



Big Island Visitors Bureau Media Contact:

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WHAT TO DO ON HAWAI‘I’S BIG ISLAND – FOR FREE!

Kalapana Lava Viewing Area, located at the end of Highway 130 in the Puna District, affords a dazzling vantage point to see molten lava pouring into the sea. Conditions change daily, but visitors to the safe coastal viewing area have been awed by the fury of roaring steam and exploding lava gushing from the black lava plain into the roiling ocean, adding more and more land to “the Big Island.” Open 5 p.m. – 10 p.m., but no cars are allowed into the parking area after 8 p.m. Call (808) 961-8093 for the latest conditions, or visit www.lavainfo.us.

Pana‘ewa Rainforest Zoo & Gardens is a 12-acre rainforest zoo located south of Hilo on Māmaki Street. Namasté, its white Bengal tiger, gets fed daily at 3:30, and there’s a children’s petting zoo on Saturdays from 1:30-2:30. The zoo is also known for its beautiful botanical gardens, which have more than 100 varieties of palm trees and other plants. Open 9-4 daily. (808) 959-7224.

‘Akaka Falls State Park, located 13 miles north of Hilo above Honomū, has an easy and pleasant footpath loop that provides views of two beautiful waterfalls. It’s one of the Big Island’s most-visited spots.

Mokupāpapa Discovery Center showcases the marine life of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, perhaps Earth’s most remote and pristine ocean environment. Scientific interpretation, a 2,500-gallon saltwater aquarium, and more await visitors. Located at 308 Kamehameha Ave. in Hilo, near the Hilo Farmers Market. Open Tues. – Sat. (808) 933-8195 or visit <http://papahanaumokuakea.gov/education/center.html>

Kalōpā State Recreation Area is off Highway 19 at the end of Kalōpā Road, southeast of Honoka‘a. This beautiful and cool park, situated at 2000 feet, has picnic areas, an easy nature hike in a native ‘ōhi‘a forest, and additional trails in the adjoining forest reserve.

Kohala Historical Sites State Monument, off Hwy. 270 near ‘Upolu Airport, consists of two historic sites. Mo‘okini Heiau, a National Historic Monument, is the most famous ancient sacrificial heiau (temple) in the state. The adjacent site is Kamehameha’s Birth Place, a memorial to the 18th-century chief who united the islands under one rule.

Lapakahi State Historical Park is off of Hwy. 270, 12.4 miles north of Kawaihae. It is the partially restored remains of an ancient coastal settlement, and there are daily cultural demonstrations and also story telling.

Puakō Petroglyph Preserve, off Highway 19 and just north of the entrance to the Fairmont Orchid on the Kohala Coast, offers a short hike that leads to more than 3,000 petroglyphs; the hotel provides a free map and brochure.

Kona Historical Society’s traditional Portuguese bread-baking, every Thursday 11 a.m. – 2 pm. See how Portuguese families in Hawai‘i traditionally baked their weekly supply of bread in large, wood-fired “fornos” (stone ovens)—and sample some, too! (808) 323-3222 or email khs@konahistorical.org.

Ka Lae, the remote and windswept southernmost part of the island, is where Polynesians first arrived in Hawai‘i and settled. Now a National Historical Landmark district, it is a beautiful place to look out to sea and contemplate what caused Polynesians to outfit their voyaging canoes and set out purposefully seeking new lands, as well as their arrival in Hawai‘i.

Lava Tree State Monument, off Pāhoa-Pohoiki Road, is 2.7 miles southeast of Pāhoa. The site is a forest of “lava trees,” formed by a lava flow that swept through the area and left behind lava molds of tree trunks.

Maunakea, above the clouds, at 9,300 feet, the Visitors Information Station offers displays about the mountain’s world-class astronomical observatories; and every evening of the year, even on holidays, its volunteer astronomy buffs roll out telescopes for an outstanding—and free—stargazing program.

Special note to media: The Big Island Visitors Bureau (BIVB) recognizes the use of the ‘okina [‘] or glottal stop, one of the eight consonants of the modern Hawaiian language; and the kahakō [ā] or macron (e.g., in place names of Hawai‘i such as Kīlauea). However, BIVB respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.

For BIVB’s press kit, photo gallery, press releases and industry news, visit
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