

Maui, Hawaii

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I traveled to Maui with my family, 5 adults and 2 small children. I booked our Hawaiian Airline tickets, Budget mini-van, some accommodations and the luau through All About Hawaii. We stayed 6 nights at Napili Kai Beach Resort in the Napili area between Kaanapali and Kapalua.

We left PDX on a Sunday morning, Hawaiian Airlines non-stop PDX to Kahului. The flight was smooth and on-time. Fortunately it was not a full flight so our lap child (under 2yrs old without a seat) received her own seat. We returned on a Saturday afternoon on Hawaiian Airlines non-stop flight Kahului to PDX which again was not full so our lap child received her own seat. Upon arriving Maui's Kahului Airport we gathered our luggage and took the Budget shuttle to pick up our minivan. Long lines at Budget when we arrived but about an hour later we were in our Chevy Uplander and on the road.

It was a very tight squeeze and we should've upgraded to a larger vehicle which was offered to us at a discount but we declined. We would've liked to have stopped at Costco to purchase food/drink supplies for the week but that was not going to happen. About a day into the trip there was an electrical malfunction with the Uplander so we contacted Budget who knew exactly what the problem was, blamed it on a factory defect and advised us to return the vehicle to their Lahaina office for exchange.

I've been offering Napili Kai Beach Resort to clients for years and now that I've had the opportunity to stay there with my family I understand why people return year after year. www.napilikai.com

The bay that fronts the resort is very accessible and absolutely beautiful. Also Kapalua Bay just a short 5min walk from Napili Kai is equally gorgeous so the resort has two fantastic beach options. There are rocky points at both ends of each of the bays which makes for great snorkeling right from the beach. Napili Kai offers guests free use of snorkel equipment, beach towels and coolers during stay. The grounds are perfectly manicured and there are signs all around explaining the different plants and flowers. There are two putting greens for guests to use, one specifically for children and the other for adults only. Guests can pick up a putter and golf ball at the beach cabana. There are 2 pools, one is heated and the other is not. There is also a whirlpool on-site, the Hanki-Panki Whirlpool. The resort lobby has a bookshelf full of books for use while at the resort and an Expedia concierge desk that was staffed during regular business hrs. Throughout the day the resort offers free iced tea and lemonade at the beach cabana and hot coffee/tea in the lobby. There is one restaurant/bar on-site, the Sea House Restaurant located beachfront with awesome views and good food. The restaurant offers breakfast, lunch and dinner. There's also a workout room, a boutique and a massage therapist on-site. While at Napili Kai my immediate family of 4 stayed in a Family Ocean View Studio which was located in the Keaka II building. I was very happy with our studio, it had plenty of room for our family. Our family studio was equipped with a large king bed, sofa sleeper, a crib (which we had requested), table and chairs for two, full kitchen (coffee restocked daily), huge bathroom with separate toilet room, lots of storage and a huge lanai with 2 chaise lounge chairs and 2 regular chairs. My in-laws shared a Standard Ocean View Studio located in the main building. There are only two accommodation buildings at Napili Kai designated smoking, Keaka I & Keaka II. Throughout the rest of the resort smoking is only allowed at least 20 feet from any main entrances. This is true throughout Hawaii. On-site parking at Napili Kai is free.

Note: A/C available in most units, but if this is a necessity do check that your room is equipped with air conditioning.

We enjoyed an evening of music, dance and a 5 course meal at 'Feast at Lele' located at 505 Front Street in Lahaina. Tickets were booked and prepaid through All About Hawaii. <http://www.feastatlele.com/>

Cost is approx. \$135 per adult and \$85 per child (our daughter under 2yrs = free) and includes entertainment, five course meal and alcoholic/non-alcoholic beverages. Gratuity is additional. I can highly recommend this luau for anyone heading to Maui. It is truly an intimate ocean front setting. Parties are greeted with a fresh flower lei and a cold beverage upon arrival and seated at their own private table. The dinner/show lasts about 2.5hrs and I'd say there were maybe 80-100 people, but everyone is seated at a private table for just their family/friends. On our last visit to Maui, we went to the Drums of the Pacific luau at the Hyatt Regency Maui and it just does not compare to Feast at Lele. The show at the Hyatt was good, from what I could see sitting so far back from the stage, and the food was excellent but each table of say 20-30 people were told when it was their time to hit the buffet line and the beverages were not as abundant as the servers were handling many large tables at once. Feast at Lele was so entertaining and relaxing, I just can't say enough about it.

My in-laws purchased a Whale Watching tour with Eco Adventures. The guides on board were very friendly and knowledgeable and part of the proceeds goes to saving the environment. I think they paid approx. \$25 per adult and our daughter age 4 was free for the 2hr tour. Even though Whale Watching season begins officially Dec 15 they saw a lot of active whales. It was quite an experience for my daughter who told me all about how they blew water and showed her their tail and splashed their arms on the water. Very affordable and they guarantee whales so if you do not see any the first time around, they'll take you out again the following day.

We'd planned one long day on the road making stops at Iao Valley State Park (free), Tropical Gardens of Maui (\$5 per adult), lunch in the town of Wailuku, long twisty road to Haleakala National Park (\$10 per car .. pass good for 3days) and back to the resort.

At Iao Valley State Park there is a very easy hike offering great views of the 'needle'. In route to the state park there are a few cultural type of places to stop at including the Bailey House Museum, Maui Tropical Plantation and Heritage Gardens. We stopped at Tropical Gardens of Maui instead which is actually an export nursery where they offer a self-guided walk through their grounds for \$5. It took about 45mins or so and we enjoyed looking at all the unusual plants and flowers. Unfortunately our drive up to Haleakala ended with NO view due to the cloud cover. We drove all that way and it was as if we were looking out an airplane window. I'm glad that we made the drive and that we got to see the huge satellite. Be prepared for cool weather at the top, at over 10,000 ft elevation you'll be glad you packed a jacket.

The weather was great so we hung out on the beach as much as our schedule allowed and enjoyed it being so close. One day however, it rained non-stop. We ventured to the Hyatt to try and get a glimpse of the bird life they have displayed in their lobby but due to the rain they were all put away. We then made the short drive to The Whalers Village shopping center to check out the Whalers Village Museum which was a big hit for the adults. Admission to the museum is free but there is a donation box. Parking is \$10 at The Whalers Village shopping center but the museum will validate making it free.

Lahaina has a lot of shops to look through and many restaurants and bars to try out. There is a Foodland grocery store right off Front Street. There is also a Safeway on the main highway heading North from Lahaina to Kaanapali, Napili and Kapalua area's. In Lahaina, there's also a marina where a lot of the tours go out like whale watching or sunset cruise. After not finding off street parking in Lahaina a couple nights we made the mistake of parking at lots off Front Street for approx. \$10 but after attending the Feast at Lele located at 505 Front Street, which is towards the end of the touristy shops/restaurants section, we found a huge free public parking lot.

Most nights we drove into Lahaina for dinner. Here are the few places we tried out.

Aloha Mix Plate on Front Street was recommended by James at All About Hawaii for good food and cheap prices and he was right on. It is a wonderful casual venue, very inexpensive (approx. \$8 a plate). All the tables are outdoors which means it is not open on rainy days/nights.

Cool Cat Café on Front Street upstairs from the shops. Great service, very friendly staff, live music, open air but with a roof so open even when it rains. Again very casual and inexpensive (approx. \$12 a plate).

Moose McGillicuddy's on Front Street upstairs from the shops. Great service, very friendly staff but also a very loud sports bar, we even got to watch part of a Blazer game.

Cheeseburger in Paradise was another good choice again very casual and inexpensive (approx. \$12 a plate). It was a bit loud, but that's what lure the people there, the live music. We had attempted to go to the Lahaina Front Street Bar and Grill but our server was incredibly rude so we left and went to Cheeseburger in Paradise which was a good move.

On our last day after checking out of the resort we drove to Kihei for lunch and a bit of last minute shopping. Kihei is just a 10 minute drive from Kahului Airport so a great place to hang out for a few hours before having to check-in for the flight home. Check-in with Hawaiian Airlines at Kahului Airport was painless.