

KIDS STAY FREE



CULTURAL ACTIVITIES DAILY



ALOHA PASSPORT FOR KIDS

Join us for the **SECOND PART** of our fantastic **DISCOVER AMERICA** feature for families ...



Our fantastic contributors share their vast knowledge and insider tips on the best places, attractions and fun for families holidaying in the USA!

In this issue:

Holidays in Hawaii

Discover family stay and play options on Oahu, Maui and Kauai, and drop in on The Big Island, Lanai and Molokai.

Natural America

America's national parks are each unique in their scenic splendour and range of family adventures - and the celebrations, ahead of the National Park Service Centenary in 2016, have already begun!

Beyond the Boardwalk

Meet some of the biggest, boldest, most exciting theme parks in the country!

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10 Must-See Cities

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Holidays in Hawaii

Island-by-island, and from waterslides to whale watching, **SUE WHITE** tours heavenly Hawaii and tips the best stay and play options for holidaying families.



There's a good reason why Hawaii is on the travel bucket list for most families. With beaches, wildlife, and plenty to do on land and at sea, this uber family-friendly destination somehow caters to the young and old(er) with apparent ease.

Each island's diverse character makes it possible to choose according to mood, budget or travel style. Those with a bigger budget may consider little **Lanai**; tiny **Molokai** will attract families who like their islands without a single traffic light; while older kids will love the lure of **the Big Island's** active volcano.

But the three most popular islands for families are popular for a reason: all are beautiful, accessible and packed with family fun. Meet **Oahu, Maui** and **Kauai**.

OAHU

When we think Oahu, we tend to think of Honolulu and, of course, Waikiki Beach.

True, there's plenty to keep families amused there, but given the island of Oahu has more than 100 beaches dotted around its 80kms of coastline you'll be doing your trip an injustice if you don't get out and explore.

Sleep

If you're after a resort holiday in a bustling beachside location, Waikiki will satisfy young and old. Resorts abound here, and finding a family-friendly one is as easy as saying, "Kids Club please". Options include **Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa** in Ko Olina; here, even the spa caters for kids via massages, hula makeovers and a 'teen spa' for 13-17 year olds. Alternatively, head to the nine hectare, oceanfront **Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort** or create a home-away-from-home in the spacious **Embassy Suites Waikiki Beach Walk**— the only all-suite hotel in Waikiki – and enjoy complimentary breakfast daily.

Eat

If the crew is starving, you don't have to look far in Waikiki for a bite. **Hula Grill** and **Duke's** are family-friendly options, while the theatrical Teppanyaki chefs at **Kobe's** steak house will impress older kids. If you're after something casual, meet Honolulu's locals at the **popular Saturday farmers market** at Kapi'olani Community College (4303 Diamond Head Road). Up north and need food? Locals drive for kilometres to the famous **Shark's Cove Grill**, a lunch wagon conveniently located directly opposite the snorkelling paradise of Shark's Cove.

Play

Snorkellers of all ages typically head to **Hanauma Bay**, (go early to avoid the crowds), while those



Waikiki Beach Walk Shopping Complex

seeking bigger marine life (turtles and in season, whales), head to the west of Oahu. Taking a tour? **Wild Side** speciality tours does a great swim with dolphins, although they prefer kids to be seven and older, and under 3s have to stay in the boat. For those more comfortable snorkelling off land, guests at Hawaii Beach Fronts on the serene North Shore snorkel straight off the beach. Either way, the **North Shore** is well worth a visit – it's a chilled out antidote to the vibrant pace of Honolulu. For maximum flexibility, get there in a rental car, or join the 25,000 visitors a day who take "The Bus", a service that for USD\$2 will trundle you around the entire island (USD\$20 buys a four-day unlimited pass).

Back in Waikiki, there's plenty to do beyond the beach. If you've got active kids who can cope with an hour-long stroll up a one kilometre trail (and the 200 steps at the top), why not walk up **Diamond Head** crater rather than take one of the many tours? Slightly less scenic, but also tempting, is the chance to shop up a storm at the **Ala Moana Center**. Here, hundreds of outlets make filling that empty suitcase easy (you did bring one, right?).

Cultural kick

Head to Honolulu's Chinatown to watch the lei makers at **Cindy's Lei Shoppe** (1034 Maunakea St). This fourth-generation family business is a local favourite.

Opposite main pic:

© iStock/YinYang

Inset: Punaluu Black Sand Beach on The Big Island

Girls with Haku leis

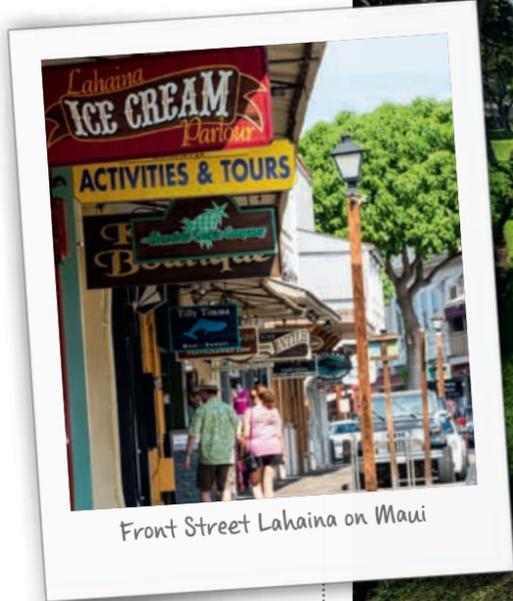
© Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)/ Tor Johnson

Molokai sea cliffs

© Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)/ Dana Edmunds

Top: Surfers at Waikiki

© Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)/Tor Johnson



Front Street Lahaina on Maui



MAUI

Locals in love with their island home commonly refer to Maui as: “No ka ‘oi” (“*Simply the best*”). With beach towns, an abundance of resorts, a stunning coastal drive and plenty of ocean wildlife, it’s not hard to see why many families agree.

Sleep

The bulk of visitors head directly to West Maui for good snorkelling, sunsets and mountain scenery. There are resorts aplenty, set along the island’s famed **Ka’anapali Beach**, and the old whaling town of **Lahaina**. The **Ka’anapali Beach Hotel** – renowned and awarded as ‘Hawaii’s most Hawaiian Hotel’ – is just steps from the beach, while the **Westin Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas** suit families who prefer to self-cater. Further north, the **Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua** has a great environmental education program for kids (be warned: the surf can be rough here). Those going south towards Kihei often continue to Wailea. There are many high-end resorts here, but the **Grand Wailea’s** seven waterslides are hard to beat, as is its Camp Grande kids program.

Eat

When budget isn’t an issue many families will end up eating at their resort, where most have ‘*keiki*’ (kids) menus. In town, the upmarket-looking **Lahaina Grill** is one of many kid-friendly options, or keep it simple with tacos at **Jawz Fish Tacos** in Kihei.

Play

Kid-friendly beaches are scattered around Maui

(although others are famously ferocious). Families love the small waves of **Ka’anapali**; while **Baby Beach** in Lahaina Town is shady and great for kids, although there can be competition for a car park. Easier may be the snorkel-worthy **Napili Bay Beach**, in front of Napili Kai Beach Resort. Further south in the Wailea-Makena area, **Kama’ole Beach III** is one of the nicest in the area.

Further offshore, don’t miss Maui’s whale watching; tours depart from Lahaina, Kihai and Wailea. For something unusual try the **Atlantis Submarine** underwater tour at Lahaina; yes, it’s a real submarine. Back on land, don’t miss the **Maui Ocean Center** (older kids will love the Hammerhead sharks), and for an excursion away from the beach, head up the island’s volcano: **Haleakala**. Sunset is superb, but if that’s too passive, kids over 12 will love the thrill of mountain biking down the side. (**Adventure Maui’s** trips are recommended.)

If everyone’s up for it, drive the stunning **Hana Highway** (warning, a long day with stops factored in: leave early). En route, stop to watch kite surfers at world famous **Ho’okipa Beach**, check out the surfing mecca “Jaws” at Paia and eventually delight in the pink and black sand beaches of the small community of Hana.

Cultural kick

If you haven’t seen a *luau*, the nightly **Old Lahaina Luau** has been running since 1986. Or, take in a show at the **Maui Theatre**: the legend of ‘Ulalena’ is known for its visual effects.



KAUAI

Known as the Garden Isle, Kauai’s lush, mountainous centre is filled with rainforests and waterfalls. Add in a ring of beaches covering roughly half the shoreline, and you have a haven your *keiki* (children) won’t want to leave.

Sleep

Ninety per cent of Kauai is inaccessible by road, but the other ten per cent offers accommodation galore spanning five main areas. The North Shore has upscale resorts in **Princeville**, while the East Side’s resorts’ many coconut groves have earned it the ‘**Coconut Coast**’ moniker. Southeast, the capital of **Lihu’e** is home to the airport as well as kid-friendly resorts like **Marriott’s Kauai Beach Club**, which fronts the calm waters of Kalapaki Beach. On the quieter West Side, look around **Waimea**. Many choose the South Shore, where **Poipu’s Grand Hyatt** has an excellent kids club and a two-hectare aquatic park. Those on tighter budgets can try the self-catering **Castle Kihua Planation & The Beach Bungalows**. Got a big brood? **The Parrish Collection** has rental houses from USD\$250 a night while **Kauai Properties** offers well-priced vacation rentals.

Eat

Look out for restaurants offering a traditional ‘**plate lunch**’ – it’s a good kid-friendly option comprising rice, salad and a main (confusingly known in Hawaii – and all of the United States – as an ‘*entrée*’). Back to a la carte menus, in Lihu’e,



Keiki dancers of Na Hula O Kaohikukapulani

the basic **Hamura Saimin Stand** is popular with locals and tourists; **Kalapaki Beach Hut’s** fish sandwiches draw rave reviews, and, if you’re in Waimea, try **Shrimp Station**.

Play

Just to prove holidays aren’t devoid of difficult choices, Kauai has 80kms of beaches to choose from! On the South Shore, families love **Poipu Beach Park’s** natural wading pool, while the North Shore’s **Anini Beach Park** has the perfect lagoon for newbie snorkellers. Getting more active, zip lining and kayaking are fabulous for both adults and kids, while littlies will love the train at **Kauai Plantation Railway** on Kilohana Estate (near Lihu’e).

Soaking up Kauai’s scenery is usually done at the 22km long **Waimea Canyon** (nicknamed the “Grand Canyon of the Pacific”), with hikers continuing on to nearby **Kokee State Park** for walks suitable for all ages. The other jaw dropping views are along the **Napali Coast** – 90 minutes north of Lihue on Kauai’s North Shore. Most families will choose to view the 27km coastline from **Ke’e Beach**, or take a boat tour or guided kayaking trip to check out the area’s spectacular sea cliffs.

Cultural kick

Hula is entrenched in Hawaii’s history: enrol in a lesson at one of the local resorts or watch the pros in action at the **Smith Family Garden Luau** in Wailua on the East Side.

Above from far left:
Shoreline at Wailea on Maui
© Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)/
Tor Johnson
Oceanside bike path at Kapaa
on Kauai
Life on a coral reef
Wall of ukuleles
© Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)/
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