

Fun on & off the Beach

This is why you've come to Maui—the sun, the sand, and the surf. In this chapter, I'll tell you about the best beaches, from where to soak up the rays to where to plunge beneath the waves. I've covered a range of ocean activities on Maui, as well as my favorite places and outfitters for these marine adventures. Also in this chapter are things to do on dry land, including the best spots for hiking and camping and the greatest golf courses.

1 Beaches

Hawaii's beaches belong to the people. All beaches (even those in front of exclusive resorts) are public property, and you are welcome to visit. Hawaii state law requires all resorts and hotels to offer public right-of-way access to the beach, along with public parking. For beach toys and equipment, contact the **Activity Warehouse** (☎ 800/343-2087; www.travelhawaii.com), which has branches in Lahaina at 578 Front St., near Prison Street (☎ 808/667-4000), and in Kihei at Azeka Place II, on the mountain side of Kihei Road near Lipoa Street (☎ 808/875-4000). Beach chairs rent for \$2 a day, coolers (with ice) for \$2 a day, and a host of toys (Frisbees, volleyballs, and more) for \$1 a day.

WEST MAUI

KAANAPALI BEACH ★★

Four-mile-long Kaanapali is one of Maui's best beaches, with grainy gold sand as far as the eye can see. The beach parallels the sea channel through most of its length, and a paved beach walk links hotels and condos, open-air restaurants, and Whalers Village shopping center. Because Kaanapali is so long, the beach is crowded only in pockets; there's plenty of room to find seclusion. Summertime swimming is excellent.

There's fabulous snorkeling around **Black Rock**, in front of the Sheraton; the water is clear, calm, and populated with clouds of tropical fish. You might even spot a turtle or two.

Facilities include outdoor showers; you can use the restrooms at the hotel pools. Beach-activity vendors line up in front of the hotels, offering various water activities and equipment.

Parking is a problem, though. There are two public entrances: At the south end, turn off Honoapiilani Highway into the Kaanapali Resort, and pay for parking there, or continue on Honoapiilani Highway, turn off at the last Kaanapali exit at the stoplight near the Maui Kaanapali Villas, and park next to the beach signs indicating public access (this is limited to only a few cars, so to save time you might want to just head to the Sheraton or Whalers Village and plunk down your money).

KAPALUA BEACH ★★

The beach cove that fronts the Kapalua Bay Hotel is the stuff of dreams: a golden crescent bordered by two palm-studded points, with crystal-clear water and a gently sloping sandy bottom. Protected from strong winds and currents by the lava-rock promontories, Kapalua's calm waters are great for snorkelers and swimmers of all ages and abilities, and the bay is big enough to paddle a kayak around without getting into the more challenging channel that separates Maui from Molokai. Waves come in just right for riding.

The beach is accessible from the hotel on one end, which provides sun chairs with shades and a beach-activities center for its guests, and a public access way on the other. The inland side is edged by a shady path and cool lawns. Outdoor showers are stationed at both ends. You'll also find restrooms, lifeguards, a rental shack, and plenty of shade.

Parking is limited to about 30 spaces in a small lot off Lower Honoapiilani Road, by Napili Kai Beach Club, so arrive early.

SOUTH MAUI

KAMAOLE III BEACH PARK ★

Three beach parks—Kamaole I, II, and III—stand like golden jewels in the front yard of the funky seaside town of Kihei. All three are popular with local residents and visitors because they're easily accessible. On weekends they're jam-packed with fishermen, picnickers, swimmers, and snorkelers.

The most popular is Kamaole III, or "Kam-3," as locals say. Swimming is safe here, but scattered lava rocks are toe-stubbers at the water line, and parents should watch to make sure that kids don't venture too far out, because the bottom slopes off quickly. Both the north and south shores are rocky fingers with a surge big enough to attract fish and snorkelers, and the winter waves attract

bodysurfers. Kam-3 is also a wonderful place to watch the sunset. Facilities include restrooms, showers, picnic tables, barbecue grills, and lifeguards. There's also plenty of parking on South Kihei Road, across from the Maui Parkshore condos.

WALEA BEACH ★★

Wailea is the best golden-sand crescent on Maui's sunbaked southwestern coast. One of five beaches within Wailea Resort, Wailea is big, wide, and protected on both sides by black-lava points. It's the front yard of the Four Seasons Wailea and the Grand Wailea Resort Hotel and Spa. From the beach, the view out to sea is magnificent, framed by neighboring Kahoolawe and Lanai and the tiny crescent of Molokini. The clear waters tumble to shore in waves just the right size for gentle riding, with or without a board. From shore, you can see Pacific humpback whales in season (Dec–Apr) and unreal sunsets nightly. Facilities include restrooms; outdoor showers; and limited free parking at the blue SHORELINE ACCESS sign, on Wailea Alanui Drive, the main drag of this resort.

ULUA BEACH ★

One of the most popular beaches in Wailea, Ulua is a long, wide, crescent-shaped gold-sand beach between two rocky points. When the ocean is calm, Ulua offers Wailea's best snorkeling; when it's rough, the waves are excellent for bodysurfers. The ocean bottom is shallow and gently slopes down to deeper waters, making swimming generally safe. In high season (Christmas–Mar and June–Aug), the beach is carpeted with towels. Facilities include showers and restrooms. A variety of equipment is available for rent at the nearby Wailea Ocean Activity Center. To find Ulua, look for the blue SHORELINE ACCESS sign on South Kihei Road, near Stouffer Wailea Beach Resort. A tiny parking lot is nearby.

MALUAKA BEACH (MAKENA BEACH) ★★

On the southern end of Maui's resort coast, development falls off dramatically, leaving a wild, dry countryside of green kiawe trees. Maluaka Beach, often called Makena, is notable for its beauty and its views of Molokini Crater; the offshore islet; and Kahoolawe, the so-called "target" island. It's a short, wide, palm-fringed crescent of golden, grainy sand set between two black-lava points and bounded by big sand dunes topped by a grassy knoll. Swimming in this mostly calm bay is considered the best on Makena Bay, which is bordered on the south by Puu Olai cinder cone and historic Keawala'i Congregational Church. Facilities include restrooms,

showers, a landscaped park, lifeguards, and roadside parking. Along Makena Alanui, look for the SHORELINE ACCESS sign near the Maui Prince hotel, turn right, and head down to the shore.

ONELOA BEACH (BIG BEACH) ★★

Oneloa, which means “long sand” in Hawaiian, is one of the most popular beaches on Maui. Locals call it Big Beach; it’s 3,300 feet long and more than 100 feet wide. Mauians come here to swim, fish, sunbathe, surf, and enjoy the view of Kahoolawe and Lanai. Snorkeling is good around the north end at the foot of Puu Olai, a 360-foot cinder cone. During storms, however, big waves and a strong rip current make swimming dangerous. There are no facilities except portable toilets, but there’s plenty of parking. To get here, drive past the Maui Prince Hotel to the second dirt road, which leads through a kiawe thicket to the beach.

On the other side of Puu Olai is **Little Beach**, a small pocket beach where nudists work on their all-over tans, to the chagrin of uptight authorities who take a dim view of public nudity.

EAST MAUI

HOOKIPA BEACH PARK ★

Two miles past Paia on the Hana Highway, you’ll find one of the most famous windsurfing sites in the world. Due to its constant winds and endless waves, Hookipa attracts top windsurfers and wave jumpers from around the globe. Surfers and fishermen also enjoy this small, gold-sand beach at the foot of a grassy cliff, which provides a natural amphitheater for spectators. Except when international competitions are being held, weekdays are the best time to watch the daredevils fly over the waves. When the water is flat, snorkelers and divers explore the reef. Facilities include restrooms, showers, pavilions, picnic tables, barbecue grills, and a parking lot.

WAIANAPANAPA STATE PARK ★

Four miles before Hana, off the Hana Highway, is this beach park. The park’s 120 acres have 12 cabins (see p. 75), a caretaker’s residence, a beach park, picnic tables, barbecue grills, restrooms, showers, a parking lot, a shoreline hiking trail, and a black-sand beach (it’s actually small black pebbles). This is a wonderful area for both shoreline hikes (mosquitoes are plentiful, so bring insect repellent) and picnicking. Swimming is generally unsafe due to powerful rip currents and strong waves breaking offshore, which roll into the beach unchecked. Waianapanapa is crowded on weekends with local residents and their families, as well as tourists; weekdays are generally a better bet.

HAMOA BEACH ★★

This half-moon-shaped, gray-sand beach (a mix of coral and lava) in a truly tropical setting is a favorite among sunbathers seeking rest and refuge. The Hotel Hana-Maui maintains the beach and acts as though it's private, which it isn't—so just march down the lava-rock steps and grab a spot on the sand. The 100-foot-wide beach is three football fields long and sits below 30-foot black-lava sea cliffs. Hamoa is often swept by powerful rip currents. Surf breaks offshore and rolls ashore, making this a popular surfing and bodysurfing area. The calm left side is best for snorkeling in summer. The hotel has numerous facilities for guests; there are an outdoor shower and restrooms for nonguests. Parking is limited. Look for the Hamoa Beach turn-off from Hana Highway.

2 Watersports

Activity Warehouse (☎ 800/343-2087; www.travelhawaii.com), which has branches in Lahaina at 578 Front St., near Prison Street (☎ 808/667-4000), and in Kihei at Azeka Place II, on the mountain side of Kihei Road near Lipoa Street (☎ 808/875-4000), rents everything from beach chairs and coolers to kayaks, boogie boards, and surfboards.

Snorkel Bob's (www.snorkelbob.com) has snorkel gear, boogie boards, and other ocean toys at four locations: 1217 Front St., Lahaina (☎ 808/661-4421); Napili Village, 5425-C Lower Honoapiilani Hwy., Napili (☎ 808/669-9603); in North Kihei at Azeka Place II, 1279 S. Kihei Rd. #310 (☎ 808/875-6188); and in South Kihei/Wailea at the Kamaole Beach Center, 2411 S. Kihei Rd., Kihei (☎ 808/879-7449). All locations are open daily from 8am to 5pm.

BOATING & SAILING

Later in this section, you can find information on snorkel cruises to Molokini under “Snorkeling”; fishing charters under “Sport Fishing”; and trips that combine snorkeling with whale-watching under “Whale-Watching Cruises.”

America II ★ This U.S. contender in the 1987 America's Cup race is a true racing boat, a 65-foot sailing yacht offering 2-hour **morning sails**, **afternoon sails**, and **sunset sails** year-round, plus **whale-watching** in winter. These are sailing trips, so there's no snorkeling—just the thrill of racing with the wind. Complimentary bottled water, soda, and chips are available.

Lahaina Harbor, slip 5. ☎ 888/667-2133 or 808/667-2195. www.galaxymall.com/stores/americaaii. Trips \$33 adults, \$17 children 12 and under. Whale-watching \$25 adults, \$13 children.

Scotch Mist Sailing Charters This 50-foot Santa Cruz sailboat offers 2-hour sailing adventures. Prices include snorkel gear, juice, fresh pineapple spears, Maui chips, beer, wine, and soda.

Lahaina Harbor, slip 2. ☎ 808/661-0386. www.scotchmistsailingcharters.com. Sail trips \$35 adults, \$18 children ages 5–12, free for children under 5; sunset sail \$45.

OCEAN KAYAKING

Gliding silently over the water, propelled by a paddle, seeing Maui from the sea the way the early Hawaiians did—that’s what ocean kayaking is all about. One of Maui’s best kayak routes is along the **Kihei Coast**, where there’s easy access to calm water. Early mornings are always best, because the wind comes up around 11 am, making seas choppy and paddling difficult.

The island’s cheapest kayak rentals are at the **Activity Warehouse** (☎ 800/343-2087; www.travelhawaii.com), which has branches in Lahaina at 578 Front St., near Prison Street (☎ 808/667-4000), and in Kihei at Azeka Place II, on the mountain side of Kihei Road near Lipoa Street (☎ 808/875-4000), where one-person kayaks are \$10 a day and two-person kayaks are \$15 a day.

For the uninitiated, my favorite kayak-tour operator is **Makena Kayak Tours** (☎ 877/879-8426 or 808/879-8426; makenakayak@aol.com). Professional guide Dino Ventura leads a 2½-hour trip from Makena Landing and loves taking first-timers over the secluded coral reefs and into remote coves. His wonderful tour will be a highlight of your vacation. It costs \$55, including refreshments and snorkel and kayak equipment.

South Pacific Kayaks, 2439 S. Kihei Rd., Kihei (☎ 800/776-2326 or 808/875-4848; www.mauikayak.com), is Maui’s oldest kayak-tour company. Its expert guides lead ocean-kayak trips that include lessons, a guided tour, and snorkeling. Tours run from 2½ to 5 hours and range in price from \$65 to \$139. South Pacific also offers kayak rentals starting at \$30 a day.

In Hana, **Hana-Maui Sea Sports** (☎ 808/248-7711; www.hana-maui-seasports.com) runs 2-hour tours of Hana’s coastline on wide, stable “no roll” kayaks, with snorkeling, for \$89 per person. They also feature kayak surfing lessons for \$89.

SCUBA DIVING

Some people come to Maui for the sole purpose of plunging into the tropical Pacific and exploring the underwater world. You can see the

great variety of tropical marine life, explore sea caves, and swim with sea turtles and monk seals in the clear tropical waters off the island. Trade winds often rough up the seas in the afternoon, so most dive operators schedule early-morning dives that end at noon.

Most operators offer no-experience-necessary dives, ranging from \$95 to \$125. You can learn from this glimpse into the sea world whether diving is for you.

Everyone dives **Molokini**. This crescent-shaped crater has three tiers of diving: a 35-foot plateau inside the crater basin (used by beginning divers and snorkelers), a wall sloping to 70 feet just beyond the inside plateau, and a sheer wall on the outside and backside of the crater that plunges 350 feet. This underwater park is very popular thanks to calm, clear, protected waters and an abundance of marine life.

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures ★ (☎ 800/635-1273 or 808/879-3584; www.mauiscuba.com) is the only Maui company rated one of *Scuba Diver* magazine's top five best dive operators for 7 years straight. Ed, a widely published underwater photographer, offers specialized charters for small groups. Two-tank dives are \$120 (\$135 with equipment); his dive boats depart from Kihei Boat Ramp.

If Ed is booked, call **Mike Severns Diving** (☎ 808/879-6596; www.mikesevernsdiving.com), for small (maximum 12 people, divided into two groups of six), personal diving tours on a 38-foot Munson/Hammerhead boat with freshwater shower. Mike and his wife, Pauline Fiene-Severns, are both biologists who make diving in Hawaii not only fun, but also educational (they have a spectacular underwater photography book called *Molokini Island*). Two-tank dives are \$110 (with equipment).

Stop by any location of **Maui Dive Shop** ★ (www.mauidiveshop.com), Maui's largest diving retailer, with everything from rentals to scuba-diving instruction to dive-boat charters, for a free copy of the 24-page *Maui Dive Guide*, which has maps and details about the 20 best shoreline and offshore dives and snorkeling sites, all ranked for beginner, intermediate, or advanced snorkelers/divers. Maui Dive Shop has branches in Kihei at Azeka Place II Shopping Center, 1455 S. Kihei Rd. (☎ 808/879-3388), Kamaole Shopping Center (☎ 808/879-1533), and Shops at Wailea (☎ 808/875-9904); in Lahaina at Lahaina Cannery Mall (☎ 808/661-5388); and in the Honokowai Market Place (☎ 808/661-6166). Other locations include Whalers Village, Kaanapali (☎ 808/661-5117); Kaanapali Fairway Shops (☎ 808/551-9663); Maalaea Village (☎ 808/244-5514); and Kahana Gateway, Kahana (☎ 808/669-3800).

SNORKELING

Snorkeling is the main attraction in Maui—and almost anyone can do it. All you need are a mask, a snorkel, fins, and some basic swimming skills. In many places all you have to do is wade into the water and look down. Most resorts and excursion boats offer instruction for first-time snorkelers, but it's plenty easy to figure it out for yourself.

Some snorkel tips: Always go with a buddy. Look up every once in a while to see where you are, how far offshore you are, and whether there's any boat traffic. Don't touch anything; not only can you damage coral, but camouflaged fish and shells with poisonous spines might also surprise you. Always check with a dive shop, lifeguards, and others on the beach about the area in which you plan to snorkel: Are there any dangerous conditions you should know about? What are the current surf, tide, and weather conditions? If you're not a good swimmer, wear a life jacket or other flotation device.

Snorkel Bob's (www.snorkelbob.com) and the **Activity Warehouse** will rent you everything you need; see the introduction to this section for locations. Also see "Scuba Diving" (above) for Maui Dive Shop's free booklet on great snorkeling sites.

When the whales aren't around, **Capt. Steve's Rafting Excursions** (☎ 808/667-5565; www.captainsteves.com) offers 7-hour snorkel trips from Mala Wharf in Lahaina to the waters around **Lanai** (you don't actually land on the island). Rates of \$150 for adults and \$115 for children 12 and under include breakfast, lunch, snorkel gear, and wet suits.

Maui's best snorkeling beaches include **Kapalua Beach**; **Black Rock**, at Kaanapali Beach, in front of the Sheraton; along the Kihei coastline, especially at **Kamaole III Beach Park**; and along the Wailea coastline, particularly at **Ulua Beach**. Mornings are best, because local winds don't kick in until around noon. **Olowalu** has great snorkeling around the **14-mile marker**, where there is a turtle-cleaning station about 150 to 225 feet out from shore. Turtles line up here to have cleaner wrasses pick off small parasites.

Ahihi-Kinaiu Natural Preserve is another terrific place; it requires more effort to reach it, but it's worth it, because it's home to Maui's tropical marine life at its best. You can't miss in Ahihi Bay, a 2,000-acre state natural area reserve in the lee of Cape Kinaiu, on Maui's rugged south coast, where Haleakala spilled red-hot lava that ran to the sea in 1790. Fish are everywhere in this series of rocky coves and black-lava tide pools. The black, barren, lunarlike land stands in stark contrast to the green-blue water. To get here, drive

south of Makena past Puu Olai to Ahihi Bay, where the road turns to gravel and sometimes seems like it'll disappear under the waves. At Cape Kinau, there are three four-wheel-drive trails that lead across the lava flow; take the shortest one, nearest La Pérouse Bay. If you have a standard car, drive as far as you can, park, and walk the remainder of the way.

SNORKEL CRUISES TO MOLOKINI

The crater of **Molokini** ⚓ sits almost midway between Maui and the uninhabited island of Kahoolawe. Tilted so that only the thin rim of its southern side shows above water in a perfect semicircle, Molokini serves, on its concave side, as a natural sanctuary for tropical fish and snorkelers, who commute daily to this marine-life preserve. Note that in high season, Molokini can be crowded with dozens of boats, each carrying scores of snorkelers.

Maui Classic Charters ⚓⚓ Maui Classic Charters offers morning and afternoon **snorkel-sail cruises to Molokini** on *Four Winds II*, a 55-foot glass-bottom catamaran, for \$79 adults (\$49 children 3–12) for the morning sail and \$40 adults (\$30 children) in the afternoon. *Four Winds* trips include a continental breakfast; a barbecue lunch; complimentary beer, wine, and soda; complimentary snorkeling gear and instruction; and sport fishing along the way.

In the fast, state-of-the-art catamaran *Maui Magic*, you can take a 5-hour snorkel journey to both Molokini and La Pérouse for \$99 for adults and \$79 for children ages 5 to 12, including a continental breakfast, barbecue lunch, drinks (beer, wine, and soda), snorkel gear, and instruction. During **whale season** (Dec–Apr) the Maui Magic Whale Watch, a 1½-hour trip with beverages, is \$40 for adults and \$30 for children ages 3 to 12.

Maalaea Harbor, slip 55 and slip 80. ☎ 800/736-5740 or 808/879-8188. www.mauicharters.com. Prices vary depending on cruise.

Pacific Whale Foundation This not-for-profit foundation supports its whale research by offering **whale-watch cruises** and **snorkel tours**, some to Molokini and Lanai. It operates a 65-foot power catamaran called *Ocean Spirit*, a 50-foot sailing catamaran called *Manutē'a*, and a fleet of other boats. There are 15 daily trips to choose among, offered from December through May, out of both Lahaina and Maalaea harbors.

101 N. Kihei Rd., Kihei. ☎ 800/942-5311 or 808/879-8811. www.pacificwhale.org. Trips from \$20 adults, \$15 children ages 7–12, free for ages 6 and under; snorkeling cruises from \$30.

Pride of Maui For a high-speed, action-packed snorkel-sail experience, consider the *Pride of Maui*. These 5½-hour **snorkel cruises** take in not only **Molokini**, but also Turtle Bay and Makena for more snorkeling, and cost \$86 for adults and \$53 for children ages 3 to 12. Continental breakfast, barbecue lunch, gear, and instruction are included. They also have an afternoon Molokini cruise (\$35 adults, \$27 children, plus an optional lunch for an additional \$5); an evening cocktail cruise (\$47 adults, \$20 children); and, during whale season, a whale-watching cruise (\$26 adults, \$17 children).

Maalaea Harbor. ☎ **877/TO-PRIDE** or 808/875-0955. www.prideofmaui.com. Prices vary; see above.

SPORT FISHING

Marlin (as big as 1,200 lb.), tuna, ono, and mahimahi await the baited hook in Maui's coastal and channel waters. No license is required; just book a sport-fishing vessel out of Lahaina or Maalaea harbors. Most charter boats that troll for big-game fish carry a maximum of six passengers. You can walk the docks, inspecting boats and talking to captains and crews, or book through an activities desk or one of the outfitters recommended below.

Shop around: Prices vary widely. A shared boat for a half day of fishing starts at \$100; a shared full day of fishing starts at around \$140. A half-day exclusive (you get the entire boat) is around \$400 to \$700; a full-day exclusive can range from \$500 to \$1,000. Also, many boat captains tag and release marlin or keep the fish for themselves. If you want to eat your mahimahi for dinner or have your marlin mounted, tell the captain before you go.

The best way to book a sport-fishing charter is through the experts: The best booking desk in the state is **Sportfish Hawaii** ★ (☎ **877/388-1376** or 808/396-2607; www.sportfishhawaii.com), which books boats not only on Maui, but also on all the islands. These fishing vessels have been inspected and must meet rigorous criteria. Prices range from \$850 to \$950 for a full-day exclusive charter for up to six people; it's \$599 to \$750 for a half-day exclusive.

SURFING

The ancient Hawaiian sport of *hee nalu* (wave sliding) is probably the sport most people picture when they think of the islands. If you'd like to give it a shot, just sign up at any one of the recommended surfing schools listed below.

Tide and Kiva Rivers, two local boys (actually twins) who have been surfing since they could walk, operate **Rivers to the Sea** (☎ **808/280-8795** or 808/280-6236; www.riverstothesea.com),

one of the best surfing schools on Maui. Rates are \$75 each for a group of three or more, \$200 for a couple, and \$150 for a private lesson. All lessons are 2 hours long and include equipment and instruction.

I also recommend the **Nancy Emerson School of Surfing**, 358 Papa Place, Suite F, Kahului (☎ 808/244-SURF or 808/662-4445; fax 808/662-4443; www.surfclinics.com). Nancy has been surfing since 1961 and has even been a stunt performer for various movies, including *Waterworld*. It's \$75 per person for a 2-hour group lesson; private 2-hour classes are \$160.

In Hana, **Hana-Maui Sea Sports** (☎ 808/248-7711; www.hana-maui-seasports.com) has 2-hour long-board lessons taught by a certified ocean lifeguard for \$89.

WHALE-WATCHING

Every winter, pods of Pacific humpback whales make the 3,000-mile swim from the chilly waters of Alaska to bask in Maui's summery shallows. The humpback is the star of the annual whale-watching season, which usually begins in December or January and lasts until April or sometimes May. About 1,500 to 3,000 humpback whales appear in Hawaiian waters each year.

WHALE-WATCHING FROM SHORE

Between mid-December and April, you can just look out to sea. There's no best time of day for whale-watching, but the whales seem to appear when the sea is glassy and the wind calm. Once you see one, keep watching in the same vicinity; a whale might stay down for 20 minutes. Bring a book and binoculars, which you can rent for \$2 a day at the **Activity Warehouse** (☎ 800/343-2087; www.travelhawaii.com), which has branches in Lahaina at 578 Front St., near Prison Street (☎ 808/667-4000), and in Kihei at Azeka Place II, on the mountain side of Kihei Road near Lipoa Street (☎ 808/875-4000). Some good whale-watching points on Maui are:

McGregor Point On the way to Lahaina, there's a scenic lookout at mile marker 9 (just before you get to the Lahaina Tunnel). It's a good viewpoint to scan for whales.

Outrigger Wailea Resort On the Wailea coastal walk, stop at this resort to look for whales through the telescope installed as a public service by the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

Olowalu Reef Along the straight part of Honoapiilani Highway, between McGregor Point and Olowalu, you'll often spot whales leaping out of the water. Sometimes their appearance brings traffic

to a screeching halt: People abandon their cars and run down to the sea to watch, causing a major traffic jam. If you stop, pull off the road so that others can pass.

Puu Olai It's a tough climb up this coastal landmark near the Maui Prince Hotel, but you're likely to be well rewarded: This is the island's best spot for offshore whale-watching. On the 360-foot cinder cone overlooking Makena Beach, you'll be at the right elevation to see Pacific humpbacks as they dodge Molokini and cruise up Alalakeiki Channel between Maui and Kahoolawe. If you don't see one, you'll at least have a whale of a view.

WHALE-WATCHING CRUISES

For a closer look, take a whale-watching cruise. The **Pacific Whale Foundation**, 101 N. Kihei Rd., Kihei (☎ 800/942-5311 or 808/879-8811; www.pacificwhale.org), is a not-for-profit foundation in Kihei that supports its whale research by offering cruises and snorkel tours, some to Molokini and Lanai. They operate a 65-foot power catamaran called the *Ocean Spirit*, a 50-foot sailing catamaran called the *Manute'a*, and a sea kayak. They have 15 daily trips to choose among, and their rates for a 2-hour whale-watching cruise would make Captain Ahab smile (starting at \$20 for adults, \$15 for children). Cruises are offered from December through May, out of both Lahaina and Maalaea harbors.

If you want to combine ocean activities, a snorkel or dive cruise to Molokini, the sunken crater off Maui's south coast, might be just the ticket. You can see whales on the way there, at no extra charge. See "Scuba Diving" and "Boating & Sailing" earlier in this section.

WINDSURFING

Maui has Hawaii's best windsurfing beaches. In winter windsurfers from around the world flock to the town of **Paia** to ride the waves. **Hookipa Beach**, known all over the globe for its brisk winds and excellent waves, is the site of several world-championship contests. **Kanaha**, west of Kahului Airport, also has dependable winds. When the winds turn northerly, **Kihei** is the spot to be. The northern end of Kihei is best: **Ohukai Park**, the first beach as you enter South Kiehi Road from the northern end, has not only good winds, but also parking, a long strip of grass to assemble your gear, and good access to the water. Experienced windsurfers here are found in front of the **Maui Sunset** condo, 1032 S. Kihei Rd., near Waipuilani Street (a block north of McDonald's), which has great windsurfing conditions but a very shallow reef (not good for beginners).

Hawaiian Island Surf and Sport, 415 Dairy Rd., Kahului (☎ 800/231-6958 or 808/871-4981; www.hawaiianisland.com), offers lessons (from \$79), rentals, and repairs. Other shops that offer rentals and lessons are **Hawaiian Sailboarding Techniques**, 425 Koloa St., Kahului (☎ 800/968-5423 or 808/871-5423; www.hst windsurfing.com), with 2½-hour lessons from \$79; and **Maui Windsurf Co.**, 22 Hana Hwy., Kahului (☎ 800/872-0999 or 808/877-4816; www.maui-windsurf.com), which has complete equipment rental (board, sail, rig harness, and roof rack) from \$45 and lessons starting at \$75.

For daily reports on wind and surf conditions, call the **Wind and Surf Report** at ☎ 808/877-3611.

3 Hiking

In the past 3 decades, Maui has grown from a rural island to a fast-paced resort destination, but its natural beauty largely remains; there are still many places that can be explored only on foot. Those interested in seeing the backcountry—complete with virgin waterfalls, remote wilderness trails, and quiet meditative settings—should head for Haleakala’s upcountry or the tropical Hana coast.

For more information on Maui hiking trails and to obtain free maps, contact **Haleakala National Park**, P.O. Box 369, Makawao, HI 96768 (☎ 808/572-4400; www.nps.gov/hale), and the **State Division of Forestry and Wildlife**, 54 S. High St., Wailuku, HI 96793 (☎ 808/984-8100; www.hawaii.gov). For information on trails, hikes, and camping, and permits for state parks, contact the **Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources**, State Parks Division, P.O. Box 621, Honolulu, HI 96809 (☎ 808/587-0300; www.state.hi.us/dlnr); note that you can get information from the website but cannot obtain permits there. For information on Maui County Parks, contact **Maui County Parks and Recreation**, 1580-C Kaahumanu Ave., Wailuku, HI 96793 (☎ 808/243-7380; www.mauiapp.com).

TIPS ON SAFE HIKING Water might be everywhere in Hawaii, but it more than likely isn’t safe to drink. Most stream water must be treated, because cattle, pigs, and goats have probably contaminated the water upstream. Bacterium leptospirosis, which is found in freshwater streams throughout the state, enters the body through breaks in the skin or through the mucous membranes. It produces flulike symptoms and can be fatal. Carry enough drinking water with you on your hikes, or use tablets with hydroperiodide to purify

water. Also, don't forget there is very little twilight in Maui when the sun sets; it gets dark quickly.

GUIDED HIKES If you'd like a knowledgeable guide to accompany you on a hike, call **Maui Hiking Safaris** ⚡ (☎ 888/445-3963 or 808/573-0168; www.mauihikingsafaris.com), **Hike Maui** ⚡ (☎ 808/879-5270; fax 808/893-2515; www.hikemaui.com), or **Maui Eco-Adventures** (☎ 877/661-7720 or 808/661-7720; www.ecomaui.com).

Ekahi Tours (☎ 888/292-2422 or 808/877-9775; www.ekahi.com) offers hikes through the verdant Kahakuloa Valley by a Kahakuloa resident and Hawaiiana expert. For information on hikes given by the **Hawaii Sierra Club** on Maui, call ☎ 808/573-4147 (www.hi.sierraclub.org).

HALEAKALA NATIONAL PARK ⚡⚡⚡

For complete coverage of the national park, see “House of the Sun: Haleakala National Park” in chapter 6.

DAY HIKES FROM THE MAIN ENTRANCE

In addition to the difficult hike into the crater, the park has a few shorter and easier options. Anyone can take a ½-mile walk down the **Hosmer Grove Nature Trail** ⚡, or you can start down **Sliding Sands Trail** for a mile or two to get a hint of what lies ahead. Even this short hike can be exhausting at the high altitude. A good day hike is **Halemau Trail** to Holua Cabin and back, an 8-mile, half-day trip. A 20-minute orientation presentation is given daily in the Summit Building at 9:30, 10:30, and 11:30am. The park rangers offer two **guided hikes**. The 2-hour, 2-mile **Cinder Desert Hike** takes place Tuesday and Friday at 10am and starts from the Sliding Sands Trailhead at the end of the Haleakala Visitor Center parking lot. The 3-hour, 3-mile **Waikamoi Cloud Forest Hike** leaves every Monday and Thursday at 9am; it starts at the Hosmer Grove, just inside the park entrance, and traverses the Nature Conservancy's Waikamoi Preserve. *Always call in advance:* The hikes and briefing sessions may be canceled, so check first. For details, call the park at ☎ 808/572-4400 or visit www.nps.gov/hale.

THE EAST MAUI SECTION OF THE PARK AT KIPAHULU (NEAR HANA)

APPROACHING KIPAHULU FROM HANA If you drive to Kipahulu, you'll have to approach it from the Hana Highway; it's not accessible from the summit. Always check in at the ranger station

before you begin your hike; the staff can inform you of current conditions and share their wonderful stories about the history, culture, flora, and fauna of the area.

There are two hikes you can take here. The first is a short, easy half-mile loop along the **Kalua Point Trail** (Kalua Point is a windy bluff overlooking **Oheo Gulch**), which leads toward the ocean along pools and waterfalls and back to the ranger station. The clearly marked path leaves the parking area and rambles along the flat, grassy peninsula. Crashing surf and views of the Big Island of Hawaii are a 5-minute walk from the ranger station.

The second hike is for the more hardy. Although just a 4-mile round-trip, the trail is steep, and you'll want to stop and swim in the pools, so allow 3 hours. You'll be climbing over rocks and up steep trails, so wear hiking boots. Take water, snacks, swim gear, and insect repellent. Always be on the lookout for flash-flood conditions. This walk will pass two magnificent waterfalls: the 181-foot **Makahiku Falls** and the even bigger 400-foot **Waimoku Falls** ⚡. There's a pool on the top of the Makahiku Falls that's safe to swim in as long as the waters aren't rising. The trail starts at the ranger station.

GUIDED HIKES The rangers at Kipahulu conduct a 1-mile hike to the **Bamboo Forest** ⚡ at 9am daily; half-mile hikes or orientation talks are given at noon, 1:30, 2:30, and 3:30pm daily; and a 4-mile round-trip hike to **Waimoku Falls** takes place on Saturday at 9:30am. All programs and hikes begin at the ranger station. Call in advance to make sure the hike will take place that day by contacting the **Kipahulu Ranger Station** (☎ 808/248-7375).

SKYLINE TRAIL, POLIPOLI SPRINGS STATE RECREATION AREA ⚡

This is some hike—strenuous but worth every step. It's 8 miles, all downhill, with a dazzling 100-mile view of the islands dotting the blue Pacific, plus the West Maui Mountains.

The trail is located just outside Haleakala National Park at Polipoli Springs National Recreation Area; however, you access it by going through the national park to the summit. The Skyline Trail starts just beyond the Puu Ulaula summit building on the south side of Science City and follows the southwest rift zone of Haleakala from its lunarlike cinder cones to a cool redwood grove. The trail drops 3,800 feet on a 4-hour hike to the recreation area in the 12,000-acre Kahikinui Forest Reserve. If you'd rather drive, you'll need a four-wheel-drive vehicle to access the trail.

THE POLIPOLI LOOP, POLIPOLI STATE PARK ⚡

The **Polipoli Loop** ⚡ is an easy, 5-mile hike that takes about 3 hours. Dress warmly; the loop is up at 5,300 to 6,200 feet, so it's cold even in summer. To get here, take the Haleakala Highway (Hwy. 37) to Keokea and turn right onto Highway 337; after less than a half mile, turn on Waipoli Road, which climbs swiftly. After 10 miles, Waipoli Road ends at the Polipoli State Park campground. The well-marked trailhead is next to the parking lot, near a stand of Monterey cypress; the tree-lined trail offers the best view of the island.

The Polipoli Loop is really a network of three trails: Haleakala Ridge, Plum Trail, and Redwood Trail. After a half mile of meandering through groves of eucalyptus, blackwood, swamp mahogany, and hybrid cypress, you'll join the Haleakala Ridge Trail, which, about a mile into the trail, joins with the Plum Trail (named for the plums that ripen in June and July). It passes through massive redwoods and by an old Conservation Corps bunkhouse and a run-down cabin before joining up with the Redwood Trail, which climbs through Mexican pine, tropical ash, Port Orford cedar, and redwood.

HANA-WAIANAPANAPA COAST TRAIL ⚡

This is an easy, 6-mile hike that takes you back in time. Allow 4 hours to walk along this relatively flat trail, which parallels the sea, along lava cliffs and a forest of lauhala trees. The best time of day is either the early morning or the late evening, when the light on the lava and surf makes for great photos. Join the route at any point along the Waianapanapa Campground, and go in either direction. Along the trail, you'll see remains of an ancient *heiau* (temple), stands of lauhala trees, caves, and a blowhole.

WAIHEE RIDGE ⚡

This strenuous 3- to 4-mile hike, with a 1,500-foot climb, offers spectacular views of the valleys of the West Maui Mountains. Allow 3 to 4 hours for the round-trip hike. Pack a lunch, carry water, and pick a dry day, as this area is very wet. There's a picnic table at the summit, with great views.

To get here from Wailuku, turn north on Market Street, which becomes the Kahekili Highway (Hwy. 340) and passes through Waihee. Go just over 2½ miles from the Waihee Elementary School, and look for the turnoff to the Boy Scouts' Camp Maluhia on the left. Turn into the camp, and drive nearly a mile to the trailhead on the jeep road. About ½ mile in, there will be another gate, marking the entrance to the West Maui Forest Reserve. A foot trail, kept in

good shape by the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, begins here. The trail climbs to the top of the ridge, offering great views of the various valleys. The trail is marked by a number of switchbacks and can be extremely muddy and wet. In some areas it's so steep that you have to grab onto the trees and bushes for support.

4 Great Golf

Golfers new to Maui should know that it's windy here, especially between 10am and 2pm, when winds of 10 to 15 mph are the norm. Play two to three clubs up or down to compensate for the wind factor. I also recommend bringing extra balls; the rough is thicker here, and the wind will pick your ball up and drop it in very unappealing places (like water hazards).

If your heart is set on playing on a resort course, book at least a week in advance. For the ardent golfer on a tight budget: Play in the afternoon, when discounted twilight rates are in effect. There's no guarantee you'll get 18 holes in, especially in winter, when it's dark by 6pm, but you'll have an opportunity to experience these world-famous courses at half the usual fee.

For last-minute and discount tee times, call **Stand-by Golf** (☎ 888/645-BOOK or 808/874-0600; www.stand-bygolf.com) between 7am and 9pm. Stand-by offers discounted (up to 50% off greens fees), guaranteed tee times for same-day or next-day golfing.

Golf Club Rentals (☎ 808/665-0800; www.mauiclubrentals.com) has custom-built clubs for men, women, and juniors (both right- and left-handed), which can be delivered island-wide; the rates are just \$20 to \$25 a day. The company also offers lessons with pros starting at \$150 for 9 holes plus greens fees.

WEST MAUI

Kaanapali Courses ♠ Both courses at Kaanapali offer a challenge to all golfers. The par-72, 6,305-yard **North Course** is a true Robert Trent Jones design: an abundance of wide bunkers; several long, stretched-out tees; and the largest, most contoured greens on Maui. The par-72, 6,250-yard **South Course** is an Arthur Jack Snyder design; although shorter than the North Course, it requires more accuracy on the narrow, hilly fairways.

Off Hwy. 30, Kaanapali. ☎ 808/661-3691. www.kaanapali-golf.com. Greens fees: \$160 (North Course), \$130 (South Course); Kaanapali guests pay \$130 (North), \$117 (South); twilight rates \$77 (North), \$74 (South) for everyone. At the 1st stoplight in Kaanapali, turn onto Kaanapali Pkwy.; the 1st building on your right is the clubhouse.

Kapalua Resort Courses ★★☆☆ The views from these three championship courses are worth the greens fees alone. The par-72, 6,761-yard **Bay Course** (☎ 808/669-8820) was designed by Arnold Palmer and Ed Seay. This course is a bit forgiving, with its wide fairways; the greens, however, are difficult to read. The par-71, 6,632-yard **Village Course** (☎ 808/669-8830), another Palmer/Seay design, is the most scenic of the three courses. The **Plantation Course** (☎ 808/669-8877), site of the Mercedes Championships, is a Ben Crenshaw/Bill Coore design. This 6,547-yard, par-73 course, set on a rolling hillside, is excellent for developing your low shots and precise chipping.

Off Hwy. 30, Kapalua. ☎ 877/KAPALUA. www.kapaluamaui.com. Greens fees: Village Course \$185 (\$130 for hotel guests), \$85 twilight rate; Bay Course \$200 (\$140 for hotel guests), \$90 twilight rate; Plantation Course \$250 (\$160 for hotel guests), \$100 twilight rate.

SOUTH MAUI

Elleair Maui Golf Club (formerly Silversword Golf Club) Sitting in the foothills of Haleakala, just high enough to afford spectacular ocean vistas from every hole, this is a course for golfers who love the views as much as the fairways and greens. It's very forgiving. *Just one caveat:* Go in the morning. Not only is it cooler, but—more important—it's also less windy.

1345 Piilani Hwy. (near Lipoa St. turnoff), Kihei. ☎ 808/874-0777. Greens fees: \$100; twilight rates \$80; 9-hole rates \$60.

Makena Courses ★★☆☆ Here, you'll find 36 holes of "Mr. Hawaii Golf"—Robert Trent Jones, Jr.—at its best. Add to that spectacular views: Molokini islet looms in the background, humpback whales gambol offshore in winter, and the tropical sunsets are spectacular. The par-72, 6,876-yard **South Course** has a couple of holes you'll never forget. The view from the par-four 15th hole, which shoots from an elevated tee 183 yards downhill to the Pacific, is magnificent. The par-72, 6,823-yard **North Course** is more difficult and more spectacular. The 13th hole, located partway up the mountain, has a view that makes most golfers stop and stare. The next hole is even more memorable: a 200-foot drop between tee and green.

On Makena Alanui Dr., just past the Maui Prince Hotel. ☎ 808/879-3344. www.maui.net/~makena. Greens fees: North Course \$170 (\$95–\$140 for Makena Resort guests), twilight rates \$95 (\$80 for guests); South Course \$180 (\$105–\$150 for resort guests), twilight rates \$105 (\$90 for guests); guest rates vary seasonally, with higher rates in the winter.

Wailea Courses ★★ There are three courses to choose among at Wailea. The **Blue Course**, a par-72, 6,758-yard course designed by Arthur Jack Snyder and dotted with bunkers and water hazards, is for duffers and pros alike. The wide fairways appeal to beginners, while the undulating terrain makes it a course everyone can enjoy. A little more difficult is the par-72, 7,078-yard championship **Gold Course**, with narrow fairways, several tricky dogleg holes, and the classic Robert Trent Jones, Jr., challenges: natural hazards, like lava-rock walls. The **Emerald Course**, also designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., is Wailea's newest, with tropical landscaping and a player-friendly design.

Wailea Alanui Dr. (off Wailea Iki Dr.), Wailea. ☎ 888/328-MAUI or 808/875-7450. www.waileagolf.com. Greens fees: Blue Course \$175 (\$135 resort guests), twilight \$100 (\$90 resort guests); Gold Course \$185 (\$145 resort guests); Emerald Course \$185 (\$145 resort guests).

UPCOUNTRY MAUI

Pukalani Country Club This cool, par-72, 6,962-yard course at 1,100 feet offers a break from the resorts' high greens fees, and it's really fun to play. The 3rd hole offers golfers two different options: a tough (especially into the wind) iron shot from the tee, across a gully (yuck!) to the green; or a shot down the side of the gully across a second green into sand traps below. (Most people choose to shoot down the side of the gully; it's actually easier than shooting across a ravine.) High handicappers will love this course, and more experienced players can make it more challenging by playing from the back tees.

360 Pukalani St., Pukalani. ☎ 808/572-1314. www.pukalanigolf.com. Greens fees, including cart \$60 for 18 holes before 11am; \$55 11am–2pm; \$45 after 2pm. 9 holes \$35. Take the Hana Hwy. (Hwy. 36) to Haleakala Hwy. (Hwy. 37) to the Pukalani exit; turn right onto Pukalani St. and go 2 blocks.

5 Biking, Horseback Riding & Tennis

BIKING

Cruising down Haleakala, from the lunarlike landscape at the top, past flower farms, pineapple fields, and eucalyptus groves, is quite an experience—and you don't have to be an expert cyclist to do it. This is a safe, comfortable bicycle trip, although it requires some stamina in the colder, wetter months between November and March. Wear layers of warm clothing, because there may be a 30°F (16°C) change in temperature from the top of the mountain to the ocean. Generally, tour groups will not take riders under 12, but younger children can ride along in the van that accompanies the

groups, as can pregnant women. The trip usually costs between \$100 and \$140, which includes hotel pickup, transport to the top, bicycle and safety equipment, and meals.

Maui's oldest downhill company is **Maui Downhill** ⚡ (☎ 800/535-BIKE or 808/871-2155; www.mauidownhill.com), which offers a sunrise safari bike tour, including continental breakfast and brunch, starting at \$150 (book online and save \$48). If it's all booked up, try **Maui Mountain Cruisers** (☎ 800/232-6284 or 808/871-6014; www.mauimountaincruisers.com), which has sunrise trips at \$130 (book online and save \$35), or **Mountain Riders Bike Tours** (☎ 800/706-7700 or 808/242-9739; www.mountainriders.com), with sunrise rides for \$115 (book online and save \$17). All rates include hotel pickup, transport to the top, bicycle, safety equipment, and meals.

If you want to avoid the crowd and go down the mountain at your own pace, call **Haleakala Bike Company** (☎ 888/922-2453; www.bikemaui.com), which will outfit you with the latest gear, take you up to the top, make sure you are secure on the bike, and then let you ride down by yourself at your own pace. Trips range from \$65 to \$85; they also have bicycle rentals to tour other parts of Maui on your own (from \$47 a day).

If you want to venture out on your own, rentals—\$10 a day for cruisers and \$20 a day for mountain bikes—are available from the **Activity Warehouse** (☎ 800/343-2087; www.travelhawaii.com), which has branches in Lahaina at 602 Front St., near Prison Street (☎ 808/667-4000), and in Kihei at Azeka Place II, on the mountain side of Kihei Road near Lipoa Street (☎ 808/875-4000).

For information on bikeways and maps, get a copy of the *Maui County Bicycle Map*, which has information on road suitability, climate, trade winds, mileage, elevation changes, bike shops, safety tips, and various bicycling routes. The map is available for \$7.50 (\$6.25 for the map and \$1.25 postage), bank checks or money orders only, from Tri Isle R, C, and D Council, Attn: Bike Map Project, 200 Imi Kala St., Suite 208, Wailuku, HI 96793.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Maui offers spectacular adventure rides through rugged ranch lands, into tropical forests, and to remote swimming holes. One of my favorites is **Piiholo Ranch**, in Makawao (☎ 866/572-5544 or 808/357-5544; www.piiholo.com). If you're out in Hana, don't pass up the **Maui Stables** ⚡⚡ in Kipahulu (a mile past Oheo Gulch;

☎ **808/248-7799**; www.mauistables.com). For those horse lovers who are looking for the ultimate equine experience, check out Frank Levinson's "**Maui Horse Whisperer Experience**" (☎ **808/572-6211**; www.mauihorses.com), which includes a seminar on the language of the horse.

If you'd like to ride down into Haleakala's crater, contact **Pony Express Tours** ⚡ (☎ **808/667-2200** or 808/878-6698; www.ponyexpresstours.com), which offers a variety of rides down to the crater floor and back up. I also recommend riding with **Mendes Ranch & Trail Rides** ⚡, 3530 Kahekili Hwy., 4 miles past Wailuku (☎ **808/244-7320**; www.mendesranch.com), on the 300-acre Mendes Ranch.

TENNIS

Maui has excellent public tennis courts; all are free and available from daylight to sunset (a few are even lit for night play until 10pm). The courts are available on a first-come, first-served basis; when someone's waiting, limit your play to 45 minutes. For a complete list of public courts, call **Maui County Parks and Recreation** (☎ **808/243-7230**). Because most public courts require a wait and are not conveniently located near the major resort areas, most visitors pay a fee to play at their own hotels. The exceptions to that rule are in Kihei (which has courts in Kalama Park on S. Kihei Rd. and in Waipualani Park on W. Waipualani Rd., behind the Maui Sunset Condo), in Lahaina (courts are in Malu'uou o Ie Park, at Front and Shaw sts.), and in Hana (courts are in Hana Park, on the Hana Hwy.).

Private tennis courts are available at most resorts and hotels on the island. The **Kapalua Tennis Garden and Village Tennis Center**, Kapalua Resort (☎ **808/669-5677**; www.kapaluamaui.com), is home to the Kapalua Open, which features the largest purse in the state, on Labor Day weekend. Court rentals are \$10 per person for resort guests and \$12 per person for nonguests. The staff will match you up with a partner if you need one. In Wailea try the **Wailea Tennis Club**, 131 Wailea Iki Place (☎ **808/879-1958**; www.wailea-resort.com), with 11 Plexipave courts. Court fees are \$12 per player.