

## Maui Roadsters 10 Tips for the Road to Hana



Endless ocean on one side, verdant jungle on the other, punctuated by untamed beaches and cascading waterfalls. The legendary Hana Highway (aka the Road to Hana) is considered one of the ultimate road trips. Comprised of 52 undulating miles, 620 curves and 59 bridges through some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world, the Road to Hana culminates in a bucolic town isolated from the rest of Maui and unique in attitude. Largely untouched by recent development, Hana Town gives a glimpse of old Hawaii and reveals a laid back way of life.

Is there an ideal season to drive the Road to Hana? November through March is prime time for waterfalls and spectacular wave action, but the high season also brings more travelers. Summer provides less traffic, longer and drier days, more placid water, and a slower pace. Here are our recommendations to make the most of your journey at any time of the year.

### 1. PLAN AHEAD

Map out your day prior to your trip, but don't be afraid to make an unexpected stop or two for a particularly good waterfall or tempting banana bread.

- Fill up your tank the night before. If you thought gas on Maui is expensive, prices in Hana can be astronomical. If you're heading as far as Oheo Gulch, put a couple of gallons in the tank in Hana.
- The number of waterfalls, scenic overlooks, parks, hikes, fruit stands, gardens, attractions, etc. can be overwhelming. Get a good guidebook or do some research on the Internet to find the sites and activities that interest you ahead of time. We always refer to [www.roadtohana.com](http://www.roadtohana.com) for a comprehensive overview.
- Facilities are limited and widely spaced, so familiarize yourself with the options along the route.

### 2. PACK PROVISIONS

Options for food and drinks are few and far between, so bring snacks and refreshments. A picnic lunch is a great idea for an al fresco feast in a scenic spot when the moment moves you. The Kuau Store just outside Pa'ia (look for the surfboard fence) has a great selection of deli sandwiches, salads, sliced meats & cheeses, plus you can fuel up with coffee, smoothies and breakfast before you hit the road.

### 3. START EARLY AND COME BACK EARLY

Beat the traffic by getting an earlier start. You'll enjoy the journey at a more leisurely pace with lesser crowds. Aim to be back in Pa'ia by sunset. We recommend leaving Hana Town by 3:30pm in the winter and 5pm in the summer as that side of Maui gets darker earlier. All those twists, turns, drop offs, and one-lane bridges can be a hair-raising experience at night, especially with commuters driving fast and furiously to get home. If you go as far as the Oheo Gulch (7 Sacred Pools), allow an extra 30-45 minutes.

#### 4. GO TOPLESS

With unbridled beauty coming at you from every angle, a top down cruise is the ultimate way to enjoy the endless vistas, lush canopies, crashing waves, and fresh ocean breezes mixing with vegetal lushness. Whether you're in a Porsche Speedster, a Mustang convertible or a Jeep, the wind in your hair, the sun on your face, and the smell of the sea will engage all your senses and elevate your journey to an unforgettable driving experience. Ditch the climate controlled bubble and enjoy the Road to Hana the way it was meant to be driven.

#### 5. DRIVE WITH ALOHA

*"Slow down, brah. This ain't the mainland."* Unfortunately this popular bumper sticker sentiment often applies. Slow down, relax, and enjoy the journey. It's not a race. Don't be the lead in a string of cars because chances are you're holding up the pack. Pick a safe spot to pull over and let others pass, especially locals. Yield to oncoming drivers at bridges and areas where the road narrows. It's a great idea to switch drivers so everyone can experience both the drive and the views.



#### 6. TAKE TIME TO STOP

Although the road offers breathtaking views and photo opportunities galore, many visitors breeze through its 52 miles in record time and arrive in Hana Town asking, "Now what?" The phrase, *"It's all about the journey, not the destination,"* was coined with the Road to Hana in mind. Our favorite highlights on the way to Hana and beyond include:

- Ke'anae Peninsula with an old Hawaiian village and stone church built in 1856, surrounded by patchwork taro fields and jagged coastline. Take a left just past mile marker 16. After exploring stop at the Ke'anae Overlook near mile marker 17 to take in the vista from above.
- Pua'a Ka'a State Wayside Park (mile marker 22). Park in the lot with facilities on the left side of the road. Picnic tables overlooking an easily accessible waterfall are on the other side.
- Wai'anapanapa State Park with its black sand beach, rock arches and fresh water lava tube caves beckoning the more daring (so very, very clear but cold!). Don't forget your bug repellent!
- Hamoa Beach, a picture perfect salt-and-pepper crescent with unbelievably blue water and great boogie boarding when the surf is up.
- Oheo Gulch (7 Sacred Pools) with multiple pools and falls cascading to the sea and the Pipiwai Trail that borders them, culminating in a bamboo forest hike to a spectacular waterfall (about 1 ¼ hours each way).
- Ho'okipa Lookout, a world-renowned windsurfing and kiteboarding destination with epic waves plus green sea turtles coming ashore to rest at sunset (stop on your trip back).



## 7. SAVOR THE LOCAL FLAVOR

Don't expect white tablecloths and a fine dining experience once you get to Hana. It's all about roadside stands, food trucks and carts serving up local grinds in a Hawaiian (read: VERY casual) atmosphere. Banana bread stands abound, but Aunt Sandy's in Ke'anae is purported by Hana locals to be the best. Braddah Hutt's lunch wagon is parked in the owner's front yard and offers a wide selection of plate lunches, pastas and fish tacos. Awaken your palette with a fresh and fruity tropical popsicle (Lava Flow pop, anyone?) at the Shaka Pops cart across from Hasegawa General Store.

## 8. BRING APPROPRIATE GEAR

Being on the windward (wet) side of the island, brief showers are common at any time of the year. Rain is what makes a rainforest so green and lush! The weather can change quickly in Hana, so bring a light jacket or sweater and a towel. Even if you're not planning on hiking or swimming, bring a pair of sturdy walking shoes and your bathing suit just in case a particular waterfall or beach calls to you unexpectedly. On our first trip to Hana we forgot our suits and decided to swim in our underwear, which was a very liberating experience up until the soggy ride back. Make sure to carry sunscreen and bug repellent to protect all your exposed appendages. And an extra battery and memory card for your camera is always a good idea.

## 9. DON'T MAKE OTHER PLANS

Hana is a full day excursion, so don't plan to hit the top of Haleakala for sunrise or book a luau that evening. Your most ambitious goal should be making it back to Pa'ia in time for dinner. Flatbread Pizza Company and Pa'ia Fish Market are tasty, casual options that will revive the weary traveler.

## 10. BE SAFE

You might be on vacation, but don't check your common sense with your luggage. The Road to Hana is an unforgettable experience that you'll want to remember fondly. Ensure your journey is a safe and sound one by taking some precautions.

- This is not the road to demonstrate your driving prowess or set land speed records. Slow down, drive carefully, yield where indicated, and be aware of others making sudden stops.
- Take all your valuables with you when you leave your car.
- Respect posted signs and warnings. Do not trespass, no matter what the guidebook says.
- In the presence of Mother Nature's bounty, it's easy to forget you're also at her mercy. Be aware of your surroundings and know that conditions can change quickly. Sudden rain showers bring flash flooding and rockslides. Footing can be treacherous on slippery rocks and loose gravel. Standing under idyllic waterfalls can bring more down on your head than just cascading water.

**Please note:** There is limited cell reception along most of the Road with the exception of a few spots: Twin Falls, Ke'anae Peninsula, "Halfway to Hana" snack stand, and Hana Town.

Have a wonderful adventure on the Road to Hana! Please give us a call at **808-339-6204** when you are leaving Pa'ia and heading back to South Maui so we can meet you.