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9 Cool Things to Do in Maui—Beyond the Beach

Of all the Hawaiian Islands, none are as glamorous as Maui, an isle of astonishing beauty where rain forested mountains slope down into tiny rural communities, glitzy oceanfront resorts, and, finally, sand. Its 120-mile coastline is home to some of the best beaches in the world, but while soaking up the sun here is obligatory, there's more to island life beyond the shore—including farm-to-table restaurants, stylish boutiques, craft breweries, and some of the most unique nature experiences you'll find anywhere. Here, our favorite things to do in Maui now.

By Lindsey Olander March 5, 2019





1

STAY: Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort

Is this the most incredible beach resort in America? The **Grand Wailea** certainly makes a good case for itself. Sprawled over 40 lush acres that include seven bars and restaurants and a lush Japanese garden, this 832-room behemoth dominates one of the world's best beaches. Its front yard is more like an amusement park—palm-fringed pools for

both kids and adults, a grotto bar, a shave-ice machine that churns out Hawaii's favorite sweet in a rainbow of colors—while the bath salt hot tubs at Spa Grande are the pre- and post-treatment detox you'll be dreaming about long after you leave. Lately, the hotel has been pioneering a local food movement (surprising, perhaps, given its mind-boggling size): they produce their own honey, monthly dinners spotlight staff-harvested produce, and there's an exclusive-to-the-resort brew from Maui Brewing Co. As with most luxury Maui resorts, luaus are held nightly, but keep a lookout for specialty events throughout the year. One worth traveling for: next July's [Fire It Up!](#), a live-fire event starring celebrity chefs, live music, and a tasting menu spotlighting Hawaii's best bounty.

[Check Prices for Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort in Wailea, HI](#)

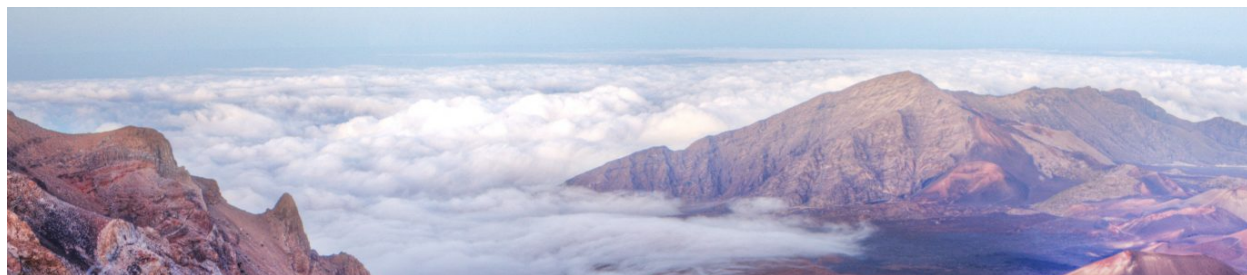


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2

SEE: Haleakalā National Park

There's a reason why reservations are now required to witness the sunrise—or, for a less crowded experience, sunset—at the 10,023-foot summit of [Haleakalā National Park](#). The experience—arguably *the* best thing to do in Maui—is *that* magical. Groups brave enough to make the hour-long drive up the ridge huddle in their warmest layers in the pitch dark until, finally, the day's first rays of sun pierce the horizon line. A park ranger chants in native Hawaiian as the volcanic red landscape unfolds—a tribute to Haleakalā, "The House of the Sun," one of Maui's most sacred places. Many visitors depart immediately after daybreak, but if you

have time to spare, it's worth extending your park stay and hiking down into crater, where trails crisscross the Aeolian cinder desert and pass native shrubland. Look out for the rare silversword, found nowhere else on the planet.





3

LUNCH: Tin Roof

Thanks to two stellar performances on Bravo hit show *Top Chef*, Hilo-born chef (and long-time Maui resident) Sheldon Simeon has rocketed into island foodie stardom. **Tin Roof**, his first solo project, opened last year—a small-time approach to his signature Hawaiian-Filipino cuisine that instantly became a lunchtime must. Five words: flavor in a rice bowl. We're talking twice-fried Mochiko chicken with house-made su-miso sauce, deep-fried pork belly over tomato onion lomi and a six-minute egg, and beyond-fresh poke bowls that change daily. But be warned: the restaurant is only open four hours a day and lines form fast; order online for takeout and thank us later. (And keep your eyes peeled for Calabash, his second restaurant, opening in Wailea in the coming months.)





DRINK: Maui Brewing Company

Despite what scores of drink menus on Maui would have you believe, it's not all Mai Tais and Blue Hawaiians. What began as a humble brewpub in 2005 has now grown into Maui's largest craft brewery, [Maui Brewing Co.](#), for which founders/owners Garrett and Melanie Marrero were recently awarded 2017 National Small Business Person(s) of the Year. Tours at their Kihei facility run daily and conclude at the tasting room, where over 32 Maui-made brews are on tap for single pints or flights. Go for their Bikini Blonde Lager or Big Swell IPA—best enjoyed at one of the picnic tables outside.





5

DINNER: Humuhumunukunukuapua'a

Often shortened to “Humuhumu,” the full name behind this gorgeous open-air restaurant in Wailea—the official name of Hawaii’s state fish—won’t be dinner’s only conversation piece. A chain of thatch-roof pavilions, floating on a lagoon lit by tiki torches overlooking the beach, sets the stage for 2016 Maui Chef of the Year Michael Lofaro’s sublime takes on seasonal Hawaiian cuisine. His innovative menu follows the lunar cycles—a nod to when the traditional Hawaiian moon

calendar dictated when farmers and fishermen would harvest—and features specialties like Hamachi carpaccio and crispy mahi mahi with baby bok choy. Time your reservation for the restaurant's opening (5 p.m.) for a glimpse of the daily conch-shell-blowing and torch-lighting ceremony.



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SHOP: Keani Jewelry

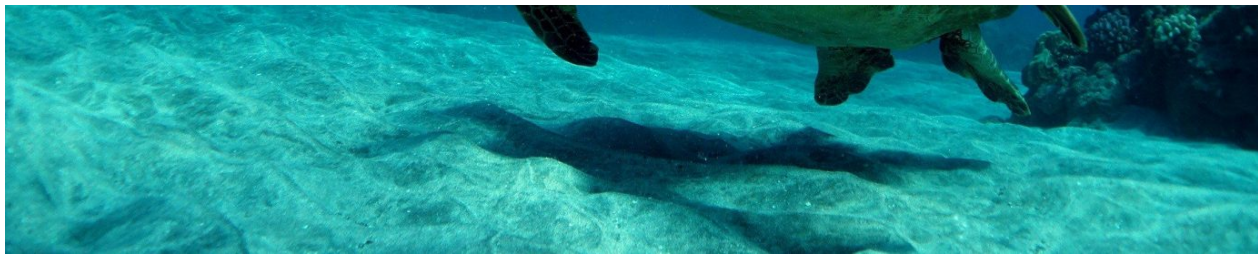
On the hunt for something a bit more permanent than that wilting orchid lei gifted to you by your hotel? Maui-based designer Keani Barnes of [Keani Jewelry](#), in Makawao, creates gorgeous accessories inspired by the beauty of her home island. Take a piece of paradise home in the form of hoop earrings strung with Tahitian pearls, silver and gold-plated bangles featuring a mermaid scale motif, and rings shaped like palm fronds and manta rays.





Despite the tiny size of Olowalu, a quiet community on the coast of western Maui, it has two huge things going for it: Turtle Reef, home to a manta ray cleaning station and 1,500-year-old coral, and **Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop**—arguably the best brunch spot on the island, and one of the best things to do in Maui (in our opinion). The inside feels like a farmhouse, with distressed wood walls and rickety bar stools, and the food is just as rustic. The freshly baked sweet and savory pies alone are worth the drive here, but the loaded sandwiches and burgers are just as filling if you're hankering for more. Wash it all down with a house-squeezed lemonade or orange juice, and get a steaming biscuit to go.





LEARN: Hawaiian Outrigger Canoe Paddling and Surf School

Polynesia is widely considered the birthplace of surfing, a sport once reserved for Hawaiian royalty. Surfers from around the world make pilgrimages to the Hawaiian Islands, whose waves both big and gentle are huge draws for both first-time and experienced riders, but there's more to Hawaiian culture than just riding the breaks. Outrigger canoe tours with [Hawaiian Paddle Sports](#), which launch near Wailea Beach, put you in the driver's seat as you learn first-hand about the ancient Ali'i way of life—wayfaring, the art of navigating the sea. You'll participate in a traditional Hawaiian chant, listen to legends passed down through generations, and might even spot a few sea turtles along the way. Or, sign up for a kayak or snorkeling tour for a chance to swim alongside them.

RELATED: [The 5 Best Beaches on Maui](#)



DAY TRIP: Road to Hana

Had your fill of poolside Mai Tais and that luxurious #resortlife? East Maui is calling your name. Most locals consider the “other” side of the island the true side of Maui—a rugged, remote rain forest community untouched by tourist development and sprawling beach resorts. The only way in or out is the famous (infamous?) [Road to Hana](#), a curvy coastal highway that passes viewpoints, narrow waterfalls, and hidden pools so stunning, you’ll *almost* forget how many hairpin turns and one-lane bridges you had to tackle to find them. A straight drive-through takes roughly two hours, but we suggest setting aside a lot more so that you can make as many road-side stops as you please. A few favorites include [Twin Falls](#), reached via a short hike (be sure to pick up a smoothie and slice of banana bread at the fruit stand on your way out), and [Wai'anapanapa State Park](#), home to freshwater caves and a unique black-sand beach.

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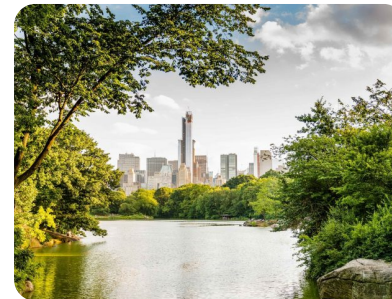
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