NOHO · STAYS

Big Island Hawai‘i.

A guide for guests at the Holua Road oceanfront house above He‘eia Bay.

Curated by NoHo Stays

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WELCOME

Aloha, and mahalo for staying with us.

You picked the sunny side of the island. The Kona coast is hot, dry, and built around the ocean - surf, snorkel, manta rays at night, and some of the best coffee in the world growing in the hills above you. Different personality from the rainforest east side, all on one island, all within a day's drive.

This guide is the short list - the spots we send our own friends and family to. It is organized so you can read just the section you need: the immediate area around the house first, then the rest of the island by region. Use what is useful. Skip the rest. Text us if you want a recommendation we did not write down.

QUICK ORIENT

- You are in Keauhou at the Holua Road house above He‘eia Bay.
- Keauhou Bay has paddling and some tours; confirm the departure harbor.
- Downtown Kona has waterfront dining, shops, and historic sites.
- Hāpuna and Kua Bay are Kohala beach options; check DLNR access notices.
- Two Step snorkeling is outside Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park.
- Hilo and Volcano are long drives; check weather, roads, and park alerts.
- Bring mineral sun protection and a light layer for higher elevations.
- Check current prices, hours, access, and ocean conditions before heading out.

WHAT IS IN THIS GUIDE

01 Kona · immediate area + south Kona
02 North Hawaii · Kohala, Waimea, Hawi, Mauna Kea
03 South Hawaii · Ka‘ū, Punalu‘u, South Point
04 Hilo
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SECTION 01

Kona · Beaches

Kona has a range of beaches and snorkeling spots, from Aliʻi Drive to Kohala and South Kona. Conditions vary by day and by beach. Check surf, posted warnings, and lifeguard advice before entering the water.

CLOSE TO THE HOUSE

Kahaluʻu Beach Park · ~5 minutes north
A well-known snorkeling spot on Aliʻi Drive. Check surf and posted conditions, stay off coral, and give fish and honu room. Gear rental may be available nearby.

Magic Sands Beach (La'aloa Bay) · ~10 minutes north
A small white-sand beach whose shoreline changes with the seasons. Enjoy the view and check conditions; shore break can be powerful and swimming may be unsafe.

Keauhou Bay · a few minutes away
A small bay and launch point for paddling and some ocean tours. Check conditions and operator departure points before booking or entering the water.

KOHALA WHITE-SAND BEACHES

Hāpuna Beach
A broad white-sand beach on the Kohala Coast. Check surf, posted conditions, and current nonresident entry and parking fees before visiting.

Kua Bay (Manini'ōwali)
A striking white-sand cove that fills quickly. Surf can make swimming unsuitable. Check current DLNR access and parking fees before heading over.

SECTION 01

Kona · Snorkel & Water

Some of the best snorkeling in Hawai‘i is on this coast. Two-Step and Kealakekua Bay are the headliners. Manta-ray night snorkel is a once-in-a-lifetime add.

SOUTH KONA SNORKEL · ~25 MINUTES SOUTH

Two-Step (Hōnaunau Bay)
Popular lava-shelf snorkeling outside Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park. Snorkel visitors should park outside the park gate. Check ocean conditions and watch for boats.

Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau (City of Refuge)
Explore the Royal Grounds and Pu‘uhonua with respect for this sacred Hawaiian place. The nearby Two Step snorkeling area is outside the national park. Check current NPS access and fees.

Kealakekua Bay · Captain Cook Monument
A protected bay with marine life and a historic shoreline. Consider a permitted boat tour or check current land and water access rules before making plans.

CHARTERS & TOURS

Manta Ray Night Snorkel
A memorable nighttime ocean outing. Compare licensed operators, check ocean conditions, and confirm the exact departure harbor when booking; tour locations and schedules can change.

Daytime Snorkel & Octopus Charters
A small-boat snorkeling charter can make a Kona-coast day easy for a group. Confirm the operator's current route, departure harbor, wildlife practices, and conditions.

Whale Watching · December through April
Humpback whales migrate through these waters every winter. Several operators run dedicated tours; many snorkel charters double as whale-watching during the season. If you are in town in those months, take a boat out at least once.

SECTION 01

Kona · Town, History & Coffee

KAILUA-KONA TOWN · ~15 MINUTES NORTH

Ali‘i Drive
The main coastal drag through downtown Kailua-Kona. Shops, restaurants, a sea-wall promenade. An easy sunset stroll with a stop at any of the patio bars along the water. Live music on weekend nights at Huggo's on the Rocks and Lava Lava.

Moku‘aikaua Church
A historic lava-stone church in central Kailua-Kona. Pair it with Hulihe‘e Palace across Ali‘i Drive and check current visitor access before entering.

Hulihe‘e Palace
Hawaiian royal family's summer home in the 1800s, now a museum. Period furniture, royal artifacts, ocean views. Check current admission and tour options online. Across the street from Moku‘aikaua Church - easy pairing.

Old Kona Airport State Recreation Area · ~20 minutes north
The former airport grounds now offer a long shoreline walk and sunset viewpoints. Check posted conditions before entering the water.

GOLF · NEARBY IN KEAUHOU

Kona Country Club · Ocean Course
An 18-hole public course in Keauhou with ocean views and lava features. Book a tee time through the club and confirm current rates and course conditions.

KONA COFFEE FARM TOURS · THE HILLS ABOVE YOU

The Kona coffee belt runs through the slopes above the coast. Pick one or two farms to visit, and confirm each farm's current tour format and reservation rules.

Greenwell Farms
A working Kona coffee farm with guided tours and tastings. Check the farm's current schedule and reservation details before visiting.

Mountain Thunder Coffee Plantation · Kaloko
Coffee farm and roastery tours in Kaloko above Kona. Confirm the current tour schedule and directions directly.

Hula Daddy Kona Coffee
A Kona coffee tasting experience. Confirm current tour format, pricing, and reservations directly before driving up.

SECTION 01

Kona · Restaurants

Kona's dining is built around fresh fish, Hawaiian regional cuisine, and sunset patios. Here is the short list.

SIT-DOWN

Umeke's
Fresh-fish-forward Hawaiian regional cuisine. Ahi katsu, ahi belly, and their poke are why we keep going back. Sit-down location is the move.

Huggo's on the Rocks · Aliʻi Drive
Easy waterfront sunset stop in Kailua-Kona. Casual food, drinks, music, and open-air seats right by the water.

Willie's · next to Umeke's
A casual Kona stop near Umeke's for food and drinks. Check the current menu and music schedule.

Teshima's, Kainaliu · ~25 min south
Classic local Japanese, family-owned since 1929. The tempura is the headline. Worth the drive south of town.

Hōlualoa Garden and Kitchen
Garden dining in historic Hōlualoa, at the former Holuakoa Café location. Check its current menu, hours, and reservations before heading up the mountain.

CASUAL, COUNTER & COFFEE

Hayashi's
Small, family-run sushi spot. Mostly takeout, but the rolls and sashimi are very good for the price.

Da Poke Shack · ~10 minutes north
A walk-up poke counter on Aliʻi Drive. Go earlier in the day for more choices and check current hours before visiting.

Kona Heaven Coffee · Aliʻi Drive
Local roaster, espresso pulled to order, breakfast pastries. The go-to morning stop in town.

Ola Brewing Kona & Kona Brewing Co.
Two local breweries within minutes of each other. Ola's lineup is broader (seltzers, ciders, beers) and the food menu is excellent. Kona Brewing is more touristy but the pizza is great and you can try the specialty pours that never leave the island.

SECTION 02

North Hawaii

Head north up Highway 19 along the Kohala coast - dry lava fields, the Kohala beaches, ranch country at elevation in Waimea, and the old plantation towns of Hawi and Honokaʻa. Budget a full day for the loop to Pololū and back; half-day if you're just doing Hāpuna and lunch in Waimea.

WAIMEA · ~1 HOUR NORTH

Pâtisserie Nanako
Japanese-French pastries in Waimea. Check the current shop location and hours; popular items can sell out.

Big Island Brewhaus
In our opinion the best brewery on the island. Fish bites and the Golden Sabbath belgian are non-negotiable orders.

Village Burger · Ippy's Hawaiian Barbecue
Two more reliable Waimea bites. Village Burger for burgers and truffle fries. Ippy's for classic Hawaiian plate lunches - solid takeout to bring home.

KOHALA & HAWI · ~1.5 HOURS NORTH

Pololū Valley Lookout
The end-of-road lookout offers a dramatic North Kohala view. The trail below is steep and can close for maintenance or weather; check current DLNR notices and respect local stewards.

Hawi · charming old plantation town
Restored storefronts, art galleries, and a growing permaculture scene. Bamboo Restaurant on the main street is the best lunch in town.

SADDLE ROAD & THE HĀMĀKUA COAST

Maunakea Visitor Information Station · ~1.5 hours via Saddle Road
Learn about the mountain and astronomy at the visitor station. Check current hours, altitude guidance, weather, and road rules before driving up. Standard rental vehicles should not continue toward the summit.

Waipiʻo Valley Lookout · ~2 hours via Waimea
Take in the valley and coastline from the public lookout. Access to the steep valley road is restricted; check current county orders and plan for the overlook.

SECTION 03

South Hawaii · Kaʻū

Past South Kona, the highway curves around Kaʻū. Plan a long day for scenic land viewpoints, Punaluʻu Black Sand Beach, and local stops. Check current access and road conditions.

Manukā State Wayside · ~1 hour south
Quiet roadside park and the gateway to Kaʻū. Small arboretum, picnic tables, easy bathroom stop on a long drive.

South Point (Ka Lae) · ~1.5 hours south
A windswept coastal viewpoint near the island's southern tip. Currents and cliff jumping are dangerous; enjoy the cliffs from land and heed posted warnings.

Punaluʻu Black Sand Beach · ~1.5 hours south
Black sand and coconut palms make this a memorable Kaʻū stop. Honu sometimes rest here; give them ample space and follow NOAA viewing guidance. Check conditions before entering the water.

SECTION 04

Hilo

Hilo is the east-side capital - about 2 hours from you via Saddle Road. Working town, historic, wetter and greener than Kona. Worth a full day, or better, an overnight if you want to also do the Hāmākua coast and ‘Akaka Falls. Best on a Wednesday or Saturday for the farmers market.

HILO TOWN

Rainbow Falls
Eighty-foot waterfall right inside Hilo town. Best in the morning when the sun hits the mist and produces an actual rainbow. Five minutes of your time.

Lili‘uokalani Gardens & Banyan Drive
Stroll the Japanese-style gardens on Hilo Bay, then continue to Banyan Drive and its historic trees. A relaxing open-air stop.

Hilo Farmers Market
Browse local produce, flowers, and prepared food in downtown Hilo. Check the market's current schedule before planning your day.

‘Imiloa Astronomy Center
Built around Mauna Kea's role in modern astronomy and in traditional Hawaiian wayfinding. Excellent planetarium. Check current admission and showtimes online.

UP THE HĀMĀKUA COAST · NORTH OF HILO

‘Akaka Falls State Park · Honomū
A rainforest walk leads to views of the 442-foot ‘Akaka Falls and Kahūnā Falls. The paved route has steps and is not wheelchair accessible. Check DLNR trail notices for the current partial closure, entry rules, and fees before visiting.

Hawai‘i Tropical Bioreserve & Garden · Onomea Bay
Explore rainforest plant collections, ocean viewpoints, and a waterfall above Onomea Bay. The scenic approach is part of the visit. Check current admission, hours, and accessibility before you go.

HILO EATS

Hilo Bay Café · Moon and Turtle · Pineapples
Three solid sit-down dinners. Hilo Bay Café for modern Hawaiian and great sushi. Moon and Turtle for chef-driven small plates. Pineapples for casual island fare with live music.

Suisan Fish Market · Two Ladies Kitchen
Pair fresh poke by Hilo Bay with strawberry mochi from Two Ladies Kitchen. Check current hours and payment options; popular items may sell out.

SECTION 05

Volcano

Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park is about 2.5 hours from you, via Saddle Road through Hilo or directly south on Highway 11. It's a long drive - best done as an overnight in Volcano village, or combined with a Hilo trip.

Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park
Set aside time for crater views and trails such as Kīlauea Iki and Nāhuku when open. Eruptions, air quality, weather, and trail access change; check NPS conditions, alerts, and fees before traveling. Bring a warm layer.

KMC Bowling Alley · Kīlauea Military Camp
The bowling alley and 10 Pin Grill are currently listed as open at Kīlauea Military Camp. Confirm current public access and hours before including them in your plans.

Café Ono · inside Volcano village
Indoor-outdoor garden café for lunch on the way out of the park. Local, vegetarian-leaning, hand-painted plates by the owner.

Thai Thai Bistro & Bar · Volcano
Surprisingly excellent Thai food at 4,000 feet. Solid takeout for dinner back at the park lookout.

Volcano Winery + Volcano Golf Course
Side-by-side and worth pairing. One of the highest-elevation wineries in the U.S. (tropical-fruit and grape flights), and an 18-hole public course with Mauna Loa views.

SECTION 06

Puna

Puna is the east-side rainforest district south of Hilo - off-grid, jungle-thick, with active volcanic landscape and one of the best Sunday markets in Hawai‘i. About 2.5 hours from you, easiest as a day trip combined with Hilo.

Maku‘u Farmers Market
Browse Puna produce, food, and local crafts. Confirm the current market day and hours before making the drive.

SECTION 07

Practical Info

GROCERIES

KTA Super Stores · Keauhou & Kailua-Kona
The local chain. Best produce, best prepared-food deli, full grocery. KTA Keauhou is the closest - about 5 minutes from the house.

Costco · ~25 minutes north
If you're stocking up for a longer stay or a big group, Costco is the move. Members only.

Sack N Save Kona · Palani Road
A full grocery store in Kailua-Kona. Check its current hours and stock up before a long drive.

Keauhou Farmers Market
A Keauhou stop for local produce and prepared food. Confirm the current market day and hours before heading over.

SUN PROTECTION & REEFS

Bring it or buy it here.
Choose mineral-based sun protection and cover up when possible to help protect reefs. Hawai‘i restricts sales of sunscreens containing oxybenzone or octinoxate; check current rules and product ingredients.

GAS

Stations
Plenty around Kailua-Kona. The Keauhou Shopping Center area has convenient options a few minutes from the house. Fill up before any long drive - stations on the Saddle Road or in Ka‘ū are scarce.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency (police / fire / medical)	**911**
Kona Community Hospital	**(808) 322-9311**
Hawai‘i County (non-emergency)	**(808) 935-3311**
Volcanoes NP information	**(808) 985-6011**

CELL, INTERNET & WEATHER

Coverage
Cell service varies around the island, especially in remote areas. Download maps before long drives. Property Wi-Fi details are provided in your arrival message.

Kona weather
Kona is usually warm and comparatively dry, with passing showers possible. Vog can occur when volcanic emissions and winds align; guests who are sensitive should check current air-quality and weather forecasts. Bring sun protection and a light rain layer.

SECTION 07

A Few Cultural Notes

You are a guest on someone else's home island. Hawai‘i is not a theme park. A few small things go a long way.

Take off your shoes.
Follow your home's shoe policy and leave sandy footwear by the door when requested.

Mahalo means thank you. Aloha means hello, goodbye, and love.
Use them. Locals appreciate the effort. Mispronouncing is fine; not trying is not.

Drive slow. Wave shaka.
If a driver lets you in, throw the shaka. If you are in a rush, the island will not move faster. Pull over on narrow roads to let locals pass.

Leave things where you find them.
Lava rocks, sand, and coral all stay. Ancient sites (heiau), petroglyphs, and burials are sacred. Stay on marked paths. Pack out everything you pack in. Especially important at Pu‘uhonua o Honaunau - that's a sanctuary, not a backdrop.

Stay back from honu and monk seals.
Watch sea turtles and monk seals from a respectful distance. NOAA recommends at least 10 feet from turtles and 50 feet from monk seals, farther for mothers and pups. Never touch or feed marine wildlife.

Respect the ocean.
Ocean conditions change quickly. Follow posted signs and lifeguard instructions, and do not enter the water when unsure.

MAHALO FOR STAYING WITH US.

If something is off, text us. We would rather fix it now than read about it in a review later.

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A hui hou.

Until we meet again.

Loved your stay?
Leave us a review on Airbnb, VRBO, or Booking.com.
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