



Big Island, Hawaii

by Vanessa Ploessel

Hawai'i National Park - Volcanoes

Kilauea and Mauna Loa

Currently the Big Island has two active volcanoes Kilauea and Mauna Loa. Highly recommend visiting the National Park website to plan your visit, learn about the parks, entrance fees, and urgent information. The park rangers recommend visiting Kilauea closer to sunset and at night in order to have better visibility of the lava glow.

Visited Kilauea and did some day hiking and mainly stayed around the Kilauea Caldera, Kilauea Iki Crater, Steam Vents, and Nāhuku (Thurston Lava Tube).

◀ National Park Service - Photo by J. Wei

Steam Vents

While driving along the Kilauea Caldera we stopped at the steam vents. According to the National Parks website,

“...You can feel hot water vapor as it billows from the ground in steam vents. This striking phenomenon is created as ground water seeps down to rocks heated by magma deep underground. The rocks are so hot that it vaporizes the water, returning it to the surface as steam.”

It was fun to walk around and be in awe of this large caldera and as you make your way back to your vehicle there are these steam vents that are strong with heat and steam, but with the parameter setup will not cause any harm. It shows how powerful the energy and heat of a volcano is.

Nāhuku (Thurston Lava Tube)

The lava tube was an incredible sight to see as it allows for you to walk through a rainforest. Before entering a 500-year old lava tube where a river of lava once flowed through.

Nāhuku



Big Island Beaches



Punalu'u Black Sand Beach

Punalu'u is a beautiful black sand beach to visit. The beach is made from old lava flows and is known for being frequently visited by the Hawaiian green sea turtles.



Hapuna Beach State Park

Hapuna is consistently listed on the top 10 international list for beaches. It's a beautiful white sand beach and great for swimming, bodyboarding, and snorkeling. Recommend arriving early as it can get crowded especially on weekends.



Ziplining

Botanical World Adventures

Drive along the beautiful Hamakua coastline to the rain forest at Botanical World Adventures.

This amazing adventure is a combination of hiking and going through an 8-stage zipline course going from one line to the next in this tropical paradise. A portion of the hike is on a suspension bridge that cuts through the jungle with several small waterfalls below your feet!



Kamaee Falls

While ziplining you are able to view beautiful streams and waterfalls originating from the slopes of Mauna Kea as you cross over each bridge.

Food, Drinks & Dessert

Big Kahuna Beach Grill

Located in Kailua-Kona, great for casual dining. It has a beautiful view of Kailua Bay and live music everyday. Unko's Crabby Patties are absolutely delicious!



Punalu'u Bakeshop

At latitude 19 degrees, four minutes north of the equator — the Punalu'u Bake Shop is the southernmost bakery in the U.S. They have a menu of local plate lunch favorites, sandwiches, fresh garden and fruit salads, freshly brewed Ka'u coffee and ice cream to complement the bake shop's renowned sweet bread, malasadas, and other scrumptious bakery favorites.



Scandinavian Shaved Ice "Scandi's"

Great place in Kona for a shaved ice treat! Lots of amazing flavors to choose from and great portions.

