



BEERTOWN, U.S.A.: HONOLULU

SURE IT'S GOT SHAVE ICE AND SPAM, LUAUS AND DON HO TRIBUTES, BUT THERE'S MORE TO HONOLULU THAN TOURIST KITSCH. CASE IN POINT: THE BUSTLING CITY CENTER, A DYNAMIC FOOD-AND-CRAFT-BEER SCENE AND A REVITALIZED ISLAND CULTURE.

BEER

Hawaii might be best known as the land of mai tais and lava flows, but local craft beers are making waves. **Maui Brewing Co.** showcases its award-winning suds, such as the Coconut Porter, a malty brew made with hand-toasted coconut, at its Maui brewpub (*Lahaina*, Maui, www.mauibrewingco.com). The brewery is a model of sustainability, converting the pub's used vegetable oil into biodiesel, donating the spent grain to local farmers for feed and compost and packaging its brews in recyclable cans. **Hawaii Nui Brewing's** (www.hawaiinuibrewing.com) craft beers—Sunset Amber Ale, Kauai Golden Ale and Hapa Brown Ale—are found across the isles, as well as at its Hilo, Hawaii tasting room. Also be sure to try the company's Mehana brews (particularly Humpback Blue, a Hawaiian-style kölsch) and brewer Andy Baker's monthly Hops and Grinds beer/pupu pairing dinner. **Sam Choy's Breakfast, Lunch & Crab and Big Aloha Brewery** (*Honolulu*, www.samchoy.com) melds the chef's Hawaiian-fusion cuisine (think kalua pork quesadillas and kalbi-marinated butterfish) with Big Aloha's handcrafted beers, which include the deliciously drinkable Kiawe Honey Porter. **Kona Brewing Company** has two brewpubs: the Koko Marina Pub and Kona Pub & Brewery (*Hawaii Kai*, Oahu; and *Kailua-Kona*, Hawaii, respectively, www.konabrewingco.com). Both pubs feature the brewery's flagship Longboard Island Lager as well as exclusives like Black Sand Porter and Castaway IPA. While not a brewpub, **Bar 35** (*Chinatown*, www.bar35.com) has the city's most expansive beer list. The bar's weekly House of Brews tasting highlights nine different beer samplers and the bar's gourmet pizza (a favorite of the late-night crowd). To keep tabs on the event's ever-changing theme and track craft beer around the island, bookmark Beer808.com; the site holds a finger on the pulse of Oahu's brewing scene.

BARS

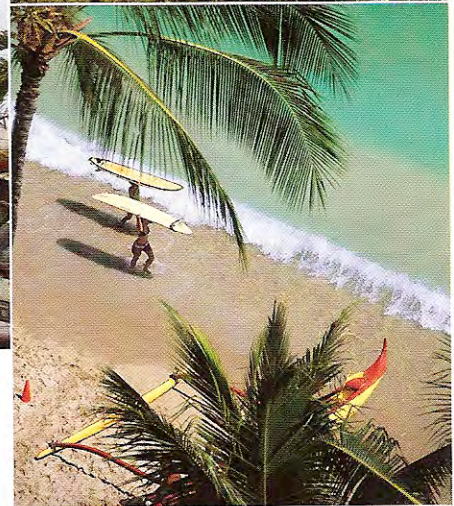
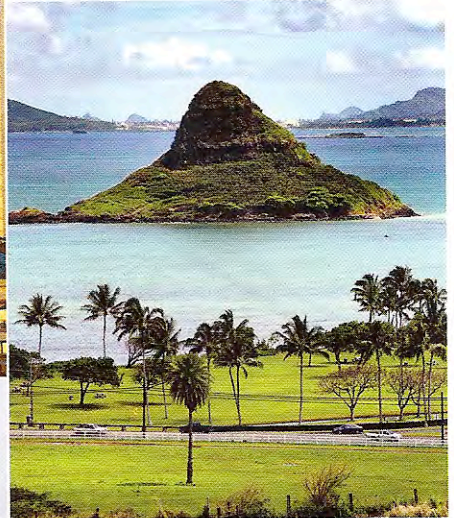
Indigo Restaurant (*Chinatown*, www.indigo-hawaii.com) is a popular happy-hour spot for the downtown set, thanks in large part to the \$4 martinis. For the best mai tai in town, head to the **Royal Hawaiian's Mai Tai Bar** (*Waikiki*, www.royal-hawaiian.com), a must for sunset sips overlooking Waikiki Beach. **RumFire** (*Waikiki*, www.rumfirewaikiki.com), a swanky beachside watering hole, stocks exactly 101 different brands of rum. Tucked away in a nondescript, industrial neighborhood, **La Mariana Sailing Club** (*Sand Island*, 808.848.2800) is one of the last authentic tiki bars, replete with koa and rattan furnishings, an indoor waterfall, a talking parrot and blowfish lanterns and glass fishing floats hanging from the ceiling. Every city has an Irish pub, and Honolulu's no exception. With the top New York-style pizza in town and Harp, Guinness and Smithwick's on tap, **J.J. Dolan's** (*Chinatown*, www.jjdolans.com) is the best of the lot.

DINE

For fish so fresh it practically swims onto your plate, do lunch at **Nico's Pier 38** (*Honolulu*, www.nicospier38.com), next door to the Honolulu fish auction. The chef/owner is transplanted Frenchman Nicolas Chaize, who applies classic French cooking techniques to Hawaiian-style plates. **Kalapawai Market** (*Kailua*, www.kalapawaimarket.com) stands as one of the island's last neighborhood country stores, and serves sandwiches and coffee to the fresh-from-the-beach crowds. The market's sister restaurant, Kalapawai Café, is a full-service restaurant, coffee bar and deli located in the heart of Kailua Town. The sophisticated-yet-unpretentious menu at **12th Ave. Grill** (*Kaimuki*, www.12thavegrill.com), a bistro-style eatery, emphasizes locally grown ingredients. Your big-night-out destination is **Alan Wong's** (*Honolulu*, www.alanwongs.com), the fine-dining establish-



Left: Parts of Oahu, like downtown Honolulu, seem starkly modern, but the homey Kona brewery (bottom left) and views of the Chinaman's Hat (below) are proof the island is truly paradise.



ment of its namesake chef, a James Beard award winner and father of Hawaiian cuisine. Perched within the atrium of hotel Halekulani's Orchids restaurant, **Table One** (Waikiki, www.halekulani.com) features a five- or seven-course tasting menu specially designed each evening by the executive chef using only fresh, seasonal ingredients.

SLEEP

The majority of Oahu's hotels are concentrated within Waikiki, but a handful are tucked away along the island's outer coasts. The **JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa at Ko Olina** (Kapolei, www.ihilani.com) is on the island's far west side, but worth the drive for its pristine swimming lagoons, white sand beach, championship golf course, five restaurants and spa. The only full-service hotel on Oahu's famous North Shore, **Turtle Bay Resort** (Kahuku, www.turtlebayresort.com) was designed for those who want to get away from it all. The luxurious oceanfront **Kahala Hotel & Resort** (Kahala, www.kahalaresort.com) sits on a stretch of beach that will occupy your days. **Hotel Renew** (Waikiki, www.hotelrenew.com) is the boutique hipster of the bunch with free boogie board rentals, signature flip-flops and sleek, modern accommodations.

DO

Check out Honolulu locavores in action at the **weekly farmers markets**. The largest, held at Kapiolani Community College every Saturday morning, sells an abundance of island-grown produce and other treats, such as cheese, honey, jam and coffee. The market's a hungry man's paradise, with dozens of food vendors selling their tasty creations, including fried green tomatoes and North Shore Cattle Company burgers. Additional weekly markets are located in Mililani, Kailua and Waianae (www.hfbf.org). The latest water-sport craze is **stand-up paddle surfing**, where you stand on top of a board and propel yourself through the water using a long paddle. For lessons, try **Surf N' Sea** (Haleiwa, www.surfnsea.com). Chinatown gets down at the monthly **First Friday Art Party** (Chinatown, www.chinatownhi.com) when galleries, restaurants, bars and shops stay open late for streaming crowds. Make the most of your Hawaii vacation by hopping over to the **neighbor islands**—Maui, the Big Island, Kauai, Lanai or Molokai. Hawaiian Airlines (www.hawaiianair.com), Go! (www.iflygo.com), Island Air (www.islandair.com) and Mokulele Airlines (www.mokuleleairlines.com) will get you there. ●

SURF'S UP

Drop in on the island's major surf contests.

Every year from November to February, 15- to 50-foot waves roll into Oahu, signaling the beginning of surf-contest season. The annual Vans Triple Crown is the Super Bowl of surfing and consists of four events, three of which are held on Oahu's famous North Shore: the Reef Hawaiian Pro in Haleiwa between Nov. 12 and 24; the O'Neill World Cup of Surfing at Sunset Beach, Nov. 24 to Dec. 6; and Billabong Pipeline Masters at Banzai Pipeline, Dec. 8 to 20. You can expect to see such surf gods as Kelly Slater and the 2008 Vans Triple Crown winner, Joel Parkinson. The Quiksilver in Memory of Eddie Aikau, held in honor of the legendary Hawaiian waterman, takes place between December and February at Waimea Bay. Surf contests draw huge crowds and even bigger traffic jams, so get on the road at 7 a.m., grab coffee on the way, and don't forget binoculars.