

## Maui Travel 2004

We just returned from our annual Maui trip, and are reporting in with the latest travel tips, places to see, and activity reports.



### ***Maui Travel Tips***

**Airfare** - In my article “Maui on Budget” there is a section on booking via travel agents to get better flights at a competitive price. Although we booked this trip as well via an agent (verse online), next vacation will likely be booked online. Shortly after we booked this package the online flight prices dropped to the rate we got through the agent, and we could have booked the car much less expensive.

**Car Rental** – There are several car rental alternatives on Maui that offer significantly better rates. One I came across extensively in the windsurfing community is “Al West’s Rentals”. In viewing the cars, and talking with the people that used these rental vehicles, I found the rates to be between 50 to 65% less than the main rental companies for comparable cars. These cars ranged from new to more used vehicles. While many of these were for windsurfing, I believe the rent to non-sailors as well. Another company to check is “Island Car Rentals of Maui” (<http://www.rentacarinmaui.com>).

## **Maui Activities**

**Travel to Hana** – For a change of pace we booked three nights in Hana this trip. For us, as well as based on feedback from others, staying in Hana is the way to go! My recommendation to others is to book two nights in Hana, and take some time to enjoy the area.



There are a number of good hikes in Wai'anapanapa State Park and at the Seven Pools. There are also a variety of beaches including black-sand, red-sand (clothing optional), and normal white-sand beaches. The city beach near the old pier is well protected for kids use. There are several online listings for booking condo accommodations (search Hana accommodations, Hana condos, or just go to [www.vrbo.com](http://www.vrbo.com)).

### **Snorkeling –**

We had several days out to different snorkeling locations this trip. Each is listed below...

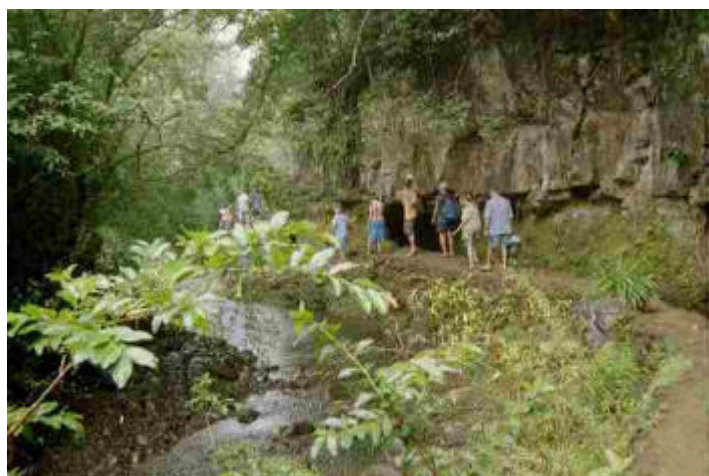
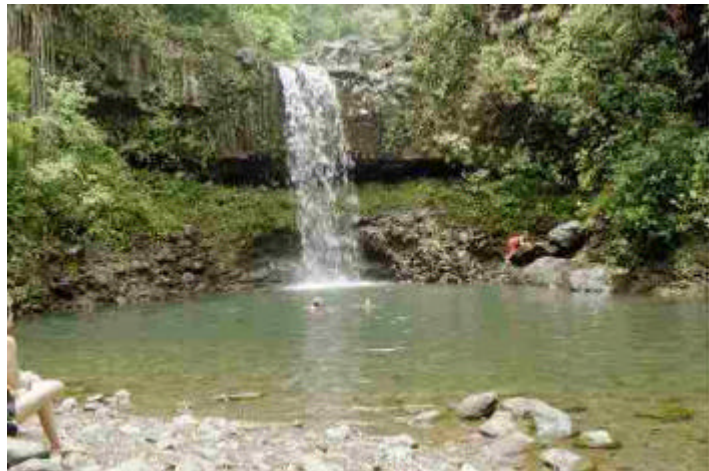
- **End of the Road** – While I can never remember the exact name of the snorkel spot past Wialea, it is best described as the end of the road. Normally a good place for a variety of fish, this year the waves were particularly high and often dangerous. Of two attempts to snorkel there we only managed brief snorkeling in the shallow waters on our second trip. Breaking wave sets of about 3 feet were a little much for the kids this year...
- **Molokini** – This was the first year we have taken the Molokini snorkel trips. We chose the Ocean Voyager trip from the Pacific Whale Foundation. This offered stops at Molokini and turtle arches. The service was good, good equipment, and good food. I was not particularly excited about the trip overall as there were less fish at Molokini than expected, and the water was too rough near turtle arches to see much. In other words, the snorkeling from Maui's shores was better than my experience on this trip. We had kids on this trip and the conditions particularly at

the turtle spot were beyond kids level. With my opinion stated, some guests did see turtles, and others had a dolphin swim by. I would give this a neutral rating so you can decide based on others feedback.

- **Maui Prince Hotel** – The turtle arches location that the tours bring you to is not far off shore from the Maui Prince hotel in Wialea. We took a day trip there and I snorkeled from shore to see the turtles. Unfortunately I was directed to snorkel the left side of the beach... that meant the left side if standing in the ocean facing shore! The turtles are mainly to the right when on the beach facing the water... That is where the tours go. Will try there again next year....

**Twin Falls Hike and Swim** – The Twin Falls hike and swim made for a nice day outing.

The hike in is approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, and you can do a loop at the end to go past both falls. The falls are located on the road to Hana before the narrow windy sections begin, and are easy to drive to. This is the rainy side (which explains the water falls) and therefore the trail is quite muddy. Near the end we navigated through water about two feet deep to get to one of the falls. Overall this was a pretty easy hike, and a nice scenic location. Nice freebee for a day outing.



**Nicest South-side Beaches** – Each year there are a few favorite beaches we visit...

- **Grand Wialea** – The Grand Wialea beach is one of our favorites. This beach is large, clean, has excellent sand for the kids, and moderate to light break for family wave fun. The beach access provides restrooms and showers. Overall the Grand Wialea offers a nice atmosphere for a day at the beach.
- **Wialea Fairmont Hotel** – We had an excellent day at the Fairmont beach while the south waves were high. Although the waves were breaking with about four foot faces, they broke well off shore and rolled in the rest of the way. The white water near shore provided a good environment for our kids.
- **Kihei/Maalea Beaches** – The beaches between Kihei and Maalea provide a unique experience in that they are hardly used! We enjoyed a day on the beach with essentially no one in sight. The waves were light, but made good boggy boarding waves for the kids and I. Good quite day at the beach.



Unfortunately legal disclaimers required on everything these days – All vacationers need to assess what is safe for their kids swimming abilities. The information provided above should not be construed as recommendations for the use of, or safety of, any of these locations.

### ***Kids Highlights***

For all of the activities the kids and adults do on a trip to Maui, there are a few the kids seem to enjoy more than others. This year we had our two boys (ages 5 and 7), and niece (also 7).

- **Pool Day** - For these kids they would have been satisfied to go to the pool every day. They were often slow to accept day trips but often happy when we were under way.

- **Beach Trips** – The kids always enjoyed the time at the beach whether it was playing in the waves, or making castles with other kids. Our kids do not sit still to lounge in the sun, but are happy as long as they have these other beach activities.
- **Snorkeling** – At the younger ages the attention span is pretty short for snorkeling, but they do get a great deal of excitement of the few fish they see! Our kids really enjoyed the fish at the end of the road and talk highly of the experience.

## ***Maui Weather***

- **Temperature** – I was a little concerned about the summer heat in Maui as we usually go in April when it is cooler. To my pleasant surprise summer temperatures were not much warmer than April. The key factor is the summer trade winds regulate the temperature to the surrounding ocean temperatures.
- **Windsurfing** - Maui's summer provides the most consistent winds of the season, and I talked with several people that sailed 10 days straight before taking time off to recover. I sailed eight days of our trip hitting winds ranging from 16 to high 30's. Windsurfing Maui is an article unto itself, and the details are of less interest to most. Just worth saying there is sailing there!

## ***Summary***

We had another good trip to Maui this year, and continue to expand our experiences there. Even with a three-week vacation we found the end came and we felt we ran out of time. Trips back to the beaches of Napili and top of the volcano will have to wait until next year. Until then, it is back to the working world....

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*This article is provided by Mr. Marc Elpel and [SunsetMaui.com](http://SunsetMaui.com). Mr Elpel has been an avid activity based traveler for years with extensive travel in the Hawaiian Islands.*

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