

Understand Maui

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From eco-activism to the closing of a historic sugar mill, take a look at the issues that are making headlines.

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Maui's rich heritage stretches from the great Tahitian canoe voyages to the whaling era and beyond.

THE PEOPLE OF MAUI280

Easygoing and ethnically diverse, Mauians share a love for the outdoors and a respect for the island's fragile environment.

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The sensual art of hula and the strumming of a ukelele are compelling introductions to a rich culture.

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These garlands symbolize the spirit of aloha that animate Hawaii.

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Maui is a grown-up's wonderland: fish-filled coral reefs, trails past lava formations, and birds and plants born of isolation.

Maui Today

Whether it's commercial development, eco-minded activism or discussions about the modern sovereignty movement, the biggest issues on Maui today are intricately connected with the Hawaiian concept of *aloha 'āina*, which is a term meaning 'love and respect for the land.' Specific issues dominating recent headlines? The closure of the island's last sugar mill, new initiatives geared to protecting the island's parks, and efforts to ban genetically modified crops.

Best on Film

The Devil at 4 O'Clock (1961)

Spencer Tracy & Frank Sinatra hang out at Lahaina's Pioneer Inn

Riding Giants (2004) Documentary spotlighting surf culture, with big-wave surfers riding waves off Maui

Just Go With It (2011) Adam Sandler & Jennifer Aniston have misadventures at the Grand Wailea Resort

Hereafter (2011) Clint Eastwood's film shot scenes on Front St in Lahaina

Best in Print

Middle Son (2000) Deborah Iida describes 1950s Maui through the eyes of a sugar-plantation laborer

The Maui Coast: Legacy of the King's Highway (2015) Daniel Sullivan captures the enduring majesty of the historic King's Hwy in this vibrant photo book

A Hawaiian Life (2000) Grammy-winning slack key guitarist and host of the Slack Key Show at Napili Kai Beach Resort, George Kahumoku Jr shares stories about life in Hawaii

Maui: A History (2014) This easy-to-read book by Cummins E Speakman Jr and Jill Engledow tells the story of the Valley Isle

Staying Hawaiian

Hawaiian culture today is about much more than melodic place names and luau shows. Traditional arts and healing arts are experiencing a revival, ancient heiau (temples) and fishponds are being restored, native forests replaced and endangered birds bred and released.

Although few island residents can agree on what shape the fragmented Native Hawaiian sovereignty movement should take, or even if it should exist at all, its grassroots political activism has achieved tangible results. Decades of protest and a federal lawsuit filed by sovereignty activists finally pressured the US military into returning the island of Kaho'olawe (which it had used for bombing practice since WWII) to the state in 1994. In 2011, then-governor Neil Abercrombie signed into law a bill recognizing Native Hawaiians as the state's only indigenous people.

In 2016 Disney released the movie *Moana*, an immediate blockbuster. In the film, Moana, the daughter of an ancient Polynesian chieftain, sets out to sea on a mission to restore her people's seafaring ways. She's helped by the demigod Maui, who is based on an actual figure in Polynesian mythology. Filmmakers worked closely with anthropologists and cultural advisers to stay accurate and culturally sensitive. There were some missteps, however, like the film's depiction of Maui as heroic, but also overweight and slightly buffoonish. Effective storytelling or harmful cultural appropriation? Maybe the key lies in the discussions and awareness sparked since the film's release.

Time Marches On

The sugar mill operated by Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar in central Maui shut down operations in 2016. Owned by Alexander & Baldwin (A&B), a company with