



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Randy Son Of Robert

Waterfalls Walk through Lava Tubes and Wellington

Big Island (Hawaii), 1 Day

Table of contents:

- Guide Description 2
- Itinerary Overview 3
- Daily Itineraries 4
- Big Island (Hawaii) Snapshot 7

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Perfect for those who want to see the beauty of this island but are not at all interested in long heart pumping hikes, brave enough to venture out with minimum supervision and like adventures short, satisfying and relaxing. This half-day Big Island itinerary fits in well for early or late risers, day-trippers, kids and more. It requires a rental car, and ten dollars for entrance into the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, reservations for a 50-minute helicopter tour and a huge appetite to enjoy either lunch or dinner at one of Hilo's favorite award winning local spots. It is an enjoyable morning or afternoon perfect for romantics to linger leisurely and quick moving enough for kids with shorter attention spans, and for everyone who enjoys easy access to all that is the Big Island has to offer. Day-trippers can easily re-arrange the order of this trip to begin with the helicopter trip and end at the airport after eating.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Big Island (Hawaii)

DAY NOTE: If starting from Hilo or Kona, begin with Akaka Falls. Start with Kahuna Falls first because the trail access is easier and avoids the steep angles upward. As you pass Kahuna Falls, the white noise of rushing water of Akaka Falls will be heard in the distance. This is where Hawaiian legend says that the warrior chief Akaka was discovered by his wife having an affair and while overwhelmed with guilt, threw himself over the cliff into the pool below. His wife, mistress and dog turned to stone out of grief for losing the chief. The area is full of streams, fragrant flowers and foliage. Be sure to watch your step on the trail since areas are quite slippery and remember to never leave any valuables in your car.

The drive from Akaka Falls to the entrance of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park should take about 60 minutes. The drive will take you through Hilo town via Hawaii Belt Road. The signs to the entry of the park are well marked. Once through the entrance, it's highly recommended that you start at the Kilauea Visitor center for any updates and maps.

The Kilauea crater is a sacred spot for Hawaiians. The home of Madame Pele the fire goddess she is known to appear in several forms and can be very ruthless. The drive to the lava tube is short and well marked. A walk through the lava tube is exciting, and includes a large collection of flora and fauna. Return to Hilo the way you came and continue into Hilo town and turn left onto Waianuenue and follow the signs to Rainbow Falls. Hawaiian legend says that the goddess Hina lives in the cave under the falls where she crafts her highly prized tapa cloth. There is a free parking lot and a short path to the viewing area that is so close it is one of the best drive-up waterfalls in the islands. The river that flows over the falls is the longest in the state.

The drive to Hilo Bay Café will take you back down Waianuenue and right back onto Hawaii Belt Rd. Turn right onto Makaala St. The café is nestled near the Hilo Wal-Mart and Boarders Bookstore. Once inside the menu offers a collection of contemporary dishes and local favorites. The décor is sparse at best, and the service is attentive but not rushed. I recommend the Wellington. Puffs of beef, ahi and pork with a sauce that will make your taste buds sing. Chef Joshua Ketner is the man behind this success story. Great food reasonable prices all make this spot an island favorite.

-
-  **Akaka Falls State Park**
Park with waterfalls

 -  **Crater Rim Scenic Drive**
Around the rim of the Kilauea Caldera

-
-  **Wailuku River State Park**
Historic park with lava forms and waterfalls

 -  **Circle of Fire and Waterfalls Helicopter Tour**
Family Friendly Tours & Activities

Day 1 - Big Island (Hawaii)

QUICK NOTE

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contact:
tel: +1 808 974 6200
<http://www.bigisland.org/parks>

location:
Highway 220
Big Island of Hawaii HI 96728

1 Akaka Falls State Park

DESCRIPTION: On the far end of the Big Island's Windward side is this pretty little park noted for its magnificent waterfall. The hike to the waterfall overlook is short (less than a half-mile) and not too difficult. The path is even paved. The waterfall is impressive; it is a 440-foot cascade over a volcanic cliff. Lush greenery blankets the area. Visitors enjoy quite a few nice places for pictures or picnics on the 65-acre property. The trail leads through tropical rain forest, leading to viewpoints overlooking two beautiful waterfalls, cascading Kahuna Falls and the free-falling 'Akaka Falls which drops 442 feet into a steep gorge. Restroom facilities are located at the trailhead. This park is rich in scenic beauty, that lends itself well to photography and opportunities for viewing tropical scenery. The lush terrain also provides excellent opportunities for plant identification. A paved walking path leads visitors to the waterfalls offering a short hike requiring some physical exertion. This state park lies on the windward side of the Big Island north of Hilo. The site can be accessed from Akaka Falls Road via Hawaii Belt Road. © wcities.com



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P.O. Box 52
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2 Crater Rim Scenic Drive

DESCRIPTION: Crater Rim Drive is an eleven-mile loop road that encircles the summit Caldera, passes through the Ka`u Desert and tropical rain forest and provides access to well-marked scenic stops and short walks. This road provides access to Kilauea Visitor Center, Jaggar Museum, Halemaumau Overlook and Thurston Lava Tube. Several trails are accessible from this route, including Crater Rim Trail, Devastation Trail and Ka'u Desert Trail. You should allow one to three hours to tour this scenic drive, depending on how often you stop. Turn to the left as you enter Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and follow signs toward the Kilauea Visitor Center. This is the beginning of Crater Rim Scenic Drive.



Photo courtesy of Crater Rim Scenic Drive.

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Waiuanue Avenue &
Rainbow Drive
Waikoloa HI 96720

3 Wailuku River State Park

DESCRIPTION: Wailuku River State Park provides viewpoints of geologic and scenic interest along the Wailuku River. The park preserves two waterfalls and a basalt lava formation known as the boiling pots. Rainbow Falls takes its name from a rainbow formed by the mists and sunlight. The falls are 80 feet high. A cave lies beneath the falls, which legend says was home to Hina, mother of the demigod Maui. The boiling pots lie down river from Peepee Falls. They are a succession of large pools whose water appears to be boiling as it rolls over many rocks en route to the ocean. There are well-exposed hexagonal columns that line the pools which were formed by the slow cooling of basalt lava. A short hiking trail around the boiling pots is maintained at this site, which also has restrooms and many scenic vistas offering photographic opportunities. Wailuku River State Park is located near downtown Hilo on the leeward side of Hawaii. It can be accessed from Waiuanue Avenue with the boiling pots on Peepee Falls Drive and Rainbow Falls on Rainbow Drive. © wcities.com



Josh Steinitz

contact:

http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/Big-Island-of-Hawaii/Circle-of-Fire-and-Waterfalls-Helicopter-Tour/d669-3388CFW

location:

Captain Cook HI

Circle of Fire and Waterfalls Helicopter Tour

DESCRIPTION: Take a once in a lifetime flight over the spectacular Big Island. On this Circle of Fire and Waterfall Helicopter Tour, view lava flows, black sand beaches, tropical rain forests and waterfalls. There is no better way to experience the beauty and ferocity of Hawaii's active volcanoes than from the air - come see for yourself!

Tour the most geologically active environment on earth, with emphasis on the most current areas of volcanic activity. Enjoy a 50 minute helicopter flight from Hilo, The Big Island's most tropical town: an exotic year-round greenhouse of flourishing flowers and lush tropical plants under a canopy of towering Banyan trees, and a landscape well-endowed with natural wonders, including thundering falls and volcanic fissures.



viator

Your helicopter tour will fly over the Circle of Fire, view amazing lava flows and black sand beaches, from the comfort and safety of your million dollar aircraft! As well as seeing tropical rain forests and waterfalls you will learn all about the history and culture of Hawaii. Book now for an experience truly unique to Hawaii!

Prior to your travel date, all passenger weights MUST be advised to the supplier. If you do not indicate this at the time of booking, you will be required to call the supplier and advise them of this information directly. The supplier contact details will be on your voucher once you have a confirmed booking.

Special Offer - Price displayed currently includes a discount of 5% off the regular retail price - BOOK NOW! ©

Viator

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.

Orientation:

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

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