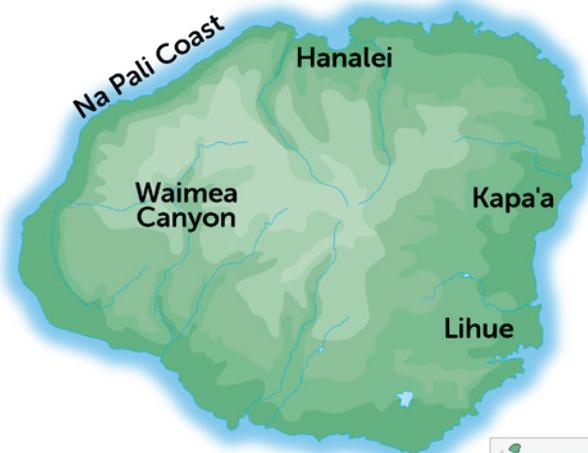


Kauai

2023
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GUIDE



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KAUAI
THE GARDEN ISLAND



Hawaii-Guide.com offers personalized Hawaii travel advice and vacation tips on the top attractions and things to see and do within the Hawaiian islands.

This packet, along with our [website](#), features all of the best attractions in Kauai — plus you can explore our hand-picked Hawaii tours, activities, and accommodations - each vetted by our team of Hawaii experts.



Since 2002, our Hawaii website, guidebooks, and digital travel guides have assisted millions of visitors in the process of planning and booking the Hawaiian vacation of their dreams.

Our organization is dedicated to being the one-stop resource for all things Hawaii.





HAWAII TRAVEL GUIDE - 2023 VISITOR PACKET Kauai Essential Edition

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Language Note: Hawai'i's two official languages are Hawaiian and English. It is the only state in the U.S. with two official languages. In this guide we used both the English and Hawaiian names of places when possible. There are only 13 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet: A, E, H, I K, L, M, N, O, P, U, W and the 'okina ('). The okina is a glottal stop like the sound between the ohs in "oh-oh" and is considered a consonant. In order to clarify pronunciation, you will often see the glottal stop (') or 'okina used on words in this guide such as Hawai'i. Due to printing restrictions, we will not use the macron, which is

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HAWAII TRAVEL GUIDE

2023 Visitor Packet

Kauai Essential Edition

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Written by:

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HawaiiGuide
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The Aloha Spirit

Aloha from Kauai, Hawaii! This beautiful and lush tropical island is home to verdant rainforests, stunning beaches, and some of the best hikes in the world. Whether you're looking for adventure, relaxation, or a mix of both, Kauai has something for every type of visitor.

From the majestic Na Pali Coastline to the cascading waterfalls of Hanalei and Waimea Canyon, you'll find a wealth of activities and sights to explore. And don't forget about Kauai's famous local delicacies, such as poke, shave ice, and mixed-plate lunches! With its nearly ideal climate and welcoming local residents, Kauai is the perfect place for a memorable Hawaii vacation.

Kauai is an island full of splendor, raw beauty, and culture; an island that, like no other, represents the true spirit of aloha. The island really is a true hidden gem of sorts. Over 90% of the island cannot be reached by road. In fact, the most beautiful part of the whole island has no road near it - and most Kauai lovers like it that way.

The island has also been a hot spot for feature films. Dozens of filmmakers and producers have chosen the 'Garden Isle' as a backdrop in their movies. In this guide we'll help you discover all that the island has to offer.



Kauai



Na Pali Coastline

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Experience the Na Pali coast

The glorious Na Pali Coast... a truly breathtaking experience either by air, land, or sea.

Explore Kokee State Park

Some of the best hiking in the world can be found within Kokee State Park. Even if hiking isn't your thing, the views of the Na Pali coastline from various lookouts are amazing.

Visit Waimea Canyon

No visit to Kauai would be complete without at least one visit to Waimea Canyon State Park.

Discover South Kauai

Kauai's south shore is popular due to its abundance of sunny weather. Poipu and Lawai offer a wide array of accommodations, fine dining, and shopping.

KAUAI

Kauai is the fourth most visited island, at 1.2 to 1.3 million visitors annually. It is also the fourth largest landmass in the Hawaiian Island chain that includes eight major islands and 124 islets.

The island is defined by its amazing scenery and laid back persona. The island, arguably we'll admit, also boasts more coastline filled with beaches than any other island in the chain. Kauai is full of uncrowded and secluded beaches all around the island; you're sure to find one that's just right for you.



Hanakapiai Falls - Kalalau Trail

KAUAI - The Garden Isle

Like all of the Hawaiian islands, Kauai's scenery is ever changing as you head around the island's coastal roads. Your surroundings are certainly never boring ranging from sugarcane fields to rainforests, pristine beaches to ranch lands. Though the island is small by mainland standards, you can find desert plateaus, tropical rain-forest, verdant valleys, fertile farmland, and sea cliffs along the Na Pali that will make your jaw drop.

Kauai is the oldest of the major Hawaiian islands and the fourth largest. With over 110 miles of shoreline, you're sure to find your perfect beach. All said and done, Kauai boasts nearly 70 beaches for you to select from on your trip. Nowhere else in Hawaii will you get that kind of selection. Tunnels Beach, on the north shore, and Poipu Beach, to the south, are two of the most popular and scenic beaches on the island.

If you want selection heading inland, Kauai has eight state parks awaiting your adventurous side, not to mention a plethora of trails that crisscross the island. In fact, the vast majority of Kauai can only be seen by foot or air - the roads only cover about 10% of the island. Waimea Canyon is a popular choice on the western side of the island, offering expansive views into what Mark Twain dubbed, 'The Grand Canyon of the Pacific.'

Kauai is also home to three of the worlds National Tropical Botanical Gardens - Allerton, McBryde, both on the south shore, and Limahuli, on the north shore.



Wailua Falls - Lihue Region

Kauai Fun Fact

Kauai is home to the world's wettest location, Waialeale, which receives over 450 inches of rain annually - that's almost 40 ft (12 m)!

All of that water leads to the most navigable rivers of any island in the chain, the most popular being Wailua on the east coast.

Kauai Top Places To Know

Waimea Canyon – Waimea Canyon is the largest canyon in the Pacific and truly a dramatic sight to behold at ten miles long, one mile wide, and more than 3,500 ft (1,927m) deep.



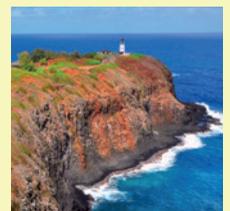
Kokee State Park – Kokee and Waimea State Parks are two of the premier parks on the island of Kauai. Inside these adjacent state parks exist some of the most stunning trails in all of Hawaii, and the diversity of the trails is unmatched. All visitors will need to pay a \$5 entrance fee to visit the Kokee & Waimea State Park in addition to any parking fees.



Haena Beach Park – This beautiful, golden sand beach along is popular for many reasons: Stunning views, plenty of water activities, camping, surfing, or simply lounging and relaxing are a great way to spend some time here - along Kauai's famed North Shore.



Kilauea Lighthouse – Kilauea Lighthouse is the northernmost point of the main Hawaiian Islands. The lighthouse is open to look around on the ground level, and remains one of Kauai's most popular attractions.



Kalalau Valley - West Kauai



KAUAI REGIONS

Na Pali Coast

Kee Beach, Kalalau, Polihale Beach

North Kauai

Kaena Beach Park, Kilauea Lighthouse

East Kauai

Kapa'a Town, Nounou, Opaeka'a Falls

Lihue

Lihue Town

South Kauai

Poipu, Spouting Horn, NTBG

West Kauai

Waimea Canyon, Polihale, Kalalau Lookout, Kokee State Park

Kauai is home to the lushest scenery and beholds the most unique natural beauty of all the major Hawaiian Islands. There's a magic to the island that draws in people from all over the world. The sheer amount of outdoor activities on the island is remarkable, everything from backwoods hiking through Waimea Canyon to kayaking up the Wailua River. Kauai is a mecca for all things outdoors and all persons looking for adventure. Kauai is impressive by land, water, or air - and ideally, all three.

Na Pali Coast

When it comes to scenic areas, Na Pali may very well be the top on the list here in Hawaii. Miles of rugged coastline more beautiful than anything imagined, it truly feels like another world.

So whether you fly over it, hike it, or take a boat around the edges of it... Na Pali is something that must be experienced. These sea cliffs begin at Ke'e Beach in North Kauai and continue around the north and west portion of Kauai, ending at Polihale Beach bordering West Kauai.



Kalalau Trail - Na Pali Coast

North Kauai

The North Shore has a mild average temperature in the mid to low 70's °F (21°C), but much of it receives a lot more rain - up to 120 inches a year in some places. This makes it green, lush, and very tropical. One of the most popular resort areas is also located on the north shore of Kaua'i, Princeville. Other towns you'll find include Kilauea, Ha'ena, and Hanalei with its beautiful bay and beaches.



East Kauai

There are many people who will call East Kaua'i the Coconut Coast, and once you visit you'll see why. For miles along the shoreline there are hundreds of coconut trees. The east coast is very likely the second most popular part of the island, and most of the resorts are along this stretch, especially in Kapa'a. Plus, there are plenty of attractions gracing the region, from Wailua Falls and Opaeka'a Falls to the Fern Grotto, all near the Wailua River. Other towns you'll find on the east coast include Wailua, Hanamaulu, and Anahola.



Lihue

Lihue is the county seat of Kauai and is the location of the government offices, a museum, and several other potential resources to visitors.

South Kauai

The southern side of Kaua'i is warm, dry, and generally arid averaging about 35-40 inches (89-102 cm) of rain a year. The average temperature is 78°F (25.5°C), but don't be surprised if temps get into the high 80's or even 90's °F (27-32°C) in this region. Though far from the popular North Shore and scarcely populated, the South side has a lot to offer. The biggest attractions here are the perfect beaches around the Poipu area and Spouting Horn. Other towns you'll find on the south side include Kalaheo, Koloa, Lawai, and Omao.

West Kauai

For the most part, West Kaua'i is impassable, filled with mountainous terrain and valleys that make roads impossible to build here. This side of Kaua'i is most famous for the Na Pali coast (which we've split into its own region) and the trails and hikes that stretch far and wide across this part of the island. Visitors will also find Kokee State Park and the majestic Waimea Canyon in this region.

KAUAI WEATHER

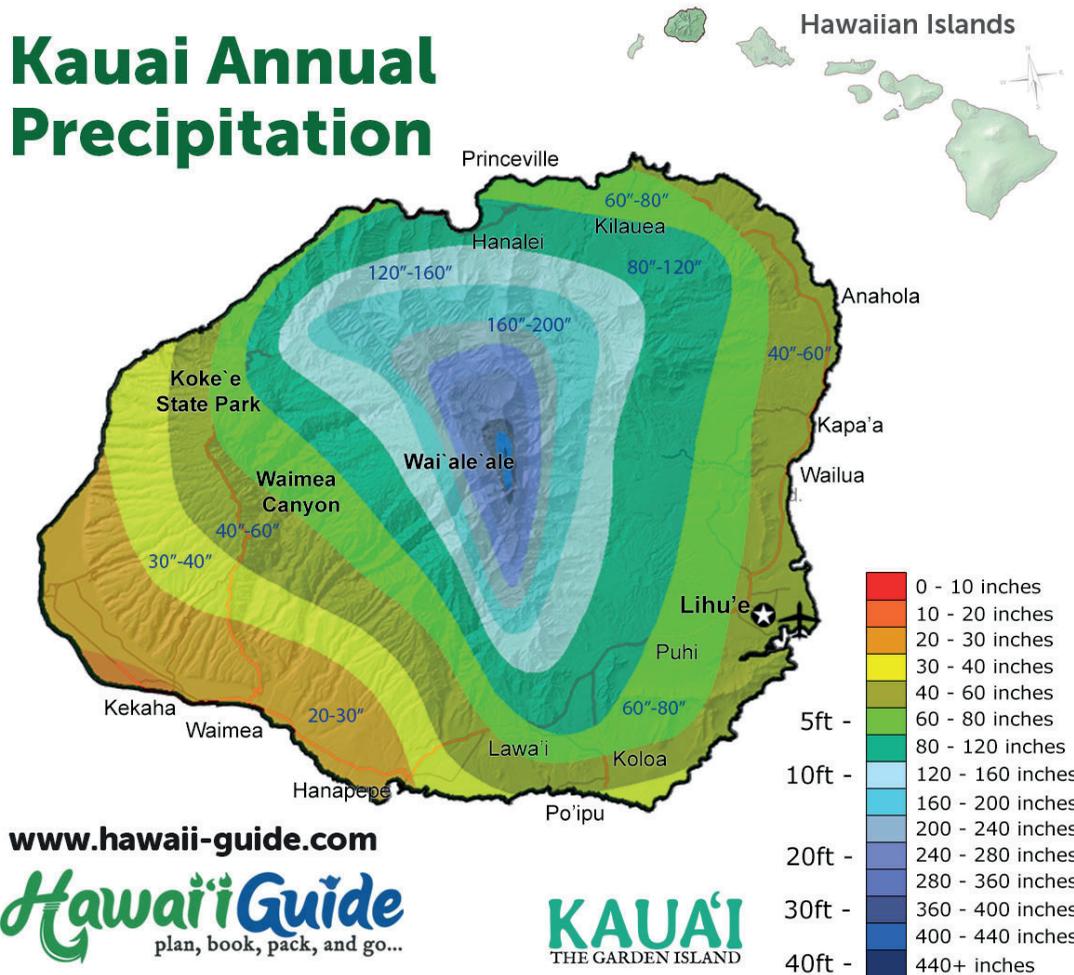
The weather on Kauai is pretty balanced throughout the year. Still, knowing about this balance and what weather to expect before your trip is very helpful when it comes to selecting a place to stay on the island.

If you're adamant about avoiding the rain, then, as you'll see below, the South Shore is certainly going to be your best bet. If a little rain doesn't bother you, then perhaps somewhere on the North Shore or East Shore would be better suited for you. You may also be interested in our [When to Visit Kauai](#) article for additional information, as well as average monthly rainfall amounts and temperatures. For now, though, let's take a look at Kauai's general weather patterns.

Kauai is known as the "Garden Isle" for good reason - it's lush, green, and wet (home to one of the top two wettest spots on the planet, actually). Many folks who love Kauai do so because they know its verdant appearance is thanks to a happy medium of both sunshine and rain. Plus, this means more rainbows. To date, we can certainly say we've seen more rainbows on Kauai than anywhere else in Hawaii; often double and even triple rainbows depending on the location - it's a sight to behold!

Ultimately, as we noted before, Kauai has a remarkably stable weather pattern year-round. During the winter you'll experience highs in the mid-70s °F (23-24°C), while

Kauai Annual Precipitation

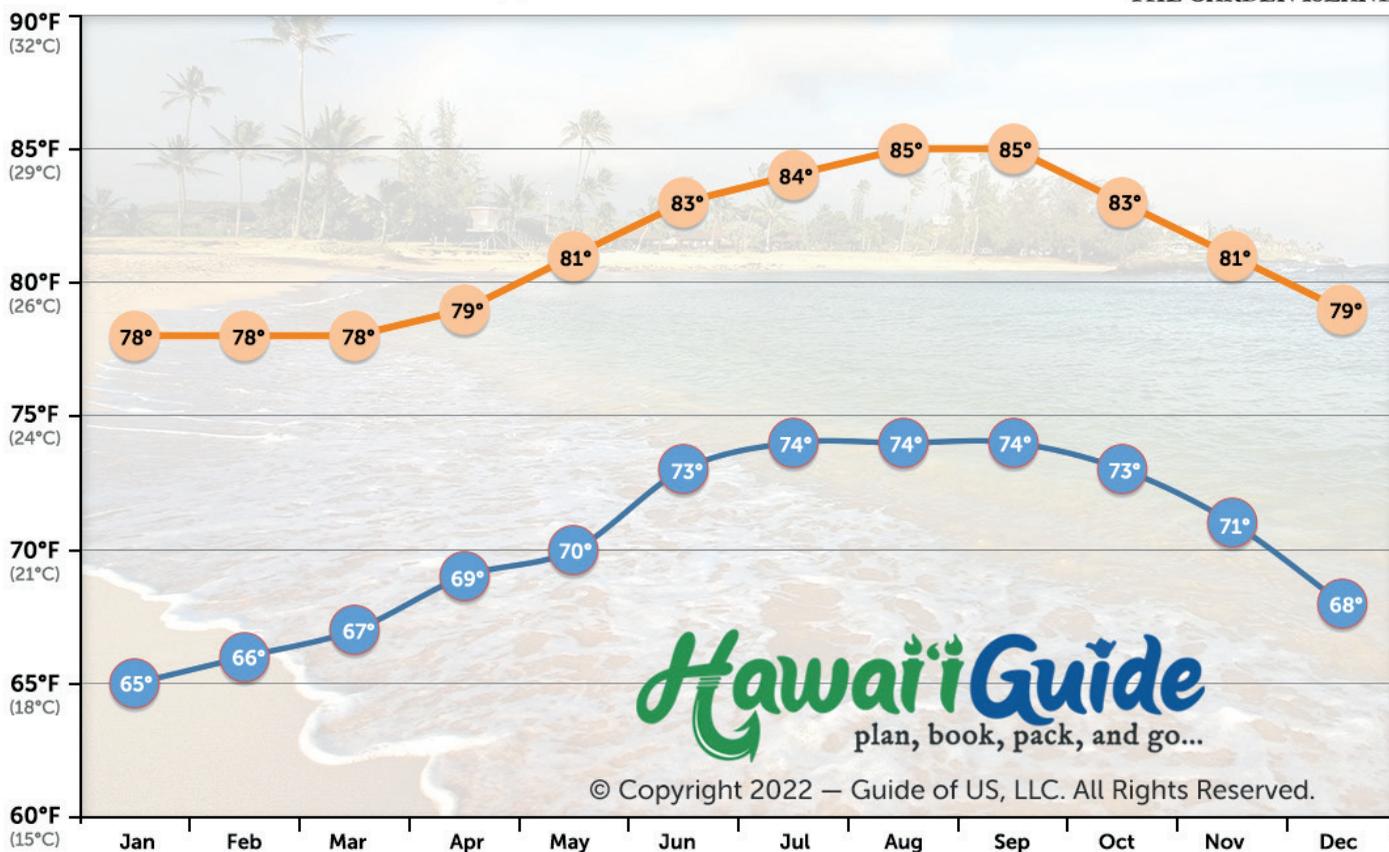


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KAUAI
 THE GARDEN ISLAND

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Lihue Temperatures



summer temperatures usually get into the mid-80s °F (28-30°C). Kauai is wetter than the other islands and is actually home to the second (arguably THE) wettest spot on the planet at Waialeale.

When you begin to plan your Kauai trip you'll likely want to know which areas offer the most sun and the driest weather. This is especially important to consider during the winter months when the tradewinds bring additional moisture to the islands.

Kauai's North and East Coasts are together referred to as the windward side; which is typically wetter than the rest of the island. The driest locations are in south Kauai near Poipu or further west towards Waimea and Kekaha. Ultimately, most rain showers are brief and the sun quickly returns; only occasionally

does a weather system bring prolonged rain to the island. Next we'll create a short list of the driest/sunniest locations to the wetter locations on the island, year-round.

Here's our list, driest to wettest:

Waimea is probably the driest of all the areas on the island but offers fewer accommodation choices than other locations.

Poipu or Lawai, which offer an abundance of accommodations on the South Shore, is your best bet for a dry and sunny vacation. The area averages about 30-40" (76-102 cm) of rain each year.

Kapaa on the Eastern (Coconut) Coast is your next best choice, averaging about 50" (127 cm) of rain annually.

The fourth location is also the wettest, but offers gorgeous scenery and lush surroundings - it's the North Shore: Princeville, Hanalei, Kilauea, etc. This area gets around 85" (216 cm) each year.

In choosing any of these locations, consider which activities you'd like to participate in. Would you prefer hiking, beach lounging, swimming, or snorkeling? Keep these things in mind when selecting your location. The good news is that Kauai is small enough to reach almost any area of the island within an hour or so. If you find yourself in a rain shower one minute, it'll typically be sunny again just up the road. Ultimately, it's hard to pick a bad location on Kauai to stay for your vacation.

A quick note about Hurricane Season:

Hurricane and tropical storms are historically rare events on Kauai, but it's still important to be prepared for storms if you visit during hurricane season - June through November. The changes in global climate have led to increased activity around the islands, so it's essential to monitor weather conditions when planning and taking your trip to Kauai.

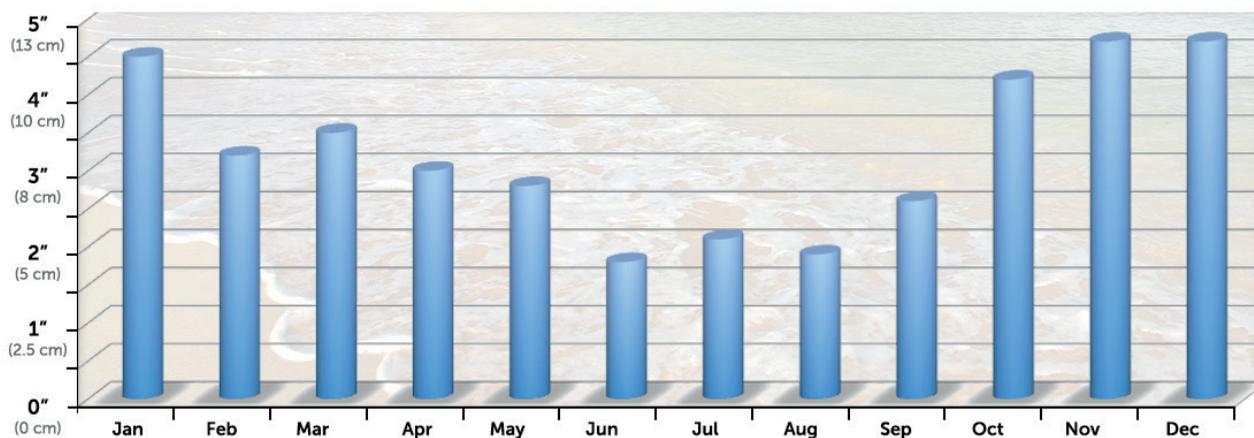
Here are a few things to keep in mind, summarized, about Kauai's weather:

- Check sources of reliable forecasts, like the [University of Hawaii Weather](#), before you visit and during your stay, as they have the best and most accurate forecast in the islands.

- Don't listen to the Weather Channel or watch the NOAA forecast graphs, of course, they'll predict rain - it technically rains almost every day in Hawaii... for about 10 minutes at a time. The only time it's really wet in Hawaii for a prolonged time is during the winter months, usually from November until March.

- As far as temperature goes, plan accordingly for the island you're visiting. At sea level, it's usually about 76-85°F (24-29°C) all year-round. Temperatures at night are typically 12-18°F (7-8°C) cooler, but this can change dramatically depending on your altitude. Kokee, in West Kauai, can get quite chilly at night for example.

Lihue Precipitation



Precipitation is based on average rainfall, measured in inches (*estimated metric measurements in parenthesis*), at Lihue airport and may vary based on geographic location.

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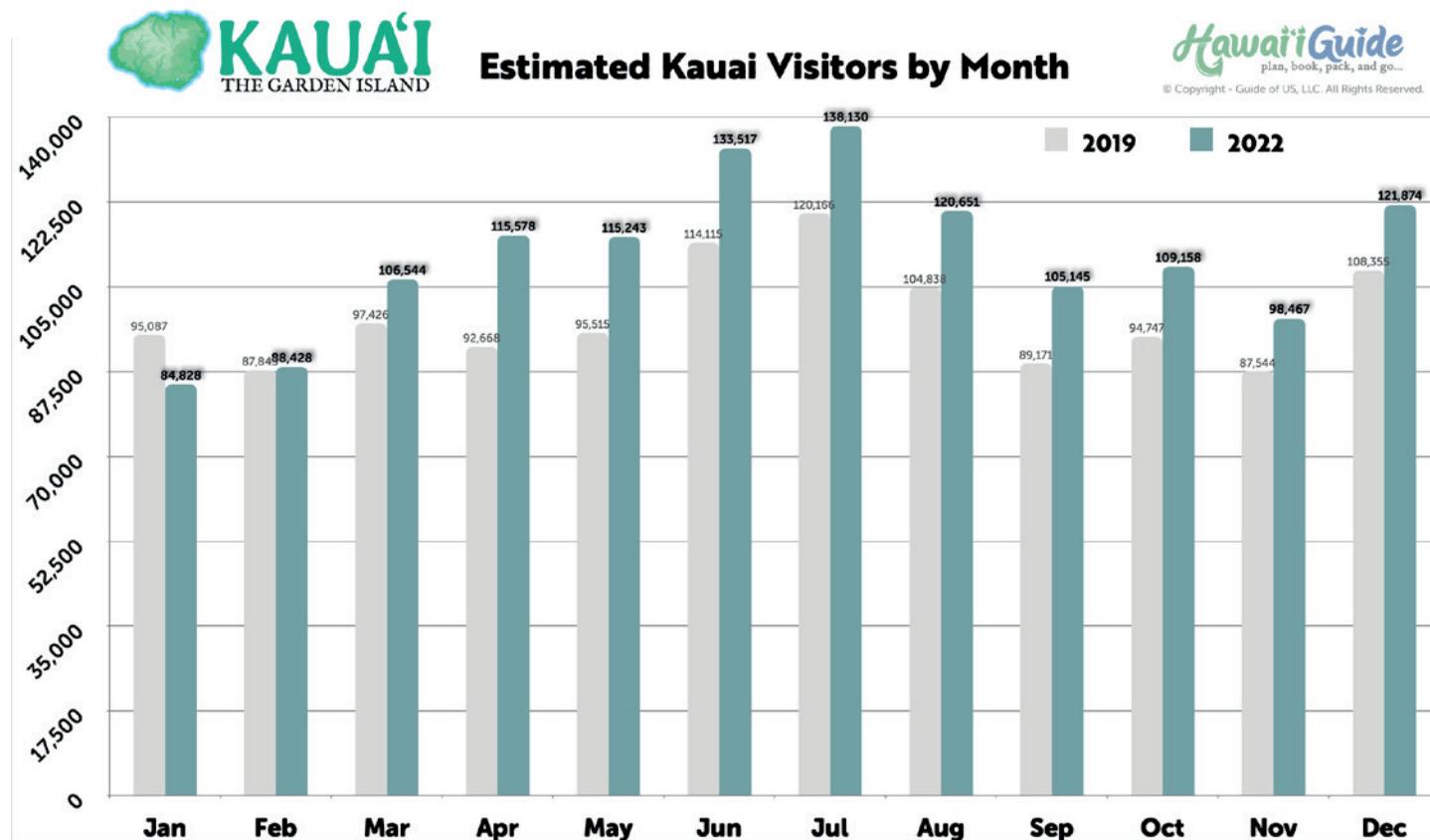
Makua 'Tunnels' Beach - North Shore Kauai

WHEN TO VISIT

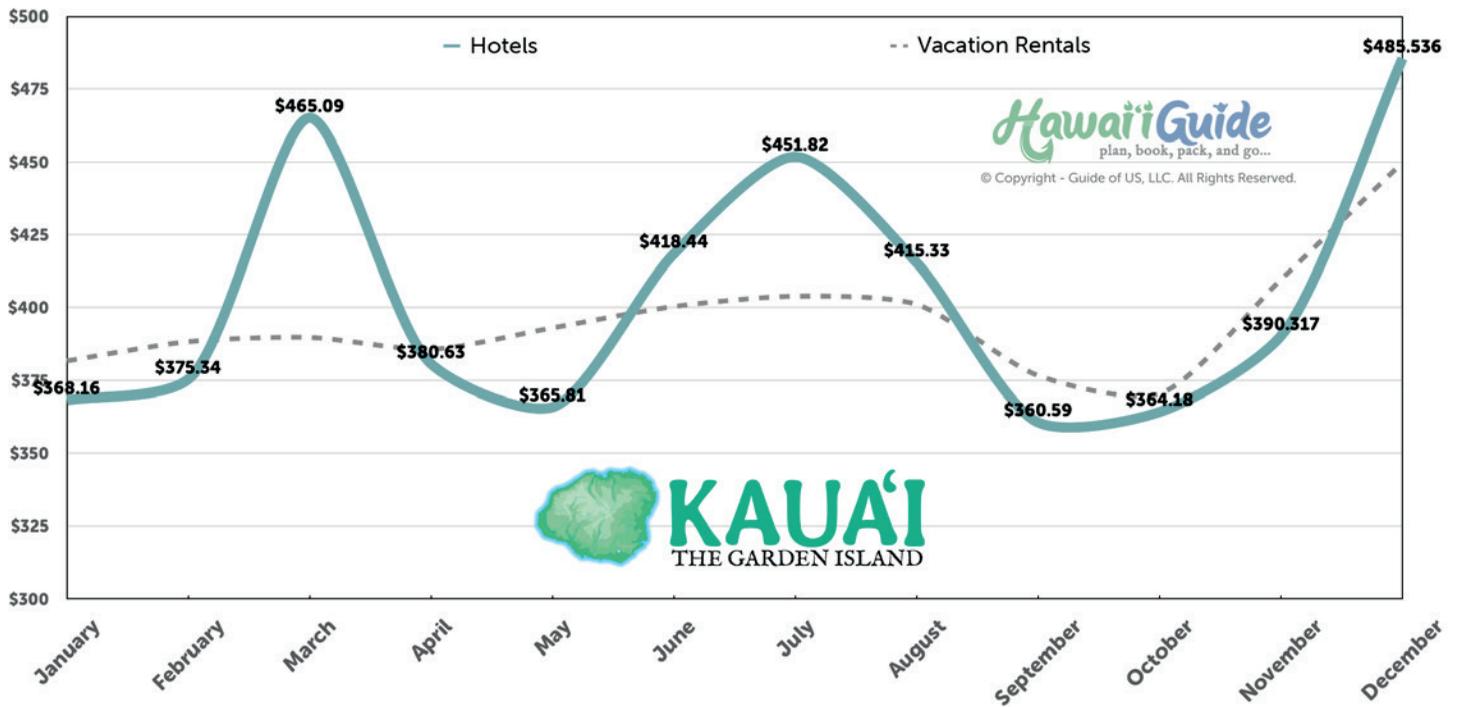
There honestly isn't a 'bad time' to go to Hawaii. Visiting Hawaii is a dream come true for many visitors, and who can blame them? It's a remarkable, unique, & beautiful paradise.

The best times to visit Kauai, when considering the weather, crowds, demand, and prices, are the months of April, May, August, September, and early October. Some call these Kauai's 'off-season periods' or the 'shoulder months.' But there's more to cover on this topic before you make a final decision.

Let's go over a few additional topics that'll make deciding when to visit easier. First here's an overview of visitor arrivals on the islands by month. As you can see, there's an increase at three times of the year - Spring Break in March, Summer, and Christmas/New Year's.



Kauai Monthly Accommodation Rate Averages



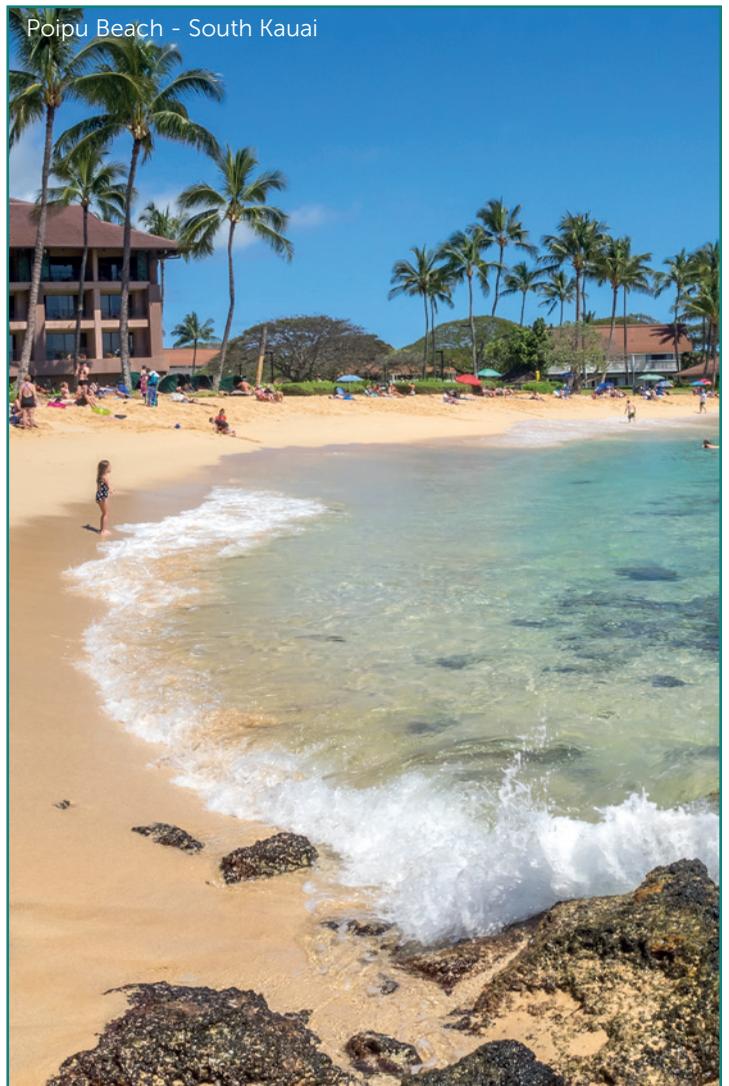
Kauai Hotel Rates Average Accommodation Prices

As is to be expected, when more people are 'on-island' visiting the Hawaiian Islands - accommodation, rental, and flight costs will increase as well.

To avoid the crowds and keep rates lower, you can always try visiting during non-peak visitation periods (i.e.; spring and fall are both much quieter).

When preparing for your trip, the graphic above should help provide a general idea of the average rates during different times of the year.

The rates can and will fluctuate by island and by year, but these figures still allow you to prepare accordingly.



Hawaii Demand Forecast

Estimated High & Low Periods for 2023

JANUARY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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MARCH 2023

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APRIL 2023

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MAY 2023

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JUNE 2023

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JULY 2023

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AUGUST 2023

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SEPTEMBER 2023

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OCTOBER 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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NOVEMBER 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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DECEMBER 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Key

- Higher Demand
- Average / Neutral
- Lower Demand



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WHERE TO STAY ON KAUAI

Finding a Place on Kauai

In this section we will highlight the best places to stay on Kauai and the best parts of Kauai. Kauai holds several favorable areas for different vacationers. Essentially, you can find it all depending on your desires like:

- Kauai hotels on the beach
- Kauai resorts on the beach
- Kauai luxury resorts
- Cheap places to stay on Kauai

Whether you consider yourself the luxury seeker, beach bum, shoestring backpacker, a couple on a romantic getaway, or a family, look no further than Kauai for the perfect lodging for your vacation. As you review each location of Kauai, pay attention to the pros and cons.



Overview of Staying on Kauai

Let's get a lay of the land that is Kauai. The island of Kauai has four major geographic areas to select from when choosing where to stay. In order of popularity (by our account), they are:

- **The South Shore**- including Koloa, Lawai, and Poipu
- **The North Shore**- including Princeville, Hanalei, and Kilauea
- **The East Coast**- including Kapaa, Wailua, and, in this case, the county seat of Lihue
- **The West Side**- including the towns of Waimea and Hanapepe, staying on the West Side is much less popular than the other locations)

Shipwreck Beach - South Kauai



OK, that may not seem that simple. However, not that difficult because it's hard to make a terrible choice in Kauai. But each area on Kauai has its unique flavor and atmosphere - including its attractions and sights to see.

Accommodations by Region

If you love the beach, enjoy lush scenery, and want to immerse yourself in stunning, untouched landscapes, anywhere on Kauai will make you happy. The North and East coasts of Kauai illustrate absolute beauty. Beaches sprawl across the entire island - more (arguably) than any other island in the state. So head to "Garden Isle" for the

lush greenery, particularly the North and East coasts, which provide the most scenic terrains.

Staying on the South Shore

Including Koloa, Lawai, and Poipu

The South Side of Kauai is a magical place that weaves rich history, gorgeous beaches, and the finest cuisine into its unique brand of luscious, Aloha-inspired hospitality. The area hosts some of the most breathtaking sunsets you can see anywhere—a perfect spot to visit and relax with friends and family.

Why Should You Stay on the South Side?

Brilliant weather: You will find the best weather, as you can experience more sunny and dry days in this part of the island.

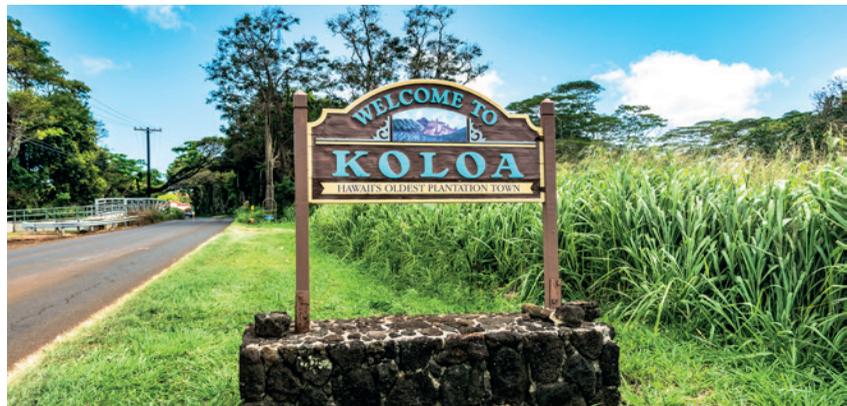
Stunning beaches: The beaches along this island certainly radiate more vibrancy than other beaches on Kauai. With a nice variety of beaches to select from - one of our personal favorites is Shipwreck Beach. Range of Hawaiian lodgings: This area offers luxurious island retreats, beachfront hotels, condos, and vacation rentals.

Sights and attractions: On the South Side of Kauai explore, all the noteworthy sights and draws of the western and eastern parts of the island, including Waimea Canyon and Kokee in the west, and the 'coconut' coast on the eastern side of the island.

The Pros and Cons of Staying on the South Side

- + Sunny and dry almost year-round
- + Excellent selection of beaches available
- + Luxurious and top resorts
- + Many wonderful restaurants and dining options

- Beaches are more crowded than on the North Shore





Shopping and Dining Options: Discover an abundance of great shopping and dining options that vary to accommodate the whims of luxury seekers.

Our Recommended Accommodations to Stay in South Kauai

A few of the more popular properties in South Kauai are the Grand Hyatt Kauai, the Sheraton Kauai Resort, the Koa Kea Hotel & Resort, the Koloa Landing at Poipu Beach, and the Marriott's Waiohai Beach Club Koloa.

Staying on the North Shore Including Princeville, Hanalei, and Kilauea

The North Shore of Kauai may be one of the most scenic places on Earth. There are a variety of gorgeous beaches, and the verdant mountains rising as a backdrop to the coastline make this entire stretch of the island seem like the "real" Hawaii you've envisioned before visiting.

Why Should You Stay on the North Side?

Scenic Beaches: Hanalei and Kauai offer excellent snorkeling, fun-filled beaches, and truly amazing scenery.

Romantic Getaway: Best location for the newlyweds looking for a romantic honeymoon. All couples can enjoy this romantic getaway. The island offers a variety of romantic properties, from the traditional beachfront cabanas to the more sophisticated and luxurious villas. The island also has some activities for couples to enjoy together, including scuba diving, snorkeling, and lying on white sandy beaches.

Lush Terrain: Hanalei and Kauai's north shore is a place to experience nature at its best. The area has everything you could want in a vacation destination with stunning mountains, waterfalls, clear blue seas, and lush green forests.

Accommodations: Expect high-end resorts and hotels that exude luxury, romance, and indulgence. Along the North Shore, you'll find Princeville—the place for North Shore luxury accommodations.

Our Favorite Accommodations to Stay in North Kauai

A few popular properties on the North Shore of Kauai are the Hanalei Bay Resort, 1 Hotel Hanalei Bay, and the Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas.

The Pros and Cons of Staying on the North Shore

- + An abundance of amazing scenery with a backdrop of gorgeous mountains
- + Lush valleys bursting with waterfalls
- + Luxury accommodations available
- + Proximity to what may well be the best trio of beaches in the state: Kee Beach, Haena Beach Park (including Tunnels Beach), Hanalei Bay Beach(es)
- Rain- especially during the winter months (late November through March)

Kilauea Lighthouse - North Kauai





Wailua Falls - East Kauai

Staying on the East 'Coconut' Coast

Including Kapaa, Lihue, and Wailua

Ride through the East Coast of Kauai, also known as the Coconut Coast, and find hundreds of cocos growing along this stretch of Kauai coastline. This is the most developed part of Kauai, but it's also where you'll find the most budget-friendly hotels and vacation rentals.

Why Should You Stay on the East Coast?

Location: With a centralized location on the island, it is an ideal hub for visiting the entire island. As a convenient hub, you will find it easier to see the attractions and sights in the West and on both the North and South shores.

Weather: The area has a tropical climate and is almost always sunny and hot.

Accommodations: Most hotels in Kapaa span across the same strip. The hotels include a noticeable variety like budget-friendly, shoestring, and luxury options. Consider ISO Hotel, the Aston Islander, the Outrigger, and the more upscale Sheraton Coconut Beach.

Shopping Options: Kinipopo Shopping Village, in Kapaa Town, offers a unique shopping experience. You can enjoy the beautiful Kauai scenery and the relaxing atmosphere of the shopping village. There are several eateries and shops available at Kinipopo Shopping Village.

Dining Options: Kapaa offers a wide range of high-quality, fresh, and healthy options in Kauai, like the delicious and hearty Pono Market, the famous Street Burger, etc.

The towns of Anahola to the north and the capital city of Lihue essentially bordered the



region to the south, with Kapaa and Wailua villages about halfway between them.

One of the disadvantages of this region is that there are a variety of more "local" beaches along this stretch of the island, but they lack the scenic beauty of the north shore beaches and the amenities of those along the south shoreline.

Popular Accommodations to Stay at along the East 'Coconut' Coast

The Sheraton Kauai Coconut Beach Resort, the Kauai Coast Resort at the Beach Boy, the Outrigger Waipouli Beach Resort & Spa, the Marriot Kauai Beach Club Resort, and the Aston Islander on the Beach are a few popular choices in this region.

The Pros and Cons of Staying on the East "Coconut" Coast

- + Generally more affordable accommodations, even during times of high demand on the island (i.e., Christmas, major holidays)
- + Close to numerous cultural sights and convenient base from which to visit the entire island
- + Proximity to both the North Shore and West Side (including Waimea Canyon, Kokee, and Polihale)
- + Home of the Kauai Path- a wonderful place to take a walk or ride a bike. It extends from Lydgate Park in Wailua to Donkeys Beach north of Kealia and Kapaa town.

- Predominantly local beaches that lack the majesty of the North Shore beaches or the convenience of the South Side beaches



BEST TIME

TO....

KAUAI FAQ



Best time for good weather?

1 While Kauai is a great destination year-round, the best opportunity for good weather exists during April, May, September, and October. The weather is warm year-round, with average highs in the winter of 78-82°F (26-28°C) and 83-88°F (29-31°C) in the summer months.

Best time to avoid crowds?

2 Hawaii has visitors during all months of the year, but typically, if you want to avoid the crowds, visit in either November (excluding Thanksgiving) or May for the quietest scene on the islands.

Best time to book?

3 As a rule of thumb, book hotels early - no later than 2-3 months before you go! For flights, as with accommodations, it's best to typically book earlier than later.

Best time for local festivals and events?

4 'The 'Aloha Festivals' takes place on all the islands each year in late September. King Kamehameha Day (June 11) and Lei Day (May 1) also both offer various festivities.

Check our [Hawaii events](#) calendar online for more information on what might be taking place during your visit.





Best time for Snorkeling, Swimming, and Diving?

Hawaii offers fantastic snorkeling, diving, and swimming opportunities for much of the year, but the best times are the summer months. During this period the surf will be less intense than during the winter, the water will be warmer, and the weather more cooperative - creating the perfect conditions for exploring in the water around the islands.

Best time for Hiking?

Hawaii offers some of the best hiking in the world if we may say so ourselves; a hiker could probably traverse Kauai's trails alone for years and never get bored. As with most things in Hawaii, the hiking is excellent year-round, but the best months for hitting the trails are during the late spring and early fall (April, May, September, and October). The weather will be drier during these months, as well as through the entire summer, but unlike the summer, these spring/fall months will also be cooler.

Be sure to take plenty of water and sunscreen before you head out, as the UV is very high in Hawaii year-round. If you hike during the winter months, be prepared for showers.

Best time to go Whale Watching?

Each winter, Humpback Whales migrate from Alaska to the warm waters surrounding Hawaii to mate and give birth to their calves. The best opportunities for whale watching will be from late November through mid-April; February and March often provide the best opportunities for sightings.

Best time to take a cruise to/around Hawaii?

The best time to find a good bargain on cruises, including inter-island cruises, will be late November through mid-December. The best time for selection of boats will be in the spring (April/May) and fall (late August-October). Winter months are often more expensive but do offer the opportunity for whale watching (late November through early April).



Humpback Whale breaching offshore

TOP ATTRACTIONS ON KAUAI

Na Pali Coastline - West Kauai

Be prepared to be wowed by Kauai! Whether you're looking to tour jaw-dropping waterfalls, hit some of Hawaii's best hiking trails, or snorkel and spot fascinating marine life, the Garden Isle is the place to be for outdoor adventure.

Those with more cerebral interests will love stopping by artsy Hanapepe town or touring the Grove Farm Sugar Plantation Museum in Lihue- a treasure trove of Kauai history. And how could we forget the Na Pali Coast, one of Earth's true gems? That's a lot of exploring, so get ready to relax on a soft swath of sand... did we mention Kauai has some of the world's best beaches?

Browse our handpicked Kauai attractions; whether by land, by sea, or by air, we know you'll find your perfect adventure!

Kalalau Lookout

West Kauai Region



The Heart of Kalalau Valley

Something look familiar?

- The valley and surrounding coast have served as the backdrop for countless films including "King Kong" (the original), "Mighty Joe Young," "Jurassic Park," and "Six Days Seven Nights."

Kalalau Lookout isn't just another Waimea Canyon lookout, as many first-time visitors often believe. It's a view into the heart of the Kalalau Valley- one of the most-photographed and well-recognized valleys in all of Hawaii. Kalalau Lookout is also the highest elevation most people reach in Kauai by road, at 4,000 ft (2,204m). Kalalau Valley is the largest valley on the island at two miles wide. Interestingly, it was inhabited up until as recently as 1919.

Makua 'Tunnels' Beach

North Kauai Region



Parking Tips

- Two roads provide beach access- the first is located 0.4-mile past mile marker 8 and the second is 0.6-mile past mile marker 8 (the latter is the better of the two). Please show Aloha and do not park in spots marked 'No Parking' by residents.

Best Snorkeling on Kauai

If you're looking for one of the best North Shore snorkeling beaches, look no further than Tunnels Beach- a North Kauai gem that has a coral reef so massive it can be seen from space. If SCUBA diving is more your style, the amazing coral reef and generally calm conditions mean you, too, will have a spectacular dive. The beach itself is located nearly directly across from mile marker 8 on Highway 560 going east from Hanalei towards Ha'ena. Parking spaces are limited, so it's best to arrive as early as possible.

Waimea Canyon

West Kauai Region

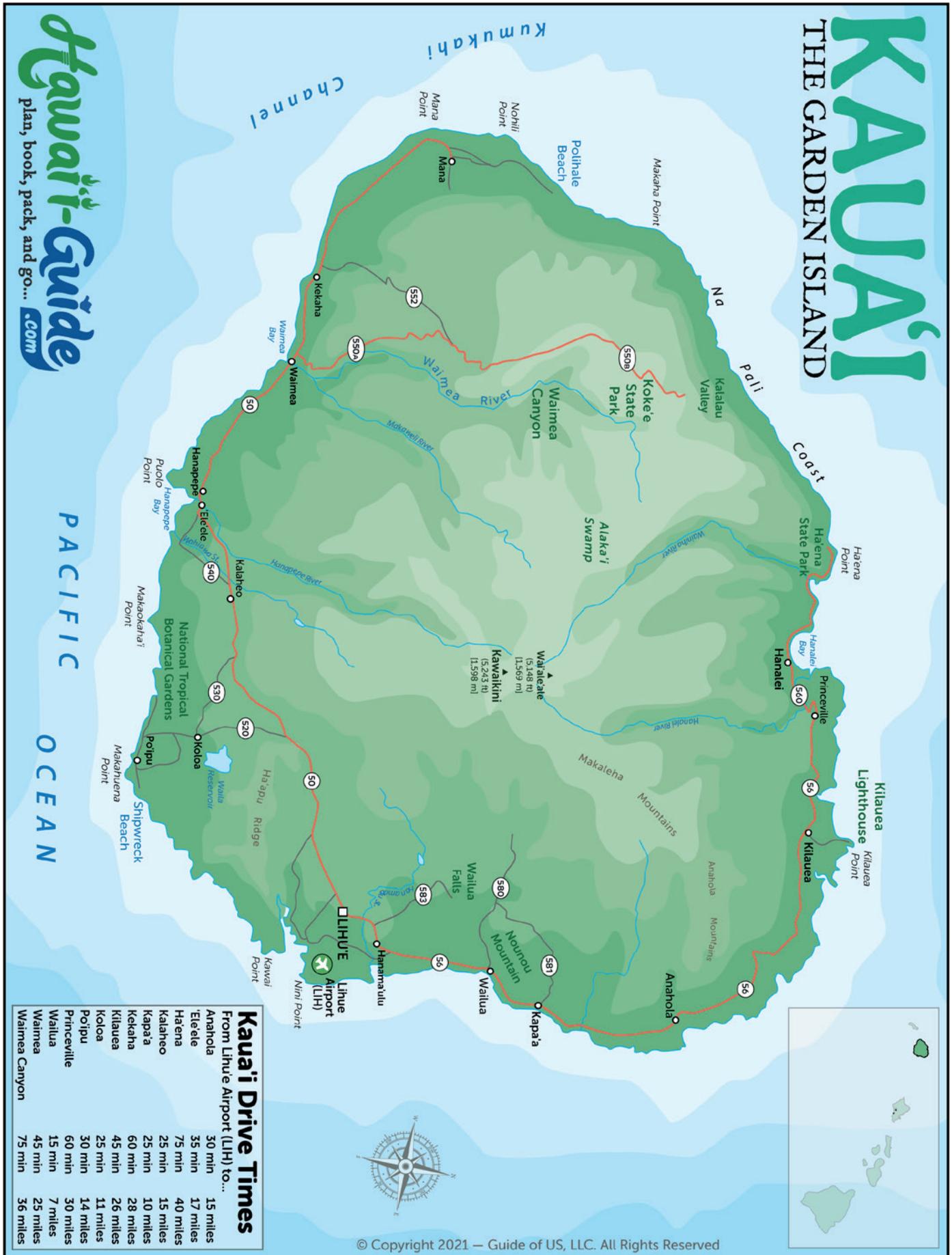


Driving Directions

- Take Hwy. 50 west from Hanapepe toward Waimea. Waimea Canyon Drive (Hwy 550) is on the right just past mile marker 23. The road travels through the canyon area and ends at Pu'u o Kila Lookout overlooking Kalalau Valley.

'The Grand Canyon of the Pacific' - Mark Twain

Waimea Canyon is the largest canyon in the Pacific and truly a dramatic sight to behold at ten miles long, one mile wide, and more than 3,500 ft (1,927m) deep. Carved thousands of years ago by rivers and floods that flowed from Mount Waialeale's summit, the canyon is home to the Waimea River. The river was named for the red hue of the water, as Waimea means 'red waters.' The red tint is caused by several natural processes that break down the ancient rock inside the gorge. From space, you can even see the rust tinted runoff making its way into the ocean. You can buy your own 'Red Dirt' T-Shirt on the island, as a souvenir.



Wailua Falls

Lihue Kauai Region



+ Added Bonus

- Visit when the sun hits at just the right angle you'll get a beautiful rainbow extending out from the base of the falls in the mist, which is nothing short of spectacular.

Famous Double-Tiered Waterfall

If you've ever fantasized about seeing a double-tiered waterfall, then at the gorgeous Wailua Falls. And speaking of fantasy, Wailua Falls is so scene of the long-running TV show *Fantasy Island*. Wailua Falls is easily accessible, as no hiking is needed to reach it and appreciate its beauty up close. In fact, the parking lot basically overlooks the falls. But the main reason the falls is so special is its beauty; it has certainly earned its place as an international representation of Kauai's enchantment.

get ready to turn your fantasy into reality lovely that it was featured in the opening

Limahuli Garden & Preserve

North Kauai Region



Tours Available

- Limahuli Garden is open Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 am – 4 pm. Last check-in is 2:15 pm when they close the entrance gate, as of this writing. There is an admission fee.

<https://ntbg.org/gardens/limahuli/>

National Tropical Botanical Gardens

The 1,000-acre garden is now part of the National Tropical Botanical Gardens after being donated to the society in 1976. In 1995, the garden was opened to the public and as of 1997 was rated by the American Horticultural Society as the best natural botanical garden in the United States. The garden, nestled in the mountains, is unique and a real treasure to visit. Today, 17 acres of the garden and rainforest provide visitors a chance to view both the natural beauty of the island and the cultural history behind it.

Kee Beach

North Kauai Region



Photography Tip

- The best time for photographs is early morning (on a clear day) or right at sunset. Thanks to the stunning views and photographic opportunities here, this is also one of the popular Kauai wedding beaches.

The Start of Na Pali

Kauai's glorious Na Pali Coast begins at one of the most popular beaches on Kauai, Kee Beach. This beach marks the end of Highway 560 and the portion of Kauai that can be seen by car. The rest of North Kauai is occupied by the Na Pali Coast, a series of rugged seaside cliffs stretching along the northwest shore that is not navigable by vehicle. Reservations are now required as of this writing. Please visit www.gohaena.com for more information. This is also the starting point for the popular four-mile roundtrip hike along the Kalalau Trail to Hanakapiai Beach.

Kilauea Lighthouse & Refuge

North Kauai Region



Lighthouse Directions

- Take Hwy 56 until you come to Kolo Road shortly after mile marker 23. The road will be on your right. After you have turned onto Kolo Road you are going to want to take Kilauea Road makai (towards the ocean) to the lighthouse & refuge.

Historic Lighthouse & Wildlife Refuge

Kilauea Lighthouse is the northernmost point of the main Hawaiian Islands. The lighthouse was built in 1913 with the largest hand blown clamshell lens in the world. It was later replaced with a beacon in the 1970's. The lighthouse is open to look around on the ground level. Today the lighthouse remains one of Kauai's most popular attractions. Native vegetation and an informative visitor center attracts thousands of tourists to this site to bird watch, view the sweeping cliff and ocean vistas, and revel in Kauai's past.

Hanalei Beach Park & Bay

North Kauai Region



Beautiful Bay with Famous Pier



So many options

- Hanalei Bay features a little of everything for those seeking ocean fun and diversity. The right side of the bay features a reef that creates ideal surfing conditions for those looking to catch some waves.

This is by far the best beach on the island on an average day. It's family-friendly, and the sand is pristine. At 125 ft. wide and with over two miles of sand along the crescent-shaped bay, the surroundings are superb, with views of the verdant mountains rising in the background. Hanalei Bay Beach is bordered by the Hanalei River to the east the Waipa River to the west, and there are two extensive coral reefs at both ends of the bay.

Opaeka'a Falls

East Kauai Region



Spectacular all year long



What's in a name?

- The name Opaeka'a dates back to days when shrimp roamed the river and were seen rolling in the turbulent waters at the base of the falls. "Opae" is the Hawaiian word for "shrimp," and "ka'a" means "rolling."

Head up Kuamo'o Road until you see a pullout for Opaeka'a Falls on your right, shortly before the second mile marker. From the overlook, you can get a spectacular view of 150+ foot Opaeka'a Falls. The falls are at their best in full sunlight (late morning usually). If you visit on a cloudy day, definitely try to return at a sunnier hour. Best of all, the falls are flowing year-round so you're always certain to see it in action.

Poipu Beach

South Kauai Region



Two Beaches in One



Wildlife Alert

- Head to the sandbar separating the two sections for our animal lovers to witness the endangered monk seal. Remember to keep your distance from these amazing creatures.

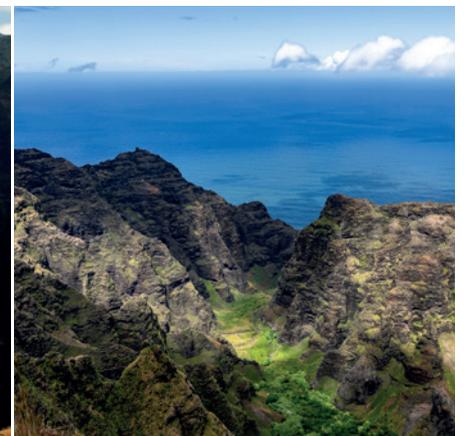
Poipu Beach—the star of Kauai’s south shore—splits into two bays, one for novice snorkelers and children and the other for swimmers, surfers, and advanced snorkelers. Poipu Beach, a crescent-shaped strip of white sand dotted with palm trees backed by cliffs, stretches 50 feet wide and a thousand feet long.

Nualolo Trail

West Kauai Region



Sweeping views of the Na Pali coastline



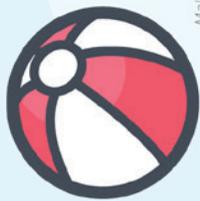
Do the loop

- While it's a fairly strenuous hike, and a total of 7.6 miles round trip, it's hard to beat this adventure. If you're up for it, we recommend the loop trail, starting at Nualolo, along the Nualolo Cliff Trail, and back up Awa'awapuhi trail.

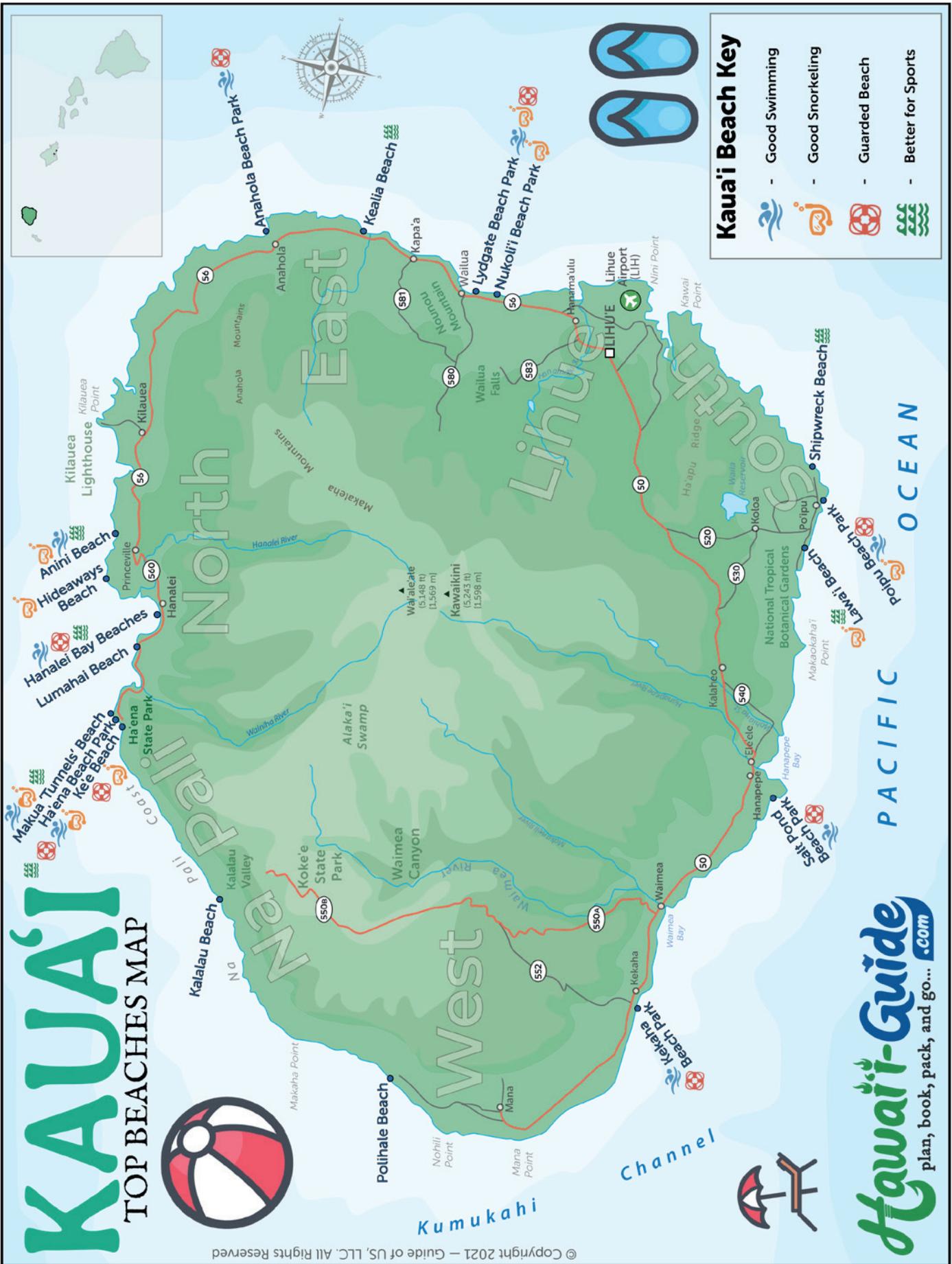
If you want breathtaking views of the NaPali coast, along with up-close views into some of the valleys that grace this beautiful stretch of coastline, then this trail is for you. In our opinion, it's best done as a loop trail combined with Awa'awapuhi Trail. It's not for the faint of heart; however, as it's a full-day hike that will push your endurance. But it is certainly a trail we love because it offers amazing views of the NaPali Coast you won't get anywhere else. Fees to Koke'e State Park will be required for all non-resident visitors.

KAUAI

TOP BEACHES MAP



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Kauai Beach Key

-  - Good Swimming
-  - Good Snorkeling
-  - Guarded Beach
-  - Better for Sports

Hawaii-Guide
plan, book, pack, and go... .com



BEST KAUAI 'Ono Grindz' LOCAL EATS

LAULAU

You may be thinking, what is lau lau, and where do you get it on Kauai?

The answers to the second question are below. As for the first, in case you're among the presumable majority of island visitors who haven't yet heard of the dish (don't feel bad), lau lau is, simply put, meat wrapped in taro leaves.

There's a bit more to it than that, however. This traditional Polynesian dish, in its modernized Hawaiian form, typically contains chicken, pork, or beef, combined with salted butterfish. After being encased in several layers of taro leaves, the resulting brick of mighty calories gets stuffed underground.

You may recognize this as a distinctively Hawaiian cooking process called kalua. The brick cooks in an underground oven called an imu thanks to some burning-hot rocks that are buried along with it. The cooking process often takes several hours.

Upon removal, one does not even eat the leaves; their sole purpose is to create an impenetrable fortress of flavor enhancement. Instead, one

peels away the cooked leaves as if unwrapping a gift to discover mind-bendingly savory, juicy, tender meat inside.

Lau lau has been described by Condé Nast Traveler as "Hawaiian soul food at its finest."

If you find yourself in Lihue (a likely discovery if you're visiting the Garden Island) you'll absolutely want to visit Smiley's Local Grinds.

Visitors often mention the lau lau served here as being some of the island's best - and what's more, at 4100 Rice St, it's just down the street from the self-explanatory Kauai Beer Company. Smiley's is open every weekday.

LauLau (Center)



MIXED PLATE

Mixed plate, or plate lunch, is arguably the ultimate Hawaiian meal. Like many if not most traditional Hawaiian dishes, its various resemblances and outright connections to other traditional dishes around the world are numerous, but never complete. It is truly, globally unique.

So, what is it? For those unfamiliar, plate lunch in its standard form is very simple: macaroni salad, white rice, and one entree. Multiple entrees typically mean you're now eating a mixed plate - but such distinctions aren't necessarily set in stone. What the entree happens to be can of course vary, but generally some kind of meat, such as kalua pork, could be considered standard procedure.

How plate lunch came into existence as a Hawaiian original is not widely agreed upon. A prevailing theory is that it is a direct descendent of bento from Japan. Part of the reason this isn't certain, however, is that the list of potential influencers is both long and diverse. Hawaiian plate lunch first emerged, and long reigned supreme, as a laborers' meal. Sugar plantations in Hawaii saw migrants from all over the globe: primarily Portugal, China, Japan, The Philippines.

The Hawaiian plate lunch and mixed plate constitute what many might call an essential part of the cultural experience. Not only is this dish an original creation of the Hawaiian Islands, but it has traveled around the world and made connections to customary dishes in countless other places.

Being such a classic, it is easy to find, but its most storied creators and greatest incarnations are worth pursuing.

Mark is king when it comes to the mixed plate on the island of Kauai. Having received a fair amount of press over the years, this adored local spot is so known for plate lunch that it has its own signature, best-selling mixed plate, which comes with chicken katsu, teriyaki beef, and beef stew.

Mark's Place has been in Lihue since 1998, when chefs Mark and Wendy Oyama founded it. The restaurant has been routinely listed among the best food places in Kauai, if not all, of Hawaii. Mark Oyama was recently inducted into the Hawaii Restaurant Hall Of Fame.

You'll find Mark's Place at 1610 Haleukana Street, open on weekdays.



Mixed Plate



Loco Moco

LOCO MOCO

Loco moco isn't just the most fun Hawaiian dish to say; it's also outrageously delicious and widely available. If you're on one of the islands and you're really, really hungry, this dish is hard to beat.

Loco moco, in its traditional form, is a plate of rice with a burger patty, a fried egg, and gravy on top. Popular meat variations may include kalua pork, Spam, teriyaki beef/chicken, mahi-mahi, shrimp, or other locally sourced meats. If, for some extraordinary reason, you need to know anything more than that: loco moco is interestingly much younger than other traditional Hawaiian dishes. In fact, we pretty much know exactly when it was invented, and who by. Hilo, in 1949, was home to the Lincoln Grill, owned by Nancy and Richard Inouye. The story goes that in order to satisfy the extortionate caloric demands of the young men frequently visiting from the nearby athletic club, the couple brilliantly invented loco moco; a hefty assault from which no appetite can survive.

On this smallest and typically more limited of the four main Hawaiian Islands, there seems to be something of a clear winner among general opinion.

Mark's Place makes up for its uncreative title by serving what most seem to say is the best loco moco on the island. This is another very local, takeout-only spot on our list; you can find it in Lihue at 1610 Haleukana Street.

They also sell homemade cookies, an obvious upsell.

POKE

It's not unreasonable to describe the current state of poke in the US as a "craze." Poke places are popping up every day all across the country. The popularity of the dish speaks for itself; but what isn't spoken about enough is where it all started from.

Hawaii is the birthplace of poke. Rachel Laudan, a food historian and the author of *The Food of Paradise*, states modern poke was originally born in Hawaii in the 1970's. Its connection to

the islands' rich Japanese cultural heritage is clear enough; it is essentially sashimi, presented differently.

For those unfamiliar, the crudest description of this dish would be a "sashimi salad," but it could also be a "sashimi rice bowl." Lots of colors and flavors can get creatively mixed in to excite your palate and often be remarkably nutritious for something so delicious. Pineapple or mango, fresh ahi, and savory sauce all in the same bite? You won't believe how fantastic it is; seriously. There's a reason this stuff is so explosively popular. Hawaii is the homeland of poke and the best place on Earth to get it.

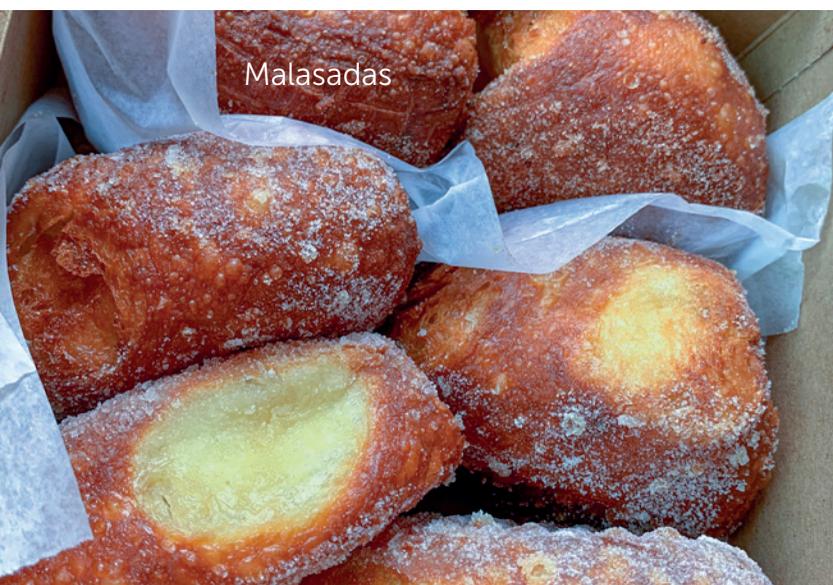
The most authentic local food often comes out of the side of a truck.

On the island of Kauai, in the small beach town of Lawai, you'll find the Kauai Poke Company Food Truck. Here is a source for super fresh and beautifully prepared poke bowls and dishes. Scroll around their Instagram if you want to see some examples for yourself!

The truck is open for business every weekday for lunch. You'll find it at 3540 Koloa Road.

MALASADAS

If, during your Hawaii visit, it will at any point be Tuesday, and if, by chance, you have taste buds,



Malasadas

Poke



then you're going to need the full rundown on the malasada situation.

These are sinfully delicious pastries mostly resembling, but arguably surpassing, donuts. Malasadas are similarly made with a yeast dough, but the dough is typically eggier and includes milk - something that is true of many, but not all, regular donuts. Perhaps most importantly they also, in a stroke of genius, don't have a hole. In other words, the fried dough is richer, and you get more of it. This allows for common fillings, like custard, coconut, or even pineapple, guava, and other tropical fruit flavors.

Why Tuesday? Well, to answer that, we have to briefly summarize the story of how these underappreciated treasures made their way onto the Hawaiian Islands in the first place.

Malasada is actually a Portuguese compound word, which roughly translates to "badly baked." The malasada originated in the Madeira region of Portugal, supposedly in order to serve the stomach-rumbling but artery-clenching purpose of using up all the leftover butter and sugar before the start of Lent - which always starts on a Wednesday.

They made their way to Hawaii when Portuguese laborers started working on island plantations in the late 19th century. Today, Hawaii is a rare hub for these "badly baked" delights. They can be hard to find in most parts of the world, including the rest of the United States, and most people have

KAUAI - The Garden Isle

probably never even heard of them. However, in Hawaii, they're everywhere; and although the tradition of "Fat Tuesday" lives on and forms a kind of annual "malasada season" before Easter, many if not most local bakeries offer them year-round.

Believe it or not, the smallest and typically most rugged of the four main islands recently pulled off a David-and-Goliath-level upset. Lihue's little local bake shop, the modestly-named Kauai Bakery, was voted this year by readers of Hawaii Magazine to have the best malasadas in the whole malasada-loaded state. This dealt a stunning defeat to the reigning champion, Leonard's on Oahu, and has been repeatedly described by Hawaii Magazine as nothing short of a "dethroning."

SHAVE ICE

If rapturous unrestrained joy is something you consider to be an important part of your visit to Hawaii, you need to get some shave ice.

This refreshing substance is, technically, an island original. Despite consisting of just two simple ingredients which are used in countless

hawaii-guide.com/kauai

other frozen sweet treats around the world (ice and syrup), the way the two are prepared and combined in the Hawaiian style is distinctive. The ice is in fact or perhaps more accurately, grated. The ice is reduced to a very light, fine substance quite indistinguishable from powdery snow - no crunching here. This allows for the syrup to soak into the ice thoroughly and evenly, creating what is indisputably one of the greatest melt-in-mouth substances for refreshment underneath warm tropical sunshine.

Warm tropical sunshine permeates every Hawaiian island, pretty much all the time. So does shave ice. Here are the best places for you to get it.

The island of Kauai is home to one of the most distinctly high-end shave ice experiences to be found anywhere in the state. Waikomo Shave Ice stands out from other Kauai shave ice shops for its use of all-natural ingredients. No artificial flavors, no artificial colors, and, best of all, served in a real coconut shell. Find them at 2827 Poipu Rd in Koloa.

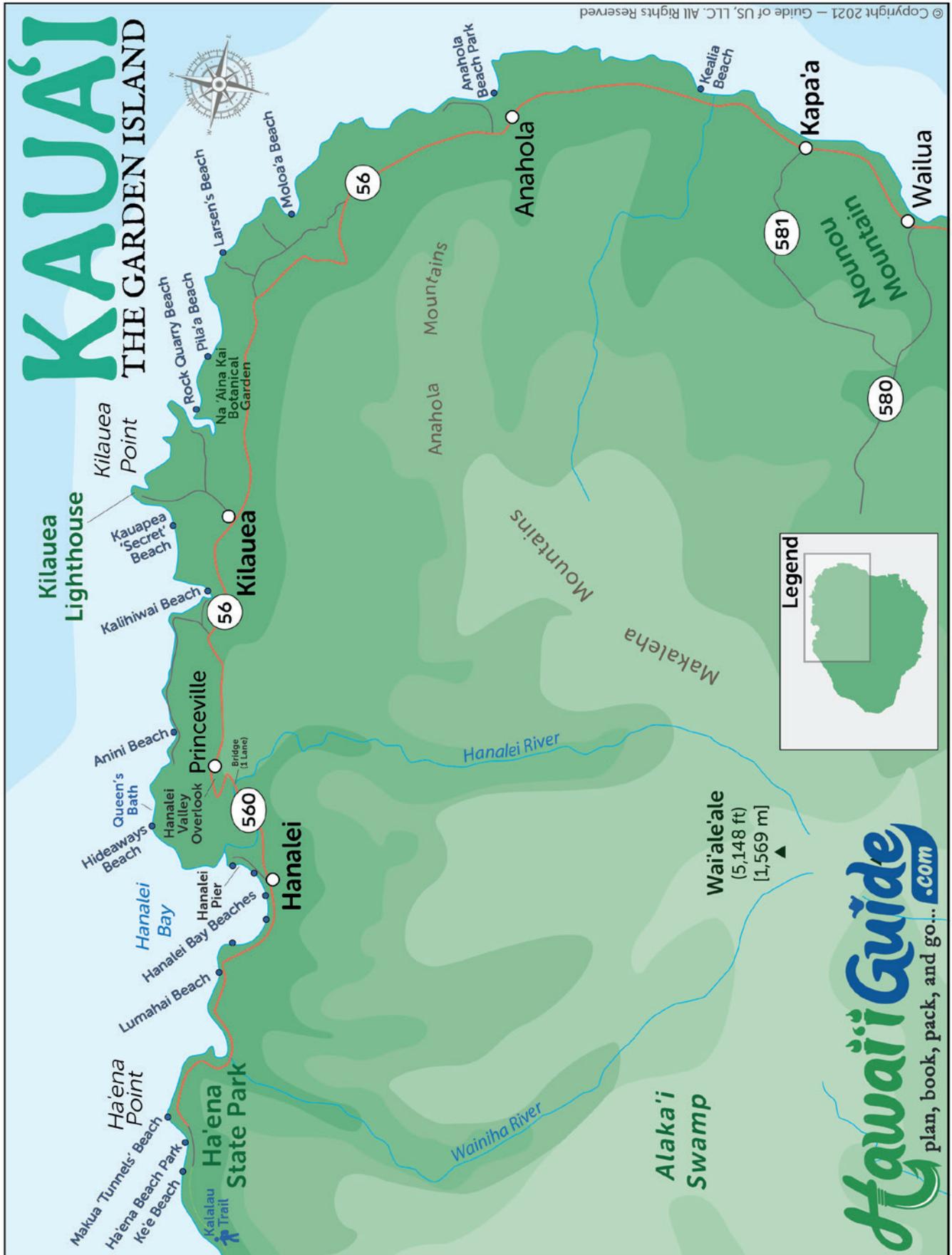


Shave Ice

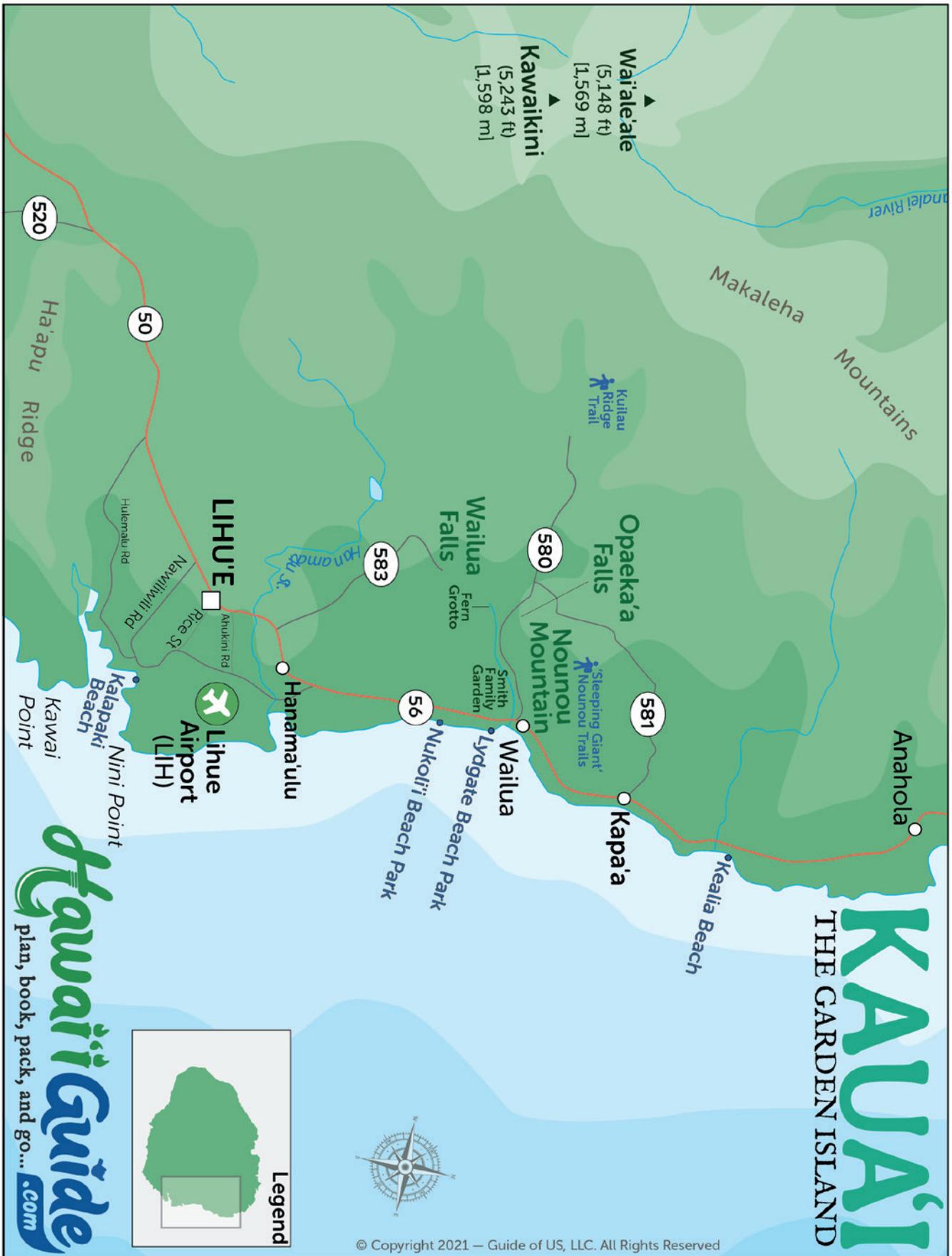
SOUTH KAUAI MAP



NORTH KAUAI MAP



EAST KAUAI MAP



HAWAII SAFETY

The islands of Hawaii could each easily be described as paradise. But even paradise has its hazards and we'd be foolish not to educate you on at least a few of them. The truth is simple, Hawaii isn't Disneyland; it is often wild, rough, and natural law prevails. The more you know, the better prepared you are to avoid the hazards of the beautiful Hawaiian Islands. We've put together some tips online, and we highly recommend reviewing them before your trip.

Visit: hawaii-guide.com/hawaii-travel-tips/hawaii-safety

PACKING YOUR BAGS

What to pack & What NOT to pack...

Regardless of how much you've traveled in the past and where you've been, there is one good rule to follow when coming to Hawai'i, leave as much as you can at home!

Seriously, bring only what you'll need during your stay and nothing more. Chances are a pair of shorts, and a nice Aloha shirt is all you'll need for even some fine dining. Leave the formal wear back home. And please don't bring your passport if you're a U.S. citizen (you'd be surprised how many folks do).

A light jacket and a long pair of pants might also be helpful for those visits to higher elevations around the islands. You'd be surprised at how many "chilly" people there are in Hawaii each day. Sure it's tropical, but not every thing's at sea level either. On the other hand, don't overdo it and bring your winter coat to Hawai'i

With the motto, 'less is more' in mind, here are a few other items to bring:

Sunblock (the UV on Hawai'i is typically 14+ in the spring, summer, and fall), a **backpack** (for any hikes) and a **water bottle**, **slippers** (flip flops, shower shoes, zoris), **snorkel mask and fins** (or rent locally instead), **two bathing suits** (one to wear while the other dries) and a cover-up, **camera or phone**, **lightweight raincoat**



or poncho (it's tropical here), **bug spray** with DEET (for any forest hikes), **flashlight** (for just in case), **hiking boots** / hiking rods (even if you're not a hardcore hiker, it's not a bad idea to bring proper footwear for some trails), and most importantly a **list of all your troubles to leave behind**.

For more tips and suggestions, we suggest reading through our [What to Pack](http://www.hawaii-guide.com/what-to-pack) page online: www.hawaii-guide.com/what-to-pack



www.hawaii-guide.com

Kauai, Hawaii Essential Guide



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