

# An Island THANKSGIVING

Spend your weekend on Maui: We found 10 things to do that just might beat being home for the holidays.

Most of us are programmed to think of Thanksgiving as a homebound holiday—even when we travel, we end up in someone else's house. Imagine breaking away, just once, to a place where November temperatures hover around 80 degrees and where you can spend Black Friday hiking a volcano instead of hustling through a mall. Maui could be the most pleasant place in the country on November 24, and if you visit at that time, you'll beat the hordes of tourists who come at the start of the high season in mid-December. Here's a guide to a perfect long weekend on Maui: the coolest places to visit, the best places to stay and the tastiest things to eat—including, of course, turkey dinner.



## 1 Flit the Road

The town of Hana is Maui's last undeveloped tropical oasis, and the journey to get there has become as famous as the destination itself. The Road to Hana, as it's called, is a portion of the highway that loops around the entire island, and it's dotted with scenic rest stops and great food stands. The stretch from Kahului to Hana is only about 40 miles, but you need to block off a whole day to drive it because cars move on island time: The speed limit is 25 miles per hour, at most. Look out for these mile markers as you go.



**Start**  
**MANA FOODS**  
**MILE MARKER 6**  
Mana Foods, in the surfer town of Paia, is your first and last chance to visit a large-scale market. Stock up on snacks like fresh sushi, wraps and deli sandwiches or locally grown lychee and apple bananas. [manafoodsmaui.com](http://manafoodsmaui.com)

**HO'OKIPA BEACH PARK**  
**MILE MARKER 8**  
The waters here are considered some of the best in the world for windsurfing. Stop, unbuckle and watch the colorful sails streak across the waves.

**AUNTY SANDY'S BANANA BREAD**  
**MILE MARKER 16**  
Take a detour down to tiny Keanae Peninsula. It's home to a black lava shoreline, taro patches and Aunty Sandy's famous banana bread. 808-248-7448

**UPPER WAIKANI FALLS**  
**MILE MARKER 19**  
The turnoff near Upper Waikani Falls offers a close-up look of the triple falls and swimming hole. Its nickname is Three Bears, for the separate papa, mama and baby streams.

**COCONUT GLEN'S ICE CREAM**  
**MILE MARKER 27**  
This is not your average ice cream joint: The coconut-based scoops are vegan and the owner grows many of his own ingredients. [coconutglens.com](http://coconutglens.com)

**HANA BURGER FOOD TRUCK**  
**MILE MARKER 34**  
The owners run a ranch in Paia, and every part of their popular grass-fed Hana Burger is hyper local, including tomato-papaya ketchup and brioche-style taro or breadfruit buns. [hanaranch.com](http://hanaranch.com)

## 2 Celebrate Turkey Day

These are three of the best island-inspired Thanksgiving menus.

**Mama's Fish House**  
The kitchen here is run by Maui native Perry Bateman, who will serve boar bacon and poha berry stuffing, pumpkin seed-crusted mahi mahi and roasted kabocha squash soup. You'll find Hawaiian kitsch galore in the dining room, including canoes strapped to the ceiling. [mamasfishhouse.com](http://mamasfishhouse.com)

**Cane & Canoe**  
Montage Kapalua Bay's hotel eatery resembles one of Maui's old canoe houses where locals gathered. Guests can eat in the common area or order Thanksgiving dinner in their rooms. [montagehotels.com/kapaluaabay](http://montagehotels.com/kapaluaabay)

**The Preserve Kitchen + Bar**  
This restaurant opened at Maui's Travaasa Hana resort less than a year ago, and you should make a pilgrimage for its first Thanksgiving. The menu will include kālua turkey and candied Molokai sweet potatoes with macadamia nuts. [travaasa.com/hana](http://travaasa.com/hana)

ILLUSTRATION: MARIE POTTIEZ; MAMA'S FISH HOUSE: JESSICA SAMPLE; CANE & CANOE: PACIFIC DREAM PHOTOGRAPHY; BAMBOO: SHUTTERSTOCK; SPAM: DEVON JARVIS/STUDIO D; SHAVE ICE: LAURA SANT; PLATE LUNCH: LAURA GREENE.

## 3 Eat Spam

Spam gained popularity in Hawaii during World War II, and islanders are still eating 7 million cans of it every year. Try Spam musubi first: It's a sushi-like concoction of sliced Spam and rice wrapped in seaweed, and you'll find it everywhere—gas stations, fast-food chains, high-end restaurants. Then, graduate to more adventurous bites, such as fried Spam musubi at **Da Kitchen Cafe** ([dakitchen.com](http://dakitchen.com)); a Spam, cheese and guava jelly doughnut sandwich at **Tin Roof Maui** ([tinroofmaui.com](http://tinroofmaui.com)); or Spam-flavored macadamia nuts, sold at **Longs Drugs** in the Lahaina Cannery Mall ([lahainacannerymall.com](http://lahainacannerymall.com)).



## 4

### Taste the Classics

Here are some Hawaiian favorites you shouldn't miss.

**Malasadas**

These oversize sugar-dusted, deep-fried doughnut holes came to the islands by way of Portuguese immigrants, and **Home Maid Bakery** has been churning them out since 1960. You have to order by the dozen, but trust us—you'll wish you had more. [homemaiddbakery.com](http://homemaiddbakery.com)

**Shave Ice**

When Japanese plantation workers came to Hawaii in the early 1900s, they brought a tradition of scraping super-thin shavings from a block of ice, then sweetening it with syrup. **Ululani's Hawaiian Shave Ice** was one of the first spots to poke holes in its ice so the real fruit syrups would seep into every last bit. [ululanishawaiianshaveice.com](http://ululanishawaiianshaveice.com)

**Plate Lunch**

Plate lunches—platters of white rice, macaroni salad and an entrée—were first enjoyed by Japanese, Korean and Filipino laborers in the mid-1900s. **Aloha Mixed Plate** carries on the tradition with a menu of more than a dozen varieties; the most popular is a mix of shoyu chicken, fresh fish and teriyaki beef. [alohamixedplate.com](http://alohamixedplate.com)

**Poke**

The back of a liquor store is, oddly enough, the best place to enjoy Maui's most popular raw fish dish. Traditional poke bowls come with rice or seaweed salad and marinated chunks of raw fish (poke is Hawaiian for "to slice into crosswise pieces"). The award-winning selection at **Tamura's Fine Wine & Liquors** includes sashimi-grade tuna, scallops and octopus. [tamurasfinewine.com](http://tamurasfinewine.com)

### TALK LIKE A LOCAL

E 'ai kākua (eh eye kah-koh): LET'S EAT

'Ono (oh-no): DELICIOUS

Pūpū (poo-poo): APPETIZERS OR SNACKS

Hau'oli Lā Ho'omaika'i (how-oh-lay lah ho-oh-my-kah-ee): HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Kāmau kī'aha (kah-mao key-ah-ha): CHEERS

Mai e 'ai (my eh eye): COME EAT

Mahalo (mah-hah-low): THANK YOU



## Shake a Lei

Island residents have been hosting luaus—traditional gatherings with Polynesian music, dancing and feasting—since 1819. Don't leave Maui without experiencing one.

### FOR LOVEBIRDS: FEAST AT LELE

Couples are seated at private tables with sunset ocean views, and instead of the usual buffet, diners get four courses, each inspired by a different Polynesian nation, along with entertainment like Samoan fire dancing. [feastatlele.com](http://feastatlele.com)

### FOR TRADITIONALISTS: OLD LAHAINA LUAU

This is a truly authentic luau, featuring long tables with on-the-ground seating, a classic imu ceremony (when the roasted pig is pulled from the fire pit) and ancient kahiko hula dancing. [oldlahainaluau.com](http://oldlahainaluau.com)

### FOR FAMILIES: DRUMS OF THE PACIFIC

During every show, children are invited to the stage for a hula lesson, and after each performance, they can snap photos with the dancers. There's a special keiki (kids) buffet for picky eaters, too, with chicken nuggets and pasta. [drumsofthepacificmaui.com](http://drumsofthepacificmaui.com)



## Eat (and Golf) like a Chef



Chef Masaharu Morimoto's home is Oahu, but he runs an outpost of his eponymous restaurant in the Andaz Maui at Wailea resort. When he's on Maui, he hits these spots.



### Star Noodle

Most of the noodles at this restaurant are made on-site. Chef Morimoto's favorite: udon with wafu dashi broth, radish and scallion. [starnoodle.com](http://starnoodle.com)



### Ka'ana Kitchen

The chef wakes up early and heads here for breakfast—usually the cinnamon roll pancakes with coconut cream and macadamia nuts. [maui.andaz.hyatt.com](http://maui.andaz.hyatt.com)



### Wailea Blue Golf Course

Morimoto, an avid golfer, says this course with ocean views is one of the best on Maui. [waileagolf.com](http://waileagolf.com)



## Watch the Whales

Every winter, more than 6,000 humpback whales migrate from the chilly waters off Alaska to give birth in the warmer waters near Maui. The Pacific Whale Foundation kicks off its whale-watching season in November, and you can choose from three Thanksgiving Day catamaran cruises that leave from Lahaina Harbor. Chefs from the island's Three's Bar & Grill whip up a menu with kālúa turkey (cooked in a pit in the ground), Portuguese sausage stuffing and pumpkin-coconut squares. [pacificwhale.org](http://pacificwhale.org)



LEI: GETTY IMAGES; LUAU: J. ANTHONY MARTINEZ; KA'ANA KITCHEN: DABE PATTERSON; HUMPBACK WHALE: MICHAEL NOLAN/SPECIALIST/STOCK/AURORA PHOTOS

## 8 Burn Off the Big Meal

There are plenty of ways to get active on Maui.



### HIKING

Mount Haleakalā is the largest dormant volcano in the US, and Haleakalā National Park provides marked trails to the top. The summit is about 10,000 feet. [nps.gov/hale](http://nps.gov/hale)



### PADDLEBOARDING

On Thanksgiving morning, Hawaiian Paddle Sports hosts Paddle for Hunger, where canoers, kayakers and paddleboarders take to the Maalaea Bay for some good-natured races. All that's asked of participants: Bring a check or canned goods for the Maui Food Bank. [hawaiianpaddlesports.com](http://hawaiianpaddlesports.com)



### HORSEBACK RIDING

Maui is a pretty sweet place to be a cowboy. Since 1838, wranglers—known as paniolos—have been working the up-country cattle ranches. Piiholo Ranch's seventh-generation ranch hands lead tours on horseback through their private pastures. [piiholo.com](http://piiholo.com)



### RUNNING

Only serious runners should apply for this Thanksgiving-morning race. You can run the eight-mile course that winds through picturesque Kula or complete two loops (16 miles). [virr.com](http://virr.com)



## 9 Party like a Local

There's a saying on this island: "If it's Friday on Maui, there's a party going on." Every Friday, historic towns take turns hosting, and the night after Thanksgiving, the gathering will be in Kihei.

Organizers will shut down the streets near Azeka Shopping Center and line them with 20 food trucks, craft vendors and musicians. [kiheifridays.com](http://kiheifridays.com)



## 10 Get Some Beauty Sleep

Spend your nights in one of these dreamy spots.



### ROMANTIC GETAWAY

The serene six-room **Ho'oiilo House** is Balinese-inspired. Guests must be 17 or older, so the meditation gazebo and ocean-view swimming pool are as relaxing as they're intended to be. *From \$339; [hoiilo.com](http://hoiilo.com)*



### FAMILY FAVORITE

It's impossible to get bored at **Napili Kai Beach Resort**: There are lei-making classes, shuffleboard courts, Hawaiian Slack Key concerts and more. Choose from a standard room or a suite that includes a kitchen and private lanai. *From \$390; [napilikai.com](http://napilikai.com)*



### LITTLE HIDEAWAY

A private path behind the **Paia Inn Hotel** leads straight to the beach. And out front is a strip of shops and restaurants. If you plan on spending most of your time outdoors, opt for the budget-friendly "petite" room: It's small on space (just 120 square feet) but big on Polynesian decor. *From \$199; [paiainn.com](http://paiainn.com)*



### FUN SPLURGE

There's a two-to-one staff-to-guest ratio at **The Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea**. Among the upscale amenities: Evian spritzes by the pool, a photo ambassador to snap sunset pics, and free introductory scuba clinics. *From \$489; [fourseasons.com/maui](http://fourseasons.com/maui)*