

This Remote Hawaiian Island Is a Nature Lover's Paradise With Excellent Snorkeling, Waterfalls, and Fresh Seafood

Amanda Ogle

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Ah, Hawaii — the land of luaus, mai tais, too-good-to-be-true [beaches](#), and so much more. Full of beauty and culture, it's easy to make memories that last a lifetime here, especially with lots of [resorts](#) and [activities](#) to choose from. But for a taste of rural, remote Hawaii, hop over to Molokai, a short, 25-minute flight from Maui.

Aerial view of Molokai coast and mountain, Hawaii

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At 38 miles long and 10 miles across, Molokai is Hawaii's fifth-largest island. It's home to a population of about 7,400 people, and the residents here, largely native Hawaiians, all strive to preserve their land and way of life. The island usually only sees approximately 25 to 30 travelers a day, giving visitors a chance to explore without fighting throngs of tourists. Here, there are no large resorts, no over-touristed beaches, and essentially no commercial vibes. With the world's highest sea cliffs, Hawaii's tallest waterfall, and the state's longest continuous fringing reef, this is rugged Hawaii at its best.

Here's how to spend the perfect day on Molokai.

The world tallest sea cliffs of Molokai in a blue sky bright day light, Molokai, Hawaii.

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Do some voluntourism at Mokia Preserve.

Spanning 1,718 acres, the Mokia Preserve is a nature lover's paradise. It's currently being rid of invasive species and replanted with native Hawaiian plants, thanks to the [Molokai Land Trust](#). Visitors can work with the organization to do some [voluntourism](#), helping them to replant native species, pull weeds, and water, among other outdoor activities. The views

here are stunning, with around five miles of rugged shoreline cliffs, remnant native coastal strand and dune ecosystems, seasonal wetland, and ancient Hawaiian sites. Mokio is also home to seabirds like the albatross, which has suffered greatly in finding nesting sites due to rising sea levels, and the endangered Hawaiian yellow-faced bee, which burrows into small cavities in the ground across the preserve and helps native plants thrive through pollination.

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Try Molokai hot bread.

No visit to Molokai is complete without trying hot bread. For decades, locals have lined up at night in the lit alley behind [Kanemitsu's Bakery](#) for a huge roll of hot bread, cut in half and slathered with your choice of cream cheese, butter, cinnamon, sugar, or strawberry or blueberry jam. It's a tradition to share the loaves with family or a date, and there are no utensils — everyone picks at the loaf with their fingers for a true Molokai treat.

Hawaii, island of Molokai, coconut post office, colourful painted coconuts, Post-A-Nut
Westend61/Getty Images

Send your loved ones coconut mail.

Why send a typical postcard when you can mail a coconut? At the Ho'olehua Post Office, [Post-A-Nut](#) has been around since the 90s, and today, more than 50,000 coconuts have been sent from Molokai across the globe. Choose a coconut from the bins and decorate it with the colorful pens provided. Then, address it, add some stamps, and the coconut will be sent out for delivery. (The coconut is free, you just pay shipping.)

Falls is the largest waterfall in the Halawa Valley dropping a reported 500 feet.
Melinda Podor/Getty Images

Get outside.

With 88 miles of coastline, Molokai has some stellar outdoor activities on offer. It's home to Hawaii's longest pier, Kaunakakai Harbor, and the water here is clear enough to see sea turtles swimming. Head out for a canoe ride with the Wa'akapaemua Canoe Club and race other teams around the bay. And don't forget to watch for fish and sea turtles lazing beneath your boat. On the north side of the island are some of the highest sea cliffs in

the world, towering between 3,600 to 3,900 feet above the ocean. These can be seen via a helicopter tour, on a flight from [Maui](#) to Molokai, or from the overlook at [Pala'au State Park](#). Oloupena Falls, the tallest in Hawaii, measures almost 3,000 feet and may also be seen from the air. Molokai is also home to Hawaii's longest continuous fringing reef — a coral reef close to the shore. At 28 miles long, it's home to finger coral, stony coral, green sea turtles, Hawaiian monk seals, and reef fish, making it a great spot for [snorkeling](#) and scuba diving.

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Have lunch and drinks with a view.

Looking for a place to enjoy a cocktail or some lunch? Check out [Hotel Molokai](#), a favorite for locals and visitors alike for more than 50 years. The property and its restaurant have modern amenities, yet blend in the old-school Hawaii vibes with Polynesian style bungalows and great food. The oceanside Hiro's Ohana Grill makes a tasty mai tai and serves fresh seafood specials every day. You can't go wrong with the ahi poke bowl paired with a salad and papaya seed dressing. Another great option is [Paddlers Restaurant and Bar](#), with a full bar and delicious grub.

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