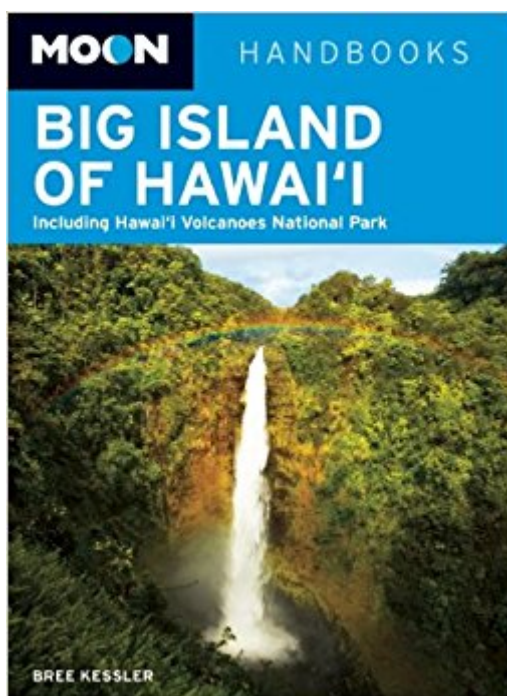


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# Moon Big Island Of Hawai'i: Including Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (Moon Handbooks)



## Synopsis

Expert traveler Bree Kessler covers the best sights and adventures that the Big Island has to offer, from soaking up the sun on Kona's iconic white sand beaches to sampling local delicacies at Hilo's popular farmer's market. Kessler also offers one-of-a-kind trip ideas, including Eat Your Way Around the Island, Big Island on a Budget, and Just Leave Me at the Beach; an itinerary for travelers who want to spend their entire vacation relaxing on the sand. Brimming with details on checking out the sea turtles at Punalu'u Beach County Park, tidepooling in Pahoa, and venturing up Saddle Road for the spectacular views at the Mauna Kea observatory, Moon Big Island of Hawai'i gives travelers the tools they need to create a more personal and memorable experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bree Kessler has always been a traveler. She's lived in India and Honduras, worked in Thailand, volunteered with the National Park Service in northern Alaska, and traveled extensively throughout Latin America. Her first visit to the Big Island of Hawai'i was as a summer volunteer, picking pineapples on an organic farm. This experience sparked her interest in urban agriculture and ultimately environmental psychology-the study of how people and places interact with one another. She is currently earning a PhD in this field at the City University of New York. Bree has taught courses on a variety of topics at Hunter College, the University of Hawai'i-Hilo, and the School for International Training. Outside of academia, she has a second career as a freelance writer. Her work has appeared in publications such as Honolulu Magazine, Edible Hawaiian Islands,

Women's Adventure, and Wine Enthusiast. Although there are certainly more travels ahead of her, she always returns to Hawai'i and her true vocation: exploring her island home and sharing its spirit of aloha. Read more from Bree on her website [ParkDispatches.com](http://ParkDispatches.com) and on Twitter [@thebrooklynof](https://twitter.com/thebrooklynof).

Exploring the Big Island of Hawai'i with Bree Kessler1. When is the best time to visit the Big Island to avoid the crowds?September, October, March, and May tend to be less crowded times. If you want to stay away from crowds, definitely steer clear of the standard school break times.2.

What's a must-do activity for first-time visitors?It's easy to go from winter to summer in one day on the Big Island. For those looking to cool off, a trip to Mauna Kea to observe the nighttime sky is a must-do. For those craving the classic warm temperatures of Hawaii, check out the view at Waipio Valley and if you feel motivated, walk down the near vertical road to the beach at the bottom.3. Name of a few of the best beaches, in your opinion. There is a beach on the Big Island to fit every personality. Some beaches offer much more shade than sun, some are completely desolate, while others make you feel like you're right in the action. Maniniowali Beach in Kona is a beach that is easy to access and allows for great people watching. The Mauna Kea beach in Kohala is a public beach that offers visitors the same waterfront as guests staying at the resort at the same time (without the price). Punalu'u Black Sand Beach in Ka'u isn't the best beach for swimming, but you can't find a better spot for a picnic and to see turtles nesting in the sand.4. What are the best gluten-free and vegetarian food options on the island?Check out Island Naturals Grocery Store chain (in four locations throughout the Island) for all kinds of gluten-free, vegan, and sometimes raw goodies. Kalani Oceanside Resort in Pahoa has a daily lunch and dinner buffet with tons of gluten-free and/or vegan options. Check out my Moon guide for more recommendations on where to find gluten-free pizza, crepes, and traditional mochi treats made from sweet rice flour.5. Is the weather actually beautiful year-round? Do you have a favorite season?The weather is wonderful all year, but a Big Island fun fact is that it has 11 of the world's 13 climate zones. This means that you can go from the tropics to the desert to a snowy landscape all within a few hours; nearly all year round!6. If a traveler is craving privacy and a secluded spot to relax, what's your recommendation?It's surprisingly easy to find privacy and seclusion on the Big Island as long as you stay away from the bigger cities. The beaches dotting the very south coast of the island, like Manuka Bay near South Point, require four-wheel-drive to reach; but that's how you know they are great places to seek solitude.7. Where do you consider the best place to stay on a budget?If you're on a strict budget, the best place to stay is in a tent or cabin

that you can reserve on the state park website. If you're seeking a bed, there are some great hosteling choices in Hilo. If you're looking for something more private, there are several bed and breakfast options on the Island that offer great deals and they include breakfast! For a large group of people, rent a condo in Puna or North Kohala for great views and lots of space for the whole family (or friends).

8. What's the best drive to take to tour the island? There is only one road that circumvents the island (note: the name of the road changes as you go around from Hwy-11 to Hwy-19). You can circle the island without stopping in just half a day or take a full day (or longer) and make some stops along the way.

9. Name a few of your favorite local dishes. Spam musubi (from 7-11), mochi (from Two Ladies Kitchen), and poke (from KTA grocery store).

10. Where's the best place for hiking and volcano sight-seeing? The Big Island offers a range of hikes: those that are do-able for a novice hiker (or experienced hiker) as well as hikes that are extremely technically difficult. In Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, there are both types of hikes. Novices can walk around the Crater Rim or walk down into Mauna Iki (where lava once spewed forth). Experienced hikers should try the moonscape of Mauna Lau. The best place to view the lava glow at night is from the Jaggar Museum overlook.

11. Where can travelers visit to have a truly local experience? Take the bus and ride with the locals! Or hang out on Coconut Island or Richardson's Beach in Hilo during the weekend.

I bought basically every available guidebook when planning my trip to the Big Island, and this one was the best by far. My favorite feature was the "Your best day in [fill in the blank region of the Island]" which gave recommended activities and places to eat in each region. I prefer to buy multiple guides and get varying opinions, but if you are only going to buy one book about the Big Island, this is the one.

The Moon guide is a good resource for planning a trip to the big island. I ordered it for my Kindle so that I could have it available on our upcoming trip. In the past I've always taken the book itself on trips and found them too heavy to deal with. Unfortunately, going back and forth on the Kindle in the planning stage is somewhat frustrating. I found that I used the Big Island pages of a Hawaii guide more than the Kindle even though the Moon guide was probably a much better guide. I think the Kindle edition will be very useful though, once we get to the Big Island.

Read this on the plane and found out many interesting facts and mention of places that I would not have visited otherwise. Skipped many pages that dealt with lodging since I had booked that already.

Between this book and the "tourist info" material available after arriving at the airport, I was able to spend a very satisfying 2-week vacation with very little preplanning.

Many parts out of date. Purposefully bought a 2014, but don't think it has been updated for a while.  
Bummet

Plenty of good info here. We went to a couple of places (including the waterfall on the cover) based solely on the book's description of them, and we were very glad we did. Moon books seem to be among the best guidebooks out there.

The best guide for the Big Island I have laid my hands on. I would recommend it but I would appreciate more info in the book and not only referencing where else I can get the information.

I can't speak to the paperback edition, but I would not buy this Kindle edition again. I find it hard to navigate and more like reading a book than how I usually use a travel guide as a reference tool for tips and highlights.

I have used Moon travel guides in the past and have gotten familiar with the format. The author gives a good summary of the particular topic. I think the information is factual and does not represent a commercial bias

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