

Eye Level With the Clouds

HEAD INLAND TO the lush life. There's a trail that will take you far from the beach, through giant fern forests and along the cliffs to where thundering waterfalls feed your own secret swimming hole.

ISLAND STYLE
The essential soundtrack for any sojourn in the islands must include tunes by the late "Bruddah Iz," chief among contemporary Hawaiian musicians. Born Israel Kama-kawiwo'ole on the island of Oahu, this ukulele-strumming ambassador of aloha was a massive force for native Hawaiian activism (quite literally, since he weighed more than 700 pounds when he died in 1997, at 38). His haunting rendition of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" helped make his 1993 *Facing Future* the first ever Hawaiian music album to go platinum.



HIGH ROAD: A mule's-eye view of Molokai's Kalaupapa Peninsula

HIKE Molokai High Country

7 FOR CENTURIES, MOLOKAI served as a refuge for kahunas (priests, healers, and sorcerers) and *kapu* (taboo) breakers seeking absolution. To soak up its mana (spiritual power) for yourself, explore remote Kamakou Preserve high in Molokai's central mountains (\$25 for a six-hour tour; www.nature.org). Here you'll find more than 200 species of native flora blooming and a vast montane bog traversed by muddy, narrow boardwalks. Next make a pilgrimage to windswept Kalaupapa Peninsula, a national historic site, and hike down three vertiginous miles of switchbacks on a mule trail shared with Hawaiian paniolos. From December through April, look seaward and you might spot the spumes of migrating humpback whales. Permits are available only from Damien Tours (\$40, including a brief, requisite bus tour; 808-567-6171). Mountain bikers can rent wheels from Molokai Bicycle (\$20 a day; www.bikehawaii.com/molokaibicycle) and ply lush forest trails that reward pedalers with panoramic vistas from atop monumental sea cliffs. Then bed down at luxe Molokai Ranch (\$150; www.molokairanch.com) in a beach-front "tentalow," and dine on fresh fruit and seafood in an open-air pavilion.

SWIM Maui's Jungle Pools

8 COOL YOUR JETS ten miles south of Hana on Maui's pristine southern coast in the Kipahulu section of Haleakala National Park (\$5; www.nps.gov/hale). Emerging from the cloud-forest cover, a chain of two dozen freshwater pools pours into the ocean at Oheo Gulch. Higher up, on the southern flank of Haleakala, the crashing,

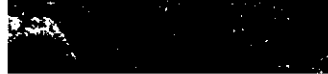
400-foot-high Waimoku Falls are accessible via the four-mile round-trip Pipiwai Trail, which winds through gently percussive bamboo groves and past cascades that spill lacelike patterns down the rocks. Camp overnight beside an ancient Hawaiian village above the pounding surf, while the moonlight glints off of overgrown ruins.

Emerging from the cloud-forest cover, a chain of two dozen freshwater pools pours into the ocean at Oheo Gulch.

BACKPACK Kauai's Epic Trail

9 THE ISLAND OF Kauai stakes its reputation on Waimea Canyon, a two-mile-wide, 3,500-foot-deep series of cloud-wreathed gorges dubbed the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific." But every bit as impressive is the state's most coveted backpacking route, the 22-mile round-trip Kalalau Trail (\$10 a night; www.hawaii.gov/dnr/dsp). Traverse the cliffs, skirt sharp-edged, stream-fed valleys rife with hidden waterfalls, and make camp at a remote beach where you can sleep by starlight and pick your own guavas and coconuts. Or, opt for a four-mile round-trip day hike as far as Hanakapiai Valley. Then drive to Kauai's west side to roam atop majestic *pali* (sea cliffs) on the trails in mountainous Kokee State Park. Stop by the Kokee Natural History Museum (www.kokee.org) for maps and to learn more about the Polynesian *moa* (red jungle fowl) strutting in the parking lot. After resting up in a two-bedroom cedar cabin with a wood-burning stove at the Lodge at Kokee (\$70; www.kokee-kauai.com), hike the nearby three-mile round-trip Awaawapuhi Trail through fiddlehead-fern forests to a jutting overlook at eye level with the clouds.

Taking it in from the Kalalau Lookout



PHOTOGRAPHS: CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: ANN CECIL/ONLINEY PLANET IMAGES; PETER GUTTMAN; JACK JEFFREY; DAVID COOK & LEO JENSEN; JIM SUGAR/CORBIS; MARK SEGA/GETTY IMAGES

MAUI WOWIE: Still life with waterfall