

**WORLD'S BEST
CRUISES**

 **NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC**

TRAVELER

EPIC JOURNEYS

**19 TRIPS TO
Change
Your Life**

Get Going Now!

CRUISE ARCTIC NORWAY

HIKE IN PATAGONIA

DISCOVER BRITTANY

EXPLORE MACHU PICCHU

ROAD TRIP

KAUAI'S RING ROAD



➤ **Miles:** 79 • **Days on the Road:** 3 • **Best Snack Stop:** Waimea Canyon Lookout fruit stand • **Best Indoor Attraction:** Kokee Museum

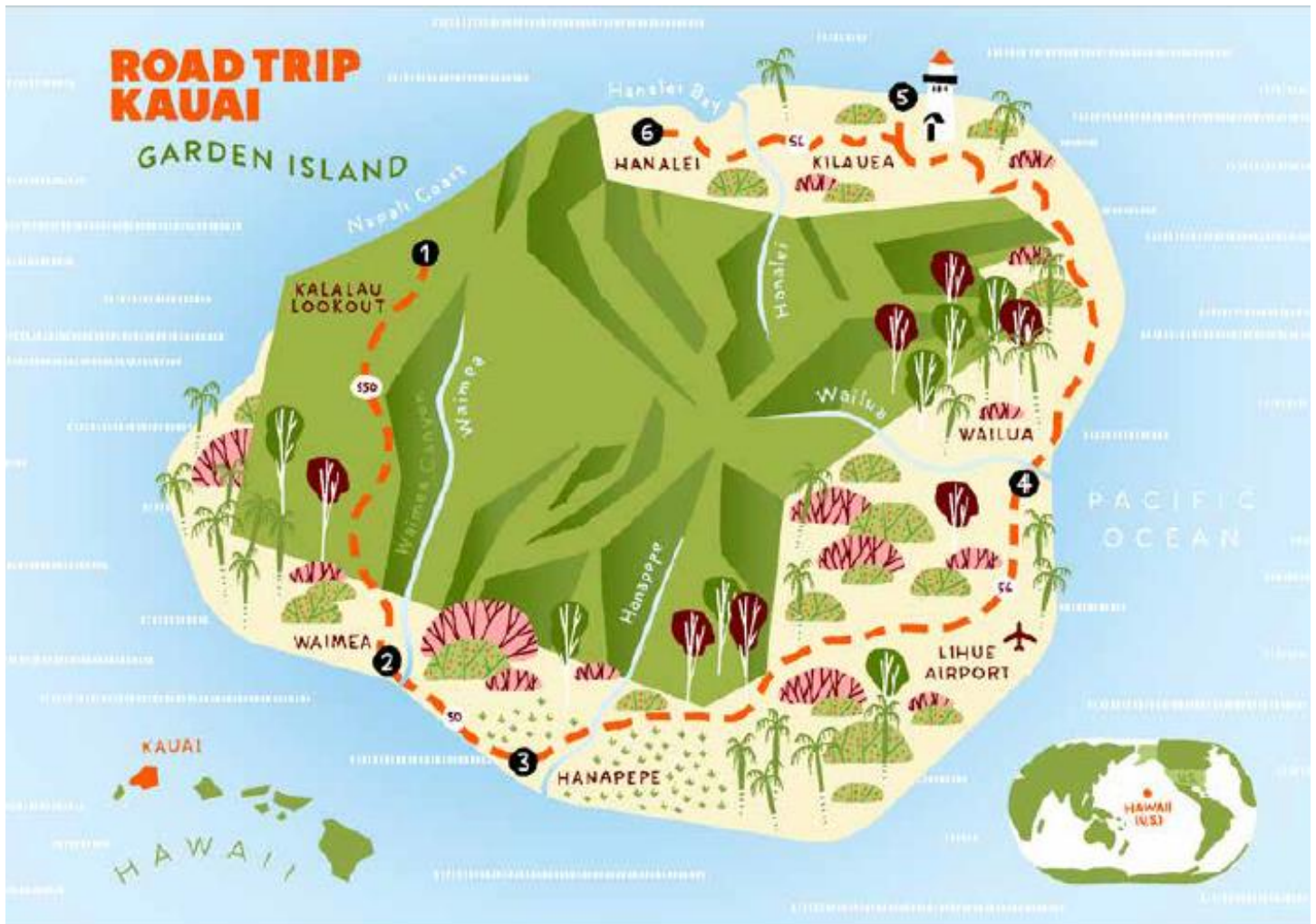


Lush Kauai, known as the Garden Isle, is the oldest of the main Hawaiian Islands. This verdant gem packs a ton of tropical punch into its 552 square miles. Beyond the resorts, you'll find a massive inland canyon, ancient Hawaiian sites, waterfalls that trickle down neon green mountains, sleepy former plantation towns, golden sand beaches, and more

than a few wild chickens, which act as the island's unofficial mascots. Many of the local attractions are family-friendly. Kauai's horseshoe-shaped route (a gap on the west side accommodates the wild Napali coast) can be tackled in a day but is best when stretched out over a long weekend.

—Meghan Miner Murray

Kauai's Waiau Falls, in Waiau River State Park, makes for a serene break on a road trip.



STOP 1

Nature First

Head straight for the hills early in the morning: The **Kalalau Lookout**, above a northwestern valley along the undulating Napali coast, is best before the afternoon fogs settle in. After exploring the coast's 17 miles of jungle green sea cliffs, savor a hearty local-style meal at the **Kokee Lodge Restaurant**. Order the loco moco, a fried-egg-topped hamburger smothered in gravy over rice, to fuel up for the **Waimea Canyon**, the wild, red chasm dubbed the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific."

STOP 2

Check In to a Sweet Suite

The islands' sugar plantation heyday from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s is credited with sparking Hawaii's modern cultural mix. At **Waimea Plantation Cottages**, on the former seaside grounds of a sugar mill, restored workers' homes—some more than a century old—serve as bungalow-style accommodations, with lounge-worthy lanais and period details such as claw-foot tubs and rattan furniture.

STOP 3

Sacred Snack

Early Polynesians brought kalo (taro) to the islands, where it attained mythical status. Hawaiian legend holds that the daughter of Papahānaumoku (earth mother) and Wakea (sky father) had a stillborn baby from whose grave grew a taro plant—the older brother of man. More kalo is grown on Kauai than on any other Hawaiian island, and its roots are still used to produce gummy poi, a starch that sustained islanders for centuries. Dale Nagamine, owner of Taro Ko Farm, fashions the roots into an even more palatable snack—thin, salty chips fried in soybean oil. You'll find him cooking his creations almost every day at **Taro Ko Chips Factory**, a tiny, green house located in Hanapepe.

STOP 4

Kayak With Kids

The palm-lined **Wailua River State Park** is popular with kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders, and its waters are calm enough for families to navigate. The river runs past a fern grotto, lava rock ruins, and hidden waterfalls. Outfitter **Kayak Kauai** offers tours and rentals for paddlers.

STOP 5

Birds of Paradise

Kilauea Point's lighthouse guided ships during the 1900s, but boobies, frigatebirds, and albatrosses have flocked to this rugged peninsula for eons. It's possible to spot ocean wildlife here: dolphins, humpback whales, and endangered Hawaiian monk seals.

STOP 6

Back to the Beach

The mountain-backed beach town of **Hanalei** boasts cute surf boutiques and casual eateries (check out the **Wishing Well Shave Ice** food truck for an organic take on the frozen local confection). This North Shore community's iconic pier on Hanalei Bay has been a visitor staple since the late 1800s, when it was first constructed to transport Kauai's sugar to points beyond. Now it serves as a scenic photo op. Complete your road trip at **Tunnels Beach**, located near the very end of Kauai's road, where you can relax on the two-mile stretch of sand, snorkel along the shore, and explore a few of the lava-formed caves carved into the rock formations across the street.