



PHOTOS: CURT WOODHALL

You can watch the North Shore waves from the comfort of the pool at Turtle Bay Resort. And for surfing fans, three of Oahu's best known surf spots are only a 15-minute drive away.

Enjoying a Hawaiian family paradise

CHILD-FRIENDLY VACATION in Oahu fun for children and relaxing for parents, with a wide variety of attractions and amenities

MHAIRRI WOODHALL
POSTMEDIA NEWS

My daughter's excited squeals snapped me out of a sun-drenched daze. She'd been running around the Keiki Cove splash zone for 45 minutes. Her unbridled enthusiasm and bold moves (staring directly into the jets until water shoots her in the face) drew a crowd of onlookers. When new kids dared to enter, my 18-month-old pre-talking force of nature acted as ambassador, explaining with animated gestures how to properly use the splash zone.

My husband and I were in awe, both of her enthusiasm and at the fact we'd been sprawled on lounge chairs for almost an hour doing nothing. An impossible feat when you're parent to an active toddler. Aulani, a Disney Resort and Spa in Oahu, was now my happiest place on earth.

We chose Oahu for our family holiday because Hawaii truly is fabulous for

toddlers. Kids between 18 months and four years of age have zero interest in being strapped to a stroller taking in local sights. They crave freedom, and need an outlet to exhaust their boundless energy. A day at the beach, powering through sand and splashing in the ocean, pretty much guarantees an early bedtime and sound sleep — the ultimate goal for any parent with young children.

After a little research, I discovered a couple of services that made travelling to Oahu with kids even easier: Carving out time for a romantic dinner, or an adult-oriented activity, such as paddle boarding, ensured that all members of our family had a chance to unwind. Through Nannies Hawaii, I found excellent care for our daughter in each area of the island we visited.

Readily available baby amenities also helped alleviate some stress. Between diapers, books, toys, clothes and sun-safety supplies I usually have enough room in the suit-



At Aulani, kids get to mingle with Disney characters.

case for a sundress and flip flops — never mind lugging a car seat through the airport. Paradise Baby Co. offered on-island rentals on everything from strollers and car seats to baby carriers, bicycles and trailers. Diapers and formula can also be purchased and delivered to the hotel.

We started in Waikiki, where a car wasn't necessary. The condo-style Trump

International Waikiki Beach Walk, TripAdvisor's No. 1 family-rated hotel in Waikiki, had full kitchens (great for making quick breakfasts) and a separate living room with balcony, which allows for romantic dinners after the kids go to bed.

My favourite beach for tots was by the freshwater lagoon adjacent to the Hilton Hawaiian Village. It was much quiet-

er than Waikiki beach and the calm lagoon waters are safe for younger children. Stop by any ABC Store and pick up a bag of plastic beach toys — an inexpensive purchase that provides hours of fun.

Off-beach activities that work well for little ones, included a visit to Honolulu Zoo, where the hippos and giraffes stole the show as far as my daughter was concerned, and finding Nemo at the Waikiki Aquarium. Both are within walking distance of most hotels, and are often crowd-free.

Restaurants are plentiful in Waikiki. Happy Hour at Trump's Wai'olu Ocean View Lounge offers exceptional value for the entire family.

The oceanfront patio at Azure Restaurant in The Royal Hawaiian Hotel was my little piece of heaven in Waikiki. Under a canopy of twinkling lanterns, you'll dine on freshly caught fish (hand-picked at the auction that very morning), while listening to waves thunder on the shore. Try the five-course

tasting menu, which includes Azure's signature Kona lobster tail risotto.

After the bustle of Waikiki, Turtle Bay Resort on the North Shore was a welcome retreat. Set on almost eight kilometres of beachfront, the property offers views of the area's famous big surf.

Three of Oahu's best known surf spots — Waimea Bay, Banzai Pipeline and Sunset Beach — are a 15-minute drive away. We liked to grab a picnic lunch from one of the many North Shore shrimp trucks, or a teriyaki chicken plate from Ted's Bakery, and watch the onslaught of towering waves pummel the beach.

The resort's two pools and swimming bay kept my daughter happy. In addition to a spa, golf courses, tennis courts, biking trails and kayaking, Turtle Bay has a riding stable. The Pony Experience includes a grooming lesson and a 15-minute pony ride — or in my daughter's case, sitting on a pony for 10 minutes while I took hundreds of photos.

Maui festival celebrates a local food revival

Sustainable goods fuel cuisine style that spurs 'thinking outside of the box'

ANDREW MCCREDIE
POSTMEDIA NEWS

KA'ANAPALI, MAUI — Proponents of the 100-mile diet will find much to like on this island paradise. At 78 kilometres long and 42 kilometres across at its widest point, ingredients harvested from Maui's land and sea easily fit into that geographical boundary. And with an ever increasing emphasis on sustainability and traditional cuisine, the island's pickings are ripe for the travelling foodie.

In late August, for the third year in a row, the island's chefs are joining forces with the island's farmers and producers at the Ka'anapali Fresh Food Wine Festival to celebrate the culinary delights Maui has to offer.

"We're using local produce and ingredients more than ever," says Ka'anapali Beach Hotel executive chef Tom Muromoto, who is serving as festival chef co-chair along

with Ka'anapali Westin Resort chef Ikaika Manaku. "The idea of the festival, apart from showing people the diverse range of food available here, is to encourage other chefs on the island to get involved in thinking about sustainable goods."

In many ways the past decade has been a perfect storm for the island's burgeoning food scene, which for years was, unlike Maui's tropical breezes and sandy beaches, nothing to write home about.

"If you go over on the east coast (of Maui) 20 years ago, no one had ever heard about Hawaiian traditional cuisine, or for that matter even Pacific Rim cuisine," explains Chef Manaku, noting that when the big resorts started showing up on the island in the early 1970s, they brought with them European-influenced chefs and menus. "So for a few decades that organized our kitchens in that tradition: cold salad, hot main serving



The Ka'anapali Fresh food festival celebrates Maui's burgeoning local food scene.

and dessert."

But over time, the locals who entered those resort kitchens to learn and train under the European masters began to incorporate some of the almost forgotten Hawaiian food traditions of their parents and grandparents.

And so began the rebirth of Hawaiian cuisine; a diet

Manaku describes as very simple, with a big Asian influence.

"We'll do whatever we want," he says. "In European cuisine and style of cooking there are a lot of rules. We'll serve a hot steak with a cold salad on the same plate."

"It's fun and definitely thinking outside the box."

That emerging cuisine wouldn't be possible without the establishment of a renewed farming scene on Maui.

The changing face of the Hawaiian Islands' food scene is in some part due to the end of the giant factory plantations that for nearly a century took most of the farmland

IF YOU GO

What: Ka'anapali Fresh Food Wine Festival 2014

When: Aug. 29-31

Where: Ka'anapali Beach Resort

Cost: Events range from free to \$185 per person

Website: kaanapalifresh.com

out of the locals' control in favour of single crops like pineapple. With some of that land now freed up, new farmers are planting a more diverse array of crops.

The blending of these and other local ingredients with the inspired and creative chefs of Maui is what the Ka'anapali Fresh Food Wine Festival is all about.

The centrepiece of the three-day festival Aug. 29-31 is the Range to Sea event, which sees a dozen farmer/chef pairings. Festivalgoers will be able to watch and taste the pairings on the ocean-side lawns of the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel.