

Megan's Maui Thoughts and Recommendations

Breakfast/brunch

The Gazebo – Small place with few tables, so always busy. It gets right at 7:00am opening. We arrived then and waited 20 minutes for the second seating. When we arrived at 9:30am, it was an hour wait for 2 people. Great views of the ocean so you can whale watch while waiting. Known for macadamia nut (or banana) pancakes. Located in back of a condo place with easy parking. You can also do take out.
5315 Lower Honoapiilani Rd, Lahaina, HI 96761 / (808) 669-5621

Slappy Cakes – This has a make your own pancakes at the table which is fun and the egg dishes are different and fun. We often sit at the bar as faster to get in and eat (and if we didn't want the make your own pancake tables). Mushroom scramble with goat cheese was great. There was a 15 minute wait at 8:30 for a table and when we left at 9:30, there were tons of groups outside waiting. This is located in shopping center with Times Grocery Store (in a strip mall with easy parking.) 3350 Lower Honoapiilani Road, in the Honokowai Marketplace / 808-419-6600

Dinner

Star Noodle - This was opened by one of the Top Chef finalists Sheldon. (As of 2015 - Sheldon is no longer affiliated with Star Noodle but most of his dishes are still on the menu.) This is up on the hill, away from ocean in almost an "office park" looking place right off the Bypass road. It's very close to the Lahaina Safeway (you will drive past this daily). Love the scallop shooters, Ahi starter, mushroom medley and Pad Thai, It's a smaller place and always busy, but you can make a reservation if more than 5 people (and now can make reservations on Yelp reservation system). Try to go off peak hours as it's worth the wait. We found 3pm – 5pm is a great time for an off time meal and then go elsewhere for drinks/snacks if still hungry later. Last few years we drove right from the airport when we landed as we were hungry, and it was off time and it was perfect! We have arrived around 2:30 and that's perfect to get in and out quickly.
www.starnoodle.com / 808.667.5400 / 286 Kupuohi St.

Aloha Mixed Plate - Great local place in Lahaina and really reasonable. It's more of the traditional Hawaiian BBQ style meats with macaroni salad, and sides. It's on the ocean side, right behind Safeway and next door to the Old Lahaina Luau so you can hear some of that during luau times. It's popular, so expect a little wait.
www.alohamixedplate.com / 1285 Front Street, Lahaina, HI 96761 / (808)661-3322

Poke

Tamura's Fine Wine and Liquors – They have a fresh deli/poke counter and make some of the best poke on the island. Odd in a wine store, but trust me and go. Buy poke and wine and be happy enjoying back at your condo/hotel. It's \$14 a lb and amazing and made fresh there throughout the day. It's on the way up the hill towards Star Noodle (near the Bypass road and Safeway). 226 Kupuohi Street. 808.667.9000.
www.tamurasfinewine.com

Safeway Grocery Store - Fish Counter - Seriously – you can get great fresh Poke at the Safeway seafood counter. Better than most of the high end restaurants without all the fuss or expense. They make it fresh all day, with about 7 varieties (and you can taste them all before buying). It's much cheaper and we will get some to take back to our timeshare for snacks. Hidden deal of Maui.

Miso Phat – They have a side of Big Eye Tuna Poke which is amazing and I would go for just the side (but more expensive at \$15 for 5oz). See details under local places below.

Hula Grill Kaanapali

This is one of our standby places to have to go to. Reason being...it's right on the beach at the Whalers Village. They have the barefoot bar where you are eating at tables in the sand so casual and there is often live music at happy hour and night. Great happy hour in the sand (3-5). Different (more upscale) menu in the dining room. If you go at peak time, get on the list and a pager and then walk around the beach while you wait...as there is always a wait. Get a coupon for free potsticker appetizer or pineapple upside down cake. There is validated parking at Whalers Village. www.hulagrillkaanapali.com - (808) 667-6636 2435 Kaanapali Parkway (walk to the beach and it's right beach front), Lahaina, HI 96761

Leilani's on the Beach – This is one of my favorites. Great seafood dinner and the sunset view amazing. I try to go for a 6pm reservation and request to sit on the railing for best sunset views. Always make reservations in advance on open table (or you will have an hour wait and can shop around Whalers Village as it's located across from Hula Grill. www.leilanis.com

Kimo's – Right on the water in Lahaina. Same group as Hula Grill and Dukes, but different food. Amazing Mai Tai's and Hula Pie. The fish sandwiches are great. We normally go for lunch as nice on sunny day with outdoor deck seating. Get the timeshare coupons for this place in advance (either Appetizer or Hula pie). www.kimosmaui.com

Duke's Beach House –Just north of Kaanapali and in a newer condo resort called Honua Kai Resort. We go for \$5 mai tai's at happy hour. Food is good, sort of an isolated location next to a big timeshare building. Get the timeshare coupons for this place in advance (either appetizer or oreo pie.)
130 Kai Malina Parkway / 808-662-2900 www.dukesmaui.com

Cool Cat Café – Seriously – the best burgers in Lahaina. This is where the locals all go and not as many tourists (as they all go to Cheeseburger in Paradise for overpriced and just ok burgers). Cool Cat is across the street from Giant Bayan Tree, upstairs in the wooden mall area. Best to get a seat right on the railings so you can people watch down below. Get coupon for free rootbeer floats from timeshare booths. www.coolcatcafe.com

Ruth Chris Steakhouse – Yes, it's a chain, but simple go and great for drinks and apps at happy hour. This is right on front street (right in front of the outlet mall). They have a great happy hour at the bar with \$6 cocktails, \$5 wine and large selection of bar food that you would make a cheap dinner with. I believe HH goes till 7.

Near Airport

Da Kitchen - This is close to the airport and recommended by a couple friends and also on Diners, Dives and Drive in. More of traditional and home style Hawaiian food and really good. Worth sharing a few plates. Perfect to eat right after landing as close to airport and fast service. Been twice and tasty. www.dakitchen.com 425 Koloa St Ste 104, Kahului, HI 96732 / (808) 871-7782

Tin Roof - This is the new place that Sheldon (from Top Chef) opened. It's close to the airport and more of quick order at counter, try to grab one of 6 stools at the counter or just sit outside (on the curb) to eat but really

tasty. Reasonable dishes about \$8 for no table service. Found out many locals go there for take out and tourists are just starting to learn. Definitely would stop after landing for quick bite before driving to down.

www.tinroofmaui.com / (808) 868-0753 / [360 Papa Pi Ste Y, Kahului, HI 96732](https://www.google.com/maps/place/360+Papa+Pi+Ste+Y,+Kahului,+HI+96732)

Local Restaurants/Bars/Happy Hour

- **Dollie's Pizza** - This is just north in Kahana (and actually across from my timeshare). We have asked many locals where they go and they all say this place. There is actually great pizza and great early (3-6) and late night (9-midnight) happy hour. Sometimes live music.
4310 Lower Honoapiilani Road / 808-669-0266
- **Miso Phat** (sushi). Really fresh sushi with most caught by local fisherman so menu varies nightly. This is a BYOB restaurant...so bring your own wine/beer. There's a liquor store two shops down if you forget but better to bring what you really want. They don't take reservations, so come and expect a wait as small place but worth it. They will bring you glasses so you can start to drink the alcohol you bring with you. This location is across street from my timeshare in Kahana (and in same strip mall as Dollie's above). There is another one in Kehei. www.misophat.com (808-669-9010 4310 Lower Honoapiilani)
- **Maui Brewing Company** – This is a large brewpub with all local brews and good food. The brewpub is located in a mall in Kahana just off the freeway by the McDonalds. There is a new brewery with tours in Kihei (30-45 minute drive away from Kahana). Tours 7 days at 12:30/1:30/2:30 for \$5.
www.mauibrewingco.com
 - o **Brewpub - 4405 Honoapiilani Hwy 217, Lahaina, HI 96761 | 808.669.3474**
 - o **Brewery - 605 Lipoa Pkwy, Kihei, HI 96753 | 808.213.3002**

Activities:

Haleakalā Volcano Sunrise with Bike Ride - is amazing to see, but you have to leave around 4am to get there as it's a drive to get there. You can drive up yourself...you can join a tour which picks you up and brings back (so some people can choose this).

Tour and Bike Down Option Volcano - Once you see the sunrise, you bike down the volcano road to town. It's an easy downhill ride with a guide, so anyone can do it and really quite fun as you change from freezing cold, to warmer and shed clothing as you go. It costs about \$160 (3 days in advance) or \$180 if booked less than 3 days. Expensive and early - so something to consider. My friends that did it with me loved it and said worth the early morning. They pick you up at 3am (yes in the pitch dark), drive you an hour to get bike gear and then you are returned to condo before lunchtime. We used Bike Maui - <https://www.bikemaui.com/tour/sunrise-special/>

Self Drive Option - New in 2017, you must pre-reserve a parking pass if you want to drive yourself for sunrise and this can be done up to 60 days prior. I tried to reserve a week before, but they were already sold out...so pay attention if you want to. The passes are only \$1.50 a day (so buy a few days if you aren't sure to have flexibility). There is an additional \$25 per car fee (good for 3 days) and also a per person entrance fee of \$12.

Permit Purchase: www.recreation.gov

More info: <https://www.nps.gov/hale/playourvisit/haleakala-sunrise-reservations.htm>

If you drive yourself there, there are lots of fun places to visit and eat at in "Upcountry" area. It's towards the bottom of the volcano and nice place to shop, eat and walk around.

Upcountry Day Trip: Lots to do in “Upcountry” and you could easily make a day trip of these fun things:

- **Lavender Farm** - \$3 per person to walk around lavender farm. Really quite pretty with amazing views.
 - o www.aliikulalavender.com
 - o 1100 Waipoli Road Kula, HI. 96790 - Phone: 808-878-3004
- **Botanical Gardens** – only 1 mile from Lavender Farm. Heard was nice, but only drove by.
 - o www.kulabotanicalgarden.com, 638 Kekaulike Avenue, Kula, Maui,- (808) 878-1715
- **Surfing Goat Dairy** – Cute goat farm, with cheese tasting, tours or just cheese to buy to take back to condo.
 - o www.surfinggoatdairy.com, 3651 Omaopio Road, Kula, Hawaii 96790, - 808.878.2870
- **Kula Lodge** – Great lunch spot - known for wood fire pizza. Great views and tasty food. Worth a stop.
 - o www.kulalodge.com - 15200 Haleakala Hwy, HI 96790, (808) 878-1535

Ziplining – There are lots of places to go, but many are expensive so ask about how many zips, costs and what’s included. We found a great ziplining in “Upcountry” which was part of an old military area so old military gear was around and it was great zips. I believe it was called “NorthShore Ziplining)

Scuba Diving – I always go with Lahaina Divers (dove with them past 10 years and will again next time). Super safe, and knowledgeable and go to dive spots that aren’t overly crowded. A friend that only snorkels went with me and she loved it too as we were together for the trip and then she went with a few snorkelers in the water while I went down with divers. Only company that goes to Hammerhead shark dive site (Tues and Fri). They have a nice variety of advanced dive sites. www.lahainadivers.com - (808) 667-7496

Snorkeling Trips – I asked my dive shop for a recommendation. Two people that work there recommended, Teralani as a great company for small snorkel trips or whale watching. They leave out of Kannapali as well. Here is the website: www.teralani.net. Look for a smaller boat for a better experience. The big boats just drop everyone off at once and it’s a cluster mess.

- **Molokini Crater** is great (if you don’t dive). It’s a moon shaped island and unique fish. During whale season (Jan – March) you can hear the humpback whales singing under the water and the crescent moon creates an amphitheater sound effect there.
- **Turtle Bay/Turtle Point/Mala Ramp** – great spots where they see lots of giant turtles. I went times and saw over 20 one day. You will see both scuba divers and snorkelers here and generally this is an afternoon snorkel trip.
- **Lanai** – another great snorkel spot. Most trips come with lunch as it’s an hour boat ride each way. In whale season, you basically get a whale watching trip as well, as you will see many humpbacks crossing the channel.

Whale Watching Trips –In 2019, I had friends that had never been whale watching and it was high whale season and we wanted to go. So I looked into companies and spoke to trusted people I knew in Maui and got 2 recommendations. There were two options we considered for whale watching as I knew we wanted a smaller boat as the large ones were no good.

- **Pacific Whale Foundation** - They have many options from small to big boats. We wanted the catamaran with about 60 people and this the company we would have gone with, but they were sold out for our days. They are popular as they are great and give back to the ocean. www.pacificwhale.org
- **Scotch Mist** – We decided to go this route to have the smaller boat and loved it. This is a racing Yacht and we loved it. Only 22 guests max (we had 14) and it was a great 2 hour trip for about \$65. Highly recommend to be on the water, whale watch and enjoy. www.scotchmistsailingcharters.com

Kapalua Coastal Trail. I heard of this 3.5 mile round trip along the ocean with views of lava formation, tide pools. Sturdy shoes are recommended (not flip flops) as it can be rocky at parks. Parking lots at both ends and heard gets busy after 9am. The closest lot is just north of Napili Kai Beach resort and other end is at near Ritz Carlton. I did this hike in 2019 and really enjoyed it and will do again. Fairly flat ocean front paved walkway...just a few sections of lava where you want sturdy shoes. Nice morning activity to move and see the ocean and whales. Hike details at www.liveinhawaiiow.com and address for trail is: 99 Coconut Grove Ln, Lahaina, HI 96761

Another website I found with more hikes is: www.kapalua.com/activities/hiking-trails

Road to Hana – It's a LONG, WINDY and SLOW drive, meaning all day but really super beautiful and something you should do once. There are many places to stop along the gorgeous drive to hike, swim, go in the black sand beach, have lunch and such. Some people love it, others think too far to go in a car. The traffic can be really bad, so you have to leave early to avoid it. It's a long windy road but you have to go slow, so not a bad ride. One year we went on Saturday (most common day for people to arrive and leave) as we had a late night flight. This was ideal as no one was out driving on the road. We just checked out of timeshare early, packed our luggage in trunk and went out on the road to Hana as it's just past the airport (an hour from timeshare). We didn't make it all the way to Hana, but about half to three quarters which was enough and then we had to turn back around. I've driven it as the driver, been a passenger and also did a tour bus (only way to go all the way around the road as cars have to turn around due to the road conditions). In 2019, we did a halfway to Hana and paid attention to mile markers in advance so we knew where to stop. This time we stopped at:

- Mile Marker 2- (Twin Falls) – Easy walk to 2 different waterfalls. Bring a lunch as a few picnic tables to eat at. Allow 30 minutes.
- Mile Marker 6.5/7 – (Bamboo Forrest) – Bring sturdy shoes (tennis/hiking) that can get wet as there is a creek/river to cross and pending water levels you will get wet. Really great and allow an hour.

Luau's – In case you want to go to a Luau in Maui, you can get free Luau tickets if you go to a timeshare presentation for 90 minutes. So something to consider as the Luau can be about \$100-\$125. In Maui, the Luau's include dinner and all you can drink included (when other islands only give you two coupons). Here are my thoughts:

- **Best – Old Lahaina Luau:** Best food, best drinks good location right on beach. Only downside is they don't do fire performance as that is not traditional. Show was really good...so didn't miss fire. It's known as the best, and it can sell out...so if interested, get reservations BEFORE you arrive in Maui as I've had two friends that couldn't go as sold out. Adults \$125 www.oldlahainaluau.com 1251 Front St, Lahaina/ (800) 248-5828
- **** New with great reviews is Feast of Lele.** I heard from a few locals the new favorite as of 2020 is Feast of Lele. It's the only sit down 5 course dinner (no buffet). It's from the same company as Old Lahaina Luau and in downtown Lahaina. Haven't been yet, but I will be trying this one next. Tickets go for \$140 with unlimited drinks. www.feastatelele.com
- **Very Good - Drums of the Pacific (at Hyatt) (\$123-\$130).** This is a big production with about 600 guests which feels big. www.drumsofthepacificmaui.com
- **Very Good – Sheraton** (\$125) – Great food and drinks, see the water diver at sunset before the show. Easy to walk to from Whalers Village and great show with fire. This is one you could also easily walk by from 6-8pm and watch show from walkway as there are no shields. Show is only Monday, Wednesday, Friday and smaller and more intimate event with about 200 people. www.sheratonmauiluau.com
- **Worst** - Royal Lahaina Luau. Horrible food, watered down drinks. They sell it to families as they have a special kids buffet which was gross too. So you get lots of families that think this is kid friendly, but all the

luaus are kid friendly. This Luau is not worth time, money or calories. I will say in 2019, I met 3 different people who said this was a great luau and a expedia expert said it changed a lot in the past couple years...so MAYBE consider if one day.

Downtown Lahaina – This is just great to walk around, shop, eat and enjoy. Parking is always tough, so look for lots or street parking a few blocks from water. There is also a big validated lot behind the mini outlet mall. You can always go into any of the ABC stores to get a validation too.

- At far end of Lahaina, there is the largest Bayan Tree which is fun to walk around. There are usually local craft vendors selling things too.
- Outlet stores – easy shopping right off Front Street

Glass Blowing – I came across Moana Glass at the art fairs in 2019 and did some more research and went in 2020. This was such a fun activity where you get to blow your own glass item. While it's expensive it was worth the education, fun and item to take home. Item beginners can make range from \$150-\$250 and takes 30 minutes. We opted for 2 people each making own item and we had our own glass blowing teacher helping us make one item each. They also have Thursday night shows where the experts make big items and you can watch (and bring your own food and alcohol to have fun watching). It's 6-9pm and could be a fun post dinner activity. www.moanaglass.com 808.763.6338 / 1000 Limahana Place, Lahaina

Hair Tinsel – If the kids (or you) want to get hair tinsel, we found a local woman that came to our condo (or will meet where you want). She was great and would recommend her for sure. Contact Danielle Brill at 916-220-7827 or Danielle.brilliant@gmail.com

Dole Pineapple Tour – I haven't done this yet, but heard good things about it. It's located upcountry (closer to airport). Two tours a day at 9:30 and 11:45 and cost is \$65. There is now a distillery there you can add a tour for \$10 and there is a lunch option if you want to add on.

Hula Lessons for kids – there is some sort of free hula lessons offered a few days a week in the Cannery Row Mall (next to Safeway). My friend took her kids there and they loved it and it was free. This was a good alternative to going to a luau for the kids. Not sure details, but stop in early to inquire as it may only be one or two days during the week and I think it's an afternoon thing.

Grocery Stores

- **CostCo** – There is a Costco right by the airport. So if you have a large group and want to stock up (get alcohol for the condo), worth the stop as the grocery stores are REALLY expensive in Maui.
- **Safeway in Lahaina** – This is really the biggest grocery store and always busy but they have it all.
- **Times Grocery** – Closest larger grocery store in between Kaanapali and Kahana (1.5 miles from Kahana) if you don't want to go all the way to Safeway. It's a big grocery store with all you need.