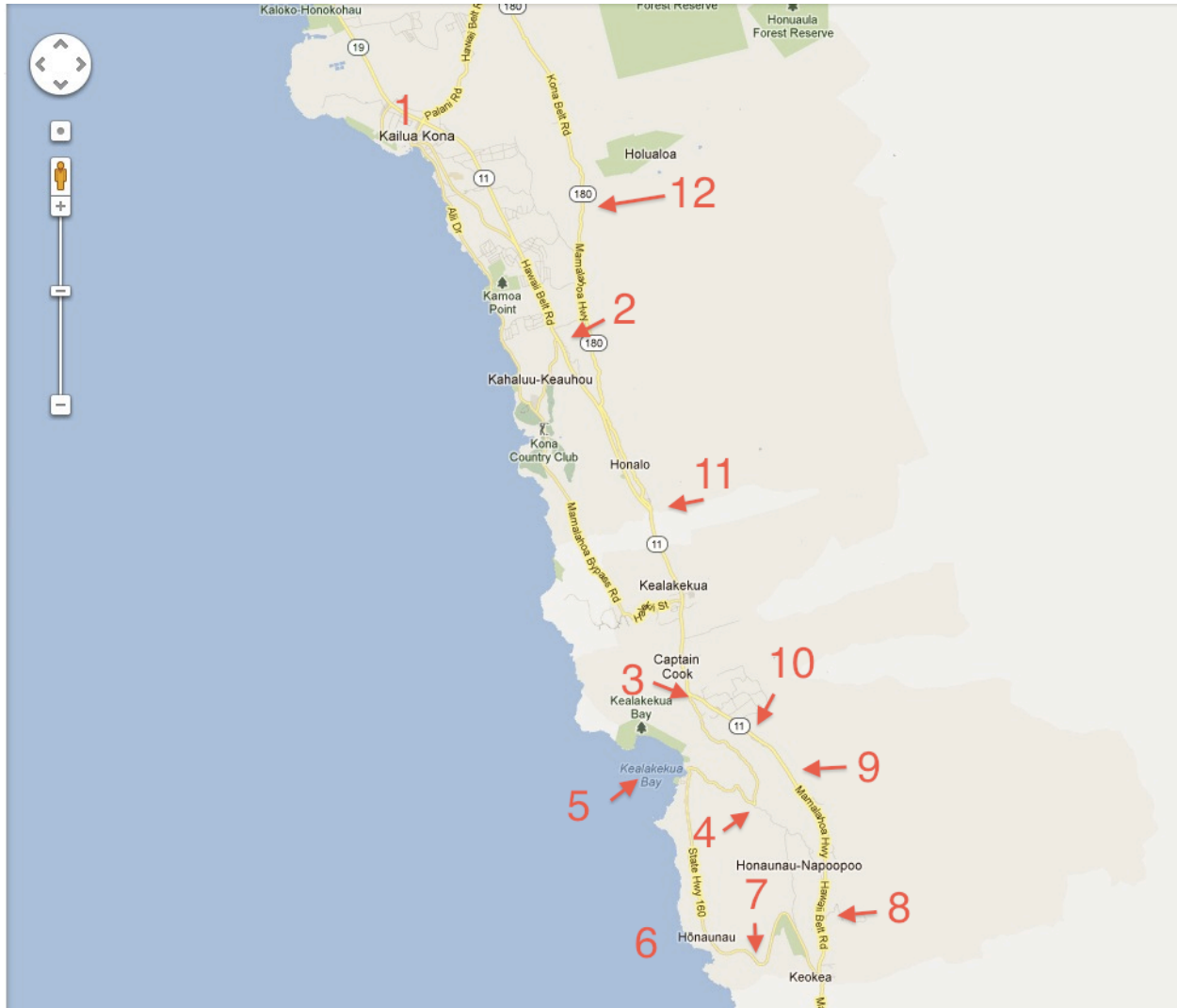


DayTrip to Kealakekua Bay and the Place of Refuge



Courtesy of <http://www.bigislandvacation.com>

This day trip will take you from Kailua-Kona to Kealakekua Bay, the site of the first contact between Europeans and Hawaiians, then to the Place of Refuge National Historical Park. After a visit to St. Benedict's Painted Church and a stop for lunch and a visit to a coffee plantation, you will drive to Holualoa, an artist's village and the center of Kona Coffee production, before returning to Kailua-Kona for dinner. The trip covers approximately 50 miles and has an elevation change of +/- 3,000 feet.

Restrooms Along the Way

You will find public restrooms at most stops on this day trip.

1. Start Here: Kailua-Kona

Pack a hat, sunblock, your camera, and water. Start with an early breakfast in Kailua-Kona, then head south out of town on either the Kuakini Highway or the

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Hawaiian Belt Road (Hwy. 11). If you are leaving town via the Kuakini Highway, turn right (south) at its intersection with Hwy. 11.

2. Intersection with Kamehameha III Road

As you climb out of Kailua-Kona the wide expanse of the coastline will come into view. Pull over and stop near the intersection with King Kamehameha III Road (the route to Keauhou-Kona), get out and take in the view. If you are driving this route between November and April, use your binoculars to look near stationary boats for migrating Humpback whales.

3. Napo`o`po`o Road

As you exit the town of Captain Cook, look for the sign near mile marker 111 pointing the way to Kealakekua Bay (Napo`o`po Road). Turn right at the intersection and slow down. This is a steep and windy road with lots of blind driveways. Exercise caution, but keep an eye out for gorgeous flowering plants and landscaping.

4. Intersection with Middle Kee Road

Keep right at the intersection with Middle Kee Road (turning left will take you back up to Hwy. 11). The road will continue to wind downhill (keep right at all intersections) until you reach the intersection with Beach Road. Turn right onto Beach Road and left into the parking lot. Take your valuables with you, put everything else in the trunk, lock the car and follow the other vacationers to the bay overlook.

5. Kealakekua Bay: Captain Cook Monument

This area was once the site of a village of more than 10,000 Hawaiians. The white obelisk, which sits on territory the United States ceded to Britain, marks the spot where, in February, 1779, British explorer Captain James Cook met his death at the hands of Hawaiian warriors.

5. Kealakekua Bay: Cliff Face

The cliff face at the end of the bay is laced with lava tubes which once held the bones of Hawaiian Royalty. Some think the bones of King Kamehameha the Great are hidden here.

5. Kealakekua Bay: Hikeau Heiau

The rock walls on the right at the north end of Beach Drive are the remains of a luakini, or human sacrificial temple still sacred to those who practice the religion of ancient Hawaiians. Supposedly the body of Captain Cook was brought here to be stripped of flesh so his bones could receive a royal burial.

Beach Road

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Return to your car and follow Beach Road south. Beach Road, also called Pu`u Honua Road, is a lane-and-a half or rutted asphalt which follows the dips and hills of a lava flow, parallels the shoreline for four miles, and leads to your next stop: Pu`uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park (also called the Place of Refuge) . Drive carefully and slowly, yield to oncoming traffic, and beware of trucks with large side mirrors.

6. Pu`uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park (Place of Refuge)

Restrooms and cold drinking water are available here. This is a National Historic Park (admission fee: \$5 per carload, or free with a National Park Senior Card) that encompasses the site of a Hawaiian village reserved for royalty (the first Kona Coast resort) and a sacred 'Place of Refuge' for defeated warriors and kapu breakers.

Up until the early 19th century anyone who broke a kapu - a law punishable by death - could find forgiveness at a place of refuge. This one was particularly difficult to reach, requiring one to swim across a bay and climb a 12 foot tall wall. And, no. I haven't a clue how the person was marked with absolution. As you leave the parking lot, turn right onto State Hwy. 160 and start uphill to your next stop, St. Benedict's Church (the Painted Church).

7. Painted Church

As you climb up from the coast look for Painted Church Road on your left between mile markers 2 and 1. A sign points the way to St. Benedict Catholic Church, a tiny structure built in the 1899. Turn left onto Painted Church Road; the church is on your right in about a mile. The wood frame church is famous for the Biblical paintings on its interior wall done by Father John Velghe. In those days few Hawaiians could read so he taught scripture with pictures. There is a donation box on a post inside the church. Please leave a few dollars so that restoration and maintenance can continue. On your way out of the church, stop and look at the beautiful coastline view. (Restrooms are at the uphill end of the parking lot).

8. Royal Kona Coffee Mill and Museum (optional stop)

Continue uphill and turn left at the intersection with Route 11. Look for fluttering banners at the Royal Kona Coffee Mill and Museum on the ocean side of the road just north of mile marker 107 in Honaunau. This stop is optional. (If you would like to tour a working coffee plantation, pass up the Royal Kona Coffee Mill and stop instead at Greenwell Farm (stop #10 on this day trip). The Royal Kona Coffee Mill will let you sample up to 25 Kona Coffees and teas on their spectacular ocean view deck. Restrooms are downstairs.

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9. Coffee Shack Resaurant and Coffee Shop

Open daily 7:30a.m. - 3:00p.m. Even if you have to wait for a table, stop here and enjoy lunch and the spectacular view. They also have a killer bakery. The restaurant is on the ocean (makai) side of the road between mile markers 108 and 109. Tell them we sent you. It won't get you anything, but they might start advertising with us.

10. Greenwell Coffee Farm

Look for their sign and driveways on the left between mile markers 111 and 112. Greenwell Farms offers a free walking tours of their coffee plantation and processing facilities continuously from 8:30am through 4:30pm seven days a week (tell Gloria we send our Aloha). At the end of the tour, guests are offered free tastings of all their coffee products. They sell only 100% pure Kona coffee. (we like peaberry - the rarest and most expensive of Kona coffee beans. If you want to treat us, email theorchidisle@aol.com for our mailing address...)

11. Route 180 to Holualoa

Look for a road sign between mile markers 115 and 116 pointing towards Holualoa. Turn right onto Route 180 (the Mamalahoa Highway) and slow down. The road winds its way along the western flank of Hualalai Volcano through rainforests and coffee farms. Enjoy the flowers and vegetation that can't exist along the hot coastline. It will probably be raining by now, but it will taper off as you approach Holualoa.

12. Holualoa Village

Holualoa is a cute artist village, Stop, stretch your legs, take a potty break, and get something to drink. Take time to peruse some of the artisan's shops. When you are ready to leave, continue in the direction you were traveling.

Palani Road to Kailua-Kona

The road from Hulalooa will stop at the intersection with Palani Road (Hwy 190). Turn left (makai) on Palani Road and meander downhill, back to Kailua Kona your starting point.

Finis:

This ends the day trip. If you would like to comment on it or suggest additions, please email us at theorchidisle@aol.com