

Big Island, Hawaii

- Radio Station: [101.5 KWXX - Your Feel Good Island Music Station](#)

****More recs are on the West/Kona side because of where Lako House is located***

More recommendations: <https://www.gohawaii.com/>

TIPS

- Sunscreen: Please try to use [reef safe sun screen](#)! It is so much better for marine life/ocean and better for you too!
- Gifts/souvenirs:
 - Walmart (It is much more Hawaiian themed than the mainland; macadamia nuts/chocolates, coffee, candies, décor, clothes are all there)
 - Target (clothing has some Hawaiian theme, TONS more bathing suits)
 - ABC Stores (they are everywhere, most of the things you find there is at Walmart for cheaper but it is the classic Hawaii gift/souvenir shop!
 - Want to buy an aloha shirt? Go to a thrift store!
- At Walmart:
 - Get water shoes for snorkeling for walking on volcanic rock at the snorkeling beach, it'll be way less slippery and prickly
 - Snorkeling gear/boogie boards/bamboo mats are cheap too, but sometimes where you are staying will have them available
- Rush hour can get bad with one lane highways, map out/plan where you want to go ahead of time
- Parking in Downtown Kona:
 - Morning/afternoon: park in the farmers parking lot (it's rarely regulated) but there is a metered parking lot right next to it
 - Evenings: at the public library, farmers parking lot or the lot across the street where there are doctor's offices
- When you are going snorkeling, search low/high tide times
- Actual Kona coffee is expensive, but it is delicious! Go on a coffee tour to learn more about quality Kona coffee!
 - Coffee Plantation Tour (there are SO many to pick from):
<https://www.lovebigisland.com/kona-coffee-tasting/>
 - Pine Village Small Farm is specifically catered to Japanese visitors
 - Hawaiian Mana Farm: <https://www.hawaiianmanafarm.com/>
 - A note about Kona coffee: as long as there's 10% of Kona Coffee in the roast, it's deemed as "Kona Coffee." Real Kona Coffee will be min \$30, and good descriptors to find is "Peaberry," "Extra Fancy."
 - Walmart has a Hualalai coffee brand, the peaberry one is good (~\$32), just make sure to look through the expiration date and find fresher ones

EATERIES/GROCERIES

- Coffee Shops: Kona Mountain Coffee, Kona Coffee & Tea, HiCO
- Safeway - Get poke to go and eat it with rice/you can order a poke bowl right there to
- Kona Brewery – Brewery food and a lot more beer options than you'll see on the mainland (go on a brewery tour then dinner to follow!)
- KTA – Japanese supermarket (bentos and poke are delicious!)
- Walmart - I like to get Punalu'u Sweet Bread (Guava, Taro, Kalakoa), li-hing mui flavored candy, variety of macadamia nuts/chocolates
- Costco - great seafood selection, snacks are different too
- Kona Cold Lobsters - Seafood wholesaler if you want to cook your own fresh seafood
- Pine Tree Cafe - Classic Hawaiian place, great meal after you've arrived or on your way to your flight)
- Ultimate Burger - homemade buns, super fresh ingredients
- Kenichi Bento Box - To-go bento boxes
- Downtown Kona
 - Gypsea Gelato - think Salt & Straw but cheaper and more tropical flavors
 - Kamana Kitchen – Indian
 - Umekes Fish Market Bar & Grill - poke & Hawaiian favorites
 - Sushi Shiono & Izakaya Shiono (2 different locations) - Japanese
 - Royal Thai Cafe - Thai
 - Da Poke Shack - Poke
 - Broke Da Mouth Grindz & Catering - Hawaiian & Filipino food (call and order!)
 - Jacie Rey's Ohana Grill - Seafood/American/Hawaiian
 - Shave Ice: One Aloha Shave Ice, Scandinavian Shave Ice, Gecko Girlz, Kona Wave Cafe
 - Basik Café - delicious acai bowls!
 - Ocean Seafood Chinese Restaurant - Chinese
 - The Feeding Leaf Kitchen and Okazuya - Japanese/Hawaiian/Deli
- Spots outside of Kailua-Kona:
 - Kaaloa's Super Js Authentic Hawaiian (30 min of DT Kona in Captain Cook) - Delicious Hawaiian food, the laulau is heavy on meat (there's a kalua pig and chicken option). Definitely try their Ube Haupia pie!
 - The Coffee Shack
 - Punalu'u Bake Shop (closer to the volcano)
 - Randy's Huli Chicken and Ribs

HAWAIIAN FOODS TO TRY

- Poke (Safeway or KTA is the best!)
 - Kimchi taco
 - Spicy mayo ahi
 - Shoyu salmon
 - Pipikaula (salted and dried beef)
 - Ahi limu
 - Tsunami (imitation crab & ahi)
- Lulau
- Spam musubi
- Loco moco
- Furikake chicken
- Kalua pig/kalua cabbage
- Any type of Hawaiian plate lunch
- Kona Coffee
- Macadamia Nut or Coconut flavored anything
- Malasada (Portuguese doughnuts)
 - Manuela Malasada Co (they have a truck in Waimea and Puako, call ahead) - served fresh and hot
 - Local and my favorite: li-hing mui sugar coating
- Tex Drive In (Honokaa)
- Punalu'u Bake Shop
- Hawaiian Sweetbread
 - Walmart
 - Punalu'u Bake Shop
- Fruits
 - Rainbow or Strawberry Papaya (squirt some lime)
 - Dragon fruit
 - Lychee
 - Lilikoi
 - Rambutan
 - Mangoes
 - Pineapples
 - White pineapple (July-September, can be found at farmer's market)
 - Rambutans
- Anything fish related – fish burgers/sandos are always delicious
- Hawaiian jams (lilikoi, fruity/chili, mac nut/lilikoi butters)
- POG – passion-orange-guava juice

ACTIVITIES IN KONA

- Surf lessons: I recommend booking through [Kona Town Surf Adventures](#)
- Farmers Markets (check schedule): Kona Farmers Market, Keahou Farmers Market, Pure Kona Green Market, Food Truck Friday Kailua Kona, 4th Friday market at Kona Commons
- [Kona Brewery Tour](#) (\$20)
- [Hamakua Macadamia Nut Co Inc.](#) (Small factory, lots of flavors to try and buy)

- Beaches
 - *List of snorkeling spots: <https://www.lovebigisland.com/kailua-kona/snorkeling/>
 - Kahalu'u Beach (best snorkeling) - lots of turtles and beautiful fish
 - Mauna Kea Beach (Connected to a resort but you can just go to the beach)
 - Mau'u Mae Beach (same entrance as Mauna Kea Resort)
 - Hapuna Beach
 - Manini'owali Beach (Kua Bay) - snorkeling when it's low tide
 - Makalawena Beach
 - Kekaha Kai Beach Park
 - Spencer Beach
 - Honaunau Bay / Two-Step
 - Magic Sands Beach Park (waves are huge)
- Night snorkeling with manta rays
 - At the Sheraton Keahou Bay, manta rays come near the restaurant balcony to eat in the evenings (just park at the hotel and go toward the restaurant, you'll see a lot of people crowding around)
 - If you want to [night snorkel with mantas](#)
- Luau – I think King Kamehaha hotel's luau in DT Kona is the best
- January/February is whale watching season, look out with binoculars or go on a tour (make sure you don't get seasick because you're typically on a smaller boat)
- Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park
- Hulihe'e Palace - royal vacation home in downtown Kona
- Mokuaikaia Church - oldest Christian church in Hawaii, in downtown Kona
- Pu'uuhonua O Hōnaunau National Historical Park - 40 min south of Kona
- Lapakahi State Historical Park
- Explore the area of Captain Cook - 20 min south of Kona
 - Captain Cook Monument
 - Kealakekua Bay - great spot for snorkeling (you'll have to hike 1.9 miles to the water or book a tour, there's no beach but beautiful snorkeling)
 - Kona Historical Society

DAY TRIPS (OUTSIDE OF KONA)

- Waimea
- Hilo
 - Rainbow Falls
 - Akaka Falls
 - Hawaii Tropical Botanical Gardens
 - Panaewa Rainforest Zoo and Botanical Garden - small zoo in rainforest, free admission
 - Hilo Farmers Market (Wednesday & Saturday)
 - Richardson Ocean Park - great for snorkeling/swimming
 - Downtown Hilo
 - Lyman Museum and Mission House - History/culture of Hawaii, \$10 admission
 - Mehana Brewing Company
 - Big Island Candies - famous cookie/candy factory and gift shop
- Hawi
 - Pololu Valley Lookout - hike down to a beach
- Hawaii Volcano National Park (\$30 7-day pass per car) -Pick a few hikes/lookouts ahead of time, i.e.
 - Lava tubes
 - Leave before sunrise (~2:30am from Lako House) to see lava in the dark
- Punalu'u Black Sand Beach
- Papakolea Green Sand Beach – you'll need a four wheel drive if you don't want to hike on volcanic rock to the beach (5.5 mi round trip)/ sometimes there are people there that you can pay and they'll drive you to the beach!
- Waikoloa Village - shopping center where the big resorts are
- Mauna Kea Summit - lots of tours available
- Helicopter tours over volcano/rainforest
- [Kohala Zipline](#)
- Hiking in Waipio