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The Hawaiian Islands

Self-Drive Guide



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Self-drive The Hawaiian Islands

Think of The Hawaiian Islands and images of paradise beaches, tropical rainforests and smouldering volcanoes will spring to mind. The six islands of Aloha - Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Maui and Hawai'i Island each offer a unique experience and are perfect for a self-drive discovery holiday. Head off the beaten track and explore unique landscapes such as dramatic coastal cliffs and stunning surf beaches. Experience the warmth of Hawai'i's people and their aloha spirit. There are plenty of activities to keep you occupied too, ranging from shopping, dining out, whale watching, sailing, snorkelling, horse riding and of course surfing!

DriveAway Holidays is the leading specialist in Australia & New Zealand offering worldwide car hire, motorhome rentals and European Peugeot Leasing. Find the best deals from world-leading suppliers with the expertise and knowledge of our team for your next self-drive holiday. In Hawai'i, choose from a range of car hire options with suppliers including Dollar Rent A Car, Avis, Hertz and Alamo so you can experience the real Hawai'i.

So before you head off on your travels, check out some of the drives we have put together within this guide with the help of Hawai'i Tourism Oceania and be inspired to take the road to freedom with DriveAway Holidays.



The
HAWAIIAN
ISLANDS

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Hawai'i

The state of Hawai'i comprises of six magnificent islands located in the central Pacific Ocean, southwest of the continental United States. Hawai'i has it all; beautiful scenic drives, unmatched serenity and hospitable locals. By day learn how to snorkel in crystal clear waters, visit volcanoes and waterfalls, and by night taste local Hawaiian cuisine, relax at a spa resort or enjoy a traditional lū'au performance.

Events

January

Ka Molokai Makahiki Festival - Hawaiians celebrate this festival with sporting events, ceremonies, hula dance, games and arts and crafts.

February

Chinese New Year Festival in Honolulu— The main street of Chinatown will be draped with red lanterns and good luck symbols. Grab a bite to eat from the delicious food stalls or watch the parade that features the traditional lion and dragon dance, musical and kung-fu performances.

March

Honolulu Festival in O'ahu—This annual festival has heaps of cultural performances, an arts and crafts exhibition, educational programs and concludes with a Grand Parade with fireworks and all.

April

Merrie Monarch Festival on Hawai'i The Big Island—This week long festival hosts a hula competition and free exhibits.

May

Lei Day—Celebrated throughout the state of Hawai'i, each island has its own traditional Lei that people wear for the day. This is some fun to get involved in if visiting in May.

June

Kapalua Wine & Food Festival in Maui—This four day event consists of many different events. From wine and gourmet food tasting, to golf tournaments, seminars, celebrity guests and internal seafood festival.

Maui Film Festival—Visit the Maui Film Festival for a great opportunity to see the artistic work of creative locals who have a passion for film. There are different festival passes available and onsite event parking. Take a look at the website closer to the date to see a detailed events schedule.

July

Fourth of July at Ala Moana Beach Park in O'ahu— This is the biggest Fourth of July celebration on the Island. Free entertainment begins in the late afternoon and visitors are also able to enjoy the many eateries.

August

Molokai Bow Hunters Tournament in O'ahu—This is a fun family day out. Partake in different categories such as bare bow, free style, organised hunts and more.

September

Aloha Festival—This month-long festival takes place throughout all the Hawaiian islands. The traditional events include cultural dancing, the floral parade, Hawaiian food, entertainment, music, hula, crafts, and more.

October

Molokai Hoe in O'ahu—This huge canoe race sees over 1000 paddlers from around the globe competing each year.

November

Kona Coffee Festival on Hawai'i The Big Island— This event is Hawai'i's oldest festival and runs for about two weeks. There is something for everyone at the festival with over 40 different events planned.

December

Honolulu City Lights in O'ahu—This will definitely get visitors into the spirit of Christmas. The Honolulu City Lights features a 50ft pine Christmas tree, decorated courtyard and displays, a parade and vendors.

Waikiki Beach, O'ahu

Attractions

O`ahu

Waikiki is the most popular attraction on Hawaii's main island, O`ahu'. There is so much to see and do in Waikiki from water sports including snorkelling, surfing, canoeing to bike riding, hiking and more. Waikiki beach boasts a white sandy shoreline and bright blue water.

Pearl Harbor is a must see when visiting O`ahu. Visiting the USS Arizona Memorial will allow visitors to learn about the tragic attacks of December 1941 and remember and respect those who lost their lives fighting to protect their country. Explore the exhibits, memorials and museums whilst listening to an audio tour.

Honolulu Zoo is home to over 900 different animals. There are more than enough animals in the zoo to get the whole family excited starting with reptiles such as lizards, frogs and tortoise to tigers and sheep and over 100 different birds.

North Shore is a great destination to visit all year round. In the winter pro surfers can experience some of the best waves' (In winter waves can often be too dangerous to recommend non-pro surfers to attempt), whilst in the warmer months go snorkelling and diving to see the marine wildlife.

Washington Place is the home of Queen Liliuokalani, Hawai'i's last reigning monarch. Take a guided tour of the residence and learn about the history and lives of the past residents.

Ala Moana Center is an impressive shopping centre that boasts over 290 stores ranging from retail outlets to dining options. Visitors will find everything from children's stores to high end fashion stores, be sure to spend a day here indulging in some luxuries.

Pua Mau Botanical Gardens is a garden paradise waiting to be explored. Complete with a hibiscus maze, large lava boulders and ever blooming plants a visit to this lush green location is not to be missed.

Mau'i Island

Road to Hana, is a popular attraction amongst visitors to Maui. Travelling along the Hana Highway in your hire car is a great way to see many lush green panoramas and blue waterfalls. This scenic route stretches along the east coast of the island and overlooks famous Hawaiian beaches, botanical gardens, tropical landscapes, lookouts and more.

Maui Lu'aus are a significant part of Hawai'i's history. There are lu'aus offered all over the island of Maui which include Hawaiian food, music, hula, acrobatics and fire dancing.

KaHana Beach Park is a world-famous windsurfing beach that also has great conditions for swimming and diving. Spend the day here soaking up the sun and enjoy lunch at the picnic tables.

The Pipiwai Trail is located in East Maui and begins at the Oheo' Bridge near the 'Pools of Oheo'. On the hike visitors will pass many waterfalls, a banyan tree and conquer their way through a bamboo forest.

Maui Ocean Center has been voted Hawai'i's top rated family attraction. This state of the art aquarium exhibits both indoor and outdoor displays of the fascinating underwater world. Dine at the restaurant, participate in the educational talks or simply stroll the aquarium and enjoy the exhibits.

Haleakala National Park is home to Maui's highest peak rising over 3,000 metres above sea level. Visitors can go hiking or horse back riding through the park or brave the early morning to witness a spectacular sunrise.

Makena Beach State Park is one of the most famous and largest beaches in Maui. It boasts a one kilometre stretch of white sandy shores and crystal blue water perfect for swimming and snorkelling. Picnic facilities are also available at the beach.

Pebble Beach, Maui

Attractions

Hawai'i Island (The Big Island)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is a one of a kind site and Hawaii's most popular park to visit. The Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is the result of over 70 million years of volcanism. Complete a hiking trail through smoking craters, rainforest, black lava deserts, snowy summits and grassy coastal plains.

Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park is a historic location on the south coast of the island. Kealakekua Bay marks the site where Captain James Cook landed on Hawai'i island. Filled with tropical fish and colourful coral, Kealakekua is a great place to spend the day kayaking, snorkelling or scuba diving. Pack lunch and sit at the picnic area and simply enjoy this lush, historic location.

Hāpuna Beach is one of the islands best beaches and boasts white sandy shores and turquoise water. This is a great place for swimming, snorkelling and body boarding.

Anna Ranch Heritage Center gives visitors an opportunity to take a tour on the discovery trail through the historic property. Learn about the long life of Anna Ranch and her achievements as one of Hawai'i's most loved community leaders. Make sure you admire the manicured gardens when completing the tour.

Rainbow Falls is located in Hilo and a great place to visit early in the day as the morning sun refracts through the waterfalls creating rainbows everywhere.

Hulihe Palace is located in Kona and used to be the home of Princess Ruth Luka Ke'elikōlani. It has now been converted into a museum that houses beautiful furniture and artefacts. Take a guided tour of the palace or stroll the grounds at your own leisure.

Kaua'i

Waimea Canyon is a beautiful must see site when visiting the island of Kaua'i. This 22km long stretch offers panoramic views of the deep gorges and vivid colours. It is considered the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific."

Nā Pali Coastline is an expansive rocky cliff face that stretches over Kaua'i's northwest shore. Experience the natural beauty by foot on the Kalalau Hiking Trail, from the water in a kayak or catamaran or from the air above in a once in a life time helicopter ride.

Kaua'i Museum is the perfect place to brush up on your history of the island. The small entry fee includes a guided tour of the museum in which visitors embark on a historical journey dating back to 1778 when Captain James Cook anchored in Waimea Harbor.

Hānaiei Bay is one of the few areas that are calm enough for swimming during the summer on the island of Kaua'i. Visit the Hānaiei Beach Park and enjoy splashing in the water or pack a picnic and spend the day relaxing and people watching.

Kilauea Lighthouse is a popular attraction on Hawai'i's island of Kaua'i. Visitors can tour the lighthouse, take panoramic pictures of the view and most likely catch a glimpse of some humpback whales swimming in the winter.

Kalalau Trail is on the Nā Pali coast and is over 11 miles in length. Along the hike, visitors will encounter narrow valleys, waterfalls, steams and other scenic landscapes.

Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge has a stunning backdrop of the Pacific ocean and allows guests to observe the seabirds and other Hawai'ian wildlife in their natural habitats.

Honolulu , O'ahu

O`ahu Self-Drive Tours

Windward Coast

Stop 1: Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve

Start your morning early and head east of Waikiki taking the Kalaniana'ole Highway out to Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve. Here you can enjoy a unique snorkelling experience at one of Hawai'i's premier marine conservatories, sheltered in a curved bay of a breached volcanic crater. On arrival you will need to pay a small entrance fee and watch a short educational video. Opens daily at 6am, closed Tuesdays.



Waimanalo Beach, O`ahu

Stop 2: Hālonā Blowhole

Continuing along the Kalaniana'ole Highway stop off at Hālonā Blowhole, a lava tube that can shoot water up to 9 metres in the air when the tide is high.

Stop 3: Makapu'u Point & Lighthouse

Five minutes' drive up the road you will find Makapu'u Point & Lighthouse, the easternmost point on O`ahu, known for the Island's best body surfing. Take a leisurely hike to the top of the Makapu'u sea cliff and delight in seasonal whale watching.

Stop 4: Waimānalo Beach

Return to the highway and ten minutes' drive up the coast you will find Waimānalo Beach, perhaps the prettiest stretch of pristine white-sand beach on O`ahu. The shoreline fronts majestic views of the Ko'olau Range and is perfect for picnics.

Stop 5: Kailua Beach

Follow the highway north and turn right at Kailua Road to discover Kailua Beach offering soft, white sand, or a day of windsurfing, kayaking and swimming in the beautiful waters.



Makapu'u Lighthouse, O`ahu



Hālonā Blowhole, O`ahu

O`ahu Self-Drive Tours

Windward Coast

Stop 6: Byodo-In Temple

Next make your way along Kāne`ohe Bay Drive and onto the Kahekili Highway. Go for a wonder around the Byodo-In Temple, which can be found at the base of the 610 meter Ko`olau Range. A replica of a 900-year-old Buddhist temple in Kyoto, Japan it was built in memory of the first Japanese immigrants that came to O`ahu to work on the sugar plantations. Enter at the Valley of the Temples Memorial Park.



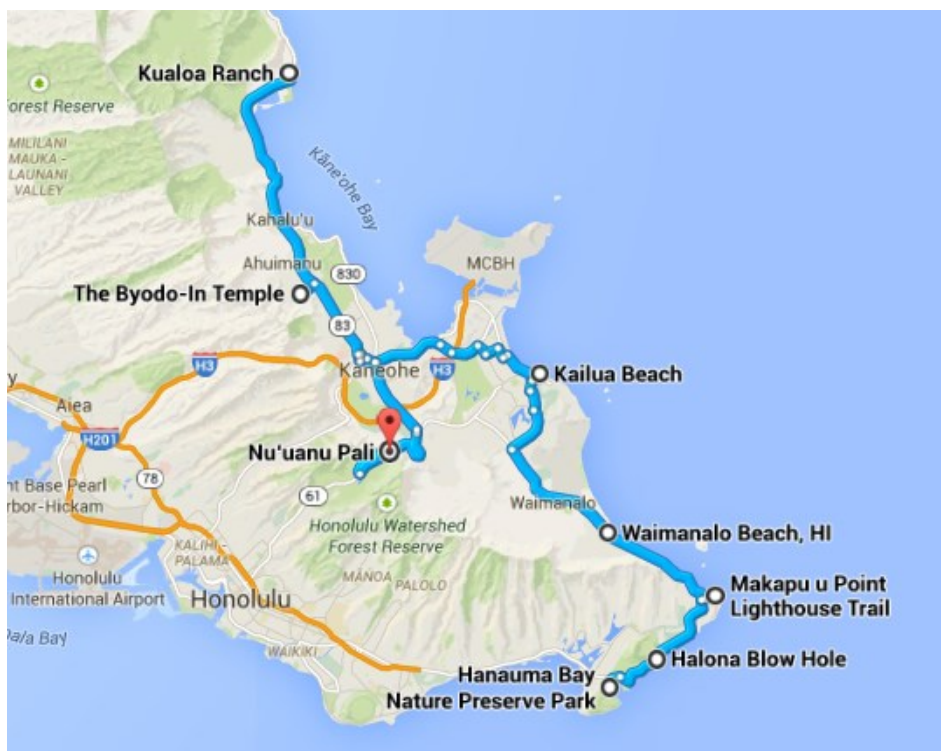
Byodo-In Temple, O`ahu

Stop 7: Kualoa

Carry on driving north on the Kahekili Highway (turns into Kamehameha Highway) until you reach Kualoa, which was one of the most sacred sites on O`ahu and is today included in the National Register of Historical Places. Visit the Kualoa Ranch in operation since 1850. The cattle ranch offers guests horseback riding, movie set tours, archery, jet skiing, kayaking, snorkelling or simple relaxation (pre-book prior to arrival, but walk-ins are welcome). Opportunity for lunch.

Stop 8: Nu`uanu Pali Lookout

Head back towards Honolulu along the Kamehameha Highway and at the end join the Pali Highway. You will soon reach the Nu`uanu Pali Lookout, one of O`ahu`s finest views of the sheer Ko`olau cliffs. Perched over 900 meters above the O`ahu coastline is the site of the battle of Nu`uanu, where in 1795 Kamehameha I won the struggle that finally united all islands south of O`ahu under one rule.



O`ahu Self-Drive Tours

North Shore

Stop 1: Dole Plantation

Start your day driving for approximately 40 minutes north-west of Honolulu. Take the Queen Lili`uokalani Freeway, the Veterans Memorial Freeway and then Kamehameha Highway and you will soon reach the turnoff for Dole Plantation. Make a quick stop for some delicious DoleWhip (pineapple ice-cream) before setting off for Hale`iwa Town.

Stop 2: Hale`iwa

Continue along the highway until you reach Hale`iwa. This town is more than the laid back surfing center it seems. Discover the town filled with local style and rustic ambiance, as well as quaint shops, understated restaurants and charming art galleries. Why not try a shave ice while you are there!

Stop 3: Laniakea Beach

Our next stop is Laniakea Beach, one of the best places on O`ahu for spotting green sea turtles (honu). To get there, head back onto the highway driving northeast for five minutes. Please remember to be respectful and keep your distance from these amazing, endangered creatures.

Stop 4: Waimea Valley & Waimea Bay

A bit further up the road you will find the turn off for Waimea Valley. Wander through this 1,800 acre rainforest and botanical garden to a beautiful waterfall. Situated at the base of the majestic Ko`olau Range, this valley was once a heavily populated Hawaiian village. Get back on the highway to discover Waimea Bay. In the winter, ocean swells rising above the North Shore pound the Bay with 10 metre waves. Summers find the bay quiet and gentle-perfect for swimming, snorkelling or diving. Parking at Waimea Valley and walking to the beach is an option.

Stop 5: Pu`u o Mahuka Heiau State Park

Make your way onto Pūpūkea Road to explore Pu`u o Mahuka Heiau State Park. This is a national monument and state historic site, and O`ahu`s largest Hawaiian heiau (temple). Today, this sacred temple boasts a magnificent view from Waimea to Ka`ena Point.

Stop 6: `Ehukai and Sunset Beach

Stop at the amazing surf spots, `Ehukai and Sunset Beach, which host surfers from around the world for both enjoyment and competition. Watch the spectacle of surfers catching the thrill of, at times, six to ten metre waves during the winter months. During summer sunbathe on the beach or enjoy the now calmer waters. Simply continue following the highway in a north-easterly direction to get there.



Maui Self-Drive Tours

North Road to Hāna and Beyond

Stop 1: Ho'okipa Beach Park

Begin your morning bright and early driving from Kahului to join Hāna Highway. At Ho'okipa Beach Park watch the pro-windsurfers race around in the winter or swim and sunbathe in the calmer summer months. Note that during the winter, wave conditions can be extremely dangerous so please heed all posted signs for your safety.

Stop 2: Hāna Highway

Continue along the Hāna Highway, also known as the 'Road to Hāna'. With over 600 hairpin turns and 54 narrow bridges, the famous Road to Hāna is much less a thoroughfare as it is a life lesson. Slow down and enjoy the ride, there's a surprise around every corner. Plan at least 3 hours each way, only confident drivers should take on this highway.



Hāna Highway, Maui

Stop 3: Wai'anapanapa State Park

As you follow the Hāna Highway you will find Wai'anapanapa State Park located just a few minutes' drive past Hāna Airport, where you'll see a beautiful black sand beach. The park offers a coastal hiking trail. Please use caution if swimming as the currents tend to be strong.

Stop 4: Hāna

Re-join the Hāna Highway and continue heading east for 10 minutes and you will reach the town of Hāna. East Maui is as rewarding as the journey to reach it. A magical little hamlet of simple homes and quiet gardens, Hāna's isolation is the source of its charm. Make sure to fill up your car with petrol here as you won't find any petrol stations until you drive back past Hāna on your way home.



Wai'anapanapa State Park, Maui



Water Caves at Wai'anapanapa State Park, Maui

Maui Self-Drive Tours

North Road to Hāna

Stop 5: Pools of 'Ohe'o

Haleakalā National Park stretches from upcountry Maui, down the mountain's flanks all the way to the ocean in the east and to our next stop, the Pools of 'Ohe'o. A half hour drive along the highway from Hāna, the Pools of 'Ohe'o is made up of dozens of beautiful pools fed by fresh water streams from Maui's famed Haleakalā volcano.

Stop 6: Haleakalā National Park

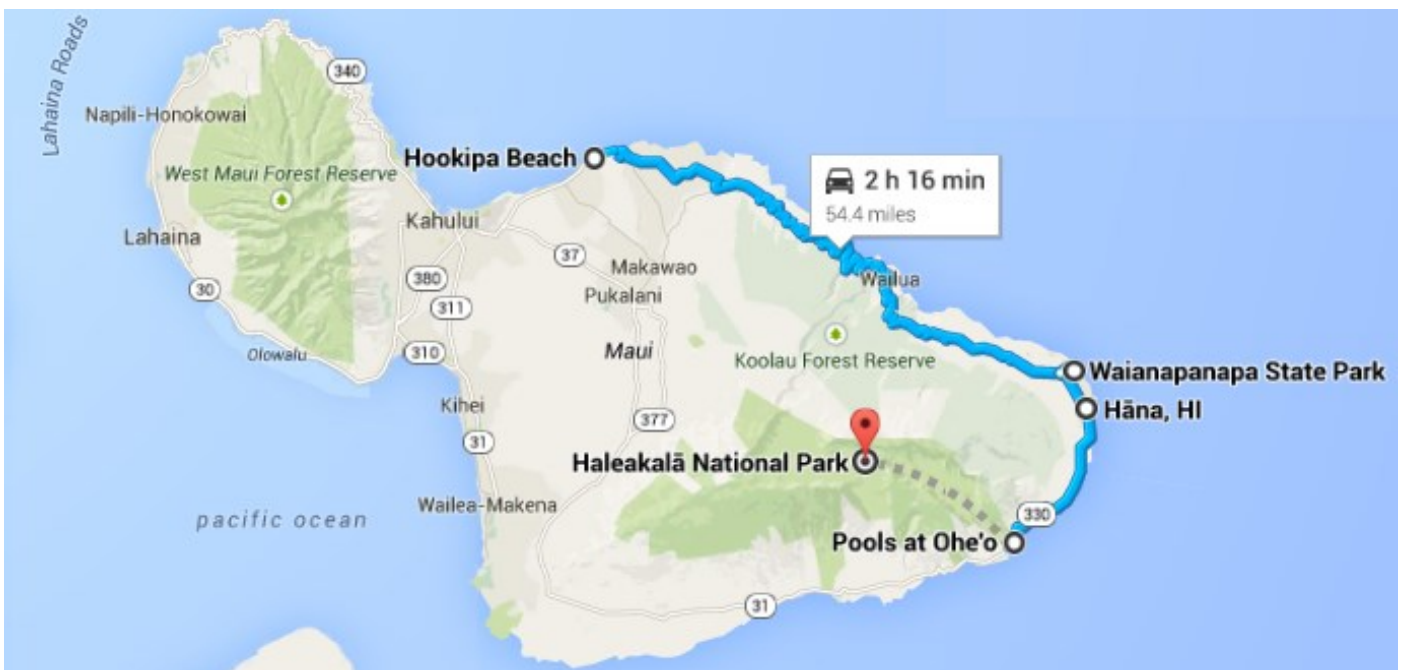
The Kīpahulu side of Haleakalā National Park features lush rainforests, a visitor centre and various hiking trails. If you decide to hike be prepared for hot, humid weather year round and wear sturdy, close-toed shoes. Kīpahulu continues to be an important cultural site today. You will discover waterfalls, sweeping vistas of the coastline and you may even spot sea turtles, monk seals, dolphins, seabirds and between December and April even humpback whales! Guided hikes, talks and cultural demonstrations are available once daily.



Pools of 'Ohe'o, Maui

Stop 7: Kahului

Head back towards Kahului, driving west along the southern coast of Maui. Follow the Hāna Highway, which soon becomes the Pi'ilani Highway and drive up through scenic Upcountry Maui.



Maui Self-Drive Tours

Upcountry Maui to Haleakalā

Stop 1: ʻĪao Valley State Park

ʻĪao Valley State Park is a peaceful, lush area centring around Kūkaemoku, or ʻĪao Needle, a towering rock pinnacle. Kūkaemoku soars 365 meters high and can best be seen in the early morning. To drive there from West Maui follow Honoapiʻilani Highway then turn left onto Main Street, which becomes ʻĪao Valley Road.

Stop 2: Hoʻokipa Beach Park

Our next stop is at Hoʻokipa Beach Park, a great spot to watch pro-windsurfers race around in the winter or swim and sunbathe in the calmer summer months. Simply follow Main Street east, which will become W Kaʻahumanu Avenue. Turn right onto the Hāna Highway and drive along the coast for twenty minutes. Note that during the winter, wave conditions can be extremely dangerous so please heed all posted signs for your safety.

Stop 3: Pāʻia

Head five minutes back down the Hāna Highway the way you came, turn left onto Baldwin Avenue and follow the road to Pāʻia. The picturesque plantation-era storefronts of Pāʻia are home to several ethnic eateries and dozens of colourful boutiques offering unique gifts, surf gear and a variety of locally produced art, jewellery and clothing.

Stop 4: Makawao

Continue up Baldwin Avenue and you will discover another small town, Makawao. The combination of pineapple plantation and *paniolo* (Hawaiian cowboy) heritage along with a thriving arts community make Makawao a uniquely enjoyable place to go for a wander.

Stop 5: Surfing Goat Dairy

Next check out the Surfing Goat Dairy. Follow Makawao Avenue, the Kula Highway, ʻOmaʻopio Road and turn left onto ʻIkena Kai Place. The Surfing Goat Dairy is a state of the art working dairy with over 25 cheeses including 11 National Award winners. Reservations are recommended for some tours.



ʻĪao Valley State Park, Maui



Hoʻokipa Beach Park, Maui

Maui Self-Drive Tours

Upcountry Maui to Haleakalā

Stop 6: Kula

Get back onto 'Oma'opio Road and turn right, heading south, on the Kula Highway and you will quickly find the town of Kula. In Kula, you'll uncover fruitful farming communities that harvest some of Maui's freshest produce (including the famous Maui onion). The delicious Kula onion is sweet, flavourful and appropriately mellow.



Kula Botanical Gardens, Maui

Stop 7: Ali'i Kula Lavender Farm

Re-join the Kula Highway driving south, turn left onto Kekaulike Avenue then take a right onto Waipoli Road to visit Ali'i Kula Lavender Farm. Go on a tour of the farm that is home to approximately 55,000 lavender plants and 45 different species of lavender. Have lunch overlooking the beautiful lavender fields or wonder the shop full of lavender products.

Stop 8: Haleakalā National Park

Haleakalā volcano at Haleakalā National Park is also one of Maui's most memorable attractions. Rising more than 3,050 meters from the sea, no trip to Maui is complete without a visit to the "House of the Sun". Plan to arrive before sunset, the views will be unforgettable. Make sure to dress warmly, the summit averages at about eight degrees Celsius. To drive there make your way to the Haleakalā Highway and follow the signs to reach the visitor centre and summit. You might like to take motion sickness tablets with you as the road winds back and forth up the mountain.



Ali'i Kula Lavender Farm, Maui



Hawai'i, The Big Island Self-Drive

Kona to Hilo via the North Route



Stop 1: Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historic Park
Begin your day travelling north along the Kona/ Kohala Coast on the Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway (Hwy 19) until you reach the entrance to Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historic Park located on the ma kai (ocean) side between mile marker 96 & 97. This 1160-acre national park was established in 1978 to preserve, protect and interpret the traditional Native Hawaiian activities and culture that thrived on the site. The visitors centre is open daily from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.

Stop 2: Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site

Continue driving north along the highway for approximately 32 kilometres until you reach the intersection of Hwy 19 & Hwy 270. Turn left and continue for 3 kilometres to the entrance of Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site. Around 1790, this "place of worship" was built by King Kamehameha I as an offering to the gods to ask for success in his campaign to unite the Hawaiian Islands. Visitors centre open daily from 7:45 am – 4:45 pm.



Stop 3: Waimea

Turn right upon leaving the park, backtracking for 3 kilometres, until you are heading east on Mamalahoa Highway. A 15 minute drive will take you to the town of Waimea, known as *paniolo* (Hawaiian cowboy) country and home to several cattle ranches including Parker Ranch-once the nation's largest privately owned ranch.

Stop 4: Waipi'o Valley Lookout

Continuing in an easterly direction, you will come to the town of Honoka'a. Upon entering the town you will see a sign indicating a left turn from the highway to Waipi'o Valley. Take this 16 kilometre detour to discover the Waipi'o Valley Lookout, a beautiful photo spot of this immense valley with the black sand beach below. This was the home of many chiefs and an important centre for political & religious life in Hawai'i.



The Big Island Self-Drive Tours

Kona to Hilo via the North Route

Stop 5: Akaka Falls State Park

Once back on Hwy 19, continue toward Hilo for approximately 48 kilometres to the small town of Honomū (between mile marker 13 & 14), where you will see the turn off on the right side of the road for 'Akaka Falls State Park. Once at 'Akaka Falls, take the waterfall loop hike where you will first see 60 meter Kahuna Falls. Continue along the loop to witness towering 'Akaka Falls, plunging 135 meters from the cliffs above. The hike takes less than an hour and there is a small entrance fee.



Stop 6: Hilo

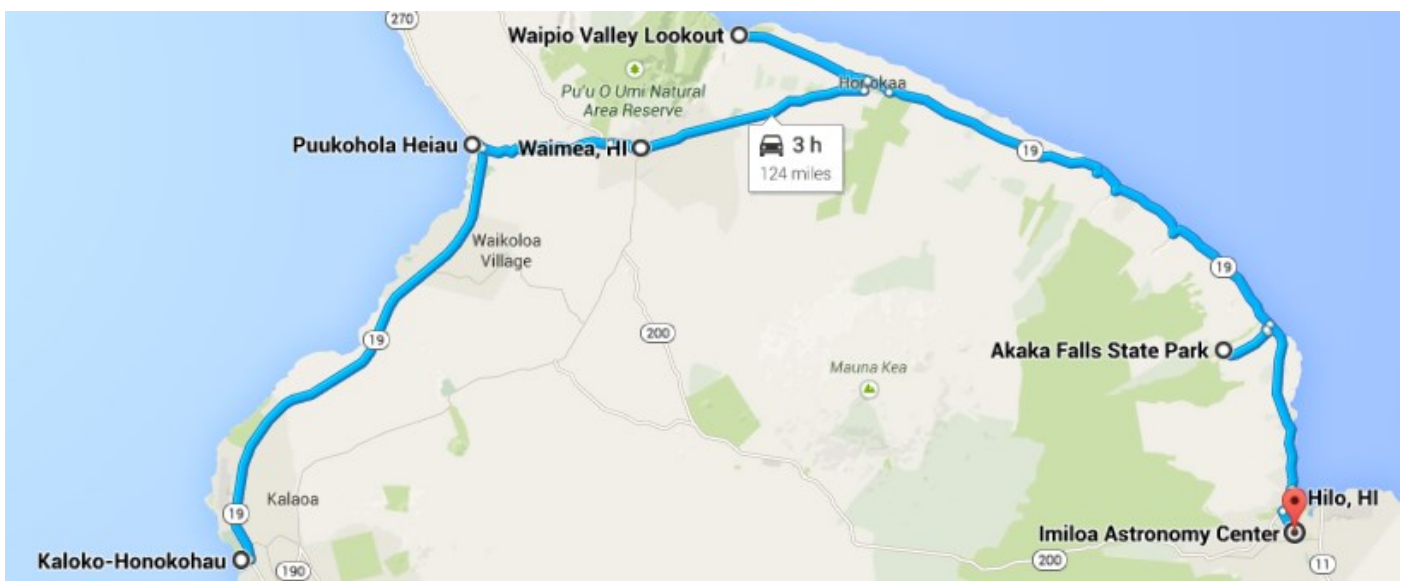
Travel back to the main highway (approximately 6.5 kilometres) and continue south to the quaint town of Hilo. Start your visit with a stroll down Kamehameha Avenue and discover a variety of local shops, art galleries, restaurants and attractions. Visit the bustling Hilo Farmers Market, open 7 days a week but Wednesday and Saturday are the most popular market days.

Stop 7: 'Imiloa Astronomy Center

Not far away is the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center where the relationship between Hawaiian culture and the universe is showcased through a colourful variety of displays and interactive exhibits. There are daily Planetarium shows, an extensive Exhibit Hall, landscape tours, and a restaurant. The centre is open from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Tues-Sun (closed Mondays).

Stop 8: Kaloko-Honokōhau

Overnight in Hilo town or, if you need to get back to the Kona side of the island, take Kaumana Drive to Saddle Road (Daniel K Inouye Hwy 200) for a shorter drive across the centre of the island (allow 2 hours).



Kaua'i Self-Drive Tours

Līhu'e to Waimea Canyon Roundtrip

Stop 1: Līhu'e

Start your day with a caffeine hit at Kaua'i Coffee Company, the largest coffee farm in the US. From Līhu'e head west on Highway 50 before taking Route 540. Take a self-guided tour of the Kaua'i coffee harvesting and roasting process and sample a variety of coffee flavours.

Stop 2: Hanapepē

Continue on Route 540, which will take you back to Highway 50, and stop into "Kaua'i's Biggest Little Town" of Hanapepē. Visit the unique art galleries or enjoy a stroll on the swinging bridge.

Stop 3: Waimea

Continuing west, you will reach Waimea. This historic seaport town can be found not far from where British discoverer Captain James Cook first landed in Hawai'i in 1778. Visit the statue of Captain Cook in the centre of town, a replica of the original statue found in Whitby England.



Sunrise in Lihue,

Stop 4: Waimea Canyon, Koke'e State Park and Kalalau Valley

Take a right at Waimea Canyon Drive (550) and keep driving until you reach one of Kaua'i's biggest attractions, Waimea Canyon, nicknamed the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific". Stand in awe at the sweeping views of lush valleys and tropical forest canopies, creating a kaleidoscopic landscape of green, orange, red and purple. Past the canyon lookouts you will enter Koke'e State Park. Visit the Koke'e Lodge and Museum to get a glimpse of the area's history, rare and unique foliage and wildlife. Be sure to travel to the end of the road, where a lookout offers visitors a glimpse of the amazing Kalalau Valley.

Stop 5: Kōloa

Head back down Highway 550, leading to route 50 then 530. Soon you'll arrive at Kōloa, home of Hawai'i's first productive sugar plantation established in 1835. The area has retained much of its old charm and many plantation buildings still decorate this historic place. Check out the Kōloa History Centre and browse the shops under the shade of large monkeypod trees.



Waimea Canyon, Kaua'i

Kaua'i Self-Drive Tours

Līhu'e to Waimea Canyon Roundtrip

Stop 6: McBryde and Allerton Gardens Visitor Center

Journey south via Po'ipu Road then west on Lawai Road and stop at the McBryde and Allerton Gardens Visitor Center, headquarters for the National Tropical Botanical Garden and the only tropical plant research station in the US. Here you'll see lily pads the size of swimming pools, along with dozens of rare and endangered plants. Reservations are recommended for the Allerton Garden as they offer guided tours only. McBryde Garden is a self-guided tour only.

Stop 7: Spouting Horn Park

Across the road at the Spouting Horn Park bear witness to the Po'ipū surf shooting through a natural lava tube and up to 18 metres into the air during large swells, listen for the hiss and roar of the water that follows!

Stop 8: Po'ipū Beach Park

Head east back along Lawai Road and Po'ipu Road to finish your day at the inviting ocean waters off Po'ipū Beach Park. From December through May you might even spot humpback whales spouting offshore. It's also a well-known spot for endangered Hawaiian monk seals to sunbathe on the sand.



Spouting Horn, Kaua'i



Kaua'i Self-Drive Tours

Kaua'i: North Shore and the Coconut Coast

Stop 1: Wailua Falls

Your first stop is the beautiful Wailua Falls, most recognised as the waterfall in the opening credits of the television show "Fantasy Island". To get there head north from Līhu'e on Kuhio Highway (56) and turn left on Highway 583. Easily accessible, Wailua Falls can be seen from the roadside, so you can leave your hiking boots behind.



Kīlauea Point Lighthouse, Kaua'i

Stop 2: Lydgate Beach Park

Next is the family-friendly Lydgate Beach Park. Take Highway 583 back the way you came then join Kuhio Highway (56) heading north. Lydgate Beach Park offers visitors and residents a relaxing beach experience, it features two mini-pools surrounded by reefs and is ideal for keiki (children). Snorkellers will be treated to a colourful spectrum of fish in the big pool.

Stop 3: Wailua River, Fern Grotto and Kapa'a

A couple of minutes' drive north of the beach take a riverboat tour up Wailua River, Hawai'i's largest navigable river, to the magnificent Fern Grotto. The grotto is a natural lava-rock grotto, with hanging ferns and tropical foliage, cooled by the mists of a waterfall. This is a popular tour so it is best to pre-book. Head back northeast up Highway 56. You'll soon arrive at the quaint town of Kapa'a where you'll discover a blend of handmade and fine items including Hawaiian art and craft pieces.

Stop 4: Kīlauea Point Lighthouse and Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge

Continue along the highway to Kīlauea Point Lighthouse. The historic landmark sits majestically on the northernmost peninsula of the island, providing scenic views of the dramatic cliffs and coastline. It is a perfect place to spot whales December through April. While visiting the lighthouse, discover Kīlauea Point National Wildlife Refuge to see some of Hawai'i's most treasured birdlife.

Stop 5: Princeville

Follow the highway again and you will soon come to the picturesque luxury resort area, Princeville. Wander around the resorts, restaurants and shops. This area is also home to the multi award-winning Makai Golf Course.



Wailua River Kaua'i

Kaua'i Self-Drive Tours

North Shore and the Coconut Coast

Stop 6: Hanalei and Hanalei Bay

Join the Kuhio Highway (560) and head into the charming town of Hanalei, which offers simple to sophisticated dining, shopping and entertainment. Beach parks border nearby Hanalei Bay and the pier is great for fishing. The mountains form a stunning backdrop, complete with waterfalls, mists and rainbows; no wonder so many movies have been filmed in the area!



Stop 7: Limahuli Garden and Preserve

Further up the highway on the left is Limahuli Garden and Preserve. Offering both guided and non-guided tours, Tuesday through Saturday, this unique garden offers a glimpse into Kaua'i's unique cultural past and a superb collection of native tropical plants.

Stop 8: Ke'e Beach Park

At the end of Kuhio Highway (560), Ke'e Beach Park, an aquamarine lagoon awaits snorkelers. Always check the water conditions with the lifeguard station before entering the water. Nearby are wet and dry caves, easily accessible and steeped in ancient lore.





So now that we've inspired you to take a self-drive holiday in Hawai'i, don't forget to book your car hire with DriveAway Holidays before you go. Our prices are inclusive and you will leave with peace of mind that everything is locked in ready for you to enjoy your holiday!

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