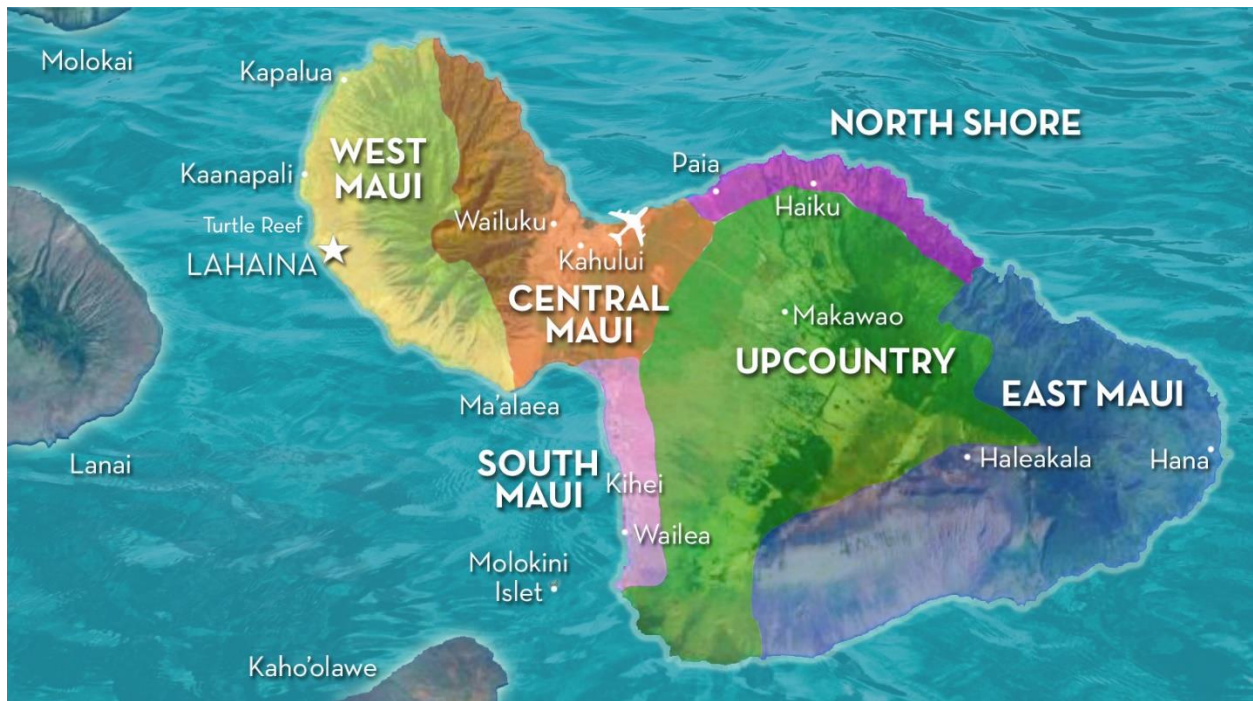


Lahaina Divers Epic Guide to Diving on Maui

Everything you need, from the best scuba sites to must-do between dive activities

In addition to amazing underwater life, Maui is filled with natural diversity above ground. Boasting 10 of the world's 14 climate zones, you can start your day on a sunny beach, have a picnic lunch in a jungle rainforest, and end your day with a spectacular sunset on top of a 10,000 ft arid volcano.

Each town on Maui has its own unique flavor. As the former whaling capital, Lahaina still retains its mariner charm. Front Street is filled with historic sites, oceanside restaurants and unique shops. And of course, the town is home to Lahaina Divers PADI 5-star facility, just a short walk from the harbor.



Whether you explore the laid-back funky town of Paia, traverse the winding road to Hana or explore the Hawaiian cowboy towns Upcountry, Maui has something for everyone. Following is how to incorporate the best island activities into a Maui diving vacation, followed by dive maps and travel tips.



Maui 8-Day Dive Vacation Itinerary

If you are enamored by the ocean like we are, be prepared experience marine life like none other. More than 20 percent of Hawaiian reef fishes are found nowhere else in the world. Some endemic species that are easily spotted along the reef include the rainbow hued parrot fish and a wide variety of angel fish and wrasse.



The Hawaii State Fish Humuhumunukunuuapuaa (which means fish with nose like a pig) is abundant, as are eels, crustaceans, invertebrates, and reef sharks. Deeper, divers may encounter manta rays, monk seals, sharks and on a rare occasion, humpback whales.

Any of the suggested activities on this Maui dive vacation itinerary can be switched around. Our dive calendar shows which dives are offered each day. Just remember it is not safe travel to an elevation above 2,000 feet within 18 hours of diving, so to be safe, we suggest a day off in-between dives if going to Haleakala (elevation 10,000 feet) or on a helicopter ride. Even some areas upcountry are above 2,000 feet. Besides, there is so much to see and do on Maui, it's good to spread things out a little!

Main Itinerary: Recreation Diver

Sample based on a Friday Arrival

Day 1 – Arrival Day

Welcome to Maui! You will likely want to stay on the West side of Maui to be more convenient to your dive charters. However, you'll be arriving in Kahului- the main business hub of the island, so after picking up a rental car, you may want to stop for supplies. If you are staying in a condo with a kitchen, it is a good idea to pick up some groceries and beverages to carry you through the evening and morning, and don't forget to buy some reef-safe sunscreen!



After checking in to your accommodations, explore the former whaling town of Lahaina. Once the playground of island ali'i (royalty), the area is a favorite of visitors from around the world. Be sure to check out Lahaina's numerous historical sites. You are welcome to pop into the Lahaina Divers store and say aloha- we are looking forward to seeing you!

A short walk away is charming Lahaina Harbor. Both Lahaina Divers vessels, the Dauntless and the Dominion, are conveniently located in the harbor front row. There are many restaurants near the harbor for a delicious open-air meal, including Pioneer Inn, Captain Jack's, or a bit down Front Street try rooftop dining at Fleetwoods, or Kimo's waterfront location, just to name a few.

Day 2 – Time to Get Wet Diving



With the time change to Maui, you'll likely be up early today, so let's go diving!

2 Tank Molokini Crater Charter: The volcanic islet of Molokini Crater is a marine preserve below water and a bird sanctuary above. The visibility averages over 100 feet, affording 360 views of the reef at various depths. You'll encounter a rainbow of tropical fish, and often can spot reef sharks,

manta rays, and perhaps garden eels swaying in the current. Occasionally humpback whales, whale sharks and Hawaiian monk seals will visit the crater.

Beginner/Refresher option: If you haven't been diving in a while or are just starting out, spend the morning at the beach, then go on the **Turtle Reef charter**. An easy dive at depths of 30-35 feet, divers are submerged in a world teeming with aquatic animals. Frog fish, white tip reef sharks,

nudibranchs and the majestic Green Sea Turtle are all common occurrences on this dive among sunken piers and coral gardens.

If the time zone is catching up with you, this may be a great evening to relax and soak in a magical Maui sunset at one of the local beaches. Tomorrow is another day of your Maui Dive Vacation!



Day 3 – Dive Lanai

Lanai's unique topography makes a diving experience that is not to be missed. Home to stunning rock formations and rare corals, divers explore majestic swim-through cathedrals, archways and lava tubes filled with many endemic species found only in Hawaii. With numerous dive sites, a charter to Lanai could easily be repeated.

Tip: Bring your underwater light or purchase one at the Lahaina Divers shop before setting out.

You'll be back from your charter in plenty of time to grab some snacks and cruise up the Northwest coast for a short walk over lava terrain to [Nakalele blowhole](#). While an incredible sight with a geyser-like water spout, please do heed the warnings on site link, and stay on dry land. People can and do get swept to sea here, and let's just say it doesn't end well.

Day 4 – Explore the road to Hana (and beyond to Kipahulu)

Maui's road to Hana represents many of the iconic features that are uniquely Hawaii- a journey through a thick rainforest, spectacular waterfalls, dramatic seascapes, the most unspoiled Hawaiian town, ample opportunities to hike, explore white, red and black sand beaches, caves and tropical pools. Here's the key thing to remember- the road to Hana, including stops and going past town to Kipahulu (the back side of Haleakala) is an all-day adventure. Don't plan anything else. It is worthwhile to prepare a quick breakfast and bringing some road snacks so you can get an early start and avoid some of the traffic, fitting in as much as you can during daylight hours. There are good apps like the Shaka Guide, which you can download to your phone, then play the narrated tour through your car stereo.



Diving option: If you don't want to miss wreck diving, schedule an afternoon Carthaginian Charter on Day 4 and move the road to Hana adventure to Day 6. The Carthaginian is a steel-hulled sailing boat which served as a symbol of the whaling industry as floating museum in Lahaina Harbor. It was carefully prepared and sunk at the end of its useful life to create an artificial reef, and is a unique dive site at a depth of 97 feet.

Day 5 – More Diving Options



If you took the Turtle Reef option on Day 2, this would be a good day to dive [Molokini Crater](#).

Experienced diver option: Our regularly scheduled [Hammerhead Charter](#) off the shores of Molokai was exclusively developed by Lahaina Divers. For our most adventurous dive, we head across the challenging Paiolo channel towards the cliffs of Molokai. We have identified one of the few sites on the planet where one can commonly see hammerhead sharks. A blue water drift dive, other oceanic creatures are often spotted on this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

Take an afternoon stroll around [Maui Ocean Center Aquarium](#), and learn more about all of the marine life you have been encountering. This world-class aquarium also just opened a must-see 3D movie all

about humpback whales. Roll right into happy hour at the attached Seascape restaurant, overlooking Maalaea bay.

Day 6 – Explore Maui



After the previous day's diving adventures, you likely want to sleep in, or spend a relaxing morning on the beach or by the pool. There are also a couple of short adventures you can go on. Make a picnic lunch and head to [Iao Valley State Park](#) in Central Maui, another spot with deep cultural significance, with a towering, needle like mountain and lush valley with a stream, plus some nice paved walking trails. Next door at [Heritage Gardens at Kepaniwai Park](#) there are ample picnic tables and more cultural information.

Or, if you are more of a thrill seeker, plan a [zipline tour](#), or try surfing or stand up paddle boarding. A [round of golf](#) on an oceanfront course is another option.

If you have not attended a luau on Maui, it is highly recommended. Prepare for a full evening of entertainment, including Pacific Island dances, chants, storytelling, and an abundance of food and beverages.

Tip: The best luaus, such as [Old Lahaina Luau](#), book up fast. Consider making a reservation up to 2 months in advance!

Day 7 – Activities above 2,000 ft



You may have heard the sunrise atop Haleakala- a 10,000 ft. dormant volcano- is spectacular, and it is. However, it is also chilly and can be socked in with fog, meaning you will have gotten up pre-dawn for nothing. Plus, so many visitors flock to sunrise, you now need an advance reservation between the hours of 3am and 7am. Keep in mind it will take between 2 – 2.5 hours to get from your condo to the summit of Haleakala. Sunrise is around 5:30am in June and just before 7am in January,

meaning for some locations during the summer you would have to be up before 3am to catch the sun coming up. If you are determined to view the sunrise, learn about making a reservation [on the National Park website](#).

We recommend either arriving at the summit around 9am then touring Upcountry Maui afterward, or tour Upcountry then go to Haleakala for sunset, which requires no advance reservations. The weather is more predictable for sunset- if it looks cloudy and rainy, pick another day to visit.

After visiting Haleakala, stop at [Kula Lodge](#) for an early lunch surrounded by spectacular views (try one of the outdoor dining pods), and stop in the Curtis Cost gallery next door. Venture on to Ulupalakua. The road here is spectacular, with bi-coastal views. Tour the grounds of [Maui's Winery](#) and the country store across the street- all part of Ulupalakua Ranch and steeped in island history.

Other Upcountry options include touring [Ocean Vodka](#) or visit the paniolo (Hawaiian cowboy) town of Makawao filled with one-of-a-kind shops, then wind your way down to the laid-back surfing town of Paia, and loop back to the southwest shore for sunset, and a spectacular dinner out.

Day 8 – Departure Day



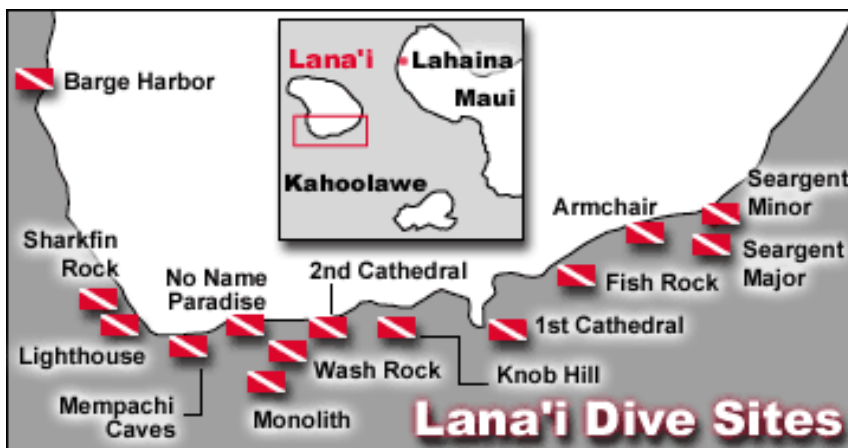
For this final day, we suggest you do some prepacking in so you can just enjoy the island. Get in one last morning beach walk, perfect your tan by the pool, and dine in an oceanfront restaurant. Don't forget to stop by the Lahaina Divers shop for a t-shirt or just to say aloha- until next time!

If you have a late flight, you have more time to explore or revisit some of your favorite places. But it also presents a problem with what to do with your luggage. You can request a late check out (more likely during low season than high season). When your luggage is in your rental car, make sure it is all in the trunk for safety. Another really outstanding option is to visit Queen Kaahumanu Shopping Mall. Located just 3 miles from the airport, the mall offers complimentary luggage storage, a real-time flight departure monitor and complimentary wi-fi. [Check out their visitor's page here.](#)

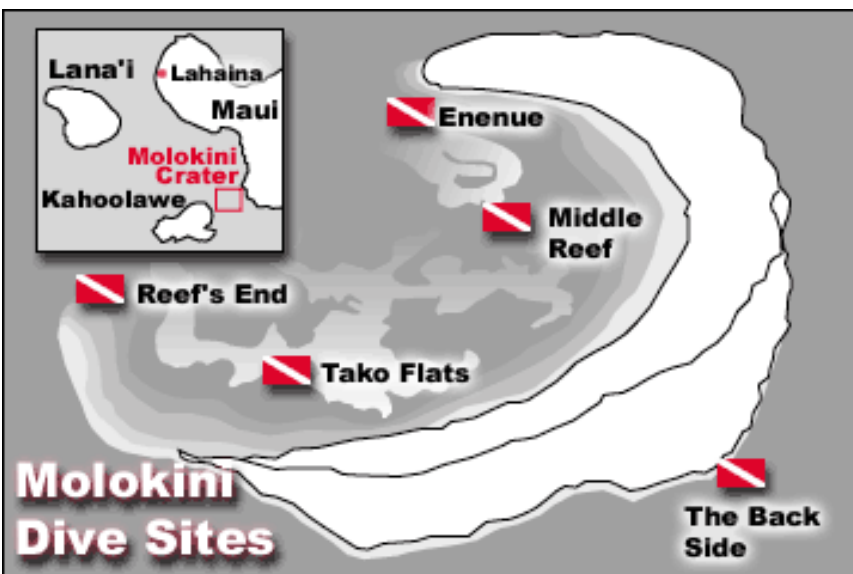
Trip Planning – Save on Multiple Dives!

Lahaina Divers supports your enthusiasm for diving by offering multi-charter discounts and a variety of dive packages. Check our [dive discount page](#) for all the details!

The Best Dive Sites



Lana'i is known for its underwater topography, caverns and swim-throughs. Listed are just a few of over 20 dive sights accessible from our boats, each offering something unique on the [Lana'i charter](#), or the adventurous drift dives on the [3-tank Lana'i charter](#).



Experience teeming wildlife in a marine preserve on the [Molokini charter](#). This partially submerged volcanic cinder cone provides some protection from wind and wave conditions, with visibility frequently exceeding 100 ft. Along the backside is a stunning 300 ft vertical cliff, though our [Back Wall dive](#) stays at about 80 ft.

Turtle Reef Dive Sites



Our [Turtle Reef charter](#) often focuses off of the partially submerged Mala Wharf. Sunken pier structures provide hiding places for an array of marine life, including reef sharks and abundant turtles. In adverse weather, there are a multitude of alternative dive sites to the north or south.

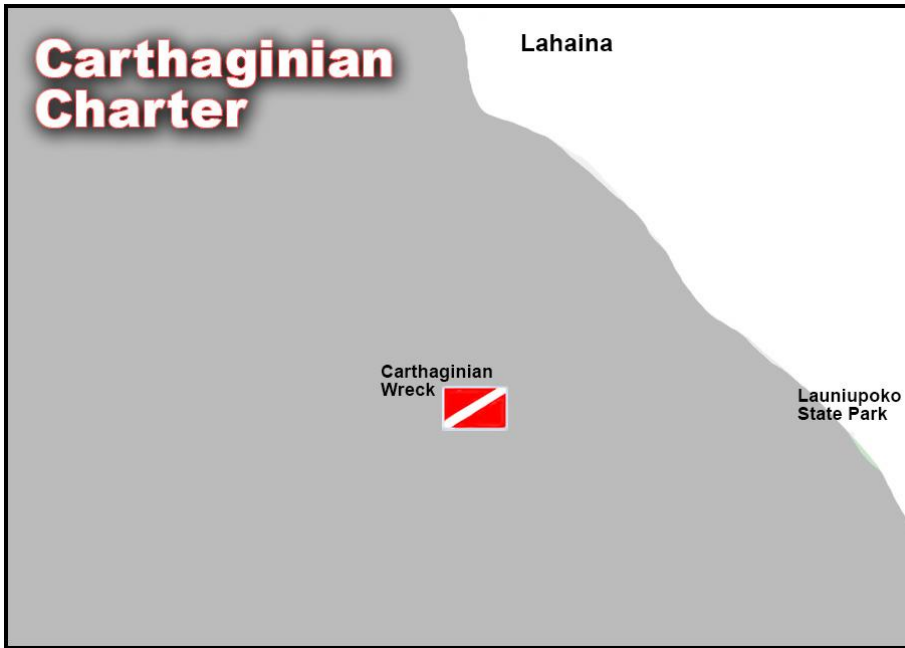
Hammerhead Charter

Molokai

Mokuho'Oniki Rock



About a mile off the coast of Molokai, this [Hammerhead dive site](#) is near the Mokuho'Oniki Rock formation. A challenging channel crossing is worth the opportunity to dive with schools of hammerhead sharks (sightings typical but not guaranteed).



Purposely sunk in an environmentally safe manner off the west coast of Maui, the [Carthaginian charter](#) provides some of the finest wreck diving. The wreck is at 97 ft, is teeming with marine life, and is frequently visited by the Atlantis submarine.

Best Time of Year for Diving

Diving on Maui can be exceptional throughout the year. Lahaina Divers goes out 365 days a year (unless there is a severe storm- hey we're passionate, not lolo). That said there are advantages to diving different times of the year.



April and May or September through early December are Maui's 'shoulder seasons'- an optimal time to visit for a number of reasons. The weather is great, accommodations and flights are cheaper and the island is less crowded. Spring is also pupping season for Hammerhead sharks. While we consistently see sharks throughout the year, these deeper water sharks will be closer to the reef.

During the summer months, Maui is a family vacation paradise. Diving is a great bonding experience to participate in as a group. The weather is more consistent, the water is a few degrees warmer and usually calmer.

Maui is hard to resist during the winter months, when most of the mainland is facing snow and cold. The warm aloha on the island seems to increase around the holidays, as does festive activities. Winter is when the Pacific Humpback whales are most active. Amazing to watch from shore, you might hear or even see one of these gentle giants while scuba diving.

What to Bring



This is an easy one- our well stocked shop has great rental gear. Along with men's and lady's wetsuit, mask and fin options, we offer top quality Aqualung products, including Core regulators, i300 computers and SPG, and Pro HD weight integrated BCD's. We rotate out gear regularly, so you are assured of a good set-up, and don't have to worry about hauling wet gear back and forth to your condo. However, if you have special circumstances, such as preferring a prescription mask or like how your own wetsuit fits, by all mean bring it along.

Aloha



In Hawaii, aloha means hello and goodbye. By the end of your Maui diving vacation, you will likely learn the other meaning of aloha- love. A strong bond is formed when discovering marine creatures and underwater landscapes found nowhere else in the world. You may not be ready to say farewell at the end of your stay, but we know if Maui gets into your heart, you will be back.