

Beaches on the West Side of the Big Island

Warning! If the ocean is too rough, don't go into the water!! Sometimes though, if the water is too rough at one beach, you can go to another beach where the waves are not so rough.

Protect our Ocean! ONLY USE REEF SAFE SUNSCREEN! The ingredients of oxybenzone and octinoxate are VERY HARMFUL to coral reefs. In Jan of 2021, all sunscreen sold in Hawaii must be "reef safe" but do the right thing now! DON'T use any that contain oxybenzone or octinoxate.

Here is a list of some "reef safe sunscreens: All Good SPF 30 Sport Sunscreen Lotion, Babo Botanicals SPF 30 Clear Zinc Lotion, Badger SPF 30 Unscented Sunscreen Cream, Banana Boat Simply Protect SPF 50+ Sunscreen (spray, not lotion), Kokua Sun Care Hawaiian SPF 50 Natural Zinc Sunscreen, Little Hands Hawaii SPF 35+ All-natural and Organic Sunscreen, Loving Naturals Clear Body SPF 30+ All-natural Sunscreen, Mama Kuleana Waterproof SPF 30 Reef-safe Sunscreen, Manda Organic SPF 50 Sun Paste, Raw Elements SPF 30 Certified Natural Sunscreen, Raw Love SPF 35 All-natural Mineral Sunscreen, Reef Safe Oxybenzone Free Biodegradable SPF 50 Sunscreen, Stream2Sea SPF 30 Mineral Sunblock, Suntegrity Natural Mineral Sunscreen, Thinksport SPF 50 Sunscreen

TIP: If you click onto the underscored beach name, it will hyperlink you to Google Maps. This can be helpful if you want driving directions. On Google Maps, people post pictures to Google Maps of the locations.

Here is a link to a map I made

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1btGAszojqVDJoSvPyY0UOso9Zds13lwy&usp=sharing>

The following list is in geographical order from North to South.

[Mahukona Beach Park](#) 

A page right out of Hawaii's history books and a fantastic place to snorkel and scuba.

In late 1880's the Mahukona harbor was built for steamships to load sugarcane from the newly built railway. The railway transported sugarcane from the plantations of the Kohala District. The ruins of the railway station are also at the Mahukona Beach Park.

There is a stainless-steel ladder at the pier convenient for getting in and out of the water. The fresh-water shower at the pier is always nice and warm. There are toilets by the old railway station.

[Spencer Beach Park](#) 

White Sands Beach. Great picnicking, lots of shade. Nice children's playground and nice bathrooms and showers. There is an area for permitted camping. The long shallow reef offshore typically protects the beach, keeping waves and currents low.

The nearby [Pu'ukola Heiau National Historic Site](#) is a great Hawaiian Historic site to visit.

[Kauna'oa \(Mauna Kea\) Beach.](#)



Often know as Mauna Kea beach because it is in front of the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel.

White Sands Beach. Very pretty with nice facilities. You can eat at the Hotel's beach restaurant.

All beaches in Hawaii are public but to get to the beach, you will have to ask for a free beach access pass at the Security gate entrance. Sometimes the 40 public parking spots can fill up so it is better to get there early and not on weekends. If there is no parking, just drive a mile south and go to Hapuna Beach which is also a beautiful white sands beach. Hapuna Beach always has plenty of parking but parking cost \$5 per car.

[Hāpuna Beach State Park](#)



This ½ mile, white sands beach is rated as one of the best beaches in the world. There are lifeguards, shaded picnic pavilions, nice bathrooms and showers.

There is plenty of parking but parking costs \$5 per car.

[Waialea Beach \(Beach 69\)](#)



Beautiful White Sands Beach. No Lifeguards. Nice restrooms and showers. It is sometimes called "beach 69" because of the number 69 utility pole at the parking lot.

[Puako Beach South Access](#)



There are actually several public beach access points. This is a very shallow bay and a favorite snorkel and scuba location. However, because of its shallowness, it can be a challenge navigating over the shallow reefs when snorkeling or scuba diving. No Life guards. No restrooms or showers.

[Pauoa Bay](#)



A crescent shaped bay located behind the Fairmont Orchid Hotel. You will have to pay for parking at the Fairmont. The Coral reef is protected by a natural sea wall and offers great snorkeling. There is a sandy beach at the Fairmont as well. Nice bathroom / shower facilities. [The Puako Petroglyph Park](#) nearby is worth the visit. The Petroglyph Park walk is a flat, 1 ½ mile walk with plenty of shade from the trees along the way. You can Park at the Petroglyph Park and then walk about ¼ of a mile south along the shore to Pauoa Bay if you don't want to pay for parking at the Fairmont.

[49 Black Sand Beach](#)



This beautiful black sand beach is a result of the 19th century lava flow from Mauna Kea. Nice bathrooms/showers. You will have to get a free parking pass from the guard. Towards the southside of the beach is nice snorkeling. Because black sand is relatively heavy, the black sands don't cloud up the water as much as white sand in the waves. Of course, black sand heats up from the sun more than white sand. On a clear day, you will see the Island of Kaho'olawe. [The Puako Petroglyph Park](#) is nearby and worth the visit. The Petroglyph Park walk is a flat, 1 ½ mile walk with plenty of shade from the trees along the way.

[Waikōloa Beach](#)



White Sands beach that is easier to access from the south end at Anaeho'omalū.

On the north end of Anaeho'omalū Bay in front of the Marriott Waikōloa Hotel.

[A-Bay - 'Anaeho'omalū Bay](#)



Anaeho'omalū Bay, often referred to as "A-Bay". A salt & pepper sand beach. Very photographic with the long row of palm trees and the adjacent fishponds. Towards the south there is plenty of shade. Nice bathrooms and showers. Park in the public parking near the Lava Lave Beach club (but don't park in the restaurant's parking area). The Lava Lave restaurant <https://lavalavabeachclub.com/> is a great place to have lunch or cocktails.

[Kua Bay - Manini'owali Beach](#)



Beautiful white sands beach, part of Kehaha Kai State Park. Nice restrooms/showers. It can sometimes be crowded so best to go in the morning. The trail nearby to the top of the [Pu'u Ku'ili](#) cinder cone offers a commanding view. The cinder cone is only 342 feet above sea level and an easy hike.

[Pele's Well](#)

Not so much a place for swimming but for watching the water surge out and then receding back into a lava tube. A great location for amazing photographs.

[Kohanaiki Beach Park](#)



On the shoreline of the Kohanaiki Private Club Community.

The shoreline access road has various parking places along the way. A popular surfing area. There are sections of coarse salt and pepper sand and lava rock.

There are numerous porta-potties as well as a nice bathroom with running water and showers to the south.

The southmost area past where you the road ends, is a popular area for experienced shore scuba divers familiar with the area.

[The Pines](#)

An area of Kohanaiki Beach Park by Puhili Point. The nickname of the Pines is somewhat of a misnomer since the trees are not “pine” trees but Helitrope and Hau trees.

[Honokohau Harbor Crescent Beach](#)

Located just south of the Honokohau Boat harbor. a.k.a. Dog Beach because it is one of the few places people can have dogs off-leash. If you are missing your dog back home, its fun to see the dogs playing in the water. A fantastic place for snorkelers and scuba divers. The center part of the beach is made up of coarse salt and pepper sand. You can walk out into the water in the center part without worrying about damaging corals or stepping on rocks or sea urchins. To the south (left side) is some of the best snorkeling and scuba diving to be had. Follow the shoreline to the south so you don’t have to worry about the boat traffic going in/out of the boat harbor. There is about 80 yards of large lava rocks to walk over before getting to the beach so be careful.

[Old Airport](#)

After 1970, when the “new Kona Airport (KOA)” was opened with longer runways to accommodate jets, the original “Old Airport” was closed and became the Old Airport State Recreation Area. A long stretch of beach with several pavilions. The waves at the far north area of the Old Airport are typically not as rough and better suited for swimming. It is a popular snorkeling and scuba diving area.

[Keiki Beach \(Queen's Bath\)](#)

A nice protected bay that can be good for young children when the ocean isn’t rough. Park in the parking lot next to the Kona Community Aquatic Center near the Old Airport. Walk across the soccer fields to an opening pathway. Follow the pathway past the 2 homes to the beach.

[Kamakahonu Beach](#)



Kamakahonu Beach also known as King Kam Beach. A small sandy beach in front of the Marriot King Kamehameha Beach Hotel. Ideally suited for sunbathing and children. The restored [Ahu'ena](#) heiau is next to the beach.

[Magic Sands Beach](#)



"Magic Sands Beach" a.k.a "White Sands Beach", "Disappearing Sands" or "La'aloa Beach County Park" (the official name). At about mile marker 4 on Ali'i Drive. It is called "Disappearing" or "Magic" Sands because a few times a year when rough surf hits, the fine white sand "disappears" when it is washed out to sea, exposing the black lava rock below. The cool part is that the fine white sand "magically" is washed back and reappears! NOTE: Waves can be rough and knock you around. You may end up with sand on your body where sand shouldn't be! There is a great restaurant to the north called Magics Beach Grill <http://magicsbeachgrill.com/>

[Kahalu'u Beach Park](#)



Kahalu'u Beach Park (about mile marker 5 on Alli' Drive). This protected bay is a good place to get comfortable snorkeling. Lifeguards during the day. Very shallow with sandy areas to stand up on if you need to adjust you mask. Don't go over to far the right side (north side) of the bay where people are surfing.

[Keauhou Bay](#)



Small Sandy Beach, north of the Volleyball Courts. Sandy bottom and very shallow. You can rent kayaks and SUP's at the bay from [Ocean Safaris Kayak Adventures](#). Best to call first to reserve kayaks or stand-up-paddleboards.

[Captain James Cook Monument](#)



You can hike to the monument or take a boat excursion. Great snorkeling but a 2 mile hike down and 2 mile hike back up with 1,300 feet of elevation change. Take plenty of water if you do the hike. The Trail head is just south of the intersection of the Mamalahoa Bypass Road and Napoopoo Road (On Napoopoo Rd. <https://goo.gl/maps/KHKujyxayDis6xBEA>

[Manini Beach Park](#)



Beautiful beach on Kaelakua Bay, across from the Captain Cook Monument. This secluded beach offers great snorkeling and scuba.

[Honaunau Bay aka 2-Step](#)

Spectacular snorkeling and diving. Two steep refers to the natural 2 steps that are worn into the rocks to get in and out. It is not a sandy beach but a flat area of lava rock that is good for sunbathing. The Pu'uhonua o Honaunau National Historic Park is just to the south. If you also go to the National Park, leave the car parked there since parking availability can sometimes be challenging at 2-Step. It is a short walk to 2-Step from the Park. The [Pu'uhonua o Honaunau National Historic Park](#) is worth the visit in itself and the Park Rangers are knowledgeable about Hawaiian history.

[Ho'okena Beach Park](#)

A historic Hawaiian canoe fishing village. There are remnants of an old steamship pier. There are still Canoes there used by local fisherman that still fish in the traditional ways. There are restrooms and showers. Camping is available with a permit.

[Pebbles Beach](#)

Pebbles Beach gets its name from the black lava pebbles. A fantastic Scuba diving site. Underwater, you will know you are getting close to the beach by the crackle of the pebbled shore moved by the waves. The layer of pebbles is thick and when shore diving with all your heavy gear, it is better to crawl out on your hands and knees rather than to immediately try to stand up in the thick layer of pebbles.