

Airport you're flying into: "Kona" (located on the Big Island of Hawaii, airline code is "KOA"). The town is known as "Kona" or "Kailua-Kona", our complex is called "Kona Isle".

Packing and general information:

If this is your first trip to Hawaii, you'll undoubtedly want to pack more than you'll ever need. This seems to be common, but if you'll stick with the items I have mentioned below, you should be covered. You're entitled to two carry-on bags per person, which includes a purse (call your airline and double-check this), but that's pretty standard. The bags must meet certain dimension requirements, so you should call and make sure that what you think will go on the plane actually fits in their overhead bins. Try to keep your luggage "carry-on" - you waste valuable vacation time waiting for stowed bags to be delivered at the airport, plus bags are regularly lost for awhile in Hawaii, particularly if you have a layover in Oahu enroute to Kona. Your lost luggage will probably be delivered within a day or so, but remember you're going into "Hawaiian Standard Time" and they are just slightly less frantic than we are on the mainland, (like 10,000% less frantic), so it may take awhile to get your bags to you! **Look over this entire list of what to bring and what to leave at home**, to familiarize yourself with how simple packing for Hawaii can be.

****IMPORTANT: Our home is classified as "smoking permitted", but please do so on the lanai, not inside the unit.**

** The most important statement we can make is to **leave all jewelry at home** - don't wear rings, (including wedding rings), earrings, bracelets, watches, necklaces, etc. for any reason. My boss lost his wedding ring on his honeymoon during an ocean swim there, many friends have also lost their rings and other jewelry, and this is very typical. Just keep them at your homes, and you won't need to worry about them. The condo does not have a safe, to put these items in when you're swimming, sightseeing, etc., so they're much better off being left at home.

In general, make sure you have the following items:

Sunscreen (remember, you're very close to the equator there and you can burn very, very quickly, even if you normally tan easily. Buy "25" or higher).

Hats/baseball caps to shield your face and eyes from the sun

Sunglasses

Plane tickets

Car rental confirmation

Condo confirmation/information

A couple cups of laundry soap, to do clothes mid-week and maybe before you head back, rather than buying a box there and dragging the box home or leaving it. Our condo has its own washer/dryer in the kitchen. (These are stackable, use about 1/4 cup of soap per **SMALL** load). You can do laundry mid-week, and just before you leave, if you'd like.

Traveler's checks

Credit card (you can't rent a car without one)

Driver's licenses

Your Costco card, if you want to buy large quantities of food, disposable cameras, sodas, etc. (Keep your good cameras at home since they can get ruined easily by the salty air. Disposables work really well, especially the "panoramic" ones. Bring a video camera if you want, but you must keep it protected from the sand, etc.) Costco is located between the airport and town of Kona, and they usually have the cheapest gasoline you can find. If you don't have a Costco card, you might consider applying for one. The savings in gasoline charges can be significant.

Remember that this is a condo with no daily maid service. A small supply of toilet paper and bath soap will be provided when you arrive, but you will probably need to purchase a supply of both when you get there, unless you want to pack some from home. You might want to throw a couple rolls of toilet paper and a bar of soap in your luggage, rather than buying those items in Kona.

Also remember that there is a "block" on the phone for long-distance or incoming collect calls. Bring a cell phone, calling card to use, or a phone card of some sort, if you're going to be calling off-island. It does allow (800) off-island calls.

When you're not in the condo, please lock the unit securely, especially the sliders facing the ocean. There's not much crime in Kona, but you're in a ground-floor unit, and someone walking by will be able to see inside. And turning off the ceiling fans is greatly appreciated, when you're not there. We're able to keep the rental rates low if everyone assists with electricity usage, etc.

Personal items: (Each person coming should bring...)

(3) pairs of shorts

(3) T-shirts

Underwear

Jammies

Light jacket, if you plan to drive to the Hilo side of the island where it's cooler

Light jeans, same reason as above

(You can wear the light jeans and jacket on the airplane, since the airline cabins are usually kept quite cool, and change into shorts when you land in Kona)

Bathing suit(s)

Toothbrush

Toothpaste

Deodorant

Medications/pills

Shaving cream, if needed (you'll probably need to purchase razors in Kona, with the heightened security at the airports, unless you're putting a suitcase in the "belly" of the plane.

Feminine items, if needed

Shampoo

Sandals

Lightweight tennies or deck shoes (leave high-tops and leather shoes at home)

Find swimming booties at any sporting good store, or maybe Wal Mart, etc. Buy the kind that have rubber on the soles - they keep you from slipping on submerged rocks in the ocean.

Book/magazine to read on the plane and in the condo.

Reading glasses

Snorkeling equipment - you can rent masks, etc. in Kona, but it's cheaper to buy your own on the mainland and get to use it every single day. Rental masks in town are thoroughly washed between visitors, but it's nicer to put your mouth on YOUR stuff. Also, you might try Play It Again Sports in Kona, (their phone number is 808-334-0051) since sometimes you can get a great price there on used snorkeling equipment.

Fanny pack (instead of carrying purses around once you get there)

You may want to bring a pair of small binoculars to watch for dolphin, whale and other activity from our lanai, as our home is literally "ocean front".

All of these items can easily be brought in your carry-on luggage.

There is absolutely no reason to bring dressy clothes, ties, coats, high heels, or stockings - you simply won't need any of these items. Also don't bring make-up or hair rollers - you'll be in the water so much of the time that it's pointless to worry about setting hair, fixing faces, etc.

Some people like to pack an empty, lightweight bag inside their outbound carry-on luggage for the souvenirs they'll want to bring home. Putting stuff in the belly of the plane on the return trip works okay, since the vacation is over by that time, so who cares? And Brad and I sometimes box up things and send them to our house via the post office in Kona, to save having to drag calendars and other heavy items through the airports, etc.

Use either the Web to get information on Hawaii, or call AAA for booklets on Hawaii, if you belong to that service, so you can really find out about the history of where you're going. Words are very long and confusing in Hawaii - they only have 12 letters in their alphabet, so they use independently pronounced vowels over and over. "Alii" is pronounced "Ah-lee-ee", etc. There are several islands in the Hawaiian chain - you're going to the Big Island of Hawaii, and staying on the Kona side of that island, if you want to research where you're going. (The town of Hilo is on the other side of the island). And I have a kind of "cheat sheet" about the Big Island, which I'm attaching to this letter, about things to do and see on the island.

The weather in Kona always hovers around 85 degrees, so keep that in mind when you're packing clothing. Lightweight is the way to go - whether it's in T-shirts, or jammies, or shoes, or shorts (in other words, leave the denim at home - too hot!). The lighter the material, the happier you'll be! And you'll be wet most of the time from swimming, so be really casual in the items you pick.

Inside the unit:

This is a one-bedroom, one-bath condo that sleeps 4 people. It directly faces the ocean, so you'll probably be spending a lot of your time either on the patio, watching the waves and sunsets, or sitting on the man-made beach or rock wall, directly in front of our unit. There is no obstruction of your view between our patio and the ocean.

It may take a day or so to get used to the sound of the ocean, since it's so close, but you'll soon be sleeping like a baby and will truly miss those waves when you return home.

Inside the condo, we've provided many things, which we hope are still there when you show up. These are for our guests to use, so feel free to use whatever you'd like. There may be more items than I'm mentioning here, simply because guests will purchase items for their vacation and leave those in the unit.

In the hallway closet you'll find boogie boards, water toys, sand mats and beach towels. There's also a vacuum, if you want to keep sand or dirt picked up during your stay. I believe this closet also has (in the past) had styrofoam coolers, for picnics. If there isn't one there, you can purchase one at a store and make yourselves cheap, fun picnics to take to various beaches. Make sure you've prepared plenty of ice in the freezer to put into the cooler, and just spend the day wherever you want, with a load of food right with you. Many of the beaches you'll be going to are a great distance from food and drink, so preparing a picnic can be a good idea, and lots of fun.

Under the television is a CD player, and lots of board games, (for children and adults), cards, poker chips, etc. The unit also has a video machine, if you'd like to bring movies from home, but you can also rent movies there. It uses DVD tapes.

We flew a very famous Southern California painter to Kona, and she created the most incredible mural on the living room wall that you'll ever see. It's "old Hawaii", and it's magnificent. You'll love really looking at it, day or night. And each time you look, you'll find a different waterfall, or creature, that you hadn't seen before. It's incredible. ****What is not provided, and we don't permit, are crayons or marking pens in the unit. Children might want to "add" to the mural, which would be unbelievably expensive for the parents to have repaired, as they would need to fly the artist from California and she charges \$1,000 per day, with a 5-day minimum. The mural must be protected at all times.**

There is an answering machine for the phone (and the number there is (808) 329-4705). Feel free to leave that phone number with family and friends on the mainland. Since this is a vacation rental, we have a "block" on the phone for long-distance or collect calls. It does accept outgoing (800) numbers, and you can use your calling card, as well. And any calls to anywhere on the entire island are free, so even if you call Hilo, there's no charge. If you call off-island, however, you'll need to use a calling card or phone card of some sort.

The bathroom has a shower and a bathtub.

The bedroom has a queen-sized bed, and in the closet is an iron and ironing board, and lots of books. There are plenty of drawers and closet space for your clothes.

The kitchen should have a coffee maker, coffee grinder, microwave, full-sized stove, full-sized refrigerator/freezer, stackable clothes washer and dryer (only use about 1/4 cup of laundry soap when you use the washer, **AND ONLY DO SMALL LOADS, DO NOT STUFF IT**, since it's so much smaller than the ones at home and heavy loads won't dry well, and the washer could break. We want to always provide a washer/dryer in E-1, but won't be able to unless everyone only does small loads), a rice cooker, and lots of plates, cups, glasses, silverware, pots, pans, cooking utensils, etc. The vacation renters do a lot of cooking there, and leave the spices in the cupboards, rather than bring them home, so look through the cupboards before you run to the store. You may find what you need already there, from a previous guest. And people tend to buy laundry soap there and leave it, so a supply may already be ready for you. Again, use up whatever you find, and if you want to replace items before you head home, the next guests will appreciate it. There are several large grocery stores near you, to purchase whatever you'll need.

The front room has a pull-out queen-sized sofa bed, and sometimes the guests prefer to sleep there (rather than in the bedroom) with the sliding windows open a bit, to have the breezes right on your faces, and hear the waves all night. Feel free to use it, if you'd prefer it to the bedroom.

The patio has a small table and four chairs, plus a love seat - I imagine you'll be having a lot of your meals and drinks there, just staring at the ocean. We've also installed pull-down shades, which really help with afternoon sun.

By the way, to your left (when you're on the patio) is a "sea pool", that is filled by the waves of the ocean. You're welcome to use it, and it's fun to swim with some of the fish and turtles flipped in by the action of the waves. When swimming in that pool, we recommend using those "water booties", which give traction, because the bottom of that pool can be slippery, since it's never bleached or cleaned like a normal pool. There's also a regular pool to your right.

Right down near the water you'll find a wonderful picnic section, with tables and BBQ's. Feel free to BBQ every night, if you want, then eat your dinner down there. It's heaven. Many of our guests have said they make daily trips to Honokohau Marina and Harbor, for fresh fish to BBQ, and several have shipped fish to their residences on the mainland from there, just before they leave to come home. I guess they pack the fish in dry ice or something, and it arrives perfectly, from what we've heard. If you're not into fish, the grocery stores certainly carry chicken, steaks, hamburger meat, etc. Restaurants in Kona aren't as expensive as some of the other islands, but you can save a great deal of money by preparing at least one of your meals in the condo each day. This is the beauty of a condo, rather than a hotel room, where every bite of food, or drink, has to be purchased in a restaurant. Stock up on sodas and juices, etc. at Costco, or one of the grocery stores, and it will be much less expensive.

Please sign the guest book, and feel free to read what other visitors have written.

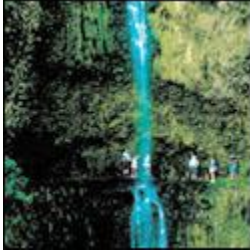
When you leave to go home, we have a cleaning service who will come and prepare the unit for the next guests, so you don't need to wash sheets, towels, etc.



Things to see/do in Kona, on the Big Island of Hawaii:

**** Important:** To the Hawaiians the land is sacred; it is called the *aina*. Before building any new dwelling in the islands, the land should first be blessed by a kahuna or priest, a tradition that has existed for hundreds of years. It is best not to mess with the *aina*.

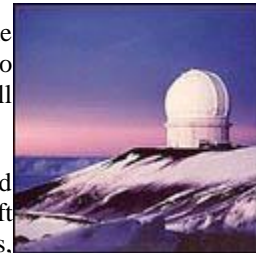
**** Brief tour around the island:** Since the Big Island has 11 of the 13 defined microclimates, you would do well to discover it a little at a time. Take a couple of days to drive around the island instead of trying to squeeze it all into one day. Remember, you're on Hawaiian time now, so there's no need to hurry.



You can start by heading on a southern (counterclockwise) course around the island. First stop may be the National Historic Park, **Puuhonua O Honaunau (Place of Refuge)**, detailed more on following pages, where the kapu (law) breakers of old sought to be absolved of their death sentences (the single punishment for all crimes).

Farther along is South Point; its claim to fame is being the southernmost tip of the U.S. Then perhaps you'll want to stop in the charming community of Naalehu before continuing on to **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park**, (more info follows) where the visitor center highlights the history of one of the world's few "visitor-friendly" active volcanoes. Where else in the world might you view a molten lava field trekking relentlessly onward in its path to the sea?

Proceeding on from the volcano, you come to Hilo, the closest thing the Big Island has to a city. You can visit a rain forest or snorkel at Kapoho tide pools. How about a tour of the Macadamia Nut Factory or a stroll along the Hilo Bay waterfront?



Heading north from Hilo on Highway 19, you are now halfway around the island. As you make your way along the Hamakua Coast, take the left at Highway 220. A short drive plus a half-mile hike will let you witness, up close, breathtaking **Akaka Falls**.

Continue north on Highway 19 to the turnoff for Honokaa/Waipio. About 10 miles down, Highway 240 brings you to the **Waipio Valley Lookout**. Its sheer cliffs and awe-inspiring beauty make it hard to believe that places like this exist on Earth. Explore the valley floor by horseback, four-wheel drive, or mule-drawn wagon.



Before returning to Kailua-Kona, consider a visit to the Kohala resorts, home to some of the most extensive stretches of white sand beach the Big Island has to offer. If you're looking for fine dining or premier golf courses, the "gold coast" of Kohala is the place to go.

Twice as large as all of the other major Hawaiian Islands combined, (it's actually the size of Connecticut!), the Big Island is also the youngest of the island chain. At some 800,000 years of age, it's also still growing.

The Hawaii Volcanoes National Park contains one of the world's most active volcanoes which continues to pour into the sea, adding to the shoreline.

From its snow capped peaks to its black, white, pink and green sand beaches, the island is really a study in contrasts. Rocky deserts and lush rainforests. Peaceful bays and rolling pasture land. Luxurious orchids and waterfalls on the windward side, and areas on the western slopes where the world famous Kona coffee is grown.

The Big Island is the place for adventure. Horseback riding in Waimea. Golf everywhere. Snow skiing (really!) at Mauna Kea. The ocean is gorgeous at any time of year. Kona is the marlin fishing capital of the Pacific. Or maybe the quaint shops and restaurants of Hilo, will be enough to keep you thoroughly entertained. The Big Island is also the place for history. All over the island you'll see petroglyphs, and heiau, ancient places of worship. The royal summer palace and the first Christian church in Hawaii will take you back in time.

From the rainbows and waterfalls of the windward side to the sun drenched beaches of the Kona/Kohala Coast, the Big Island is vibrant and alive.

And wherever you go, you'll find the spirit of Aloha. Of course, you'll find all of the amenities, attractions, activities, and accommodations that will fit any pocketbook and life style. You'll also find a physical beauty, a depth of cultural heritage, and a spiritual warmth that is without equal.

Whatever you're looking for in a Hawaiian vacation, the Big Island offers some great moments that could last a lifetime. Because Hawaiian weather varies very little throughout the year, the weather you'll experience on the Big Island depends more on location than time of year. The wide variety of climates and the resulting range of temperatures and rainfall across the island are due primarily to differences in elevation and exposure to the moist northeasterly trade winds. The average day-time temperature in the coastal resort areas ranges from the mid 80's in the summer months of May to October to the mid to low 70's during the winter months of November to April.

Be prepared when you fly into Kona that you'll be seeing mountains of previously poured lava - since Hawaii is the newest island, it hasn't had as much time as the others to get really green in places. Stopping and really looking closely at the lava is incredible - ropes of black goop which is really very healthy and will grow beautiful plants someday.

We always recommend you rent a convertible, rather than the traditional car. It costs a little more, but to put the top down, and cruise in that warm weather, smelling the flowers, is worth every cent. But don't forget sunglasses and sunscreen!

You can also rent 4-wheel-drive vehicles, to get into places you can't reach with traditional cars.

Before heading for Kona, especially if this is your first trip to the island, you might want to check out the following site: <http://www.hawaiiactive.com/home.html> This gives you a quick guide to activities on the island, and how to contact the operators of those excursions. Or just "surf the web" and see what interesting sites you can find, which may even offer great discounts on things you want to do while on the Big Island. But the site above has full listings of all kinds of activities you might want to try on your vacation. Also try <http://www.allbigislandhawaiitours.com/> which has lots of information and seems to have good prices on excursions.

Kailua-Kona (also known as "Kona") was picked by the Royal Hawaiians for their personal homes. Lots of history in the area, believe me. The oldest church in Hawaii, **Moku'aikaua Church** (built in the 1830's) is in the town of Kailua-Kona, and right across the street is **Hulihe'e Palace**, built in 1838. **Kamakahonu**, the restored compound where King Kamehameha spent his last years, is also in town, adjacent to the Kailua Pier. This is a National Historical Monument.

You can get maps and information from free booklets everywhere on the island - pick those things that sound interesting to do and see, and then map out your itinerary.

No buildings taller than a palm tree are allowed to be built in Kailua-Kona, so it's a cute town. There are several "ABC" stores there, which are like our drugstores on the mainland that sell everything from suntan lotion to postcards to candy. Wonderful, wonderful local people will be happy to help you with anything you need. There is also a WalMart, where you might consider buying your gifts to take home. Calendars, macadamia nuts, etc. are less expensive there than anywhere else.

Remember as you travel up and down Alii Drive from the condo that the speed limit is usually posted at 30 m.p.h., but there are spots on that road that drop to **15 m.p.h.**, so be careful to watch for m.p.h. signs. People are walking, jogging and riding bikes on that road, and always crossing from one side to the other, and the local police will absolutely ticket you if you go over the posted speed limit.

Also, from the condo there are two exit lanes onto Alii Drive. Note that the one on the left has a "pull in and wait" middle divider on Alii, if you're turning left, which the right exit lane does not have. So if you're traveling into town, use the left exit lane and you can pull into the middle divider as you wait for a chance to move into the lane going that way. It can be difficult to enter Alii Drive at times, with traffic going both directions, so this works very well.

When you want to park your car in Kona, turn right at the 2nd stopsign (after you've left Kona Isle, the corner where Uncle Billy's hotel is), then turn left into the second driveway. The parking on your right requires money, the one I just described does not.

You'll be on the Kona side (drier, warmer) but you can drive to the Hilo side to see **Akaka Falls**, sugar cane fields, **Parker Ranch** (the largest privately-owned ranch in the entire U.S.) etc. GREAT horseback riding, tours down into the valleys, etc. It rains in Hilo nearly every day.

Our favorite restaurant in the entire world is the **Kona Inn**, right in the town of Kailua-Kona. Make sure you make your dinner reservations at about sundown, (5:30 is when they open, I think, which is about sundown), and ask for a window table, because the sunsets from there are incredible! And no window glass to glare your view - the weather in Kona is so warm, all of the time, that glass in the windows is simply not needed in any of the restaurants. You should try to plan at least one nice dinner here- the prices run maybe \$5.00 more than a comparable dinner on the mainland, but it's worth it. Again, make sure you get there before sundown and just enjoy. Their Thousand Island dressing is incredible. Our favorite waiter there is Bill, and he usually waits on the tables with the best views, right up in front. If you see him, please tell him Beth and Brad from California say "hello", and we'll be there Thanksgiving week.

Visit the 1,160-acre area called the **Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park**. This was once a thriving Hawaiian settlement, and it's a wonderful place to picnic, swim, and just enjoy the magnificent beach. You'll discover *kahua* (house platforms), *pa* (planters), *ku'ula* (fishing shrines), *paena wa'a* (canoe landings), *na ala hele* (trails), and *ki'i pohaku* (petroglyphs-rock carvings). To date, more than 200 archeological sites have been recorded around Kaloko pond alone. The turn-off from Hwy. 19 right now goes only to the Visitor's Center, but if you want to see the actual park, take the road to Honokohau Harbor, and turn right at the first chance you get. Follow that road all the way to the end, (this is the back side of the harbor), and walk the 5 minutes or so to the beach. There is an amazing, HUGE, pond, (known as the Kaloko fishpond) which is only about 5-feet deep at it's deepest point, and with its massive seawall, provides an excellent example of the engineering skills of the ancient people. (There is, however, an opening in the wall into the ocean, if you want to do some serious ocean swimming). There are several ancient *heiau* (Hawaiian temple platforms) found in the park, and basking sea turtles are usually sunning themselves. Remember that the punishment for so much as touching the sea turtles is swift and expensive - please keep your distance. Take pictures, but do not, under any circumstances, touch them either on land, or in the water, if they happen to be swimming next to you. Children and adults love this park, but remember that lava rocks under the surface of the sand can hurt your feet, so you should wear "booties" or sandals, especially in the water.

The **Bubba Gump Shrimp Company**, also in town, is a blast for lunch and dinner. Lots of "Forrest Gump" memorabilia, and the location is awesome. Try to get a table on the patio, and just enjoy the incredible waves breaking near you. Kona now also has a new **Outback** right on Alii Drive. The locals rave about **Izakaya Kai Japanese Restaurant** for sushi, etc. Apparently the prices are incredible, and the food is wonderful. It's located directly behind **Pancho & Lefty's Mexican Restaurant** in town. For breakfast, absolutely eat at **Bongo Ben's**. We usually share one of their breakfasts, because they are quite large, and delicious! And the view of the ocean and the bay is fantastic.

Kona also has a **Taco Bell**, **KFC**, **McDonald's**, **Sizzler**, pizza restaurants, and other recognizable restaurants when you just want something quick.

Other fun things to check out before you come to paradise:

Zip Line Canopy Tour (located up at Hawi, the tip of the Big Island)

Don't miss this one! Offroad excursion into North Kohala Rainforest. Guided Zip Line course of 8 runs. Hiking trails, suspension bridges and waterfalls. This exciting adventure is four hours long, with about an hour + drive to Hawi. They also offer Heli-Zip Combo Tours, teaming up with Paradise Helicopters. As of this date (9/2010), an overnight at a hotel has been added, if you're interested in exploring Hawi before or after the zipping, for a small additional cost. ****IMPORTANT- YOU MUST WEAR CLOSED-TOED SHOES, NO SANDALS. BRING TENNIS OR BUY A PAIR AT WALMART****

Call (808) 889-5111 for reservation.

<http://www.BigIslandEcoAdventures.com>

Luau at the Royal Kona Hotel

There are many luaus offered in Kona, but several guests have recommended this particular one for the sheer beauty and authenticity of the dancers, the food, etc. And the location is exquisite. For more information, visit their website: <http://www.hawaiihotels.com/main/sub.cfm?ID=200>

Hawaii Forest and Trail

Nature Adventures & Outfitting on the Hawaii Forest and Trail provides Nature Adventures & Outfitting, natural history tours, birding, birdwatching and eco tours on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Reservations & Information

- * Toll Free: 800 464-1993
- * Local call: 808 331-8505

<http://www.hawaii-forest.com/>

Pau Hana Estate Coffee Plantation

If you would like to tour a beautiful coffee plantation south of Kona, call Carol Weaver at (808) 328-8099. She will be delighted to show you how the coffee is grown, picked, etc. This is a rare and wonderful treat. Her coffee is completely organic and you can purchase this delicious coffee to take home with you, if you'd like. Carol will give you directions to the plantation when you call.

You'll be in Kailua-Kona frequently, since there's few other towns near you, all of them much smaller than Kona. Lots of great shopping, wonderful people, and incredible weather.

Our home is cute, and the location is incredible. We hope you have a wonderful time!

Things to absolutely do if you can:

Spend an afternoon on **Magic Sands Beach**. Picture perfect spot, (bring a picnic, if you'd like) but the waves can be a little treacherous at times, so there is a lifeguard. The interesting thing about the beach is that once a year, every single grain of sand is taken out to sea for several weeks, then deposited back on the beach. When we were there at Christmas one year, all we saw were rocks, but as the days progressed, more and more sand appeared, as if by "magic" (hence the name of the beach).

See the **Hilton Waikoloa Beach Resort** - (a little north of the airport)....it's so large that to get around the inside of the hotel you have to either take their monorail or hop on one of their gondolas which winds through the hotel. Just park your car and walk into the lobby - at that point, you can decide on the monorail or the gondola, or go one direction on one and return on the other. The gondola is lots of fun, and stops at little secluded bars built into the waterways. An amazing, fun, free thing to do. Find the Dolphin Pool and try to enter the lottery to swim with them, if you'd like. If not, you can just hang over the side and see them. There's a gorgeous lagoon at the hotel, which we've never been hassled for using when we're there. This is probably one of the most spectacular hotels you'll ever see in your lifetime. ****They now charge for self-parking, (\$15.00 as of 11/09), so what we do is drive to the King's Shops near the hotel, and take the \$1 shuttle to/from the hotel. Charging to park your own car is so offensive to us, we simply refuse to play their game.**

Don't miss **Hapuna State Beach**, miles of soft white sand, picnic tables, etc. It's also north of the airport, near the resort hotels. Local maps will show you exactly where it's located.

Go to **Mau'u Umae** (I think that's how it's spelled) **Beach** at the Mauna Kea resort. Pull in, tell the guard at the gate you want to go to this beach, and he'll issue you a pass to put in your window and give you directions how to get there. Follow the directions carefully, since there are no "markers" to tell you you've arrived at the spot you need to park at to start the walk to the beach. (Hint: After you make the right turn off the main road, it's approximately one mile to where you park your car and start your walk through the trees.) Remember to go early - only 10 cars at a time are allowed at this gorgeous beach, and if you're car #11, you'll have to wait until a car leaves before you can go in. **You'll see mostly Hawaiians and locals, since tourists are never told about this beach.** Take food and drink with you - no restaurants or bathrooms are provided, so it's quite primitive. (But gorgeous....) Buy a cheap Styrofoam cooler at the store and pack whatever you'd like to eat. There are also few trash containers, so we just haul our garbage out. In all the times we've been there, we've never seen nude sunbathers, but a local told us that happens occasionally. Be on the lookout!

In that area, visit **Spencer State Beach**. It's very pretty, with lots of shady spots and picnic tables, and since it's not known for wild waves, it's usually ideal for children. It's much calmer than some beaches, and a nice place for a picnic, or wonderful swim, or just relaxing. It's very close to **Mau'u Umae**, mentioned above, so you can do both in the same timeframe, since they're located next to each other.

There's a great shopping center on Alii Drive (in Keauhou) with a grocery store, an ice cream shop, movie rentals, etc. Spend some time there at **Drysdale's** - it's a sports bar/restaurant and it has delicious food (especially the onion rings). You can watch the sunset from there. And there are people up and down Alii Drive who sell fresh papayas, mangoes, etc. We buy LOTS of fruit when we're there. (Yummy....)

Remember that people come from all over the world to photograph the sunsets at Kona. The gases from the volcano ring the island, and sometimes during the sunset these turn blue, lavender, pink, red, yellow, etc. An amazing thing to see, especially sitting on the patio of the condo, sipping a wonderful drink.

If you're bringing toddlers or small children, don't miss the **keki (children's) pond** near the old airport. This is known as the "Queen's Bath" and it's an area without a single wave, with lots of white sand and warm water. Take Alii Drive through town, turning left at Kuakini Highway, the first stoplight you come to. On Kuakini, go through one stop sign, then park behind the gymnasium on your left, as near the soccer field in the back as you can. Go through the soccer field, angling to the far left fence, and go down the steps at the other side. Follow the signs to "public beach", between the homes there, and just relax and enjoy this marvelous pond.

We located another gorgeous white-sand beach that also has an amazing **keki (children's) pond** for the little ones, but also a beautiful grass section under the trees, and wave action for those that want a bit more excitement. Take Hwy. 19 north past the airport and go just beyond mile marker 88. There's a large left turn lane, leading into a residential area being developed, but no signs on Hwy. 19 yet to tell you about this beach. Go to the guard shack/kiosk and ask to use the public beach, and they'll give you a card to hang from your rear view mirror. (There are exclusive homes being built there that you won't have access to, but the public beach signs are well posted). There are only 28 slots for cars, and 2 for handicapped parking, so go early in the day as once the cards are given out, nobody is permitted on that road until someone returning drops off their card. Follow the road to the parking area, and take the beautiful footpath to **Kikaua Point Park**. It opens at sunrise and closes one-half hour after sunset, and has public restrooms and drinking fountains.

If you're up to a hike and want to see a sacred beach, then **Honomalino** is for you. It's not easy to get to, but absolutely gorgeous. Drive south of Kona on Hwy. 11 about 30 miles to a right-hand turn-off toward the fishing village of Milolii. You'll drive down the mountain several miles until you come to the end of the road, which is the oldest Hawaiian fishing village. Park your car and find the beginning of the footpath to the beach. **WEAR GOOD SHOES**, as you'll be walking over lava, through trees and even through water. After you slosh through the ankle-deep water at one point you'll see a beautiful beach, but you will be going beyond that. Find the hand-written signs there that direct you on the second part of the walk, (to the left of that beach, up a small rise) and keep going for at least another 15 minutes until you come to Honomalino. There are no restrooms, etc., and bring plenty of water, as it's about a 30-minute hike and no water is provided there. You'll see burial sites along the trail, and blessing tables to place special shells or rocks that you pick up at the beach to make as offerings on your way back. This is a picture-perfect spot with lots of palm trees, and crystal-clear water for swimming or snorkeling. Please take all of your trash back with you, and we like to pick up other people's trash on our way out, to thank the Hawaiian gods for allowing us to use such an incredible beach. Few non-Hawaiians know about this beach, or would be willing to take the hike to it, but once you've seen it, you'll want to return over and over again. Hopefully it will remain untouched by cement paths to it, or lots of building in the area, as this beach truly takes your breath away when you arrive there. Since it's difficult to get to, very few people make the trip there so you may have the entire beach to yourselves. Don't take small children unless they can walk easily on their own – and definitely don't try to take strollers, as those absolutely will not work on the dirt/lava path.

If you like to snorkel or Scuba dive, this is the island to do it, since 200-300 feet visibility is common. You can bring your own equipment with you from home, or rent stuff at the King Kamehameha Hotel and other spots in town. But it's also nice to have your own gear in the trunk so you can just pop into the water whenever you want. We also keep towels and bathing suits in the trunk of the car at all times, so we can dive into the water in a heartbeat. Keep disposable underwater and regular cameras in the trunk, as well, since each day is another adventure and you might miss some great shots if you don't have cameras handy.

One of our favorite beaches to snorkle is **Kahalu'u Beach Park**, 5.5 miles south of Kona on Alii Drive. This is one of the best, if not the best snorkel spot on the island with a huge variety of fish of all shapes and sizes. Bring an underwater camera along with your snorkel gear. The water's a little murky near shore but clearer out by the breakwater. A little lazy body boarding is also an option at the north end of the beach where it's sandy. Go early in the day to avoid the crowds.

You might want to try **Torpedo Tours Hawaii** (www.torpedotours.com) where you can rent a battery-powered Torpedo to snorkle or Scuba dive, and boy, this looks like fun. In Kona, you can contact them at (808) 938-0405 for information.

Visit the **black sand beaches**, but wear sandals to walk across. Black sand is actually little rocks from the friatic explosion caused by the 2000 degree lava boulders hitting the 80 degree water and exploding, then these pebbles being carried by the ocean currents to create a beach. Very sharp on the feet, but amazing to see.

You can drive to South Point (**Ka Lae**) to tell people that you stood at the "Southernmost point in the U.S." Nearby you can find Green Sand Beach and Pink Sand Beach, but I'm not sure if you have to hike to it, or whether vehicles can go there (maybe 4-wheel-drive?) You can ask locals about getting to these beaches.

Get as close as you can to the volcano, at **Volcano National Park** (about 100 miles from Kona - not many towns between Kona and the volcano, so you may want to stop at McDonalds, which is en-route, and get something to eat/drink for the drive). We've actually gotten within 10 feet of the red-hot lava at times. The Park Department will allow you to get as close as is safe, and the location of the lava changes often, so I don't know how close you'll be able to get to it on your trip. Don't miss "**Devastation Trail**" and the "**Thurston Lava Tube**" while you're driving through the park. The Rangers at the entrance will give you info on where to drive to the Visitor's Center, too. Have a snack at **Volcano House**, which overlooks the crater.

Take the mule ride or go on horseback down into **Waipi'o Valley**. Don't even think of driving it yourself - I believe only 4-wheel drive cars are allowed down there, for good reason. The tours are wonderful, anyway, and you'll learn tons about the native Hawaiians. We took the mule ride, and the guide was an old Hawaiian, and he was a RIOT!

Don't miss a drive down into **Napo'opo'o** (pronounced Na-poh-oh-poh-oh), to see the monument to the legendary Captain Cook (he was killed there in **Kealakekua Bay**). The winding road is so pretty, and you will see the white monument to Captain Cook across the water, which is maintained by the British, to this day. In that area, you can visit the beautiful **St. Benedict's Painted Church**.

This is coffee country, where roasting houses and roadside eateries offer you a place to rest when driving between Kona and the volcano. Stop at the various coffee processing places. Remember that Kona was the only place in the U.S. that produced coffee for many years (Kona coffee - yum!), but now I believe Kauai also grows coffee beans, as well. It's interesting to see how they pick the beans, etc.

Visit the **Pu'uhonua O Honaunau National Historical Park** (also known as **Place of Refuge, or City of Refuge**), which has an incredible history. This is where the weak, the criminals, and vanquished warriors of Old Hawaii were given sanctuary, if they could swim fast enough to outrun the people and canoes chasing them from the other side. You are welcome to swim/snorkle in the beautiful lagoon, but apparently the Gods get very upset if you sunbathe there! You can confirm this if you go.

Below are recommendations for tours of the island from our guests:

<http://www.bigislandair.com/>

<http://www.hawaiiactive.com/activities/bigisland-circler.html>

and a favorite Kona restaurant, Huggo's, mentioned by many, many guests:

<http://restauranteur.com/huggos/>

Sometimes the visitor's centers sponsor free passes to various things to do on the island if you're willing to hear a timeshare or other presentation. You can decide if it's worth it to you, or not.

Contact AAA and get books and maps before you go, so you can read about what you'll be seeing.

**** Remember not to bring a single piece of lava rock back with you.** even by accident - this is considered extremely offensive to the Hawaiian Gods. There are incredible stories of the bad luck caused by us "mainlanders" thinking we're clever and sneaking a piece home as a souvenir - the Kona Post Office returns approximately a TON, literally, of lava rocks a year, back to approximately from where they were taken, after the tourists go home, and bad luck follows them in everything they do. They ship these to the Post Office at Kona, and volunteers run around replacing the rocks. We do NOT mess with the island's taboo stuff - there's a lot of magical stories on the island, which you'll hear.

I haven't even begun to let you know about the exciting things to do on the island. I hope you have a WONDERFUL time....

Aloha!

Beth and Brad



Airport to Kailua-Kona

Directions to the condo:

After you leave the Kona Airport, you'll need to turn right on Highway 19, and travel approximately 7 miles. Turn right when you come to the signs directing you to the town of "Kailua-Kona" (I believe this street is called Palani Rd.) After you make the right turn onto Palani Rd. into town, you'll have two lanes to choose from; pick the one on the left, since the lane on the right veers off. Cross Kuakini Highway. (On Palani Rd. you'll find grocery stores, restaurants, etc.)

Palani Rd. becomes Alii Drive, and winds past the harbor and through town. Stay on Alii Drive, and the condo will be approximately 2 miles south of the town, on your right. After you pass a large white condo complex called Casa de Emdeko, our complex is next. Our condo is called "Kona Isle", and it's located at 75-6100 Alii Drive, phone number in the condo is (808) 329-4705. Park your car in your parking place (#67), and walk all the way down to the beach. Our unit (E-1) is located ocean-front, to the left of the pool as you're heading toward the ocean.

Your car rental company should be able to give you a great map of how to get there, if this is confusing.



Condos on Alii Drive



Our building is “E” and our unit is directly to the right of the swimming pool, on the ground floor.

Pictures of the Condo

Mural is hand painted by the same lady who painted interior of Cisco's and Yolanda's Restaurants in Camarillo, California.



New bedroom set



Completely remodeled kitchen.



Pool located just outside our unit.

**Thanks again for sharing a piece of your
paradise**

We used your lanai almost every night -- laid down on the chairs near the waters. My mom and I agree that your condo was more than we expected -- comfortable, nicely decorated, and listening to the waves at night were priceless. I'd highly recommend your place to all of my friends. You and Beth are so lucky to have such a gem of a place." Thanks again for sharing a piece of your paradise. Erica .C from San Diego



Just imagine you and your loved ones watching incredible sunsets like this one from your own private Lanai. WOW

No hotel could ever, ever compare

Elicia, from Thousand Oaks, California states "Thank you so much for sharing your place with us, we felt as if it was our little home away from home. In fact we feel that Kona IS our home and that living here is like being away from home, LOL! Our stay in Hawaii was like a dream come true and we loved staying at the condo, no hotel could ever, ever compare".



View across the grass knoll. Notice the waves breaking



Another beautiful sunset at E-1

What a GREAT vacation

Keith from San Francisco, CA says: "If you want relaxation, beautiful views and a great location during your vacation - stay here! I go back every chance I get and have a wonderful experience each and every time".



View of grass area from our lanai