

## Chapter 15

# Settling into the Big Island

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Getting from the airport to your hotel
- ▶ Finding your way around the Big Island and its major resort areas
- ▶ Choosing among the island's top accommodations
- ▶ Discovering the Big Island's best restaurants
- ▶ Arranging for a luau
- ▶ Using an easy-reference list of important local contacts

**A**t 4,038 square miles, the Big Island really is *big*. Not only that, but a handful of volcanic mountains dominates the interior, making crossing from coast to coast a challenge, to say the least. If you want to visit all the Big Island's major attractions, I strongly suggest that you choose not one but two places to stay while you're here: one on the hot, arid Kona Coast, and the other on the lush, rainforested volcano coast.

You *can* stay just on the Kona side of the island and visit Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on a daytrip. Expect a long day, however: It takes at least three hours to reach the park from anywhere on the western coast. And because the best time to see the flowing lava in the park is after dark, you won't get back to Kona anytime before midnight.



If you're planning to visit both sides of the island, here's a way to cut down on driving time and maximize sightseeing (or relaxation) time. I suggest scheduling your Big Island visit so that you fly in to one side of the island and fly out on the other. Either land at Kona airport and fly out of Hilo, or vice versa — it really doesn't matter. Doing so will likely cost you about 50 bucks in car-rental drop-off charges, but can save an extra 3- to 3½-hour drive to return to the coast you started from for your outbound flight.



Visit [www.hawaii specials.com](http://www.hawaii specials.com), operated by the Big Island Visitors Bureau, for easy-as-pie one-stop shopping. Here you'll find the best accommodations bargains and value-added vacation packages currently available on the Volcano Isle.

## Arriving on the West Side at Kona Airport

**Kona International Airport at Keahole** (☎ 808-329-3423; [www.state.hi.us/dot/airports/hawaii/koa](http://www.state.hi.us/dot/airports/hawaii/koa)) is located 7 miles north of Kailua-Kona, just off Queen Kaahumanu Highway (Highway 19). Kona is served direct from the mainland by three airlines: **American Airlines**, **United Airlines**, and **Aloha Airlines**. Otherwise, you can take an interisland flight from another Hawaiian island, via Aloha or **Hawaiian Airlines**. This small, open-air airport is a breeze to navigate. The major rental-car companies have counters directly across the street (in the wooden hut), but because of increased airport security, you must now take a shuttle van to a nearby offsite lot to pick up your car.



While you're at the rental counter, be sure to pick up a map booklet from the agent; all the car-rental agencies offer them, and they're invaluable for getting around the island. They often include money-saving coupons for attractions as well.

If you're heading to **Kailua-Kona**, turn right out of the airport onto Queen Kaahumanu (ka-a-hoo-MA-noo) Highway (Highway 19). Clearly marked turnoffs take you down to the town's main drag, Alii (ah-LEE-ee) Drive, about 7 miles to the south. If you're continuing on to **South Kona** or **Keauhou** (kay-A-ho), stay on Highway 19 for another 7 or so miles; for Keauhou, turn toward the coast on Kamehameha III Road.

If you're heading to a **Kohala Coast** resort, turn left out of the airport onto Queen Kaahumanu Highway (Highway 19) and proceed to one of the following locations:

- ✓ **Kaupulehu** (cow-poo-LAY-hoo), home to the Four Seasons Hualalai and Kona Village, is 7 miles north of the airport, or a ten-minute drive.
- ✓ **Waikoloa** (why-ko-LO-ah), home to the Waikoloa Beach Marriott and Hilton Waikoloa Village, is 18 miles north, or a 20- to 25-minute drive.
- ✓ **Mauna Lani**, home to the Orchid and the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows, is about 23 miles north, or a half-hour drive.
- ✓ **Mauna Kea** has its entrance 28 miles north of the airport, or a 40-minute drive.

Look for the gateway to your resort on the ocean side of the road; the only one that's on the right side of the road is the turnoff for the Westin Hapuna Prince Beach Hotel, just before Mauna Kea's entrance. The resort entrances tend to be marked in a rather understated way, so look carefully.



If you're staying at one of the Kohala Coast resorts and don't need a rental car for your entire stay, you can usually arrange for the resort shuttle to pick you up at the airport. Then you can arrange to have a

rental car delivered to your hotel only on the day(s) you need it. Call the concierge at your hotel for details before you arrive.

Taxis are also readily available at the airport, so you don't need to arrange for one in advance. Expect the cost to be about \$21 to Kailua-Kona, more if you're heading to one of the Kohala Coast resorts. You can also prearrange airport transfers with **SpeediShuttle** (☎ 800-977-2605 or 808-329-5433; [www.speedishuttle.com](http://www.speedishuttle.com)). If you forgot to call SpeediShuttle before you left home, dial "65" from one of the courtesy phones in baggage claim.

If you prefer to have a private car service transport you to your Kohala Coast resort in style, contact **Luana Limousine** (☎ 800-999-4001 or 808-326-5466). Vehicles run the gamut from Lincoln Town Cars to stretch limos to 14-passenger vans, and prices are actually quite reasonable; about \$35 will get you to Mauna Lani. Be sure to call a couple of days before you leave home to arrange pickup.

## *Arriving on the East Side at Hilo Airport*

**Hilo** (HEE-low) **International Airport** (☎ 808-934-5840 or 808-934-5838; [www.state.hi.us/dot/airports/hawaii/ito](http://www.state.hi.us/dot/airports/hawaii/ito)) is 2 miles east of downtown Hilo, at the junction of Kamehameha Avenue and Kanoelehua Avenue (Highway 11). **Aloha Airlines** and **Hawaiian Airlines** serve Hilo International from Honolulu; tiny **Pacific Wings Airlines** also offers flights to Hilo from other islands.

Step outside and proceed straight to the rental car desk. Be sure to pick up a map booklet at the rental counter — they're invaluable for getting around the island.

If you're staying in **Hilo**, turn right out of the airport onto Kanoelehua Avenue (Highway 11), which will lead you right to Banyan Drive and the Hilo Hawaiian and Hawaii Naniloa hotels. To reach downtown and the waterfront, turn left onto Kamehameha Avenue just before Banyan Drive.

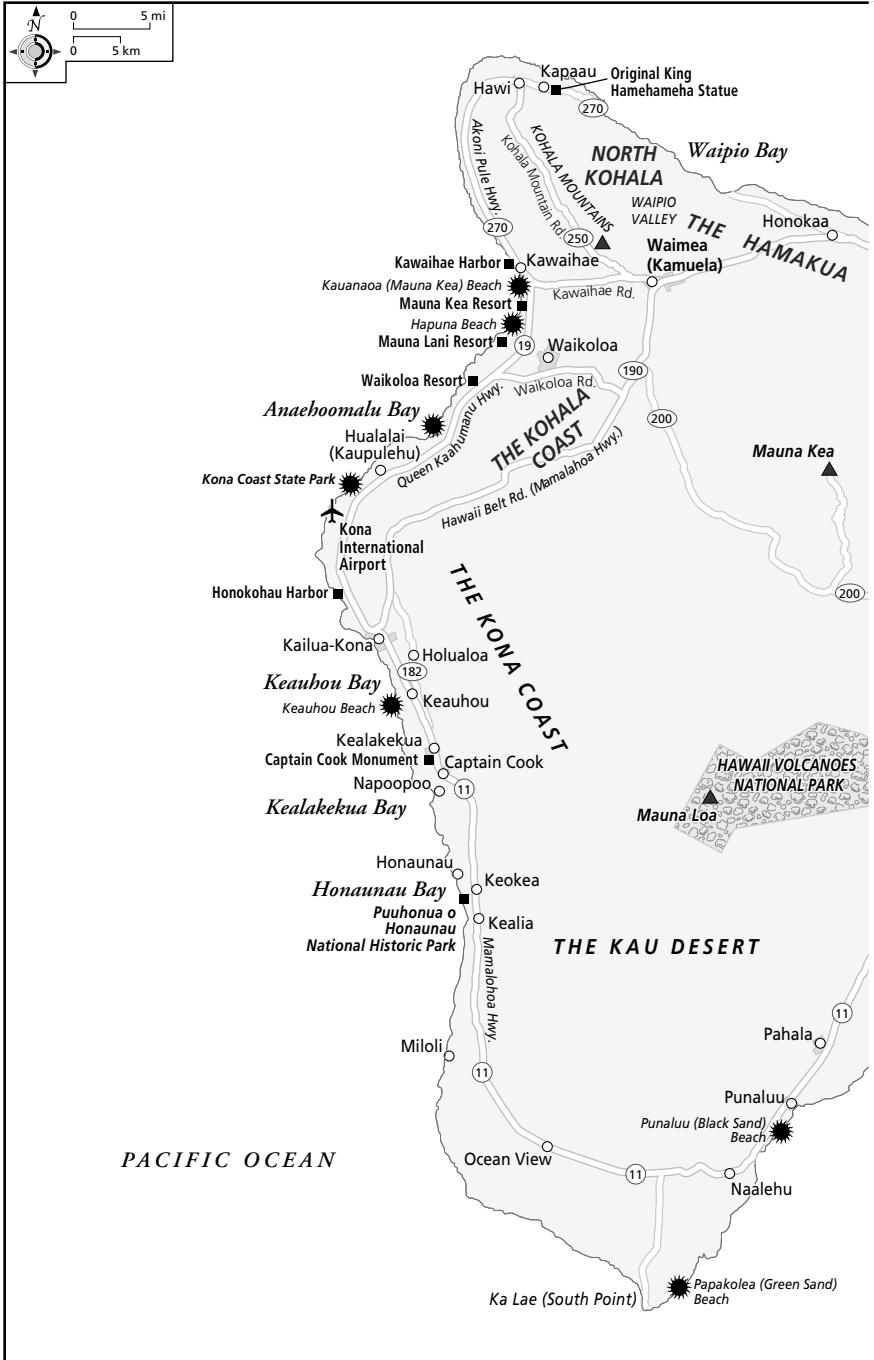
If you're heading to **Volcano Village**, turn left out of the airport onto Kanoelehua Avenue (Highway 11). Highway 11 will take you the 27 miles (a 45-minute or so drive), to Volcano Village, at the entrance of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

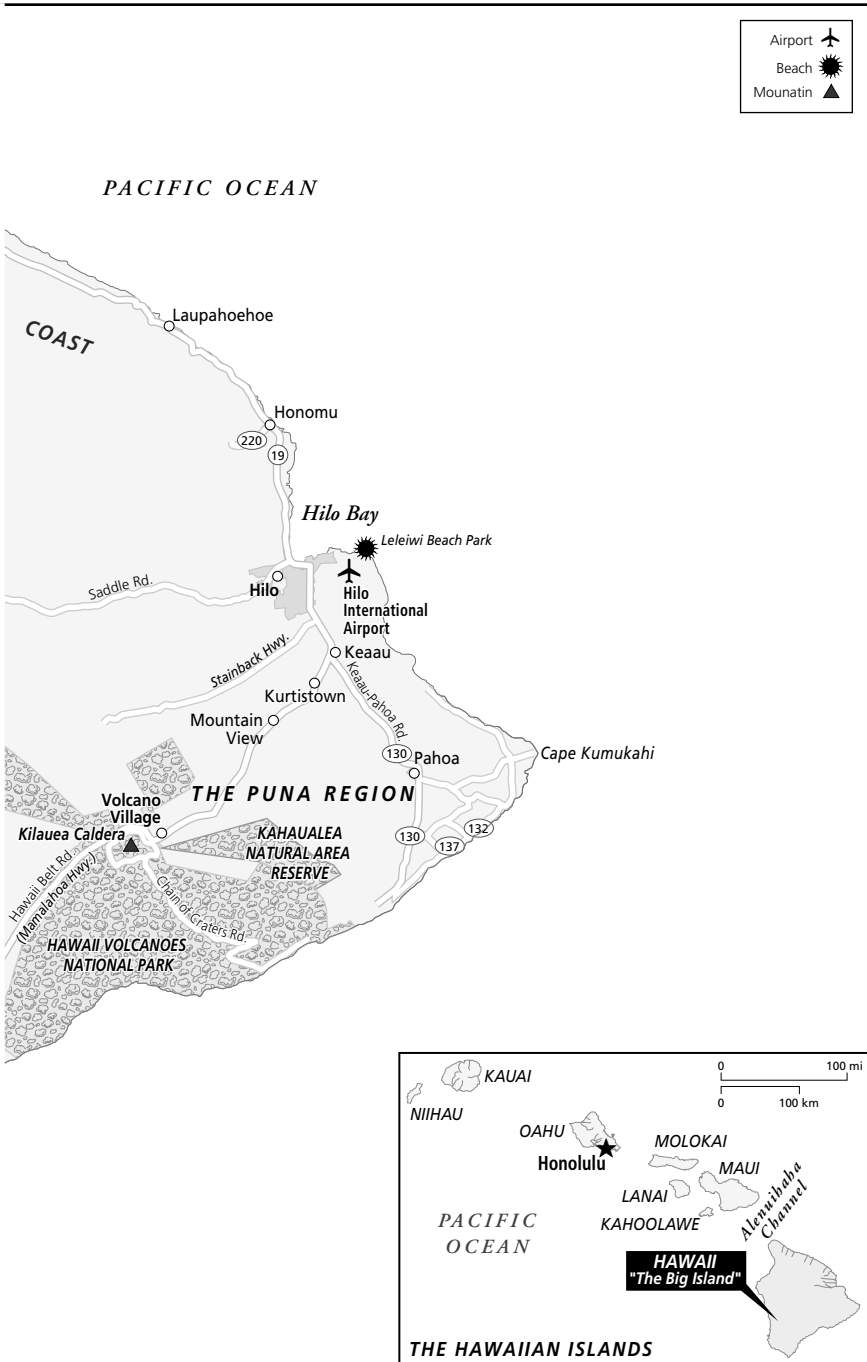
Taxis line up at the airport's curb, so you don't have to worry about arranging for one in advance. Expect to pay \$8 to \$10 to a Hilo destination, plus tip.

## *Choosing Your Location*

The west, or Kona, side of the Big Island is the hot, arid, beachy side, where all the island resorts and condos are located. The misty,

Big Island Orientation





luxuriantly green east side is home to the pretty, petite city of Hilo and spectacular Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

### ***On the west (Kona) side***

This hot, dry, almost-always-sunny side of the island is where you go when you want to hit the beach. West Hawaii may come as a shock to some — this is parched, black-lava-covered land fringed by swaying palms, salt-and-pepper sand, and gorgeous Pacific waves. Still, it's a landscape of dramatic, otherworldly beauty. This side is where you'll find some of Hawaii's most gorgeous beaches (and some of the state's most expensive real estate).

### ***The Kohala Coast***

This ritzy resort coast stretches for about 30 miles north from Kona International Airport. No other resort coast in Hawaii boasts luxury spreads this sprawling or fabulously grand. Every hotel along the Kona-Kohala coast is part of a “resort” — Kaupulehu (cow-poo-LAY-hoo), Waikoloa, Mauna Lani, and Mauna Kea, in order, from south to north — each of which functions something like a neighborhood, usually encompassing two resort hotels, upscale residential developments (condos, freestanding homes, or both), and golf courses. Each resort has a clearly marked gateway off Queen Kaahumanu Highway (Highway 19, the coast's main drag) and its own network of roads, plus public beach access. Waikoloa even boasts its own sizable shopping and restaurant complex.



When you're making your resort decision, take distance into consideration if you're planning to do lots of running around. Mauna Kea is at least a 30-minute drive from the airport and 40 or 45 minutes from Kailua-Kona town, which can make popping into town for dinner more work than you'd like. Kaupulehu (where the Four Seasons and Kona Village resort hotels are), on the other hand, is only about 10 or 15 minutes from Kailua-Kona and practically around the corner from the airport (7 miles to be exact, which qualifies as “around the corner” on this island).

### ***Kailua-Kona***

About 7 miles south of the Kona International Airport, Kailua-Kona is the commercial hub of the island's west side. It's similar to Maui's Lahaina, down to the tacky-touristy shopping and open-air restaurants along Alii (ah-LEE-ee) Drive that open to spectacular ocean views. Kailua-Kona is a convenient and affordable place to stay, with lots of hotel and condo bargains. Keep in mind, however, that you'll usually have to drive to get to a decent beach. Go for one of the condo complexes south of town if you want easy beach access and a respite from crowds and noise.

### *Upcountry Kona*

Drive 15 minutes inland and upland from Kailua-Kona, and you'll enter a whole different world. Lush, green, cool, and quiet, this is the world-famous Kona coffee country. Charming Holualoa village serves as a great alternative to the beach resorts if you're looking to get away from it all. Views are spectacular, the streets are lined with art galleries, and you won't hear much but birdsong and the sound of the tropical fruit growing on the trees. It's an excellent choice for off-the-beaten-path types.

### *South Kona*

A 10-minute drive south of Kailua-Kona town is South Kona, a quieter and more lush territory than Kona central. It's still convenient to everything, but much more sedate, with a handful of nice hotels and condo complexes, plus an excellent B&B on the slope above the coast, **Horizon Guest House** (see listing later in this chapter). You'll have wonderful ocean views no matter where you stay in South Kona, but expect a short drive to reach a swimmable beach (although some of the best snorkel spots on the island are within easy reach).

### *The east (volcano) side*

The east side of the Big Island seems like the polar opposite of the Kona side — it's cool, wet, rainforested, fragrant with tropical flowers (the Big Island is also known as the Orchid Isle), and decidedly *not* the place for a day at the beach. Stay on this side of the island if you want to dedicate some time to exploring **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park**, but expect a whole different kind of island experience here.

### *Volcano Village*

The gateway to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is **Volcano Village**, a network of charming B&Bs and vacation rentals tucked into the rainforest just outside the national park's gate. Needless to say, Volcano Village makes the best base for exploring the park. No matter where you stay, you'll be just minutes from the park entrance.

### *Hilo*

Hawaii's largest city after Honolulu embodies Hawaii the way it used to be: It's a quaint, misty, flower-filled city with a gorgeous half-moon bay, a charmingly historic false-fronted downtown, some beautifully restored Victorian houses, and a real penchant for rain — 128 inches a year makes it one of America's wettest cities. Not everybody loves Hilo, but those of us with a passion for anything retro do. If you can't find a place to stay in Volcano Village, try Hilo; it's just 45 minutes from the national park and offers many more dining options.

## Driving Around the Big Island

You *will* need a rental car on the Big Island. Not having one will leave you dependent on what your resort has to offer — or worse, relegate you to the confines of touristy Kailua-Kona. Distances on this island are just too long to rely on taxis. An island-wide bus system, the **Hele-On Bus** (☎ 808-961-8744), is available, but all it really does is transport passengers (mostly locals) between the Kona-Kohala coast and Hilo.

All the major car-rental firms have cars available at both island airports: Kona International Airport, on the arid, beachy west side of the island; and Hilo International Airport, on the east, or volcano, side of the island. Arrange for one before you arrive; otherwise, you may find yourself paying top dollar at the airport counter (or run the risk of not getting a car at all if their inventory is depleted). If you visit more than one island, ask about interisland rentals, which can allow you to benefit from lower weekly rates even if you island-hop.



If your heart's set on some heavy-duty exploring along the Saddle Road, up to the summit of Mauna Kea, or to the southernmost tip of the island (which is also the southernmost point in the United States), you'll need a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Keep in mind that most standard rental contracts for garden-variety front-wheel-drive cars restrict access to each of these rough-and-ready destinations. For more information, see the upcoming information on Saddle and South Point roads.



If you're not going to rent a car, contact your hotel concierge or condo front desk and ask about local shuttle services. A few shuttles cover the Kailua-Kona area and the South Kona coast. In addition, most of the Kona-Kohala coast resorts offer free resort shuttles that transport guests within the resort, to golf courses, neighboring hotels, and any other nearby facilities. If you plan on relying on a resort shuttle, though, expect to be confined largely to your resort.

For transportation around Kailua-Kona and down to Keauhou, in South Kona, catch a ride on the **Alii Shuttle** (☎ 808-938-1112), which travels up and down Alii Drive between Kailua-Kona's Lanikai Shopping Center to Keauhou, every 1½ hours Monday through Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. The fare is \$2 per person, per ride. Just flag the bus down on Alii Drive in the direction that you want to go, and the kindly driver will stop. Be sure to call ahead first to confirm hours because they're subject to change at any time.

It's pretty hard to get lost on the Big Island. It has only a handful of main roads, all of which basically stick to the perimeter of the island because of the five volcanic mountains that dominate the interior.



The most important thing to keep in mind is the island's sheer size — they don't call it the Big Island for nothing. Driving from coast to coast — from Kailua-Kona to Hilo, say, or from Volcano to the Kohala Coast — takes 3 to 3½ hours; circling the entire island takes between six



and seven hours. Distances are often longer than they seem, much like they are in the southwest United States, so be sure that you have a realistic idea of how far you need to travel before you set out. If you're not sure, check with the concierge or the front-desk staff of your hotel or condo before you leave.

Here are some estimated island drive times:

- ✔ **From Kailua-Kona to the Waikoloa Resort:** 35 minutes
- ✔ **From Waikoloa Resort to Waimea:** 25 minutes
- ✔ **From Waimea to Hilo:** 1 hour
- ✔ **From Hilo to Volcano Village (gateway to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park):** 45 minutes
- ✔ **From Hawaii Volcanoes National Park to Kailua-Kona via South Point:** 2¾ to 3 hours

If you're a driver who sticks to the conservative side of the speed limit or you're setting out on a rainy day, expect drive times to be slightly longer. And don't forget to factor in pit stops.

If you arrive at Kona Airport, the first of the Big Island's main highways that you'll encounter is **Queen Kaahumanu Highway** (Highway 19), which runs along the Kona-Kohala coast for 33 miles, from Kailua-Kona at the south to the industrial port of Kawaihae at the north. All the major Kohala Coast resorts and beaches are accessible from this main coastal highway.

The Big Island has one main highway that circles the island: the **Hawaii Belt Road**, also known as the **Mamalaho Highway**, which is labeled **Highway 11** as it runs south from the sunny, arid resort town of Kailua-Kona around the island's southern tip (a 60-mile drive); another 36 miles through Volcano (gateway to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park); and then about 27 miles north to Hilo, a misty, funky-cool bayfront town that's the second-largest city in the state (after Honolulu). Go north from Hilo, and the road becomes **Highway 19** as it travels north along the misty and ruggedly beautiful Hamakua Coast, then west to the upland cowboy town of Waimea, the heart of the Big Island's ranchland, for a total of 54 miles.

In Waimea, Highway 19 continues directly west, connecting up with the north end of the coastal Queen Kaahumanu Highway, which runs down the Kohala Coast. This roughly 10-mile stretch of east-west road connecting Waimea and the industrial port of Kawaihae (ka-WHY-high) is called **Kawaihae Road**.

An interior road offers a more direct route between Waimea and Kailua-Kona: The continuation of the Hawaii Belt Road (Mamalaho Highway) is **Highway 190**, a scenic "upper" road that cuts along the western slope of

Mauna Kea back to the coast, meeting up with the Queen Kaahumanu Highway (Highway 19) right in Kailua-Kona — thus completing the loop.



One more road links east to west: **The Saddle Road** (Highway 200) is so named because it crosses the “saddle” between Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa volcanoes as it runs from Highway 190 south of Waimea direct to Hilo; from this road, you can take the access road to the 14,000-odd-foot summit of Mauna Kea. Your rental-car agreement will most likely demand that you avoid the Saddle Road because it’s rough and narrow, and the ever-changing weather conditions can be tough to handle (not to mention the locals, who drive like bats out of hell between Hilo and the Kona Coast along this road). So don’t take it; stick to the main highways instead. You’re also supposed to stay away from **South Point Road**, the road that runs from the Mamalahoa Road at the south end of the island directly south, to the southernmost point in the United States. Although this road is less treacherous, you’re best off avoiding it in order to honor the built-in restrictions on your rental-car contract.

If you plan to take on the Saddle Road or the South Point Road, or both, I suggest renting a four-wheel-drive SUV — and check your rental contract first before setting out. If you disregard any disclaimer or restriction in your contract and get stuck on a forbidden road, and your rental-car company then sticks you with a wallet-busting tow bill, don’t say I didn’t warn you.



Also stay off of the steeply graded **Waipio Valley Road**, at the north end of the Hamakua Coast, which isn’t meant for cars — you *will* get stuck here.

For a more complete discussion of the major resort areas as well as Hilo and Volcano, check out the section “Choosing Your Location,” earlier in this chapter. If you drive north from the intersection of the Kohala Coast’s Queen Kaahumanu Highway and the Kawaihae Road, you’ll enter North Kohala, the peninsula that extends off the northern end of the island. The drive north along the **Akoni Pule** (ah-KO-nee POO-lay) **Highway** (Highway 270) offers a peek at a different side of the Big Island, one where lava cedes to gorgeous rolling ranchlands. It’s a beautiful hour-long drive that leads to some wonderful wilderness activities that I discuss in detail in Chapter 16. You can circle back from the town of Hawi (HA-vee) at North Kohala’s tip along the **Kohala Mountain Road** (Highway 250), ending up back on the Kawaihae Road just west of Waimea.

## Staying in Style

In the following listings, each property is followed by a number of dollar signs, ranging from one (\$) to five (\$\$\$\$\$). Each represents the median rack-rate price range for a double room per night, as follows:

\$	Super-cheap — less than \$100 per night
\$\$	Still affordable — \$100 to \$175
\$\$\$	Moderate — \$175 to \$250
\$\$\$\$	Expensive but not ridiculous — \$250 to \$375
\$\$\$\$\$	Ultraluxurious — more than \$375 per night



Remember that you almost never need to pay the asking price for a hotel room. Check out Chapter 8 for tips on how to avoid paying for a full-price hotel room. Also see Chapter 6 for advice on how to score an all-inclusive package that can save you big bucks on both accommodations and airfare, and, sometimes, car rentals and activities, too.

Also, don't forget that the state adds 11.42 percent in taxes to your hotel bill.



In addition to the following choices, you might also want to consider the **Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa** (☎ 888-488-3535, [www.sheratonkeauhou.com](http://www.sheratonkeauhou.com)), set to debut on a spectacular 22-acre oceanfront lava point on the sunny south Kona Coast in late 2004. The former Kona Surf hotel was in the process of being gloriously reborn as a deluxe Sheraton at editorial time. Among the perks of the \$45-million makeover are 530 brand-new guest rooms, featuring tropical-modern décor and cloudlike Sheraton SweetSleeper beds; the full-service, open-air Keauhou Spa; two restaurants, plus luau grounds; a wedding chapel; an eye-popping fantasy pool with a 200-foot lava-tube water slide; and much more. The jury is still out at this writing, but all signs point to a winner.

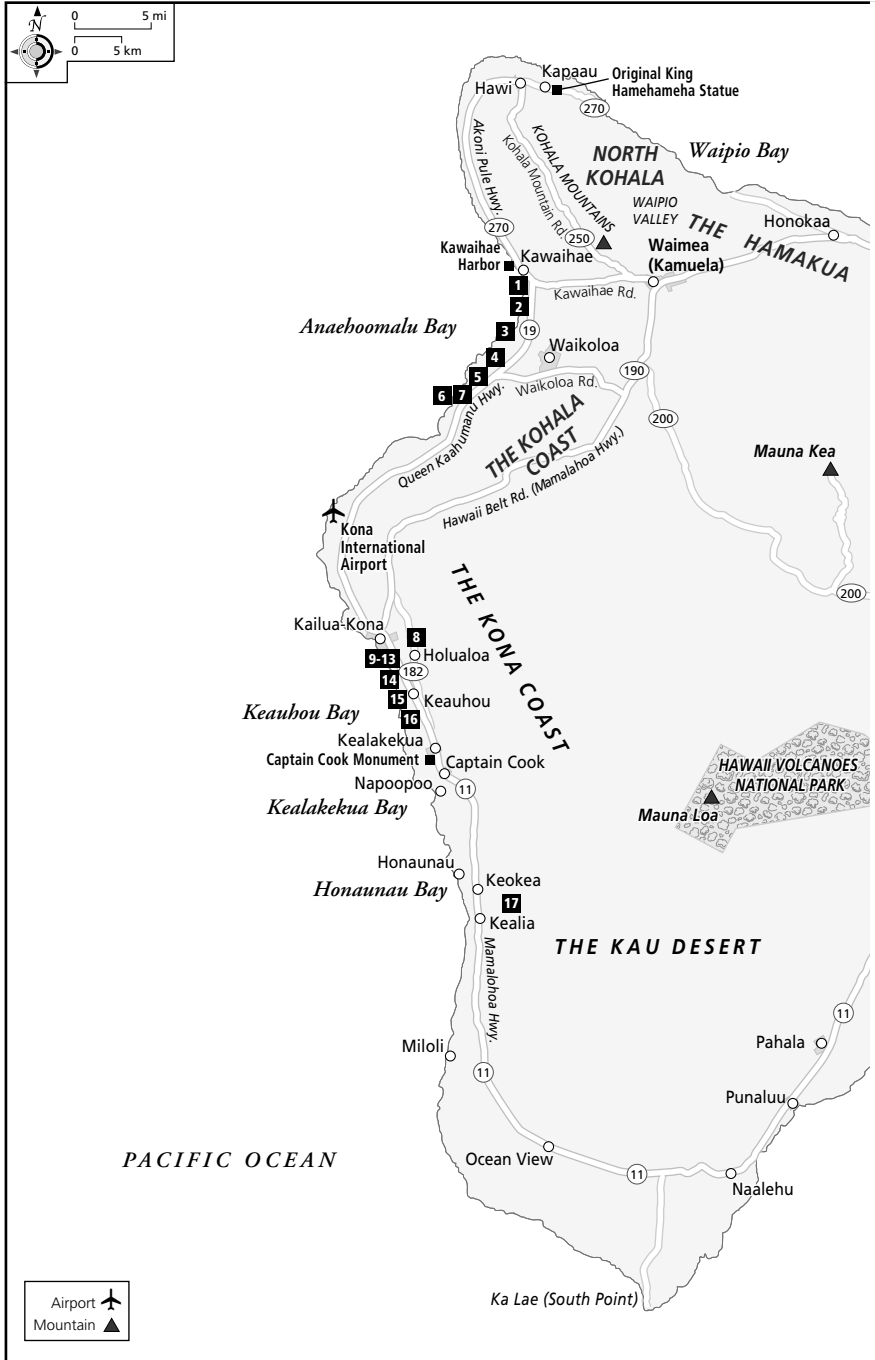


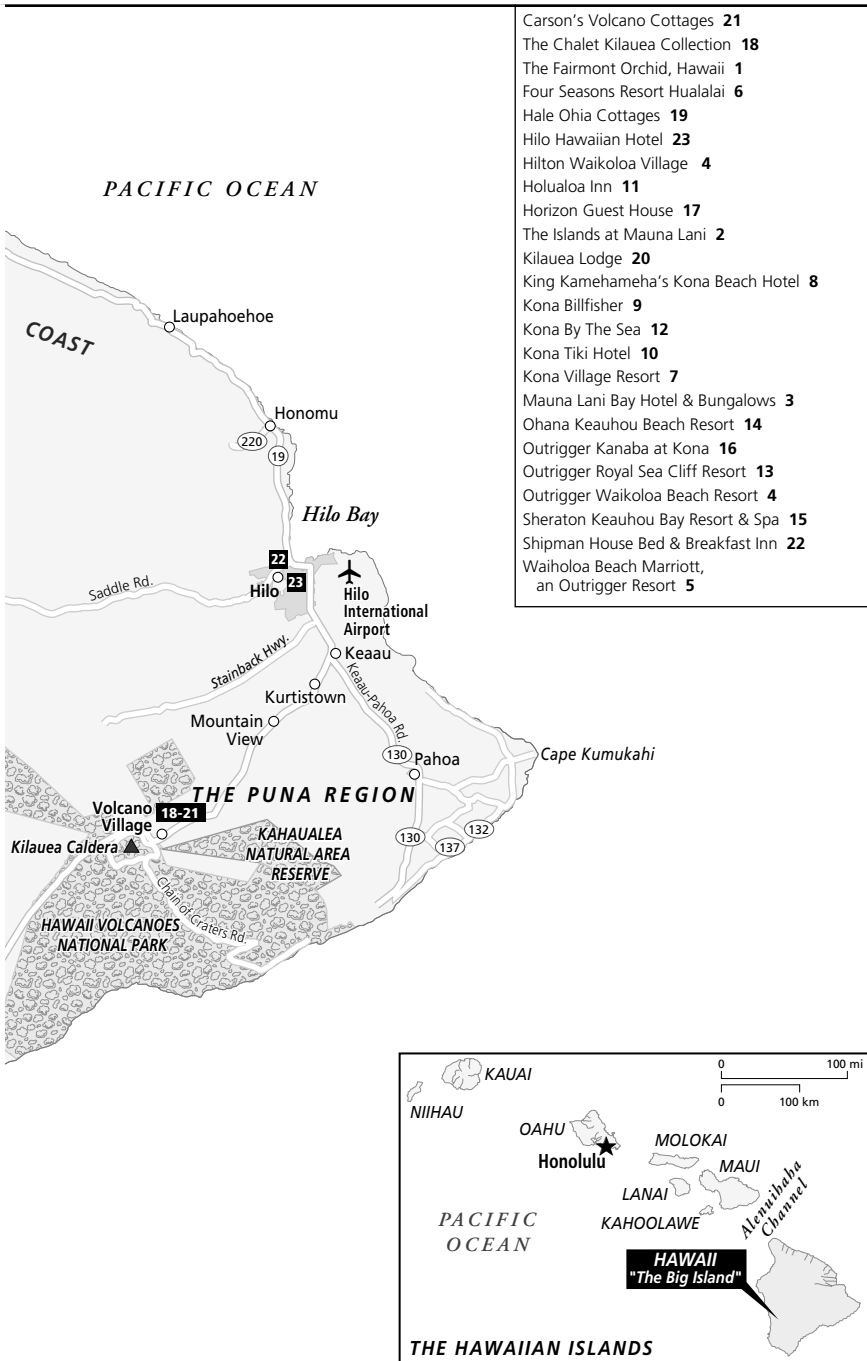
### *Carson's Volcano Cottages*

**\$\$ Volcano**

Hands down, Carson's Volcano Cottages is my favorite place to stay in Volcano Village. Warm and wonderful innkeepers Tom and Brenda Carson offer an accommodation for everyone just outside Hawaii Volcanoes National Park: a half-dozen charming guest rooms with private baths in the main house (including two that can be combined into a nice family suite for four), for travelers looking for good value; three ultraromantic tin-roofed cottages, each with full kitchen; and two dedicated family cottages with full kitchen and TV. All units brim with island-style charm and feature cozy beds with goose-down comforters, plush terry robes, and daily maid service. (The family cottages are serviced every second or third day.) Some cottages feature wood-burning stoves (a wonderful extra on cold nights) and/or private hot tubs; my favorite is the magical Koa Cabin, which boasts both, plus wonderful Jadite dinnerware and other midcentury collectibles. The property also features a hot tub tucked under the ferns for everybody's use. A few of the units are located a few blocks off-property, so you'll have to drive or walk to breakfast. Ask if it matters to you (we actually enjoyed the rainforestry seclusion). The bountiful breakfast buffet is a hearty, delicious feast — good carb-loading for your day at the park.

The Big Island's Accommodations







If you're looking for a secluded, off-the-beaten-path hideaway, ask Tom and Brenda about their two oceanview rental cottages in sunny Kapoho, in the remote Puna District, on the Big Island's southeast coast.

See map p. 330. 501 Sixth St. (near Pearl Street), Volcano. ☎ 800-845-5282 or 808-967-7683. Fax: 808-967-8094. [www.carsonsvolcanocottage.com](http://www.carsonsvolcanocottage.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$105–\$125 double, \$155 suite, \$125–\$165 cottage. Full breakfast buffet included. Deals: Ask about weekly, monthly, and off-season rates. AE, DISC, MC, V.

### **The Chalet Kilauea Collection** \$-\$\$\$\$ Volcano

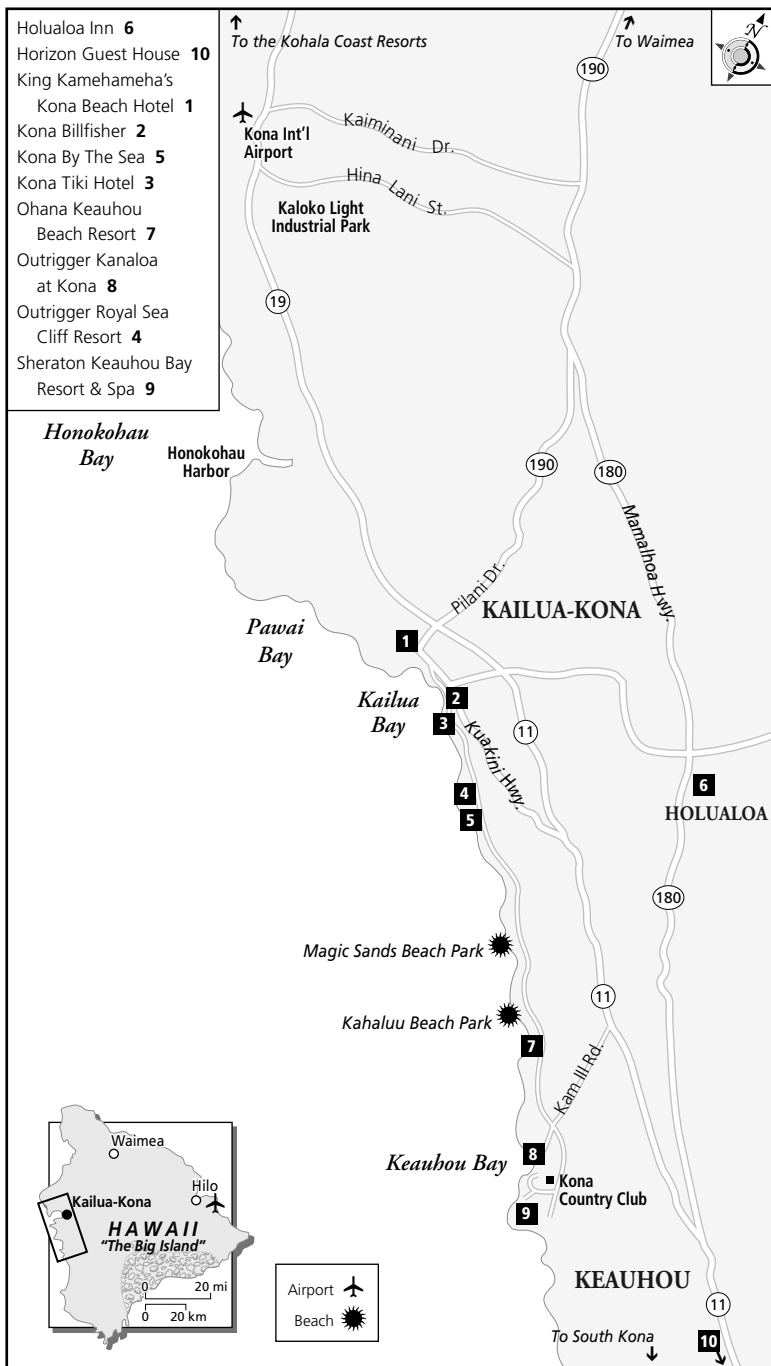
Brian and Lisha Crawford have built a mini-empire outside the gates of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. They own a B&B for every budget, as well as a selection of vacation rentals, ranging from a cozy one-bedroom cottage to a fully equipped three-bedroom home that sleeps six. All are well furnished, well maintained, and well priced. I think their luxury suites are overpriced and too heavy-handed in the decoration department to be called elegant, but the rest of their accommodations — especially the vacation rentals — offer reasonably good value for your dollar. (I prefer Carson's Volcano Cottages and Hale Ohia in the B&B department.) All are conveniently located, nicely outfitted, and feature comfortable public spaces for lounging. Your best bet is either to peruse the comprehensive Web site or call and speak to an attendant who will pair you up with an accommodation that's right for you.

See map p. 330. 988 Wright Rd., Volcano. ☎ 800-937-7786 or 808-967-7786. Fax: 800-577-1849 or 808-967-8660. [www.volcano-hawaii.com](http://www.volcano-hawaii.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$49–\$399 double or suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.

### **The Fairmont Orchid, Hawaii** \$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast

This elegant, attractive, and thoroughly appealing beach resort boasts gorgeous views and some of the best extras on the coast. The sports facilities are extensive (championship golf, tennis, catamaran rides, and outrigger canoe trips), the oceanside “Spa Without Walls” is as stress-relieving as they come, and the heated oceanfront pool (a whopping 10,000 sq. ft.) and hot tubs are tiki-torchlit for maximum romance at night. The resort also offers an excellent Hawaiian program for culture and crafts buffs; on the flip side, reality-TV fans might be interested to know that this was the setting for *Celebrity Mole Hawaii*. Brown's Beach House is the coast's most romantic restaurant (see the section “Dining Out,” later in this chapter); and eight other bars and restaurants are on the property, including a sushi restaurant and a New York-style deli. The spacious rooms are more boldly colorful than most, with an eye-catching teal palette, comfy furnishings, and large marble baths. The beach is small but pretty and perfect for snorkeling and kids at play. All in all, the Orchid is a tad less opulent and a bit more intimately sized and accessible than many other Big Island resorts. The service is top-notch, and even employees at competing resorts admit that the Orchid's concierge staff is the island's best. The only downside is

*Kona Coast Accommodations*



the building's U shape, which gives most of the rooms courtyard rather than ocean views. Fairmont took over the property in January 2003, eliminating the sneaky \$12-per-day "resort fee" and lowering room rates, except on the Gold Floor, where guests receive upgraded amenities and personalized concierge service.

See map p. 335. 1 N. Kaniku Dr., Mauna Lani resort. ☎ 800-845-9905 or 808-885-2000. Fax: 808-885-1064. [www.fairmont.com/orchid](http://www.fairmont.com/orchid) or Valet parking: \$11. Self-parking: Free! Rack rates: \$299–\$900 double, \$999–\$2,000 suite. Deals: Package deals are usually available (including fifth-night-free offers), so be sure to ask (bargains were as low as \$299 at press time). Also ask for AAA-member and senior discounts. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.



### **Four Seasons Resort Hualalai** **\$\$\$\$\$ West Side (Kona Coast)**

Here it is: the finest luxury resort hotel in the islands, and the Hope diamond of the glittering Four Seasons chain. Island-style elegance simply doesn't get any better than this one. Low-rise clusters of clean-lined ocean-facing villas are nestled between a lovely sandy beach and a fabulous Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course (for guests only — so start dialing, duffers!). You'll want for nothing in the huge, gorgeous, and supremely comfortable rooms. Each comes dressed in natural hues and materials — including raffia, rattan, and slate — that set the perfect kick-off-your-shoes Pacific island ambience; ground-level rooms even have private outdoor showers off the big marble bathrooms, so you can shower *au naturel* under the sun or stars. Wireless high-speed Internet access is ideal for guests who want to get away from it all without forsaking complete connectivity. The beautiful beach can be too rough for swimming, but no matter — three ocean-front pools more than compensate, including a stocked snorkel pond (with friendly stingrays!) that's ideal for beginners. An exclusive spa (named by *Condé Nast Traveler* as the world's best resort spa), a state-of-the-art fitness center, and sublime beachfront dining round out the experience. Now that superstar Honolulu chef Alan Wong is the lead chef in the delightful clubhouse restaurant, who could ask for anything more?

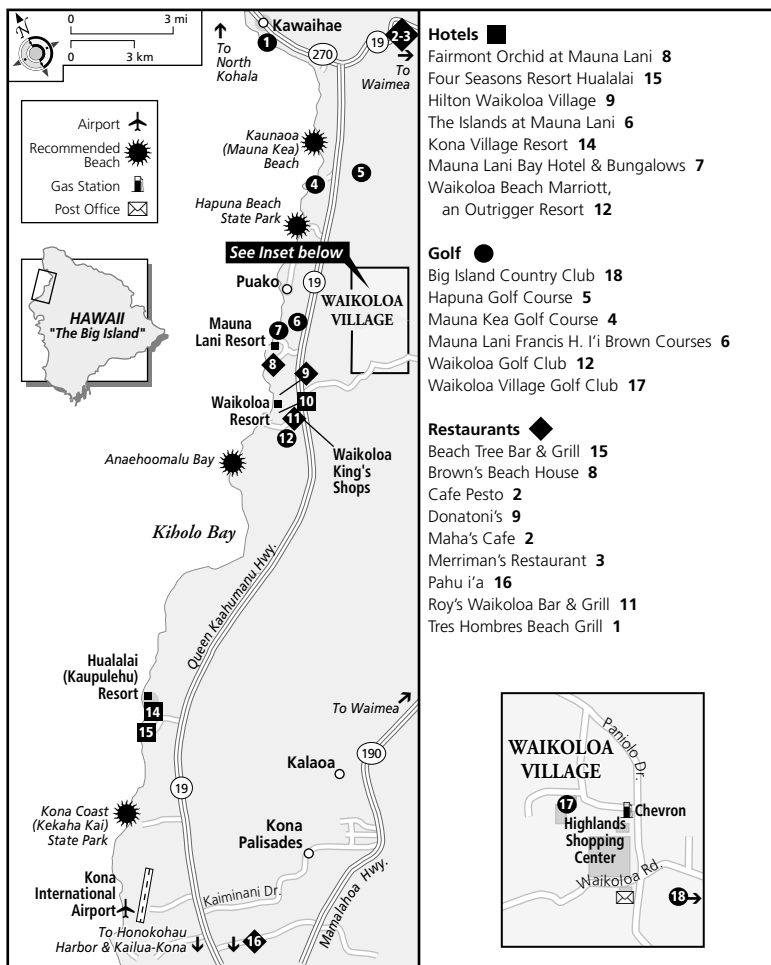
See map p. 335. 100 Kaupulehu Dr., Kaupulehu-Kona (7 miles north of the airport). ☎ 800-332-3442, 888-340-5662, or 808-325-8000. Fax: 808-325-8200. [www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$540–\$725 double, \$850–\$6,500 suite. Deals: Ask about romance, golf, spa, fifth-night-free, room-and-car, bed-and-breakfast, and other packages. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.

### **Hale Ohia Cottages** **\$–\$\$ Volcano**

*Condé Nast Traveler* named Hale Ohia the top place to stay in Volcano in its February 2004 issue, and the honor is well-deserved. This charming and tranquil assemblage of suites and cottages offers a wonderful opportunity to step into the past and get back to nature. The gorgeous red-shingled 1931 estate boasts an impeccable blend of 1930s Hawaii plantation style and modern-day sophistication. The stunning botanical grounds are the



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result of more than 30 years' work by a master Japanese gardener. All the accommodations are lovely and comfortable. The Ihilani Cottage is a honeymooner's dream, with its own enclosed lanai with a bubbling fountain, and the three-bedroom Hale Ohia Cottage, with its own full kitchen, is a great deal for families. The recent transformation of the property's original redwood water tank into Cottage #44, a beautiful and fully outfitted suite (complete with kitchenette and Jacuzzi tub), adds yet another off-beat delight to the retro-romantic collection. The massive Master Suite (where the owner stays when he's on the island) is a steal if you can snare it. The in-room continental breakfast makes this spot an excellent choice for privacy seekers.

See map p. 330. On Hale Ohia Road (off Highway 11), Volcano. ☎ **800-455-3803** or 808-967-7986. Fax: 808-967-8610. [www.haleohia.com](http://www.haleohia.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$95–\$150 double. Rates include continental breakfast. MC, V.

### **Hilo Hawaiian Hotel**

**\$\$ Hilo**

This eight-story waterfront hotel on picturesque Hilo Bay features nice rooms that do the job at a fair price. It's generic but is set on a gracious setting on leafy Banyan Drive. There aren't many facilities, but you'll still find a pool and sun deck, a gift shop, a laundromat, and a restaurant and lounge here. Pay the few extra bucks for a bay view if you can swing it; you won't be disappointed. Check online for frequent money-saving Internet specials; at press time, rooms could be had for as little as \$80.

See map p. 330. 71 Banyan Dr., Hilo. ☎ **800-367-5004** or 808-545-3510. Fax: 808-545-2163. [www.castleresorts.com/HHH](http://www.castleresorts.com/HHH). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$125–\$180 double, \$190–\$385 suite. Deals: Check for deeply discounted Internet rates (as low as \$80 at press time). Also ask about free-car, free-night, and other special packages. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.



### **Hilton Waikoloa Village**

**\$\$\$–\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast**

With 1,240 rooms spread over 62 acres, this massive hotel is too big for its own good. Just getting from your room to the lobby is a 15- to 20-minute production, so check in, park yourself, and don't be in any hurry to leave. This is a destination resort of the highest order, Hawaii's very own version of Disneyland. Its high-rise towers, water slide-riddled megapools, dolphin lagoons, and gaggle of restaurants (including the divine Donatoni's; see the section "Dining Out," later in this chapter), bars, and shops are connected by trams, boats, and art-lined walkways. Thanks to so many eye-popping diversions, your kids will think that they've died and gone to heaven. Mom and Dad are bound to be entertained, too, thanks to a tremendous spa and championship golf course — if you don't run screaming from sensory overload first. The rooms are well-appointed, comfortable, and relatively affordable considering the level of luxury and the full slate of amenities that you'll find here. You won't find any sandy beach, though; you have to go next door for that.

See map p. 335. 425 Waikoloa Beach Dr., Waikoloa. ☎ **800-HILTONS** or 808-886-1234. Fax: 808-886-2900. [www.hiltonwaikoloavillage.com](http://www.hiltonwaikoloavillage.com) or [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com). Valet parking: \$11. Rack rates: \$199–\$689 double, suites from \$1,030. Mandatory daily \$18 "resort fee" covers "free" local phone calls, in-room coffee, use of safe, use of spa for two, and \$25 credit towards beach rental and tennis. Deals: A range of packages and special offers is usually available, including romance, golf, and family packages, and more. Also ask for AAA, AARP, corporate, and other discounts. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.

**Holualoa Inn****\$\$\$ Upcountry Kona**

Set on 40 pastoral acres on the slopes above Kailua-Kona, in the charmingly artsy town of Holualoa, this impeccable inn offers the ultimate tranquil escape, yet it's also conveniently located just 15 minutes from great beaches and all the other conveniences. Built entirely of golden woods and outfitted in a simple Balinese style — all clean lines, rattan, and subtle colors — this gorgeous contemporary Hawaiian home boasts six spacious guest rooms, window-walls that slide away to reveal stunning panoramic ocean views, and an easygoing island vibe. The lovely pool and Jacuzzi overlook a backyard coffee farm and fruit trees (which supply the morning brew and breakfast papayas) and offer spectacular views of the coastline below. Nice extras include a gas grill with all the supplies you need to barbecue a romantic dinner, wonderful common spaces for dining and lounging, and a pool table to entertain yourself on quiet evenings. Even B&B-phobes will feel right at home.

*See map p. 333. 76-5932 Mamalahoa Hwy., Holualoa (a 15-minute drive uphill from Highway 19, along Hualalai Road). ☎ 800-392-1812 or 808-324-1121. Fax: 808-322-2472. www.holualoainn.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$175–\$225 double. Rates include substantial continental breakfast and sunset pupu. Children under 13 not accepted. Two-night minimum stay. Deals: 15-percent discount on stays of 7 nights or more. AE, MC, V.*

**Horizon Guest House****\$\$\$\$ South Kona**

This impeccable B&B offers the ultimate in luxurious relaxation. The house is located on 40 acres of lush pastureland at 1,100 feet elevation, offering unparalleled coastline views. The four carefully designed one-room suites are cantilevered off the end of the house for maximum privacy. Each has its own private entry and furnished lanai and is filled with gorgeous island antiques, hand-quilted Hawaiian bedspreads, a minifridge, coffeemaker, and cushy robes. A dramatic 20-x-40-foot infinity pool (the pool appears to have no edge) and a romantic hot tub are situated to take full advantage of the breathtaking views. Guests have free use of laundry facilities and beach toys galore. Innkeeper Clem Classen serves a gourmet buffet breakfast in the artifact-filled main house, which also features a multimedia room with an extensive book and video library and a TV with VCR and DVD. Impeccable personalized (but completely unobtrusive) service is the elegant finish that justifies the high price tag.

*See map p. 333. 86-3992 Highway 11 (between mile markers 100 and 101), Honaunau. ☎ 888-328-8301 or 808-328-2540. Fax: 808-328-8707. www.horizonguesthouse.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$250 double. Rate includes full gourmet breakfast. Children under 14 not accepted. Deals: 15 percent off bookings of 7 nights or more. Inquire about other discounts (rates can sometimes fall as low as \$175). MC, V.*

***The Islands at Mauna Lani*****\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast**

If you're in the market for a two- or three-bedroom condo — be it for a family, sharing couples, or plenty of spreading-out for yourself — you can't do better than the Islands. Light, bright, airy, and gorgeous, these contemporary Mediterranean-style townhomes boast a massive 2,100 square feet of living space. On the first floor, you find a gourmet kitchen, full dining and living rooms (both with furnished lanais), and a laundry room with full-size washer and dryer. Upstairs are two (or three) master-size bedrooms, each with a firm, well-dressed king bed, a furnished lanai, and a monster bathroom with an oversized Jacuzzi tub and yards of counter space. Every luxury is at hand, from a cordless phone to a gas grill to daily maid service to your own garage with automatic door opener. The views of the lushly manicured grounds and surrounding fairways more than make up for the lack of ocean vistas. The perks don't end there. On-site is a very nice heated pool and hot tub; what's more, Islands guests can hop the free on-call shuttle to an exclusive beach club, which boasts its own perfect white-sand cove, excellent snorkel reef, gear-rental shack, and restaurant. The shuttle also takes you to and from the Mauna Lani Spa, the island's best. Service is excellent but completely non-intrusive.

*See map p. 335. 68-1050 Mauna Lani Point Dr., Mauna Lani resort. ☎ 800-642-6284 or 808-661-3339. Fax: 808-667-1145. [www.classicresorts.com](http://www.classicresorts.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$540 2-bedroom, \$695 3-bedroom. 3-night minimum. Deals: Fifth night free at press time. Also ask about room-and-car packages, return guest packages, and other available discounts. AE, MC, V.*

***Kilauea Lodge*****\$\$ Volcano**

Built in 1938 as a YMCA camp, this popular roadside lodge sits on 10 wooded acres just a stone's throw from the main gate of the national park. The lodge is a real woodsy charmer, with stone pillars and beamed ceilings. Twelve comfortably outfitted rooms offer private baths, attractive artwork by local artists, lovely garden views, and individual heat controls and towel warmers (nice plusses on chilly Volcano nights). A phone, lending library, games, and a TV set for shared viewing are found in the common room. Two charming cottages are also available, one with two bedrooms and a full kitchen that's great for families, plus a pleasant, newly renovated house on the fairway at the Volcano Golf Course. A complete, satisfying breakfast is served in the restaurant, which is my Volcano favorite for dinner (see the section "Dining Out," later in this chapter). All in all, this is an excellent choice, especially for those who prefer hotel-style anonymity over the intimacy of many of Volcano's B&B-style stays.

*See map p. 330. 19-4055 Volcano Rd. (just off Highway 11 at Wright Road), Volcano. ☎ 808-967-7366. Fax: 808-967-7367. [www.kilauealodge.com](http://www.kilauealodge.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$135–\$155 double, \$165–\$175 1- or 2-bedroom cottage. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V.*

**King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel****\$\$ Kailua-Kona**

Located in the heart of Kailua-Kona town, just a stroll away from everything, this hotel can't be beat for convenience. The King Kam is Holiday Inn simple, but it's clean, ocean-facing, and an ideal choice for those who don't want to have to go far for shopping and dining. Every room features a private lanai; ask for one overlooking sparkling Kailua Bay for only-in-Hawaii views. (Note that bathrooms have showers only.) The small, gold-sand beach isn't exactly your dream strand, but it will satisfy in a pinch. Other on-site extras include shops, a pool and Jacuzzi, tennis, sauna, a massage center, restaurants and a poolside bar, a luau, and a coin-op laundry plus valet service. Nicer beaches are just a short drive away. The numerous, always-available package deals are a steal, so be sure to inquire.

See map p. 333. 75-5660 Palani Rd. (at Alii Drive), Kailua-Kona. ☎ 800-367-6060 or 808-329-2911. Fax: 808-922-84602. www.konabeachhotel.com. Parking: \$5. Rack rates: \$155–\$225 double, \$500–\$900 1- to 3-bedroom suite. Deals: Very good packages are usually on offer; at press time, from \$155 with breakfast and free parking, \$165 with car added; family package gets you a second room at half price. Also ask about corporate and senior rates, and check for Internet rates (as low as \$95 at press time). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.

**Kona Billfisher****\$ Kailua-Kona**

This place is my favorite under-\$100 bargain. The units aren't fancy, but you can't do better for the money — and discounts on longer stays make the rooms practically free. The management company invests in constant renovations, and the resident manager keeps everything neat and fresh. Each apartment has a full kitchen with all-electric appliances, a large lanai, decent newish furniture, and king-size beds. The one-bedrooms have sliding doors that allow you to close off the living room into another bedroom, which makes them a real deal for penny-saving families. On-site extras include a pool, barbecues, and a coin-op laundry, and the town is just a walk away. You'll have to drive to a swimmable beach, but at these prices, you won't mind. Book well in advance because this place fills up fast, usually with repeat guests.

See map p. 333. On Alii Drive (on the mountain side of the street, across from the Royal Kona Resort), Kailua-Kona, c/o Hawaii Resort Management. ☎ 800-622-5348 or 808-329-9393. Fax: 808-326-4137. www.konahawaii.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$80–\$95 1-bedroom, \$105–\$125 2-bedroom/1-bath. 3-night minimum, plus \$50 nonrefundable cleaning fee (higher rates available for shorter stays). Deals: Big discounts available on weekly and monthly stays; also ask about Internet specials (from \$70 at press time). DISC, MC, V.



### Kona By The Sea

\$\$\$\$ Kailua-Kona

The units and grounds at this deluxe oceanfront condo complex are a tad more inviting than those at the nearby Outrigger Royal Sea Cliff (see later in this chapter), but not dramatically so. The bright, spacious, nicely decorated apartments boast complete kitchens with microwave, washer/dryers, daily maid service, and large lanais (most with ocean views). On-site you find a nice oceanfront freshwater pool, Jacuzzi, barbecues, and an activities desk that can book your island fun. One of the nice plusses exclusive to this property is the personal grocery-shopping service — just leave a shopping list with the manager, and your staples are delivered right to your door. The white-sand beach here is lovely but unswimmable, so plan on heading 4 miles south to Kahaluu Beach for first-rate snorkeling.

See map p. 333. 75-6106 Alii Dr., Kailua-Kona (2 miles south of town). ☎ 877-997-6667 or 808-327-2300. Fax: 808-327-2333. www.aston-hotels.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$196–\$330 1-bedroom, \$245–\$405 2-bedroom. Deals: Excellent discounts. Ask for AAA, senior (50-plus), and corporate discounts, and other special rate programs such as the kids stay, play, and eat for free package. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.



### Kona Tiki Hotel

\$ Kailua-Kona

This friendly family-run motel is one of the best cheap sleeps in the state. Staying here is like stepping into a time warp — one where you can have a reasonable room for two, right on the ocean, for as little as \$61. The rooms are budget-basic on every level, but the beds are firm and comfy, ceiling fans and minifridges are on hand (a few have kitchenettes for just a bit more moolah), and every room has a lanai with front-row ocean views. New paint and carpets were in the works at press time. A basic continental breakfast is served poolside every morning, making this incredible value that much more astounding. The location is pleasant, away from the hustle and bustle of downtown. The ocean here isn't swimmable, and you'll find no TVs, phones, or coin-op laundry (a local laundry will pick up and deliver), but those are the sacrifices you make for such a bargain. Book way in advance, because people *loooove* this place.

See map p. 333. 75-5968 Alii Dr. Kailua-Kona (a mile south of town). ☎ 808-329-1425. Fax: 808-327-9402. www.konatiki.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$61–\$75 double, \$84 double with kitchenette. Rates include continental breakfast and tax. 3-night minimum. No credit cards.



### Kona Village Resort

\$\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast

Hawaii may have fancier and more amenity-laden resorts, but the state's only all-inclusive is truly something special: a super-deluxe version of *Gilligan's Island*, where it feels perfectly natural to tuck a flower behind

your ear and sip cocktails out of coconuts. This South Seas paradise of swaying palms and lagoons offers blissful escape, Robinson Crusoe style: no TVs, phones, or fax machines around to interrupt your tropical reverie for even a minute. You'll stay in your own thatch-roofed *hale*, which is much like a comfortably furnished tropical cottage. The dark-sand beach offers first-rate snorkeling with green sea turtles, who climb up on shore nearly every afternoon for a nap; manta rays hang out in the flood-lit bay after dark, proving that all species love Kona Village. A tenderly attentive staff — one of the best in the islands — is on hand to meet your needs and desires even before you know you have them, and the food is abundant and absolutely terrific at every meal. There's something going on most nights, whether it's dancing to a Hawaiian trio or the terrific Friday-night luau (see the section "Luau!" later in this chapter), and the kids' program is excellent. Utterly restful, and simply divine, this resort is Hawaii vacationing as it was really meant to be.

*See map p. 335. At the Kaupulehu resort, 7 miles north of the airport. ☎ 800-367-5290 or 808-325-5555. Fax: 808-325-5124. [www.konavillage.com](http://www.konavillage.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$515–\$910 double. Rates include all meals, in-room refreshments, most activities, children's program, airport transfers, and more. All rates are based on double occupancy; \$38–\$193 per person extra. No kids' rates or programs in May and Sept. Deals: Ask about honeymoon, family, car, and other packages. AE, DC, MC, V.*

### **Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows** \$\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast

Hawaiian elders named this section of the sunny lava coast Mauna Lani, or "Mountain reaching Heaven," and it's an apt name for so heavenly a resort. Mauna Lani has a finer swimming and snorkeling beach than any other Big Island resort hotel. The hotel is designed in the shape of an arrow on the sands to take advantage of its prime coastal location, providing most rooms with substantial ocean views. A vast open-air lobby spilling over with tropical greenery leads to serene and simple rooms that exude island style — teak floors, lauhala headboards, ceiling fans, natural-hued textiles, and lanais. VCRs, opposing vanities, seersucker robes, and twice-daily maid service add a luxury touch. Families can stay in the homelike villas, but those with bottomless bank accounts should opt for one of the incredible bungalows, each of which has its own private pool and a butler who doesn't know the word "no." The historically and culturally sensitive resort features the finest, most Hawaiian spa in the islands, an extensive calendar of daily activities, a first-rate tennis center, and easy access to some of Hawaii's best golf. One sour note: Dinner in the celebrated CanoeHouse just isn't what it used to be.

*See map p. 335. 68-1400 Mauna Lani Dr., Mauna Lani resort. ☎ 800-367-2323 or 808-885-6622. Fax: 808-885-1484. [www.maunalani.com](http://www.maunalani.com). Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$385–\$750 double, \$1,200 suite, \$550–\$1,050 1- to 3-bedroom villa, \$4,900–\$5,600 bungalow. Deals: Many packages usually available, including 2-room deals as low as \$575, and a 4-night deal with airfare from L.A. for \$1,078. Discounted weekly rates available on villas. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.*

**Ohana Keauhou Beach Resort**  
 \$\$\$–\$\$\$\$ South Kona

Unveiled in 2000 after a \$15-million-plus overhaul and managed by Ohana (the value-minded arm of the reliable Hawaii-based Outrigger chain), this hotel has been restored to like-new condition and is a great choice for culture buffs, active vacationers, or anybody in search of affordable oceanfront accommodations. Situated on a tranquil and lovely stretch of coast, the midrise structure boasts a central location, lovely views, and a genuine Hawaiian ambience. The island's best snorkeling is right next door at Kahaluu Beach Park, while the hotel's own 10 acres of tropical grounds feature an oceanside pool, a fitness center, and tennis courts lit for night play. A grassy oceanfront area is dedicated to the easy life, with hammocks strung between coconut palms. There's a surprisingly good restaurant and an open-air lounge with live Hawaiian music and glorious golden sunsets. The rooms themselves are less distinctive, but perfectly comfortable. They're fresh and pleasant, with good bedside reading lights, generous counter space and cushy towels in the bathrooms (some of which have showers only), coffeemakers, and lanais — most with some kind of ocean view. Adjoining rooms make this resort a good family choice, too.

See map p. 333. 78-6740 Alii Dr., Keauhou (3 miles south of Kailua-Kona). ☎ 800-462-6262 or 808-322-3441. Fax: 808-322-3117. www.ohanahotels.com. Parking: \$5. Rack rates: \$189–\$309 double, \$559–\$599 suite. Deals: Better-than-average discounts for AAA and AARP members and seniors (50-plus), plus corporate, government, and military discounts. Ask about heavily discounted SimpleSaver rates and first-night-free, bed-and-breakfast, room-and-car, and other package deals. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.



**Outrigger Kanaloa at Kona**  
 \$\$\$–\$\$\$\$ South Kona

Tucked away in a quiet, attractive neighborhood, these big, well-managed oceanfront condos (by the reliable, value-oriented Hawaii-based Outrigger hotel chain) are a cut above the average and ideal for families. Comfortably furnished in quality island style with Hawaiian wood accents, the apartments have all the comforts of home and then some, including dressing rooms, big kitchens loaded with appliances, huge bathrooms (with whirlpools in oceanview suites!), and washer/dryers. Two tennis courts lit for night play, three swimming pools with hot tubs, and playgrounds dot the pleasant, attractively manicured ocean-facing grounds. The coast is lava rock here, however, so you'll have to drive a half-mile to Kahaluu Beach (one of Hawaii's best for snorkeling). An excellent restaurant, Edward's at Kanaloa (see the section "Dining Out," later in this chapter), is on-site; a big, modern, well-stocked supermarket is just up the hill; and Kailua-Kona's restaurants and shops are a ten-minute drive away. Guests receive discounted rates on 36 holes of championship golf at the neighboring country club.

See map p. 333. 78-261 Manukai St., Keauhou. ☎ 800-688-7444 or 808-322-9625. Fax: 808-322-3818. www.outrigger.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$205–\$290 1-bedroom, \$220–\$330 2-bedroom. Deals: Better-than-average discounts for AAA



and AARP members and seniors (50-plus), plus corporate, government, and military discounts. Fifth-night-free, bed-and-breakfast, and room-and-car packages regularly on offer. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.



### **Outrigger Royal Sea Cliff Resort**

**\$\$\$ Kailua-Kona**

Parents with kids in tow will love these apartments. They're not fancy, but they're large, well outfitted, and older but well cared for by the reliable Outrigger hotel chain. The big five-story complex steps down a terraced cliff to a black-sand beach. The water's too rough for swimming, but the views are spectacular, and the privacy is unsurpassed. Gardens and hanging bougainvillea give the whole place a pleasant, tropical ambience. The spacious, air-conditioned apartments carry through on the vibe, with lots of rattan, sunny lanais, full kitchens with microwave, washer/dryer, TV with VCR in the living rooms, and daily maid service, making for easy vacation living. Two pools (one freshwater, one saltwater), a Jacuzzi, sauna, tennis, and barbecues are all on-site. The nearest swimming beach is about a mile away, but it's a winner for snorkelers.

See map p. 333. 75-6040 Alii Dr., Kailua-Kona (2 miles south of town). ☎ 800-688-7444 or 808-329-8021. Fax: 808-326-1887. www.outrigger.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$183–\$233 studio, \$215–\$318 1-bedroom apartment, \$250–\$803 2-bedroom apartment or villa. Deals: Many discounts and packages available (some as low as \$151 at press time), including reduced rates for AAA and AARP members and seniors (50-plus), as well as members of the government or the military. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.

### **Shipman House Bed & Breakfast Inn**

**\$\$-\$\$\$ Hilo**

Misty, flower-filled Hilo wows nostalgics with its Victorian homes and charming downtown overlooking a romantic half-moon bay. One of those century-old Victorians is this dreamy B&B, my favorite place to stay in town. Impeccably renovated and on the National Register of Historic Places, it's right in step with Hilo's old Hawaii vibe. Barbara Ann and Gary Andersen have kept the inn true to its original form, but they haven't lost sight of its present-day purpose. It's full of modern conveniences, including full baths, ceiling fans, minifridges, and kimono robes (but no TVs) in each of the five spacious, impeccably done rooms. Most romantic is Auntie Clara's, a corner room with windows on two walls overlooking a lush rain-forest and bay, with a clawfoot tub in the bathroom. (The bathroom for this room is private, but is detached from the bedroom.) Breakfast is served on the wide veranda. This B&B is perfect for romance-seeking couples, history buffs, and national park-goers alike. Hawaii Volcanoes is a half-hour's drive south. Smoking and shoes are forbidden inside the house, and children are discouraged.

See map p. 330. 131 Kaiulani St. (off Waianuenue Avenue), Hilo. ☎ 800-627-8447 or 808-934-8002. Fax: 808-934-8002. www.hilo-hawaii.com. Parking: Free! Rack rates: \$169–\$189 double. Rates include generous continental buffet breakfast. Rates \$25 higher for single-night stays. AE, MC, V.

***Waikoloa Beach Marriott, an Outrigger Resort*****\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast**

This used to be the Kohala Coast's best value back when it was the Royal Waikoloan. Today, after a \$23-million renovation, it's the product of a new partnership between Marriott and the Hawaii-based Outrigger chain. The upgrade has really lightened and upscaled the place and removed much of the budget feel from the smallish rooms, giving them a genuinely lovely island vibe as well as conveniences like coffeemakers and minifridges. Still, the biggest plus remains the location: The resort is situated on palm-lined A-Bay, one of the island's prettiest white-sand beaches and best bays for watersports. An excellent beach-activities desk provides easy access to snorkeling, diving, kayaking, and windsurfing; championship golf and salon and spa services are also on hand. All in all, the resort looks great. The food, service, and trappings aren't on par with its more luxury-minded neighbors, but neither are the rates. They're higher than they should be, but Outrigger excels in handing out packages and discounts, so this hotel usually wins the race as the bargain of the Kohala Coast (although it's worth price-comparing against Hilton Waikoloa Village, reviewed earlier in this chapter).

See map p. 335. 69-275 Waikoloa Beach Rd., Waikoloa. ☎ 800-688-7444 or 808-886-6789. Fax: 808-886-1554. [www.outrigger.com](http://www.outrigger.com). Valet parking: \$5. Rack rates: \$215–\$335 double, \$965–\$3,100 suite. Deals: Better-than-average discounts for AAA and AARP members and seniors (50-plus), plus corporate, government, and military discounts. Fifth-night-free, bed-and-breakfast, and room-and-car packages regularly on offer. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V.

***Home, sweet vacation home***

Local real-estate agencies offer a wealth of additional condo choices in and around Kailua-Kona and South Kona. One of the more trusted names is **Knutson & Associates** (☎ 800-800-6202 or 808-329-6311; [www.konahawaiirentals.com](http://www.konahawaiirentals.com)), a vacation-rental broker representing everything from affordable condos to multibedroom oceanfront houses.

**Hawaii Resort Management** (☎ 800-622-5348 or 808-329-9393; [www.konahawaii.com](http://www.konahawaii.com)) represents a dozen or more condo properties in the Kailua-Kona area (including the Kona Billfisher, listed above) and is a good source for budget-watching travelers. Also inquire with these folks about discounted car rates through Avis.

If you prefer a luxury rental on the sunny, golf course-riddled Kohala Coast, reach out to **South Kohala Management** (☎ 800-822-4252 or 808-883-8500; [www.southkohala.com](http://www.southkohala.com)), which offers first-rate condos and townhomes plus a couple of upscale oceanfront houses.

If you'd like a full-scale vacation home outside the gates of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, contact the folks behind the **Chalet Kilauea Collection** (see earlier in this chapter), who offer five nice vacation homes in the Volcano area, ranging from a cozy one-bedroom cottage to

a fully equipped three-bedroom home that sleeps six. Call ☎ **800-937-7786** or 808-987-7786 or visit [www.volcano-hawaii.com](http://www.volcano-hawaii.com) for details.

**Hawaii's Best Bed & Breakfasts** (☎ **800-262-9912** or 808-885-4550; [www.bestbnb.com](http://www.bestbnb.com)) also represents some excellent vacation homes on the Big Island, as well as delightful B&Bs. The staff can book a room for you in a cozy cottage or a larger home that they have personally inspected and approved, and service is always friendly.

## *Dining Out*

The Big Island is home to some wonderful restaurants, including a handful of special-occasion oceanfront spots that are just right for some grand island-style wooing. But you don't have to spend a fortune to eat well; in fact, the Big Island is home to some of my favorite affordable restaurants in the state.

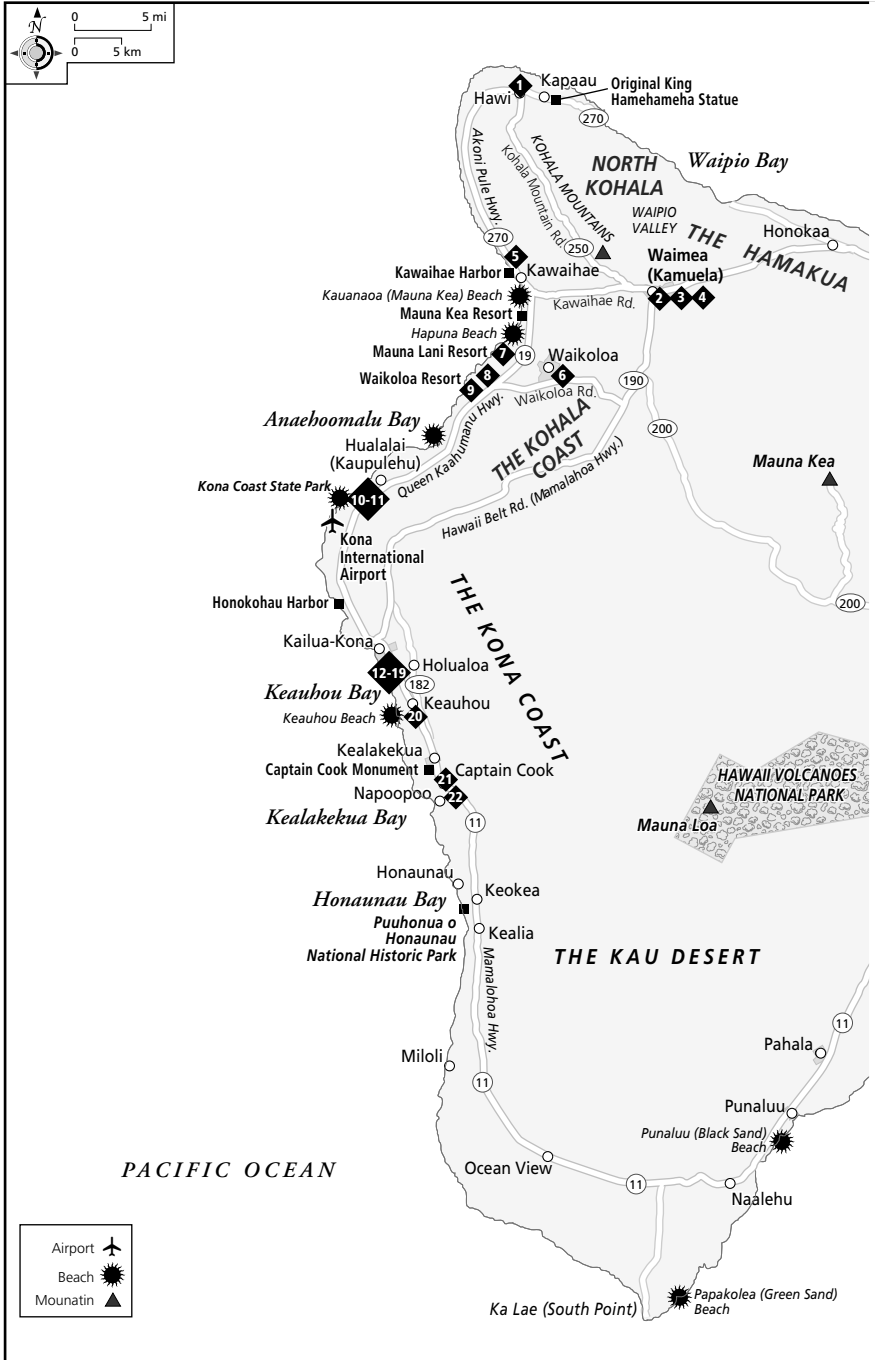
On the downside, things are a little spread out on this oversized rural island, so choose your dining spots carefully; you don't want to make a reservation for dinner only to realize that the restaurant is an hour's drive from where you're staying. I've worked to include the best restaurants in and around all the major resort and visitor areas in which you may be staying. Still, you may find that your choices are limited; the area around Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, for example, has only a small handful of restaurants, period. If you want additional choices, your concierge, front-desk staff, or innkeeper are usually happy to make recommendations.

If you're staying at a Kohala Coast resort, you'll find that the resort restaurants are almost universally overpriced. I've included a few worthy local favorites near the resorts, for those of you who are weary of paying a minimum of 30 bucks for an entree or \$16 for a room-service burger that little Johnny isn't going to finish anyway.

In the restaurant listings in this chapter, each review is followed by a number of dollar signs, ranging from one (\$) to five (\$\$\$\$\$). The dollar signs are meant to give you an idea of what a complete dinner for one person — including appetizer, main course, dessert, one drink, tax, and tip — is likely to set you back. The price categories go like this:

\$	Cheap eats — less than \$15 per person
\$\$	Still inexpensive — \$15 to \$25
\$\$\$	Moderate — \$25 to \$40
\$\$\$\$	Pricey — \$40 to \$70
\$\$\$\$\$	Ultraexpensive — more than \$70 per person

The Big Island's Restaurants





Of course, it all depends on how you order, so stay away from the surf and turf or the north end of the wine list if you're watching your budget. To give you a further idea of how much you can expect to spend, I also include the price range of main courses in the listings. (Keep in mind that prices can change at the whim of the management, but restaurants usually don't raise their prices by more than a dollar or two at any given time.)



The state adds 4 percent in sales tax to every restaurant bill. A 15- to 20-percent tip is standard in Hawaii, just like on the mainland.



Just dying to take home a **Hard Rock Cafe Kona** T-shirt? The Big Island branch of the rock-and-burger chain is in the heart of Kailua-Kona at the Coconut Grove Marketplace, 75-5815 Alii Dr. (☎ **808-329-8866**).

### ***Bamboo Restaurant & Gallery***

**\$\$-\$\$\$ North Kohala Hawaii Local/Pacific Rim**

This wonderful restaurant provides the perfect excuse to venture up to pastoral North Kohala. Housed in a delightful plantation-era building and done up in well-worn rattan and retro-tropical prints, Bamboo bubbles over with old Hawaii appeal — like Trader Vic's without the kitsch. The pleasing menu features delicious island cuisine that, refreshingly, doesn't bother with "gourmet" or "culinary" pretensions. This is real food, well prepared with local pride. Almost everything is fresh-caught or locally grown by Kohala fishermen and farmers, and the owners grow their own herbs and flowers. The quality is excellent, portions are generous, and Pacific and Thai influences add zip. Chicken satay potstickers are hand-wrapped and pan-fried in chili oil for a spicy signature treat. Island fish is prepared four winning ways, and a moist and tender herb-marinated pork tenderloin is flame-broiled and paired with black tiger shrimp and green papaya salad. The lunch menu is simpler but equally satisfying, and eggs Bamboo (eggs Benedict with kalua pork and *lilikoi* hollandaise) is a winner at Sunday brunch. Passion-fruit margaritas and live slack key guitar music round out the island appeal. Plan on an early dinner so that you can enjoy the scenic drive in the daylight.

See map p. 346. On Akoni Pule Hwy. (at Highway 270/250 intersection), Hawi (a 30- to 45-minute drive from most Kohala Coast resorts). ☎ **808-889-5555**. <http://arcturus.org/bamboorestaurant>. *Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses: \$5-\$12 at lunch, \$10-\$24 at dinner. DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner Tues-Sat, Sun brunch.*

### ***Beach Tree Bar & Grill***

**\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast Pacific Rim/International**

Kudos to the Four Seasons for creating such an unpretentious, and relatively affordable, beachfront spot. This lovely, casual outdoor patio restaurant sits right on the sand, and every generously sized, comfortable table is angled to make the most of the surf and sunset views. Hawaiian music and hula make an already enchanting setting simply exquisite at sunset.

The regular menu focuses on fusion dishes like kiawe-smoked baby-back ribs with jalapeño corn bread; a fresh mozzarella and Waimea-grown tomato salad with Maui onion and herbed champagne vinaigrette, with pesto-crusted chicken for an extra kick; and the day's catch, pan-seared and served with local greens, papaya pineapple salsa, and a mango-kaffir lime drizzle. I've eaten here numerous times, and the casual gourmet fare always shines. Don't miss out on the marvelous tropical cocktails. But the Beach Tree really sparkles on all-you-can-eat nights, when the staff mounts a bountiful, top-quality themed spread. Wednesday is Italian night, but the hands-down winner is Saturday's Surf, Sand, and Stars Barbecue, a traditional cookout featuring fresh island fish, steak, ribs, oysters, clams, and snow-crab claws grilled over an open flame. A staff astronomer is even on hand to help guests with their stargazing.



**TIP** Book your table at the Beach Tree's Surf, Sand, and Stars Barbecue in advance because this festive Saturday-night beach party is a hugely popular weekly event.

*See map p. 346. At the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai, 100 Kaupulehu Dr., Kaupulehu-Kona (7 miles north of Kona Airport). ☎ 808-325-8000. www.fourseasons.com. Reservations recommended for dinner (highly recommended on buffet nights). Main courses: \$11–\$18 at lunch, \$22–\$40 at dinner; all-you-can-eat buffets \$48–\$58 adults, \$24–\$29 kids 6–12. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch, afternoon pupus, and early dinner (to 8:30 p.m.) daily.*



### **Big Island Grill**

**\$ Kailua-Kona American/Local**

This local favorite offers huge portions of homestyle cooking at retro prices, making it one of the island's most beloved restaurants. And the love shows: The grill is always hopping, from the first cup of coffee at breakfast to the last bite of dessert after dark. Expect American favorites with a local spin, including excellent fresh fish and generous salads and sandwiches; don't miss out on a side of the fabulous mashed potatoes. It's a excellent choice for families. In a hurry? No worries: Head to the drive-up window for coffee, cappuccino, smoothies, fresh baked pastries, lunch specials, and the like.

*See map p. 346. 75-5702 Kuakini Hwy., Kailua-Kona. ☎ 808-326-1153. Reservations not accepted for breakfast or lunch; reservations only accepted for dinner a day or more in advance. Main courses: \$6.25–\$16. MC, V. Open: Breakfast Mon–Fri, lunch and dinner Mon–Sat.*

### **Brown's Beach House**

**\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast Hawaii Regional**

On-the-beach dining experiences don't come finer than Brown's, an excellent alfresco restaurant that consistently shines in all categories: food, service, and setting. Chef de Cuisine Etsuji Umezu has created an east-meets-west cuisine that fuses Japanese culinary arts and French cooking traditions to great effect (you can watch the staff in action in the exhibition

kitchen). You might start with pan-seared Hudson Valley foie gras and barbecued eel served over sushi rice and painted with a pineapple and balsamic reduction, or miso-marinated butterfish with fresh *edamame* (soybeans) and vine-ripened tomatoes. Follow with wok-seared Kona lobster, with a wasabi butter sauce for dipping and crisp wonton ravioli; linguine with Kauai shrimp; and a gorgeous rib-eye, pan-seared in the style of Japanese Kobe beef. The food at Pahu i'a (see listing later in this chapter) has the slight edge, but the one-of-a-kind ambience here, with nightly entertainment under the stars, is pure magic. What's more, presentation and service are both faultless. Reserve a table close to the spotlight surf for the ultimate in romance (and bring a light jacket or wrap to ward off the ocean breeze, which can be nippy after dark).

See map p. 346. In the Fairmont Orchid, 1 N. Kaniku Dr., Mauna Lani resort. ☎ 808-885-2000. [www.fairmont.com](http://www.fairmont.com). Reservations highly recommended for dinner. Main courses: \$12–\$20 at lunch, \$28–\$55 at dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

### **Cafe Pesto**

**\$\$–\$\$\$ Hilo/Kohala Coast Pizza/Italian/Island**

These casual favorites are a long-standing hit with locals and visitors alike. The well-prepared pastas and Pacific Regional specialties are pleasing, but the pizza is the real star — and the real value — of the menu. Both branches serve top-flight gourmet brick-oven-baked pies featuring fresh organic herbs, island-grown produce, and a thick, slightly sweet golden crust. My favorite is the pizza luau, with kalua-style pork, sweet onions, and fresh pineapple, but you can choose from a full slate of creative combinations or build your own from a list of more than two dozen toppings. I find the food to be consistently better at the original Hilo branch (which also boasts a lovelier setting), but the branch at the northernmost end of the Kohala Coast provides a great escape for families tired of feeding on resort food.

See map p. 346. **Hilo:** In the S. Hata Building, 308 Kamehameha Ave. (at Mamo Street). ☎ 808-969-6640. **The Kohala Coast:** In the Kawaihae Shopping Center at Kawaihae Harbor, at Akoni Pule Highway and Kawaihae Road, Kawaihae (at the Highway 19/270 junction). ☎ 808-882-1071. [www.cafepesto.com](http://www.cafepesto.com). Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses: \$8–\$18 at lunch, \$8–\$26 at dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

### **The Coffee Shack**

**\$ South Kona American**

This bare-bones roadside charmer prepares some of South Kona's best eats. Take a seat on the pleasant terrace (which boasts ocean views beyond the banana trees) for table service or pony up to the friendly counter to order takeout. You can start the day with a first-class eggs Benedict or thick French toast or come by at lunch for the best sandwiches on the coast. Top-notch fillings range from smoked Alaskan salmon to fresh local veggies to warmed corned beef and Black Forest ham, and you have



them applied to any one of six kinds of fresh-baked bread. The thick-crust, generously topped pizzas are even better than Cafe Pesto's (see the preceding listing), and when it's time for dessert, lots of homemade pies and baked goods tempt you. The service can be slow, but what's your hurry? You're on vacation. Sit back, take it in stride, and consider it a blessing that you have more time to take in the million-dollar view.

See map p. 346. On Highway 11, between mile markers 108 and 109, a mile south of Captain Cook (about 10 minutes south of Keauhou). ☎ 808-328-9555. [www.coffeeshack.com](http://www.coffeeshack.com). Breakfast and sandwiches: \$6.50–\$11. Pizzas: \$10–\$16. MC, V. Open: Breakfast and lunch daily.

### **Donatoni's**

**\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast Northern Italian**

This wildly romantic restaurant replicates the feel of an Italian villa, with tables overlooking a tranquil lagoon and boasting unforgettable sunset views. Make sure to book a table on the twinkle-lit, European-elegant patio. Excellent choices include a delectable, fall-off-the-bone osso bucco alla Milanese, delicate and delicious veal scallopine alla Montovana, and any of the housemade pastas. But if something else entices you, go for it; I dined with a large party on my last visit, and every dish at the table was a star. Desserts are equally impressive. For something really special, opt for the Venetian Carnival Mask, made of white chocolate and resting atop a lightly bittersweet chocolate marquis with Franjelico sauce. The restaurant offers an excellent wine list, too. Come for sunset because the view is everything it should be.



Be sure to arrive at the Hilton Waikoloa a full 15 to 20 minutes before your reservation time; it will take you that long to walk (or take one of the resort's silly shuttles) to the restaurant because the resort sprawls over a massive 62 acres.

See map p. 346. At Hilton Waikoloa Village, 69-425 Waikoloa Beach Dr., Waikoloa. ☎ 808-886-1234. [www.hiltonwaikoloavillage.com](http://www.hiltonwaikoloavillage.com). Reservations highly recommended. Main courses: \$24–\$37. AE, DISC, MC, V. Open: Dinner nightly.

### **Edward's at Kanaloa**

**\$\$\$\$ South Kona Mediterranean**

Not much more than a covered pier reaching out to sea, Edward's is one of the most romantic restaurants in Hawaii. The tables for two sit so close to the melodious surf that the outermost ones have to be pulled in when the waves kick up. Sunset is breathtaking, and tiki torches make magic after dark. The food wins high praise, too: Edward's broadly Mediterranean cuisine — a Provençal flair here, a taste of Verona there — is rich, flavorful, and delicious. I love to start with the escargot medley, deftly seasoned with fresh herbs and accompanied by mushrooms, asparagus spears, and artichoke hearts. In addition to the requisite fresh island fish preparations, ricotta-stuffed squid dressed in *herbes de provence* and tomato caper sauce is a standout. The food isn't cheap, but it's not overpriced, either,

like so many other restaurants boasting a winning combination of cuisine, service, and views. The wine list is short but also reasonably priced.

See map p. 346. At *Kanaloa at Kona*, 78-261 Manukai St., Keauhou. ☎ 808-322-1003. Reservations required. To get there: From Highway 11, turn right on Kamehameha III Road (between mile markers 117 and 118), and then right on Manukai Street. Main courses: \$6–\$12 at breakfast, \$8–\$16 at lunch, \$19–\$36 at dinner (most less than \$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Open: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily.



### **Fiasco's**

**\$\$ Hilo American/Eclectic**

In the mood for some saucy enchiladas? How about Italian — maybe scampi, or spaghetti and meatballs? Down-home pork chops or fried chicken? Or just a good, juicy burger or a thick-cut prime rib? Fiasco's tries to be all things to all people, and it doesn't come off half bad, really. Don't expect gourmet cuisine — just good all-American favorites, which happen to be made with Big Island–raised beef and locally grown produce. The menu is multicultural, but it doesn't venture far from the familiar. The fajitas, which come on a sizzling cast-iron platter with all the fixin's, are a real standout, as is the help-yourself soup-and-salad bar. This is a fun, jazzy place that particularly caters to kids; they'll even make kid-size portions of dishes off their regular menu.

See map p. 346. In *Waiakea Square*, 200 Kanoelehua Ave. (Highway 11, between Kuawa and Piilani streets), Hilo. ☎ 808-935-7666. Reservations recommended for parties of five or more. Main courses: \$9–\$22. AE, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

### **Huggo's**

**\$\$\$\$ Kailua-Kona Seafood**

Happy, hopping Huggo's serves reliably fine seafood to a jovial crowd drawn in by the festive vibe and remarkable Kailua Bay views. Fresh fish — grilled, blackened, sauteed, or steamed — is the specialty, as it should be. They could practically cast a line over the side of the deck. The kitchen isn't going to set the world on fire with its culinary creativity, but the simplicity can be refreshing when so many restaurants smother the freshness and flavor of top-quality local catches with heavy-handed preparations. Ginger orange chicken, New York steak, and wild mushroom pasta are on hand for the fish-o-phobic. There's casual all-day dining and live music nightly at the lively bar next door, the thatch-roofed Huggo's on the Rocks, which prepares an extensive tropical cocktail menu, making this the perfect place to watch the sunset. Come extra-early for your sunset perch because the secret's out. From 6:30 to 11 a.m., this same location turns into Java on the Rocks, a great place to greet the day.

See map p. 346. 75-5828 Kahakai Rd., off Alii Drive (behind Snorkel Bob's and next to the Royal Kona Resort), Kailua-Kona. ☎ 808-329-1493. www.huggos.com. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses: \$7–\$14 at lunch, \$20–\$46 at dinner (most less than \$30). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

**Kaikodo****\$\$-\$\$\$ Hilo East-West Fusion/Sushi**

Kaikodo has swept into sleepy Hilo like a welcome tsunami, quickly establishing itself as the city's finest restaurant. Kaikodo is the cooperative brainchild of owners Howard and Mary Ann Rogers — art historians and collectors who have transformed the majestic, century-old Toyama Building into an exquisite restaurant filled with light and art — and James Beard star chef Michael Fennelly, who has also been feted by *Food & Wine* magazine and featured on PBS's "Great Chefs" series. Fennelly, formerly of Santa Fe's Santacafé, Mike's on the Avenue in New Orleans, and Mecca in San Francisco, wows with his inspired and innovative Japan-meets-Southwest cooking, which is prepared with the best local meats and fish, as well as veggies and herbs from the restaurant's own private garden. Stars of the menu include coconut- and lentil-crust-ed baked ono dressed with Hawaiian pumpkin puree; tapioca-crust-ed mahimahi married with zesty Thai eggplant and sweet chili sauce; and a tender-to-the-bone lamb shank braised in Mahana red ale. The lunch menu is equally appetizing, if a bit more casual: You'll find housemade pumpkin raviolis, a grilled steak sandwich glazed in sherry and oyster sauce, even a teriyaki-basted bacon cheeseburger. Next door to the main restaurant is the Zen-like Kaiko Sushi Bar, which boasts a stellar selection of sushi, both classic and visionary.

See map p. 346. 60 Keawe St. (at Waianuenue St.), Hilo. ☎ 808-961-2558. www.restaurantkaikodo.com. Reservations essential. Main courses: \$8–\$12 at lunch, \$5–\$15 at Sun brunch, \$19–\$28 at dinner. AE, MC, V. Open: Lunch Mon–Sat, brunch Sun, dinner daily.

**Kei Cafe****\$\$-\$\$\$ South Kona Island/Eclectic**

Kei (KAY-ee) Cafe prepares some of the Big Island's finest food in a casual, low-key environment. After operating for eight years in a former fish market, Kei relocated a bit farther north to somewhat more upscale digs. The ambience remains as comfortable as ever, the service is friendly, and the island-style meals are excellent. Expect hearty Mediterranean- and Asian-slanted dishes in pleasantly light sauces accompanied by fresh, crisp vegetables, such as half-roasted chicken in red Thai curry, or marvelous fresh Kona catches in a puckery picatta sauce. Every dish is made from scratch, and virtually all ingredients are caught, grown, or harvested on the island. Kei Cafe offers one of the best dining values in the state; it's easy to pay a lot more for a lot less elsewhere in Hawaii. Save room for dessert, because both the bread pudding, made with bananas and pineapple, and coconut flan with *lilikoi* sauce (secret recipe of the owner's Portuguese mother-in-law) are homestyle tropical delights.

See map p. 346. On Highway 11 at mile marker 113, Kealahakua. ☎ 808-322-9992. Reservations highly recommended. Main courses: \$12–\$20. No credit cards. Open: Dinner Tues–Sat.

**Kenichi Pacific****\$\$\$ South Kona Pacific Rim Fusion/Sushi**

Master sushi chef Kenichi Kamada, who has already made a splash in Austin and Aspen with his thrilling Pacific Rim fusion cuisine, has thankfully blessed the Big Island with his hip signature style, famous sushi bar, and a welcome blast of cool. The setting is Zen-modern, the service is efficient, and the food is fantastic, making Kenichi Pacific a winner on all fronts. You can enjoy some of the best sushi and sashimi in the islands, opt for more traditional appetizer/main-course ordering, or mix it up family style, if you prefer. Dishes that make grazing pure pleasure include ginger-marinated squid, Saikyo black cod — cured for 48 hours in miso blend and then broiled with a teriyaki glaze until it's melt-in-your-mouth perfection — and Dungeness crab cakes, fresh crab encased in crispy phyllo and dressed in a sambal-pickled ginger sauce. Kenichi's special roast duck with orange hoisin sauce, wrapped mu shu-style and served with tempura asparagus, is the stuff that culinary dreams are made of. Thank you, Kenichi!

See map p. 346. In the Keauhou Shopping Center, Keauhou. ☎ 808-322-6400. Reservations recommended for dinner. To get there: From Highway 11, turn right on Kamehameha III Road (between mile markers 117 and 118) and head downhill to the shopping center. Main courses: \$17–\$32. AE, MC, V. Open: Lunch Mon–Fri, dinner daily.

**Ken's House of Pancakes****\$ Hilo Coffee Shop**

The classic coffee shop goes Hawaiian at Ken's, the only round-the-clock joint on the Big Island. This cheery place is your average all-American diner, where the food is familiar and pleasingly prepared, and the old-fashioned service comes with a dash of island-style aloha. Ken's is a three-meals-a-day-plus kind of place: Start your day bright and early with French toast or a macadamia-nut waffle (topped with passion-fruit or coconut syrup, if you want); come back at noon for a garden-fresh salad or a flame-broiled burger; stop in for a roast turkey, teriyaki chicken, or kalbi rib dinner; and drop by for a late-night piece of pie and a cup of Kona joe.

See map p. 346. 1730 Kamehameha Ave. (at Kanoelehua Avenue), Hilo. ☎ 808-935-8711. Reservations not taken. Main courses: \$2–\$11. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Daily 24 hours.

**Kilauea Lodge & Restaurant****\$\$\$\$ Volcano Continental**

My favorite Volcano restaurant is dressed like a cozy old-world hunting lodge and is tucked away in the rainforest just outside the national park. The large, high-ceilinged room is appealingly attractive, with country-style furniture polished to a high sheen and a roaring stone fireplace. The knowledgeable and warmly welcoming servers are dressed in beautiful island prints by renowned Big Island designer Sig Zane (see Chapter 16 for info

on where to get your own Sig Zane aloha wear). A skilled bartender mixing up perfect martinis rounds out the picture. Chef/owner Albert Jeyte specializes in hearty old-world cuisine. Sure, a well-prepared fresh catch is always on offer, but Jeyte's heart lies with such richly flavored dishes as venison medallions, which arrive pan-seared, brandy-flamed, and sporting a yummy Nicole sauce. Seafood Mauna Kea is sautéed and topped with crème fraîche, shiitake mushrooms, and fresh basil. Or try the *hasenpfefer*: succulent braised rabbit in a red-wine sauce. Dinners come with soup, salad, and fresh-baked bread, which makes the excellent fare an excellent value, too.

See map p. 346. 19-4055 Volcano Rd., (just off Highway 11 at Wright Road), Volcano. ☎ 808-967-7366. www.kilauealodge.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses: \$19–\$39 (most less than \$30). AE, MC, V. Open: Dinner nightly.

### **Kona Brewing Co.**

**\$–\$\$ Kailua-Kona Island/Pizza**

Kona Brewing Co. is Hawaii's finest microbrewery, specializing in flavorful hand-crafted brews with island-rooted names like Longboard Lager, Fire Rock Pale Ale, and Hula Hefewiezen. You can enjoy them fresh from the tap at this pleasingly casual pub, along with equally well-prepared island-style pub grub. The hand-tossed pizza crusts are topped with top-quality Parmesan and mozzarella, locally grown herbs, and a range of creative ingredients, from traditional pepperoni to *liliko'i* (passion fruit) barbecue chicken. Or you can opt for hearty salads with crisp island-grown veggies, and generously stuffed sandwiches on the brewery's own focaccia. A nice selection of pupu (appetizers) is on hand for those who merely want to pull up to the blond-wood bar for some munchies and a brewski. Inside service is available, but snare a table on the pretty tropical patio if you can. Friendly service rounds out the affordable, easygoing appeal.

See map p. 346. 75-5629 Kuakini Highway, in the North Kona Shopping Center, (1 block inland from Alii Drive) and Palani Road ☎ 808-334-2739. www.konabrewing.co.com. Reservations taken only for parties of 10 or more. To get there: Heading toward the ocean on Palani Road, turn left on Kuakini Highway, and then right into the shopping center. Sandwiches and salads: \$8–\$11. Pizzas: \$9–\$23. DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

### **Lava Rock Cafe**

**\$\$ Volcano Village American/Hawaii Local**

This easygoing local favorite is a very nice choice for a casual meal (especially because your choices are rather limited in Volcano Village). It's a cheerful spot furnished in knotty pine, with both indoor and covered open-air dining. The fare is American with a cross-cultural bent, from beefy burgers to teriyaki chicken to chow-fun noodles to hearty chili to T-bone-and-shrimp combos — you get the something-for-everybody idea. It's pretty straightforward island fare — simple, unfussy, and served with a smile. This is a great place to start the day if your accommodations don't include breakfast. (I love the pancakes, which come with yummy house-made *liliko'i* — passion fruit —

butter.) The kitchen will even pack its “seismic sandwiches” to go for hikers who want to bring a lunch along the trail. Ask ’em to throw in a macadamia nut cookie or two; they’re divine. Live music adds to the local flavor on Thursday and Saturday evenings.



The Lava Rock also happens to be Volcano Village’s only Internet cafe, so this is also the place to check your mail if you want to keep in e-touch with the folks back home.

See map p. 346. On Highway 11, behind Kilauea General Store, Volcano Village. ☎ 808-967-8526. [www.volcanovillage.com/LavaRock.htm](http://www.volcanovillage.com/LavaRock.htm). Reservations not necessary. Main courses: \$4.50–\$7 at lunch, \$6–\$18 at dinner (most items under \$12). MC, V. Open: Breakfast and lunch daily, dinner Tues–Sat.

### **Maha’s Cafe**

#### **\$ Waimea Island/Sandwiches**

Maha’s alone makes a trip to Waimea well worth the effort. This cozy country cottage (Waimea’s first frame house, built in 1852) is one of the Big Island’s best restaurants. Maha’s magic touch raises simple homestyle cooking to new heights. I dream about Maha’s oven-roasted turkey sandwich: Served on dark squaw bread with homemade mushroom stuffing and cranberry sauce (with added zest from Kau oranges), this open-faced symphony of a sandwich shouldn’t be relegated to holiday time. Other choices are similarly ethereal: honey-smoked ahi with *lilikoi* (passion fruit) salsa; roasted lamb with spicy mango chutney; and fresh fish with local taro and sweet potato. Winning morning choices include yummy poi pancakes with coconut syrup and a homemade granola parfait with fresh island fruits, nuts, and yogurt. Don’t skip dessert even if you don’t usually indulge because each and every one of the fresh-baked sweets is divine. Maha’s is a real island find!

See map p. 346. In front of Waimea Center, 65-1148 Mamalahoa Highway (Highway 19), near Highway 190 junction (next to McDonald’s), Waimea. ☎ 808-885-0693. [www.hawaiinow.com/mahas](http://www.hawaiinow.com/mahas). Reservations not taken. Breakfast items: \$2.50–\$4. Lunch menu: \$5.50–\$11. Afternoon tea: \$12. MC, V. Open: Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tea (3–4:30 p.m.) daily except Tues.

### **Merriman’s Restaurant**

#### **\$\$\$\$ Waimea Hawaii Regional**

One of the original purveyors of Hawaii Regional cuisine, James Beard-nominated chef Peter Merriman reigns over this cozy cowboy-country enclave. Over the years, it has matured into a still-pleasing — and still hugely popular — culinary institution. Residents and visitors alike happily make the long drive Upcountry (20 minutes from the Kohala Coast, about an hour from Kona or Hilo) to feast on Merriman’s winning cuisine, the long-lasting success of which lies in its simplicity. Waimea-raised beef and lamb, fish caught daily in Kona waters, and organically grown local veggies are used in uncomplicated yet innovative preparations that let the fresh natural flavors of the top-quality ingredients shine through. Wok-charred ahi,

Pahoa corn-and-shrimp fritters, and slow-roasted chicken are among the many standouts on the perpetually pleasing menu. Meals are more affordably priced than most of this caliber, and lunch is a downright bargain. The only downside is the big '80s-reminiscent pastel interior, which is nicely maintained but nevertheless sorely in need of an update.



If you'd like to try Peter Merriman's winning fare but don't feel like driving all the way to Waimea — or if you're simply in the mood for something more casual — visit the new **Merriman's Market Café** in the Waikoloa Kings Shops at the Waikoloa Beach Resort, 250 Waikoloa Beach Dr. (\$\$; ☎ **808-886-1700**). This casually sophisticated market-style cafe features Italian- and Mediterranean-style fare prepared with fresh local produce, meats, and fish that give every dish a delightful local flair. Expect house-made sausages, artisan-style breads, a wide range of cheeses, hearty salads, individual pizzas, and the like, plus beautifully prepared dishes for takeout or enjoying on-site, either indoors or out. It's a wonderful place to prepare a picnic, relax at lunch, or enjoy a light dinner. The full-service bar includes a good wine selection.

*See map p. 346. 65-1227 Opelo Road, in Opelo Plaza, Highway 19 (at Opelo Road, on the Kona side of town), Kamuela. ☎ 808-885-6822. www.merrimanshawaii.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses: \$9–\$14 at lunch, \$18–\$35 at dinner. AE, MC, V. Open: Lunch Mon–Fri, dinner nightly.*

### ***Ocean Sushi Deli*** **\$\$ Hilo Japanese**

Sushi lovers who visit Hilo shouldn't miss this plain and simple sushi restaurant, which makes the most of the bounty of the sea, both island-caught and flown in fresh from Japan. Always of A-1 quality, the fish is skillfully prepared by master sushi chefs and served with aloha by a young, friendly, and attentive waitstaff. Creative rolls are a forte, and combination plates are a bargain. The restaurant is very popular at dinnertime, so make reservations or be prepared for a wait. Across the street, at no. 250, is sister restaurant **Tsunami Grill and Tempura**, which excels at noodle bowls, bentos, tempura, katsu, and other Japanese comfort foods; the sushi-phobic members of your party can order nonfish items from the Tsunami menu at Ocean Sushi Deli.

*See map p. 346 239 Keawe St. (near Haili Street, next to Pescatore), Hilo. ☎ 808-961-6625. Reservations recommended for dinner. 2-piece sushi and rolls: \$2–\$8. Complete meals: \$4.50–\$23. Family platters: \$20–\$50. DC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner Mon–Sat.*



### ***Oodles of Noodles*** **\$\$–\$\$\$ Kailua-Kona Pan-Asian/International**

Oodles isn't just any Formica-countered quickie noodle stand; rather, it's the domain of top Hawaii Regional chef Amy Ota, who has reinvented noodle dishes for discriminating diners with resounding success. Noodles are the unifying theme on a creative global-gourmet menu that runs the

gamut from Vietnamese *pho* (beef noodle soup) to pasta primavera with grilled vegetables to wok-seared ahi noodle casserole to the world's best macaroni and cheese. Save room for the surprisingly scrumptious desserts, which are often the finest feature of an all-around pleasing meal; the ice cream coated with sweet Japanese *mochi* is my favorite dessert on the island. The hip, warm-hued restaurant has doubled in size in recent years, but its popularity among locals and visitors alike means that you may still encounter a wait for a table. BYOB or stick with the delightful juices and flavored teas. A kids' menu is available, and kids under 3 eat free.

See map p. 346. In the Crossroads Shopping Center (the Safeway Center), 75-1027 Henry St. (at Highway 11 and Palani Road), Kailua-Kona. ☎ 808-329-9222. Reservations accepted for parties of 6 or more. Main courses: \$8–\$14 at lunch, \$12–\$26 at dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

### ***Pahu i'a***

\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast Euro-Pacific Fusion

Done in an elegant haute-plantation style and open to the trade winds and ocean views, this ultraromantic candlelit dining room is the Big Island's most beautiful restaurant — and the sublime food and faultless service live up to the setting in every respect. The regularly changing menu features only the finest regional ingredients, and both Pacific-born and continental preparations take inspired turns in the capable kitchen. For example, while a thick-cut ahi steak wears a Szechuan pepper crust, the threat of excessive spice is undone by a light and aromatic Kau orange citrus sauce. Crispy-skin *opakapaka* (snapper) meunière comes with both Maui onions and macadamia-nut brown butter. I'm clearly not alone in considering Pahu i'a phenomenal on all fronts; it has won stellar ratings from Zagat and four-diamond status from AAA and was recognized as one of America's top hotel restaurants by *Food & Wine*. Scoring a table can be rather difficult, but your efforts will be well-rewarded, so book well in advance (before you leave home, if possible) or opt for an early or late meal.

See map p. 346. At the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai, 100 Kaupulehu Dr., Kaupulehu-Kona (7 miles north of the airport). ☎ 808-325-8000. www.fourseasons.com/hualalai. Reservations essential. Main courses: \$9–\$24 at breakfast, \$32–\$48 at dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Breakfast and dinner daily.

### ***Pescatore Italian Restaurant***

\$\$\$ Hilo Southern Italian

One of Hilo's top fine-dining spots is this old-world restaurant with wood-paneled walls, ornately cushioned chairs, and delicate lace curtains on the windows. The traditionally Southern Italian, seafood-heavy menu stars excellent scaloppines, primaveras, and puttanesecas. Dishes are consistently well-prepared and pleasing: Ahi carpaccio is sliced paper-thin and dressed in fine extra-virgin olive oil to heighten the fresh flavor, the seafood Fra Diavolo is a spicy bounty of fresh seafood in zesty marinara, and the veal is always a tender triumph. Service is attentive, and the wine list is affordable. The lunch menu is simpler but no less satisfying.



See map p. 346. 235 Keawe St. (at Haili Street), Hilo. ☎ 808-969-9090. Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses: \$5–\$12 at lunch, \$16–\$29 at dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily, breakfast buffet Sat–Sun.

### **Roy's Waikoloa Bar & Grill**

\$\$\$–\$\$\$\$ Kohala Coast Hawaii Regional

The Waikoloa branch of Roy Yamaguchi's high-profile, high-end restaurant chain is not quite as winningly casual as the other Roy's throughout Hawaii (particularly my favorite, Roy's Poipu Grill on Kauai), but this brightly lit restaurant is a great place to sample the original Hawaii Regional cuisine nonetheless. Roy's food is more overtly Asian than what you'll find in many other Hawaii Regional restaurants (like Merriman's; see listing earlier in this chapter). The menu changes daily, but usually includes standards such as sublime Szechuan baby-back ribs, blackened ahi with a delectable soy mustard butter, or roasted macadamia-nut mahimahi in lobster cognac butter sauce. You can easily eat affordably here thanks to an oversized menu of dim sum, appetizers, and pizzas. The wines and sakes bottled under Roy's own label are affordable and surprisingly good. Service is a little too attentive, but it's a minor complaint — like complaining that the Moët's too cold, if you know what I mean.

See map p. 346. In the King's Shops, 250 Waikoloa Beach Dr., Waikoloa. ☎ 808-886-4321. www.roysrestaurant.com. Reservations highly recommended. Appetizers and pizzas: \$5–\$12. Main courses: \$14–\$28. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.



### **Seaside Restaurant & Aqua Farm**

\$\$–\$\$\$ Hilo Seafood

Enterprising aquaculture farmers, the Nakagawa family has struck on a winning concept: a simple, satisfying restaurant overlooking well-stocked fish ponds, into which the chef himself drops a line to fulfill each night's dinner orders. Seaside is a refreshing alternative for fish lovers who want a break from the ahi and mahimahi — not to mention the high prices — so prevalent on Hawaii menus. Farm-raised mullet, catfish, and golden perch are steamed in a ti leaf with lemon and onion, a wonderfully unfussy preparation that lets the flavor of the state's freshest-caught fish star on the plate. *Aholehole* (Hawaiian flagtail bass), fried and served whole, is another house specialty, known to draw day-trippers from as far as Honolulu. Dinners come complete with salad, veggies, rice, apple pie, and tea or coffee for an excellent value. Chicken and steak are available for landlubbers, as are more familiar island fishes like ahi, mahi, and ono. It's a genuine island dining experience, complete with aloha-friendly service. Reserve ahead so that the angler knows how big to make the day's catch.

See map p. 346. 1790 Kalaniana'ole Ave. (at Lokoaka Street, 2.6 miles east of Banyan Drive), Hilo. ☎ 808-935-8825. www.seasiderestaurant.com. Reservations highly recommended. Complete dinners: \$11–\$26 (most \$17–\$24). MC, V. Open: Dinner Tues–Sun.



### **Sibu Cafe**

**\$\$ Kailua-Kona Indonesian**

Tucked away in a nondescript Alii Drive minimall, affordable Sibu offers flame-grilled satays (including a terrific all-veggie version), rich and flavorful curries, fresh stir-fries, and a creative list of daily specials that offer a welcome change of pace from Kona's ubiquitous and overpriced surf-and-turf fare. Both the Balinese chicken with peanut sauce and the garlic shrimp linguine with black pepper and green chili more than justify their long-standing popularity. The closet-size dining room is colorful but otherwise devoid of ambience, so I recommend grabbing a well-shaded courtyard table, where the table service is equally attentive.

See map p. 346. In *Banyan Court*, 75-5695 Alii Drive, Kailua-Kona. ☎ 808-329-1112. Reservations not taken. Main courses: \$10–\$14. No credit cards. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

### **Thai Rin**

**\$\$ Kailua-Kona Thai**

An oasis of good value in a town that falls short more often than not, this affordable and authentic spot features an expansive menu of well-prepared Thai favorites. The noodle dishes and multicolored curries are universally pleasing and include a pad Thai that borders on greatness. Thai Rin's version of chicken with cashew nuts — a dish that can often be pedestrian in lesser restaurants — is light, flavorful, and overflowing with a bounty of fresh veggies. The menu features lots of seafood choices, of course (to be expected in the deep-sea-fishing capital of the Pacific). The dining room is plain, high-ceilinged, and simple, but patio tables offer views of the bay across Alii Drive. Service is graciously attentive from start to finish.

See map p. 346. Alii Sunset Plaza, 75-5799 Alii Dr., in the heart of Kailua-Kona. ☎ 808-329-2929. Reservations accepted. Lunch specials: \$6–\$11. Main courses: \$7–\$18 (most less than \$15). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Open: Lunch Mon–Sat, dinner nightly.

### **Thai Thai Restaurant**

**\$\$ Volcano Thai**

I was thrilled to find this wonderful Thai restaurant in Volcano Village, which doesn't exactly brim with quality dining spots, especially not ethnic places. An attractive high-ceilinged room with Thai decorative touches, pretty table linens, and Thai pop music on the sound system sets the stage for simple, freshly prepared dishes. The menu is on the smallish side, but every dish I tasted was a winner. The tom yum soup was clear and well-spiced with lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves; the masaman curry was rich with coconut milk and potatoes; and a stir-fry starred crisp Asian veggies and jumbo shrimp. The green papaya salad makes an excellent way to start a wholly satisfying meal.

See map p. 346. 19-4084 Old Volcano Rd., Volcano. ☎ 808-967-7969. Reservations accepted. Main courses: \$9–\$15. MC, V. Open: Dinner nightly.



**Tres Hombres Beach Grill/Tres Hombres Steak & Seafood Cantina**  
**\$\$ Kohala Coast/Kailua-Kona Mexican**

Set on the second floor of a harborfront center at the very north end of the Kohala Coast, this cheerful tropical Mexican restaurant is perfectly situated for watching outrigger canoe clubs paddle out to sea from the nearby launch. The food is only a step above average-quality gringoized Mexican grub, but I like Tres Hombres anyway. A welcome alternative to the generally overpriced resort dining, this fun, easygoing, surf-themed restaurant features a nice Trader Vic's-style bar with a big, creative tequila and tropical drinks menu and a simply furnished outdoor patio. The affordable menu has an island flair: fresh mahimahi tacos, mammoth surf burritos, sizzling fajitas, and more, all sizably portioned and satisfying. A second, slightly more upscale branch is conveniently located in Kailua-Kona, ideally suiting the resort town's party mood. The kids will love the fun environment and "kid-friendly" food.

See map p. 346. **The Kohala Coast:** In the Kawaihae Shopping Center at Kawaihae Harbor, at Akoni Pule Highway and Kawaihae Road, Kawaihae (at the Highway 19/270 junction). ☎ 808-882-1031. Reservations accepted for parties of 5 or more. **Kailua-Kona:** 75-5864 Walua Rd. (at Alii Drive, across from the Royal Kona Resort). ☎ 808-329-2173. Reservations accepted. Main courses: \$8–\$22. MC, V. Open: Lunch and dinner daily.

## Luau!

My favorite luau on the Big Island has always been the wonderful Friday-night-only Kona Village Luau. You should make your reservations as far ahead of time as possible (before you leave home) because it sells out sometimes weeks in advance.



**Kona Village Luau**

This ultradeluxe Polynesian-style resort is the ideal place for a luau, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a better one. The food is excellently prepared and well labeled (so you know what you're eating), and the traditional *imu* (underground pig roasting) ceremony is well narrated, so you get the cultural gist. The South Pacific revue is fast-moving and lots of fun, if not nearly as authentic as the one you'll see at the new Traditions at Kahaluu luau (I don't think that cowboy hulas occurred in old Hawaii). The fire dancer is a show-stopper, of course, and everyone involved is a first-rate entertainer. The setting isn't oceanfront, but it's lovely nonetheless; the luau is large-scale, but it manages to feel friendly and intimate; service is attentive and aloha friendly. Reservations are required, so book as far in advance as possible.

See map p. 346. At Kona Village, in the Kaupulehu resort, 7 miles north of the airport on the Kohala Coast. ☎ 800-367-5290 or 808-325-5555. www.konavillage.com. Admission: \$76 adults, \$46 kids 12 and under. Beer and house wine included. Included in the rates for Kona Village guests. Time: Fri at 5:45 p.m.

## Fast Facts: Big Island

### American Automobile Association (AAA)

Roadside service is available to members by calling ☎ 800-AAA-HELP; however, the only Hawaii office is on Oahu (see Chapter 11).

### American Express

American Express has one office on the Big Island, on the Kohala Coast at the Hilton Waikoloa Village, 425 Waikoloa Beach Dr., off Highway 19 in the Waikoloa Resort (☎ 808-886-7958).

### Baby Sitters and Baby Stuff

Any resort, hotel, or condo should be able to refer you to a reliable baby sitter with a proven track record. **Baby's Away** (☎ 800-996-9030 or 808-987-9236; [www.babysaway.com](http://www.babysaway.com)) rents cribs, strollers, highchairs, playpens, infant seats, and the like; they'll deliver whatever you need to wherever you're staying, and they'll pick it up when you're done.

### Doctors

**Hualalai Urgent Care** is in Kailua-Kona at 75-1028 Henry St. (behind Borders Books and Music, across the street from Safeway; ☎ 808-327-4357). In Hilo, contact **Hilo Urgent Care**, 42 Mohouli St., off Kilauea Avenue (☎ 808-969-3051), which offers walk-in service.

### Emergencies

Dial **911** from any phone, just like on the mainland.

### Hospitals

**Kona Community Hospital**, on the south Kona Coast at 79-1019 Haukapila St., off Highway 11, in Kealahou (☎ 808-733-4020; [www.kch.hhsc.org](http://www.kch.hhsc.org)), has 24-hour emergency facilities. On the east side of the island, head to the emergency room at

**Hilo Medical Center**, 1190 Waiuanue Ave. (just west of Rainbow Drive), Hilo (☎ 808-974-4700; [www.hmc.hhsc.org](http://www.hmc.hhsc.org)). In Waimea, visit **North Hawaii Community Hospital**, 67-125 Mamalahoa Hwy. (☎ 808-885-4444).

### Information

The **Big Island Visitors Bureau** ([bigisland.gohawaii.com](http://bigisland.gohawaii.com)) has two island offices: one on the Kohala Coast at the Kings' Shops, 250 Waikoloa Beach Dr., Suite B-15, in the Waikoloa Resort (☎ 808-886-1655); and another in Hilo at 250 Keawe St., at Haili Street (across from Pescatore's restaurant), downtown (☎ 808-961-5797). Or, if you want information specifically on the island's west side, contact the **Kohala Coast Resort Association** (☎ 800-318-3637 or 808-886-4915; [www.kkra.org](http://www.kkra.org)).

For information on **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park**, contact P.O. Box 52, Hawaii National Park, HI 96718-0052 (☎ 808-965-6000; [www.nps.gov/havo](http://www.nps.gov/havo)).

Chances are good that you'll find all the information you need even before you leave the airport. Just wander over to the information kiosks while you're waiting for your baggage and pick up copies of **This Week Big Island** and **101 Things to Do on the Big Island**, and the other free tourist publications and brochures that you'll find there. They're also available all over the island (particularly at malls and shopping centers).

Also, don't hesitate to ask the staff at your resort or condo for help or advice if you need it. These knowledgeable folks are usually more than happy to point you in the right direction and make recommendations.

### Newspapers/Magazines

The Big Island has two daily papers: **West Hawaii Today** ([www.westhawaiiitoday.com](http://www.westhawaiiitoday.com)), and the **Hawaii Tribune Herald** ([www.hilohawaiiitribune.com](http://www.hilohawaiiitribune.com)), which predominantly serves Hilo and environs. In addition, the **Hawaii Island Journal** ([www.hawaiiislandjournal.com](http://www.hawaiiislandjournal.com)) is a free weekly newspaper that's a good source for event and entertainment listings; it's easy to find in free racks around the island.

### Pharmacies

**Long's Drugs** ([www.longs.com](http://www.longs.com)), Hawaii's biggest drugstore chain, has two branches on the Kona Coast: one at the Keauhou Shopping Center, 78-6831 Alii Dr, Keauhou (☎ 808-322-5122); and one in the Lanihau Shopping Center, 75-5595 Palani Rd., on the ocean side of Highway 19, Kailua-Kona (☎ 808-329-1380). In Hilo, you'll find Long's at 555 Kilauea Ave., at Ponahawai Street (☎ 808-935-3357); and in the Prince Kuhio Shopping Plaza, 111 E. Puainako St., east of Highway 11 (☎ 808-959-5881).

### Police

**Hawaii County Police Department** headquarters is at 349 Kapiolani St. (between Kukuau and Hualalai streets), Hilo (☎ 808-935-3311). The **Kona Police Station** is at 74-5221 Queen Kaahumanu Hwy. (Highway 19), just south of Kaloko Light Industrial Park (☎ 808-326-4646). Of course, if you have an emergency, dial **911** from any phone.

### Post Offices

The Kona branch offices are at 74-7577 Palani Rd. (past Highway 11, almost to the shoreline), Kailua-Kona, and in the Keauhou Shopping Center, 78-6831 Alii Dr. (near Judd Trail), Keauhou. In Hilo, head to 1299 Kekuanaoa Ave. (past the airport; follow it as it loops around). A downtown branch is at 152 Waiuanue Ave., between Keawe and Kinoole streets. Satellite post offices are located around the island; to find the one nearest you, call ☎ 800-275-8777 or visit [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com).

### Taxes

Hawaii's sales tax is 4 percent. Expect taxes of about 11.42 percent to be added to your hotel bill.

### Taxis

On the Kona-Kohala side of the island, call **Paradise Taxi** (☎ 808-329-1234), which serves the Kailua-Kona area, or **Luana Limousine** (☎ 800-999-4001 or 808-326-5466). In Hilo, call **Ace One** (☎ 808-935-8303).

### Weather, Surf, and Volcano Reports

For the current weather, call ☎ 808-961-5582 or 808-935-8555 in Hilo. For the marine forecast, dial ☎ 808-935-9883. For volcano eruption information and weather updates for Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, dial ☎ 808-985-6000.