

**Travel And Leisure : Domestic**

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**Honua Kai Resort Review - Maui's Five-Star Luxury, Two-Star Rates**

By [Anne Z. Cooke](#), Photos by [Steve Haggerty/ColorWorld](#)

Now Available:



From pool to ocean at the Honua Kai Resort & Spa(c)ColorWorld

 

How about a luxury **five-star Maui vacation at two-star prices**? It's yours for the asking at the [Honua Kai Resort & Spa](#), West **Maui's** newest condominium hotel. Check into your spacious multi-bedroom unit, pour a tall cold one, sink into a deck chair on the balcony and soak up the view of **West Maui's sun-splashed coast**.

From high on the eighth floor, the ocean looks as pristine as a postcard, a luminous blue beside a narrow strip of oatmeal-colored sand. Below is the pool area and a path to the beach, and in the distance, Molokai's peaks rise on the horizon.



Lobby, pool deck and towers (c)ColorWorld

Your one, two or three-bedroom condominium, a mile north of [Ka'anapali Beach's sacred Black Rock](#), is sleek and uncluttered, its spaces spare and simple. Combining the convenience and space of a private residence with the amenities of a hotel, a [Honua Kai](#) getaway is the jackpot of the year.



Poolside at the Honua Kai Resort (c)ColorWorld

Why is [Maui](#) on sale? With the global economy trading water and travelers spending less on vacations, Maui's occupancy rates have taken a dive. To counter the trend, [Honua Kai's](#) daily rates have been slashed in half. But these 50-percent-off prices aren't likely to last very long. As the economy recovers and visitor numbers rise, so will the prices. Wait too long and you'll have to dig deep to afford more than a night or two at this luxury retreat, the first property built on

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north Ka'anapali in 15 years.

Now and through August, a one-bedroom suite (for a stay of two or more nights) starts at \$285 a night, plus a \$25 resort fee per day. Then it drops even lower to **\$225 a night from Sept. 1 to Dec. 10**. Prices are likely to rise again over the holidays, but after that it's anybody's guess.



Plumeria blossoms, a lei-maker's favorite (c)ColorWorld

With 318 units, ten stories and all the amenities of a hotel, the **Honua Kai** is designed for today's sophisticated travelers, all glass and chrome and a palette of subtle earth tones. You'd hesitate to track sand onto these luscious bedroom carpets or fling wet bathing suits onto the furniture. Ten kids in your group? Look for another destination. But for **friends and families**, couples traveling together, **honeymoon** or a **wedding parties**, it's perfect.

Our family, two couples and three kids, shared a spacious **three-bedroom unit** in June, with two balconies, panoramic windows and an open-space design. We had a spacious entrance hall, two balconies, a fully equipped kitchen with an island and bar stools, and a dining table large enough to seat eight.

There was plenty of room for all of us to spread out and be comfortable. And having a big kitchen meant we could save money by eating at least some of our meals -- usually breakfast and lunch -- at home. Ordinarily that would have meant more chores. But the hotel side of the Honua Kai eliminated most of them.



At home in a three-bedroom suite (c) ColorWorld

For a token resort fee of \$25 per day, we had access to free valet parking (we must have used this three or four times a day), bell desk service, a concierge to book tickets and make reservations, and a maid who mopped the floors, shined up the bathrooms and changed the sheets.



Sweet dreams on silky-soft linens (c)ColorWorld

Each room had a flat screen tv, individual temperature controls, roomy closets, plenty of drawer space and bathrooms with separate shower and tub. Free local calling, shampoos and lotions, a dishwasher and a stacked washer-dryer made the chores we did have easier. Our particular unit had a tiled entrance hall with a table, a washer and

a dryer, a glass-railed balcony on two sides and a dining table and chairs to seat eight.

The **Honua Kai** is ideally located, about two miles north of **Whaler's Village** shopping center, at the **Ka'anapali Beach Resort area**, and five miles north of **Lahaina**, the historic whaling town. You'll want to sample the area's unique restaurants, sights and local attractions, all just a few minutes away.

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Obama's favorite: the classic plate lunch (c)Colorworld

missing at the **Honua Kai**? A casual restaurant with tables and waiters. But the chef-owned **Aina Market** in the lobby, a combination gourmet grocery and quick-meal counter, sold everything from breakfast paninis, sandwiches, fruit plates and smoothies to , sliced meats, pastas and frozen entrees to cheeses, bread, chips, cookies and drinks.



Aina Gourmet Market, in the lobby (c) ColorWorld

put **Maui** on your calendar now.

But when we weren't out and about, we were either in the ocean or at the hotel pool, surrounded by several terraced decks and landscaped with garden areas and rows of beach chairs and umbrellas. The beach, known locally as North Beach, was pristine and almost always empty, a rare pleasure even on **Hawaii**. For that reason, however, you probably shouldn't swim alone (a rule that applies to all Hawaii's beaches), and kids should be accompanied by an adult.

The bottom was mostly sand for the first ten feet, sand and mossy rocks for the next 15 feet, by which time you're into deep water and over a popular snorkeling reef. To take advantage of this, rent a snorkel and mask at the pool area.



At the beach: pristine and private (c)C

missing is a free resort shuttle service to **Whalers' Village**, which means you'll depend on taking cabs or renting a car. We intended to see all of **Maui**, so we went the car route, renting a **Budget Mini-van** at **Maui's Kahului International Airport**. The timing will never be better;

FOR: **Budget Rental Cars**: At (800)527-0700; [www.budget.com](http://www.budget.com).

FOR: **Honua Kai Resort & Spa**: Condo prices start at \$225 per day, from Sept. 1 to Dec. 10. At (808)662-2800; [www.honuakaimaui.com](http://www.honuakaimaui.com).

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