

# Lana'i



Among its translations, Lana'i is thought to mean 'day of conquest' and although there is debate about this, it seems appropriate. This small island (at its widest point it is only 18 miles across) has been affected more than anything by waves of conquest, whether it was the first Hawaiians (who set up fishing villages around the coast), 19th-century goats (who ate all the trees), 20th-century tycoons (who covered the place in pineapples) or modern-day visitors (looking for respite at luxury resorts).

Although in some ways the most central of the islands – on clear days you can see five islands from here – it is also the least 'Hawaiian' of the islands. The locals are a mix of people descended from immigrant pineapple workers from around the world. The relatively few buildings mostly hew to a corporate plantation style and the predictable waves of rental-car-driving tourists are missing from the miles of red-dirt roads.

Its signature Norfolk and Cook Island pines (imported) give the island an other-worldly feel that could just as well come from a remote corner of the South Pacific. And therein lies the charm of Lana'i: the entire island is the ultimate off-the-beaten-path destination. Hidden beaches, archaeological sites, oddball geology and a constant sense of isolation are perfect for those who don't want to go far to get away from it all. If you'd like to add some exotic adventure to your Hawaiian holiday, then consider adding in a few days on this unusual outpost right in the middle of the islands.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Snorkel the protected reef at **Hulopo'e Beach** (p432)
- Enjoy good food and drink under the stars at Lana'i City's **Pele's Other Garden** (p431)
- Stroll the square of shops and cafés around **Dole Park** (p429)
- Get into local rhythms by renting a vacation house in **Lana'i City** (p430)
- Hike the **Munro Trail** (p436) through the island's small but lush heart
- Get lost on the dirt track to **Naha** (p434)
- Count the other islands from the **Garden of the Gods** (p435)
- Explore the local diving at spectacular **Cathedrals** (p432)



■ POPULATION: 3200

■ AREA: 140.5 SQ MILES

■ NICKNAME: PINEAPPLE ISLE/PRIVATE ISLE

## LANA'I ITINERARIES

### In Two Days

Start your first day swimming and snorkeling at **Hulopo'e Beach** (p432) or diving at nearby **Manele Bay** (p432). In the afternoon take a stroll around **Lana'i City** (p428) and watch the sun set over the majestic Norfolk Island pines at **Dole Park** (p429). On the second day rent a mountain bike or put on your hiking boots and head up the **Munro Trail** (p436) for a sweeping view of everything Lana'i has to offer.

### In Four Days

Get a Jeep and do a little beachcombing along **Shipwreck Beach** (p433) and then explore the road to **Naha** (p434). That night, enjoy a superb meal at **Lana'i City Grille** (p431). On day four choose from one of the old-time **eateries** (p431) on Dole Park before a day exploring the **Garden of the Gods** (p435), the **Luahiwa Petroglyphs** (p432) and the ancient village of **Kaunolu** (p436).

### For Day-Trippers

Take the early morning **ferry** (p427) from Lahaina and keep an eye out for schools of dolphins as the boat approaches **Manele Bay** (p432). Catch the shuttle into town and pour your own coffee for breakfast at **Blue Ginger Café** (p431). Stroll the shops and superb museum of **Lana'i City** (p428). In the afternoon, snorkel at **Hulopo'e Beach** (p432) before heading back to Maui on the sunset ferry.

## HISTORY

Evil spirits were thought to be the only inhabitants of Lana'i prior to about 1400. Then a chief's son from Maui is credited with chasing off the evil-doers and making things safe for others from his home island. Little recorded history exists but there are traces of a thriving fishing culture along the coasts, especially to the north and east. Raiding parties from other islands were a frequent terror.

Colonialism largely bypassed Lana'i, although diseases brought by the odd missionary decimated the population from several thousand to 200 by the 1850s. Sporadic efforts were made at ranching and sugar growing by outsiders. Everything changed permanently when George Gay began buying up the place in 1902. Within a few years he owned 98% of the island (a holding that has remained almost unbroken through various owners to this day). In 1922, Lana'i passed into the hands of Jim Dole, who fatefully started a pineapple plantation that was soon the world's largest.

Under Dole (and later its corporate successor Castle & Cooke), Lana'i was not just a company town but a company island. Early managers were de facto dictators, who were known for spying on residents from their hillside mansion and ordering guards to discipline any deemed to be slackers.

In the 1980s Castle & Cooke and its hard-driving main shareholder David Murdoch made plans to shift Lana'i from pineapples to tourists. The final harvest of the former occurred in 1992, the first resorts for the latter opened in 1990.

## CLIMATE

At an elevation of 1620ft Lana'i City enjoys a mild climate with average temperatures of 66°F in winter and 73°F in summer. Bring a jacket if you're coming in winter, when nighttime temperatures might dip to around 55°F. Rainfall, which is heaviest in winter, averages around 40in annually in Lana'i City and 15in along the coast. When it's overcast in Lana'i City, chances are that Hulopo'e Beach will be sunny and in the low 80s.

## ACTIVITIES

Lana'i has no national, state or county parks, but its finest beach, Hulopo'e Beach, is run by the Lana'i Company as a free public park.

Almost all organized activities on the island are coordinated through the resorts. These include tennis, horseback riding, golf and scuba diving. **Adventure Lana'i Ecoentre** (☎ 565-7373; www.adventurelanai.com) offers a range of land and water activities, gear rental and will meet the Maui ferry.