



PHOTO BY KIM KUHN; INVITATION DESIGN BY CECI NEW YORK, CECINEEWYORK.COM

Hawaii HAS THE RARE DISTINCTION OF BEING FULLY *American* AND FULLY EXOTIC. YOU DON'T CHANGE *currency*, BUT THE LANDSCAPE CHANGES FROM BEACH TO *jungle* TO *volcanic* DESERT. AND YOU DON'T NEED A *language* TRANSLATOR, BUT YOU'LL LEAVE WITH A WARM SENSE OF *aloha*. HERE'S WHERE TO STAY, PLAY AND PARTY.



Hawaii

(the Big Island)



EXPERT PICKS

Enoch A'ana is owner of **Pele's Wedding & Events** at **Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa**. A'ana has designed weddings for the past decade.

HIDDEN VENUE

Anaehoomalu Bay is a sacred pond where Hawaiian royalty once roamed. Sitting on the edge are **King's Knoll** and **Lindsey Beach**, which are two of the most beautiful ceremony sites with breathtaking views.

WELCOME BAGS

Big Island Candies gives you a variety of local favorites, all dipped in chocolate.

PLANNING TIP

Waikoloa sits in between our three mountain ranges: the Kohala Mountains, Mauna Kea and Hualalai. Although we get sunshine about 360 days a year, we're known as the windy city, or "Waikoblowa."

So when planning for an outdoor wedding in Waikoloa, my suggestion is to wear your hair up — then you won't have to worry about the wind.

WEDDING CUSTOM

A traditional Hawaiian ceremony is always the way to go. Start off with the blowing of the conch shell and either a Hawaiian chant or prayer.

To the west at **The Original Hawaiian Chocolate Factory**, groups of up to 30 people nibble on chocolate samples while learning how cocoa beans morph into chocolate bars.



Come nighttime, make friends with manta rays (some with 14-foot wingspans) in the calm waters off the Kona Coast. Using spotlights on the sea floor, outfitters like **Kona**

Diving attract loads of plankton, which the rays gracefully scoop up while doing back rolls.

If saying your vows at a resort isn't your cup of tea, consider

upcountry **Puakea Ranch** for a heavy dose of Old Hawaii. (Don't be surprised if you hear farm animals in the background at this cattle-ranch-turned-B&B.) To the east in Hilo, **The Falls at Reed's Island** is a luxury vacation rental with soaking tubs, a gourmet kitchen and a waterfall you'll have all to yourself. In Waimea, **Anna Ranch Heritage Center** combines flower gardens and ranching culture — there's even a blacksmith who crafts horseshoe key chains to mark the day.

For favors, look to **Kona Natural Soap Co.** for small bottles of kukui-nut oil and handcrafted soaps. Incorporate more island flair by booking **Hawaii Hula Co.**; it provides hip-shaking lessons for guests who want to get in on the action. — *Sarah Sekula*

full-on feast with music, dance and history. *Rooms from \$339; weddings from \$3,500.*

Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, also on the Kohala Coast, offers a bluff-top ceremony site on the third tee of the resort's oceanfront golf course, as well as hyper-manicured lawns, a tropical garden and a lava-stone patio. A rehearsal dinner in the terraced Garden Room is a crowd-pleaser thanks to the sprawling buffet. *Rooms from \$399; weddings from \$4,000.*

If historic is what you're after, **Courtyard Marriott King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel** delivers. Centrally located in Kailua Village, it marks the spot where King Kamehameha spent his final years. Weddings on the luau grounds have views of Ahuena Heiau: once Kamehameha's temple and still a sacred place. (Note: Avoid October when the hotel hosts the Ironman World Championship.) *Rooms from \$219; weddings from \$1,000.*

The Big Island's primordial landscape will beckon you outdoors each day. Start with a trek through **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park**, where molten lava occasionally flows into the sea thanks to active volcano Kilauea. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to seven ecological zones and endangered species like the hawksbill turtle and the *nēnē* (Hawaiian goose).

Hawaii, the Big Island, as one might guess, is rather large, which means it's a massive canvas for show-stopping natural wonders. Geographically unique, it comprises 11 of the world's 13 climate zones. Couples can wed on the beach with a snow-capped volcano in the distance and then entertain guests with rainforest treks or excursions to view the lava flow.

FROM TOP: FLETCH PHOTOGRAPHY; ALLYSON MAGDA PHOTOGRAPHY; JOSE VILLA; OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JAMES RUBIO; FLETCH PHOTOGRAPHY; CHRISTIE PHAM PHOTOGRAPHY; JAMES RUBIO; FLETCH PHOTOGRAPHY; CHRISTIE PHAM PHOTOGRAPHY; JAMES RUBIO; FLETCH PHOTOGRAPHY; CHRISTIE PHAM PHOTOGRAPHY; JAMES RUBIO; FLETCH PHOTOGRAPHY; CHRISTIE PHAM PHOTOGRAPHY; JAMES RUBIO



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Big Island venues, such as The Falls at Reed's Island, exude grandeur. Bridesmaid dresses riff on the locale's flora. Colorful spring rolls. Hawaii-made beverages from Waialua Soda Works. An outdoor celebration at Mauna Kea Beach Hotel. A flower girl carries a capiz-shell basket. Rings rest on an illustration of the island. A petal-strewn aisle by Big Island florist Bliss in Bloom. Kukui-nut leis and paper parasols lend Hawaiian flair.

Kauai



Hawaii's fourth-largest isle (at 552 square miles, it's one-third the size of Rhode Island), Kauai is small but mighty. Engaged couples and filmmakers alike swoon for the island's epic scenery — Jurassic Park and Avatar utilized Kauai's jungle-porn landscape to conjure both a prehistoric era and another planet. Pair that with rich history (legend holds that hula began here) and a wealth of only-in-Kauai wedding touches, and you've got a formula for an Oscar-worthy big day.

stay

To the north, Princeville is home to Kauai's plush property, **The St. Regis Princeville Resort**. Wed on the Kamani Cove beach lawn in the shadow of Makana Mountain; the in-house events team dreams up eye-popping orchid arrangements and other decor details. Late night, serve Bloody Marys, invented at The St. Regis New York — each resort features its own local spin, and in Princeville it's the Aloha Mary with Hawaiian Ocean Vodka, wasabi powder, sriracha and sea salt. *Rooms from \$525; weddings from \$250 per person.*

Just next door (and sharing a private beach), **Hanalei Bay Resort** offers similar vistas at a three-star price point. Homey amenities like two-bedroom condos with a washer, dryer and full kitchen attract families. Beach

EXPERT PICKS

Since 2002, planner **Lisa Insalata** has combined her love for Kauai and passion for weddings to create signature celebrations.

HIDDEN VENUE

Makai Golf Course in Princeville offers the most spectacular ocean-bluff site. At the seventh hole, you can stage your events right on the perfectly manicured greens, with views of both the ocean and the mountains.

WELCOME BAGS

Some of my favorite products are snacks from **Kauai Nut Roasters** and **Uncle Mikey's**, as well as **Ele** candles and bath salts. Also, **Second Skin Naturals** makes pleasantly scented and all-natural insect repellent.

PLANNING TIP

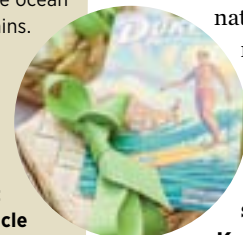
Kauai is the greenest of the Hawaiian Islands, so it does rain quite a bit — many times it's a brief shower followed by sunshine and rainbows. Have a rain plan, which can entail umbrellas, relocating to a covered area, or simply waiting for the shower to pass.

WEDDING CUSTOM

In some ceremonies, the minister will sprinkle the wedding rings with salt water poured from a ti leaf and then wrap a lava rock in the leaf: a blessing that remains at the wedding site.



ceremonies are popular, but garden weddings offer epic views. Note: There are currently no restaurants, but onsite event coordinator Debra Lebiet can



recommend nearby places to nosh.

Rooms from \$154; weddings custom.

On the south shore, **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa**

is the grand dame of Poipu Beach, where monk seals often come ashore to sunbathe. The hotel's luau is one of the best on the island, and weddings wow with dashes of native flair (hula dancers, conch-shell blowers, lei exchanges). Plus, couples marrying at any Hyatt can earn free honeymoon nights. *Rooms from \$440; weddings from \$7,000.*

play

Can't-miss activities abound, beginning with the North Shore's famed **Napali Coast**, with jagged, velvet-green bluffs that rise 2,000 feet above the ocean. Gawk via helicopter or boat; for groups, **Capt. Andy's** dinner sunset sail is a festive option.

On the West Side, **Waimea Canyon**, gaping a mile wide and plunging 3,600 feet into the earth, has earned the nickname Grand

Canyon of the Pacific. Guided hikes are available, but it's just as easy to pick up trail maps at the ranger station and do a little exploring on your own.

More bragging rights: Kauai has the only navigable rivers in the Aloha State. Brave one in a kayak — **Outfitters Kauai's** Kipu Zipline Safari (max 20 people) starts with a 2-mile paddle on the Huleia River and continues with a canopy tour and a plunge into Kipu Ranch's Bamboo Pool swimming hole.

party

Looking to wed beyond the bounds of your resort? In Poipu, two restaurants keep the celebration all under one roof (er, sky): **Plantation Gardens' Moir Gardens** doesn't need much dressing up, while **Beach House** hosts alfresco ceremonies right on the water. To the east in Lihue, **Kilohana Plantation**, a historic landmark and cultural attraction, distills its own Koloa Rum and specializes in themed oceanfront receptions.

The island purveys plenty of local goodies. **Kauai Kookies**, **Kauai Coffee**, **Kauai Chocolate Co.** truffles and **Aunty Liliko'i** jam make for appreciated treats that can be enjoyed on the go.

FROM TOP: ALISA GREIG FOR JAMES RUBIO PHOTOGRAPHY; REBECCA ARTHURS, REBECCA ARTHURS.COM; JAMES RUBIO; OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JAMES RUBIO; REBECCA ARTHURS, REBECCA ARTHURS.COM (2); JESSE AND WHITNEY OF OUR LABOR OF LOVE; FLETCH PHOTOGRAPHY



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: An iconic Blue Hawaiian cocktail. Woven *lauhala* favor boxes are embellished with vintage Duke Kahanamoku surfer tags. Hanalei Bay Resort's 22 acres comprise verdant hills and a sun-kissed beach. From the groom's lei and bride's head wreath to their ceremony aisle decor, local flowers feature prominently at this event at Four Seasons Resort Lanai at Manele Bay. Protea king blooms and Hawaiian guitar music set an island mood.



Lanai & Molokai

Most weddings take place on the four major Hawaiian islands — but don't rule out the smaller ones. Bill Gates sure didn't.

He married on the *Challenge* at Manele golf course, which overlooks the **Four Seasons Resort Lanai at Manele Bay**. Consider Hulopoe Bay if your guests are OK with a short walk: A marine preserve, this white-sand beach is footsteps from Sweetheart Rock, a natural altar sculpted by the sea. As for Molokai, since **Hotel Molokai** is the island's only



hotel, many couples opt to hold their ceremony at a private home or on white-sand Papohaku Beach, one of the prettiest in Hawaii. The best part is: You won't find much foot traffic. (Be sure to check on permits and weather first.) — SS





Oahu



EXPERT PICKS
Diana Caro-Salvador is owner and lead planner at **Oahu Wedding**, which creates custom packages and provides planning and coordination services exclusively for Oahu couples.

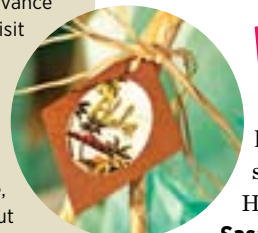
PLANNING TIP
 Oahu is a year-round wedding destination. Make appointments with vendors and venues well in advance of when you visit the island for a scouting trip. If you wait to make appointments until you arrive, you may be out of luck.

WEDDING CUSTOM
 The ancient Hawaiians didn't have forged metal, so they didn't have wedding rings. Instead, they wove leis to present to their beloved during the wedding ceremony.

PHOTO OP
Makapuu Beach on the eastern side of the island boasts deep blue water, dramatic cliffs and a small offshore island.

WELCOME BAGS
 Hawaii's coffee-growing history dates to the early 1800s and began on the island of Oahu. Gift guests with bags of coffee, chocolate-covered coffee beans or other souvenirs from **Honolulu Coffee** or **Hawaiian Gourmet Coffee Roasters**.

North Shore visitors can take a horseback tour through forests, ranchland and tropical orchards with **Happy Trails Hawaii** in Haleiwa. Photo ops also abound at **Waimea Valley's** waterfalls. While you're in the area, visit Kahuku's famous roadside shrimp trucks for succulent, locally raised jumbo prawns piled high on paper plates and steaming with garlic, lemon and butter.



party The ideal rehearsal dinner for sushi snobs is at Honolulu's **Sushi Sasabune**, where the

seriously fresh catch is the star. Order the chef's-choice *omakase* ("trust me") menu, and let the man behind the bar guide your evening.

Though a beach wedding is de rigeur in Hawaii, several other venues contend for consideration. **Kawaiahao Church**, built from coral slabs hauled from the sea in the 1840s, hosts memorable religious ceremonies in both Hawaiian and English. At **Loulu Palm Estate**, a plantation-style home built in 1941, the wedding lawn extends right to the water, so sand in your skirt isn't an issue. And with **Kualoa Ranch's** 4,000-plus acres of potential wedding space (gardens, mountains, beaches, lawns), you'll certainly find a picturesque spot to seal the deal; wedding packages feature a traditional Hawaiian ukulele player.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The youngest *pu* (conch) shell blower. A photo op at the Hawaii Theatre Center. Hula dancers entertain at Loulu Palm Estate. Amp up the Hawaiian vibe with aloha gift tags and tiki torches. Hibiscus and orchids are naturals in Hawaiian wedding decor. Groomsmen look studly in ti-leaf leis. Below: A post-ceremony moment at Kualoa Ranch.



Big city, bright lights, broad beaches and beautiful vistas: Oahu has it all and then some. The third-largest Hawaiian island, it's often called The Gathering Place, because it's home to most of the state's population — 900,000-plus people — and more than 5 million tourists flock to its iconic beaches annually. Between its cultural heritage, historical significance and modern luxury, Oahu's myriad options fit almost any style — and spark your inner surf-goddess.

evening, the resort outdoes itself with a wedding-worthy fireworks display to cap off the night. **Rooms from \$199; weddings from \$750.**

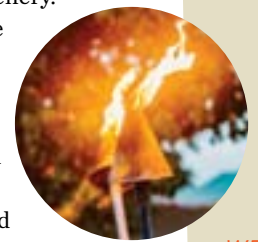
If an infusion of historic charm is important to your day, **Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa** is the place. Built in 1901, the Beaux Arts-style stunner was Waikiki's first hotel. The "First Lady of Waikiki" keeps guests gawking with nightly hula performances and event spaces like turn-of-the-century reception halls and a majestic banyan tree. **Rooms from \$315; weddings from \$5,200.**

stay Tucked in a secluded cove in Ko Olina — one of

Oahu's less-populated beaches just 30 minutes from Honolulu — the **JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa at Ko Olina** is outfitted with a private lanai in every room, a championship golf course and both outdoor and indoor venues, including the sunset-facing Lagoon Lawn. **Rooms from \$595; wedding packages from \$4,000.**

Modestly priced but lavishly appointed corner suites at **Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort** flaunt a full-on view of the ocean, beach and Diamond Head crater. If you're tying the knot on the Great Lawn on a Friday

play There's no point in visiting Oahu without getting outside and enjoying the drop-dead-gorgeous scenery. Schedule a private group yoga class with **Beach Sunset Yoga Hawaii** on Waikiki Beach, or strap on the Texas and head up the **Makapuu Lighthouse Trail**, a moderately easy hike that ends with a spectacular vista of a 600-foot sea cliff. Seven national military monuments commemorate World War II; visit one in Pearl Harbor, including the **USS Arizona** memorial and the 887-foot-long **USS Battleship Missouri**.



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Maui



For an A-list island, Maui is surprisingly low-key and unpopulated. And that's how the locals like it. Maui has strict building codes that limit structures to approximately 10 stories, so the undisturbed views of cloud-shrouded mountains, lava-rock cliffs and pineapple fields-cum-coffee orchards stay that way. Plus, it's easy to circumnavigate, even though it's Hawaii's second-largest island.

stay

The resort community of Wailea is on Maui's leeward side, which means calm weather and water plus Instagram-worthy sunsets (#nofilter). Its newest resident, **Andaz Maui at Wailea**, has you at aloha: The elevated entryway provides direct eye contact with the horizon. The 297-room resort has three tiered, cascading pools, an apothecary-inspired spa and great snorkeling just offshore. Wedding spaces are plentiful and flexible; the event studio with an open kitchen offers an interactive vibe for rehearsal dinners. *Rooms from \$499; site fees from \$3,000.*

An eight-minute drive down the road, **The Fairmont Kea Lani** has two- and three-bedroom villas with private courtyards and plunge pools, which are more affordable should you wed during low season (September through November). Fairmont's honeymoon registry lets friends and family gift contributions like massage treatments, drinks at Luana



EXPERT PICKS
Carolee Higashino, owner of **White Orchid Wedding**, has orchestrated Hawaiian weddings since 1991.

HIDDEN VENUE
The **White Orchid Beach House** is located on its own private sandy beach cove on the remote southern shores of Makena. This venue can hold up to 50 guests and is one of Hawaii's only white-sand-beach oceanfront estates.

WELCOME BAGS
We create a lovely beach-bag welcome filled with island goodies, such as **Kitch'n Cook'd Maui Potato Chips**, tropical juices, local organic pineapples, **Alii Kula Lavender** farm products, logo water bottles, logo flip-flops and **Cook Kwee's Maui Cookies**.

PLANNING TIP
Arrive a few days prior to your wedding to acclimate and relax. There's nothing more stressful than landing and rushing. Set aside time for yourself and your fiancé with a spa day or a massage.

WEDDING CUSTOM
During the sand ceremony, couples pour two-tone sand into a keepsake vessel in lieu of the unity candle, which would blow out with our trade winds.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Striking a pose at Olowalu Plantation House. A fire-dancing performance adds a thrilling touch to a Hawaii reception. Andaz Maui at Wailea specializes in wow-factor ceremony setups.

Lounge and dinner at Kō. *Rooms from \$569; weddings from \$7,200.*

Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea is the most upscale option, but a stay of five nights can earn you up to \$1,000 in resort credits. There are 13 event sites, but the Ocean Front Lawn (seats 200) is the most popular. *Rooms from \$595; weddings from \$7,400.*

play

In the misting forest district of Kula, take the **Oo Farm** tour, where guests forage for herbs and veggies in the meticulous garden and then watch as the chef whips up a gourmet feast of farm greens, local fruit, fresh fish and hand-rolled dark-chocolate truffles.

Equally appealing, the 10,023-foot **Haleakala** volcano should be on your short list. Catching the lunarlike landscape at sunrise is the tradition. (On clear days, you can see four other islands.)

Cool off with an outrigger canoe ride; **Makena Beach & Golf Resort**

combines it with a snorkel session amid turtles and colorful reefs.

party

Olowalu Plantation House is one of the most popular places to host a Maui soiree (even ABC's *The Bachelorette* has filmed a tryst here). Located on an old sugar plantation, it features an oceanfront lawn, a wraparound porch and a slew of acacia trees. It's also a short drive from the **Old Lahaina Luau**, the island's best. To the south, **Kukahiko Estate** has a palm-lined lawn and covered lanai for alfresco dining (max 50 guests), while **Gannon's** hosts ceremonies on a seaside grassy knoll. Reception meals include favorites like Pacific crab cakes, macadamia-nut-crusted fish and guava-flavored wedding cakes.

For favors, **Dan's Greenhouse** crafts customs-certified plumeria clippings to tote home. And guests will swoon for coconut-flavored **Maui Macaroons**.

Seeking an authentic Hawaiian soundtrack? The ukulele- and guitar-strumming duo **Barefoot Minded** is a local favorite. — SS