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Maui Travel Guide: The Best Things to do in Maui

Posted: Mar. 12th, 2010 | By Debbi & William D. Kickham, Esq.



Luxury Vacations: The locals say "Maui No Ka Oi," meaning "Maui is the best." And it's no surprise. With its warm waters, beautiful beaches, famous rainbows, magnificent sunsets, and oceans of activities, Maui is a superb vacation destination.

How to make the most of your stay?

Our first word of advice: When you land, get a free copy of Maui Gold at the airport. This slim little volume will provide you with more information than you ever bargained for, providing an overview of everything there is to do on the island.

Also — remember. All beaches in Hawaii are free, public beaches. And while, as a JustLuxe reader, you're probably going to stay at a five-star resort with a magnificent beach — nothing is to stop you from going next door if you like the sands over there better. We recommend Kaanapali Beach, which is known for its smooth waters and excellent snorkeling. Take our advice and buy an inexpensive tube at the ubiquitous ABC stores, have them blow it up for you, and you can spend your afternoon floating with your posterior in the Pacific. In fact, we can't think of a better way to spend any day.

That said, here are some of our favorite things we did on our most recent trip, which you should definitely add to your agenda.



Zip Lining

We had ziplined in Alaska, and so when we

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heard about a new ziplining experience on Maui, we were excited! We drove the hour-long ride from Wailea to Makawao, and found ourselves upcountry, in the rainforest at Piiholo Ranch Zipline. Here, we were weighed, and received our zipline trolleys according to our avoirdupois. Next, we did a beginner's zipline (which, at the end of our 5th zipline, seemed like child's play, it was so easy!). This first zipline is really designed to get you to "know the ropes," quite

literally, and to understand the hand commands of the instructors, who are waiting for you at the end of each zipline. The first one was a piece of cake. We hiked and trekked up steps for the four subsequent ziplines, and each one was higher and longer than the previous one, with the fourth zipline measuring a quarter-mile, and the final one measuring a half-mile. It definitely gets your heart racing and your adrenalin pumping — whoo-hoo!

On the fourth one, Deb's instructors got more than they bargained for — she ziplined in, and then her trolley pulled her back out over the trees. Bill had to saddle up next to her and literally, throw her a lifeline to pull her back in. (Bill's always said that I saved his life when we met 14 years ago, so he needed to save Deb now!) Then we did the fifth zipline — in the pouring rain, which actually made the experience all the more fun. You'll be out there in nature, in the rainforest, smelling the aroma of the eucalyptus trees all around you, and having the time of your life. We describe it as surfing in the sky! Four ziplines cost \$140pp plus tax, while five ziplines costs \$190pp plus tax. Contact: (808) 572-1717.

Warren & Annabelle's

Be forewarned: everything in Maui closes up at 10 p.m. Take our word for it — Front Street in Lahaina resembles a ghost town by 11 p.m. If you only do one thing on Maui, in the evening, you MUST schedule a night with Warren & Annabelle's, one of the most wonderful, exciting, entertaining shows you will ever see, anywhere. (And refreshingly, unlike many nightclub shows, there is absolutely no profanity or scatological humor. What a welcome relief!) We have had the good fortune to see many magic shows in our travel careers (especially on cruise ships), but nothing beats Warren & Annabelle's. It's funny, it's awe-inspiring, and you won't want the fun to end.

On the night that we visited, we were graced by the entertainment of not one but two first-class magicians — Dana Daniels, and John Shryock — who were standing in for the inimitable Warren Gibson, who was on vacation. You'll be dazzled by the dynamite array of magic tricks, and you'll laugh all the way through each show. We're talking sleight-of-hand, performed intimately in a 78-seat theatre, so that you are up-close-and-personal to all of the action. Here's what you should do: get the most popular ticket, the Royal Flush (\$94.50pp), which entitles you to admission to the two-hour magic and comedy show; two premium cocktails; a combination platter of delicious gourmet appetizers (who wouldn't want coconut shrimp and chicken satay?); a fabulous gourmet dessert; with all gratuities included. (Cost of the show only is \$56).



While you dine on such delectable treats, you'll be treated to the piano tunes of "Annabelle," the resident ghost. After all that, it's time for the show — and what a show it is! No two performances are alike, but you'll see magic that happens right before your very eyes — and you'll be left scratching your head wondering, "How the heck did he do that?" Dana Daniels, who is featured in the Christian comedy DVD Thou Shalt Laugh, did a hilarious routine with his psychic bird, and later, John Shryock, who has frequently performed at The Magic Castle in Hollywood, also captivated us with his magic capers. (Yes, he really did change a \$100 bill into one dollar.) This is Maui's best, most entertaining show, and you've just got to see it. It sells out nightly, and that's no trick. Tell 'em we sent you! Contact: (808) 667-MAGIC (6244).

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Cirque Polynesia

Take incredible death-defying circus with acrobatic feats, add a Polynesian flair, and create an all new show at the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa. What do you have? Well, it's Cirque Polynesia, one of the most fabulous shows we've seen on Maui. Let's face it, luaus are great, but after you've been to, say, five of them, you've really been there and done that, and it's great to have yet another entertainment option on Maui.

This new show features an ensemble of internationally acclaimed performers, including two members of the famous "Flying Wallenda" family — Lyric Wallenda, 25 years old, and her mother Rietta, 48 (and 103 pounds) who performs an incredible feat: twirling around the air, and spinning while only being held in the air by a strap underneath her neck. Death-defying and dynamite!

This is a great show for the entire family, and you won't be disappointed. There is jaw-dropping acrobatics galore, and you won't want the evening to end. In fact, just so the fun keeps coming and coming, here's our suggestion. Go to the Cirque Polynesia show at 7 p.m., which lasts a little over an hour. Then, make a dinner reservation for 8:30 at Umalu, the exciting new poolside restaurant at the Hyatt Regency Maui (we recommend the delicious fish tacos). Then, at 10 p.m., do the "Tour of the Stars" up on the Hyatt roof (see below). It will all be the very model of a major memorable Maui evening!

Tickets are \$75pp for the first five rows; \$65 for rows after that. You can also do a dinner show at Umalu (either before or after the performance); prices are \$119 for the first five rows; \$99 after that. Contact: (808) 667-4540.

Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa

When you're in Maui, you'll notice that the stars above you seem more abundant and more amazing. To learn all you can about them, do one of our favorite activities — the Tour of the Stars that the Hyatt Regency Maui Resort & Spa gives on Friday and Saturday nights. When you check in upstairs, you'll notice that the hotel offers you complimentary "Milky Way" and "Starburst" candies — an adorable touch. We met with professional astronomer Ed Mahoney, who took us out on the roof, where two giant telescopes, and binoculars, awaited us (as did champagne and chocolate-covered strawberries). The first thing we looked at was Jupiter, more than 460 million miles away (or just one light year). Then we took a long hard look at so many things astronomical — Rigel in Orion; Pleiades the Seven Sisters (called "Subaru" in Japanese); even the moon, and learned that the circumference of earth is only 24,000 miles. It was all fascinating, and worth every penny. Afterwards, you'll amaze yourself by what you know, every time you look up in the sky. Tour of the Stars is held daily at 8, 9 and 10 p.m.; and on Friday and Saturday nights for couples only at 11 p.m. \$25pp; \$15 per child. Contact: (808) 661-1234.

Goofy Foot Surf School

Goofy Foot Surf School guarantees that you'll hang ten or your money back — and that same promise has been given to the 45,000 students the school has taught in the past seven years. Take a private lesson in Lahaina with master instructor and owner Tim Sherer, who has personally taught more than 30,000 beginners; his fee is \$200pp for two hours. We donned rash-guard T-shirts and reef shoes and smothered ourselves in sunblock. Did we rise to the occasion — hey, was *Endless Summer* a great movie? Contact: (808) 244-WAVE.



UFO Parasail

Para-sail away — at least once in your lifetime! At UFO Parasail, you'll fly about 600 feet in the air for seven minutes (\$65pp), or 1200 feet for 10 minutes, (\$75pp). If you fly in tandem, and have just tied the knot, you can even take along a "Just Maui-ed" sign. Capture the photos too; \$15 for 12 images. Contact: (800) FLY-4UFO.

Maui Downhill

Cyclists, unite! Maui's most famous bike ride starts at the park entrance to Haleakala at 6,500 feet and winds up in Makawao. "On a clear day the visibility is for 100 miles; it's so amazing," says Catherine Stephan, reservationist. Maui Downhill offers guided tours that start at \$69pp and go up to \$155pp. The sunrise excursion picks you up at 3:30 a.m. (Ouch!), with arrival at the top at 4 a.m. At about 6 a.m., you'll bike for about an hour before having a sit-down breakfast.. Bring warm clothing — it's only about 40-degrees Fahrenheit at the top! Contact: (808) 871-2155.



Old Lahaina Luau

You haven't done "I'm a tourist in Hawaii" until you've been to a luau, and the one to lust after is the award-winning Old Lahaina Luau. Set in an oceanfront area just a 10-minute walk from the harbor, this three-hour-long feast features amazing Polynesian food — everything from pork roasted in an imu oven (set below the ground, in a pit) to haupia (coconut custard), all served at long wooden picnic tables. The entertainment includes beautiful male and female dancers in grass skirts and handmade costumes in vibrant colors, who, through dance, tell the traditional stories of Hawaii, such as how the ancient Tahitians migrated to Hawaii in canoes. It's quite a show—the Tahitian tamure, a rapid dance performed to pounding drums, is one of the sexiest

dances you'll ever see. \$96 per person plus tax includes all alcoholic drinks; children are \$65pp. Contact: (800) 248-5828.

Before you get to Hawaii:

If you're traveling to Hawaii from the East Coast, or even the Midwest, take our advice and break up your trip with a one- or two-night stay in Los Angeles, to make travel easier and give you a chance to obviate any jet lag. Here's what we do — and we highly recommend it. Book one or two nights at the Four Points by Sheraton right at the Los Angeles International Airport. In the past five years Starwood and its partners have invested more than \$1 Billion to reinvent the **Four Points** brand — and it shows. If you're going to stay at the airport, our Number One choice is the Four Points. There are numerous advantages to doing this, and let us point them out.

- 1). Their beds: We love the bed. Starwood/Sheraton is famous for its beds, and you will slumber down and sink into sleep the minute your head hits the pillow, these beds are so comfortable. (You'll have a champagne experience, at sparkling-cider prices.)
- 2). The LAX property just underwent a \$12 Million renovation, making it even more lovely and customer-friendly. The fitness center, (24/7, of course, and complimentary) is three times bigger, and now there are complimentary computers and printers in the lobby. The comfortable rooms have high-end basics and great amenities including free Wi-Fi and bottled water, plus coffee makers with coffee, ironing boards and irons, and refrigerators on request.
- 3). You'll love the Four Points by LAX's wildly successful Brewster's Bar & Grill, serving 110 different beers from 26 countries. In fact, it's popular even with the local Los Angelenos, who come here to sample the many brewskis. For example, try Czech Republic Czechvar, German organic Schneider Edelweisse, Classic Duvel Golden Belgian Ale, and Belgian St. Louis Kriek cherry lambic. It's all there, with a great menu, as well as 17 — count 'em — 17 flat screens to watch your favorite sports programs.
- 4). The hotel is in a GREAT location — you can take the \$3 Ocean Express to get to Manhattan Beach and spend the day surfing. Or simply drive one-hour to either Universal Studios or

Disney World. Or drive to Beverly Hills. The hotel also has a rental car agency right on site (so you can get your car on the very morning you need it, and not the night before) and there's even a Smart Car promotion. If you're an In-N-Out burger aficionado (and we know you're out there), the Four Points also has a special package for that too.

5). The hotel is just a quarter-mile from the LAX Airport, so there are free shuttles all day long. (A no brainer.)

Who knows? You might fall so in love with the Four Points LAX they you forget all about the remainder of your trip!

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Two More Recommendations...

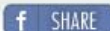
We couldn't finish this article without giving you two more of our favorite, insider Maui recommendations.

The first is **Maui Babe**. If you want a great, golden tan, you simply must purchase a bottle of Maui Babe Amazing Browning Lotion. Creator Joe Rossi created his magical formula with baby oil, iodine, coffee, aloe, kukui nut oil, and other ingredients, and if you apply it alone, or even under sunscreen, you will turn a lovely cocoa tan. (Bill swears by it.) Celebrities such as Clint Eastwood and Paris Hilton have been photographed using it. Don't visit Maui without it. Every ABD store and Long's under the sun stocks it.

The second is the new **book**, *Top Maui Restaurants From Thrifty to Four-Star: Indispensable Advice from Experts Who Live, Play, & Eat on Maui* (Maui Media, 2010). Written by the husband-and-wife team of James and Molly Jacobsen, this great guide will be one that you'll want to pack in your carry-on bag, to use as a reference throughout your trip. To say that these two love, love, love food is an understatement. They live for food — and it's obvious. You'll find frank, in-depth information that will help with all of your dining choices. And we totally agree with them — Ferraro's and A Saigon Café are fantastic!

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