

# Huckaby Kauai Guidance

(For the adventurous)

**Background** – My first visit to the Hawaiian Islands was in 1973 when my mom and dad took us to visit Oahu, Maui and Kauai. And although I have been to those other islands many times Kauai has always been my favorite...by far... and consequently a favorite to the Huckabys. It's our favorite because of the unspoiled and undeveloped nature and the countless adventures in the wilderness there. A full 1/3rd of the island is undeveloped; the road doesn't even go around the island.

I can remember my dad, beating the hell out of a rental car driving for miles on sugar cane roads, before the hyatt existed in Poipu... opening and closing the gates behind us, cutting sugar cane with a butter knife so we could taste it and finally popping out at Mahaulepu beach.

If you want shopping and touristy stuff and eating your 3 squares in restaurants go to Maui. If you want adventure and sightseeing in nature go to Kauai.

## The Book

buy it now. The guidance and directions are spectacular. The reviews don't lie.

[http://www.amazon.com/Ultimate-Kauai-Guidebook-Revealed/dp/0983888760/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1432479066&sr=1-1&keywords=kauai+revealed+2015](http://www.amazon.com/Ultimate-Kauai-Guidebook-Revealed/dp/0983888760/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1432479066&sr=1-1&keywords=kauai+revealed+2015)

## The Island and Weather

The general rule is on a sunny day you go north. On a rainy day you stay south. Remember that there is a reason Kauai is so green... it will rain. On your side and the south typically only for 20 or 30 mins and then the sun comes out. On the north it can rain all day. so, get a cocktail and wait it out.

The **east side**, often called the windy side or the bette midler side is located right in the middle of the island so that getting to the north side (the rainy side) to Princeville is easy. It can be windy on the east side

The **west side** is where many of the locals are concentrated. It is sunny and rural

Our timeshare (Marriott Waiohai) is in poipu on the sunny side; the **south side**.

The **North Side** of the island is the rainy side; it's beautiful and green for a reason.

The surf is generally big in winter especially on the north side and smaller in summer

## Adventures

### The Huckaby top 6 Adventures that cost money

(in no order)

**The Helicopter** – is a must at least once....if you can afford it. find the highest rated ones through yelp or other internet means and find a coupon on the internet and reserve in advance.

**Sugar cane flume tubes** - A great...and I mean perfect adventure / fun family thing for those with little kids or grandma and grandpa is the sugar cane flume float. you get in bathing suits and float slowly in inner tubes in the actual sugar cane flumes. Through tunnels, etc. Unfortunately it is very popular and people reserve months in advance. <http://kuaibackcountry.com/>

**ATVs** – totally fun and very close to poipu. One our our best paid adventures ever. Muddy, waterfalls, awesome. <http://www.kauaiatv.com/>

**Ziplining** – is done very close to Poipu in the mountains of kipu above the waita reservoir. <http://kuaibackcountry.com/>

**Napali Coast Zodiac** – of all the boat / snorkel tours the zodiac is our favorite and because of that we have done it many times. It's a must for the adventurous family. There are a number of companies that do it so use the internet to find the ratings and reserve in advance.

**Kayaking / Stand up Paddle boards** – Wailua River or Menehune (kelly's favorite)

### Non-Paid favorite Adventures

Every adventurous family that visits Kauai for a week must burn two full days of their 7 days on the island in two "must do" full day adventures:

1. **Kokee State Park and Waimea Canyon** – is shockingly beautiful. This is where the helicopters spend most of their time. There are numerous hikes in the state park. The Pihee trail at the end of the road is a must...and if caught on a sunny day you will never forget it. it's rugged; not for the faint of heart, but none of the hikes in the area are easy. The Alaka'i swamp trail is a great addition to this. The elusive Kauaian Rainbow trout lives here...and when I say elusive I mean it. it took me 8 years and I spilled a lot of blood bushwhacking 18 mile hikes to catch and release one.
2. **Kee beach and the kalalua trail** – at the end of the road on the North side this beach has everything. If you catch it on a sunny day it will be what you remember most from your vacation. The beach is protected from the surf and the snorkeling and turtles can be great. the Kaulau trailhead is here. ¼ mile on the trail is the most photographed

place on the island. The adventurous hike 2 miles of the trail to the river. It's a strenuous 4 mile hike that is a must. When young and fit I have run the trail to the 4 mile mark and back. This is a popular place and they closed the natural parking lot at the beach so, parking is at a premium. It's best to drop off the stuff in the parking lot and one person parks the car as far as a mile away and hikes it back.

3. **The sugar cane tunnel:** My family has not done one of my favorite adventures and I wish they will one day: the tunnel through the mountain in Kipu ranch near Koloa. I stumbled upon this accidently running years ago, faced my fears and just went in...it's about 1/2 mile long. When you pop out on the other side you are where most of Jurassic park was filmed. To get there you park where ATV adventures is; at the old sugar cane mill at the end of Mahaulepu / wili wili road in koloa. It's a good 2.5 miles on the dirt road before you get to the tunnel. Mountain Bikes would be a good here. There are tons of dirt roads in the area. The zip line is in the area too. you'll see the atvs and zipliners. You'll also see the wild pigs and tons of birds. The waita reservoir is here.
4. **Mahaulepu** – This beach is great because it's hard to get to and there is no civilization for miles. You have to take a small easy series of poorly maintained dirt sugar cane roads. Drive to the hyatt in poipu and keep going past until the road ends. Take a right on the dirt road that parallels the poipu bay golf course. When that road end take a right turn on the dirt road (mahaulepu road) another couple miles, past the empty guard shack until it ends at the beach (that is gillin's beach). Left turn following the beach for another 1.5 miles until it ends at Mahaulepu. There is Plenty of parking here at the end of the road and the nasty dirt roads scare the tourists off. It can get windy here and the beach is primitive and beautiful. There is a trail that parallels the beach to the north that goes for miles... past spouting horns and beautiful cliffs. About a mile down the trail is the lithified cliffs; climb to the top and take pictures. You can continue the hike for another mile to what I call the most secluded beach in Kauai because there is not a road close to it for miles. Follow the trail to a gate, ignore it, and keep going until you are stopped by the cliffs. Look down and you'll see the secluded beach. I have never seen anyone on this beach...ever.
5. **The Makauwahi Cave Trail** – this is a spectacular hike along the bluffs just past the Hyatt in Poipu. Park at the public beach parking lot between the hyatt and the golf course. the trailhead is easy to find at the end of the beach in where the big cliff is. you hike along the cliffs with the spectacular views. The trail actually goes on the edge of the golf course by ancient Hawaiian buriel grounds. Just short of the river it turns inland to the ancient Hawaiian caves.
6. Here's how you do "Turtle Town":

Head to Princeville and turn into the main entrance.

Stare at this map:

<https://binged.it/2DmY3tD>

the push pin is where we parked. It's in an apartment complex. Technically it's illegal to park there. there is no public parking there. and as you probably know, there is very little public parking in the entire city of Princeville.

We were shown this place by our local buddies. They told us that everyone parks there. but they said to be smart about it by not parking right in front of it. notice how we parked a couple hundred yards before the trail, in front of some apartments that had tons of spaces free.

Stare carefully at that map and you can see the trail. There is actually a garden hose right at the trailhead where you can rinse off. many people were doing it after hiking out when we went in. we used it too.

Since there is rock climbing and swimming in the ocean involved you cannot really bring anything that is not waterproof. Typically just a bathing suit and water shoes.



*Here we are at the top of the trail headed down*

The trail down is very steep. In fact, it's more of a climb than a trail at many points. There are a few ropes that are pretty much necessary. The trail pretty much goes 300 feet or so straight down to the ocean. The best time to do this is on a sunny day (because it would be somewhat dangerously slippery in rainy conditions) and on a low tide (because swimming in the ocean is involved.)

When you get down (facing the ocean) you'll climb the lava south a bit and you'll see a little rocky bay with dead trees and some sand on your right. you'll need to climb the lava to a point where you can enter the ocean and wade over to the entrance to the cave.



*You can see the entrance to the cave in the background and kelly struggling to wade over to it.*

The cave is pitch dark. I had my underwater camera and used the flash to give people a quick peek of what is in front of them. we would have stepped on a turtle (and bonked our heads on the roof of the cave) had we not had that camera.

The cave is about 200 feet long and winds around to an entrance to the ocean on the other side. it is mostly sand, but there are rocks in there.



*Pitch black. Notice camille accidentally stepping on a rock and a turtle in the foreground that no one had seen yet.*

Upon exiting the cave you'll be faced with a short swim from the little beach through deep calm water to the lava wall on the other side. hike the lava to the next bay (about 200 feet). There is where we swam. It was calm in that bay and there were turtles in the water everywhere.



Also notice how rough it was on the other side of the bay. In calmer, lower tides you swim across this bay, climb up the lava then hike the lava around the bend to an awesome beach that is only accessible this way (or by boat). it was too rough this day for us to continue on.

If you look right to the shore of this bay and hike up ... there is an ancient hawaiian area with a trickling waterfall of fresh water and artifacts. We explored it. super cool.

So, after swimming and spotting all the turtles we headed back. when we got back to the opposite side of the cave, the kids climbed up the lava wall. this is where the kids climbed over the top of the cave to jump 20 feet into the water before swimming back to the cave entrance.



*That is camille jumping into the deep pool at the exit / entrance to the cave*

## Snorkling

The snorkeling in Kauai can be spectacular if you catch the right day when the surf is down and the water clarity is good. The best guidance is to buy and bring your equipment and don't rent it there. But, you can rent there easily. Turtles are abundant on the south shorelines. If you stay in the water long enough you will run into them. or you just spot them from the shore and swim to them.

All the beaches and lava shoreline are great for snorkeling in Poipu. For the adventurous drive to the old Koloa landing just a couple miles north of poipu beach, park up top and walk down the road to where the scuba people enter the water. Swim the shoreline south. It's eery because of the deep clear water and spectacular. Lots of turtles and fish; big fish. It's a tough swim in rough surf. Mark and I fish the shoreline here very successfully.

The reefs at the beach house restaurant beach are calm and easy and pretty good too.

## Golf

poipu bay is a world class course...the pga course... plan on bringing a lot of golf balls.... A lot....



The Kiahuna course across the street from our condo is great because it's close and it's inexpensive. One trip mark and I inked a "play every day" deal. It was dirt cheap and as much golf as we wanted after 3pm.

## The best Beaches

### South Side

- Poipu Beaches (poipu beach park, waiohai and kiahuna)
- Mahaulepu (see adventures)
- Baby beach (in front of and next to the beach house restaurant)

### North Side

- Kee (see adventures)
- Tunnels (is overrated....skip it unless you want to surf)
- Lumahai (requires a hike down; the locals go here. It's awesome. It's where the movie south pacific was filmed)
- Secrets (another locals beach that requires a hike down). Once there, Hike a mile north to the rocks, climb up and over to the waterfall that enters the ocean.

### East Side

- Lydgate beach is on the west side. it's called a childrens beach because they built a lagoon which protects it from the surf. With a mask and snorkel it can be awesome for the kids. But, when that wind and tide come up it is the exact opposite....miserable. So go early in the morning or on a calm day. if you do go to lydgate then hike north up the beach to where the wailua river enters the ocean. You can see the ancient kauai'n carvings in the rocks. Just don't swim there. it's a general rule never to swim in the ocean where rivers enter (sharks).

**Mountain Biking** – can be rented in koloa. I have mountain biked the sugar cane roads and trails in the mehaulepu area and it's so rugged broke spokes in the process. If I were to do it again I'd do it through the tunnel by the waita reservoir. (see adventures).

**Running / walking** – both directions along the coast in poipu is fantastic. Mostly flat. See adventures for running the tunnel.

**Fishing and Fly Fishing** – is a totally separate document that is twice as long as this one. Email me ([timhuck@interknowlogy.com](mailto:timhuck@interknowlogy.com)) for guidance on fishing.

## Dinner Restaurants / Eating highlights:

Make sure to see the current restaurant ratings:

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g60625-Poipu\\_Kauai\\_Hawaii.html#MAINWRAP](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g60625-Poipu_Kauai_Hawaii.html#MAINWRAP)

## Nice Restaurants

**Brenneckes** is a must. Its food is not outstanding; it's good, but it's location and ambiance cannot be beat. Anyone going to Kauai must go home with the literally famous Brennecke's mahi mahi tshirt with the on it.

We always go there on the first night we arrive by tradition. We love it. Get a reso and ask them to be on the "window" for the sunset. It's an open air restaurant. Always packed. A good plan would be first to have a cocktail at the beach bar, Honu Bar at our place (waiohai) and walk over to brenneckes after that. So if not from Waiohai you'd drive to Poipu Beach Park, make that right turn on Hoowii Road, drive 200 yards down to the water. Make a right turn when you hit the water and are forced to turn (away from Brenneckes which you'll see on your left). Park in that public parking lot as far right (west?) as you can. there will be a ton of spots. It's a huge lot. In between the Waihai and those 2 \$20M homes you are looking at is the public beach access walkway. Walk on the public beach access path, turn right when you get to the beach onto the waiohia property. You'll run right into the Hono Bar.

**Beach House:** it's the nicest restaurant (arguably) on the island. It's also the most expensive. The views here are awesome. Turtles everywhere in the water in front of the restaurant. Get a reso "on the window" or with a view. Before or after the restaurant drive the 3 or so miles to spouting horn.

**TidePools:** Tidepools restaurant is an awesome place; 4 star level food and has the pricetag to go with it. it's in the hyatt in poipu. Macadamia Nut Crusted Opah... Get a reso and they'll put you on the water. The restaurant sits in a lake with tons of Koi. Its set on a lagoon so that the coi swim right by your table. Our kids adore this place

**Red Salt:** Really highly rated and we have never been there. It's right next to the Waiohai.

**Keoki's Paradise:** In the Poipu Shopping center. Not crazy expensive. Great food; great ambiance. Really fun bar.

**Plantation Gardens Restaurant:** Really good food; famous chef. No real view. It's in Kiahuna Plantation.



**La Spezia Restaurant and Wine Bar** – in Koloa by the big save market and the Tiny Koloa fish market. Great Italian food and awesome service.

### Little Kid Friendly

- If you are considering a luau, which can be mega fun for the kids, then **Smiths** in Wailua is the best. cheesy, average food, good entertainment. Everyone must do it once.
- **Keoki's paradise** in poipu is a place kids love....and many honeymooners. It's medium priced...which in Kauai there is no such thing so it's still pricey, but set in a garden area with water features. We always go here because the kids even as teenagers still love it. awesome fu-fu drinks.
- If you make the day trip south and west to waimea canyon (the grand canyon of Hawaii) then you must stop at **jo jos shave ice** on the way back. It's hard to miss on the main hwy in waimea. It's legendary and has a cult following all over the world.... And always crowded. The wait is worth it.

### Other Restaurant and Food options

- **Paco's Tacos** – For us SoCals the thing about travel is how, after 3 or 4 days, you start craving Mexican food. Well, the best burrito I have ever had...ever... was on Kauai. We stumbled into it accidentally after playing golf at the Kukuioolono Golf Course near Lawai. We had always heard about "the Mexican place at the golf course", but were shocked when we finally ate there. it was so good I talked to the owners. This was a number of years ago. now there are 5-6 Pacos Tacos on the island including one in Poipu.
- The locals eat at **Kountry Kitchen**. It's right by the airport. In Lihue Tons of families. it's awesome....simply for food and value. No ambiance; it's a dive. We try to figure out a way to eat there. usually on the way home before the red-eye.
- **Brick Oven Pizza** in Kalaheo for pizza
- **Mark's Place** – in lihue. great for lunch
- **Ono Family Restaurant** in kapaa.
- **Plantation Gardens** that is my father in law's favorite place. very kid friendly. It's in Kiahuna Plantation

### "Eating in" Guidance

- **Koloa Fish Market** - There is a local fresh fish market, tiny, cash only, limited hours, in Koloa. It's close the BigSave market and La Spezia. If you want the highest end fresh fish to cook yourself or the highest end poke, this is the place to go.
- As shocking as this may sound, **Costco** in Lihui has the most awesome fresh fish for a great price. If you are staying at a condo or vrbo where you are going to cook this Costco is a must. They also have many types of Koloa Rum for a great price
- The **Big Save market** in Koloa has fresh poke every day. it's where you'll do the most of your shopping. it's cramped and crowded; not like the giant grocery stores of the mainland.

### Up North Options

We really don't know the restaurants up north at an expertise level and there are a lot of nice ones....the world's elite have places up in Princeville. When we go north it's an all day trip because we are so far south in Poipu. It's usually spent on one of their spectacular beaches with a bag lunch and a long tired drive home. But, we have added a ritual in the last 3-4 years. After a long day at Kee Beach and the Kalalua Trail, we shower up at Kee Beach, then hit the **st. regis** hotel for cocktails as the sun goes down on the balcony restaurant off the main lobby.

Another great casual place is **Happy Talk lounge** in Princeville. It has a good view, reasonable prices and good food. It's really highly rated.