



Lodge at Torrey Pines, La Jolla, CA



Lake Austin Spa Resort, Austin TX



Lanai, Hawaii

HOT

Summer Getaways

While summer is a busy season filled with lots to do here in Colorado, we know our readers travel and we know you travel a lot! *Denver Life* presents three fabulous destinations—from a “grown-ups only” spa-cation in Texas to Southern California’s striking shores of La Jolla and then across the Pacific to one of the Hawaiian Islands’ less-frequented isles...we present hot destinations from the exceptionally indulgent to the uncommon and understated—all designed to meet the needs of luxury-loving travelers.

Laidback Luxury

By KARA WILLIAMS

Seasoned travelers who have already “been there and done that” on some of the more popular Hawaiian islands, might want to consider tiny Lanai to enjoy a restful tropical vacation away from the crowds. Indeed, this small island, a 90-minute ferry ride from Maui or 30-minute plane ride from Honolulu, is worlds away from its highly developed neighbors. On Lanai, visitors find wide-open ranchland, pristine beaches, just a few paved roads and zero traffic lights!

Forget giant shopping centers, massive man-made attractions or crowded luaus. Adventures on Lanai focus on laidback activities like hiking or horseback-riding on remote trails, snorkeling from quiet beaches or simply setting out in a rented jeep and exploring off road. Downtown Lanai City is just six blocks long, but lined with cute gift shops, art galleries, casual restaurants and clothing boutiques. The locals are ultra friendly and willing to answer questions and otherwise share their love of their island with visitors.

For example, when you stop by downtown's Lanai Culture & Heritage Center, longtime resident Executive Director Kepa Maly will likely be staffing the small museum, and can share his wealth of knowledge about the history of Lanai. He'll gladly tell you a bit about the island's prehistoric residents as well as its first ranchers, and can detail Lanai's transformation into a thriving Dole Pineapple plantation beginning in the

1920s. After the last pineapples were harvested on the island in 1992, the island evolved into the premier vacation destination it is today, with the development of not one, but two Four Seasons resorts.

The exclusive Four Seasons Manele Bay is an ocean-side resort set on a cliff above Hulopoe Bay. The ocean views are absolutely stunning and visible from the resort's golf course, guest rooms, restaurants and pool area. It's a short walk down to the actual beach, where the hotel offers chaise lounges for R&R. Sophisticated accommodations ranging from a “garden view room” to “prime ocean suite” have a definite tropical feel, and each has a private lanai or balcony. A full-service spa, the Challenge at Manele championship golf course (with three holes on cliffs with the Pacific Ocean as a water hazard), fitness room and tennis courts are some of the other amenities offered to guests.

Inland a few miles from the coast is the “upcountry” Four Seasons Lodge at Koele. This plantation-style resort is reminiscent of an elegant manor, with a definite “taste of the Orient” bent, since its lobby is decorated with Asian antiques and a pagoda is featured prominently on the grounds. Accommodations range from a “garden room” to the “Great Hall Fireplace Suite,” and on-site amenities include a fitness center, outdoor pool, croquet and lawn bowling court, as well as the 18-hole Experience at Koele championship golf course. Even if you don't book a room at the Lodge at Koele, simply strolling the vast, beautifully landscaped

grounds is well worth an hour or two of your vacation time, as being outdoors at the Lodge is a delightful way to take in the beauty of Lanai's cooler, misty upcountry (and a nice break from the sunny beach).

Two of the island's fee-based organized activities actually take place from the Lodge: group horseback rides into the hills from the Stables at Koele and clay shooting at Lanai Pine Sporting Clays. But one of the most popular things to do on Lanai doesn't cost a cent—pick up a “Koloiki Ridge Hike Map” from the concierge at the Lodge for a moderately difficult 2.5-mile trek to an overlook featuring fabulous views of Molokai and Maui. If you're game for a longer hike, stay on the Munro Trail, which stretches for 13 miles over the highest point on the island (3,370 feet).

Otherwise, you can also rent a jeep from Dollar Rent-a-Car in Lanai City, and drive the Munro Trail... if it hasn't been washed out by rain. (The rental car folks will let you know.) Other popular off-road drives include the route to Shipwreck Beach, where a mammoth Navy vessel was grounded on a coral reef, and the Garden of the Gods, a nifty landscape of interesting looking rock formations created by wind erosion over hundreds of years.

Lanai's premier beach for snorkeling, spotting dolphins and simply chilling out in the golden sand is Hulopoe Beach. From here, walk a short rocky trail to Sweetheart Rock (Pu'u Pehe), where legend has it, a jealous husband kept his wife hidden in a cave. One day, during a storm, she drowned. He was distraught, carried her body to the top of Pu'u Pehe, and left her. He then jumped to his death into the crashing waves below.

While both of the Four Seasons properties have elegant dining rooms for on-site meals, head into town (via the complimentary resort shuttles) for authentic island flavor. The Blue Ginger Café is where residents gather in the mornings for affordable omelets, breakfast burritos, fresh-baked pastries and banana pancakes. The afternoon/evening menu is vast, including traditional “plate lunches,” stir fries, shrimp tempura, club sandwiches, bacon burgers and much more. Pele's Other Garden offers huge deli sandwiches during lunch and transforms into an Italian bistro in the evening. Top off any meal with an ice cream cone, sundae, float or shake from The Sweetest Days.

The Lanai City Grille at the Hotel Lanai bed-and-breakfast is downtown's most upscale spot for dinner, with fresh seafood, steak and chicken dishes. Enjoy live music (typically every Friday night) in the back room, or sit at the bar and strike up a conversation with the amiable bartender and loquacious locals!



Four Seasons Manele Bay