauna Kea** (p269) or **Mauna Loa** (p275). Next, camp at **Laupahoehoe Point** (p283) or **Kalopa State Park** (p283), and explore **Waipi'o Valley** (p279). If you've got the time, consider backpacking to **Waimanu Valley** (p282).

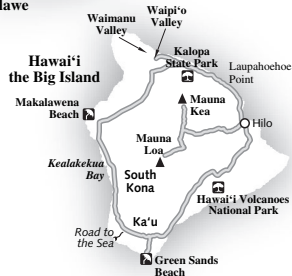
Next, spend three to four days on Moloka'i. Good camping is scarce, so stay in a condo or B&B in **Kaunakakai** (p446). Day one: explore **East Moloka'i** (p449), checking out **Halawa Valley** (p453) and perhaps **Moa'ula Falls** (p453). Day two: penetrate the raw forests of the **Kamakou Preserve** (p455). Day three: trek to the **Kalaupapa Peninsula** (p458).

With five or six days in Kaua'i, spend three camping and hiking at **Koke'e State Park** (p553) and **Waimea Canyon State Park** (p550), then boogie up to the **North Shore** (p507), mixing some camping at **'Anini Beach** (p511) or **Ha'ena Beach** (p524) with lodgings in **Hanalei** (p519). Swim, snorkel and surf, but don't leave without tackling the Na Pali Coast's *amazing Kalalau Trail* (p525). All in all, this trip is a hiker's dream.

If you want to live in the scenery (not just admire it), consider combining the Big Island, Moloka'i and Kaua'i, which offers the hiking and backcountry adventure of a lifetime plus lots of ancient and modern-day Hawaiian culture. It's 550 miles (that's driving, not hiking).



Kaho'olawe



The Authors



JEFF CAMPBELL

Coordinating Author, History, Culture, Environment, Outdoor Activities & Adventures; Hawai'i the Big Island, Kaho'olawe, Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

Jeff has been trying to reach Green Sands Beach since first hearing about it in 1990, finally digging his toes into the sparkling olive sands in 2008. In between, he fell in love on the Big Island and honeymooned on Kaua'i, camping with his ever-patient wife both times. He was the coordinating author of *Hawaii 8*. He's also been the coordinating author of *Lonely Planet's USA* three times, *Florida, Southwest, Mid-Atlantic Trips*, and more. He lives with his wife and two kids in New Jersey.



SARA BENSON

O'ahu (Honolulu, Pearl Harbor Area, Waikiki, Southwest Coast & Windward Coast)

After graduating from college in Chicago, Sara jumped on a plane to California with just one suitcase and \$100 in her pocket. Then she hopped across the Pacific to Japan, eventually splitting the difference by living on Maui, the Big Island and O'ahu for a few years. She is an avid outdoor enthusiast who has worked for the National Park Service in California and as a volunteer at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Already the author of over 30 travel and nonfiction books, Sara also contributed to *Lonely Planet's Honolulu, Waikiki & O'ahu* and *Hiking in Hawaii* guides.



NED FRIARY & GLENDA BENDURE

Maui

Ned and Glenda first laid eyes on Hawaii after leaving the concrete jungle of Japan, where they'd been teaching English for several years. They were so taken by Hawaii's raw natural beauty that their intended two-week stop-over turned into a four-month stay. Since then, they've returned to Hawaii more than a dozen times, exploring each island from top to bottom. Ned and Glenda wrote the first edition of *Lonely Planet's Hawaii* guide and have worked as co-authors on every edition since. They are also the authors of *Lonely Planet's Maui* guidebook.





AMANDA C GREGG

Kaua'i (North Shore & Westside), Ni'ihau

One of Amanda Gregg's earliest memories is jumping on a Maui hotel bed with her little sister, announcing plans to someday live in Hawaii – and here she is, calling Kaua'i's Eastside home. Growing up in Massachusetts, Amanda's first love was the ocean; travel, the second. After studying in Spain, Amanda received degrees in English and fine arts and a Masters in journalism from CU-Boulder. Since then, she's worked as a beat reporter and editor on the mainland and on Kaua'i. Chasing her newest love, outrigger canoeing, she participated in the 32-mile Na Pali Challenge and 18-mile Queen Lili'uokalani Canoe Race.



SCOTT KENNEDY

O'ahu (North Shore, Central O'ahu & Wai'anae (Leeward) Coast)

Scott Kennedy grew up in the very untropical mountains of Western Canada – perhaps that's why he's always been drawn to warm places. A divemaster, amateur *mojito* connoisseur and, sometimes, surfer, he's had sand in his surf trunks on beaches from Aitutaki to Zanzibar. A decade ago, Scott first stepped foot on O'ahu and has been maintaining a long-distance relationship with Hawaii ever since. He now lives in Queenstown, New Zealand where he longs for clean waves, golden beaches and raspberry shave ice. Scott's website is www.adventureskope.com.



RYAN VER BERKMOES

Moloka'i, Lana'i

Ryan Ver Berkmoes first visited Moloka'i in 1987 and remembers being intoxicated by lush rural scenery on the drive east (or maybe it was the fumes from the heaps of mangos fermenting along the side of the road). He's been back often, usually renting a beachside house where, between novels, he looks without envy at the busy lights of Maui across the channel. For this edition of *Hawaii*, Ryan brings his journalistic skills to Lanai'i and Moloka'i, two places that had previously only tested his holiday skills.



LUCI YAMAMOTO Food & Drink, Kaua'i (Lihu'e, Eastside & South Shore)

A fourth-generation native of Hawai'i, Luci Yamamoto grew up with hula lessons and homegrown bananas, but longed for four seasons and city sidewalks. She got as far as college in Los Angeles and law school in Berkeley, followed by a brief stint practicing law, then a career change toward writing. Over the years, especially after working on several editions of Lonely Planet's *Hawai'i the Big Island* and *Kaua'i* titles, she's come full circle from her youthful offhandedness about her extraordinary home islands. Currently living in Vancouver, she feels privileged when *kama'aina* still consider her a 'local girl.'

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Dr David Goldberg wrote the material from which the Health chapter was adapted. He completed his training at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City and is an infectious diseases specialist and the editor-in-chief of www.mdtravelhealth.com.

Jake Howard wrote the Surfing boxed texts in the Outdoor Activities & Adventures, O'ahu, Hawai'i the Big Island, Maui, Lana'i, Moloka'i and Kaua'i chapters. Jake is a senior writer at *Surfer* magazine and lives in San Clemente, California. He has traveled and surfed extensively throughout the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands, Indonesia, and Central and South America.

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