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Travel | Big Island of Hawaii

Adult and children's pools are located between the hotel and historic park and fishponds.

STEVE HAGGERTY: COLORWORLD



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On island time at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows

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HAWAII — There's a reason that the Big Island's "ali'i" — members of Hawaii's royal families — loved the place called Kalahuipua'a, on Makaiwa Bay, on the Kohala Coast. It's the same reason that travelers who stay at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows, on 29 of the 3,200 acres now known as the Mauna Lani Resort, feel they've had more than a vacation.

Directly south of the hotel is a historic park and preserve, a unique cultural treasure where archaeologists have unearthed artifacts dating from 1200 A.D. After you've shifted to island time, helped the kids build sandcastles, snorkeled through the reefs and dined by candlelight, go exploring.

Here, on the Mauna Lani's 1,800 undeveloped acres (and may they stay that way) is a chance to revisit pre-European Hawaii. Look for signs to the coastal path, following it as it curves past rugged lava flows and sandy inlets. Watch for endangered green turtles; they sun themselves in this area.

From here, trails, ancient and modern, wind through 15 acres of spring-fed ponds, which the Hawaiians harnessed in order to raise and harvest the local fish. Signs point to the connecting trail that heads inland to a dense flow of lava and a group of shelter caves and tool-

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[Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows](#)

IF YOU GO

- The hotel, a Pan Pacific Resort, is on Mauna Lani Drive on the Kohala Coast, Big Island, 23 miles north of Kona International Airport. For the map and guide to the historic preserve, ask your concierge or call the Resort Corporate Office at 808-885-6677.
- Double rooms start at about \$345 per night for a weekday in low season, but vary depending on occupancy and the date. Saturday nights are generally priced higher. The high season is Jan-March, and July and August, with some exceptions. Book a room at 800-356-6652, or call the hotel directly at 808-885-1473, or visit www.maunalani.com. Call Pan

making sites. The shoreline trail continues farther south to the fishing village. Or turn inland on the Loop Trail through the botanical garden planted by the property's last Hawaiian owner, Francis H. I'i Brown, a descendant of royalty and, in 1972, a co-creator of the Mauna Lani development.

As for the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel, it's one of Hawaii's old-style resorts, an architectural classic of the island-style genre so popular in the mid-1970s. Today, the terraced facade of the six-story hotel, looking west toward the setting sun, reminds some people of the front grille of a vintage limousine. But it's the interior of the hotel, with its casual ambiance and open-air atrium that you can't forget.

No jumped-up luxury enclave this, embellished with imported marble and gold-plated faucets. Instead, the atrium is a tropical garden towering over waterfalls and fishponds stocked with tropical species. If you want to see fish but don't want to snorkel, sit by these pools and be enthralled.

The hotel's 343 guest rooms, each opening onto the atrium, were recently renovated, leaving just enough of the original decor to remind you that dark wood shutters and floral patterns were once de rigueur. The new interiors are pleasantly contemporary, with a fresh uncluttered look.

The furniture is functional, the color schemes cool and bed linens, quilts, upholstery and draperies, in white, beige and lime, are simple but tasteful. All rooms have two telephones with data ports, cable television and VCR, a mini-bar, ceiling fan, hair dryer, bathrobes and individually controlled air conditioning. The bathrooms, with separate tub and toilet stalls, have also been updated.

The hotel also has five restaurants, including our favorite, The Canoe House, built on the oceanfront, serving Pacific/Asian cuisine at indoor and outdoor tables. When the lights are low and the candles lit, you can't imagine a more romantic setting.

And luxury is not entirely absent. For the discriminating and well-heeled, the hotel has five 4,000-square-foot bungalows, each completely private, sumptuously decorated, with separate bedroom suites, a walled garden, swimming pool, spa and a 24-hour butler. The guest list has included, besides Steven Spielberg, Danny DeVito and Billy Crystal, honeymooners, families vacationing together and corporate executives.

For more entertainment, check out the larger Mauna Lani property. Besides three miles of ocean coastline, and a second hotel, the 539-room Fairmont Orchid, there's the Sports and Fitness Club, with a lap pool, weights, exercise equipment and tennis courts; the Mauna Lani Spa, an independent facility famous for its healing and relaxation treatments indoors and out; two award-winning 18-hole golf courses wrestled out of the surrounding lava flow; and an upscale shopping complex. To unlock the Mauna Lani's ancient secrets, look for "The View into the Past," a map and guide that we found by accident. Distributed free by the Mauna Lani Resort property, it's printed in sepia ink on wheat-colored paper and, like the door to King Tut's tomb, will open a door to the past.

Pacific at 800-327-8585 or visit www.panpacific.com.

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