



Big Island Visitors Bureau Media Contact:

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FEBRUARY'S SIZZLIN' NEWS FROM HAWAI'I, THE BIG ISLAND

Hawai'i Island (Feb. 2, 2011) -- You heard right, there *is* snow on Maunakea. But while parkas and gloves are recommended atop the world's tallest mountain, sunscreen and "slippahs" (flip flops) are still the norm at sea level, where summer-like weather continues to warm and wow travelers, inside and out.

ADVENTURES, ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

The Ditch is Back! One of Hawai'i Island's favorite family-friendly activities, the former Flumin' da Ditch, is back as the **brand new Kohala Ditch Adventures**, owned by **ATV Outfitters**. Tours ceased after the 2006 earthquake, but after a hardworking effort by many, the ditch is back and better than ever. Ride a six-wheel Pinzgauer to this **mountain kayak journey**, walk over a new 150-foot flume bridge with views of native forest and a waterfall, then paddle through 10 tunnels and seven flumes before riding out along a macadamia nut orchard. Two tours a day, Monday through Saturday. The historic Kohala ditch was originally built to transport water to sugar cane plantations, and floating down the waterway is a fun pastime loved by visitors and locals. Special introductory rates are \$99/adults; \$49 for keiki ages 11 and younger. Visit <http://www.kohaladitchadventures.com> or call (808) 889-6000 for information.

New Big Island Equestrian Vacations. After filming and experiencing diverse horse riding adventures on Hawai'i Island for its Emmy-winning **PBS TV show**, the **Equitrekking** team created a special vacation package for horse lovers. Riders saddle up in scenic Waipi'o Valley and historic Waimea ranches, with four nights hotel and breakfast daily at Hilton Waikoloa Village included, plus car rental and all taxes (except on the car). Rates start at \$971 per person, double occupancy. Visit www.EquitrekkingTravel.com or call (877) 490-7786.

The Fairmont Orchid, Hawaii has added **Flo-yo** to its list of water fitness offerings. Practiced on a stand-up paddle board, **Flo-yo (Floating Yoga)**, connects the mind, body and breath on the ocean surface, and builds strength through balance and resistance. The hour-long classes are offered Monday and Friday mornings and include warm-up, sun salutations, balancing poses and paddle techniques, followed by 40 minutes of floating yoga. \$20/class. Call (808) 885-2000 for more information.

Visit the **brand new Ocean Sports at Queens' Marketplace** headquarters in the **Waikoloa Beach Resort**. Discover island-inspired apparel and souvenirs, interactive marine life displays, and learn about, reserve and check in for Ocean Sports activities. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily. Call (808) 886-6666; www.hawaii oceansports.com.

Hawaii Forest & Trail now offers guests booking a **Mauna Kea Summit & Stars Adventure** a copy of *Under Hawaiian Skies*, a full-color, two-page newsletter created exclusively for HF&T by world-renowned astronomical illustrators, Jon and Sharona Lomberg. *Under Hawaiian Skies* features timely and intriguing information, including a weekly star map, Hawaiian moon phases and trivia. This informational newsletter is available only on HF&T's Mauna Kea Summit & Stars Adventure. Call (800) 464-1993 or visit www.hawaii-forest.com.

Big Island Eco Adventures has a new package deal to choose from. Book the **Zip-N-Dine package adventure**, and receive a Kohala zipline adventure plus one lunch item and one fountain drink. Call (808) 889-5111 for information or visit www.bigislandecoadventures.com.

Lava Tree State Monument off Highway 132 (Pāhoa/Pohoiki Rd.) in Puna is **closed now through mid-March** for safety and comfort upgrades. Enhancements include a new loop trail, pathway paving, tree hazard removal, comfort station renovations, and more, and are expected to cost an estimated \$614,123, according to the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources.

Looking for more to do? Click www.bigisland.org/calendar for detailed information about additional Hawai'i Island happenings throughout 2011, like the **Merrie Monarch Festival**:

Merrie Monarch Festival, April 24 -30. Hawai'i's most venerable hula celebration and competition has week-long festivities including exhibitions, musical entertainment, arts and crafts fairs, the Miss Aloha Hula Competition and *kahiko* (ancient) and *'auana* (modern) hula competitions. Except for the hula competition, events are free and there are many Hawaiian cultural events happening throughout Hilo. Call (808) 935-9168 or visit <http://merriemonarch.com>.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Romance Your Valentine, All Year Long. The **romance package at Kona Village Resort** includes *lei* and tropical punch welcome, three oceanside meals for two daily, petroglyph tours, paddleboards or outrigger canoe, one-day car rental, transportation to/from Kona International Airport, and more. Rates start at \$690/night. Additional nights available at prevailing rates. Minimum stay of five nights; book seven nights for a complimentary couples' massage. Valid now, and after Valentine's Day because there's always romance at the Village! Visit www.konavillage.com or call (800) 367-5290.

Spring Into Summer with Prince Resorts Hawaii. Valid for stays between Apr. 1 and Sept. 30, 2011. **Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel** room rates start at \$239/night for a partial oceanview room with a \$50 daily resort credit. **Mauna Kea Beach Hotel** room rates start at \$459/night for a golf vista room with a \$100 daily resort credit. No minimum stay required. Members of **Prince Preferred** receive an additional 10% discount plus additional 1,500 bonus miles per stay for **Hawaiian Miles members**. For more information, call (866) Prince-6 or visit www.PrinceResortsHawaii.com/Spring.

Four Seasons Resort Hualālai has been named the "**Best Hotel for Staying Fit**" in the **Fifth**

Annual Healthy Travel Awards of *Shape* magazine (February 2011 issue.) The award-winning **Hualālai Sports Club** consists of three separate gyms, with state-of-the-art fitness equipment; a wide range of fitness classes available from a team of accomplished fitness and wellness professionals; eight ACE Rebound tennis courts; a 25-meter, four-lane fitness pool; rock climbing wall; basketball half-court and sand volleyball court. Go to www.fourseasons.com/hualalai or call (888) 340-5662.

The always-affordable **Uncle Billy's Hilo Bay and Kona Bay hotels** now offer **weekly and monthly rates**. Weekly rates start at \$450 (seven-night minimum) and monthly rates start at \$1200 (30-night minimum). As always, all stays include free Wi-Fi and daily continental breakfast. Call (800) 367-5102 to reserve today. Restrictions apply, tax not included, based on single or double occupancy, subject to availability, www.unclebilly.com.

Experience the breathtaking breaching and fluke-slapping action of humpback whale season now with **Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa's new *Celebration of the Sea Package***. Starting at \$227/night, guests receive contemporary accommodations with private *lanai* (balcony) for two and two tickets aboard the **Ocean Sports Whale Watch Cruise** located on 'Anaeho'omalu Bay fronting the resort. Valid through April 15. Five-night minimum required. Based on availability, restrictions may apply. Visit www.waikoloamarriott.com and enter promotional code PK9.

Hale Maluhia Country Inn (House of Peace) is a Kona-coffee upcountry Eden with peaceful comfort, good beds, a "**Breakfast Lovers Buffet**" featuring self-service omelet bar and bird watching at friendly prices. Enjoy a gentle touch of aloha from old Hawai'i along the road less traveled. Less than a half-mile south of Kailua-Kona, three miles to the Hōlualoa artist community and 11 miles from Kona International Airport. Visit <http://www.hawaii-bnb.com/> or call (808) 329-1123 for information.

Lunch with the Stars. Guests staying four nights at **Aston Shores at Waikoloa** and **Aston Waikoloa Colony Villas** can explore the Hawaiian universe at **'Imiloa Astronomy Center in Hilo**, then savor a buffet lunch at **'Imiloa's Sky Garden Restaurant**. A pass for two includes lunch, the award-winning Hawaiian cultural experience of the Center, the story of amazing astronomical research conducted atop Maunakea and information on the free nightly stargazing at the Maunakea Visitors Center, or weekend tours of the summit. www.AstonHotels.com.

Tee off with **Royal Kona Resort's Royal-Tee Package**. This golf lover's dream package includes a five-night stay in a beautiful ocean view room, five days economy car rental, four rounds of golf per stay at West Hawai'i's award-winning **Makalei Golf Club**, and full buffet breakfast for two daily. Five-night packages start at \$1,015 per stay for two. Valid now through Dec. 21, 2011. Blackout dates and restrictions may apply. Call (800) 22-ALOHA (222-5642) or visit www.RoyalKona.com.

Dragonfly Ranch Healing Arts Center hosts workshops and retreats this spring, designed for women seeking empowerment and joy. In April, facilitators Susan Prince, Victoria Bliss and Jennifer Hough have scheduled workshops from three to seven days. Includes great food and communing with friendly dolphins. Internationally renowned philosopher Patricia Sun offers a week-long retreat in May that will include her famous healing "sounds." Check www.dragonflyranch.com workshop page for details or call (808) 328-2159.

Kids Eat Free! The new **Getaway 2011 Package** from **King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel**, is perfect for families. Fourth night is free and *keiki* (children) under age 12 eat free breakfast each morning of their stay. Use "Getaway 2011" as the special promo code to book online at

www.konabeachhotel.com.

TASTY TIDBITS

Kona Brewing Company debuts its **third Aloha Series brew, Koko Brown**, available mid-February through May 1 throughout Hawai'i and the mainland. This island-style mahogany ale boasts roasted malt, caramel and chocolate aromas and flavors, balanced by modest hop bitterness. Toasted coconut chips are added both during the brewing and conditioning stages, giving this flavorful beer a complex, nutty flavor. This is a nut worth cracking! www.konabrewingco.com

With food ranking among the most anticipated travel experiences, **Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa introduces new menus**. At **Sliders**, guests enjoy the Chef's Slider special of the day including *Luau Sliders* with Kalua Pork or *Kilauea Volcano Sliders* with Cajun-seasoned Angus beef. At **Manta Ray Bar & Grill** near the manta viewing area, guests relax while sipping one of Sheraton's new signature made-to-share cocktails such as a Ginger Cosmo. At **Kai**, the resort's signature restaurant, a new menu focuses more than ever on locally-sourced foods. Learn more at www.SheratonKeauhou.com.

KUDOS

Big Island Candies in Hilo was just named one of the **Top Five Best Chocolate Factory Tours in the U.S.** by AOL.com. Admission? Free! Samples? Free! Visit www.bigislandcandies.com or better yet, stop by the irresistible and fabulously decorated Hilo factory in person for the ultimate temptation.

Mountain Thunder Coffee Plantation's 100 percent Organic Cloud Forest Estate Kona Coffee has been selected as **Best Coffee** by the **Good Food Awards**, sponsored by Whole Foods and Williams & Sonoma. The annual awards showcase the best gourmet foods from top producers around the world. In celebration, Mountain Thunder will offer free cookies and 10 percent off its 100 percent Organic Cloud Forest Kona Coffee, at its Kaloko plantation kiosk, www.mountainthunder.com for directions and more info.

Special note to media: The Big Island Visitors Bureau (BIVB) recognizes the use of the 'okina ['] or glottal stop, one of the eight consonants of the modern Hawaiian language; and the kahakō [ā] or macron (e.g., in place names of Hawai'i such as Kīlauea). However, BIVB respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.

For more information on Hawai'i, the Big Island, please visit www.bigisland.org

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