

2026 Readers' Choice: Hawai'i Island

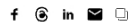
Along with being home to one of the world's most active volcanoes, Hawai'i Island is dotted with charming towns, coffee farms and stunning coastlines. These are the best spots on the island, according to HAWAII Magazine readers.

BY HAWAII MAGAZINE STAFF • MAY 12, 2026



The short and beautiful trail at 'Akaka Falls State Park leads to the impressive 442-foot 'Akaka Falls.
Photo: Aaron K. Yoshino

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Nearly twice as big as all the other Hawaiian Islands combined, Hawai'i Island earns its nickname. Hawai'i Island is home to one of the world's most active volcanoes, plus charming towns, sprawling resorts and gorgeous coastlines. Here's the best beaches, hotels, restaurants on Hawai'i Island.

Best Hotels and Resorts on Hawai'i Island



The infinity pool overlooks King's Pond at the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai.
Photo: Courtesy of the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai

Best Luxury Resort

1. Four Seasons Resort Hualālai
2. Royal Kona Resort
3. Hilton Waikōloa Village
4. Fairmont Orchid
5. Kona Village, A Rosewood Resort



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6. Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection
7. Mauna Lani Resort, Auberge Resorts Collection
8. Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa
9. The Westin Hāpuna Beach Resort
10. Castle Hali'i Kai at Waikōloa

Best Value Hotel or Resort

1. Royal Kona Resort
2. Hilton Waikōloa Village
3. Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa
4. Courtyard by Marriott King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel
5. Waikōloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa
6. Castle Hilo Hawaiian Hotel
7. SCP Hilo Hotel
8. Fairmont Orchid
9. Aston Kona by the Sea
10. Pacific 19

Best Hotel or Resort for Families

1. Royal Kona Resort
2. Hilton Waikōloa Village
3. Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa
4. Fairmont Orchid
5. Waikōloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa
6. Courtyard by Marriott King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel
7. Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection
8. Royal Sea Cliff Kona by Outrigger
9. Mauna Lani Resort, Auberge Resorts Collection
10. Castle Hali'i Kai at Waikōloa

Best Hotel or Resort for Romance

1. Royal Kona Resort
2. Fairmont Orchid
3. Four Seasons Resort Hualālai
4. Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection
5. Hilton Waikōloa Village
6. Kona Village, A Rosewood Resort
7. Waikōloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa
8. Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa
9. Mauna Lani Resort, Auberge Resorts Collection
10. Courtyard by Marriott King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel

Best Hotel or Resort Spa

1. Hualālai Spa at Four Seasons Resort Hualālai
2. Mauna Kea Spa by Mandara at Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection
3. Kohala Spa by Hilton Waikōloa Village
4. Spa Without Walls at Fairmont Orchid
5. Auberge Spa at Mauna Lani Resort, Auberge Resorts Collection

Best Hotel or Resort Pool

1. Royal Kona Resort
2. Hilton Waikōloa Village
3. Outrigger Kona Resort & Spa
4. Four Seasons Resort Hualālai
5. The Westin Hāpuna Beach Resort

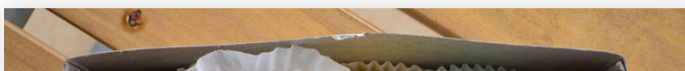
Best Hotel or Resort for a Wedding

1. Fairmont Orchid
2. Hilton Waikōloa Village
3. Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection
4. Waikōloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa
5. Mauna Lani Resort, Auberge Resorts Collection

Best Bed & Breakfast or Inn

1. Volcano Village Lodge
2. Hilo Bay Oceanfront Bed and Breakfast
3. Hōlualoa Inn
4. Ka'awa Loa Plantation Bed & Breakfast
5. Honu Kai

Best Food and Drink on Hawai'i Island





Two Ladies Kitchen in Hilo is known for its colorful variety of Japanese mochi and manju. It's voted one of the best bakeries on Hawai'i Island.
Photo: Aaron K. Yoshino

Best Restaurant

1. Merriman's Waimea
2. Don's Mai Tai Bar & Restaurant
3. Roy's Waikoloa Bar & Grill
4. Island Lava Java
5. Chubby's Diner

Best Hotel or Resort Restaurant

1. Don's Mai Tai Bar & Restaurant at the Royal Kona Resort
2. CanoeHouse at Mauna Lani Resort, Auberge Resorts Collection
3. Brown's Beach House at Fairmont Orchid
4. 'Ulu at Four Seasons Resort Hualālai
5. Beach House at Four Seasons Resort Hualālai

Best Farm-to-Table Restaurant

1. Merriman's Waimea
2. Hilo Bay Café
3. Moon and Turtle
4. Foster's Kitchen
5. The Eatery

Best Seafood Restaurant

1. 'Umeke's Fish Market Bar & Grill
2. The Fish Hopper
3. Jackie Rey's 'Ohana Grill
4. The Seaside Restaurant
5. 'Ulu Ocean Grill

Best Loco Moco

1. Big Island Grill
2. Hawaiian Style Café
3. Chubby's Diner
4. Ken's House of Pancakes
5. Café 100

Best Plate Lunch

1. Big Island Grill
2. Broke Da Mouth Grindz
3. Hawaiian Style Café Hilo
4. Chubby's Diner
5. Ka'aloa's Super J's

Best Poke

1. Da Poke Shack
2. 'Umeke's Fish Market Bar & Grill
3. Suisan Fish Market
4. Poke Market
5. Kona Grill

Best Shave Ice

1. Original Big Island Shave Ice Co.
2. Ululani's Hawaiian Shave Ice
3. Gecko Girlz Shave Ice
4. Scandinavian Shave Ice
5. One Aloha Shave Ice Co.

Best Noodle

1. TK Noodle House

2. Tetsumen
3. Nori's Saimin and Snacks
4. Ken's House of Pancakes
5. Noodle Club

Best Pizza

1. Kona Brewing Co.
2. Big Island Pizza Napoletana
3. Café Pesto
4. James Angelo's Underground Pizza
5. Bianelli's Gourmet Pizza & Pasta

Best Burger

1. Hilo Burger Joint
2. Village Burger Waimea
3. Ultimate Burger
4. Chubby's Diner
5. Cronies Bar & Grill

Best Steak House

1. Merriman's Waimea
2. Roy's Waikoloa Bar & Grill
3. Waimea Butcher Shop
4. Jackie Rey's Kona
5. Miller & Lux

Best Food Truck

1. Da Braddahz Grindz
2. Rendezvous Hawai'i Food Truck
3. Califas Mexican Food
4. Cool Runnings Food Truck
5. Jaw Jacker Grindz

Best Breakfast or Brunch

1. Hawaiian Style Café
2. Island Lava Java
3. Ken's House of Pancakes
4. The Coffee Shack
5. Chubby's Diner

Best Bakery

1. Punalu'u Bake Shop
2. Island Lava Java
3. Two Ladies Kitchen
4. Tex Drive-In
5. Patisserie Nanako

Best Coffee Shop

1. Big Island Coffee Roasters
2. The Coffee Shack Kona
3. Puna Chocolate Company & Cafe
4. Surf Camp Waimea
5. HiCo Hawaiian Coffee

Best Bar or Lounge

1. Don's Mai Tai Bar & Restaurant
2. Kona Brewing Co.
3. Lava Lava Beach Club
4. Huggo's On the Rocks
5. The Hidden Nēnē

Best Happy Hour

1. Don's Mai Tai Bar & Restaurant
2. Huggo's On the Rocks
3. Humpy's Big Island Alehouse
4. The Temple Bar
5. Jackie Rey's Kona

Best Cheap Eats

1. L&L Hawaiian Barbecue
2. 'Umeke's Fish Market Bar & Grill
3. Da Poke Shack
4. Chubby's Diner
5. 808 Grindz Café

Best Outdoor Adventures on Hawai'i Island



The best hike on the Big Island is the Kīlauea Iki Trail in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, according to HAWAII Magazine readers.
Photo: Getty Images/ Greg Vaughn / VWPics

Best Beach

1. Hāpuna Beach
2. Punalu'u Black Sand Beach
3. Mauna Kea Beach
4. Kahalu'u Beach
5. Makalawena Beach

Best Snorkeling Spot

1. Two Step, Hōnaunau Bay
2. Kealahou Bay
3. Mauna Lani Beach
4. Kahalu'u Beach Park
5. La'aloa Beach (Magic Sands)

Best Surf Spot

1. Kahalu'u Beach Park
2. Honoli'i Beach Park
3. Old Kona Airport State Park
4. Lyman's Beach
5. Banyans

Best Hiking Trail

1. Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Kīlauea Iki Trail
2. 'Akaka Falls Loop Trail
3. Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Devastation Trail
4. Pololū Valley
5. Papakōlea Green Sand Beach

Best Botanical Garden

1. Hawai'i Tropical Bioreserve and Garden
2. Pana'ewa Rainforest Zoo and Gardens
3. University of Hawai'i at Hilo Botanical Gardens
4. Botanical World Adventures
5. The Umauma Experience

Best Dinner or Sunset Cruise

1. Body Glove Cruises
2. Paradise Sailing Hawai'i
3. Fair Wind Cruises
4. Hawai'i Nautical
5. Tom Barefoot Tours

Best Extreme Tour

1. Epic Lava Tours
2. Hawai'i Forest & Trail
3. The Umauma Experience
4. Botanical World Adventures
5. Aloha Adventure Farms

Best Zipline

1. Umauma Falls Zipline & Rappel Experience
2. Hawai'i Zipline Tours
3. Kohala Zipline
4. Botanical World Adventures

5. Kapohokine Adventures

Best Helicopter Tour

1. Blue Hawaiian Helicopters
2. Paradise Helicopters
3. Mauna Loa Helicopters
4. Rainbow Helicopters
5. Safari Helicopters

Best Farm Tour

1. Greenwell Farms
2. Lavaloha Chocolate Farm
3. Heavenly Hawaiian Farms
4. Hawaiian Vanilla Co.

Best Guided Tour

1. Mauna Kea Summit Adventures
2. Hawai'i Forest & Trail
3. Kona Cloud Forest Sanctuary
4. Epic Lava Tours
5. Greenwell Farms

Best Golf Course

1. Mauna Kea Golf Course
2. Kona Country Club
3. Hualālai Golf Course at the Four Seasons Hualālai
4. Mauna Lani Golf Course (South Course)
5. Hāpuna Golf Course at The Westin Hāpuna Beach Resort

Best Lū'au

1. Royal Kona Lū'au, Voyagers of the Pacific
2. Island Breeze Lū'au, Courtyard King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel
3. Legends of Hawai'i Lū'au, Hilton Waikoloa Village
4. The Mauna Kea Lū'au, Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection
5. Sunset Lū'au, Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa

Best Museum

1. Pacific Tsunami Museum
2. Hulihe'e Palace
3. Kona Coffee Living History Farm
4. Mokupāpapa Discovery Center
5. Lyman Museum

Best Shopping on Hawai'i Island

Best Shopping Center or Mall

1. Queens' Marketplace
2. Keauhou Shopping Center
3. Parker Ranch Center
4. Prince Kūhiō Plaza
5. Kea'au Shopping Center

Best Clothing/Boutique or Store

1. Hilo Hattie
2. Tommy Bahama
3. Sig Zane Designs
4. Pueo Boutique
5. Rainbow Jo

Best Store for Souvenirs

1. ABC Stores
2. Waimea General Store
3. Kimura Lauhala Shop
4. Basically Books
5. Aloha Pawz

Best Surf Shop

1. Kona Boys
2. Kahalu'u Bay Surf and Sea
3. Oshima Surf & Skate
4. Orchid Land Surf Shop
5. HIC

Best Services on Hawai'i Island

Best Surf Instruction

1. Kona Boys
2. Kaha'u Bay Surf & Sea
3. Kona Mike's Surf Adventures
4. Hawai'i Lifeguard Surf Instructors
5. 'Ohana Surf Lessons

Best Beach Gear or Water Gear Rentals

1. Snorkel Bob's
2. Kona Boys
3. Boss Frog's
4. Kona Snorkel Trips
5. Orchid Land Surf Shop

Best Snorkeling/Scuba Rental or Instruction

1. Snorkel Bob's
2. Boss Frog's
3. Kona Snorkel Trips
4. Jack's Diving Locker
5. Big Island Divers

Best Wedding Venue (Not a Resort)

1. Volcano House
2. Lili'uokalani Gardens
3. Nani Mau Gardens
4. Hulihe'e Palace
5. Papa Kona Restaurant & Bar

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