

# Big Island Activities

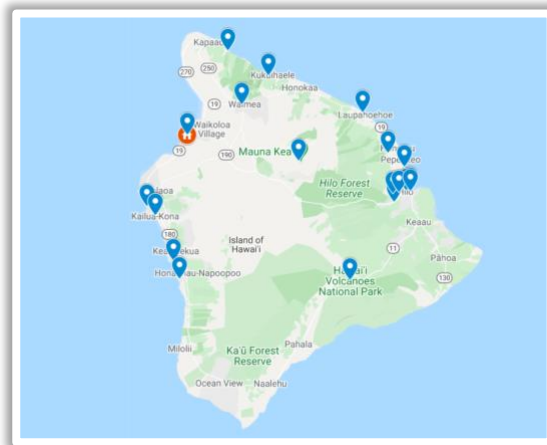
Things to do on Hawaii Island



## Activities & Exploration

Yay! You've made it and are settled into the condo. Now it is time to come up with a game plan and get out exploring. We both love this island and hope you will too. It has such a variety of terrain and climates that it is sure to feed the adventurer in all of you.

To help you plan out your days while on Island, we figured you might like a little help. This document will provide you with some great ideas on what there is to do and see while here. Keep in mind it is a Big Island and you might not be able to attack all of these, but that is ok. Pick your favorite ones and you can just save the rest for your next trip.



*Map of Top Attractions*

## Akaka Falls

The trail to Akaka Falls is a wonder of bamboo and flowers, including large red ginger stalks. Thunderous Akaka Falls has a smaller neighbor, Kahuna Falls, which is also visible on the loop trail, within Akaka Falls State Park. Follow the signs through the plantation town of Honomu on the Hamakua Coast. It's a fairly easy and paved hike, so if all you have is flip flops, no worries.

**Tip:** Taking the right side of the loop trail makes your trip predominantly downhill.



*Akaka Falls*



*Hamakua Coast*

## HI Volcanoes National Park

This is the Big Island's number-one attraction as well as an international center for the study of volcanism. Always popular, the park can overflow with visitors when volcanic flows from Kilauea, the world's most active volcano, erupting almost continuously since 1983, come within a short hike of the road. The park is a spectacular showcase of millions of years of volcanic activity - with steaming vents, craters, cinder cones, hardened fields of lava, lava tubes (caves), "tree molds" embedded in hardened lava, and on some days, towering clouds of steam where lava flows into the ocean.



*Hilo*

## Coconut Island

This landscaped islet in Hilo Bay is reached over a foot bridge. On the other side are the Liliuokalani Gardens with their tranquil fish ponds and Asian-influenced landscaping.

## Hamakua Coast

The fertile and green Hamakua Coast stretches the length of Mamalahoa Highway from Hilo northwest to Waipio, the "Valley of the Kings". Waipio's natural wonders include many waterfalls cascading down over 1,000 foot cliffs.



*Halemaumau Crater*

## Hilo Town

The Big Island's county seat and commercial center. The downtown district has been renovated over the years and is now a nice mix of local businesses, historic buildings, and shops catering mostly to visitors. Hilo is on the east coast of the Big Island and may also be reached by direct flights to Hilo International Airport. It's approximately a 1.5 hour drive from Waikoloa.

**Tip:** Hilo is famous for its moist climate so have umbrellas, shoes, and jackets on reserve.



*Honokohua Harbor*

## Honokohau Harbor

Kona's main harbor is the starting point for expeditions in search of marlin and other large game fish. Off Queen Kaahumanu Highway just north of Kailua-Kona.

**Tip:** The competition between charter boats is fierce so shop around for the one that best fits your needs. A little known National Historic Park is just to the north of the harbor.

## Hulihee Palace

Built in 1838, Hulihee was the former summer palace of King David Kalakaua, the "Merrie Monarch." Elegant Hawaiian koa wood furniture is on display inside. On Ali'i Drive near the Kailua-Kona seawall. Telephone: (808) 329-1877.

**Tip:** This is a nice cultural departure from Kona's otherwise shopping- and activities-based highlights.



*Hulihee Place*



*Ali'i Drive*

## Kailua-Kona Town

Hawaii's deep sea fishing capital. The weather is usually ideal in this small oceanside town that serves as the center of Kona coast activity. About 10 minutes from Kona International Airport on Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway. Perfect place for shopping and dining while walking along the coastal Ali'i Drive. Approximately 30 minute drive from the condo and a must see for shops, restaurants, and farmers markets. Even the famous Kona Brewery is located here.

**Tip:** The annual billfish tournaments here attract anglers from around the globe.



*Kaumana Caves*

## Kaumana Caves

Visitors to this tropical park can descend into a massive 1881 lava tube cave formed by Mauna Loa. The caves are a moderately trafficked out and back trail located near Hilo that is good for all skill levels. The entrance on the right leads to the larger of the two openings and has some cool lava formations as well as roots hanging from the ceiling. The entrance on the left is smaller but is still just as cool to explore.

**Tip:** Bring good walking shoes and a headlamp. Your phone flashlight will not be enough plus you will need your hands free.

## Kealakekua Bay

The Big Island landing point of Captain James Cook in 1779. Visible across the bay is the large memorial erected by the British in 1874 to commemorate the event. From the town of Captain Cook follow Napo'opo'o road to Kealakekua. This bay also is home to one of the best snorkel spots on the island and it's about an hour drive from the condo.

**Tip:** Take the time to explore the Hikiau Heiau next to the bay. It was here that Hawaiians entertained Cook during his first trip ashore.



*Captain Cook Monument*



*Keck's Twin Telescopes*

## Keck Observatory Mauna Kea

The Keck Observatory sits atop Mauna Kea and can be seen on a clear day from the condo. The observatory has twin telescopes which are the largest optical and infrared telescopes in the world. While the telescopes are not open to the public, coming up here to see the stars and sunrise is a must.

**Tip:** Take warm clothes, it can be in the 30's at the top of the summit.



*Onomea Scenic Drive*

## Onomea Scenic Drive

Onomea (Pepe'ekeo) scenic drive is the most famous scenic road on the Big Island of Hawaii. It is a short 4 mile stretch of the Old Mamalahoa Highway. This scenic road snakes from one beautiful spot to another through old bridges and lush tropical forest. The starting point is between mile marker 7 and 8 on Highway 19 north from Hilo.

**Tip:** Take your time on this road and enjoy the scenery. There are various pull-outs on the side of the road to get out and enjoy the beauty of this luscious drive.

## Parker Ranch

The 150,000-acre Parker Ranch is not only Hawaii's largest; it competes with the King Ranch in Texas for the title of the nation's biggest cattle ranches. A visitor center and several museums are scattered between the ranch grounds and the neighboring cowboy town of Kamuela (Waimea). At the junction of Kawaihae Road and the Mamalahoa Highway, only about 25 minutes away from the condo.

**Tip:** Riding enthusiasts can book tours on horseback through the ranch.



*Parker Ranch*



*Pe'epe'e Falls*

## Pe'epe'e Falls and Boiling Pots

If you're visiting popular Rainbow Falls you might as well continue up the road for another mile and see Pe'epe'e Falls as well. This lesser-known waterfall can be seen from a lookout point on the road (it is distant view). Boiling Pots is closer to the lookout point, a series of small pools and cascades that can be quite turbulent if it has recently rained and there is lots of water coming down the stream. During heavy rain, the pots appear to be boiling (due to underground lava tubes), hence the name Boiling Pots.



*Pololu Valley Lookout*

## Pololu Valley

The majestic Pololū Valley, is located at the end of Highway 270 in North Kohala. Take a leisurely drive through the quaint towns of Hāwī and Kapa‘au, and when you pass the 28 mile marker, get ready to have your breath taken away as you round the corner and are gifted with the breathtaking view of Pololū Valley. This is one of our favorite spots and drives on the island. It only takes about an hour but well worth it.

**Tip:** If you plan on hiking down to the black sand beach wear hiking shoes and find a hiking stick, makes the trip much easier.

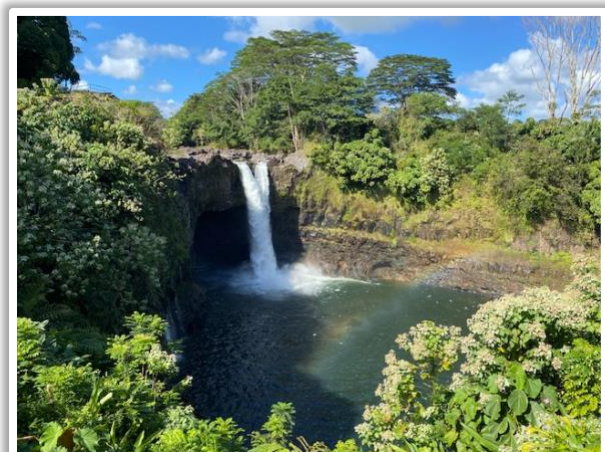
## Pu'uhonua O Honaunau

The Pu'uhonua O Honaunau, or Place of Refuge, is a national historical park containing a restored - and highly picturesque - Hawaiian village. In ancient Hawaii, all islands had such places where those who had broken kapu (ancient Hawaiian prohibitions, similar to "taboo" in Southern Polynesia) could seek safety from punishment. Highway 11 to Keokea, then Highway 160 down to the coast and Pu'uhonua O Honaunau.

**Tip:** The scuba diving and snorkeling in this area is also excellent.



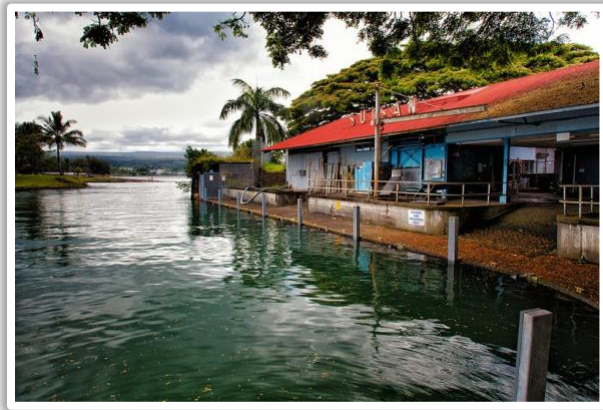
*Pu'uhonua O Honaunau*



## Rainbow Falls

An impressive waterfall known for its misty rainbows in Hilo's Wailuku River State Park. Take Waianuenue Avenue to Rainbow Drive - the park is on the right. No hiking involved; you can see the falls from the parking lot. Must see sight.

**Tip:** It takes only minutes to reach Rainbow Falls from downtown Hilo. The earlier you go, the better the rainbows.



*Suisan Fish Market*

## Suisan Fish Market

Hawaii's premier fish market. Come early to watch the intense bidding for the day's catch. Bay side of the Kamehameha Avenue and Lihwai Street intersection in Hilo. Great place to stop for a Poke bowl.

Tip: This is the spot to photograph Hawaii's many colorful gamefish up close.

## Waikoloa Petroglyph Field

The Waikoloa Petroglyph Field is one of the best preserved petroglyph sites on the Big Island. The petroglyphs around the trail are scattered like graffiti everywhere you look. Some are graphic (humans, birds, canoes) and others cryptic (dots, lines). Western influences appear in the form of horses and English initials. This is literally right in our backyard. Just head outside of the gate and get exploring right across the street.



*Petroglyphs*



*Waipi'o Valley Lookout*

## Waipi'o Valley

Reaching the valley is difficult. Vehicular access is limited to 4WD vehicles, and car rental companies prohibit use of their vehicles on the road. An ATV tour may be the best way to see Waipi'o. The most convenient and accessible view of the valley is from the scenic point at the end of Route 240, about 10 miles outside of Honoka'a. While a visit to the valley floor has its obvious rewards, the view from the top holds plenty of merit. Tour operators are not allowed to take visitors to the beach, but you're free to make your way there on foot.