



HAWAII

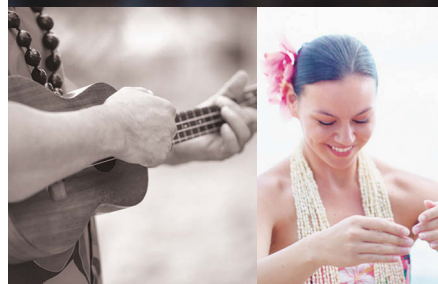
SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

Foodies paradise





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Hawaii isn't a hard sell. The Aloha State is known throughout the world as, essentially, paradise on earth—glorious weather, glittering beaches, lush rain forests, awe-inspiring volcanoes.

Fine dining, however, may not be the first thing that leaps to mind when you think of Hawaii. Of course, everyone thinks of the clichés—the luau, the pig with the apple in its mouth, the Mai Tai, and no doubt these favorites became iconic for a reason, and ought to be part of a visitor's experience, especially on a first visit.

However, it might come as a surprise to some visitors that Hawaii can be a gourmet's paradise as well. A well-informed foodie might regard the 50th state, as a destination worth the trip even if you forget to pack your bikini or your board shorts.

The history of Hawaiian cuisine begins with the native foods of the Polynesians who first settled the islands, and continues with the arrival of every group that followed. Sailors, missionaries and plantation farmers brought western food traditions in the 18th and 19th Centuries, while Chinese, Japanese and Filipino immigrants added a major Asian infusion. By the 20th Century, with the American military presence and the burgeoning tourist trade, the mainland Yank influence was unmistakable.

These diverse ingredients and styles were deliberately brought together in 1991, when 12 top chefs met and ironed out an established Hawaiian Regional Cuisine. Using

island-sourced seafood, beef and produce, HRC blends the food traditions of Hawaii's many cultures with a gourmet sensibility to produce high-end dining available nowhere else in the world.

Examples? Well, you could try Alan Wong's Honolulu. One of the 12 chefs from the original HRC summit, Wong started his restaurant in 1995, and by 2006 it was ranked number 8 on Gourmet Magazine's list of the 50 Best Restaurants in America. Options like macadamia nut-coconut crusted lamb chops or Keahole lobster lasagna sound thoroughly Hawaiian - and thoroughly delicious.

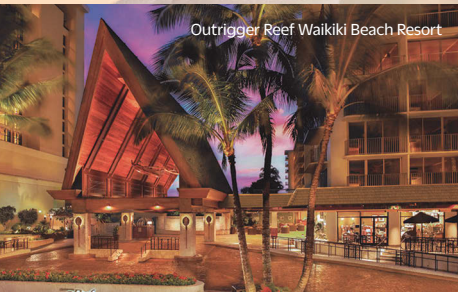
Over on the Island of Hawaii, you could try Sam Choy's Kai Lanai in Keauhou. Another of the HRC Twelve, and a familiar face from Food TV and on the cover of many cookbooks, Choy offers menu items like shoyu poke (marinated fish salad), seafood laulau and Kona orange duck.

Still another of the 12—widely regarded as the group's catalyst—Peter Merriman has several restaurants scattered throughout the islands. At his Maui location, for instance, you could try the day boat mahi-mahi, or the pan-sautéed Maui Lehuna taro cake.

If, on the other hand, you're in a hurry, or on a budget, there's still a fast and inexpensive way to experience the cultural fusion of Hawaiian food: stop into any grocery or a convenience store for some Spam musubi. Spam from the U.S. military; sushi-style rice and seaweed from Japan? What a combination. Pure Hawaii.



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