

TRAVEL

How to Travel More Responsibly on Your Next Trip to Hawaii

by [Kitt Doucette](#)

tourismIn 2019, a record-setting 10.4 million tourists visited the Hawaiian Islands. While the economic benefit of that many visitors was certainly substantial, the environmental and cultural costs were equally significant. “For the last 50 years, the juggernaut of tourism in Hawaii rolled forward in a seemingly unstoppable way,” explains John DeFries, the recently appointed and first Native-Hawaiian born CEO of the Hawaiian Tourism Authority. “For those 50 years, we watched as foreign businesses and corporations benefitted while our natural environment, resources, and local culture suffered,” DeFries explains. The truth is, long before COVID-19 did the impossible and stopped Hawaiian tourism, Hawaii was already in crisis.

In an effort to help Hawaii change its relationship with tourists and educate future visitors, we've compiled the following list of locally owned and operated hotels, restaurants, surf schools, and adventure tours in Hawaii. These are the places and people that are spearheading the value based, locally centric, regenerative tourism movement in the islands. It's by no means all-inclusive, not even close, but it's a start.



1. Hotel Wailea, Maui

The first and only Relais & Châteaux property in Hawaii, **Hotel Wailea** offers visitors a beautiful combination of ultra-private elegance infused with island luxury. It's independently owned and operated by Private Label Collection, a full-service luxury hospitality management company based in Hawaii and founded by Honolulu native Jonathan McManus. The hotel is an intimate adults-only escape with 72 oversized suites and a stylish, recently renovated pool area overlooking three different Hawaiian islands with residential-style cabanas and an apothecary pool bar. An ideal island escape for couples, Hotel Wailea boasts an unprecedented level of intimacy, privacy, and exclusivity in Hawaii. Personalized guest programming is tailored to couples and centered on unique local experiences that embody adventure, romance, and laid-back luxury. Hotel Wailea's continually evolving culinary program boasts a unique take on seasonal dining with a focus on traditional Hawaiian staples and Maui-grown ingredients, including produce from the hotel's own organic garden.