



## 8 of the Best Hikes in Kauai with Kids

### 1. Kalalau Trail

One of the most popular hikes in Kauai is the Kalalau Trail. However, the full length of the trail runs 11 miles one-way along the Napali Coast and permits are required to access it.

If you would like to experience a portion of this epic trail, the first 2 miles from Ke'e Beach to Hanakapiai Beach are open to the public and do not require permits.

It is a beautiful hike through the trees with glimpses of the Napali Coast along the way. The most popular lookout is at the half-mile point.

Just use caution as portions of the trail are steep and it is often muddy and slippery. You will also need to cross Hanakapiai Stream, so wear proper footwear.

Hanakapiai Beach is not safe for swimming but is a great place to relax and take in the views or explore the rocks and caves.

You do not need a permit to hike the first two miles to the beach or the additional 2 miles to the first waterfall. However, you do need to reserve a shuttle or parking pass.

Please check the [Go Ha'ena](#) website for reservation information.

### 2. Kuilau Ridge Trail

The Kuilau Ridge Trail is one of the lesser-known trails in the area, so it is generally less crowded.

The 3.6-mile out-and-back trail leads through the dense rainforest with spectacular

views along the way.

The trail is fairly easy (although it can be muddy), and there is even a hidden trail around the one-mile mark that leads to a lookout view over the jungle canopy.

For more detailed information about this hike, check out our guide to [Hiking the Kuilau Ridge Trail](#).

### 3. Queen's Bath

The trail to Queen's Bath is a short 0.6-mile trail through the rainforest. It can be quite muddy, slippery, and steep in some areas so use caution.

It is doable, my youngest is 6 years old and he managed it just fine with some help, but just be prepared.

There is a nice collection of hiking sticks at the beginning of the trail that others have left. They come in quite handy, just be sure to return them so that others can use them too.

Parking is a little tricky as the trailhead is located in a residential neighborhood.

There is only a small parking lot and street parking is not allowed. You may have to be patient and just wait for a spot to open up if it is already full.

Once you get to the bottom of the trail, continue to the left across the lava rocks for about 1/4 mile until you reach the Queen's Bath.

Queen's Bath is a large sinkhole filled with water. It is a popular pool to swim in at low tide when the water is calm.

However, swimming here can be quite dangerous and there have been several people who have lost their lives here.

Only swim at low tide on a calm day, but still use caution as there is always the risk of a rogue wave. The waves are also bigger during the winter months, so summer is the best time to go.

When we were visiting, a rogue wave came as we were leaving and the tide was coming up. It can be pretty scary and dangerous to be down there when waves like this hit!

### 4. Pihea Trail

If you follow Highway 550 through Waimea Canyon to the very end, you'll find the beautiful Pu'u O Kila Lookout. To the right of the lookout point, you'll see the Pihea trailhead.

The trail follows along the back rim of the Kalalau Valley for about a mile to the Pihea Viewpoint with amazing panoramic views of the Kalalau Valley and Napali coast.

This is known as the wettest place in the US and averages about 460 inches of rain a year. To give you perspective, Seattle averages about 40 inches a year!

With so much rain, it is often hard to get a clear view. The clouds tend to roll in every afternoon, so morning is best for a clearer view.

You can turn around at this point, or continue to the 2-mile point where the trail intersects with the [Alakai Swamp Trail](#).

The Alakai Swamp is a beautiful trail with a boardwalk through thick vegetation. You'll cross over streams until you reach the Kilohana overlook.

If you choose to go all the way to the Kilohana overlook, it is 8 miles roundtrip.

After working up an appetite from hiking, see our guide [13 Best Places to Eat in Kauai](#) for restaurant recommendations.

## 5. Maha'ulepu Coastal Trail

The Maha'ulepu Coastal Trail is a Kauai Heritage sight. It is also the last stretch of undeveloped accessible coastline on the south shore.

It is an easy 4-mile round trip coastal trail that follows up sand dune cliffs, through Kiawe trees, and along rocky inlets.

The inlets serve as a safe haven for wildlife such as Monk Seals and sea turtles.

The trailhead is just south of Shipwreck Beach and continues to Mahaulepu Beach where you can often find tree swings.

Mahaulepa Beach is a remote and rugged beach not well suited for swimming but is a great place for whale watching and exploring.

For a list of the best swimming beaches, see our guide [7 of the Best Beaches in Kauai](#).

## 6. Secret Falls

Secret Falls isn't necessarily a secret, but because you can only reach the trail by kayak it does help limit the crowds.

You'll need to either rent a kayak from a local outfitter or book a [kayaking tour](#).

To reach the trail to Secret Falls, you'll paddle about 2 miles up the river. If you have younger kids, I would recommend getting a double kayak so they can go with an adult.

Once you reach the trail, the hike is a little over a mile to the waterfall. It is a scenic trail that leads through the thick native forest alongside the river.

It is a fairly easy trail without much elevation gain, there is even a raised boardwalk in some portions. There are a few shallow river crossings so use caution with younger kids.

Once you reach the waterfall, you can swim in the pool and even stand under the falls.

It's also a great place to have a picnic in the shade, so plan to pack a lunch to bring with you.

We've added this to our list of [29 Bucket List Things to Do in Kauai with Kids](#), click the link for more recommendations.

## 7. Sleeping Giant West Trail

To reach the Sleeping Giant lookout point, you can either take the Sleeping Giant East Trail or the Sleeping Giant West Trail.

We prefer taking the West Trail since it is only 1.7 miles round trip and the East Trail is 3.2 miles round trip.

We also love the Sleeping Giant West Trail because it leads through an enchanting forest of Cook Pines.

Although the trail is short, it has a steady incline so little legs may get tired.

Once you reach the top, you'll find one of the best views over the island with stunning vistas of Kalepa Ridge, Wailua Bay, and Hoary Head Mountain.

Just use caution as the trail is narrow and steep towards the top. If you are hiking

with young kids, you may want to turn around once you reach the ridge.

The ground through the forest is also carpeted in pine needles, which can make it easy to lose your traction and slip, especially if it has been raining.

Besides that, it is one of our favorite hikes in Kauai with kids. It has so much to offer in such a short distance!

For more recommended things to do in the area, see our [7 Day Kauai Itinerary](#).

## 8. Kilauea Point Lighthouse

This short 0.4-mile loop trail takes you along the perimeter of the peninsula to the Kilauea Point Lighthouse situated on the rugged coastal cliffs.

Kilauea Point is also considered a wildlife refuge and overlooks the island of Mokuiaea, a sanctuary for thousands of nesting and migratory birds.

Keep your eye out for seals, dolphins, and sea turtles. Humpback whales can also be spotted from December through April.

The short trail, beautiful views, and wildlife sightings make this one of the best easy hikes in Kauai, especially for young kids.

Timed reservations and an entrance fee are required to enter the refuge.