



Hilo

POP 45,380 / 📶 808

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Hilo Bay Cafe (p215)
- ➔ Pineapples (p216)
- ➔ Paul's Place (p214)
- ➔ Sweet Cane Cafe (p214)
- ➔ Moon & Turtle (p216)

Best for Children

- ➔ Lili'uokalani Park (p200)
- ➔ Coconut Island footbridge (p201)
- ➔ Onekahakaha Beach Park (p200)
- ➔ Pana'ewa Rainforest Zoo & Gardens (p201)
- ➔ 'Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai'i (p201)

Why Go?

Kailua-Kona may host more visitors, but Hilo is the beating heart of Hawai'i Island. Hidden beneath its daily drizzle lies deep soil and soul, from which sprout a genuine community and aloha spirit. Hilo's demographics still mirror its sugar-town roots, with a diverse mix of Native Hawaiians, Japanese, Filipinos, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans, Chinese and Caucasians.

People might seem low-key, but they're a resilient lot. Knocked down by two tsunamis, threatened with extinction by Mauna Loa lava flows, deluged with the highest annual rainfall in the USA and always battling for its share of tourist dollars, Hilo knows how to survive and to thrive.

Hilo had a life before tourism, and it remains refreshingly untouristy. Yet it offers many attractions: compelling museums, a walkable downtown, two thriving farmers markets and dozens of indie restaurants. Hilo is an ideal base for exploring Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Mauna Kea, Puna and the Hamakua Coast.

When to Go

Mar & Apr Hilo is booked solid during the Merrie Monarch Festival, which starts on Easter Sunday. If planning to attend the festival, order tickets immediately after December 1 (prior year) and book accommodations up to a year ahead.

Jun–Nov Summer tends to be hot and humid, and Hilo's rainiest month is November

Dec–Feb Winter temperatures are balmy and comfortable. During winter high season, accommodations are pricier and often booked solid.



Hilo Highlights

- 1 Lili'uokalani Park** (p200) Strolling through serene Japanese gardens.
- 2 Pacific Tsunami Museum** (p201) Learning about the two historical tsunami that tested Hilo's mettle.
- 3 Pana'ewa Rainforest Zoo & Gardens** (p201) Meeting Bengal tigers and other

- fascinating creatures amid tropical flora.
- 4 Hilo Bayfront Trails** (p206) Walking or cycling from downtown to Banyan Dr on a family-friendly path.
 - 5 Onakahakaha Beach Park** (p200) Splashing with kids and local families in a shallow pool.

- 6 Hilo Bay Cafe** (p215) Dining on Hawaii Regional Cuisine overlooking the bay.
- 7 KTA Super Store** (p211) Stocking up on fresh *poke* (marinated raw fish) sold by the pound at fantastic prices.
- 8 Local Antiques & Stuff** (p218) Browsing eclectic local artifacts and memorabilia.