

travel

THE MAGIC OF

MAUI

Say aloha to one of the friendliest and most beautiful islands in the world



Enjoy golden-sand beaches, lush rainforests, impressive volcanoes, shimmering waterfalls and more. The options are endless on sunny Maui.

WHY SHOULD I GO?

There's a reason honeymooners flock to Maui in droves each year: It's one of the most blissful places on earth. Flourishing greenery, sun-kissed beaches and blue waters set the stage for romance. Add to that an exotic culture, tropical drinks and the soft strumming of a Hawaiian ukulele and you've got a recipe for couples' paradise. Not planning a romantic getaway? Maui offers loads of activities for families and adventurous travelers alike. All that and you don't even need a passport.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

World-class hotels abound throughout the island, but the cream of the crop is the Ritz-Carlton in Kapalua. From the moment you arrive and are given a floral lei and a smile, you receive VIP treatment. Staff members go out of their way to make

sure each guest feels welcome. Not only will you be impressed by the hotel's service, you will also be dazzled by its setting. The 548-room hotel is located on the northwest coast of the island and is surrounded by a championship golf course and a scenic pineapple plantation. The resort, which was built next to a Hawaiian burial ground dating back to the year 850, also overlooks a pristine beach and the Pacific Ocean. The resulting environment is a wonderful mixture of modern luxury, spiritual history and natural beauty. What's more, the Ritz boasts a tri-level pool, six tennis courts, a basketball court, walking trails, a state-of-the-art fitness center with exercise classes, a high-end spa and several outstanding restaurants. If you are on your honeymoon, take advantage of the hotel's honeymoon packages, which include amenities like champagne and strawberries in your room, rose petals on your bed and a personal concierge. If you're traveling with children, sign up for the Ritz Kids program, which consists of full- or half-day recreation and education activities. If you're interested in learning more about Hawaii's early Polynesian in-

habitants, talk to the Ritz's cultural advisor, who conducts historical discussions and tours. There is something for everyone at this premier hotel.

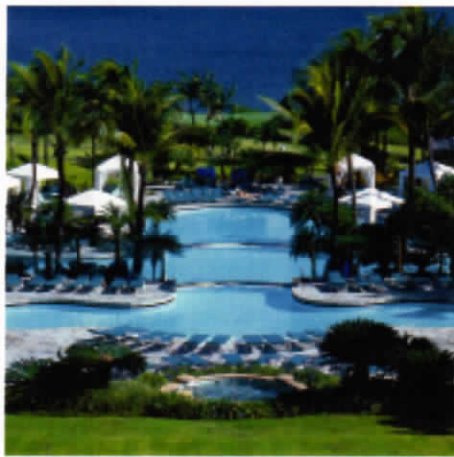
WHAT ARE THE BEST ACTIVITIES?

There are enough outdoor activities in Maui to occupy you for several vacations, so you won't want for things to do. You could go on a rainforest hike complete with a waterfall swim with Latitudes 'N Adatudes/Maui Eco-Adventures. This tour company offers hikes, kayak trips, bike tours and helicopter rides with knowledgeable guides and picnic lunches. One of their most popular excursions is a hike into the crater of Haleakala, the world's largest dormant volcano crater.

For those who care to brave the waves, take a surf lesson at the Island Style Surf School in Ka'anapali. The instructors coach you on everything from paddling out to the waves to getting — and staying — up on your board. And rumor has it an upcoming MTV reality series is set to take place at this surf school. If you prefer snorkeling, go on a catamaran cruise



Clear blue waters surround Maui, creating miles of stunning coastline.



The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua (above), and peaceful mountainside vistas (below) help make Maui — Hawaii's second-largest island — unforgettable.



along Maui's coastline with Kapalua Kai, which stops at prime snorkeling spots (scuba diving is also available). If you go on an excursion between December and April, you may see humpback whales.

Interested in sightseeing on your own? Drive along the world-famous Hana coast and take in the gorgeous state parks, waterfalls and beaches. Then, when you want to relax, head to the Boutique Spa at the Ritz for some pampering. Indulge in one of many treatments, such as a green-tea body wrap, a papaya-pineapple scrub or an aromatherapy massage — which is available outdoors in a cozy hut that is enclosed enough to afford privacy yet open enough to let in the gentle breeze.

WHERE SHOULD I EAT?

No trip to Hawaii would be complete without a true Hawaiian lu'au. Try out the Old Lahaina Lu'au, known as Maui's best and most authentic. The evening begins with a feast of traditional Hawaiian fare, which includes fish, roasted pork and taro (a root plant that is a staple of the Hawaiian diet). Then, as you sip Mai Tais and watch the

sun set, enjoy an unforgettable musical hula performance.

For a fabulous meal overlooking the water, head to The Banyan Tree at the Ritz. You won't be disappointed by chef Jojo Vasquez's seasonal and original menu, which includes ahi tuna sashimi, grilled Kona lobster and roasted duck. All creations are elegantly presented and delicious. The Ritz also has a top sushi bar, Kai, which serves only the ocean's freshest catches. Mama's Fish House is another popular spot. This converted beach house with Polynesian décor is located in a coconut grove on a secluded white-sand beach. The menu includes fish, crab cakes, lamb chops, Polynesian lobster soup and organic vegetables.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

Most major airlines, including Delta, United and American, fly nonstop out of Los Angeles. There are also several flights from New York with one stopover. **OK!**

FEATURE BY RACHEL RABKIN PECHMAN
EDITED BY JACQUELINE NEISS, OKI TRAVEL EDITOR

STAR TRAVEL

Expectant mom **Britney Spears** vacationed earlier this year in Maui, along with her young son, Sean Preston, and husband, Kevin Federline. Lucky for her she didn't run into her ex Justin Timberlake and his super-surfing partner, Cameron Diaz, who are also frequent visitors to the island.



Actress Mischa Barton and beau Cisco Adler enjoyed a romantic retreat to Maui this past Thanksgiving. The couple, who have been dating for more than a year, have never been shy about public displays of affection, and their trip to seductive Maui provided plenty of opportunity for lovin'. Mischa, 20, who recently left the cast of *The O.C.*, and Cisco, 26, frontman of *Whitestarr*, kissed, cuddled and frolicked on the beach to their hearts' content.

The Kapalua Resort in Maui has one of the finest golf courses in the world and is a major stop on the PGA Tour. Pro golfers such as **Tiger Woods** jet to Maui each January to compete in the island's Mercedes Championships tournament, which is the PGA Tour's season-opening event. (Tiger won it in 2000.)



TRAVEL TIPS

MAUI VISITORS BUREAU, VISITMAUI.COM
RITZ-CARLTON, KAPALUA; RITZCARLTON.COM/RESORTS/
KAPALUA; FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS CALL 800-241-3333
OR 808-669-6200

LATITUDES 'N ADATUDES/MAUI ECO-ADVENTURES;
ECOMAUJ.COM, 808-661-7720 OR 877-661-7720

ISLAND STYLE SURF SCHOOL IN KA'ANAPALI;
MAUISURFSCHOOL.COM, 808-244-6858

KAPALUA KAI; SAILINGMAUI.COM

OLD LAHAINA LU'AU; OLDLAHAINALUAU.COM,
800-248-5828

MAMA'S FISH HOUSE; MAMASFISHHOUSE.COM, 808-579-8488,
OR E-MAIL RESERVATIONS@MAMASFISHHOUSE.COM