

The Best of Hawaii

There's no place on earth quite like this handful of sun-drenched, mid-Pacific islands. The Hawaii of South Seas literature and Hollywood films really does exist. Here you'll find palm-fringed blue lagoons, lush rainforests, hidden gardens, cascading waterfalls, wild rivers running through rugged canyons, and soaring volcanoes. And oh, those beaches—gold, red, black, and even green sands caressed by an endless surf. The possibilities for adventure—and relaxation—are endless. Each of the six main islands is separate, distinct, and infinitely complex. There's far too much to see and do on any 2-week vacation, which is why so many people return to the Aloha State year after year.

Unfortunately, even paradise has its share of stifling crowds and tourist schlock. If you're not careful, your trip to Hawaii could turn into a nightmare of tourist traps selling shells from the Philippines, hokey faux culture like cellophane-skirted hula dancers, overpriced exotic drinks, and a 4-hour timeshare lecture before you get on that “free” snorkeling trip. That's where this guide comes in. As a Hawaii resident, I can tell the extraordinary from the merely ordinary. This book will steer you away from the crowded, the overrated, and the overpriced—and toward the best Hawaii has to offer. No matter what your budget, this guide will help ensure that every dollar is well spent.

1 The Best Beaches

- **Lanikai Beach** (Oahu): Too gorgeous to be real, this stretch along the Windward Coast is one of Hawaii's postcard-perfect beaches—a mile of golden sand as soft as powdered sugar bordering translucent turquoise waters. The waters are calm year-round and excellent for swimming, snorkeling, and kayaking. Two tiny offshore islands complete the picture, functioning not only as scenic backdrops, but also as bird sanctuaries. See p. 178.
- **Hapuna Beach** (Big Island): This ½-mile-long crescent regularly wins kudos in the world's top travel magazines as the most beautiful beach in Hawaii—some consider it one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. One look and you'll see why: Perfect cream-colored sand slopes down to crystal-clear waters that are great for swimming, snorkeling, and bodysurfing in summer; come winter, waves thunder in like stampeding horses. The facilities for picnicking and camping are top-notch, and there's plenty of parking. See p. 298.
- **Kapalua Beach** (Maui): On an island with many great beaches, Kapalua takes the prize. This golden crescent with swaying palms is protected from strong winds and currents by two outstretched lava-rock promontories. Its calm waters are perfect for snorkeling, swimming,

and kayaking. Facilities include showers, restrooms, and lifeguards. See p. 424.

- **Papohaku Beach** (Molokai): These gold sands stretch on for some 3 miles (it's one of Hawaii's longest beaches) and are about as wide as a football field. Offshore the ocean churns mightily in winter, but the waves die down in summer, making the calm waters inviting for swimming. It's also great for picnicking, walking, and watching sunsets. See p. 496.
- **Hulopoe Beach** (Lanai): This golden, palm-fringed beach off the south coast of Lanai gently slopes down to the azure waters of a Marine Life Conservation District, where clouds of tropical fish flourish and spinner dolphins come to play. A tide pool in the lava rocks defines one side

of the bay, while the other is lorded over by the Manele Bay Hotel, which sits prominently on the hill above. Offshore you'll find good swimming, snorkeling, and diving; onshore there's a full complement of beach facilities, from restrooms to camping areas. See p. 526.

- **Haena Beach** (Kauai): Backed by verdant cliffs, this curvaceous North Shore beach has starred as Paradise in many a movie. It's easy to see why Hollywood loves Haena Beach, with its grainy golden sand and translucent turquoise waters. Summer months bring calm waters for swimming and snorkeling, and winter brings mighty waves for surfers. There are plenty of facilities on hand, including picnic tables, restrooms, and showers. See p. 587.

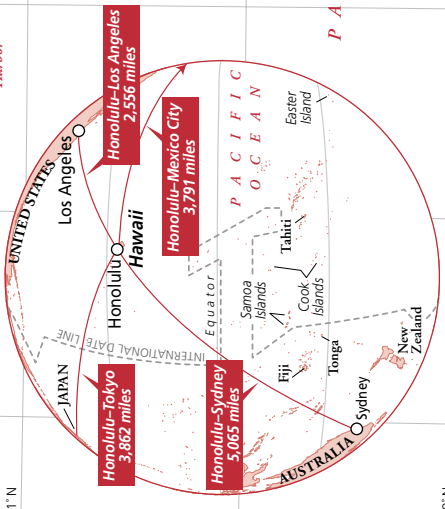
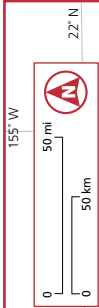
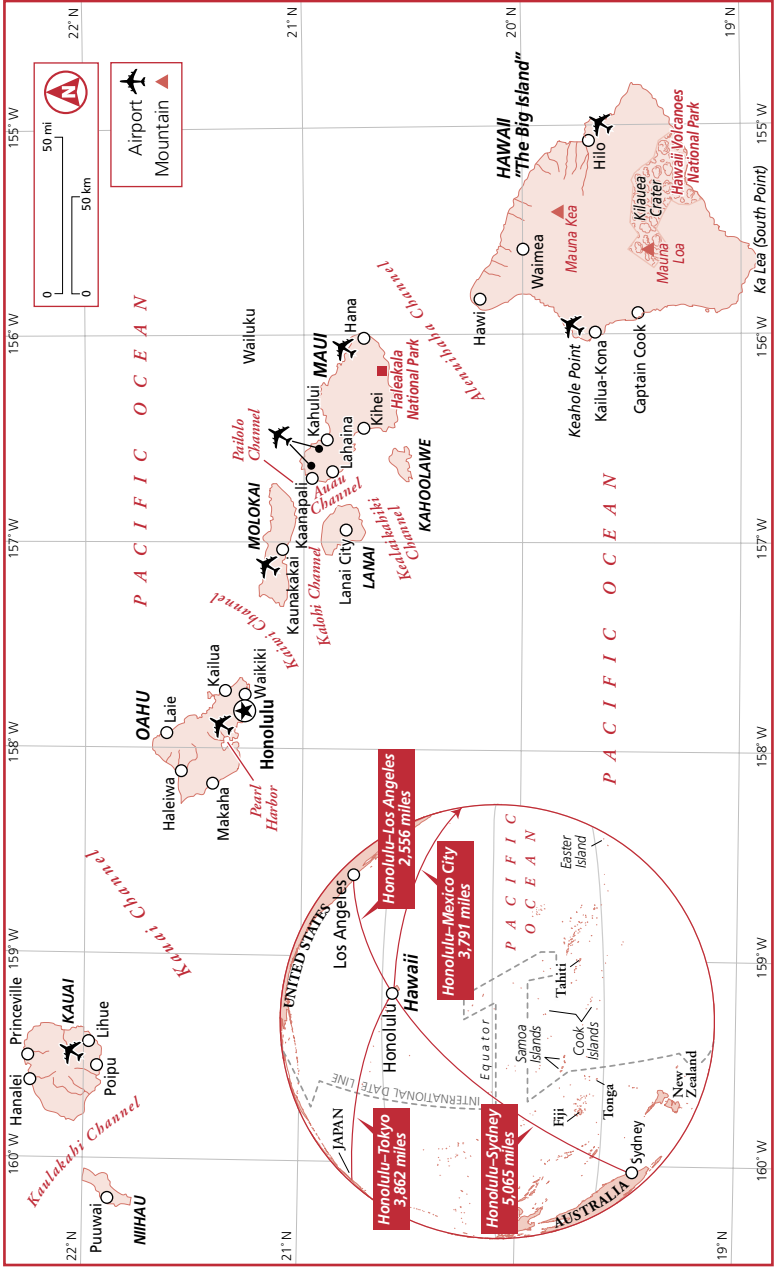
2 The Best Island Experiences

- **Hitting the Beach:** A beach is a beach, right? Not in Hawaii. With 132 islets, shoals, and reefs, plus a general coastline of 750 miles, Hawaii has beaches in all different shapes, sizes, and colors, including black. The variety on the six major islands is astonishing; you could go to a different beach every day for years and still not see them all. For the best of a spectacular bunch, see "The Best Beaches," above.
- **Taking the Plunge:** Don mask, fin, and snorkel, and explore Hawaii's magical underwater world, where exotic corals and kaleidoscopic clouds of tropical fish await you—a sea turtle may even come over to check you out. Can't swim? That's no excuse—take one of the many submarine tours offered by **Atlantis Submarines** (☎ 800/548-6262; www.go-atlantis.com) on Oahu, the Big Island, and

Maui. Check out the "Watersports" section in each island chapter for more information on all these underwater adventures.

- **Meeting Local Folks:** If you go to Hawaii and see only people like the ones back home, you might as well not have come. Extend yourself—leave your hotel, go out and meet the locals, and learn about Hawaii and its people. Just smile and say "Owzit?"—which means "How is it?" ("It's good," is the usual response)—and you're on your way to making a new friend. Hawaii is remarkably cosmopolitan; every ethnic group in the world seems to be represented here. There's a huge diversity of food, culture, language, and customs.
- **Feeling History Come Alive at Pearl Harbor** (Oahu): The United States could turn its back on World War II no longer after December 7, 1941, when Japanese warplanes

The Hawaiian Islands



bombed Pearl Harbor. Standing on the deck of the USS *Arizona* Memorial (☎ 808/422-0561; www.nps.gov/usar)—the eternal tomb for the 1,177 sailors and Marines trapped below when the battleship sank in just 9 minutes—is a moving experience you'll never forget. Also in Pearl Harbor, you can visit the USS *Missouri* Memorial, where World War II came to an end. The Japanese signed their surrender on the deck of this 58,000-ton battleship on September 2, 1945. See p. 204.

- **Watching for Whales:** If you happen to be in Hawaii during humpback-whale season (roughly Dec–Apr), don't miss the opportunity to see these gentle giants. A host of boats—from small inflatables to high-tech, high-speed sailing catamarans—offer a range of whale-watching cruises on every island. One of my favorites is along the Big Island's Kona Coast, where **Capt. Dan McSweeney's Year-Round Whale-Watching Adventures** (☎ 808/322-0028; www.ilovewhales.com) takes you right to the whales year-round (pilot, sperm, false killer, melon-headed, pygmy killer, and beaked whales call Hawaii home even when humpbacks aren't in residence). A whale researcher for more than 25 years, Captain Dan frequently drops an underwater microphone or video camera into the depths so you can listen to whale songs and maybe actually see what's going on. See p. 300.
- **Creeping up to the Ooze** (Big Island): Kilauea volcano has been adding land to the Big Island continuously since 1983. If conditions are right, you can walk up to the red-hot lava and see it ooze along, or you can stand at the shoreline and watch with awe as 2,000°F (1,092°C) molten fire pours into the ocean. You can also take to

the air in a helicopter and see the Volcano Goddess's work from above. See "Hawaii Volcanoes National Park," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 5.

- **Going Big-Game Fishing off the Kona Coast** (Big Island): Don't pass up the opportunity to try your luck in the sportfishing capital of the world, where 1,000-pound marlin are taken from the sea just about every month of the year. Not looking to set a world record? Kona's charter-boat captains specialize in conservation and will be glad to tag any fish you angle, and then let it go so someone else can have the fun of fighting a big-game fish tomorrow. See "Sportfishing: The Hunt for Granders," under "Watersports," in chapter 5.
- **Greeting the Rising Sun from atop Haleakala** (Maui): Bundle up in warm clothing, fill a thermos full of hot java, and drive up to the summit to watch the sky turn from inky black to muted charcoal as a small sliver of orange light forms on the horizon. There's something about standing at 10,000 feet, breathing in the rarefied air, and watching the first rays of sun streak across the sky. This is a mystical experience of the first magnitude. See "House of the Sun: Haleakala National Park," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 6.
- **Riding a Mule to Kalaupapa** (Molokai): If you have only a day to spend on Molokai, spend it on a mule. The trek from "topside" Molokai to Kalaupapa National Historic Park (Father Damien's world-famous leper colony) with **Molokai Mule Ride** (☎ 800/567-7550; www.muleride.com) is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. The cliffs are taller than 300-story skyscrapers, but Buzzy Sproat's surefooted mules go up and down the narrow 2.9-mile trail daily, rain or shine, and he's never lost a rider or a

mount on the 26 switchbacks. Even if you can't afford to mule or helicopter in, don't pass up the opportunity to see this hauntingly beautiful peninsula. If you're in good shape and brought hiking boots with you, you can get a permit (available at the trail head) and hike down the trail. The views are breathtaking: You'll see the world's highest sea cliffs and waterfalls plunging thousands of feet into the ocean. See "The Legacy of Father Damien: Kalaupapa National Historic Park," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 7.

- **Taking a Day Trip to Lanai** (Maui): If you'd like to visit Lanai but have only a day to spare, consider taking a day trip. **Trilogy** (☎ 888/MAUI-800; www.sailtrilogy.com) offers an all-day sailing, snorkeling, and whale-watching adventure. Trilogy is the only outfitter with rights to Hulopoe Beach, and the trip includes a minivan tour

of the little isle (pop. 3,500). See p. 429. You can also take **Expeditions Lahaina/Lanai Passenger Ferry** (☎ 808/661-3756; www.go-lanai.com) from Maui to Lanai, and then rent a four-wheel-drive vehicle from **Dollar Rent-A-Car** (☎ 800/588-7808) for a day of backcountry exploring and beach fun. See p. 430.

- **Soaring over the Na Pali Coast** (Kauai): This is the only way to see the spectacular, surreal beauty of Kauai. Your helicopter will dip low over razor-thin cliffs, fluttering past sparkling waterfalls and swooping down into the canyons and valleys of the fabled Na Pali Coast. The only problem is that there's too much beauty to absorb, and it all goes by in a rush. See "Helicopter Rides over Waimea Canyon & the Na Pali Coast," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 9.

3 The Best of Natural Hawaii

- **Volcanoes:** The entire island chain is made of volcanoes; don't miss the opportunity to see one. On Oahu the entire family can hike to the top of ancient, world-famous **Diamond Head** (see "Diamond Head Crater," under "Nature Hikes," in chapter 4). At the other end of the spectrum is fire-breathing Kilauaea at **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park**, on the Big Island, where you can get an up-close-and-personal experience with the red-hot lava ooze (see "Hawaii Volcanoes National Park," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 5). On Maui, **Haleakala National Park** provides a bird's-eye view into a long-dormant volcanic crater (see "House of the Sun: Haleakala National Park," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 6).
- **Waterfalls:** Rushing waterfalls thundering downward into sparkling freshwater pools are some of Hawaii's most beautiful natural wonders. If you're on the Big Island, stop by **Rainbow Falls** (p. 333) in Hilo or the spectacular 442-foot **Akaka Falls** (p. 327), just outside the city. On Maui the Road to Hana offers numerous viewing opportunities; at the end of the drive, you'll find **Oheo Gulch** (also known as the Seven Sacred Pools), with some of the most dramatic and accessible waterfalls on the islands (see "Tropical Haleakala: Oheo Gulch at Kipahulu," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 6). Kauai is loaded with waterfalls, especially along the North Shore and in the Wailua area, where you'll find 40-foot **Opaekea Falls**, probably the

best-looking drive-up waterfall on Kauai (see “Wailua River State Park,” under “Seeing the Sights,” in chapter 9). With scenic mountain peaks in the background and a restored Hawaiian village on the nearby riverbanks, the Opaekaa Falls are what the tourist-bureau folks call an eye-popping photo op.

- **Gardens:** The islands are redolent with the sweet scent of flowers. For a glimpse of the full breadth and beauty of Hawaii’s spectacular range of tropical flora, we suggest spending an afternoon at a lush garden. On Oahu, amid the high-rises of downtown Honolulu, the leafy oasis of **Foster Botanical Garden** (p. 206) showcases 26 native Hawaiian trees and the last stand of several rare trees, including an East African, whose white flowers bloom only at night. On the Big Island, **Liliuokalani Gardens** (p. 330), the largest formal Japanese garden this side of Tokyo, resembles a postcard from Asia, with bonsai, carp ponds, pagodas, and even a moon-gate bridge. At Maui’s **Kula Botanical Garden** (p. 457), you can take a leisurely self-guided stroll through more than 700 native and exotic plants, including orchids, proteas, and bromeliads. On lush Kauai, **Na Aina Kai Botanical Gardens** (p. 614), on some 240 acres, is sprinkled with some 70 life-size (some larger than life-size) whimsical bronze statues, hidden off the beaten path of the North Shore.
- **Marine Life Conservation Areas:** Nine underwater parks are spread across Hawaii, most notably **Waikiki Beach** (p. 172) and **Hanauma Bay**

(p. 173) on Oahu; the Big Island’s **Kealahou Bay** (p. 304); **Molokini**, just off the coast of Maui (see “Watersports,” in chapter 6); and Lanai’s **Manele and Hulopoe bays** (see “Beaches,” in chapter 8). Be sure to bring snorkel gear to at least one of these wonderful places during your vacation.

- **Garden of the Gods** (Lanai): Out on Lanai’s north shore lies the ultimate rock garden: a rugged, barren, beautiful place full of rocks strewn by volcanic forces and molded by the elements into a variety of shapes and colors—brilliant reds, oranges, ochers, and yellows. Scientists use phrases such as “ongoing posterosional event” or “plain and simple badlands” to describe the desolate, windswept place. The ancient Hawaiians, however, considered the Garden of the Gods to be an entirely supernatural phenomenon. Natural badlands or mystical garden? Take a four-wheel-drive trip out here and decide for yourself. See p. 531.
- **Waimea Canyon** (Kauai): This valley, known for its reddish lava beds, reminds everyone who sees it of Arizona’s Grand Canyon. Kauai’s version is bursting with ever-changing color, just like its namesake, but it’s smaller—only a mile wide, 3,567 feet deep, and 12 miles long. All this grandeur was caused by a massive earthquake that sent all the streams flowing into a single river, which then carved this picturesque canyon. You can stop by the road and look at it, hike down into it, or swoop through it by helicopter. See p. 606.

4 The Best of Underwater Hawaii

- **Hanauma Bay** (Oahu): It can get crowded, but for clear, warm, calm waters; an abundance of fish that are so friendly they'll swim right up to your face mask; a beautiful setting; and easy access, there's no place like Hanauma Bay. Just wade in waist-deep and look down to see more than 50 species of reef and inshore fish. Snorkelers hug the safe, shallow inner bay—it's like swimming in an outdoor aquarium. Serious divers shoot "the slot," a passage through the reef, to enter Witch's Brew, a turbulent cove. See p. 173.
- **Kahaluu Beach** (Big Island): The calm, shallow waters of Kahaluu are perfect for beginning snorkelers or those who are unsure of their swimming abilities and want the comfort of being able to stand up at any time. The sunlight through the shallow waters casts a dazzling spotlight on the colorful sea life and coral formations. If you listen closely, you can actually hear the parrotfish feeding. See p. 295.
- **Kealakekua Bay** (Big Island): Mile-wide Kealakekua Bay, at the foot of massive U-shaped sea cliffs, is rich with marine life, snorkelers, and history. A white obelisk marks the spot where, in 1778, the great British navigator Capt. James Cook, who charted most of the Pacific, was killed by Hawaiians. The bay itself is a marine sanctuary that teems with schools of polychromatic tropical fish. See p. 304.
- **Molokini** (Maui): The islet of Molokini is shaped like a crescent moon that fell from the sky. Its shallow concave side serves as a sheltering backstop against sea currents for tiny tropical fish; its opposite side is a deepwater cliff inhabited by spiny lobsters, moray eels, and white-tipped sharks. Neophyte snorkelers should report to the concave side, experienced scuba divers the other. The clear water and abundant marine life make this islet off the Makena Coast one of Hawaii's most popular dive spots, so expect crowds. See "Watersports," in chapter 6.
- **Kee Beach** (Kauai): Where the road ends on the North Shore, you'll find a dandy little reddish-gold sand beach almost too beautiful to be real. It borders a reef-protected cove at the foot of fluted volcanic cliffs. Swimming and snorkeling are safe inside the reef, where long-nosed butterfly fish flitter about and schools of taape (bluestripe snapper) swarm over the coral. See p. 587.

5 The Best Golf Courses

- **Mauna Kea's Beach and Hapuna Courses** (Big Island; ☎ 808/882-5400 for Beach Course, ☎ 808/880-3000 for Hapuna Course): The Mauna Kea Golf Course (p. 310), located out on the Kohala Coast, is everyone's old favorite. One of the first fields of play to be carved out of the black lava, the dramatic, always-challenging, par-72, 18-hole championship course is still one of Hawaii's top three. The Arnold Palmer/Ed Seay-designed Hapuna Golf Course (p. 310) rests in the rolling foothills above Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel and provides a memorable links-style golf experience along with one of the best views of this unusual coast (p. 261).
- **Mauna Lani Frances I'i Brown Championship Courses** (Big Island; ☎ 808/885-6655): Mauna Lani's two resort courses, North and South,

feature a combination of oceanfront and interior lava-lined holes; both offer wonderful scenery accompanied by strategic, championship-level golf. See p. 310.

- **Kapalua Resort Courses** (Maui; ☎ 877/KAPALUA): Kapalua is probably the best nationally known golf resort in Hawaii, thanks to the PGA Kapalua Mercedes Championship played here each January. The Bay and Village courses are vintage Arnold Palmer designs; the Plantation Course is a strong Ben Crenshaw/Bill Coore design. See p. 442.
- **Wailea Courses** (Maui; ☎ 808/875-7450): On Maui's sunbaked south shore stands Wailea Resort, *the* hot spot for golf in the islands. Three resort courses complement a string of beachfront hotels: The Blue Course is an Arthur Jack Snyder design, while Robert Trent Jones, Jr., is the mastermind behind the Emerald and Gold courses. All three boast outstanding views of the Pacific and the mid-Hawaiian islands. See p. 443.
- **The Lanai Courses** (Lanai): For quality and seclusion, nothing in Hawaii can touch Lanai's two resort offerings. **The Experience at Koele** (p. 530), designed by Ted Robinson

and Greg Norman, and **The Challenge at Manele** (p. 530), a wonderful Jack Nicklaus effort with ocean views from every hole, both rate among Hawaii's best courses.

- **Poipu Bay Golf Course** (Kauai; ☎ 808/742-8711): On Kauai's flat, dry south shore is a 210-acre, links-style course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr. The course, which for years hosted the PGA Tour's Grand Slam of Golf, is not only scenically spectacular, but is also a lot of fun to play. A flock of native Hawaiian nene geese frequents the course's lakes, and you can often see whales, monk seals, and green sea turtles along the shore. See p. 601.
- **Princeville Golf Club** (Kauai; ☎ 800/826-1105): Here you'll find 45 of the best tropical holes of golf in the world, all the work of Robert Trent Jones, Jr. They range along green bluffs below sharp mountain peaks and offer stunning views in every direction. The 18-hole Prince course, one of the top three courses in Hawaii, provides a round of golf few ever forget. It winds along 390 acres of scenic tableland bisected by tropical jungles, waterfalls, streams, and ravines. See p. 601.

6 The Best Ways to Immerse Yourself in Hawaiian Culture

- **Experiencing the Hula:** For a real, authentic hula experience on Oahu, check out the **Bishop Museum** (p. 198), which has excellent performances on weekdays, or head to the Halekulani's **House Without a Key** (p. 237) at sunset to watch the enchanting Kanoelehua Miller dance beautiful hula under a century-old kiawe tree. The first week after Easter brings Hawaii's biggest and most prestigious hula extravaganza, the **Merrie Monarch Hula Festival**

(p. 35), at Hilo on the Big Island; tickets sell out by January 30, so reserve early. In May there's the **Molokai Ka Hula Piko Festival** (p. 500), at Molokai's Papohaku Beach Park, a wonderful day-long festival that celebrates the hula on the island where it was born.

- **Watching the Ancient Hawaiian Sport of Canoe Paddling** (Oahu): From February to September, on weekday evenings and weekend days, hundreds of canoe paddlers gather at

Ala Wai Canal and practice the Hawaiian sport of canoe paddling. Find a comfortable spot at Ala Wai Park, next to the canal, and watch this ancient sport come to life.

- **Attending a Hawaiian-Language Church Service (Oahu): Kawaiahao Church** (☎ 808/522-1333) is the Westminster Abbey of Hawaii. The vestibule is lined with portraits of the Hawaiian monarchy, many of whom were crowned in this very building. The coral church is a perfect setting in which to experience an all-Hawaiian service, held every Sunday at 9am, complete with Hawaiian song. Admission is free; let your conscience be your guide as to a donation. See p. 203.
- **Buying a Lei in Chinatown (Oahu):** There's actually a host of cultural sights and experiences to be had in Honolulu's Chinatown. Wander through this several-square-block area with its jumble of exotic shops offering herbs, Chinese groceries, and acupuncture services. Before you leave, be sure to check out the lei sellers on Maunakea Street (near N. Hotel St.), where Hawaii's finest leis go for as little as \$5. If you'd like a little guidance, you can follow the walking tour on p. 210.
- **Listening to Old-Fashioned "Talk Story" with Hawaiian Song and Dance (Big Island):** Once a month, under a full moon, "**Twilight at Kalahuipua'a**," a celebration of the Hawaiian culture that includes storytelling, singing, and dancing, takes place ocean-side at Mauna Lani Bay Resort (☎ 808/885-6622; www.maunalaniculture.org/twilight). It hearkens back to another time in Hawaii when family and neighbors would gather on back porches to sing, dance, and "talk story." See the

box "Old-Style Hawaiian Entertainment," in chapter 5.

- **Visiting Ancient Hawaii's Most Sacred Temple (Big Island):** On the Kohala Coast, where King Kamehameha the Great was born, stands Hawaii's oldest, largest, and most sacred religious site: the 1,500-year-old Mo'okini Heiau, used by kings to pray and offer human sacrifices. This massive three-story stone temple, dedicated to Ku, the Hawaiian god of war, was erected in A.D. 480. It's said that each stone was passed from hand to hand from Pololu Valley, 14 miles away, by 18,000 men who worked from sunset to sunrise. The best way to see this sacred site is to help out with the monthly cleanups when the *Kahuna Nui* (high priestess), Momi Mo'okini Lum, is on-site. See p. 322.
- **Hunting for Petroglyphs (Big Island):** Archaeologists are still uncertain exactly what these ancient rock carvings—the majority of which are found in the 233-acre Puako Petroglyph Archaeological District, near Mauna Lani Resort on the Kohala Coast—mean. The best time to hunt for these intricate depictions of ancient life is either early in the morning or late afternoon, when the angle of the sun lets you see the forms clearly. See "Kohala Coast Petroglyphs," under "Seeing the Sights," in chapter 5.
- **Exploring Puuhonua O Honaunau National Historical Park (Big Island):** This sacred site on the South Kona Coast was once a place of refuge and a revered place of rejuvenation. You can walk the same consecrated grounds where priests once conducted holy ceremonies and glimpse the ancient way of life in pre-contact Hawaii in the re-created 180-acre village. See p. 320.

The Welcoming Lei

There's nothing like a lei. The stunning tropical beauty of the delicate garland, the deliciously sweet fragrance of the blossoms, the sensual way the flowers curl softly around your neck. There's no doubt about it: Getting lei'd in Hawaii is a sensuous experience.

Leis are much more than just a decorative necklace of flowers; they're also one of the nicest ways to say hello, goodbye, congratulations, I salute you, my sympathies are with you, or I love you. The custom of giving leis can be traced back to Hawaii's very roots; according to chants, the first lei was given by Hiiaka, the sister of the volcano goddess Pele, who presented Pele with a lei of lehua blossoms on a beach in Puna.

During ancient times, leis given to *alii* (high-ranking chiefs) were accompanied by a bow, since it was *kapu* (forbidden) for a commoner to raise his arms higher than the king's head. The presentation of a kiss with a lei didn't come about until World War II; it's generally attributed to an entertainer who kissed an officer on a dare and then quickly presented him with her lei, saying it was an old Hawaiian custom. It wasn't then, but it sure caught on fast.

Lei making is a tropical art form. All leis are fashioned by hand in a variety of traditional patterns; some are sewn with hundreds of tiny blooms or shells, or bits of ferns and leaves. Some are twisted, some braided, some strung; all are presented with love. Every island has its own special flower lei—the lei of the land, so to speak. On Oahu the choice is *ilima*, a small orange flower. Big Islanders prefer the *lehua*, a large, delicate red puff. On Maui it's the *lokelani*, a small rose; on Kauai, it's the *mokihana*, a fragrant green vine and berry; on Molokai it's the *kukui*, the white blossom of a candlenut tree; and on Lanai it's the *kaunaoa*, a bright yellow moss. Residents of Niihau use the island's abundant seashells to make leis that were once prized by royalty and are now worth a small fortune.

Leis are available at all of the islands' airports. Other places to get wonderful, inexpensive leis are the half-dozen lei shops on **Maunakea Street** in Honolulu's Chinatown, and **Greene Acres Leis** (☎ 808/329-2399), off Kaimiminani Drive in the Kona Palisades subdivision, across from the Kona International Airport on the Big Island. If you plan ahead, you can also arrange to have a lei-greeter meet you and your travel party as you deplane; **Greeters of Hawaii** (☎ 800/366-8559, 808/836-0161, or 808/836-3246) serves Honolulu, Kona (on the Big Island), Kahului (Maui), and Lihue (Kauai) airports.

Leis are the perfect symbol for the islands: They're given in the moment and their fragrance and beauty are enjoyed in the moment, but even after they fade, their spirit of aloha lives on. Welcome to Hawaii!

- Visiting the Most Hawaiian Isle:** A time capsule of old Hawaii, Molokai allows you to experience real Hawaiian life in its most unsullied form. The island's people have woven the cultural values of ancient times into modern life. In addition to this rich community, you'll find the magnificent natural wonders it so cherishes: Hawaii's highest waterfall, its greatest

collection of fish ponds, and the world's tallest sea cliffs, as well as sand dunes, coral reefs, rainforests, and

gloriously empty beaches. The island is pretty much the same Molokai of generations ago. See chapter 7.

7 The Best Luxury Hotels & Resorts

- **Halekulani** (Oahu; ☎ 800/367-2343; www.halekulani.com): When price is no object, this is really the only place to stay. An oasis of calm amid the buzz, this beach hotel is the finest Waikiki has to offer (heck, I think it's the finest in the state). Even if you don't stay here, pop by for a sunset mai tai to hear Sonny Kamehale sing the old *hapa-haole* tunes of the 1930s and 1940s while a lovely hula dancer sways to the music. See p. 119.
- **Royal Hawaiian** (Oahu; ☎ 800/325-3535; www.sheraton.com): This flamingo-pink oasis, hidden away among blooming gardens within the concrete jungle of Waikiki, is a symbol of luxury. You can step back in time by staying in the rooms in the Historic Wing, which contain carved wooden doors, four-poster canopy beds, flowered wallpaper, and period furniture. One of Waikiki's best spas, **Abhasa** (☎ 808/922-8200; www.abhasa.com), is located on the property. See p. 121.
- **Kahala Hotel & Resort** (Oahu; ☎ 800/367-2525; www.kahalaresort.com): After 11 years under the helm of the Mandarin Oriental Group, this grand old hotel changed management firms in 2006. The new firm promised to restore this elegant property to what it once was. The location alone offers a similarly wonderful compromise: Situated in one of Oahu's most prestigious residential areas, the Kahala offers the peace and serenity of a neighbor-island vacation, but with the conveniences of Waikiki just a 10-minute drive away. The lush, tropical grounds include an 800-foot crescent-shaped beach and a 26,000-square-foot lagoon (home to two bottle-nosed dolphins, sea turtles, and tropical fish). See p. 135.
- **Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows** (Big Island; ☎ 800/367-2323; www.maunalani.com): Burned out? In need of tranquillity and gorgeous surroundings? Look no further. Sandy beaches and lava tide pools are the focus of this serene seaside resort, where gracious hospitality is dispensed in a historic setting. From the lounge chairs on the pristine beach to the turndown service at night, everything here is done impeccably. The rooms are arranged to capture maximum ocean views, and they surround interior atrium gardens and pools in which endangered baby sea turtles are raised. A shoreline trail leads across the whole 3,200-acre resort, giving you an intimate glimpse into the ancient past, when people lived in lava caves and tended the large complex of fish ponds. See p. 262.
- **Four Seasons Resort Hualalai at Historic Kaupulehu** (Big Island; ☎ 888/340-5662; www.fourseasons.com/hualalai): Private pools, unimpeded ocean views, excellent food, and a new 18-hole championship golf course—what more could any mortal want? This new low-impact, high-ticket hideaway under the dormant Hualalai Volcano ups the ante with its residential resort of two-story bungalows clustered around five seaside swimming pools on a black lagoon. See p. 252.
- **Hotel Hana-Maui** (Maui; ☎ 800/321-HANA; www.hotelhanamaui.com): Picture Shangri-La, Hawaiian-style: 66 acres rolling down to the sea

in a remote Hawaiian village, with a wellness center, two pools, and access to one of the best beaches in Hana. Cathedral ceilings, a plush feather bed, a giant-size soaking tub, Hawaiian artwork, bamboo hardwood floors—this is luxury. The white-sand beach (just a 5-min. shuttle away), a top-notch wellness center with some of the best massage therapists in Hawaii, and numerous activities (horseback riding, mountain biking, tennis, pitch-and-putt golf) all add up to make this one of the top resorts in the state. I highly recommend this little slice of paradise. See p. 394.

- **The Fairmont Kea Lani Maui** (Maui; ☎ 800/659-4100; www.fairmont.com/kealani): This is the place to get your money's worth: For the price of a hotel room, you get an entire suite—plus a few extras. Each unit in this all-suite luxury hotel has a kitchenette, a living room with entertainment center and sofa bed (great if you have the kids in tow), a marble wet bar, an oversize marble bathroom with separate shower big enough for a party, a spacious bedroom, and a large lanai that overlooks the pools, lawns, and white-sand beach. See p. 387.
- **Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea** (Maui; ☎ 800/334-MAUI; www.fourseasons.com/maui): This is the ultimate beach hotel for latter-day royals, with excellent cuisine, spacious rooms, gracious service, and Wailea Beach, one of Maui's best gold-sand strips, out the front door. Every guest room has at least a partial ocean view from a private lanai. The luxury suites, as big as some Honolulu condos, are full of marble and deluxe appointments. See p. 388.
- **The Lodge at Molokai Ranch** (Molokai; ☎ 888/627-8082; www.molokairanch.com): This quaint

22-room inn in Maunaloa sits on 8 nicely landscaped acres in the rolling hills of Maunaloa town. Designed to resemble a 1930s-style Hawaii ranch owner's private home, the Lodge features a giant fireplace, huge wooden beam construction, panoramic views, and lots of details (cuffed cowboy boots beside the door, old books lining the shelves) to make it look and feel like a real ranch. Guests step back in time to a Hawaii of yesteryear. The beach is 6 miles and about a 20-minute car ride away. See p. 488.

- **Four Seasons Resort Lana'i at Manele Bay** (Lana'i; ☎ 800/321-4666; www.fourseasons.com/lanai): The well-known luxury hotel chain Four Seasons took over management of this 236-unit resort after a multimillion-dollar makeover in 2005. Perched on a sun-washed southern bluff overlooking Hulopoe Beach, one of Hawaii's best stretches of golden sand, this U-shaped hotel steps down the hillside to the pool and the beach. Designed as a traditional luxury beachfront hotel, the Manele Bay features open, airy, oversize rooms, each with a breath-taking view of the big blue Pacific. The guest rooms have been redone in a clean, crisp style of an elegant oceanside Hawaiian resort with 40-inch, flatscreen LCD TVs, huge marble bathrooms, and semiprivate lanais. See p. 520.
- **Four Seasons Resort Lana'i The Lodge at Koele** (Lana'i; ☎ 800/321-4666; www.fourseasons.com/lanai): The sister hotel to Manele Bay (see above), this luxury resort was renovated and rebranded a Four Seasons in 2006. A \$50-million renovation gave all 102 guest rooms new carpeting, glass bath partitions, signature Four Seasons beds, 42-inch LCD flatscreen TVs, new furniture, new fabrics, and high-speed Internet. This

small inn, which resembles a grand English country estate, was built in 1991 and needed the renovation—the new look is spectacular. See p. 521.

- **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa** (Kauai; ☎ 800/55-HYATT; www.kauai.hyatt.com): This Art Deco beach hotel recalls Hawaii in the 1920s—before the crash—when gentlemen in blue blazers and ladies in summer frocks came to the islands to learn to surf and play the ukulele. The hotel's architecture and location, on the sunny side of Kauai, make this the island's best hotel. The beach is a bit too rough for swimming, but the saltwater swimming pool is the biggest on the island. An old-fashioned reading room by the sea houses club chairs, billiards, and a bar well

stocked with cognac and port. Nearby diversions include golf, horseback riding, and the shops of Koloa, a former plantation town. See p. 547.

- **Princeville Resort Kauai** (Kauai; ☎ 800/826-4400; www.princeville.com): This palace of green marble and sparkling chandeliers recalls Hawaii's monarchy period of the 19th century. It's set in one of the most remarkable locations in the world, on a cliff between the crystal-blue waters of Hanalei Bay and steeped mountains; you arrive on the ninth floor and go down to get to the beach. Opulent rooms with magnificent views and all the activities of Princeville and Hanalei make this one of Hawaii's finest resorts. See p. 560.

8 The Best Moderately Priced Accommodations

- **New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel** (Oahu; ☎ 800/356-8264; www.kaimana.com): This is one of Waikiki's best-kept secrets: a boutique hotel nestled right on a lovely stretch of beach at the foot of Diamond Head, with Kapiolani Park just across the street. The Waikiki-side guest rooms are teeny-tiny, with barely room for two, but are tastefully decorated and open onto lanais with ocean and park views (plus they start at just \$150 a night). A good budget buy is the park-view studio with kitchen. You can stock up with provisions from the on-site Mini-Mart. See p. 131.
- **Ke Iki Beach Bungalows** (Oahu; ☎ 866/638-8229; www.keikibeach.com): This collection of studio, one-, and two-bedroom cottages snuggled on a large lot with its own 200-foot stretch of white-sand beach between two legendary surf spots (Waimea Bay and Banzai Pipeline) has been totally renovated to the tune of \$1

million. Most units are compact—the kitchens and living rooms are small and the bedrooms even smaller—but they're affordable, with rates starting at \$120 a night. And with the ocean just outside, how much time are you going to spend inside anyway? The winter waves are too rough for most swimmers, but there's a large lava reef nearby with tide pools to explore and, on the other side, Shark's Cove, a relatively protected snorkeling area. Nearby are tennis courts and a jogging path. All units have full kitchens and their own barbecue areas. See p. 139.

- **Holualoa Inn** (Big Island; ☎ 800/392-1812; www.holualoainn.com): The quiet, secluded setting of this B&B—on 40 pastoral acres just off the main drag of the artsy village of Holualoa, 1,350 feet above Kailua-Kona—provides stunning panoramic views of the entire coast. This contemporary 7,000-square-foot Hawaiian

home built of golden woods has six private suites (starting at \$225) and window-walls that roll back to embrace the gardens and views. Cows graze on the bucolic pastures below the garden Jacuzzi and pool, and the coffee plantation on the property is the source of the morning brew. See p. 257.

- **Kona Tiki Hotel** (Big Island; ☎ 808/329-1425; www.konatiki.com): Right on the ocean, away from the hustle and bustle of downtown Kailua-Kona, is one of the hottest budget deals in Hawaii: tastefully decorated rooms with private lanais overlooking the ocean, starting at just \$66 a night! Although it's called a hotel, this small, family-run operation is more like a large B&B, with plenty of friendly conversation around the pool at the morning continental breakfast buffet. See p. 256.
- **Waipio Wayside B&B Inn** (Big Island; ☎ 800/833-8849; www.waipio-wayside.com): Jackie Horne renovated this 1938 Hamakua sugar supervisor's home—nestled among fruit trees and surrounded with sweet-smelling ginger, fragile orchids, and blooming birds of paradise—and transformed it into a gracious B&B. Just minutes from the Waipio Valley Lookout and Honokaa village, this comfy five-bedroom house abounds with thoughtful touches, such as a help-yourself tea-and-cookies bar with 26 different kinds of tea. Jackie's friendly hospitality and excellent continental breakfasts really round out the experience. Rooms start at \$99 for two. See p. 267.
- **Old Wailuku Inn at Ulupono** (Maui; ☎ 800/305-4899; www.maui-inn.com): This 1924 former plantation manager's home, lovingly restored, offers a genuine old Hawaii experience. The theme is Hawaii of the 1920s and 1930s, with decor, design, and landscaping to match. The spacious rooms are gorgeously outfitted with exotic ohia-wood floors, high ceilings, and traditional Hawaiian quilts. A full gourmet breakfast is served on the enclosed back lanai or, if you prefer, delivered to your room. The inn is located in the old historic area of Wailuku, about 10 to 15 minutes to the beach. Once you settle in, you may not want to leave—and with rooms starting at \$140 for a double, you can afford to stay a while. See p. 366.
- **Pineapple Inn Maui** (Maui; ☎ 877/212-MAUI [6284]; www.pineapple-innmaui.com): This charming inn (only four rooms, plus a cottage) is not only an exquisite find, but a terrific value. Located in the residential Maui Meadows area, with panoramic ocean views, this two-story inn is expertly landscaped in tropical flowers and plants with a lily pond in the front and a giant saltwater pool and Jacuzzi overlooking the ocean. Each of the soundproof rooms is expertly decorated with a small kitchenette, a comfy bed, free wireless Internet access, TV/VCR, and an incredible view off your own private lanai. Prices start at \$109. If you need more room, they also offer a darling two-bedroom, one-bathroom cottage. See p. 385.
- **Dunbar Beachfront Cottages** (Molokai; ☎ 800/673-0520; www.molokai-beachfront-cottages.com): Each of these green-and-white plantation-style cottages sits on its own secluded beach—you'll feel like you're on your own private island. Impeccable decor, a magical setting, and reasonable rates (\$170 for two) make these cottages a must-stay. See p. 491.
- **Hotel Lanai** (Lanai; ☎ 800/795-7211; www.hotellanai.com): Lanai's

only budget lodging is a simple, down-home, plantation-era relic that has recently been Laura Ashley-ized. The Hotel Lanai is homey, funky, and fun—and, best of all, a real bargain (starting at \$125 for two) compared to its ritzy neighbors. See p. 521.

- **Hanalei Surf Board House** (Kauai; 808/826-9825; www.hanaleisurfboardhouse.com): Book well in advance—this place is so fabulous, it will go fast! Just a block from the beach, these two incredibly decorated studio units are a steal at \$150. Host Simon Potts, a former record company executive from England, has filled his two studios (with kitchenettes) with imaginative decor choices: One of them sports a whimsical cowgirl theme, the other is filled with Elvis Presley memorabilia. But the best reason to stay here (besides the 2-min. walk to the beach or a 10-min.

walk to downtown Hanalei) is Simon himself—his stories about the record industry will keep you howling with laughter for hours. See p. 563.

- **Kauai Country Inn** (Kauai; ☎ 808/821-0207; www.kauaicountryinn.com): This old-fashioned country inn, nestled in the rolling hills behind Kapaa, seems too good to be true. Each of the four suites (starting at just \$99) is uniquely decorated in Hawaiian Art Deco, complete with hardwood floors, private bathrooms, kitchen or kitchenette, your own computer with high-speed Internet connection, and lots of little extra amenities. Everything is top-drawer, from the furniture to the Sub-Zero refrigerator. They recently added a two-bedroom country cottage for families with young children. The grounds are immaculate, and you can pick as much organic fruit as you want. See p. 558.

9 The Best Places to Stay with the Kids

- **Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa** (Oahu; ☎ 800/HILTONS; www.hawaiianvillage.hilton.com): The Rainbow Express, Hilton's year-round daily program of activities for children ages 5 to 12, offers a wide range of educational and fun activities for \$56 a day, including lunch. Everything about this hotel is kid-friendly, from the wildlife parading about the grounds to the submarine dives offered just out front. In three of the resort's restaurants, kids ages 4 to 11 eat free. See p. 114.
- **J. W. Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa at Ko Olina Resort** (Oahu; ☎ 800/626-4446; www.ihilani.com): This resort on Oahu's virgin leeward coast is a haven of relaxation and tropical fun for travelers of all ages. The Keiki Beachcomber Club, for children ages 5 to 12, is available daily. Activities

(9am–3pm) range from kite-flying, tide-pool exploration, and snorkeling to Hawaiian cultural activities. The cost is \$58 per child. See p. 140.

- **Kona Village Resort** (Big Island; ☎ 800/367-5290; www.konavillage.com): This is a parent's dream: custom-designed programs to entertain your kids, from tots to teenagers, from dawn to well after dusk, all at no charge. There's even a dinner seating for children, so Mom and Dad can enjoy an intimate dinner for two later in the evening. See p. 252.
- **The Fairmont Orchid, Hawaii** (Big Island; ☎ 800/845-9905; www.fairmont.com/orchid): The Keiki Aloha program, for kids 5 to 12 years old, features supervised activities from watersports to Hawaiian cultural games for \$85 for the full day. The resort has some great money-saving

deals; for example, children 5 and under eat free at various restaurants in the resort. See p. 263.

- **Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea** (Maui; ☎ 800/334-MAUI; www.fourseasons.com/maui): The most kid-friendly hotel on Maui not only offers a complimentary kids program year-round and an everyday activities center (daily 9am–5pm), but also makes children feel welcome with extras such as complimentary milk and cookies on their first day and children's menus at all resort restaurants and even from room service. See p. 388.
- **Hyatt Regency Maui** (Maui; ☎ 800/233-1234; www.maui.hyatt.com): The Camp Hyatt program, for kids 5 to 12 years old, operates daily from 9am to 3pm and offers young guests a range of activities, from “Olympic Games” to a scavenger hunt. The cost is \$65 to \$80 for a full day. See p. 371.
- **Aloha Beach House** (Molokai; ☎ 888/828-1008; www.molokai.vacation.com): This Hawaiian-style beach house sits right on the white-sand beach of Waialua on the lush East End. Perfect for families, this

impeccably decorated, two-bedroom, 1,600-square-foot beach house has a huge, airy living/dining/kitchen area that opens out to an old-fashioned porch perfect for meals or just sitting in the comfy chairs and watching the clouds roll by. It's fully equipped, from the complete kitchen to a VCR (and library of videos), to all the beach toys you can think of. A family of five can stay here for just \$240 to \$280. See p. 490.

- **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa** (Kauai; ☎ 800/55-HYATT; www.kauai.hyatt.com): In addition to the Camp Hyatt program (for kids 3–12; \$70 for a full day), it's the collection of swimming pools—freshwater and salt, with slides, waterfalls, and secret lagoons—that makes this oceanfront Hyatt a real kids' paradise. During the summer months and the holiday season, there's Rock Hyatt, an activity room for teens to gather in and play electronic games. Summertime also boasts Family Fun Theatre Nights, when the whole family can enjoy a showing of one of the more than 400 movies filmed on Kauai. See p. 547.

10 The Best Resort Spas

- **SpaHalekulani, Halekulani hotel** (Oahu; ☎ 808/923-2311; www.halekulani.com): This is Waikiki's first spa to explore the healing traditions of the Pacific islands, as well as Hawaii. Like everything else at the top-rated Halekulani hotel, the spa is truly a heavenly experience, from the time you step into the elegantly appointed, intimate spa and experience the foot massage to the last whiff of fragrant maile, their signature scent. Spa connoisseurs should try something unique, like the Polynesian Nonu, a Samoan-inspired massage using stones. See p. 119.
- **Spa Suites at the Kahala** (Oahu; ☎ 808/739-8938): The Kahala has taken the concept of spa as a journey into relaxation to a new level, with former garden rooms converted to individual spas, each with a glass-enclosed shower, private changing area, infinity-edge deep soaking Jacuzzi tub, and personal relaxation area. No detail is overlooked, from the warm foot bath when you arrive to the refreshing hot tea served on your personal enclosed garden lanai after your relaxation treatment. See p. 135.
- **Turtle Bay Resort** (Oahu; ☎ 800/203-3650; www.turtlebayresort.com):

This Zen-like spa positioned on the ground floor facing the ocean has six treatment rooms, a meditation waiting area, an outdoor workout area, plus a complete fitness center and a private elevator to the rooms on the second floor, reserved for guests getting spa treatments. See p. 138.

- **Ihilani Spa at the J. W. Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa** (Oahu; ☎ 800/626-4446; www.ihilani.com): An oasis by the sea, this free-standing 35,000-square-foot facility is dedicated to the traditional spa definition of “health by water.” This modern, multistoried spa, filled with floor-to-ceiling glass looking out on green tropical plants, combines Hawaiian products with traditional therapies to produce some of the best water treatments in the state. You’ll also find a fitness center, tennis courts, and a bevy of aerobic and stretching classes. See p. 140.
- **Hualalai Sports Club and Spa at Four Seasons Resort Hualalai at Historic Kaupulehu** (Big Island; ☎ 888/340-5662; www.fourseasons.com/hualalai): It’s easy to see why some 6,000 *Condé Nast* readers voted this 13,000-square-foot facility their favorite resort spa. Five of its 16 treatment rooms are thatched huts (with bamboo privacy screens) nestled into a tropical garden. This is the place to come to be pampered. The fitness facilities, classes, and adventure activities are all excellent, but the attentive service and dreamy spa facilities are what you will remember long after your vacation. See p. 252.
- **Kohala Spa at the Hilton Waikoloa Village** (Big Island; ☎ 800/HILTONS; www.hiltonwaikoloa.village.com): The Big Island’s oldest (since 1989) spa has something for everyone, including 33 treatment rooms, 50 classes, and a variety of sports ranging from racquetball to indoor rock climbing. Treatments are on the cutting edge and include such unique therapies as acupuncture facials and astrological readings. Spend the day luxuriating in the lava whirlpool, steam room, and sauna before or after your treatment. See p. 264.
- **Spa Grande at the Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa** (Maui; ☎ 800/888-6100; www.grandwailea.com): This is Hawaii’s biggest spa, at 50,000 square feet, with 40 treatment rooms. The spa incorporates the best of the Old World (romantic ceiling murals, larger-than-life Roman-style sculptures, mammoth Greek columns, huge European tubs), the finest Eastern traditions (a full Japanese-style traditional bath and various exotic treatments from India), and the lure of the islands (tropical foliage, ancient Hawaiian treatments, and island products). This spa has everything from a top fitness center to a menu of classes and is constantly on the cutting edge of the latest trends. See p. 388.
- **The Spa at Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea** (Maui; ☎ 800/334-MAUI; www.fourseasons.com/maui): This relaxing oasis in the luxurious Four Seasons offers a menu of pampering—traditional Hawaii massage to Ayurvedic, plus Vichy shower treatments, body wraps, body scrubs, facials, even ocean aquacranial massage for the ultimate in relaxation. You don’t just get a massage here; you can choose from a list of therapies: hot stone, reiki, jin shin do, Swedish, aromatherapy, shiatsu, reflexology, and Thai. See p. 388.
- **Spa Moana at the Hyatt Regency Maui** (Maui; ☎ 800/233-1234; www.maui.hyatt.com): You cannot match the location—this is Hawaii’s only oceanfront spa. The 20,000-square-foot spa houses 15 relaxing

Pampering in Paradise

Hawaii's spas have raised the art of relaxation and healing to a new level. The traditional Greco-Roman-style spas have evolved into airy, open facilities that embrace the Tropics. Spa-goers in Hawaii want to hear the sound of the ocean, smell the salt air, and feel the caress of the warm breeze. They want to experience Hawaiian products and traditional treatments they can get only here.

Today's spas offer a wide diversity of treatments. Massage options include Hawaiian lomilomi, Swedish, aromatherapy, craniosacral (massaging the head), shiatsu (no oil, just deep thumb pressure on acupuncture points), Thai (another oilless massage involving stretching), and hot stone. There are even side-by-side massages for couples, and duo massages—two massage therapists working on you at once.

Body treatments, for the entire body or just the face, involve a variety of herbal wraps, masks, or scrubs using a range of ingredients from seaweed to salt to mud, with or without accompanying aromatherapy.

After you have been rubbed and scrubbed, most spas offer an array of water treatments—a sort of hydromassage in a tub with jets and an assortment of colored crystals, oils, and scents.

Those are just the traditional treatments. Most spas also offer a range of alternative healthcare like acupuncture and chiropractic, and more exotic treatments like ayurvedic and siddha from India or reiki from Japan. Some offer cutting-edge treatments, like the Grand Wailea Resort's full-spectrum color-light therapy pod (based on NASA's work with astronauts).

Spas also offer a range of fitness facilities (weights, racquetball, tennis, golf) and classes (yoga, aerobics, spinning, tai chi, kickboxing). Several even offer adventure fitness packages (from bicycling to snorkeling). For the less active, most spas have salons dedicated to hair and nail care.

Of course, all this pampering doesn't come cheap. Massages are generally \$150 to \$250 for 50 minutes and \$250 to \$295 for 80 minutes; body treatments are in the \$150-to-\$250 range; and alternative healthcare treatments can be as high as \$200 to \$300. But you may think it's worth the expense to banish your tension and stress.

treatment rooms and features one of the island's best full-service fitness centers, plus a relaxation lounge, a romantic couples' treatment room, a salon/retail shop, and new treatments for kids and teenagers. See p. 371.

- **Spa Kea Lani at The Fairmont Kea Lani Maui** (Maui; ☎ 800/659-4100; www.fairmont.com/kealani): Come to this intimate Art Deco boutique spa

(just a little over 5,000 sq. ft., with nine treatment rooms) for personal and private attention. The fitness center is just next door. See p. 387.

- **ANARA Spa at the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa** (Kauai; ☎ 808/240-6440; www.anaraspa.com): Come here to get rid of stress and to be soothed and pampered in a Hawaiian atmosphere, where the spirit of aloha

reigns. An elegant 25,000-square-foot spa, ANARA (A New Age Restorative Approach) focuses on Hawaiian culture and healing, with some 16 treatment rooms, a lap pool, fitness facilities, lava rock showers that open to the tropical air, outdoor

whirlpools, a 24-head Swiss shower, Turkish steam rooms, Finnish saunas, and botanical soaking tubs. Recent renovations make this spa even more serene and relaxing. The four-handed massage (two therapists at once) is not to be missed. See p. 547.

11 The Best Dining, Hawaii Style

- **Tropical Fruit: Mangosteen**, the queen of fruit in Indonesia, is the sensation at the Hilo Farmers Market on the Big Island. Mangosteen's elegant purple skin and soft, white, floral-flavored flesh (like litchi, but more custardlike) make this fruit a sure winner.

The **mango** is always a much-anticipated feature of late spring and summer. **Hayden mangoes** are universally loved for their plump, juicy flesh and brilliant skins. **White Piries**, with their resinous flavor and fine, fiberless flesh, are even better; this rare and ambrosial variety can be found in Honolulu's Chinatown or at roadside fruit stands in rural Oahu. Watch for the **Rapoza**, a new large, sweet, fiberless mango introduced to Hawaii several years ago.

Kahuku papayas—firm, fleshy, dark orange, and so juicy they sometimes squirt—are the ones to watch for on menus and in markets; check out the roadside stands in Kahuku on Oahu, and at supermarkets. **Sunrise papayas** from Kapoho and Kauai are also top-notch.

White, acid-free, extra-sweet, and grown on Kauai and the Big Island, **Sugarloaf pineapples** are the new rage. Hilo is the town for **litchis** (also known as lychees) in summer, but Honolulu's Chinatown markets carry them, too. **Ka'u oranges**, grown in the volcanic soil of the southern Big Island, are available in supermarkets

and health-food stores. Don't be fooled by their brown, ugly skin—they're juicy, thin-skinned, and sweet as honey.

- **Noodles:** Ramen, udon, saimin, pho, pasta, chow mein—Hawaii is the epicenter of ethnic noodle stands and houses, with many recommendable and inexpensive choices. **Jimbo's Restaurant** (Oahu; ☎ 808/947-2211), a neighborhood staple, is tops for freshly made udon with generous toppings and a homemade broth (p. 164). On the neighbor islands, noodle-mania prevails at **Hamura's Saimin Stand** (Kauai; ☎ 808/245-3271), where saimin and teriyaki sticks have replaced hamburgers and pizza as the late-night comfort-food tradition (p. 566). **Nori's Saimin & Snacks** (Big Island; ☎ 808/935-9133) is the place in charming Hilo for consummate saimin of every stripe (p. 293).
- **Plate Lunches:** **Zippy's** (21 locations throughout Oahu; call ☎ 808/973-0880 for the one nearest you) is a household word in Hawaii. Other favorite plate-lunch spots on Oahu include **Kakaako Kitchen** (☎ 808/596-7488), Ward Centre (p. 233), serving dinner at indoor and outdoor tables; **I ♥ Country Cafe** (☎ 808/596-8108); and **Yama's Fish Market** (☎ 808/941-9994), where the chocolate/macadamia nut cookies and chocolate biscotti have legions of fans. On Maui, **Pauwela Cafe** (☎ 808/575-9242; p. 420) serves gourmet

feasts from a tiny kitchen, and **Aloha Mixed Plate** (☎ 808/661-3322; p. 405) lets you nosh on fabulous shoyu chicken at ocean's edge—and with a mai tai, too. On Kauai, **Pono Market** (☎ 808/822-4581; p. 567), **Fish Express** (☎ 808/245-9918; p. 566), and **Koloa Fish Market** (☎ 808/742-6199; p. 566) are at the top of the plate-lunch pyramid.

- **Shave Ice:** Like surfing, shave ice is synonymous with Haleiwa, the North Shore Oahu town where **Matsumoto Shave Ice** (☎ 808/637-4827; p. 223) serves mounds of the icy treat. Shave ice is even better over ice cream and adzuki beans.
- **Other Mighty Morsels:** Poi biscotti from the **Poi Company**, available at supermarkets and gourmet outlets, is the consummate accompaniment to another island phenomenon, Kona

coffee. Coffee growers of highest esteem (all based on the Big Island, of course), include: **Rooster Farms** (☎ 808/328-9173), which sells and ships only organic coffees; **Bong Brothers** (☎ 808/328-9289); **Kona Blue Sky Coffee Company** (☎ 808/322-1700); **Langenstein Farms** (☎ 808/328-8356); and **Holualoa Kona Coffee Company** (☎ 800/334-0348). See the box “Kona Coffee Craze!” on p. 281.

The buttery, chocolate-dipped shortbread cookies of **Big Island Candies** (Big Island; ☎ 808/935-8890; p. 349) are worth every calorie and every dollar. From Kauai, Hanapepe town's venerable **Taro Ko taro chips** (☎ 808/335-5586 for the factory; p. 619) are a crunchy snack neighbor islanders drive long miles to find.

12 The Best Restaurants

- **Alan Wong's Restaurant** (Oahu; ☎ 808/949-2526): Master strokes at this shrine of Hawaii Regional Cuisine include warm California rolls made with salmon roe, wasabi, and Kona lobster instead of rice; luau lumpia with butterfish and *kalua* pig; and ginger-crusting fresh onaga. Opihi shooters and day-boat scallops in season are a must, and grilled lamb chops are a perennial special. The menu changes daily, but the flavors never lose their sizzle. See p. 163.
- **Chef Mavro Restaurant** (Oahu; ☎ 808/944-4714): Honolulu is abuzz over the wine pairings and elegant cuisine of George Mavrothalasitis, the culinary wizard and James Beard Award-winner from Provence who turned La Mer (at the Halekulani) and Seasons (at the Four Seasons Resort Wailea) into temples of fine dining. He brought his award-winning signature dishes with him

and continues to prove his ingenuity with dazzling a la carte and prix-fixe (\$66–\$93) menus. See p. 162.

- **Hoku's** (Oahu; ☎ 808/739-8780): Elegant without being stuffy, and creative without being overwrought, the fine-dining room of the Kahala offers elegant lunches and dinners, and one of Oahu's best Sunday brunches. This is fusion that really works—European finesse with an island touch. The ocean view, open kitchen, and astonishing bamboo floor are stellar features. Reflecting the restaurant's cross-cultural influences, the kitchen is equipped with a kiawe grill, an Indian tandoori oven, and Szechuan woks. See p. 167.
- **La Mer** (Oahu; ☎ 808/923-2311): This romantic, elegant dining room at Waikiki's Halekulani is the only AAA Five-Diamond restaurant in the state. The second-floor, open-sided room, with views of Diamond Head

and the sound of trade winds rustling the nearby coconut fronds, is the epitome of fine dining. Michelin award-winning chef Yves Garnier melds classical French influences with fresh island ingredients. It's pricey but worth it. Men are required to wear jackets (they have a selection if you didn't pack one). See p. 141.

- **3660 on the Rise** (Oahu; ☎ 808/737-1177): Ever since *Wine Spectator* gave this restaurant its "Award of Excellence," this place has been packed, and with good reason. In his 200-seat restaurant, chef Russell Siu adds an Asian or local touch to the basics: rack of lamb with macadamia nuts, filet of catfish in *ponzu* sauce, and seared ahi salad with grilled shiitake mushrooms, a local favorite. See p. 165.
- **Roy's Restaurant** (Oahu; ☎ 808/396-7697): Good food still reigns at this busy, noisy flagship dining room in Hawaii Kai with the trademark open kitchen. Roy Yamaguchi's deft way with local ingredients, nostalgic ethnic preparations, and fresh fish makes his menu, which changes daily, a novel experience every time. See p. 168.
- **Merriman's** (Big Island; ☎ 808/885-6822): Chef Peter Merriman, one of the founders of Hawaii Regional Cuisine, displays his creativity at this Waimea eatery, a premier Hawaii attraction. Dishes include his signature wok-charred ahi, kung pao shrimp, or lamb from nearby Kahua Ranch. His famous platters of seafood and meats are among the many reasons this is still the best—and busiest—dining spot in Waimea. See p. 286.
- **Son'z Maui at Swan Court** (Maui; ☎ 808/667-4506; www.sonzmaui.com): For 30 years, the Swan Court was *the* dining experience at the Hyatt Regency Maui. When Tri-Star Restaurant Group CEO Aaron Placourakis (who also owns Nick's Fishmarket, see p. 144) took over this restaurant, he and executive chef Geno Sarmiento knew they wanted to hit a home run every night with the cuisine. The restaurant already had perhaps the most romantic location in Maui, overlooking a man-made lagoon with white and black swans swimming by and the rolling surf of the Pacific in the distance. The culinary team's creative dishes, made with fresh local ingredients (Kula corn and strawberries, Ono Farms avocados, Hana hearts of palm, Maui Cattle Company beef, fresh Hawaiian fish, and sweet Maui onions) plus top-notch service and a relaxing atmosphere make this gem one of Maui's best restaurants. See p. 406.
- **Haliimaile General Store** (Maui; ☎ 808/572-2666): Bev Gannon, one of the 12 original Hawaii Regional Cuisine chefs, is still going strong at her foodie haven in the pineapple fields. You'll dine at tables set on old wood floors under high ceilings, in a peach-colored room emblazoned with works by local artists. Gannon's Texas roots shine through in her food, a blend of eclectic American with ethnic touches that puts an innovative spin on Hawaii Regional Cuisine. See p. 416.
- **Pineapple Grill Kapalua** (Maui; ☎ 808/669-9600): If you have only 1 night to eat on the island of Maui, this is the place to go. In fact, if you eat here at the beginning of your Maui trip, you are definitely going to want to come back! Executive chef Joey Macadangdang (a protégé of Roy Yamaguchi of Roy's Restaurant p. 168), is a genius, combining Asian/Filipino ingredients into culinary masterpieces. You'll find lots of tasty sandwiches and salads at lunch, and a continental-style breakfast in

the morning—all served in a very Maui-like atmosphere overlooking the rolling hills of the Kapalua Golf Course out to the Pacific Ocean. See p. 409.

- **Ihilani** (Lanai; ☎ 808/565-2296): A number of top Hawaii chefs (such as Phillippe Padovani and Edwin Goto) have each added a bit of their own style during their tenure here, but the common denominator is the melding of Mediterranean with Island cuisine. The result is Lanai's top gourmet restaurant, in a formal atmosphere with inspiring food. The latest incarnation of this classy restaurant, overlooking the resort and the ocean beyond, is traditional Italian cuisine, priced moderately for the Four Seasons Resort Lanai at Manele Bay. See p. 522.
- **Hanapepe Cafe & Espresso Bar** (Kauai; ☎ 808/335-5011): This is

one of those places that locals know about and generally visitors are not aware of. Nestled in the quaint little town on the west side of Kauai, this small, wholesome cafe boasts a casual, winning ambience and some of the most creative cuisine around. See p. 573.

- **Dondero's** (Kauai; ☎ 808/742-1234): If you're looking for a romantic dinner, Dondero's is hard to beat. Dine either under the stars overlooking the ocean or tucked away at an intimate table surrounded by inlaid marble floors, ornate imported floor tiles, and Franciscan murals. You get all this atmosphere plus the best Italian cuisine on the island, served with efficiency. It's hard to have a bad experience here. Dinners are pricey but worth every penny. See p. 569.

13 The Best Spots for Sunset Cocktails

- **Duke's Canoe Club**, at the Outrigger Waikiki (Oahu; ☎ 808/922-2268): It's crowded in the evening, but who can resist Hawaiian music with Waikiki sand still on your feet? Come in from the beach or the street—it's always a party at Duke's. Entertainment here is tops, reaching a crescendo at sunset. See p. 237.
- **House Without a Key**, at the Halekulani (Oahu; ☎ 808/923-2311): Oahu's quintessential sunset oasis offers a view of Diamond Head, great hula and steel-guitar music, and the best mai tais on the island—all under a century-old kiawe tree. Even jaded locals are unable to resist the lure. See p. 237.
- **Mai Tai Bar**, at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel (Oahu; ☎ 808/923-7311): This bar without walls is perched a few feet from the sand, with pleasing

views of the south shore and the Waianae Mountains. Surfers and paddlers ride the waves while Diamond Head acquires a golden sunset halo. Sip a mighty mai tai while Carmen and Keith Haugen serenade you. See p. 237.

- **Sunset Lanai Lounge**, at the New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel (Oahu; ☎ 808/923-1555): The hau tree here shaded Robert Louis Stevenson as he wrote poems to Princess Kaiulani; today it frames the ocean view from the Sunset Lanai Lounge. This lounge is the favorite watering hole of Diamond Head-area beachgoers, who love Sans Souci beach, the ocean view, the mai tais, and the live music during weekend sunset hours. See p. 131.
- **Jameson's by the Sea** (Oahu; ☎ 808/637-6272): The mai tais here are

dubbed the best in surf city, and the view, though not perfect, doesn't hurt, either. Across the street from the harbor, this open-air roadside oasis is a happy stop for North Shore wave-watchers and sunset-savvy sightseers. See p. 170.

- **Huggo's on the Rocks** (Big Island; ☎ 808/329-1493): Here's a thatched-bar fantasy that's *really* on the rocks. This mound of thatch, rock, and grassy-sandy ground right next to Huggo's restaurant is a sunset lover's nirvana. Sip a tropical drink while reclining on a chaise and nosh on Island-style appetizers while the ocean laps at your feet. See p. 276.
- **Beach Tree Bar & Grill**, at the Four Seasons Resort Hualalai (Big Island; ☎ 808/325-8000): The bar on the beach seats only a handful, but the restaurant will accept the overflow.
- **Kimo's** (Maui; ☎ 808/661-4811): An oceanfront dining room and deck, upstairs dining, and happy-hour drinks draw a fun-loving Lahaina crowd. Nibble on sashimi or nachos and take in the views of Lanai and Molokai. See p. 404.
- **Hula Grill** (Maui; ☎ 808/667-6636): Sit outdoors at the Barefoot Bar, order drinks and macadamia nut and crab won tons, and marvel at the wonders of West Maui, where the sun sets slowly and Lanai looks like a giant whale offshore. It's simply magical. See p. 407.

This is the finest sunset perch in North Kona, with consummate people-watching, tasty drinks, and the gorgeous ocean. The open-air restaurant, with Hawaiian music and hula dancing at sunset, also serves excellent fare. See p. 276.