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Maui June 2023 Blog Post

I think it's safe to say that visiting Maui is a dream vacation for anyone and everyone. So often images we see on social media promise a picture-perfect and unrealistic experience of a destination, but with Maui no Instagram story could do it justice. My first visit to this incredible island left me speechless more times than I can count. From the pristine beaches and warm ocean waters, to the fresh local food and the fascinating and important history – getting on a plane home was challenging to say the least.

Maui AgFest & 4-H Livestock Fair

First glance at the name and you might not expect this to be one of the best celebrations of local Maui flavors and food you can experience – but that's exactly what it is. One Saturday in June, the best vendors and chefs in Maui come together for an epic showcasing of the traditional Maui recipes and local ingredients. For me, it was the world's best farmers' market. You can spend all day perusing the stands, trying samples of fresh pineapple, coffee, and taro roots. It's perfect for everyone; very family friendly with lots of things to do (like climb up and hang out on a tractor!) that keep the kids entertained.





But it's also about learning and appreciating where the food comes from. One of the best parts of Maui AgFest is talking to the people who grow the fruit and meeting the ranchers behind the livestock. You feel the heart and passion for supporting local as the overriding theme of the festival, and it's fantastic.

Make sure you come hungry!

You might spend the afternoon happily sampling away as you'll want to try as many of the local food trucks and vendors as possible. Guava lemonade, homemade popsicles, garlic noodles, taro root hash, fresh pork tacos, coconut cookies – You won't regret popping from stand to

stand trying all the flavors and chatting up the chefs behind the delicious treats.

One experience you absolutely must attend is the Grand Taste. You'll need to buy a separate ticket but trust me when I say it is the best food experience on the island. Twelve Chefs come together to compete for Best Dish using only ingredients local to Maui. Not only do you get to try every dish, you have the opportunity to talk to the award-winning chefs as they're handing you their creations. Getting up close and personal with chefs of that caliber is a rare occurrence, let alone twelve together with the luscious green West Maui mountains as a backdrop. You can tell this is a yearly tradition for so many on the island – they started lining up an hour before gates opened! I've been a food reporter for five years and have judged dozens of similar food events, but I can confidently say this is the best one I've experienced.



Hiking



Halfway up the Waihe'e Ridge I turned to my friend and said, this is my favorite trail I've ever done. The hiking in Maui promises the most vibrant green colors, waterfalls, sweeping ocean views and there's a hike for every skill level.

'Īao Valley State Monument Park is a must on your trip to Maui whether or not you love hiking. Just driving into the parking lot you immediately see what makes this place so special. The

'Īao Needle or Kuka'emoku, stands at 1,200 ft tall and serves as the historic site of the battle of Kepaniwai where Kamehameha conquered the Maui army in 1790. For a little more adventure, head down to the stream and follow the path along the way to soak in more of the views. If you're coming from out of state you do need a [reservation](#) before coming to the park. For more information on the 'Īao Valley State Monument reservation system, [here's the link](#).

If you're hoping to see some classic Maui waterfalls, the Makamakaole Stream Trail is the way to go! You get two waterfalls in three miles and 13 stream crossings along the way as you hike along the valley floor through the vibrant green vegetation.

For the ones looking to get a workout in, the Waihe'e Ridge trail will offer some of the best views above the forests and into the clouds. It's steep: climbing 1,500 feet in just over two miles but the trail is well-maintained and easy to follow to the top. When we made it to the peak we were totally surrounded by clouds, but then the clouds started to clear and we had the most stunning views of the valley and ocean below.

Where we stayed.

I had never considered not staying at a beach when coming to an island, but I couldn't have loved our stay at Lumeria any more. We not only had sweeping ocean views, but truly felt relaxed in such a beautiful and quiet setting. The pool overlooked the mountains, we had meditation huts, and a hammock garden to bask in the trade winds. The welcoming staff made us feel more like family than guests and the restaurant offered a farm-to-table menu we devoured under a pink sunset.



A moment of appreciation for Maui.

There was an overriding theme that stood out to me about my experience in Maui and that was an island that truly values what they have and preserving it. Every restaurant took pride in not just using, but showcasing, local ingredients.

Head to a recycling bin and you'll have several options instead of just the standard bin to toss it all in. I was especially impressed that Maui AgFest had people stationed with the purpose of helping you sort the recycling ensuring no issues.

At the beaches we went to there were sunscreen dispensers for Hawaii-safe sunscreen to ensure the preservation of the coral reefs. In the areas where sea turtles loved to sunbathe there were signs and ropes keeping people a safe distance back, making sure the wildlife had the space they needed to thrive (while we also got to see sea turtles, how cool!)

A visit to Maui is a guaranteed beautiful adventure. You don't have to leave the beach or resort to have a good time, but if you do venture off the sand you'll have an arsenal of memories and appreciation for such a vibrant island that makes you want to come back not just for the beauty, but the culture and history that made the island what it is today.

