



**nileGUIDE**

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bjtpictures

# West Side Drive

## **Kauai, 1 Day**

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** No one comes to the Garden Isle without a visit to the Grand Canyon of the Pacific. In fact this is the view you are in for (on a clear day) at the end of the road. This scenic drive will take you most of the day, so start early (sunrise or before sunrise if you're staying on the North Shore or anywhere North of Lihue). The best way to start this scenic journey day is with breakfast at the Kalaheo Coffee Co. Once your bellies are full and you're fueled up, head straight up to Kokee State Park to enjoy the canyon views. Check out the lodge/museum for some lunch and a few souvenirs. After a day of hiking and sightseeing head back down the hill where you can hit the beach, then grab dinner and a brew at the Waimea Brewing Company and crash out the Waimea plantation cottages if you're too exhausted to drive back to the North Shore.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Kauai

**DAY NOTE:** Layer your clothing or bring a jacket. The temperature drops dramatically as you climb to the top of Waimea Canyon through Koke'e State Park.



**Kalaheo Coffee Co**  
Snacks, shakes, munchies



**Gay & Robinson Tours**  
Last working sugar plantation on Kauai



**Kekaha Beach Park**  
A good location for swimming



**Koke'e Natural History Museum**  
Not-so-hidden treasure

# Day 1 - Kauai

## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** Layer your clothing or bring a jacket. The temperature drops dramatically as you climb to the top of Waimea Canyon through Koke'e State Park.

### contact:

tel: +1 808 332 5858  
fax: +1 808 332 5868  
<http://www.kalaheo.com/>

### location:

2-2436 Kaumualii Highway #  
A2  
Kalaheo HI 96741

### hours:

6a-3p M-F, 6:30a-3p Sa,  
6:30a-2p Su

## 1 Kalaheo Coffee Co

**DESCRIPTION:** This is a popular stop-off on the way to touristy Waimea Canyon and other top destinations. The friendly, small-town cafe opens at dawn and serves hearty, tasty breakfasts and lunches. Some menu items include bagels, breakfast burritos, omelets, sandwiches, salads, espresso drinks and ice cream shakes. This is a laid-back place to grab a bite. It is also a retailer, a hangout spot and, somewhat surprisingly, a meeting place for local techies. The Internet Users Group of Kalaheo meets here monthly. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Kalaheo Coffee Co

### contact:

tel: +1 808 335 2824  
fax: +1 808 335 6852  
[http://www.kauaidiscovery.com/activities/ground\\_tours/Gay++Robinson+Tours,+LLC](http://www.kauaidiscovery.com/activities/ground_tours/Gay++Robinson+Tours,+LLC)

### location:

Kaumakani Avenue, off  
Highway 50  
Kaumakani HI 96747

### hours:

Call for details

## 2 Gay & Robinson Tours

**DESCRIPTION:** Kauai Sugar Plantation is the last working sugarcane plantation in the Kauai Island and among the last two remaining in the Hawaiian islands. It is located off Highway 50, just after mile marker 19 in the city of Kaumakani. A tour of the plantation is offered by Gay & Robinson Tours. Taking this tour will enable you to understand the harvesting and processing of sugarcane. There is also an on-site museum where you can check out photographs, documents, equipment and artifacts, all related to the sugar industry on the island for free. For details, check the website. © wcities.com



Gay & Robinson Tours

### contact:

tel: 800-GOHAWAII  
fax: 808-924-0290

### location:

HI 96815

## 3 Kekaha Beach Park

**DESCRIPTION:** Kekaha Beach Park lies on the western coast of Kauai and lies within the western most community of the island, Kekaha. The conditions at this site vary dramatically and there are no lifeguards at this beach so visitors must take extra care when entering the water. High surf at this location generally means dangerous conditions for swimming. Most visitors to Kekaha feel comfortable swimming when the water is calm. The beach is comprised of a long sandy expanse upon open ocean. This is a great place for beach combing and watching sunsets. Facilities at this site include a shower, restrooms and picnic tables. Follow the Kaumualii Highway (50) westward along the southern shore of Kauai. Kekaha is the last community before reaching Barking Sands Pacific Missile Range Facility. Follow the Kaumualii Highway (50) westward along the southern shore of Kauai. Kekaha is the last community before reaching Barking Sands Pacific Missile Range Facility.

**contact:**

tel: +1 808 335 9975  
fax: +1 808 335 6131  
<http://www.kokee.org/>

**location:**

15 miles up Koke'e Road;  
Koke'e State Park  
Kekaha HI 96752

**hours:**

10a-4p

**4 Koke'e Natural History Museum**

**DESCRIPTION:** Located inside Koke'e State Park, this museum is not as obscure as it could be. Both Koke'e and neighboring Waimea Canyon State Park are top Kauai attractions. Of the many people that find their way to the park, more than 100,000 visit the museum, which is open 365 days a year and charges no admission. Its purpose is to educate tourists about the ecology and geology of Kauai. Exhibits, displays and expert guides are all part of the experience. There is an onsite gift shop. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Koke'e Natural History Museum

# Kauai Snapshot

## Local Info

Waimea, Princeville, Hanalei, Bali Hai—it seems like every part of Kaua'i is legendary. The island is a place of unparalleled natural beauty, and thus far, all of the commercialization has occurred along the coastline. Although big-city dwellers occasionally complain about the lack of nightlife, most visitors feel that Kaua'i offers a near-perfect tropical getaway.

**Lihue—Central Kauai** The first town that one sees upon stepping off the plane is Lihue. While it isn't nearly as industrial as Honolulu, or even Kahului, it holds the County Seat and is home of the island's main airport. It also boasts the Kaua'i Museum and the only still-active sugar mill. Upon heading inland, one quickly notices civilization disappearing—replaced by jungle, waterfalls and finally near impenetrable mountains. But most people don't head inland from Lihue; instead they go in the opposite direction, toward the ocean.

There isn't far to go. The coast is just a few moments' drive away. From there, it's easy to get to one of the island's main resort districts.

**Coconut Coast** Just north of Lihue on the East Shore is the famed Coconut Coast, so named because of the hundreds of coconut palms that shade the main highway. The Wailua River runs along this coast, and a half-dozen famous natural attractions cluster around it. Fern Grotto and Sleeping Giant are two favorite sights. Kayaking down the river is a popular pastime.

Several mid-priced hotels are situated on the Coconut Coast, among them the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort Kauai and the Aston Islander on the Beach. The area also boasts several upscale bed& breakfasts, including charming Hale Tutu and the Alohilani. Most of the island's shopping is located in this area. The major mall, Coconut Marketplace, is located in Kapa'a Town, as are many major chain stores. The Coconut Coast Trolley shuttles visitors up and down the coast, from the Poipu Resort Area in the south all the way up to the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort Kauai at the Wailua River mouth.

**North Shore** Hot, humid and lushly landscaped, the North Shore is home to yet another of Hawaii's incomparable resort

areas. Princeville, that land of perfectly manicured greens and spectacular vistas, is known for its golf as well as its other activities. The Princeville Ranch offers everything from hiking to kayaking to horse-drawn carriage rides. Fine dining, world-class health spas and plenty of shops cater to the multi-national tourists.

Just past Princeville the landscape changes and the cars on the road begin to look more and more local; this is due to the proximity of Hanalei Bay and the neighboring beaches, known to be among the world's top surf spots. In the summer a few of the beaches around Hanalei—specifically Tunnels Beach—offer great snorkeling, but when the wintertime swells begin to roll in, all beginners get out of the water, leaving it to the pros. The towns of Hanalei and Haena are small, charming and possessed of an atmosphere unlike anyplace else. They're equal parts village, surf spot and resort district. Ke'e Beach, the beach that borders the North Shore and the West Side, literally marks the border between civilization and the wild.

**West Shore** The West Shore might be the most famous part of Kaua'i, but it will never be the most commercially developed. About a half of the coastline belongs to the state park system. Even if it didn't, there would be no way for modern machinery to tame the wilderness. Ke'e Beach marks the beginning of the Na Pali Coast, the majestic stretch of jagged cliffs and hidden valleys that tower 4,000 feet above sea level. Imposing, stunning, ancient and almost magical, the cliffs are a must-see for any Kaua'i visitor. The method of seeing them varies, however. Some people opt for a birds-eye perspective, as seen from a helicopter or private plane. Many people choose to take a catamaran or sailing cruise along the coastline. The most rugged people try their strength against the world-famous Kalalau Trail.

Just southwest of Na Pali is Koke'e State Park, home to famous Waimea Canyon. Koke'e is another hiker's paradise, boasting a dozen trails that range from beginner-level to advanced. Further west still is Polihale State Park, known for its shifting sand dunes. Miles and miles of uninhabited coastline extend to the southernmost part of the island.

**South Shore** While it's hard to say which spot in Kaua'i is the most tourist-filled, trendy Poipu on the South Shore definitely claims the largest number of big-name hotels. The Hyatt Regency, the Sheraton Kauai and the Embassy Vacation Resort Poipu Point are all located in Poipu. Near the resort area is charming, funky Koloa Town, a restored old-style village that blatantly angles for Poipu tourist dollars.

But the South Shore is much more than a perfectly 'human-made' resort. The tiny towns of Hanapepe and Kalaheo are throwbacks to last generation, while the botanical gardens near Poipu are in a class by themselves (literally—three of the five National Botanical Gardens are on Kaua'i). Kauai Coffee Company in Ele'ele is a thriving coffee plantation; visitors can tour the fields and the factory. People who shun the resort scene can stay anywhere from a simple guesthouse to a luxurious bed and breakfast. Gloria's Spouting Horn B&B, located near the twin lava tubes across from the Botanical Gardens, is one of the highest-rated bed and breakfasts in the state. On the other end of the spectrum, no-frills cabins can be found at Kahili Mountain Park.

The island of Kaua'i is small; one can easily drive its circumference in a single day. In many ways it's still a sleepy little island, home to only 50,000 people. But there's a reason it is a favorite of nature lovers, jaded travelers and even Hawaiian locals. There is, quite simply, no limit to the secrets and the surprises of this island.

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## History

### In Ancient Times...

The island of Kaua'i formed from gradual volcanic overflow approximately 5.1 million years ago. The oldest of the Hawaiian Islands, Kaua'i has a heritage that is steeped in myth and legend.

Although most mainlanders group all the Hawaiian islands together, many of Kauai's people (and many students of Hawaiian history) consider Kaua'i to have a separate history from its sister islands. Some even insist that it is in fact, 'a separate kingdom'. This theory is based on evidence showing that Kaua'i was once the home of

## Kauai Snapshot continued

the seafaring Menehune tribe of Central Polynesia. At present, the word 'Menehune' describes a mythical creature similar to an elf or a sprite, but in ancient times they were a brave and formidable tribe, small of stature but long in reach.

Much of what is known about Kaua'i is based around its natural history, and can be better understood through a visit to the Koke'e Natural History Museum.

### From 400 A.D. Until...

The first recorded history of Kauai's people began with the Marquesans of Polynesia. They inhabited the island from the time of their arrival (400 A.D.) until the Tahitians finally conquered them 600 years later. The Polynesian bloodlines still run strong on the island: many of Kauai's oldest families are of Polynesian descent. In addition, much of the flora and fauna that flourish on the island was transported from Polynesia during this era of migration.

The ancient Hawaiians had a polytheistic society centered around the concept of mana, which stated that gods could appear in a variety of forms besides divine. Deities could take on human or animalistic shape, thereby passing through society undetected. Many places of worship known as heiau were erected during the ancient times; some are still standing today. Not a great deal of solid fact is verifiable, in regards to ancient religious practices. Most legends and legacies, including that of the Menehunes, are kept alive through Hawaiian chant and song, often performed in conjunction with hula dance.

### The First Western Contact...

While the theory is under scrutiny, some historians uphold a belief that Captain Cook (hailed as the white founder of the Hawaiian chain) was not the first person to discover the Hawaiian Islands. Some evidence disproves his claim, showing that one of Spain's navigators discovered the islands by accident—as with so many of history's great discoveries. This Spaniard (by the name of Gaetan) was searching for the vast riches of Mexico. Finding no such jewels or spices in the Hawaiian Islands, he departed shortly after his arrival in 1542, never to return.

Whatever the truth might be, Hawai'i remained a world unto itself until the arrival of Captain James Cook in 1778. He sailed two ships into Waimea Bay on the Big

Island, beginning the explosive era that would forever alter the islands, including heretofore blissfully self-sufficient Kaua'i. Initial interactions between Englishmen and native Kauaians were peaceable. Most negotiations involved the bartering of goods (mainly English sundries for edibles), but a few curious Englishmen made overtures into Hawaiian society. They left having gained much knowledge but earned little of material value.

Just more than 30 years later (in 1819), Kaua'i was brought into a union with the Hawaiian Kingdom, agreeing to accept the rule of King Kamehameha I. This arrangement strengthened the chain as a whole, but did little to prevent the eventual surrender of Kaua'i (and all other Hawaiian Islands) to American forces in 1893. At that point, Kaua'i had already harbored European missionary settlements for more than 100 years. It was also the home of numerous sugar plantations; these were quickly becoming the island's best leverage for trade.

Some 50-odd years after Hawai'i was forcibly assimilated into the U.S. territories, it was granted statehood.

### Spotlight On the Sugar Industry...

Perhaps the single-most influential time in Kauai's recent history was the boom-time of the sugar industry. Up until that era, the sleepy little island had known nothing of trade. The first sugar plantation was founded in Koloa in the year 1835. Plantations like it would eventually attract scores of people from all corners of the world, including East Asia, the Philippines and Europe. Immigrant labor was cheap, with workers being housed in structures known as Camp Houses. A few of these old Camp Houses are still standing today, although they have been completely renovated. The Camp House Grill is a family-style Kalaheo restaurant situated inside one of these renovated buildings. Renovated plantation homes such as Grove Farm Homestead Museum and Kilohana Plantation teach visitors about the growth of the sugar industry and its influence on the island as a whole.

### The Kauai-Hollywood Connection...

With its lush, tropical landscape, breathtaking views and relative seclusion, Kaua'i makes the perfect location for a Hollywood film shoot—particularly if

the story is set in the jungle. Kauai's Hollywood history goes back as far as the 1930s, but it entered the international spotlight due to the 1976 production of 'King Kong'. In just the past 10 years, the world has seen Kauai's scenery in movies like 'Hook' (1991), 'Jurassic Park' (1993), 'George of the Jungle' (1997), 'Six Days, Seven Nights' (1998) and 'Mighty Joe Young' (1998). Hawaii Movie Tours takes interested tourists to all the top locations.

### Kaua'i Today...

The Garden Isle's natural beauty draws visitors from all over the world—and the accompanying natural disasters only slow down the tourism flow for a few weeks at most. Today, a visitor to Kaua'i might not realize that both 1982 and 1992 brought mass destruction, in the form of Hurricanes Iwa and Iniki. Both of these hurricanes devastated the island, but in the near-decade since, Kaua'i has been rebuilt to far outshine its former self.

The Hawaiian Islands continue to develop all the time, in order to accommodate the ever-increasing number of visitors. The Garden Isle is no exception, and the first decade of the new millennium will doubtless prove to be yet another time of phenomenal and constant change.

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## Hotel Insights

### Where to Stay in Kaua'i

Kaua'i is a little jewel of an island, boasting more miles of accessible coastline than any of its Hawaiian neighbors. Since it is 98 percent undeveloped, hotel planners have plenty of space to use, and most of them choose to occupy it with graceful, sprawling low-rise resorts (the opposite of the Honolulu hotel scheme). The resulting tropical paradise is modern yet still peaceful, with plenty of attractions for vacationers on the go and plenty of quiet spots for vacationers who just want to relax.

Three of the coasts have been developed to a degree, but the West Side, predominantly owned by the park service, remains untouched. There isn't one particular spot in Kaua'i that has all of the best resorts, nor is there one spot that has a row of budget hotels. Rather, luxurious and beautiful hotels abound, and

## Kauai Snapshot continued

the budget accommodations are sprinkled in amongst them.

**Lihue—Coconut Coast** Kauai's airport town of Lihue is not the most beautiful of the island's cities, but it is head and shoulders above most airport districts. The presence of a world-class golf course draws players from far and wide. Many of them stay at the Radisson Kauai Beach Resort, the Kauai Marriott Resort or the Aston Kauai Beach Villas. All three of these hotels are on the pricey side. Of the few other hotels in Lihue, the Garden Island Inn is a good choice for budget vacationers.

Up the coast from Lihue is the Coconut Coast with cities of Wailua, Kapa'a and Kealia. Several hotels and condominium complexes are scattered along the coast; the highest concentration is around the mouth of the Wailua River. The Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort Kauai and the Best Western Plantation Hale both offer the same things: name recognition and island style. These hotels are nothing like their mainland neighbors in appearance, but offer the same amenities and business services. The Aston-owned Kauai Coast Resort is a recently renovated property owned by Hawaii's own value hotel chain. Other condominium complexes include the Kapa'a Sands and the Aston Islander on the Beach.

The standout Coconut Coast hotel is the Kauai Coconut Beach Resort. It earns kudos for authenticity, charm and value. The staff also provides a terrific luau for its guests.

Many of Kauai's bed& breakfasts are tucked in various valleys and neighborhoods on the Coconut Coast. The Alohilani is one of the more upscale choices. Mohala Ke Ola rents four units, for prices ranging from low to mid-range. Hale Tutu, run by a mother-daughter team, is reasonably priced and charming.

**North Shore** Humid, hot and verdant, the North Shore is the site of Princeville, one of Hawaii's top luxury resorts. The big hotels here—Cliffs at Princeville and the Princeville Hotel—are expensive and exclusive. Further to the west are the towns of Hanalei and Haena. While the facilities are still lovely, the prices tend to get a little lower. The Hanalei Bay Resort& Suites and the Hanalei Colony Resort both offer a good value and an appealing location.

Interestingly, although there are relatively few value condominium complexes in Princeville or Hanalei, there are a number of private guest houses, vacation rentals and bed& breakfasts scattered throughout the area. Prices range from reasonable to exorbitant. Location often has a lot to do with pricing. Hale Mai Tai in Princeville rents for just under USD200 per night, while Hale Ho'o Maha in the tiny town of Kiluaea goes for a mere USD65.

**South Shore** Poipu, the famous resort district on Kauai's South Shore, is proud of its history as a playground for royalty. It seems that the luxury hotel developers strive to keep it that way. However, the tenacity of condominium developers and value hotel chains enables thousands of lucky commoners to enjoy Poipu's sun-drenched shores each year.

Anyone who wants to see a Hawaiian 'fantasy hotel' in all its glory should come to Poipu. Resorts such as the Hyatt Regency, the Embassy Vacation Resort Poipu Point and the Sheraton Kauai put a whole new spin on the idea of a beach vacation. These accommodations stretch across dozens of acres, offering every imaginable activity.

Luxury on a more modest scale can be enjoyed at the Kiahuna Plantation& the Beach Bungalows or the Nihi Kai Villas. These properties have great services and amenities, but don't necessarily have five restaurants onsite or a man-made river flowing through the grounds. The next tier down the price rung is crowded with various properties. The Aston at Poipu Kai, Poipu Makai, Poipu Plantation Resort and Prince Kuhio are all within a few miles of each other and offer the same quality of lodgings for comparable prices.

A visitor who wants to stay on the South Shore but doesn't enjoy the condominium scene would probably be happiest in one of the small towns just outside Poipu. Gloria's Spouting Horn B&B, located near the Botanical Gardens, is the highest-rated bed& breakfast in the state. On the other end of the spectrum, the tiny Kalaheo Inn offers plain and simple rooms for less than USD55 per night.

It can be difficult to tell the names of the South Shore hotels apart, much less to figure out which one is the perfect vacation destination. The best way to

see all the information at one time is to stop by the Web site of the Poipu Beach Resort Association. The address is: <http://www.poipu-beach.org/> and the site lists all of its properties.

For such a small island, Kauai boasts a high number and a stunning variety of accommodation options. The options range from five-star hotels to shared-bath places in a mountain home. Decadence, relaxation, stimulation or meditation can be had in equal doses—or not at all—during a stay on the Garden Isle.

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## Restaurants Insights

While one can't assume that the quality of restaurants on Kauai will be uniformly high, there are some good bets to be found around the island. First time visitors are well advised to research restaurants in advance. The real jewels are sometimes hidden. The restaurants noted below are just the highlights of each region—of course, there are many more tucked away. Get friendly with a local and they just might share a few insider secrets.

### Kapa'a: The Eastern Shore

Kauai's eastern shore, nicknamed 'The Coconut Coast', is a popular tourist destination and therefore home to a variety of restaurants. It is, for the most part, a casual corner of the island. You'll find no shortage of affordable, home-style cooking, but top-notch gourmet restaurants are a little harder to come by. A Pacific Cafe is one that made a name for itself years ago and retains its popularity. A few notches down is JR's Plantation Restaurant, a standby that offers family-style dining with plenty of fresh seafood options.

For a little Mexican flavor, try Norberto's El Cafe—it is Kauai's oldest (and arguably best) Mexican restaurant. Health-conscious diners are best directed to Papaya's Natural Food Market. Everything sold at Papaya's is whole-grain, organic and eco-safe. The Lizard Lounge is the opposite; it serves American bar food and brews in a lively setting. If the Hawaiian heat kills your appetite for solid food, stop by Lappert's for a dangerously delicious sundae or ice cream cone.

### Lihue (The North-Eastern Shore)

## Kauai Snapshot continued

Lihue is home to two of Kauai's best-known restaurants: Duke's Canoe Club and Gaylord's Restaurant. Duke's Canoe Club has two levels, the lower being a lounge, the upper a gourmet restaurant. Gaylord's Restaurant is an award winner thought to be the most romantic restaurant on the island. Kilohana also presents a great luau three nights a week.

For affordable, fresh seafood, Paradise Seafood & Grill is a good choice. This side of the island has a plethora of local and American restaurants to choose from including Tip Top Cafe and Kalapaki Beach Hut. Ms. Dixie's Deli is a health-conscious option located inside Kauai Athletic Club. If all you have in mind is a great cup of coffee, visit Java Kai.

### Hanalei/Princeville(The Northern Shore)

Kauai's North Shore harbors some of the island's finest dining. Inside the Princeville Resort, you will find gourmet Italian cuisine and exquisite atmosphere at La Cascata. Just a few minutes west of Princeville are the gourmet restaurants of Hanalei. Located inside the Hanalei Bay Resort & Suites, Bali Hai offers Pacific Rim delicacies, live entertainment and views across the Bay to the famous mountain. Postcards Cafe is known for its rustic-tropical atmosphere and superb 'healthy gourmet' food.

Relatively new to the North Shore dining scene is Cajun-inspired Chef Joshua's Bourbon Street Cafe, which occupies the place that was formerly Hale o Java. The Hanalei Gourmet is another upscale cafe with a menu of creative salads and sandwiches. Visit Polynesian Cafe for veggie treats and tropical smoothies. The Kilauea Bakery and Pau Hana Pizza is, according to many locals, the best place to go for fresh baked bread—it transforms into Pau Hana Pizza after 3 p.m. If a sit-down meal isn't what you have in mind at all, stop by The Farmer's Market and order your sandwich to go.

### The West Side

There really aren't many restaurants on this side of the island. In fact there isn't much to be seen of civilization. Grab something in Waimea on your way out. After a day at one of the parks, enjoy a cold micro-brewed beer at Waimea Brewing Co.

### Poipu and the South Shore

The South Shore offers plenty of dining options, although most of its gourmet scene is contained within the resort hotels. The Hyatt Regency alone houses five restaurants and several lounges, two of which (Ilima Terrace and Dondero's) fall in the "gourmet" category. Ilima Terrace is known for its delicious and ever-changing buffet; Dondero's offers fabulous ambiance and quality Italian cuisine.

One of the region's better-known seafood restaurants is Brennecke's Beach Broiler. The beach in front of Brennecke's is frequented by surfers and body-boarders. For a different kind of ambiance, try Camp House Grill. This family-style restaurant is situated inside a renovated camp house—the kind of structure in which Kauai's foreign laborers used to live.

Pizza fans, rejoice! Two of Kauai's best pizza restaurants are located on this side: Pizzetta and Brick Oven Pizza. For patio dining and quality sandwiches, try Poipu Bay Grill & Bar (located on a golf course). Don't miss Toi's Thai Restaurant if you are craving curry.

A number of charming little coffee houses dot this 'hotel row'. Two worth mentioning are Kalaheo Coffee Co and the aforementioned Java Kai, formerly Island Java.

While not everyone has the same dining expectations, most people can appreciate an award-winning gourmet menu or a cost-efficient café, if it turns up at the right time. Of these, Kauai has plenty. Its other strong suit is, of course, its ambiance. Breathtaking views, oceanfront dining, garden terraces and other little pieces of Paradise can be enjoyed no matter where you sit or what's on the menu.

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### Nightlife Insights

Citified vacationers joke that Kauai is the sort of sleepy little island that closes up entirely after sunset. That was probably true a few years ago, but the growing tourism industry has brought about more than a few changes to the entertainment and dining scene. But Kauai's strong suit still lies in its traditional Hawaiian entertainment and in its daytime outdoor activities, which are diverse and widespread. Anyone who sticks with diving, golf and surfing in the daytime

and luaus at night is likely to be more than satisfied.

### Kauai By Day

Ocean Sports/Marine Adventures The Pacific Ocean, in all its glory, provides all the entertainment that some people need. Favorite swimming beaches include Anahola Beach Park on the Coconut Coast and the South Shore's Poipu Beach Park. On the West Side the beaches are gorgeous but desolate and often dangerous. On the North Shore, it's also best to be very careful, especially during the winter months, when swells can reach 20 feet. Never swim at Hanakapiai; this beach reports more drownings than any other place on the island.

Plenty of surf schools are located on the shores of Poipu and Kalapaki Beach. Kalapaki Beach Boys, Kauai Surf School and Learn to Surf are just a few of the companies that teach the island's favorite sport. Not quite as Hawaiian as surfing, but nearly as popular, are body boarding and windsurfing. Anini Beach Park is one of the best spots for windsurfing on the island; it also has a well-reputed surf school.

Snorkel/scuba The crystalline waters off the shore of Kauai offer great snorkeling and diving. Haena State Park is a popular snorkel spot, as is Ke'e Beach. Lydgate Park has the safest year-round snorkeling conditions. Snorkel Bob's rents out snorkel equipment for the day or the week.

Sailing charters The coastal waters off Kauai are almost as popular of a hang-out spot as the beaches. Kauai Sea Tours, Captain Andy's and a number of other companies offer a variety of day and evening cruises. Holoholo Charters takes passengers to the Forbidden Isle for snorkeling and sunning. Z-Tour-Z combines snorkeling and rafting to create a unique adventure. Advanced divers can visit a variety of different sites with Dive Kauai, North Shore Divers and Seasport Divers.

Golf Like its neighbor islands, Kauai is a golfer's paradise, thanks to warm weather, frisky winds and breathtaking scenery. From Princeville to Poipu, the Kauai Lagoons to Kiahuna, the island offers some of the most technically challenging and visually stunning courses in the world.

Museums Kauai's few museums offer historical and educational exhibits about the island. The easiest one to reach is

## Kauai Snapshot continued

the Kauai Museum, centrally located in downtown Lihue. The Kauai Heritage Center and Children's Discovery Museum are both located in Kauai Village Shopping Center in Kapa'a.

The rugged West Side of the island is home to two other museums. The new West Kauai Technology & Visitor Center traces the history of the island's development, from the ancient mariners to the latest high-tech start-ups. The Koke'e Natural History Museum, located 4,000 feet above sea level in Koke'e State Park, offers educational videos, exhibits and short guided nature walks.

Shopping/galleries Kauai's luxury retail scene is not anywhere near the caliber of O'ahu or even Maui. It's best to shop for souvenirs, handmade craft items and local products. Find quality local merchandise at Kauai Products Fair or the county-sponsored Sunshine Markets. Ching Young Village and Hanapepe Town provide a glimpse of the way Kaua'i used to be. Even large shopping centers such as the Coconut Marketplace and the Poipu Shopping Village are filled with local stores selling local wares.

**Kauai By Night** When the sun goes down on Kauai, many people are too tired to do much besides eat dinner and go to sleep. But the people that still have energy can find something to do, even if it's just belting out karaoke tunes at a beach bar.

Performing arts venues: Foremost in Kauai's local performing arts scene is the Kauai International Theatre. A big name indeed—but this 'international' theater only has 52 seats. It presents original and international plays throughout the year, and offers live music concerts on Wednesdays. Groups from the mainland and famous-name Hawaiian musicians often perform at the Kauai Community College Performing Arts Center. For a taste of Broadway, Pacific-style, the Radisson Kauai Beach Resort presents the dinner show *A Nite of Broadway* every Thursday.

Luau: Garnering the award for Most Authentic Luau is the nightly Kauai Coconut Beach Resort Luau. Gaylord's at Kilohana Luau gets many peoples' vote for the most picturesque setting. A few other luaus are presented around the island.

Free live entertainment: The main lounges at the Hanalei Bay Resort & Suites,

Kauai Coconut Beach Resort and Kauai Marriott Resort are great spots to enjoy Happy Hour, complete with live music and refreshing cocktails. Later at night, enjoy music while dining at Whalers Brewpub.

Free live shows are presented daily at the Coconut Marketplace at 5 p.m. The Kukui Grove Center has a show every Friday at 6 p.m., and the Poipu Shopping Village presents a Polynesian revue on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Movies: Movie theaters are all over the island. There are cinemas at Kukui Grove Center, Coconut Marketplace, Kong Lung Shopping Center and a few other locations.

Bars: All of the major hotels have a couple of upscale watering holes. Other popular nightspots include Waimea Brewing Company and Zelo's Beachhouse. Rob's Good Times Grill is open till 2 a.m.—late night by Kauai standards. Karaoke, one of Hawaii's most beloved guilty pleasures, is offered at JR's Plantation Restaurant and Jolly Roger's. So is that it? Not even close. A few pages can barely begin to describe all that Kauai has to offer. There are kayak trips down the river, hang gliding schools, carriage tours and SNUBA. There is keiki hula. There are day trips to Pearl Harbor.

And that, as they say, is just the beginning.  
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### Things to Do Insights

It is impossible to name the most beautiful Hawaiian island. However, Kaua'i, the oldest island open to the public, boasts more beaches per mile, the most botanical gardens, the wettest patch of jungle in the world and many other features that set it apart from its gorgeous, famous neighbors.

While some of Kauai's most amazing sights can be seen from a major highway just by pulling over at the designated mile marker, others are reached only by kayak or on foot. A few of the best attractions are best viewed from the vantage point of a helicopter or catamaran. While the attractions mentioned below are the most famous, they're only a sample of what the island has to offer.

Na Pali Coast The rugged, magnificent cliffs on Kauai's western shore rise impossibly high into the sky, casting a shadow over the deep sea 4,000 feet below. After rain falls, countless waterfalls can be seen

cascading down the rocks. Many valleys nestle amidst the rock formations; some of them are accessible by boat and some via the Kalalau Trail.

No matter what perspective it is viewed from, the Na Pali Coast is unforgettable. Helicopter companies such as Will Squyres and Jack Harter Helicopters offer close-up views and birds-eye views of the cliffs. Holoholo Charters, Blue Dolphin Charters and Kauai Sea Tours offer marine excursions along the coastline. The most physically fit adventurers may want to hike the famous Kalalau Trail. Leaving from the Ke'e Beach, the trail is 11 miles long and is extremely rigorous; many people consider it to be one of the best hiking trails in the country.

Ni'ihau Known as the 'Forbidden Isle', Ni'ihau is ordinarily not accessible to anyone except Hawaiians. However, two companies are allowed to bring small groups to the island, although only to uninhabited areas. Ni'ihau Helicopters is owned by the same family that owns the island. The company brings groups of five to seven people over for lunch and swimming on the beach. Holoholo Charters transports people to Ni'ihau in a sleek attractive luxury catamaran. Both trips are lengthy and expensive, but the experience is one-of-a-kind.

Waimea—Koke'e Waimea Canyon is probably among the top five sights on Kaua'i. More than 3,000 feet deep and approximately 10 miles long, it is frequently compared to the Grand Canyon. The canyon is located in Koke'e State Park, a 4,000-square-acre piece of land on the western side of Kaua'i. Koke'e Natural History Museum is in the park as well as more than 40 miles of the best hiking trails in the country. Trail length varies; the shortest one is literally a 30-minute walk in the park, while the long ones are rigorous and only for the hardest hikers.

There are a few ways to experience Waimea and Koke'e. By car the trip takes anywhere from a few hours to a full-day round trip, depending how many times you stop and look around. Koke'e Road (Highway 552) is easy enough to navigate. The best view of the canyon is at Mile Marker 10. At the end of the road is the Kalalau Lookout. Hiking trails can be accessed from various points; current maps are available at the museum.

## Kauai Snapshot continued

People who don't wish to hike can either take a bus tour with a company such as Roberts Hawaii or opt for a shorter and more expensive—but more memorable—helicopter tour. Safari Air Tours, Hawaii Helicopters or any of the companies mentioned previously offer Waimea tours.

**Kilohana** If there is a place in Kaua'i that can please everyone—from the youngest children to the most jaded adults—it is probably Kilohana Plantation. This place offers a little bit of everything. Shops and art galleries abound in the various guesthouses and the main house. The rooms that have not been turned into shops are perfectly restored in the old-plantation style. The gardens and the farm behind the house are great places to explore on foot. Children may be entertained by a stroll through 'Kilohana Camp', a perfectly recreated plantation village. Kilohana Plantation Carriage Rides offers tours of the entire property. Gaylord's Restaurant serves gourmet lunches and dinners. Three nights out of the week Gaylord's presents a full-scale luau, complete with fire dancers and a Polynesian buffet.

**Botanical Gardens** Of five National Tropical Botanical Gardens in the U.S., three of them are on Kaua'i. Two, in fact, are adjacent to each other, making it not only easy but almost necessary to tour them at the same time. Individual tours are also available, but most people choose to see both at the same time.

No matter which park is visited first, the tours begin at the visitor's center, located just across the street from another landmark, Spouting Horn. Tours generally visit the Allerton Tropical Gardens, the McBryde Garden, nearby Allerton House and Queen Emma's Cottage. The guided tours last about two hours, but soon visitors will be able to take self-guided tours.

If one were to try to see all three gardens in one day, the next logical step would be to hop in the car and drive to the north shore, where the gorgeous Limuhuli Valley is located. While the park is several hundred acres, only 17 acres are open to the public. People may choose to explore this garden with or without a guide. Hundreds of exotic and rare plants are cultivated in this mountainous sanctuary just a few moments from the Na Pali Coast. Just like its neighbor Maui, Kaua'i is deceptive. One would think that a small island in the

Pacific, home to relatively few people, would not have much to offer. In reality, however, anyone who has an appreciation for natural beauty, natural history or South Sea culture will find plenty to do and see on the Garden Isle.

View From Above Helicopter and Airplane Tours( +1 888 321 3646/ <http://www.kauaitours.net/>) Eco Tours Kauai Eco Tours( +1 877 742 7893/ [http://www.hawaiiwebdesign.com/kauai\\_ecotours.htm](http://www.hawaiiwebdesign.com/kauai_ecotours.htm))

Culture Tours Kauai Tours( +1 866 654 1438/<http://www.allkauaihawaiitours.com/>)

Under the Sea Beach Snorkel Tours( +1 800 452 1113/ <http://www.alohakauaitours.com/>)

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### Travel Tips

#### Kaua'i Getting There:

##### By Air:

Three airports serve the island of Kaua'i: Lihue Airport(LIH) on the west coast, Port Allen Airport(PAK) on the southern coast, and Princeville Airport(HPV) on the northern coast. Both Princeville Airport and Port Allen Airport are primarily used by private and government planes. Lihue Airport(+1 808 246 1488/<http://www.hawaii.gov/dot/airports/kauai/lih/>) offers inter-island and domestic overseas service.

##### Airlines include:

Aloha Airlines(+1 800 367 5250/<http://www.alohaairlines.com/>)

American Airlines(+1 800 433 7300/<http://www.aa.com/>)

ATA(+1 800 435 9282/<http://www.ata.com/>)

Hawaiian Airlines(+1 800 367 5320/<http://www.hawaiianair.com>)

North American Airlines(+1 617 567 8116/<http://www.northamericanair.com/>)

United(+1 800 241 6522/<http://www.ual.com>)

**Taxi companies include:** Ace Kauai Taxi Service( +1 808 639 4310)

Akiko's Taxi(+1 808 822 7588)

Po'ipu Taxi(+1 808 639 2042)

Scotty Taxi(+1 808 245 7888)

##### Rental Car companies include:

Alamo(+1 800 327 9633/<http://www.alamo.com>)

Avis(+1 800 831 2847/<http://www.avis.com>)

Budget(+1 800 527 0700/<http://www.budget.com>)

Dollar(+1 800 4000/<http://www.dollar.com>)

Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/<http://www.hertz.com>)

National(+1 800 227 7368/<http://www.nationalcar.com>)

Thrifty(+1 800 847 4389/<http://www.thrifty.com/>)

##### By Bus:

The Kaua'i Bus(+1 808 241 6410/<http://www.kauai.hawaii.gov/>) offers limited service Monday-Saturday with 10 routes serving half of the island. Fare is USD1.50.

##### By Car:

Highways 50 and 56 circle about two-thirds of Kaua'i's coastline; highways 550 and 560 provide limited access to the interior island area.

##### Getting Around:

If you're looking for a refreshing way to get around the island, try bicycling. Bicycles as well as bicycle maps are available at Kaua'i Cycle and Tour(+1 808 821 2115) and Outfitters Kaua'i(+1 808 742 9667) in Lihue.

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check out <http://travel.state.gov/>

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### Fun Facts

**Kaua'i State:** Hawaii **Country:** United States

##### Kaua'i by the Numbers:

Population: 60,000 Average Annual Rainfall: 1415 mm/ 55.7 in Average Winter Temperature: 20 °C/ 68.3 °F Average Summer Temperature: 24 °C/ 75.5 °F

## Kauai Snapshot continued

Number of Parks and Beaches: 22 Cultural Landmarks: 20

### Quick Facts:

Electricity: 120 Volts, 60Hz, standard two pin plugs Time Zone: GMT-10 Country Dialing Code: 1

### Did You Know?

Kaua'i is the oldest of the five main islands in the Hawaiian archipelago. Today, Waialeale, Kaua'i's principal volcano, has eroded and now stands at 5,148 feet at its peak. The volcano is also home to one of the wettest spots in the world; the northern

slopes of Waialeale get over 450 inches of rain annually.

Approximately ninety-seven percent of the island of Kaua'i is used for agriculture and conservation.

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