

Maui Vacation & Travel Planner

Five Holoholo Adventures: For planning your next Maui getaway—where to go, what to do, where to eat, whom to call



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Locals Share their Secrets with Us

Stir a little adventure into your next Maui vacation. Whether it's a single day off of work or the anniversary you've saved up for, do something you wouldn't ordinarily do. Step out of your comfort zone. Let the mud squish between your toes. After all, that's what a vacation is: the chance to depart from your personal beaten path. Now I'm not saying hop over the next fence plastered with "No Trespassing" signs, like a certain revealing guidebook advises. I'm suggesting something even more outrageous: talk to a stranger. That's right. Ask the next Maui resident passing by where he or she likes to go *holoholo*. (That's Hawaiian for get out and about.) Most locals love to share their secrets; they're just not asked anymore. Everyone's an expert now, thanks to Trip Advisor and aforementioned guidebooks. But information technology is no excuse for acting like Charlie Brown's know-it-all friend Lucy. Hey, I grew up here. It's a small island and there are plenty of great spots I don't know about. So I put my own advice to the test. I asked several kama'aina what they like to do on their days off. Read on to discover five local adventures worth trying—the loosely kept secrets of Maui residents.

#1 Bike Keokea

What you'll see: breathtaking views, purple morning glories, cowboys, life in the slow lane

What to bring: bike or running shoes, camera, cash for church sales, light jacket

Some of us use vacations to finally visit our neglected exercise routine. If that's you, grab your trainers and head Upcountry. When you come to the fork in Kula Highway at the tiny town of **Keokea**, head left up to heavenly **Thompson Road**. Breathe deep. The air is sweet and cool, and a little thin. Fall in line with the other joggers and bikers chasing lazy mynah birds from the road. Just shy of 3,000 feet above the coastline, you can see the whole shebang—from Kanaha to Kanaio. Set your camera to panoramic. Follow the smooth-paved, undulating road past Thompson ranch, where modern-day *paniolo* (Hawaiian cowboys) saddle up horses just as they did 50, even 150 years ago. This is one spot on Maui where blessed little has changed.

Afterwards, stretch your legs with a meditative walk around the labyrinth at **St. John's Episcopal Church** (8992 Kula Hwy.). Across the street, bright flowers decorate **Our Lady Queen of Angels** (9177 Kula Hwy.). Watch for church sales, where you can sometimes score vintage aloha prints and plantation-era tools. Hula dancers shimmying across colorful canvases will draw you into **Keokea Gallery** (9230 Kula Hwy., 808-878-

3555, www.keokeagallery.com). Scoop up original artwork—hand-stamped whales and erupting volcanoes—for as little as \$20.

Refuel with water and snacks at **Ching Store** (9212 Kula Hwy., 808-878-1556). Mrs. Florence Ching has supplied the neighborhood with gasoline, candy, fresh flowers, and smiles for the past 40 years. (The same can't be said for the ornery billy goat in the neighboring yard.) At **Grandma's Coffee House** (153 Kula Hwy., 808-878-2140) you won't be the only one in dressed in sweat and spandex—well, at least sweat. Sidle up next to ranch hands in line for eggs and toast and a hot cup o' joe. Enjoy a thick slice of pumpkin bread on the lanai, shaded by a few coffee trees poking through the decking. Or, you can head a few miles down to **Sun Yat Sen Park** (Mile 19, 'Ulupalakua Rd.). Growling Foo dogs guard the entrance to this terrific picnic spot overgrown with peach and fig trees. A commemorative statue honors the contributions of Kula's early Chinese farmers, particularly one farmer whose brother, Sun Yat Sen, helped overthrow the Manchu Dynasty to become China's first president.

Don't want to leave? Stay at: Star Lookout (822 Thompson Rd., Keokey, 907-346-8028, www.starlookout.com). This idyllic cottage sleeps six and has an unbeatable view of Maui—complete with hot tub and bonfire pit.

#2 Picnic in Wailuku:

What you'll see: waterfalls, sheer cliffs, taro fields, cultural artifacts

What to bring: swimsuit, hiking shoes, picnic lunch

Beneath Wailuku's main streets are remnants of ancient settlements and battlegrounds; the memory of Hawaiian chiefs and warriors is almost palpable. Most visitors take a spin through **'Iao Valley**, but few explore its verdant depths. The heart of the West Maui Mountains has a definite pulse; let it draw you in. Bring a picnic and shoes you don't mind getting muddy. Orient yourself to the area's history by visiting the **Bailey House Museum** (2375A Main St., Wailuku, 808-244-3326, open 10 a.m.–4p.m., \$5 admission). The historic stone-and-mortar building holds many Hawaiian treasures: whale's tooth necklaces, stone *ki'i* (carved images), and massive spears. View the frail body of the extinct 'o'o (Hawaiian honeyeater), whose brilliant yellow feathers were painstakingly fastened to royal capes.

At **Kepaniwai Park** (870 'Iao Valley Rd.), a Japanese tea house, Chinese moon gate, and Hawaiian *hale* (thatched-roof house) honor the island's diverse cultural landscape. Enjoy your picnic here, or continue up into lush 'Iao Valley. Wander through Polynesian gardens planted with *ti*, *awa*, and *wauke* (paper mulberry used to make kapa, felted cloth). Taro fields are fed by the same stream that carved 'Iao Needle, a 2,250-foot basalt pillar, over several millennia. The surrounding ridges are a moody bunch, often wrapped in a wet shawl of clouds. Moments later they're splashed in gold as if some deity suddenly grinned. Venture onto shaded paths that thread through ginger and guava. Dip your toes into the cold waters of 'Iao Stream. Swimmers and hikers should be very aware of the weather, as flash floods occur regularly.

If Wailuku's history has piqued your interest, continue on to Waiehu Beach Road. Tucked in a modest residential neighborhood are two of Maui's most significant historical sites, **Haleki'i and Pihana Heiau** (Take Waiehu Beach Rd. to Kuhio Pl. Turn left on Hea Pl. and follow to end.) Built several centuries ago, these *heiau* (places of worship) served as the homes and burial sites of several Hawaiian royals. Stand where Kamehameha I invoked his war god on his quest to unite the Hawaiian Islands. Imagine Hawai'i's most sacred princess, 11-year-old Keopuolani, fleeing across the razor-edged mountains before the bloody battle, only to become the victor's wife and mother of his successors, Kamehameha II and III.

Don't want to leave? Stay at: Old Wailuku Inn at Ulupono (2199 Kaho'okele St., Wailuku, 808-244-5897, www.mauiinn.com). Each room in this quiet vintage estate is lovingly appointed with double-headed showers or jet tubs, dark wood furnishings, and Hawaiian quilts fashioned by local designer Sig Zane.

#3 Find Five Corners in Ha'iku:

What you'll see: vines overtaking the road, yoga studios, surfmobiles, roosters

What to bring: Maui road map, mosquito repellent, cash for fruit and flower stands

Hana Highway gets all the press, but Ha'iku's side streets boast almost as many hair-raising S-turns, fragrant jungle vines, and stray cows. **Ha'iku's "Five Corners"** is a mythical place, much like the Bermuda Triangle, where unsuspecting travelers are swallowed up and spun in circles for eternity. But don't be frightened; the five-cornered intersection of Kaupakalua, Pe'ahi, and Ulumalu Roads is a beautiful place. You might not want to leave.

Start in Makawao, by purchasing a **Komoda Store** (3674 Baldwin Ave., 808-572-7261) survival kit: a Maui road map and half a dozen world-famous cream puffs. Get into the Ha'iku swing of things at **the 4th Marine Division Park** (Mile 2, Kokomo Rd.). Nicknamed "Giggle Hill" for the WWII marines stationed here who took a fancy to the local ladies, the park now hosts a new set of gigglers: kids pumping madly on three swing sets. Community volunteers gathered to build an imaginative playground, complete with spy tower and octopus arms. Knock yourself out. Afterward, soothe any aching muscles with a \$25 student massage at **Spa Luna** (810 Ha'iku Rd., 808-575-2440). Once a busy pineapple factory, Ha'iku Cannery is now a town center of sorts, with a spa school, yoga studio, grocery, and several restaurants. Nearby, at Pauwela Cannery, you can spy on **Da Kine Hawai'i** (375 W. Kuiaha Rd., 808-575-2495) sailmakers as they devise the next big thing for windsurfers.

If you're running low on cream puffs, **Ohashi General Store** (410 W. Kuiaha Rd., 808-575-2141) supplies refreshments. For those low on fuel, **Toma Garage** (1073 Ha'ikū Rd., 808-575-2652) appears like an oasis—the only gas station for miles is a charming throwback to days gone by. Proceed with caution to Five Corners. Stay focused. Eat a cream puff. You'll pass a private compound fenced in entirely by surfboards—Ha'iku's hippie version of Marlowe's Heart of Darkness. You're now deep in Ha'iku. Abandon any hopes of getting cell phone or radio reception. Pull over and pick some wild guavas. Hit **Hanzawa Store** (1833 Kaupakalua Rd., 808-572-8337) for another taste of local life: hot dogs and spam musubi. Colorful mom-and-pop shops like this were once the mainstay of island households. Opened in 1915, Hanzawa's is as busy as ever. From here it's a straight (relatively speaking) shot back to your starting point in Makawao. Good luck. If you get lost, remember: the journey is the destination.

Don't want to leave? Stay at: Ha'iku Plantation Inn (555 Ha'iku Rd., 808-575-7500, www.haikuplantation.com). Walking distance from Ha'iku Cannery, this charming old plantation home gives guests a real taste of country life: coconuts, bananas, and sugar cane are picked fresh from the gardens for breakfast.

#4 Plunge into South Maui:

What you'll see: sea turtles, parrotfish, mango trees, awesome sunsets

What to bring: swimsuit, sunscreen, dive certification card

Yes, we know, South Maui can be crowded. Thirty years ago, it was an unpaved wilderness. Traffic has tripled since then, maybe even quadrupled. Still—who can resist the string of perfect beaches, stretching one after the other all the way from Ma'alaea to Makena? Humpback whales and green sea turtles find plenty to do here, and so can you. The key is getting off the highway and into—or under—the water. Strap on a mask and investigate the caves, coral heads, and creatures below at **Ulua Beach** (Wailea Alanui Dr., south of

Marriot entrance) and **Makena Landing** (off Makena Rd.). Take the plunge with **Maui Dreams Dive Company** (1993 South Kihei Rd., 808-874-5332, www.maidreamsdiveco.com). Scuba instructors with this company know the underwater landscape better than their own backyards—they host underwater Easter egg hunts and pumpkin carving contests! For \$59 they'll take beginners from the beach for an hour introductory dive. Practice blowing bubbles and making faces at the pufferfish meandering by. If you're hooked, book a second dive immediately after for just \$30. Below the surface you'll hear crackling—the sound of parrotfish and shrimp noisily snacking on coral. If you hear something between a musical saw and a knocking chain, that's a whale singing in the distance.

Learn more about earth's largest mammals at the **Hawaiian Island Humpback Whale Sanctuary** (726 S. Kihei Rd., 808-879-2818, www.hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov). Next door, restoration of the **Ko'ie'ie Fishpond** is in full swing. Don't just stand there—join in! Volunteers help fortify the ancient fishpond's walls with stones passed hand to hand. Reward your efforts with sweet, golden fruit from **Yee's Mangoes** (S. Kihei Rd., across from Nohokai St.). Where to get the best mangoes is a hot debate in the islands, but most will agree that Yee's trees are top producers.

Before heading to dinner at one of South Maui's top-notch restaurants, stroll along the **Wailea Coastal Path** (entrance at Polo and Wailea Beach parks). Inhale the sweet scent of naio (false sandalwood) and other rare, native flowers growing on the cliffs. After dark, sit quietly on the path's stone bench to hear the eerie cry of the 'ua'u (Hawaiian storm petrels) as they call one another home.

Don't want to leave? Stay at: Polo Beach Club (3750 Wailea Alanui Dr., 808-879-1595. www.drhmaui.com) Situated on semi-private Polo beach, this upscale condo provides easy access to all of South Maui's water wonders.

#5 Lahaina Scavenger Hunt:

What you'll see: Raptor eggs, pre-contact birthing stone, first newspaper in the west.

What to bring: walking shoes, water

Hardly a local secret, Lahaina's Front Street is undoubtedly Maui's most trafficked piece of pavement. But even this tourist trap offers authentically cool adventures; its rich history is just below the surface. Embark on a scavenger hunt to find its rarest jewels. Poke around the exhibits at the **Old Lahaina Courthouse** (648 Wharf St., 808-661-1959). Grab a walking-tour map and head to the **Hauola stone** (north end of Lahaina Harbor). At low tide a partially submerged stone chair is visible in the water. Positioned at the mouth of an underground stream, the chair had reputed medicinal powers and was used by Hawaiian women in childbirth.

Medical antiquities of another sort are displayed at the **Baldwin House** (120 Dickenson St., 808-661-3262, admission \$3). During a deadly smallpox epidemic, Dr. Dwight Baldwin personally immunized (and thereby saved) thousands of Hawaiians. Check out his spare dispensary and his hobby—a collection of colorful native land snails. Meteorites and raptor eggs in the window of the **Whaler's Locker** (780 Front St., 808-661-3775) date back to the Pleistocene era. Are they real? Beats me. But the scrimshawed whales' teeth are artful evidence of bygone sailors' long days at sea. When the sailors hit shore, they read news hot off Lahainaluna School's press—the first newspaper published west of the Rockies. View the antique press and headlines at **Hale Pai** (980 Lahainaluna Rd., 808-661-3262, open weekdays 10 a.m.–3 p.m.). Life in Hawai'i was also documented by Thomas Edison. Watch early film footage of old-time paniolo (cowboys) wrangling steer onto ships in the rustic cookhouse at the **Wo Hing Temple Museum** (858 Front St., 808-661-5553).

The town ballpark may not look like much, but beneath the soil **Moku'ula**, an ancient sacred island, waits to be excavated. Long ago, the one-acre island rose from the center of a spring-fed fishpond—the legendary home of supernatural *mo'ō* (lizard-gods). Over centuries, the *iwi* (bones) of high-born Hawaiians were laid to

rest here, adding to the site's mana (power). One of Hawai'i's most sacred royals, Princess Keopuolani, lies nearby at **Waine'e Church** (535 Waine'e St., 808-661-4349). The child bride of Kamehameha I helped to overthrow the restrictive kapu system and was the first to receive a Christian burial. Lahaina's lure isn't all ancient history. At 505 Front Street, a fertile green sea turtle returns to the beach year after year to lay eggs in a soft, sandy nest—the cradle for tomorrow's turtles. And for the curious—these eggs are real, so give them a wide berth.

Don't want to leave? Stay at: Old Lahaina Inn (127 Lahainaluna Rd., 808-661-0577, www.lahainainn.com). Built in the 1930s, this charming boutique hotel sits in the midst of Lahaina's action. Watch the world go by from your comfortable lanai.

Maui No Ka Oi Magazine Sept-Oct 2006.