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THE LATEST TRAVEL GUIDE TO INSPIRE YOUR NEXT TRIP

## 29 Bucket List Things to Do in Kauai with Kids

### 1. Take a Boat Tour of the Napali Coast

Taking an adventurous ride on a zodiac boat or a relaxing catamaran boat tour along the Napali Coast is considered one of the best things to do in Kauai with kids. The Napali Coast is known as one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world with towering cliffs, white sand beaches, sea caves, and waterfalls. During the tour, you'll get a chance to snorkel with sea turtles in the pristine water. Dolphin pods also love to swim along the side of the boat. In the winter and spring, there's a good chance that you will even spot whales!

### 2. Swim at Salt Pond Beach

Spend the day as a family playing in the water and relaxing on the shores of one of Kauai's many beautiful beaches. Salt Pond Beach is on the southwest coast of the island near Waimea Canyon. This region of Kauai is generally more dry and sunny, so when it is raining up north then head south to enjoy the sun here! It has a sheltered cove perfect for snorkeling and swimming in the calm waves.

### 3. Hike the Sleeping Giant West Trail

The Sleeping Giant West Trail is one of the best short hikes in Kauai. It is only 1.7 miles out-and-back, but it is a steady incline so keep that in mind if you have younger kids. The trail leads through a majestic forest of Cook Pines before reaching a lookout point with panoramic views of the island.

#### 4. Surf at Kalapaki Beach

Kalapaki Beach is one of the best beaches for beginning surfers. The protected cove provides ideal small rolling waves perfect for surfing and boogie boarding. Surfboard rental facilities and surf lessons are available at the beach. Kalapaki Beach is also a favorite as it is easily accessible from town with restaurants and shops nearby.

#### 5. Go Mountain Tubing

This excursion will take you on an open-air ride up to the mountains where you'll then hop in a tube and float down a river. The river floats through hand-dug tunnels, ditches, and flumes that were once used as irrigation canals for an old sugar cane plantation. It is such a fun and relaxing way to enjoy the beauty of Kauai.

#### 6. Go Kayaking on the Wailua River

Rent a kayak or book a kayaking tour up the Wailua River. This peaceful river flows from Mt Wai'ale'ale, one of the wettest places on earth, all the way to the Pacific Ocean. A few notable stops along the Wailua River are Secret Falls and Fern Grotto.

#### 7. Hike to Secret Falls

The name may be deceiving as these popular falls aren't really a secret. However, the waterfall can only be accessed by kayaking up the Wailua River and then hiking about one mile through the rainforest before reaching these stunning falls. Secret Falls is one of the only waterfalls in Kauai that you can swim in, so bring your swimsuit and a towel and enjoy a refreshing dip!

#### 8. Relax on the Shores of Hanalei Bay

Hanalei Bay is located on the north shore and is one of the most scenic beaches in Kauai. This is a great beach for swimming and boogie boarding in the summer, but

just use caution in the winter as the waves are much bigger. On big wave days, it's a fun spot to watch the pro surfers in action! Hanalei Bay is located near the center of town where you can walk to get some ice cream or jump off the pier with the locals.

## 9. Eat at Duke's Kauai

Duke's is a legendary dining spot in Kauai known for its seafood and famous hula pie. Not only is the food delicious, but the open-air restaurant is located right on the shore of Kalapaki Beach and boasts beautiful ocean views. The interior of the restaurant is just as impressive with a waterfall, stream, and fish pond right in the center of the dining room.

## 10. Ride Along the Kapa'a Bike Path

There are several bike rental shops in Kapa'a where you can rent a beach cruiser or e-bike and ride along the 7.2-mile coastal trail from Lydgate Beach to Donkey Beach. This scenic bike path has incredible views the entire way. It also connects to several of the most popular beaches on the east shore if you want to stop and have a picnic.

## 11. Watch the Sunset at Poipu Beach

Poipu Beach on the south shore is the best spot to catch an iconic Hawaiian sunset. It was voted "America's Best Beach" by Travel Magazine and it's easy to see why. The lagoons are perfect for swimming and snorkeling. There's also a good chance that you'll see the endangered Hawaiian Monk Seals sunbathing on the shore. The amenities are great at this beach with restrooms and even a playground. The wide sandy beach also makes it easy to find a patch of sand to spread out your towels.

## 12. Hike a Portion of the Kalalau Trail

There are some pretty incredible hikes in Kauai for any adventure level! One of the most popular hikes is the Kalalau Trail. This epic 22-mile trail requires a permit and

takes multiple days to complete. However, visitors can hike the first two miles from Ke'e Beach to Hanakapi'ai Beach without a permit. The trail offers stunning views of the coast, but it can be quite muddy and slippery so watch the weather and use caution if hiking with young kids. While you don't need a permit to hike, you do need to reserve a parking or shuttle pass. Check the Ha'ena State Park website for more information.

### 13. Take a Train Ride Around a Plantation

The Kilohana Kauai Plantation is an old sugar plantation that dates back to the early 1900s. Today, visitors can take a narrated 2.5-mile train ride around the plantation to learn about its history. The train will pass by original sugarcane and taro crops, as well as groves of mango, banana, papaya, and pineapple. You'll even get to stop and feed some of the farm animals, including pigs, goats, sheep, and donkeys. Different tour packages are available that include a picnic, luau, or even a rum safari. After your train ride, enjoy a meal at The Plantation House Restaurant which is housed in the original plantation home.

### 14. Hike the Kuilau Ridge Trail

The Kuilau Ridge Trail is a bit of a hidden gem. It is not as well known as some of the other popular hikes so you won't find as many crowds. It also has a secret lookout over the jungle that will take your breath away!

### 15. Visit Queen's Bath

The trail to Queen's Bath is a short 0.6-mile trail through the rainforest that leads to an ocean pool. During low tide on a calm day, it is possible to swim in the pool. However, use extreme caution as people have died here after being washed out to sea by a rogue wave. If you are traveling with kids, I would recommend just looking at the pool and not getting in.

### 16. Eat Hawaiian Shave Ice

You can't come to Hawaii and NOT eat Hawaiian shave ice! This shave ice is so much creamier than your typical snow cone. One of the best places to get shave ice in Kauai is at Wailua Shave Ice. A few more popular options include Hee Fat's General Store, Wishing Well Shave Ice, Fresh Shave, and Waikomo Shave Ice.

## 17. Stay at a Resort

While there are so many amazing places to explore on the island, some days just call for relaxing by the pool. Marriott Kauai Beach Club at Kalapaki Beach. The amenities are great with multiple pools and it is located right on the shore of the beach. If you're looking to stay on the North Shore, the Hanalei Colony Resort is steps away from the ocean and is tucked into a quiet area without the crowds. Wyndham Bali Hai is located in the heart of Princeville with all the amenities like a pool, hot tub, and tennis courts. It is centrally located within walking distance of shops and restaurants. It is also near the trailhead to Queen's Bath. Previously known as St. Regis Princeville, 1 Hotel Hanalei Bay is a luxury resort and a bit of a splurge if you're looking to get spoiled on your tropical vacation. The cast and crew of *The Descendants* stayed at this hotel and several scenes were even filmed here. If you are interested in staying on the south side of the island, there are several beachfront resorts located on the shores of the popular Poipu Beach. I would recommend Marriott's Waiohai Beach Club, Grand Hyatt, and the Sheraton Kauai.

## 18. Adopt a Dog for the Day

The Kauai Humane Society has a field trip program where you can adopt a dog for a day and it was one of our favorite things to do in Kauai with kids! You'll be able to choose which dog you want to adopt, then you'll get a chance to spend time with the dog inside a fenced-in lawn to see if it's a good fit for your family before heading out. Once you choose a dog, they give you the supplies needed including food, water dish, poop baggies, and a towel. They will also give you a map with recommended dog-friendly hikes and beaches, and then you are free to explore with your new four-legged friend!

## 19. Hike the Mahaulepu Coastal Trail

The Maha'ulepu Coastal Trail is the last stretch of undeveloped accessible coastline on the south side of the island and it is also listed as a Kauai Heritage Site. The 4-mile round trip coastal trail traverses along sand dune cliffs, through Kiawe trees, and along rocky inlets. Along the trail, you can even access Makauwahi Cave. This is the largest limestone cave in Hawaii and is known as one of the richest fossil sights in the Pacific. Free guided tours are available from 10 am until 4 pm daily.

## 20. Drive Through The Maluhia Road Tree Tunnel

Maluhia Road is located right before the town of Koloa on your way to Poipu. It is a beautiful stretch of road lined with a canopy of trees. It truly is magical to drive under this tree tunnel! Just be aware that there is no place to stop along the road to take pictures, so be prepared to snap a few out of the window.

## 21. Visit Waimea Canyon

Waimea Canyon offers such a unique and breathtaking landscape with colorful valleys and rushing waterfalls. There are several lookout points and hiking trails along the scenic drive. Be sure to stop at the Waimea Canyon Overlook for the most epic views of the canyon and Waipoo Falls.

## 22. Hike the Pihea Trail

There are numerous hiking trails in Waimea Canyon, but the Pihea Trail is one of the best hiking trails with kids. It is a short and easy 2-mile out-and-back trail that boasts spectacular views over the Napali coastline and mountain range. The morning is the best time to hike this trail as the clouds often roll in during the afternoon and can block the view.

## 23. Camp at Polihale Beach

Polihale Beach consists of 12 miles of deserted pristine beach. However, it is a little challenging to get there. Polihale is as far west as you can go on the island before reaching the mountain range along the Napali Coast. The 5-mile rough road is

accessible only by four-wheel drive, so rent a jeep and enjoy the off-roading adventure! Don't attempt to make the trip if there has been heavy rainfall. The road becomes impassable and many vehicles have been known to get stuck. Although rumor has it, if you get stuck just stick a can of beer on the roof of your car and local teens will come help bail you out in exchange for the beer! Once you're there, you'll discover an isolated unworldly beauty. You can even get a camping permit and spend the night. I hear the stars are incredible! Swimming at the beach is not recommended. Check the reports before you go.

#### 24. Visit Hideaways Beach

This beautiful little beach is becoming more popular. However, since it is not as easily accessible, it is still less crowded than other nearby beaches. The path is a little difficult to find. It lies directly beside the tennis court of the Puu Poa condo complex in Princeville. There is a small public parking lot with 9 spots. If it is full there are no other alternatives, so come early or just hang out and wait until a spot opens up. There is a steep staircase and path to get to the beach, so use caution. Once you are there, enjoy your own virtually private beach with great snorkeling in the summer months!

#### 25. Walk Across the Swing Bridge in Hanapepe

The charming town of Hanapepe was the inspiration for the movie Lilo and Stitch. Stroll through the laid-back town and check out the cute shops and cafes, then head over to the historic swing bridge. The Hanapepe Swing Bridge was built in 1911 to allow plantation workers easy access to the fields from town. This century-old bridge is still in use today!

#### 26. Stop by the Kilauea Point Lighthouse

The Kilauea Point Lighthouse was built in 1913 and was in operation until 1970. Today, it still stands as a historic beacon on the North Shore's rugged coastline. The lighthouse is located within the Kilauea Point National Wildlife Refuge which serves as a sanctuary for nesting sea birds. Although the lighthouse is closed to visitors, you can still walk along the coastal trail that loops around the peninsula and take in the views. Advanced timed reservations are required to visit.

## 27. See Wailua Falls

While it is not advised to hike to the bottom of Wailua Falls, there is a scenic lookout point that is easily accessible from the road. These 173-foot falls are one of the most popular attractions near Lihue and are worth a quick stop. While you're there, be sure to pick up a fresh coconut from the local fruit vendor! You may also enjoy taking an inexpensive audio driving tour that includes information about Wailua Falls and other landmarks in the area.

## 28. Take a Photo of Wai'oli Hui'ia Church

The historic Wai'oli Hui'ia Church was established in 1834 in Hanalei. The current American Gothic-style chapel was built in 1912 and is one of the oldest surviving churches in Kauai. It is worth stopping by to admire the beautiful architecture set against the lush tropical backdrop. The church invites visitors to their worship service every Sunday at 10 am if you are interested in attending.

## 29. Attend a Luau

Immerse yourself in the Hawaiian culture by attending a luau. You'll be served a traditional Hawaiian feast while watching the vibrant cultural performances, including hula dancing and fire throwers. One of the best luaus is Luau Kalamaku located at the Kilohana Plantation.