



Randy Son Of Robert

Ski to Sea in Hawaii

Big Island (Hawaii), 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Armed with a boogie board, skis, sunscreen and a 4WD, one can travel the summit road for a morning of skiing on deserted slopes and end the day boogie boarding along the Kohala coast. And, I bet you thought it couldn't be done...

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Big Island (Hawaii)

DAY NOTE: There is a lot of adventure in this activity-packed day. It takes a bit of preparation, since you can go from the summit and shore in one day (one that you will remember forever!). Remember that snow on the summit is not unusual between the months of December and March, but your best bet for getting a good base (as good as can be expected) is in January or February. The snow can be as deep as a foot but more often than not tends to be just a few inches. It's important to arrive on the summit as early as possible since the tropical sun will melt whatever has fallen by lunchtime.

Start with a call to the summit weather information line at: (808) 935-6268. It is recommended to call the night before and then once again before you head out just to be sure. From Keahole – Kona airport, expect the drive to be about 2 hours. Head north to Waimea and turn off onto Saddle Road (Highway 200) and just after the 28 mile marker turn left onto Mauna Kea Access Road. The visitor information center is located about six miles up the road and is open daily from 9am-10pm. Stop to acclimate to the altitude and for further directions, conditions and restroom facilities before proceeding. There is also a solar telescope at the center that is worth a quick stop, and tours that start around 1pm. Remember to follow the advice of the rangers, and be advised that there are no ski lifts, snow patrols, cafes and the like on the summit. Also be aware that the elevation is way over 9,000 ft. Those who are physically limited should take precautions and SCUBA divers should refrain for at least 24 hours after the last dive before attempting to ascend.

Next it's time for a lunch break at the Harbor of Kawaihae. Expect the drive to take about 105 minutes from the summit. The award winning Café Pesto is one of a long time favorite of island residents and visitors alike. To get there descend the summit via Mauna Kea Access Road, turn right onto Saddle Road and then take a right onto Highway 190 – Hawaii Belt Road past Kamuela Airport and then right onto Kawaihae Road. Café Pesto is located in the Kawaihae Shopping Center and free parking is readily available. Choose from tasty hot kalua pork sandwiches, made to order pizza and more.

End the day with a trip to beautiful Hapuna Beach Park - a perfect spot to shake off the snow and wiggle your toes in the sand. From Kawaihae harbor, turn right onto Queen Kaahumanu Hwy and then right onto Hapuna Beach Road. The drive should last a mere 10 minutes. Once at the park you will find free parking a wide stretch of white sand beach with restrooms, picnic pavilions, picnic tables, drinking water and more. Remember to check with the lifeguard before entering the water. Be sure to set aside a full day to do this itinerary, since snow and beach conditions may vary and the leisurely pace will allow time for unexpected exploration or stops along the way.



Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area
Beautiful stretch of beach

Day 1 - Big Island (Hawaii)

QUICK NOTE

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contact:
tel: 808-974-6200
<http://www.bigisland.org/parks>

location:
P.O. Box 936
Hawaii HI 96721-0936

1 Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Hapuna is ideal for a full day at the beach.

DESCRIPTION: Hapuna Beach is a landscaped beach park covering 62 acres. It is a favorite of locals and a beautiful stretch of beach. This state recreation area provides excellent access to many water sports as well as access to the historic coastal trail, Ala Kahakai. The site offers picnicking facilities and a food concessionaire, but we recommend bringing your own hearty lunch as a day at Hapuna can last for hours. The Ala Kahakai Trail follows the coastline over ancient fishermen's trails and Hawaiian Kingdom roads that have been connected through generations of use to form a single continuous route. The trail also provides access to some of



Josh Steinitz

the most pristine shoreline remaining in Hawaii, as well as numerous anachialine ponds, which are unique ecosystems given highest protection. This beach is popular for swimming, snorkeling and diving on calm summer days. The water is generally a couple of feet deep until it reaches the breaking waves, making for a nice place to swim with children- if you stay with them and the waves are small. Winter weather brings larger surf for body and board surfing, as well as strong rip currents to the area. These unpredictable currents have become deadly in several cases at Hapuna. The state advises that waves over three feet high be avoided by everyone but the experts. Hapuna Beach State Recreation Area is located on the leeward coast of the Big Island, north of Kona. Access to the site can be gained from the Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway. Do not leave any valuables in your car here.

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My List

location:

Beach Access Road off
Highway 19
Paauilo HI 96743

hours:

24 hrs

1 **Spencer Beach Park**

DESCRIPTION: With its shade trees, picnic tables and gentle surf, this is a great place for family outings or afternoon naps. It is a quiet neighborhood beach just outside of Kawaihae. The same elements that draw swimmers and snorkelers tend to dissuade surfers, windsurfers and other thrill seekers. The shorebreak is gentle and usually small. Facilities include barbecue pits, showers and even tennis courts. The soft, golden sands are usually not very crowded. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Hawaii-Lisa.

Big Island (Hawaii) Snapshot

Local Info

The island of Hawaii is a collection of contrasts and extremes accented with the aloha spirit. This island is not only the furthest south in the Hawaiian Island chain, it happens to be the newest of the main islands and the location of the southernmost point in the United States. In contrast it is also the location of the highest mountain in the world that offers stunning sunset views. Mauna Kea rises 33,000 feet when measured from the sub-oceanic base and is also home of the highest freshwater lake in the United States. Lake Waiau sits just over the 13,000 ft level near the summit of Mauna Kea and served as an important site for the newborn of Hawaiian royalty. The mountain has been proven by anthropologists to have provided a source of obsidian to make stone tools during the traditional Hawaiian times. Mauna Kea is also where the clearest air is found on the planet, hence many of the world's largest telescopes are located on the summit.

The Big Island is also a contrast of fire and ice. Snow covers the peaks of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa during winter months while the volcanic eruption at Kilauea Volcano has been continuously active for over 15 years and is still creating new land in the Kalapana area below Volcano National Park. Visitors are free to experience the winter snow, which usually follows a substantial rain fall, by driving up the mountain in a four wheel drive vehicle.

North and South Kona

Most visitors to the Big Island first arrive at the Kona International Airport at Keahole. Located in the North Kona, the architecture of the airport is definitively Polynesian. Ticket counters and gate areas are a collection of small buildings resembling groupings of village huts. The open-air setting is unique and provides easy one level access to everything from check-in kiosks to baggage claim and ground transportation.

Turn south from the airport and you will be well in the area that encompasses North and South Kona. This area includes the majority of the original town and tourist district of Kailua-Kona along with the largest business, industrial and commercial area on the Leeward side of the Big Island. Here you will find doctors, big box stores,

restaurants, cultural sites, and many shops and boutiques. Some of the must-sees are Laaloa Beach Park, Ahu'ena Heiau and Hulihe'e Palace which are both along the waterfront. Also along the waterfront is the main thoroughfare called Alii Drive. It is the place to browse shops, dance the night away, watch the green flash over a local larger or have a romantic sunset dinner for two.

North and South Kohala

Named after the oldest of the five mountains on the island, the landscape of the Kohala Coast is sunny, hot and dry with beautiful sunset and endless ocean views, numerous lava fields and only a few white sand beaches. There are fabulous views of not only Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, the Kohala Mountains and Hualalai, but on a clear day views of the eastern slope of Haleakala can be seen in the distance. Some of the best and more opulent resorts in the state are located along this coast. The Hilton Waikoloa village is probably the most fantastic followed by the very opulent Mauna Lani, the Fairmont Orchid and the Mauna Kea Beach and Hapuna resorts farther north.

Also noteworthy in the area is Spencer Beach Park and Hapuna Beach Park. These two beach parks are one of the best in the state not to mention the island. If there is one thing that brings people from around the world to the Kohala Coast, it is the golf. Most area courses rank among the top 100 in the United States. Hapuna Golf Course, Francis Brown I & II and the Waikoloa Village Golf Courses are all world-renowned. To the south of Hapuna Beach Park down a dusty, bumpy, yet two wheel drive road is Sixty-Nine Beach. Off the beaten map lies the secluded beach that is much smaller than Hapuna, yet big enough to get some privacy on white sand and enjoy swimming in clear water dotted with colorful tropical fish.

North Kohala feels like a world of its own, dotted with older plantation homes along the coast, and a small historic town with galleries, eateries, and a sense of culture. North Kohala makes for a perfect day trip of shopping in the quaint town, and most importantly, a visit to Pololu Valley, the birthplace of the notorious King Kamehameha, with a steep hike and a beautiful black sand beach.

One of the more unique areas in South Kohala is Waimea. Located at the 2500 foot elevation, Waimea town is cool and green. Breezy sunny days that can have the hint of a chill, and cool nights, Waimea is a combination of local cowboys known as paniolos, scientists and upscale island homes and not just another sleepy Hawaii plantation town. Waimea, or Kamuela as it is sometimes referred to, is a ranching town. It sits adjacent to one of the largest working cattle ranches in the country, Parker Ranch, and is steeped in tradition, culture and history. Waimea is also the location of the administrative support for the Keck and Canada France Telescopes that sit on the summit of Mauna Kea in full view from the heart of town on a clear day.

Hamakua

From the sleepy town of Honokaa to the tiny town of Paauilo, the Hamakua coast is known for beautiful ocean vistas, waterfalls, valleys and lush tropical landscapes. Life is slow, unhurried, and is lived by a combination of the young and old settled in for a lifestyle of peace and tranquility. It is a place where relationships mean more than time and the beep of a car horn is more of a greeting than a reproach. Just a few miles north from the center of Honokaa Town is Waipio Valley. Exploring the valley to view the streams, taro patches, waterfalls, and black sand beach is an island highlight. Valley tours are available to see the valley, as well as a stop at the lookout up top, a strenuous and very steep walk down and up, or a four wheel drive cruise into the valley only to be piloted by skilled drivers. Also a part of Hamakua is the Mauna Kea State Recreation Area. Accessible via Saddle Road from either Kona or Hilo, a visit to the summit would necessitate a four wheel drive and a call to the check on the area weather conditions. The Saddle Road is a site in its own, with views of both Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa, various cinder cones, open land and pastures, and state park for cabin stays and picnics, and a general feeling of being in another world.

A drive along the Hamakua coast will take you through eucalyptus forests, pasture lands over bridges and through valleys. It is a relaxing experience and one of the more special parts of the island.

North and South Hilo

Big Island (Hawaii) Snapshot continued

Located just south of Hamakua along the windward side of the island the Hilo area encompasses the area from Ookala to the quiet waterfront town of Hilo. The area is much like the Hamakua Coast to the casual untrained eye, a closer look will reveal some of the most beautiful waterfalls, picturesque parks and charming towns in the state. There are no championship golf courses, wide white sand beaches or mega resorts here, but there is a unique charm just under the thick canopy of tropical vegetation and giant hapuu fern trees. A stop in Laupahoehoe can take just a few minutes, but in those minutes one can visit the historical train museum or visit the lovely seaside park complete with tide pools and beautiful rocky coast line. A short stop in Ninole town cannot be complete without a photo opportunity at the post office. Delightful and charming, it is the smallest in the state and certainly one of the smallest in the country.

Not to be missed is a stop at the Akaka Falls State Park. The paved trails wander through thick vegetation under a tropical canopy. The park is actually home of two of the longest waterfalls in the state. Akaka Falls is the longest more well-known and neighboring Kahuna Falls is almost as long.

Hilo is the largest community on the island and has a long and interesting history that has been shaped by natural events. Hilo has been threatened by lava flows, wiped out by tsunami, hurricanes and earthquakes. Today, it is home to a wonderful farmer's market that takes place on Wednesdays and Saturdays, several museums, botanical gardens, a wonderful astronomy center, and the largest and most renowned hula competition in the world, the Merrie Monarch. Hilo is scattered with delicious eateries, local style boutiques and shops, a mall, several health food stores, and several big box stores.

Downtown Hilo is a wonderful spot to browse through the small shops, have lunch after a morning at the volcano and pick up some fresh orchids or anthuriums. Bayfront, the area of downtown Hilo located along, you guessed it, the bay, is a place where sightseers can start at either Banyan Drive or the new Tsunami Museum to explore an area of town that boasts some of the most hip places to dine and shop. There's also the East Hawaii Cultural Center and Lyman Museum. For

information on these attractions and on the outlying areas, visit the Hawaii Visitor's Bureau.

Puna

The Big Islands district of Puna has been known in the past as the "Wild West," even though it is on the east side of the island. With the small former plantation towns of Keaau and Pahoa that are nearer to the ocean than the small towns of Mountain View and Volcano on the slopes of Kilauea, Puna offers everything from chilly nights, forests of ferns and ohia lehua trees to the inexpensive acre lots with ocean views and the sounds of coqui frogs at night. Puna has evolved through a history combining plantation life, strong native Hawaiian culture, a strong hippie culture in Pahoa, and the reputation through decades as one of the largest marijuana cultivating locations.

Shipman Beach, a white sand bay where sea turtles and monk seals come to rest is located as the base of the neighborhood paradise park, and is a must see. Lower Puna, the area below Pahoa, offers various hot ponds, steam vents, tide pools, and fresh and hard lava. Puna can look a little rough at first site but a deeper look will discover hidden treasures that cannot be found anywhere else in Hawaii.

Kau

To mention Kau, is to refer to Hawaii's last frontier. Kau is certainly the most rural area on the entire island with miles and miles of wide open land with just a single road bisecting it from South Kona to the entrance of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. This area is home to small country communities, natural beauty and historical significance that has yet to be documented. A drive from Kona to the volcano will treat you with glimpses of wild untouched coastline, low-land forests, off the map black sand beaches, cold water ponds, and green sand beaches. Once at the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park a visit to the Kilauea Visitor Center, Volcano Art Center and Jaggar Museum along with a short hike through the Thurston Lava Tube are not to be missed. A visit to the semi-famous Punalu'u Bakeshop and Visitor Center for lunch and the Punaluu Black Sand Beach is also a must-do.

To experience the Big Island is to experience Madame Pele's fiery fury at

Kilauea, to venture up to snow capped summit home of the Hawaiian Goddess Poliahu at Mauna Kea, to warm up on the sunny leeward shores, to drive through miles and miles of open countryside, hike to gorgeous waterfalls, sit in natural steamy saunas, visit green and black sand beaches, and take in a variety of cultures. The Big Island is a place where direction to the intriguing and exotic sites helps and visitor, and travelers can get lost in the beauty and culture and Hawaii's largest island.

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Fun Facts

Hawai'i(Big Island)

State: Hawaii

Country: United States

Hawai'i(Big Island) by the Numbers:

Population: 148,677

Elevation: 18 feet

Highest Point: 13,796 feet(Mauna Kea)

Average Annual Rainfall: Ranges from 10 inches at Kawaihae to 128 inches at Hilo Airport

Average January Temperature: 73 degrees F

Average July Temperature: 76 degrees F

Quick Facts:

Major Industries: tourism/hospitality/recreation, sugar, coffee, cattle

Landmarks: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Kealakekua Bay, Kailua-Kona, Kawaihae, Parker Ranch, Waipio Valley

Ethnic Mix: 30.2% Hawaiian, 23.2% Caucasian, 14.1% Japanese, 10.5% Filipino

Electricity: 110 volts, 60Hz, standard two pin plugs

Time Zone: GMT-10

Country Dialing Code: 1

Area Code: 808

Did You Know?

Hawaii's Big Island is the youngest in geologic age, as well as the largest of the Hawaiian Islands and continues to increase

Big Island (Hawaii) Snapshot continued

in size because of Kilauea, the world's most active volcano that is highly active due to its location of the Pacific hot spot.

Hawaii's Big Island is located amongst the Hawaiian Islands in the central Pacific Ocean.

Orientation:

©