

PORTLAND

lifestyle & family

ACTIVITIES / TRAVEL / APRIL 30, 2017

A Maui Vacation for All



Multigenerational vacations can be tricky. The needs of my five-year-old son are vastly different than the needs of his grandmother and in many ways vastly different than mine. I wasn't sure how a weeklong spring break trip to Maui would go. Would spending this much time with my mother be OK? Would my husband and I get to steal a few hours of precious alone time? Would my son ever get out of the swimming pool? The answer to these questions, and many more, were a resounding yes!

By the time we arrived on Maui and settled into our adjoining rooms at the Ka'anapali Beach

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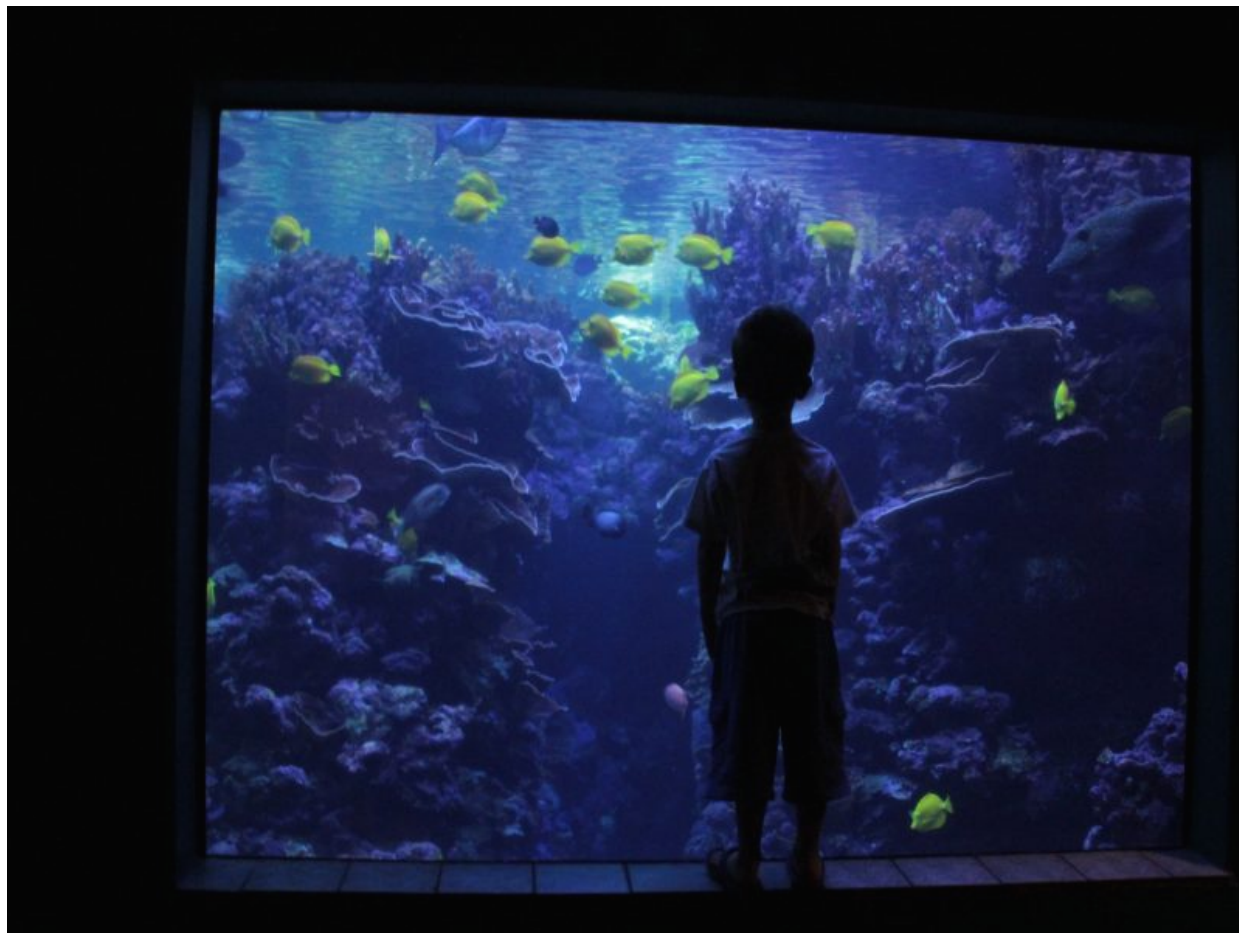


Photo: Ariel Frager

Hotel, it was almost 2 o'clock in the morning Portland time. The four of us were slaphappy exhausted, and also pleased to have removed the protective layers that we no longer needed to keep us warm and dry. We were escaping a robust winter filled with more snow, rain and grey than typical Northwest fare. Even at 2 am, the tropical air felt so good against our bare skin.

We woke at dawn, as we did every morning on Maui, to the sounds of singing birds and the warm glow of first light. The three buildings that make up the 432 room Ka'anapali Beach Hotel create a horseshoe-shaped central area that hosts Kakui nut trees and other native plants, with

An advertisement for Marylhurst University. It features a silhouette of a person lifting a child into the air, set against a city skyline at sunset. The text on the right side of the image reads: "Ready to move your life and career forward? Marylhurst can help." Below this is a blue button with the text "LEARN MORE". At the bottom right is the Marylhurst University logo, which consists of a stylized "M" and "U" followed by the text "MARYLHURST UNIVERSITY".

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areas for lei making, hula dancing, ukulele playing and, most important of all: the whale-shaped swimming pool.

First thing on our first morning, we trekked up and back on the Ka'anapali Beachwalk, a 1.5 mile paved path that creates a border between the beach and the blue Pacific with the stretch of hotels and condominium resorts that line Ka'anapali Beach. Joggers, dog walkers and tourists in search of early morning coffee passed us on the path, while surfers and stand-up paddleboarders lined up at the point break to catch beautiful rolling waves.

We meandered our way back to Ka'anapali Beach Hotel to partake in the epic Sunday Brunch. We were dazzled by the vast array of food on offer, from the carving station featuring beef, pork and lamb, to the cold seafood area with crab legs, oysters and sushi. Traditional Hawaiian dishes like mac salad were gussied up with crab. The four of us ate enough for the entire day, and the lovely wait staff filled my coffee cup over and over again until I felt awake enough to feel fully arrived on Maui.

My husband Seth and I rented paddleboards at the Hale Huaka'i Ocean Center. We tootled around the Black Rock end of the beach, watching the teenagers jump into the sea from the sacred rock. Even though we have a SUP at home and use it as a scenic workout on the Willamette River in Portland, nothing back home quite compares to paddling on the turquoise 80 degree Pacific.

Our next day, we both looked at fish and were fish. The four of us visited the Maui Ocean Center, home to a wide range of tropical fish, invertebrates and reptiles native to Hawaii. My son Ezra was very excited to see the Black Tip sharks and almost raced through much of the aquarium until we reached the Deep Reef Exhibit, stopping only long enough to enjoy an island shave ice treat. I most loved the jellyfish moving like neon amoebas through a cylindrical tank. Had the calls of "Mom, come on, the sharks are up here!" not been so incessant, I might have stood and watched the jellies for hours.

We returned to the hotel and promptly found our way to the pool. It's hard to estimate the total number of hours we spent playing in the pool during our week on Maui, but it was roughly equivalent to the number of hours we slept. Ezra befriended everyone in the pool, including a young couple that donated their floating raft to his pool-going arsenal of fun. Ezra spent hours lounging, jumping on and pirate-fighting from this mighty floaty. Every day it was a struggle to leave the beloved swimming pool.



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Suggestions on How to Saf...

By Ariel Frager Some people will want to ...

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That evening, the four of us put on our Aloha shirts and wandered down to the Legends of Ka'anapali Luau at our hotel. Part of the mission of the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel is to preserve and share Hawaiian culture, according to General Manager Mike White. Mr. White has been running KBH since 1985, the longest of any hotel manager in the State of Hawaii. Under Mr. White's leadership the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel takes very seriously their mission to help keep Hawaiian culture alive and thriving. The luau was a perfect example of the best of Hawaiian culture. Sure, there was a cheesy part where the tourists got up to hula dance (me and my son included) but the stories, the dancing and the singing had an authentic and respectful tone. The food was tasty and plentiful. The luau, and the entire experience at the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel made me feel like an invited guest, rather than a paying tourist. By the end of our three days we felt less like guests and more like *ohana* – family.

Another dawn wake up call by the island birds helped us get ready to visit other Maui tourists: the migrating humpback whales. The wonderful Pacific Whale Foundation Whale Watch tour on the Ocean Voyager was a two-hour master class on these massive mammals. The Pacific Whale Foundation's whale watch tours are lead by certified Marine Naturalists, who explained that female Humpbacks travel approximately 6,000 miles from Alaska to give birth and nurse their young in the warm Hawaiian waters before returning north to home. The journey of the pregnant and then new-mother Humpback Whales is the longest annual migration of any mammal. We saw several mother/child pairs and a few male escorts, males who are not the father of the young whale but are hoping to be the next whale baby-daddy. It was thrilling to be so close to these magnificent creatures. At one point the mama and baby whale moved so close to our boat that the captain had to cut the engine and wait for the pair to move on. We were treated to more than a few close up sightings of the massive whale tails.

Before returning to Ka'anapali Beach, we stopped for pie at Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop. Great sandwiches and savory and sweet pies were the fare at this little roadside spot. It was a perfect place for an inexpensive lunch. The words inexpensive and Maui are not often used in the same sentence, which made Leoda's such a special find.

Later that day, after saying goodbye to our friends at KBH, we moved just a few resorts down the beach, to the Ka'anapali Alii, a group of luxury condominiums. Our two-bedroom suite featured a comfortable open living room, kitchen dining area and a lanai with a great view of the ocean and the Alii grounds, including the all-important swimming pool. My mom loved the

new digs and was almost giddy as she announced that she would not be returning home but will be staying right here in this condo on Maui forever, thank you very much.

One of the great things about traveling with Nana is that we brought along a built-in babysitter. My husband Seth and I were able to take evening walks on the beach and dips in the hot tub in the evenings like we never could have done together had we traveled as just our immediate family unit.

Another dawn patrol morning, Seth and I got up early to catch a surf lesson with the Goofy Foot Surf School in lovely Lahaina. I have been surfing for years and mistakenly tried to teach Seth how to surf early in our marriage. That didn't go well and he hadn't tried since. While I borrowed a board from Goofy Foot, and paddled out to the sweet 3-foot slow rollers, Seth had a proper surf lesson.

The local and tourist folks in the line up were some of the friendliest I had ever encountered. Some surfers can be jerks, since it is the only sport where you have to compete to practice. No jerks were in the water on that early morning. We all caught wave after wave, complimenting each other and cheering the others on. No showboating or wave stealing, just a pure shared love of the ocean. After about an hour, not only was Seth's surf school out sharing the waves but so were four other groups of groms (newbie surfers), and things started to get a bit more hectic. He caught four brilliant waves and surfed them all with style. I guess years of watching me surf finally paid off. Later, when recounting our favorite experiences of the week, my husband said he had loved the surf lesson most of all. I might turn him into a surfer yet.

We had two meals in the oceanfront town of Lahiana. One was completely forgettable and the other was fantastic. The Lahiana Fish Company has a great view of the water. That's all. The food was uninspired tourist fare.

The Lahiana Grill on the other hand, boasted a sophisticated fine dining menu. We started off with cocktails, and my choice was a Mango Margarita with Li Hing dried plum powder ringing the glass instead of salt, which added a bit of island spice to an already outstanding drink. Both my husband and I had Hawaiian fish, grilled perfectly. My Mahi Mahi arrived sitting on top of herbed potatoes and spinach. His choice was Opakapaka, Hawaiian Pink snapper and it rested on a bed of fennel risotto. We all understood why Lahiana Grill tops Hawaiian and U.S. best restaurant lists! All that goodness came with a price: entrees were priced in the \$40-\$60 dollar range.

Choosing to stay in a condo makes sense for larger family groups or families with diverse needs. We did some grocery shopping and ate breakfast and some lunches either in our condo or out by the pool. The Ka'anapali Alii has several high quality grilling stations set up in the pool area. Picnicking is elevated to an art form in Hawaiian culture and the Alii helps out visiting families take advantage of the spectacular location. One evening we ordered the Ka'anapali Alii Grill Basket for two. The Hawaiian definition for two actually fed six people with enough rib eye steak to feed at least two more people.

Fred Torres, the Operations Manager for the condos, and his partner April joined us for dinner. We had a lively conversation about Maui and traveling. My mom inquired about the possibility of migrating to Hawaii herself some day she was so taken with the ocean and the climate and the Aloha spirit.

On our final day, the Ka'anapali Point surf spot was ripping. The bigger sets featured overhead waves that were gentle to slide down the face. I rented a board and paddled out, thankful to not be wearing my wetsuit, as required by the 58-degree water at home in Oregon. As I waited for the wave sets to come in, I had a few calm peaceful moments, my board softly bobbing with the sea. It had been a fun-filled, jam-packed week with my family. I was grateful that we brought my mom along. Seeing her delight in the warmth, the ocean and her grandson brought me great joy as well. I caught a few killer waves and rode one all the way to shore.



Photo credit: Steven Francois / Maui Digital Images.com

When I hopped off the board, a woman said, "you make surfing look so easy." I smiled, and said *Mahalo*.

Stay:

Ka'anapali Beach Hotel

2525 Ka'anapali Parkway

Lahaina, HI 96761

(800) 262-8456

Ka'anapali Ali'i

50 Hohea Kai Drive

Lahaina, HI 96761

(808) 667-1400

Eat:

Ka'anapali Sunday Champagne Brunch

Tiki Terrace Restaurant at the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel

Lahaina Grill

127 Lahainaluna Road

Lahaina, HI 96761

(808) 667-5117

Reservations recommended

Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop

820 Olawalu Village Road

Lahaina, HI 96761

(808) 662-3600

Activities:

Maui Ocean Center Aquarium

192 Ma'alaea Road

Wailuku, HI 96793

(808) 270-7000

Pacific Whale Foundation Whale Watch

300 Ma'alaea Road

Wailuku, HI 96793

(808) 249-8811

Goofy Foot Surf School

505 Front Street #123

Lahaina, HI 96761

(808) 244-9283

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Ariel Frager



Ariel Frager is a school counselor and has a private therapy practice that specializes in treating children, adolescents and families. She lives in Portland with her husband, son, dog and kitty cat.

