

Maui With Kids

Top Ten Activities for kids on Maui

We have traveled to Maui almost every year for the last six years. Our kids are now five and seven, so we have experienced many of the child wonder years during our travels. While traveling with kids may not be the romantic getaway you experienced as a couple, we've listed below ten events that you and your kids can enjoy together.

Top Ten Activities for kids on Maui

1	Atlantis Submarine	Rating: ★★★★★ (unique)
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Our last trip to Maui we chose the Atlantis Submarine ride as a family event that the kids would enjoy, and could learn from the experience. I was a little concerned that this would be a simple "tourist ride", but was pleasantly surprised by this unique adventure.



The Atlantis submarine tour begins with a 15-minute boat ride from Lahaina to the dive location. Once onboard the Atlantis the sub dives to the bottom, circles some reef formations, and tours a section of the ocean floor. During our tour we saw schools of fish, a shark, eel, and octopus.

The dive was long enough for the kids to see many interesting fish, and short enough to prevent them from getting restless in the confined space. We thoroughly enjoyed the Atlantis tour and felt this made for a quality family outing.

More Information : <http://www.atlantisadventures.com/destinations.php?site=8>

2	Maui Snorkeling	Rating: ★★★★★ (adventure)
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If your kids are old enough, and adventurous enough, snorkeling Maui can be an enjoyable day for all. Our kids were ready for limited snorkeling at about four years old, and more advanced snorkeling by six. If you are snorkeling from shore you can rent gear, or buy it as it is generally less than \$20 for mask and snorkel.

There are many paid snorkeling activities to choose from. One of the more popular paid tours is to the Molokini Crater Ocean Preserve. This half-moon crater provides a spectacular assortment of sea life. If you wish to venture out on your own, here are a couple of the popular places you can drive to for snorkeling.

Northwestern Maui – Honolua Bay (see <http://www.sportfishhawaii.com/honolua.htm>)

Southwestern Maui – Kanahena (Past Makena beach toward the end of the road).

3	Grand Wailea Public Beach	Rating: ★★★★★ (relaxing)
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This is not a pitch for the Grand Wailea, but I must say they have one of the best family beaches on Maui. We stay in a condo in Kihei and regularly make the trip to the Grand Wailea beach for a day outing. The beach offers a fairly gradual drop into the water, light break in the shallow areas, and excellent sand for castles. The atmosphere is comfortable for both parents and kids.



Public access to the Grand Wailea beach is via a park entrance just past the hotel. There are showers and restrooms at the parking area.

If you have not been there before, plan some time to walk the Grand Wailea grounds. They have a large fish pool near the restaurant, and a spectacular hotel pool with slides, rope swings, caves and Jacuzzis. Unfortunately if you are not staying at the hotel pool access is only permitted with a \$300 “day room” reservation.

More Hotel Information: <http://www.grandwailea.com/>

4	Old Lahaina Luau	Rating: ★★★★★ (authentic)
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If you and your family have not experienced a Hawaiian Luau, the Old Lahaina Luau may be for you. The luau provides a taste of Hawaiian history coupled with the entertainment of the luau presentation and feast. Show times run approximately 6-9PM (see online schedules).



We have attended luaus on other islands, but have not attended this one personally. This item is recommended by other Maui visitors.

More Information: <http://www.oldlahainaluau.com/>

5	Kihei – Maalaea Beaches	Rating: ★★★★★ (quite)
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There are a number of beaches along Highway 310 between Kihei and Maalaea that offer pure sand, shallow waters, and plenty of space. A reef about 100 yards out limits the shore break in this area. The beaches are gradual into the water making it easier to watch the kids. Parents will enjoy these beaches for the space – many times you will have a long strip of beach to yourselves. (free activity)

6	Ioa Valley	Rating: ★★★★★ (scenic)
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Ioa valley is located about five miles from the main airport. Although this park is not a traditional “kids” park with playground, it provides a number of short trails and overlooks. Our kids love the opportunity to explore, and we like the walk and scenery. The park area is not particularly large so one to two hours is more than adequate for exploring. (free activity)

7	Up Country Exploring	Rating: ★★★★★ (nature)
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Kula Botanical Gardens provides another location for parents and kids to explore. The gardens are located off Highway 377 at an elevation of 3300 feet.

While in the high country you may wish to visit the top of the Haleakala Crater. If interested in stretching the legs there are trails that allow you to hike down to the cinder cones within the crater.

Driving to the upcountry locations can take a fair amount of time so these locations should only be attempted if your kids travel well.

8	Maui Ocean Center	Rating: ★★★★★ (marine education)
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The Maui Ocean center offers a chance to explore Maui's underwater life including sea-turtles, reefs, sharks, and a variety of tropical fish. The center offers educational programs and information for learning about whales and the marine environment. The Maui Ocean center is a good experience if you do not mind the price of admissions.

More Information : <http://www.mauiocenter.com/>

9	Whale Watch Center - Kihei	Rating: ★★★★★ (educational)
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There is a whale watch center at the north end of Kihei along the water. The center is free to visitors, and offers an assortment of materials for kids to learn about whales and other sea life. The center has provides free coloring books, costumes for the kids to use, and the staff is available and friendly for answering questions. The center is relatively small so it makes a good stop combined with other destinations.

10	Pool Day	Rating: ★★★★★ (recovery)
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With all the preceding activities what kids (and parents) often enjoy most is a day in the pool. You can intermix this with other planned activities, or just plan the full day for relaxation. Kids usually do not require extravagant tours to entertain them, and in fact may be overwhelmed by the experience of flying to a "foreign place" and journeying out each day on adventures. A day by the pool may be just the vacation they are seeking.

Summary

Maui with kids requires planning of events that both you and the kids can enjoy. While some paid activities may spice up the vacation, many of our top ten items are free for your enjoyment. Balancing your Maui activities can make your family trip a memorable vacation for all.

*This article is provided by Mr. Marc Elpel and SunsetMaui.com. Mr Elpel has been an avid activity based traveler for years. Motto – "Travel is for doing, not just seeing."
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