Kauai may be small, but it takes months to explore the island. To begin experiencing it, check it out from air, land and sea. Fly, swim, snorkel, bike, hike, zip: Kauai holds all your summer adventure.

The Garden Island describes Kauai perfectly, not just because of its lush land, but also because gardens yield plenty of variety — just like Kauai. Though the island's small, it offers mountainous jungles, a drier canyon and of course, a sea of fun.

Island Helicopters

www.**islandhelicopters**.com

Lihue Airport, Lihue, Kauai, HI 96766‬

808-245-8588

[www.facebook.com/islandhelicopters?ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/islandhelicopters?ref=ts)

twitter.com/#!/search/island%20helicopters

family-friendly

Jurassic Falls

What’s cool about helicopters is they hover, and you definitely want to hover in the nooks and crannies of Kauai. And, yes, it’s worth it to land at Jurassic Falls. The 400-foot falls, featured in the colossal movie, generates an incredible mist. A waterproof camera is ideal, but any camera will survive — and you want pictures in front of this one. But Jurassic Falls is just the beginning. We’re talking an unforgettable flight of a lifetime. Allow reds, browns and greens in Waimea Canyon to open your eyes anew.

Venture into the wettest spot on earth, and soak in long, white lines dripping down steep green walls. The Na Pali Coast is a completely different experience by air than by sea. Island Helicopters threads you into the eye of the needle, then lets you dangle over the edge. But don’t worry: The ride always remains smooth and safe.

Captain Andy’s

www.napali.com

4353 Waialo Rd # 1A, Eleele, HI 96705

808-335-6833

Sail and Snorkel Tour

www.facebook.com/pages/Captain-Andys-Zodiac-Trip-To-The-Na-Pali-Coast/104674349631012

water sports, family-friendly, snorkeling, sailing, swimming

These guys are a riot — and they’re not hard on the eyes either. The guides on Captain Andy’s Sail and Snorkel Tour obviously enjoy their jobs: Their humor crests greater than any waves — and those can get pretty big, too. We’re not talking stupid, must-be-drinking-to-even-smirk puns, just good, clean fun. And the tours are educational, without going overboard. The 55-foot catamarans are the most comfortable and versatile way to see the Na Pali Coast. Snag the front trampolines for a wet and bouncy ride, perch above it all on the non-skid cabin roof, or hang out in the back. Dolphins love to play around the bow, so keep your (preferably waterproof) camera handy. Snorkel with parrotfish, butterflyfish, green sea turtles and even reef sharks. Like everything on this tour, the snorkel equipment is top-notch. Then kick back with wine or beer and a great deli lunch buffet.

Kauai ATV

www.**kauaiatv**.com

www.facebook.com/pages/Kauai-ATV/143052862387279

808-742-2734

1 Weliweli Rd  Koloa, HI 96756

family-friendly, extreme sports, trails, swimming

If you haven’t gotten down and dirty for a while, Kauai ATV’s the place to do it. The four-hour tour takes you on a 22-mile, round-trip tour to a waterfall, but that’s only half the fun. The real thrill comes from the pride of conquering a steep, muddy incline or blasting through a creek. Prepare to emerge from your two- or four-person mud bug looking like a mud-wrestling champion. You can’t help but let loose when mud starts flying. And the best part: You’re wearing Kauai ATV’s clothing, so you don’t have to deal with laundry. Along the way, you’ll pass an old sugar mill, drive through a half-mile lava tunnel (Kauai’s only drivable tunnel) and motor through lush, green jungle.

Eat lunch at a swimming hole, which happens to have an amazing double-tiered waterfall flowing from its source. Then, it’s time to play in the mud again.

Princeville Ranch

www.**princevilleranch**.com

www.facebook.com/princevilleranchadventures

Zip N’ Dip

extreme sports, family-friendly, water sports, swimming

808-826-7669

5-4430 Kuhio Highway  Hanalei, HI 96714

Oh, yeah: This is Jane zippin’ through the jungle in style. The guides do all the work. You just hang loose and enjoy the canopy view. It takes about four hours to glide through Princeville Ranch’s nine zip lines and jump off a 10-foot cliff into a pool. They also serve lunch at the swimming hole. Start with a 170-foot-long flight, then graduate to 460 feet. Each zip line pumps up your adrenaline level a little higher. It’s hard to believe, but the views keep improving too. The entire way, you’ll fly comfortably and safely, high over lush treetops and streams. Mountains and open ranch fields accent already stunning views, so bring your camera (they provide a backpack). Test your balance — and your propensity for vertigo — on the sparsely stringed suspension bridge. On each zip, hone your cannonball skills, because you’ll need them for the 1,200 foot King Kong finale.

Kayak and Hike to Sacred Falls

Kayak Kaua’i

www.**kayakkauai**.com

www.facebook.com/pages/Kayak-Kauai/106377622764084

4-484 Kuhio Highway

Kapaa, HI

family-friendly, swimming, kayaking, trails, hiking

800-437-3507

Row, walk, play: Kayak Kaua’i’s journey to Sacred Falls is fit for body, mind and soul. The 2-mile paddle firms up your biceps and triceps, while the tranquil Wailua River and surrounding greenery nourishes your spirit. Never kayaked? No worries. Guides teach the most effective paddling method, and they design the tour for all ages, so they’ll slow down or pick up the speed depending on need. Kayak Kaua’i is the only company that provides river kayaks, with deep seating to comfortably stretch your legs (and keep your booty dry), and rudders for easier steering. Wear water shoes for the 1-mile hike through the jungle, because you’ll cross a stream (holding a safety rope) and may encounter mud. Along the way, you’ll learn about local lore and stunning foliage until violá: the wide 100+foot falls tumble, as you enjoy a delicious lunch and cool off in the natural pools.

Maha`ulepu Heritage Trail

hiking, family-friendly, swimming, beach

Free hiking map and guide available through Po`pu Beach Foundation

P.O. Box 730, Koloa, Kauai, Hawaii 96756

808-742-7444

[www.hikemahaulepu.org](http://www.hikemahaulepu.org)

Everyone who visits Kauai hears about — and usually hikes — the Na Pali Coast and Waimea Canyon. Don’t miss those, but take time to head south to the 2 ¼ mile Maha`ulepu Heritage Trail. It’s much easier on the heart rate than the elevation gains along Na Pali and much less crowded, yet the views are still breathtaking.

Take the decent gravel road off Po`ipu Road, then head to the relatively uncrowded Shipwreck Beach, where the trail begins. Within minutes, you’ll see jagged limestone cliffs and pinnacles. Wear gym shoes to navigate the coarse lava formations. Watching waves crash through holes and pour through canyons is worth the walk itself. But check ledges before standing on them — some are simply thin arches with fissures. Two cove beaches offer some measure of solitude. Further inland, you’ll find a sinkhole, which is part of the largest limestone cave in Hawaii.

Hanalei Bay

www.facebook.com/pages/Hanalei-Bay/106107056087695

beach, family-friendly, swimming, kayaking, water sports, paddleboarding, shopping, free activities

The best place to swim, hang out for the day and people watch is Hanalei Bay. Beaches don’t come much more picturesque than this one. Palm trees dot the nearly 2-mile horseshoe bay, and dramatic mountains drape the background. Hanalei is a cool little surf town, full of boutiques, restaurants and sport shops. Summer waves tend to be more chill than winter, so it’s a good place to learn how to surf or paddle. It’s also a nice place to watch surfers, boogie boarders, rowers and the like. A parking lot, restrooms and picnic area make it a comfortable, easy place to picnic and play. In the summer the ocean warms to about 78-80 degrees. Located on the North Shore, the beach is off Weke Road in Hanalei.

www.facebook.com/pages/Hanalei-Beach/193911580633765

Kayak Kaua’i

paddleboarding, water sports

[www.facebook.com/pages/Kayak-Kauai/106377622764084](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kayak-Kauai/106377622764084)

[www.**kayakkauai**.com](http://www.kayakkauai.com)

www.facebook.com/pages/Kayak-Kauai/106377622764084

5-5070 Kuhio Highway

Hanalei, HI

800-437-3507

Stand-up paddling has it all. It’s a killer workout, only you don’t feel like you’re dying, because the river surroundings lull you into tranquility.

If you can ride a bike, you can stand-up paddle. Assume a wide stance in the middle of the board, and dig your paddle in. You’ll notice your triceps, core muscles and maybe even your legs engage. But the palm trees, flowering bushes, birds, turtles, fish and backdrop waterfalls are the primary features that will capture your attention. From Kayak Kaua’i in Hanalei, you can either head up the river or out to the ocean. Up river, you’ll duck under the one-lane bridge and glide through narrower canals until the current picks up and provides a great workout before you turn around and basically drift home. Or head to the ocean and play in small waves. Either way, you’ll leave with greater balance.

Tunnels Beach

www.facebook.com/pages/Tunnels-Beach/145814575446013

swimming, free activities, family-friendly

It’s common to spot green sea turtles as you snorkel at Tunnels Beach. And that’s just one reason Tunnels is considered the best snorkeling beach on the island. The large reef shelters a variety of marine life, sometimes including reef sharks. You’ll have to hold your breath for a while to explore the many caves and lava tubes; that’s why scuba divers come here too. You’ll find the most parking spaces at Ha`ena Beach (on the North Shore). Ask a lifeguard about the day’s currents and conditions moving through the “tunnel” of the reef, just to be safe. Even if you decide not to snorkel, the dramatic mountain backdrop against the clear blue water makes Tunnels Beach a fantastic place to spend hours.

Tunnels Beach is located on the North Shore (just before the end of the road). There’s no lifeguard, and parking gets pretty tough, since people also come to hike the Na Pali Coast and hang out at Ha`ena State Park, so get there early.

Ke Ala Hele Makalae Bike Path

biking, hiking, running trail, bike path, swimming, free activities, family-friendly

The best stretch to bike along the ocean starts in Kapa`a. Rent a bike in town (or just walk). The approximately 5-mile, wide, paved path initially travels between shops in town and the ocean. It passes by one of the best beaches to soak up local culture at Kealia. Kealia is a great place to barbeque, build a bonfire or simply watch surfers. A more secluded beach awaits farther up the path. Donkey Beach is a beautiful cove where turtles come to hatch eggs. Along the way, you’ll also find ruins of an old bridge, where pineapple growers used to throw skins of pineapples into the ocean. The practice ended because it attracted sharks. The trail ends with a scenic vista of Anahola.