

Best of Kauai

On any list of the world's most spectacular islands, Kauai ranks right up there with Bora Bora, Huahine, and Rarotonga. All the elements are here: moody rainforests, majestic cliffs, jagged peaks, emerald valleys, palm trees swaying in the breeze, daily rainbows, and some of the most spectacular golden beaches you'll find anywhere. Soft tropical air, sunrise bird song, essences of ginger and plumeria, golden sunsets, sparkling waterfalls—you don't just go to Kauai, you absorb it with every sense. It may get more than its fair share of tropical downpours, but that's what makes it so lush and green—and creates an abundance of rainbows.

Kauai is essentially a single large shield volcano that rises 3 miles above the sea floor. The island lies 90 miles across the open ocean from Oahu, but it seems at least a half century removed in time. It's often called "the separate kingdom" because it stood alone and resisted King Kamehameha's efforts to unite Hawaii. In the end, a royal kidnapping was required to take the Garden Isle: After King Kamehameha died, his son, Liholiho, ascended the throne. He gained control of Kauai by luring Kauai's king, Kaumualii, aboard the royal yacht and sailing to Oahu; once there, Kaumualii was forced to marry Kaahumanu, Kamehameha's widow, thereby uniting the islands.

A law on Kauai states that no building may exceed the height of a coconut tree—between three and four stories. As a result, the island itself, not its palatial beach hotels, is the attention-grabber. There's no real nightlife here, no opulent shopping malls. But there is the beauty of the verdant jungle, the endless succession of spectacular beaches, the grandeur of Waimea Canyon, and the drama of the Na Pali Coast. Even Princeville, an opulent marble-and-glass luxury hotel, does little more than frame the natural glory of Hanalei's spectacular 4,000-foot-high Namolokama mountain range.

This is the place for active visitors: There are watersports galore; miles of trails through rainforests and along ocean cliffs for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders; and golf options that range from championship links to funky local courses where chickens roam the greens and balls wind up embedded in coconut trees. But Kauai is also great for those who need to relax and heal jangled nerves. Here you'll find miles of sandy beaches, perfect for just sitting and meditating. There are also quiet spots in the forest where you can listen to the rain dance on the leaves, as well as an endless supply of laid-back, lazy days that end with the sun sinking into the Pacific amid a blaze of glorious tropical color.

1 The Best Beaches

- **Kalapaki Beach:** Kalapaki is the best beach not only in Lihue but also on the entire east coast. Any town would pay a fortune to have a beach like

Kalapaki, one of Kauai's best, in its backyard. But little Lihue turns its back on Kalapaki; there's not even a sign pointing the way through the

labyrinth of traffic to this graceful half moon of golden sand at the foot of the Kauai Marriott Resort & Beach Club. Fifty yards wide and a quarter mile long, Kalapaki is protected by a jetty, making it very safe for swimmers. The waves are good for surfing when there's a winter swell, and the view from the sand—of the steeped, 2,200-foot peaks of the majestic Haupu Ridge that shield Nawiliwili Bay—is awesome. See p. 153.

- **Poipu Beach Park:** Big, wide Poipu is actually two beaches in one; it's divided by a sandbar, called a tombolo. On the left, a lava-rock jetty protects a sandy-bottomed pool that's perfect for children; on the right, the open bay attracts swimmers, snorkelers, and surfers. You'll find excellent swimming, small tide pools to explore, great reefs for snorkeling and diving, good fishing, nice waves for surfers, and a steady wind for windsurfers. See p. 156.
- **Polihale State Park:** This mini-Sahara on the western end of the island is Hawaii's biggest beach: 17 miles long and as wide as three football fields. This is a wonderful place to get away from it all, but don't forget your flip-flops—the midday sand is hotter than a lava flow. The golden sands wrap around Kauai's northwestern shore from the Kekaha plantation town, just beyond Waimea, to where the ridgebacks of the Na Pali Coast begin. The state park includes ancient Hawaiian *heiau* (temple) and burial sites, a view of the "forbidden" island of Niihau, and the famed **Barking Sands Beach**, where footfalls sound like a barking dog. (Scientists say that the grains of sand are perforated with tiny echo chambers, which emit a "barking" sound when they rub together.) See p. 160.
- **Anini Beach County Park:** Kauai's safest beach for swimming and windsurfing, Anini is also one of the island's most beautiful: It sits on a blue lagoon at the foot of emerald cliffs, looking more like Tahiti than almost any other strand in the islands. This 3-mile-long, gold-sand beach is shielded from the open ocean by the longest, widest fringing reef in Hawaii. With shallow water 4 to 5 feet deep, it's also the very best snorkeling spot on Kauai, even for beginners. On the northwest side, a channel in the reef runs out to the deep blue water with a 60-foot drop that attracts divers. Beachcombers love it, too: Seashells, cowries, and sometimes even rare Niihau shells can be found here. See p. 161.
- **Hanalei Beach:** Gentle waves roll across the face of half-moon Hanalei Bay, running up to the wide, golden sand. Sheer volcanic ridges laced by waterfalls rise to 4,000 feet on the other side, 3 miles inland. Is there any beach with a better location? Celebrated in song and hula and featured on travel posters, this beach owes its natural beauty to its age—it's an ancient sunken valley with post-erosional cliffs. Hanalei Bay indents the coast a full mile inland and runs 2 miles point to point, with coral reefs on either side and a patch of coral in the middle—plus a sunken ship that belonged to a king, so divers love it. Swimming is excellent year-round, especially in summer, when Hanalei Bay becomes a big, placid lake. The aquamarine water is also great for bodyboarding, surfing, fishing, windsurfing, canoe paddling, kayaking, and boating. (There's a boat ramp on the west bank of the Hanalei River.) See p. 161.
- **Haena Beach:** 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, while winter brings mighty waves for surfers. There are plenty of facilities on hand, including picnic tables, restrooms, and showers. See p. 162.

2 The Best Kauai Experiences

- **Hitting the Beach:** A beach is a beach is a beach, right? Not on Kauai. With 50 miles of beaches, Kauai offers ocean experiences in all shapes and forms. You can go to a different beach every day during your vacations and still not get tired of seeing them. See chapter 6.
- **Taking the Plunge:** Rent a mask, fins, and snorkel, and enter a magical underwater world. Facedown, you'll float like a leaf on a pond, watching brilliant fish dart here and there in water clear as day; a slow-moving turtle may even stop by to check you out. Faceup, you'll contemplate green-velvet cathedral-like cliffs under a blue sky, with long-tailed tropical birds riding the trade winds. See chapter 6.
- **Meeting Local Folks:** If you go to Kauai 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 “Howzit?”—which means “How is it?” (“It's good,” is the usual response—and you may make 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:** It is possible to walk back in history on Kauai. You can see ancient, ancient history, from the times when the *menehune* were around, at the

Menehune Ditch and **Menehune Fishpond**. Or experience Hawaiian history at the **Kauai Museum**, the archaeological sites at **Wailua River State Park**, and the **Ka Ulu O Laka heiau**. For more recent history, since the arrival of Captain Cook, check out the **Grove Farm Homestead Museum**, **Kilohana**, and the **Waioli Mission House Museum**. See chapter 7.

- **Exploring the Grand Canyon of the Pacific:** The great gaping gulch known as Waimea Canyon is quite a sight. This valley, known for its reddish lava beds, reminds everyone who sees it of the 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. A massive earthquake sent streams into the single river that ultimately carved this picturesque canyon. Today, the Waimea River—a silver thread of water in the gorge that's sometimes a trickle, often a torrent, but always there—keeps cutting the canyon deeper and wider, and nobody can say what the result will be 100 million years from now. See chapter 7.
- **Watching the Hula:** The Coconut Marketplace, on Kuhio Highway (Hwy. 56) between mile markers 6 and 7, hosts free shows every day at 5pm. Arrive early to get a good seat for the hour-long performances of both *kabiko* (ancient) and *auwana* (modern) hula. The real showstoppers are the

keiki (children) who perform. Don't forget your camera! See chapter 9.

- **Bidding the Sun Aloha:** Polihale State Park hugs Kauai's western shore for some 17 miles. It's a great place to bring a picnic dinner, stretch out on the sand, and toast the sun as it sinks into the Pacific, illuminating the island of Niihau in the distance. Queen's Pond has facilities for camping as well as restrooms, showers, picnic tables, and pavilions. See chapter 6.

3 The Best Adventures

- **Take a Helicopter Tour of the Island:** Don't leave Kauai without seeing it from a helicopter. It's expensive but worth the splurge. You can take home memories of the thrilling ride up and over the Kalalau Valley on Kauai's wild North Shore and into the 5,200-foot vertical temple of Mount Waialeale, the most sacred place on the island and the wettest spot on earth. (In some cases, you can even take home a video of your ride.) See p. 198.
- **Explore the Na Pali Coast by Water:** Unless you're willing to make an arduous 22-mile hike (p. 183), there are only two ways to see Na Pali: by helicopter (p. 198) or by boat. Picture yourself cruising the rugged Na Pali coastline in a 42-foot ketch-rigged yacht under full sail, watching the sunset as you enjoy a

- **Soaring Over the Na Pali Coast:**

This is the only way to see the spectacular, surreal beauty of Kauai. Your helicopter will dip low over razor-thin cliffs, flutter past sparkling waterfalls, and swoop 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 chapter 7.

tropical cocktail, or speeding through the aquamarine water in a 40-foot trimaran as porpoises play off the bow. See p. 163.

- **Duck Underwater:** You haven't really seen Hawaii until you have seen the magical world underwater. Beneath those blue waves is an entire universe in itself. You'll see schools of rainbow-colored fish, dazzling corals, graceful manta rays, lumbering turtles, and quick-moving silvery game fish. If you are really lucky, you may see playful dolphins or the frequent winter visitors to Hawaii, humpback whales. See chapter 6.
- **Hike Until You Drop:** Kauai is made for hiking, from the numerous trails in Waimea Canyon to the high forests of Kokee to the interior trails that give the island its special beauty. See chapter 6.

4 The Best of Natural Hawaii

- **Waterfalls:** Rushing waterfalls thundering downward into sparkling freshwater pools are some of Hawaii's most beautiful natural wonders. Kauai is loaded with waterfalls, especially along the North Shore and in the Wailua area, where you'll find 40-foot **Opaekaa Falls**, probably the

best-looking drive-up waterfall on Kauai. With scenic mountain peaks in the background and a restored Hawaiian village on the nearby riverbank, the Opaekaa Falls are what the tourist bureau folks call an eye-popping photo op. See p. 203.

- **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. **Na Aina Kai Botanical Gardens**, on some 240 acres sprinkled with about 70 life-size (some larger than life-size) whimsical bronze statues, lies hidden off the beaten path of the North Shore. Other great gardens are **Allerton Garden** in Poipu and **Limahuli** outside of Hanalei. See chapters 6 and 7.
- **National Wildlife Refuges:** Kauai has three wildlife refuges: **Kilauea Point**, which protects seabirds; **Huleia**, which shelters endemic Hawaiian birds and wetlands; and

Hanalei, which maintains a sheltered area for Hawaiian birds and the watershed. See p. 188, 165, and 189.

- **The Grand Canyon of the Pacific—Waimea Canyon:** 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 existing streams flowing into a single river, which then carved this picturesque canyon. You can stop by the road to view the canyon, hike down into it, or swoop through it by helicopter. See p. 196.

5 The Best of Underwater Hawaii

- **Caverns:** Located off the Poipu Beach resort area, this site consists of a series of lava tubes interconnected by a chain of archways. A constant parade of fish streams by (even shy lionfish are spotted lurking in crevices), brightly hued Hawaiian lobsters hide in the lava's tiny holes, and turtles swim past. See p. 166.
- **Hanalei Beach:** Divers love this area because it has an ancient sunken valley with post-erosional cliffs. Hanalei Bay indents the coast a full mile inland and runs 2 miles point to point, with coral reefs on either side and a patch of coral in the middle—plus a sunken ship that belonged to a king, which means excellent diving. See p. 161.
- **Oceanarium:** Northwest of Hanalei Bay you'll find this kaleidoscopic marine world in a horseshoe-shaped cove. From the rare (long-handed spiny lobsters) to the more common

(taape, conger eels, and nudibranches), the resident population is one of the more diverse on the island. The topography, which features pinacles, ridges, and archways, is covered with cup corals, black-coral trees, and nooks and crannies enough for a dozen dives. See p. 167.

- **Haena Beach Park:** In summer when the water calms down, this golden sand beach becomes a giant aquarium, great for snorkeling amid clouds of tropical fish. See p. 162.
- **Kee Beach:** 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 flit about and schools of *taape* (blue stripe snapper) swarm over the coral. See p. 163.

6 The Best Golf Courses

- **Kauai Lagoons Golf Courses** (☎ 800/634-6400): Choose between two excellent Jack Nicklaus–designed courses: the **Mokihana Course** (formerly known as the Lagoons Course), for the recreational golfer; or the **Kauai Kiele Championship Course**, for the low handicapper. The 6,942-yard, par-72 Mokihana is a links-style course with a bunker that's a little less severe than Kiele's; emphasis is on the short game. The Kiele is a mixture of tournament-quality challenge and high-traffic playability. It winds up with one of Hawaii's most difficult holes, a 431-yard, par-4 played straightaway to an island green. See p. 184.
- **Puakea Golf Course** (☎ 866/773-5554): This former Grove Farm sugar plantation opened up 18 holes in 2003 to rave reviews. The course was in the middle of construction when Hurricane Iniki slammed into it in 1992, rearranging the greens from golf-course designer Robin Nelson's original plan. The first 9 (actually the first 10) holes finally opened in 1997 to many kudos; *Sports Illustrated* named Puakea one of the 10 best 9-hole golf courses in the U.S. The final 8 holes were finished last year and now give golfers something to think about. See p. 184.
- **Poipu Bay Golf Course** (☎ 808/742-8711): This 6,959-yard, par-72 course with a links-style layout is the home of the PGA Grand Slam of

Golf. Designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., this challenging course features undulating greens and water hazards on 8 of the holes. The par-4 16th hole has the coastline weaving along the entire left side. You can take the safe route to the right and maybe make par (but more likely bogey), or you can try to take it tight against the ocean and possibly make it in 2. See p. 186.

- **Kiahuna Golf Club** (☎ 808/742-9595): This par-70, 6,353-yard Robert Trent Jones, Jr.–designed course plays around four large archaeological sites, ranging from an ancient Hawaiian temple to the remains of a Portuguese home and crypt built in the early 1800s. This Scottish-style course has rolling terrain, undulating greens, 70 sand bunkers, and near-constant winds. At any given time, about half the players on the course are Kauai residents, the other half visitors. See p. 186.
- **Princeville Golf Club** (☎ 808/826-5070): 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. One of the top three courses in Hawaii, the 18-hole Prince 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. 186.

7 The Best Luxury Hotels & Resorts

- **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa** (☎ 800/55-HYATT): 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 Hyatt'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. Golf, horseback riding, and the shops of Koloa, a plantation town offering numerous boutiques, are nearby diversions. See p. 89.

- **Kauai Marriott Resort & Beach Club** (☎ 800/220-2925): Water is found everywhere throughout this resort: lagoons, waterfalls, fountains, a 5-acre circular swimming pool (some 26,000 sq. ft., the largest on the island), and a terrific stretch of beach. The lagoons are home to six islands that serve as an exotic mini-zoo, which still lends an air of fantasy to the place and, along with the enormous pool and children's program, makes the resort popular with families. See p. 84.
- **Sheraton Kauai Resort** (☎ 800/782-9488): This modern Sheraton (since 1997) has the feeling of Old Hawaii and a dynamite location on one of Kauai's best beaches. It features buildings on both the ocean side and the mountain side of the road. The horseshoe-shaped, Polynesian-style lobby has shell chandeliers dangling from the ceiling. You have a choice of three buildings: one nestled in tropical gardens with koi-filled ponds; one facing the palm-fringed, white-sand beach (our favorite); and one looking across green grass to the ocean, with great sunset views. The rooms overlook either the tropical gardens or the rolling surf. See p. 90.
- **Princeville Resort Kauai** (☎ 800/826-4400): 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 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. 114.

- **Outrigger Waipouli Beach Resort & Spa** (☎ 800/OUTRIGGER): The lap of luxury, this \$200-million condominium project on 13 acres (between the historic towns of Wailua and Kapaa) is located right on the beach within walking distance to restaurants, shops, and recreational activities. The resort, which opened in 2007, has hotel rooms, as well as 1- and 2-bedroom units. Each unit is furnished with top-of-the-line materials like granite countertops; stainless steel appliances by Sub-Zero, Wolf, and Fisher/Paykel; double dishwasher; full-size Whirlpool washer and dryer; whirlpool bathtub in the master bathroom; and 37-inch flatscreen TVs in the living room and bedrooms. The resort features a long list of amenities like complimentary high-speed Internet access, a 4,000-square-foot Aveda spa, fitness center, and a 300,000-gallon heated salt-water fantasy pool, with flowing river, garden, dual serpentine waterslides, sand-bottom children's pool, and three sand-bottom whirlpool tubs. See p. 106.

8 The Best Moderately Priced Accommodations

- **Aloha Sunrise Inn/Aloha Sunset Inn** (☎ 888/828-1008): Hidden on the North Shore, these two unique cottages nestle on a quiet 7-acre farm.

They come fully furnished with all the great videos you've been meaning to watch and an excellent CD library. The cottages are close to activities,

restaurants, and shopping, yet isolated enough to offer the peace and quiet of Old Hawaii. Rates start at \$175. See p. 116.

- **Garden Isle Cottages Oceanfront** (☎ 800/742-6711): The site is spectacular: a 13-foot cliff overlooking historic Koloa Landing and an ocean inlet (where you can see turtles swimming). Nestled in a tropical garden setting, these one-bedroom apartments have an island feel, with rattan furniture, batiks, and original art on the walls—and great views. This is a quiet, peaceful place to stay in the heart of the Poipu area, within walking distance of beaches, golfing, tennis, shopping, and restaurants. Rates start at \$281. See p. 93.
- **Hanalei Surf Board House** (☎ 808/826-9825): If you are looking for a moderately priced (\$175 a night), adorable studio just a block from the beach in Hanalei, get on the phone and book this right now. If you have a great sense of humor and enjoy whimsical little touches in the decor, you will love this place. See p. 118.
- **Hideaway Cove Poipu Beach** (☎ 886/849-2426): Just a block from the beach and next door to an excellent restaurant are these gorgeous condominiums in a plantation setting. Amenities are top-drawer, and no expense was spared in the decor. Living areas are spacious, kitchens come with the best appliances and granite-top counters, and the outdoor lanais are big. You get all of this in a lush, landscaped tropical jungle at an affordable price (from \$170 a night). See p. 93.
- **Kauai Banyan Inn** (☎ 888/786-3855): Off the beaten path, but still just a 10-minute drive to the beach, this four-unit inn has the amenities of a much more expensive property (kitchenette, views, in-room massage at budget prices (from \$105). See p. 96.
- **Kauai Country Inn** (☎ 808/821-0207): Fabulous location (nestled in the rolling hills behind Kapaa), terrific prices (from \$95 a night), wonderful accommodations (big suites, hardwood floors, kitchen or kitchenette, your own private computer, comfy beds, and great views), and friendly hosts make this a “must-book” place. See p. 111.
- **Kauai Cove** (☎ 800/624-9945): These immaculate cottages, located just 300 feet from Koloa Landing and next to Waikomo Stream, are the perfect private getaway. Each studio has a full kitchen, a private lanai (with barbecue grill), and a big bamboo four-poster bed. The cozy rooms feature beautiful hardwood floors, tropical decor, and cathedral ceilings. The cottages are close enough for walks to sandy beaches, great restaurants, and shopping, yet far enough off the beaten path that privacy and quiet are assured. From \$135 a night. See p. 96.
- **Poipu Kapili Resort** (☎ 800/443-7714): This quiet, upscale oceanfront cluster of condos is outstanding in every area. We like the home-away-from-home comforts and special touches: a video and book library, a spacious pool, several barbecues, tennis courts lit for night play, and an herb garden. (You’re welcome to take samples if you’re cooking.) A golf course is located nearby. Starting at \$230 a night. See p. 95.
- **Wailua Bayview** (☎ 800/882-9007): Located right on the ocean, these spacious one-bedroom apartments offer excellent value. The bedrooms are roomy, and the sofa bed in the living room allows you to sleep up to four. On-site facilities include a pool and barbecue area. Restaurants, bars,

shopping, golfing, and tennis are nearby. See p. 112.

- **Waimea Plantation Cottages** (☎ 866/77-HAWAII): This beach-front vacation retreat is like no other in the islands: Among groves of towering coco palms sit clusters of restored sugar-plantation cottages, dating from the 1880s to the 1930s and bearing the names of their original plantation-worker dwellers. The lovely cottages have been transformed

into cozy, comfortable guest units with period rattan and wicker furniture and fabrics from the 1930s, sugar's heyday on Kauai. Each has a furnished lanai and a fully equipped modern kitchen and bathroom; some units are oceanfront. Facilities include an oceanfront pool, tennis courts, and laundry. The seclusion of the village makes it a nice place for kids to wander and explore, away from traffic. See p. 104.

9 The Best Inexpensive Accommodations

- **Aloha Plantation Kauai** (☎ 877/658-6977): Walk back in history at this old, 1920s plantation home decorated with Hawaiian antiques in Kilauea. Prices start at \$69 double. See p. 120.
- **Brennecke's Beach Bungalow** (☎ 888/393-4646): Attention honeymooners (or honeymooner wannabes): This is your place—so close to Poipu Beach that you can see it from your private lanai (about a 45-second walk from the front door to the waves). Tucked into a large two-story house is this private-entrance studio decorated with bamboo floors, maple cabinets, and lots of Hawaiian decor. This studio also has a small kitchenette (microwave, toaster oven, blender, coffeemaker, and fridge), cozy sitting area, and a comfortable bed. Outdoors there's a beach shower, barbecue area, and a big, green lawn. Restaurants, dining, tennis, and golf are just minutes away. See p. 95.
- **Ellie's Koloa House** (☎ 808/635-0054): This two bedroom/two bathroom home, surrounded by tropical

gardens, is for the traveler who wants a "real" Hawaii experience living in a residential area, like a local resident. The house (with full kitchen) has antique furniture re-covered in old Hawaiian print fabric, with paddle fans to keep the house cool, TV, washer and dryer, barbecue, and everything you can think of to make your vacation. Just a mile and a half to the beach and walking distance to Koloa town's shops and restaurants. See p. 96.

- **Garden Island Inn** (☎ 800/648-0154): Centrally located (a couple of miles from the airport, walking distance to the beach), this small (21 rooms) inn has comfortable accommodations at budget prices (from \$99). See p. 88.
- **Kalaheo Inn** (☎ 888/332-6023): What a deal! This boutique inn (15 units), located in the community of Kalaheo (10 min. to the beach, walking distance to great restaurants) is comfy, clean, and terrific for families. Prices start at \$65 (p. 102).

10 The Best Bed & Breakfasts

- **Hale Ho'o Maha** (☎ 800/851-0291): Kirby Guyer and her husband, Toby, custom-designed this B&B

located on the North Shore in the Hanalei area known as Wainiha. Overlooking the mountains, waterfalls, and

pristine Wainiha Bay, the Hawaiian antiques-filled home is just 110 steps to the beach (and a 10-min. drive to golf courses, shops, restaurants, and two riding stables). This spacious five-bedroom/five-and-a-half-bathroom home features an elevator (something you don't often see on Kauai). Guests are welcome to use the gourmet kitchen, gas barbecue, washer/dryer, refrigerator with ice maker/water, and TV/VCR/DVD in the "great room." Use of the boogie boards and snorkel equipment, beach chairs, towels, and coolers is all complimentary. See p. 117.

- **Lani-keha** (☎ 800/821-4898): Step back in time to the 1940s, when Hawaiian families lived in open, airy, rambling homes on large plots of land lush with fruit trees and sweet-smelling flowers. This gracious age is still alive and well in Lani-keha, a *kamaaina* (old-timer) home with an open living/game/writing/dining room and oversize picture windows to take in the views. Bedrooms come with private bathrooms. The house is elegant yet casual, with old-style rattan furniture—practicality and comfort outweigh design aesthetics. See p. 113.
- **Marjorie's Kauai Inn** (☎ 800/717-8838): This quiet property, perched on the side of a hill, is just 10 minutes from Poipu Beach and 5 minutes from Old Koloa Town. From its large lanai it offers stunning views over rolling pastures and the Lawai Valley. Every unit has a kitchenette with dining table, ceiling fan, and lanai. The new Sunset View unit has a separate sitting area and a futon sofa for extra guests. On the hillside is a huge, 50-foot swimming pool, perfect for lap

swimming. Former owner Marjorie Ketcher has sold her popular inn to the new owners, Mike and Alexis, who have kept the motto "do one fun thing a day" (and have a treasure-trove of beach toys from mask-fins-snorkels to kayaks, even bicycles and bike racks for cars to help you live up to the motto). See p. 97.

- **The Palmwood** (☎ 562/688-3433): This is a unique property: tranquil (located atop a hill of a 4-acre estate), fabulous views (360-degree view of the rolling hills of Moloa'a Valley and out to the ocean), and unbelievably beautiful rooms and surrounding landscaping. From the stone entryway to the leather/palm-wood chairs (so comfortable you will be hard-pressed to leave them) to the sound of water falling—this is the lap of luxury in a tiny (only two units) inn with a full breakfast (crab cakes with sliced mango and banana bread). The amenities are endless: comfy beds, flatscreen TV on a swivel, double doors leading to a large lanai with your own personal water feature, hot tub and Japanese Zen gardens outside (with barbecue area). Relax in the free-form hammock—why leave—this place is paradise. Yes, it is pricey (from \$280) and worth every penny! See p. 116.
- **Rosewood Bed & Breakfast** (☎ 808/822-5216): This lovingly restored century-old plantation home, set amid tropical flowers, lily ponds, and waterfalls, has accommodations to suit everyone. There's a Laura Ashley-style room in the main house, and two private cottages on the grounds. There's also a bunkhouse with three separate small rooms with a shared shower and toilet. See p. 112.

11 The Best Restaurants

- **Bar Acuda** (☎ 808/826-7081): After two successful restaurants in San Francisco (The Slow Club and 42°), chef/owner Jim Moffat moved to the tiny town of Hanalei and opened this sleek, romantic restaurant specializing in his favorite tapas dishes from the Southern European regions along the 42° latitude (southern France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal). In an atmosphere of candle lights and exotic mouthwatering aromas coming from the open exhibition kitchen, wonderful food and terrific service make this a “must” stop on your trip. See p. 148.
- **Blossoming Lotus** (☎ 808/822-7678): Even if you are not a vegetarian, you will be pleasantly surprised at the creative cuisine in this elegant eatery in Kapaa. Most people can’t believe that healthy, non-meat dishes could be this delicious, and even the desserts look sinful (but aren’t). See p. 144.
- **The Beach House** (☎ 808/742-1424): All reports are good from this beachfront magnet in Lawai. Though there has been a major cosmetic overhaul, the food is as good as ever. The Beach House remains the south shore’s premier spot for sunset drinks, appetizers, and dinner—a treat for all the senses. See p. 128.
- **Caffè Coco** (☎ 808/822-7990): This gets our vote for the most charming ambience on Kauai. Caffè Coco is just off the main road at the edge of a cane field in Wailua, its backyard shaded by fruit trees, with a view of Sleeping Giant Mountain. Gourmet fare is cooked to order—and at cafe prices. The food is excellent, with vegetarian and other healthful delights such as spanakopita, homemade chai, Greek salad, fish wraps, macadamia nut–black sesame ahi with wasabi cream, and an excellent tofu-and-roast-veggie wrap. See p. 140.
- **La Cascata** (☎ 808/826-9644): The North Shore’s special-occasion restaurant is sumptuous—a Sicilian spree in Eden. Try to get here before dark, so you can enjoy the views of Bali Hai, the persimmon-colored sunset, and the waterfalls of Waialeale, all an integral part of the feast. Click your heels on the terra-cotta floors, take in the *trompe l’oeil* vines, train your eyes through the concertina windows, and pretend you’re being served on a terrazzo in Sicily. See p. 146.
- **Dondero’s** (☎ 808/742-1234): If you are looking for a romantic dinner 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, this is your best bet. All this atmosphere comes with the best Italian cuisine on the island, served with efficiency. It’s hard to have a bad experience here. Diners are pricey and worth every penny. See p. 128.
- **Duke’s Canoe Club** (☎ 808/246-9599): Tropical atmosphere overlooking the ocean, great fresh fish at attractive prices, and dependably good meals. Don’t miss the wallet-pleasing drink prices at happy hour. See p. 126.
- **Hanapepe Café** (☎ 808/335-5011): Now under new management, Hanapepe maintains the same wholesome cuisine in a casual, winning ambience that has drawn foodies for a decade. During lunchtime the place is packed with businesspeople who drive 30 minutes to eat here. On the Friday-night dinner menu, the Italian

specialties shine: lasagna quattro formaggio with spinach, mushrooms, and four cheeses; crepes; and other goodies. There's no liquor license, so if you want wine, bring your own. See p. 136.

- **Kilauea Fish Market** (☎ 808/828-6244): Perfect for a takeout lunch or dinner on the beach, this tiny deli (with a handful of tables outside) pumps out incredibly delicious meals (even dishes for vegetarians) with fresh, healthy, locally grown and caught ingredients. See p. 152.
- **Mermaids Cafe** (☎ 808/821-2026): This tiny sidewalk cafe, with brisk takeout and a handful of tables on Kapaa's main drag, serves healthy, organic, home-cooked meals. Mermaids uses kaffir lime, lemon grass, local lemons (Meyers when available), and organic herbs, when possible, to make the sauces and beverages

to go with its toothsome dishes. See p. 145.

- **Roy's Poipu Bar & Grill** (☎ 808/742-5000): This is a loud, lively room with ceiling fans, marble tables, works by local artists, and a menu tailor-made for foodies. The signature touches of Roy Yamaguchi (of Roy's restaurants in Oahu, Big Island, Maui, Tokyo, New York, and Guam) are abundantly present: an excellent, progressive, and affordable wine selection; fresh local ingredients prepared with a nod to Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. See p. 130.
- **Tidepool Restaurant** (☎ 808/742-1234): An ultraromantic setting (literally hanging over the water), fabulous creative cuisine, and quick, efficient service with a smile make this restaurant in the Grand Hyatt a stand out. See p. 131.

12 The Best Shops & Galleries

- **Banana Patch Studio** (☎ 808/335-5944): This place has the best prices on the island for anything artsy and cute like tropical plates and cups, hand-painted tiles, artwork, handmade soaps, pillows with tropical designs, and jewelry. Plus, they will pack and ship for you anywhere. See p. 214.
- **Bambulei** (☎ 808/823-8641): Celebrate the charm and style of 1930s and 1940s collectibles in this treasure-trove at the edge of a cane field. Fabulous one-of-a-kind vintage finds—Mandarin dresses with hand-sewn sequins, 1940s *pake* muumuus in mint condition, Peking lacquerware, and Bakelite jewelry—fill this jewel of a boutique, owned by two women with a passion for the past. See p. 215.
- **Kong Lung** (☎ 808/828-1822): You'll be surprised by what you find inside this 1922 stone building. It's a showcase of design, style, and quality, with items from dinnerware, books, jewelry, and clothing to the finest sake and tea sets on the island. Throw in a lacquer bowl or two, a pair of beaded sandals, and a silk dress from the women's section, and the party's on at "Gump's of the Pacific." See p. 217.
- **Ola's** (☎ 808/826-6937): Fine crafts from across the country find their way to this temple of good taste: lamps, vases, blown glass, drumsticks, jewelry, hard-to-find books, and the peerless paintings of award-winning artist Doug Britt. See p. 218.

- **Robert Hamada's Studio:** Woodturner Robert Hamada makes works of art for wood purists: museum-quality bowls and large sculptural shapes in kou, *milo*, kauila, camphor, mango, and native woods he logs himself. He works in his studio at the foot of the Sleeping Giant, quietly producing luminous pieces with unique textures and grains. His skill, his lathe, and his more than 60 years of experience put him in a class of his own. See p. 216.
- **Tropical Flowers by Charles** (☎ 800/699-7984): Charles is a flower genius

who grows a range of tropical flowers, including some very rare and unusual varieties. Prices are extremely reasonable. See p. 214.

- **Yellowfish Trading Company** (☎ 808/826-1227): Surprise yourself at Yellowfish Trading Company, where vintage bark cloth and that one-of-a-kind 1940s rattan sofa are among owner Gritt Benton's short-lived pleasures. The collectibles—1930s lampshades, '40s vases, '50s lunchboxes, antique silk piano shawls—move quickly. See p. 218.

13 The Best Spas

- **ANARA Spa at the Grand Hyatt Kauai** (☎ 808/240-6440): This is the place to be to get rid of stress and 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 new menu of treatments includes a four-handed massage (two therapists at once), which is not to be missed. See p. 89.
- **Hanalei Day Spa** (☎ 808/826-6621): Located on the grounds of the Hanalei Colony Resort in Haena, this small but wonderfully effective spa not only has a full menu of massages,

body treatments, and body wraps, but also specializes in ayurvedic treatments to soothe and comfort your weary body. Spa owner and ayurveda practitioner Darci Frankel is a recognized expert in the field of ayurvedic treatments. See p. 117.

- **Princeville Health Club & Spa, Princeville Resort** (☎ 808/826-5030): This spa offers good value. Not only are the treatments a full 60 minutes (versus the standard 50 min. in most spas), but prices are also quite a bit lower (hour-long massages and body treatments are way less than what many spas charge). Just a short 7-minute drive (via the free resort shuttle) from the Princeville Hotel, this 10,000-square-foot boutique spa has amenities like an 82-foot heated lap pool, outdoor whirlpool, sauna, steam room, five treatment rooms (plus massage cabanas poolside at the hotel), exercise classes, a weight room, a cardio room, and even babysitting services. See p. 114.

Pampering in Paradise

Kauai's spas have raised the art of relaxation and healing to a new level. The traditional Greco-Roman-style spas, with lots of marble and big tubs in closed rooms, have evolved into airy, open facilities that embrace the Tropics. Spa-goers in Kauai are looking for a sense of place, steeped in the culture. They 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 in the islands.

The spas, once nearly exclusively patronized by women, are now attracting more male clients. There are special massages for children and pregnant women, and some spas have created programs to nurture and relax brides on their big day.

Today's spas offer a wide diversity of treatments. There is no longer plain, ordinary massage, but Hawaiian lomilomi, Swedish, aromatherapy (with sweet-smelling oils), craniosacral (massaging the head), shiatsu (no oil, just deep thumb pressure on acupuncture points), Thai (another oil-less massage involving stretching), and hot stone (with heated, and sometimes cold, rocks). There are even side-by-side massages for couples. The truly decadent might even try a duo massage—not one, but two massage therapists working on you at once.

Massages are just the beginning. Body treatments, for the entire body or for 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, lights, and music.

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.

Once your body has been pampered, spas also offer a range of fitness facilities (weight-training equipment, racquetball, tennis, golf) and classes (yoga, aerobics, step, spinning, stretch, tai chi, kickboxing, aquacize). Several even offer adventure fitness packages (from bicycling to snorkeling). For the nonadventurous, most spas have salons, dedicated to hair and nail care and makeup.

If all this sounds a bit overwhelming, not to worry, all the spas in Hawaii have individual consultants who will help design an appropriate treatment program to fit your individual needs.

Of course, all this pampering doesn't come cheap. Massages are generally \$95 to \$195 for 50 minutes and \$150 to \$250 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.