



## Fact Sheet – Kaua`i's Wailua to Kapa`a Corridor

### THE REGION

The Royal Coconut Coast, also known as Kaua`i's east side, extends from the Wailua Golf Course to Kealia Beach, and towards the interior of Kaua`i to Mt. Waialeale. This area, distinguished by acres of royal palm trees seen along Kuhio Highway, contains more than a third of Kaua`i's lodging properties. Many are considered "affordable." Several popular beach parks, restaurants, bike paths, hiking trails, and a variety of stores, shops and services are found here. The area also boasts of Hawai`i's historic Wailua River, the famed Fern Grotto, and the Wailua Golf Course. Considered a central location, the Royal Coconut Coast is fifteen minutes from the airport, and a half hour from Kaua`i's north and south shores. Traveling to the ends of Kaua`i's roads takes an hour and a half each way.

### DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

**Wailua River:** Unique to all of Hawai`i, the Wailua River is considered the only navigable river in the state suitable for larger boats. It is host to a variety of water-based activities, extending from the river mouth at Wailua Beach as far as three miles upriver. Cruises to the Fern Grotto, stand up paddle boarding, canoe paddling, kayaking, and water skiing are among the most popular activities. Other points of interest include ancient heiau (temple) sites, a re-created Hawaiian village, a wildlife bird refuge, and a hiking trail from one of the river forks to a beautiful waterfall.

**Ke Ala Hele Makalae coastal multi-use path:** This 3.8 mile long multi-use pathway travels along the coastline passing by beach parks and scenic viewpoints providing spectacular views for bikers, joggers, walkers and skateboarders. The trail has several lookouts with sheltered picnic pavilions. Restrooms and drinking fountains are provided in two public parks on the trail. Kaua`i County is in the process of extending the trail several miles west towards Lihue

**Historical Sites:** The Royal Coconut Coast is an area where Kaua`i's ali`i (royalty) were born and Hawaiians practiced important cultural customs. Hawaiian heiaus (worship and ceremony locations) start from the mouth of Wailua River, and continue up to the summit of Mt. Waialeale. Huaka`i po (ghost warriors) are said to walk along this ancient route leading to the summit. Wailua Bay, at the river mouth, was considered an important port of entry for ali`i and chiefs. Located on the south side of the river mouth is Hikinaakala at Hauola heiau, a place of peace where ancient Hawaiians welcomed the rising sun. This heiau is associated with health and healing. Petroglyphs are found here. Further upriver are Holoholoku heiau and the Royal Birthing Stones, which are considered one of Hawai`i's most sacred sites. This location was established for the birth of ali`i. Kaua`i's King Kaumualii was the last king to be born here. Poli`ahu heiau is situated above the river on a narrow ridge between Opaeka`a Stream and Wailua River. Kamokila Village, a re-created ancient Hawaiian village, is open to visitors and found on a river bend when traveling north on the river, or on Kuamoo Road (Hwy 580).

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Historical sites, continued ...

Further inland is the famed Ma`ama`akualono cave (Fern Grotto), an area dedicated to one of the major Hawai`ian deities, Lono.

For more information go to:  
<http://wailuaheritagetrail.org>.

## PARKS

**Beach Parks:** Four beach parks are located on the Royal Coconut Coast:

Lydgate, Waipouli, Kapa`a and Kealia Beach Parks. Lydgate is very family friendly, with a highly developed play structure. It is largely maintained by the local community, and has a multi-use 2.5-mile pathway. There is also a protected swimming area popular among families with small children. Waipouli Beach Park is well known among beachcombers, and provides shallow wading, swimming, and wind or kite surfing along with picnic tables and a restroom. Kapa`a Beach Park is enjoyable for waders, kite boarders, and windsurfers. Kealia Beach Park provides body, boogie and board surfing along with restrooms, picnic tables and pavilions. A lifeguard is stationed at Kealia and Lydgate Beach Parks.

**River Parks:** Wailua State Park provides a boat launch for kayakers, boaters and stand-up paddlers along

with a restroom and picnic tables. Wailua River Marina Park is the base for cruises on the river. Fern Grotto, which is part of Wailua State Park, is accessible by tour boat. This rock grotto forms a natural amphitheater, and is a scenic attraction featuring cascading ferns and lush vegetation. Smith's Fern Grotto River Cruises provides tours including musical entertainment and dance during the excursion. Acoustic sounds in the grotto are exceptional.



**Sports Parks:** Public tennis courts (lighted) are found at Kapa`a New Park on Oloheua Road and at Wailua Houselots Park on Kamalu Road. Football, baseball, basketball, roller hockey and skateboarding are also found at Kapa`a New Park. Soccer fields and community festivals are found at Kapa`a Town Park on Kuhio Highway.



## HIKING TRAILS

### Sleeping Giant (Nounou)

**Mountain:** Called Sleeping Giant Mountain (for a ridgeline profile resembling a large sleeping man), Nounou Mountain provides sweeping 360-degree views stretching from Lihue to Anahola including Mt. Waialeale and surrounding ridgelines. There are three trails in the Nounou Forest Reserve providing hiking excursions considered easy, moderate and difficult.

### Nounou West Trail:

three miles round-trip trip beginning on Kamalu Road (Hwy 581) near telephone pole #11. This is considered the most difficult of the three trails with an elevation gain of 800 feet.

### Nounou East Trail:

Four miles round-trip beginning at Haleilio Road in Wailua Houselots. This is the moderate route with a 960-foot elevation gain.

### Kuamoo Trail:

Four miles round-trip beginning just beyond Opaekaa Falls. This trail, considered easy, travels laterally along the Nounou Forest Reserve and intersects with the Nounou West trail.

### Kuilau Trail:

Four and a quarter miles round-trip beginning 100 yards before the Keahua Forestry Arboretum and ending at the Moalepe trail.





### Hiking Trails, Continued ...

Considered a moderate hike (640 foot elevation gain), this trail travels through the scenic Lihue-Koloa Forestry Reserve. It is also popular with equestrians.

**Moalepe Trail:** Five miles round-trip beginning at the pavement's end on Olohena Road. Considered a moderate hike (680 foot elevation gain), it crosses a pasture at the beginning and continues into the Kealia Forest Reserve. This trail intersects the Kuilau Trail.

**Kauai Arboretum:** A forested picnic area with swimming holes and walking paths at the end of Kuilau and beginning of Moalepe Trails.

For more information please visit: <http://hawaiiitrails.ehawaii.gov>.



### ACCOMMODATIONS:

Known for offering more affordable accommodations than many of Hawai'i's high-end destinations, the Royal Coconut Coast region provides a wide variety of resort rental properties. There is also a diverse selection of small inns, bed and breakfasts and vacation rental operations throughout the region located either on the coast or in the rural interior.

**Major hotel and condominium resorts include:** Aston Aloha Beach Hotel, Aston Islander on the Beach, Courtyard by Marriott Resort at Coconut Beach, Kaha Lani Resort, Kaua'i Coast Resort at the Beachboy, Kaua'i Sands Hotel, Kaua'i Kailani, Mokihana of Kaua'i, Outrigger at Lae Nani, Outrigger Waipouli Beach Resort, Plantation Hale Suites and Pono Kai Resort. Many have completed significant renovations and upgrades over the past two years.

### AREA ACTIVITIES & SERVICES

**River Cruising:** Smith's Fern Grotto River Cruise departs four times daily from Wailua River Marina Park taking passengers to the Fern Grotto for a short conducted nature walk. The tour includes Hawaiian musical entertainment and legends.



**Bike Rental Shops:** Eight shops are situated between the Wailua River and Kealia Beach providing cruiser bikes, mountain bikes, tandem bikes, and, in some cases, bike trailers for small children. Rentals are provided on an hourly, half-day and all day basis. Helmets are usually included.

### Kayak and Stand-up Paddle (SUP)

**Board Tours and Rentals:** Six companies in this area offer rentals and guided tours for both river and ocean kayaking. Three companies offer rentals, lessons and tours for SUP in the Wailua River.

### Snorkeling and SCUBA Diving:

Two dive tour operators are found in Kapa'a providing introductory diving, dive tours for certified divers, and dive certification courses.



### Snorkeling and SCUBA, continued...

Both operators typically take scuba divers to sites on Kauaʻi's north and south shores as well as Ahukini Landing in Lihue. One SNUBA operator provides snorkeling excursions both in and outside of the region.

**Golf:** The Wailua Golf Course, rated one of the top fifteen courses in Hawaii by *Golf Digest*, is a 6991 yard 18-hole public course operated by Kauaʻi County. Three USGA Amateur Public Links Championships have been played here. Green fees are under \$50 weekdays for non-residents.

**Weddings:** There are many locations and catering options for weddings including churches, public parks and area resorts. A number of wedding service providers are available in Kapaʻa and Wailua.

### Grocery Stores & Farmer's Markets:

Seven markets are located in Wailua and Kapaʻa, including large markets (Safeway, Foodland and Big Save) and small "local-style" markets. Farmer's markets open three times a week in both Old Kapaʻa Town and at the Coconut Plantation Marketplace in Wailua. Locally grown fruits, vegetables and flowers are offered in abundant supply.



**Restaurants:** Numerous eateries are found on the Royal Coconut Coast providing an eclectic mix of gourmet dining, ethnic dining, and casual dining. Well-known restaurants include Wahoo Seafood Grill & Bar, The Bull Shed, Hukilau Lanai, Oasis on the Beach, Voyager Lanai and Verde. In the last three years a dozen new restaurants and small eateries have opened in the area. An assortment of food trucks offering local foods and ethnic cuisine are set up daily in Kapaʻa and Wailua.

**Entertainment & Events:** Popular are Smith's Tropical Paradise Luau, live theater at the Coconut Plantation Marketplace and live music at a number of restaurants and bars. There are also festivals like the annual **Coconut Festival** in October, which celebrates the area's history and the many ways coconut is used in foods and crafts. **First Saturday Art Walk** has become a key attraction in Old Kapaʻa Town every month featuring multiple musical groups, street vendors and art gallery displays.

**Retail Shops & Services:** Dozens of boutique shops and fine art galleries providing apparel, shoes, sports equipment, gifts, custom art and crafts are located between Kapaʻa and Wailua. Convenient services are available such as banking, taxis, car rental, tour companies, computer repair, medical centers, library, post office and bus services. There are several health spas located within the area's resorts, such as Spa Makiwa.

**Royal Coconut Coast Association, P.O. Box 1180, Kapaʻa, HI 96746.**

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*Published March 30, 2013*