



# Ka'u

📍 808 / POP 8540

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Mehe's Ka'u Bar & Grill (p269)
- ➔ Hana Hou Restaurant (p266)
- ➔ DJ's Pizza and Bakeshop (p269)
- ➔ Punalu'u Bake Shop (p266)

## Best Places to Stroll

- ➔ On the mesmerizing black sand of Punalu'u Beach Park (p265)
- ➔ Along the restless shores of Ka Lae (p267)
- ➔ Through the diverse landscapes of the Kahuku Unit (p260)

## Why Go?

Much of Ka'u, the southernmost district in Hawai'i, feels comfortably stuck in the mid 20th-century. Large ranches and macadamia nut plantations abut forested highlands teeming with deer, goat and mouflon sheep. Below, old plantation towns fringe a sparse wind-swept coastal zone along the deep blue Pacific – the longest uninhabited coastline on the island.

We'll be frank: this isn't where you go for tons of warm aloha or, at least, not the openly given sort you find in more touristed areas. Here, locals fiercely protect their rural, stay-away-from-it-all culture: quashing coastal resorts, lobbying for protected land, pioneering off-the-grid living, and speaking lots of pidgin.

That being said, with the right attitude and sense of adventure, time spent in Ka'u will add a welcome dash of intrigue to any itinerary.

## When to Go

**Apr–Jun** Although the dry parts of Ka'u get less than 30in of rain per year, this is the time to maximize your clear skies.

**May** The Ka'u Coffee Festival livens things up a bit in Pahala in the middle of the month.

**Jul** 'Ohi'a lehua trees can flower year round, but are most abundant during late spring through early summer – great times to visit the Kahuku Unit.



## Ka'u Highlights

- 1 South Point** (p267)  
Plunging off the edge of the earth into crystal-blue waters teeming with fish.
- 2 Kahuku** (p270) Exploring Ka'u's rich cultural heritage and astounding ecological diversity on an excellent ranger-led hike.
- 3 Punalu'u** (p265)  
Digging your toes into inky black sands at a respectful distance from nesting sea turtles.
- 4 Kane'ele'ele** (p265)  
Following in the footsteps of ancient Hawaiians on the 'Trail by the Sea' past ancient heiau with controversial histories.
- 5 Ka'alaiki Road** (p266)  
Cruising along Ka'u's pastoral back road where time passes at its own pace.
- 6 Green Sand Beach** (p267)  
Being sandblasted as you bounce along the vacant grassland in the back of a rusty old pickup truck.