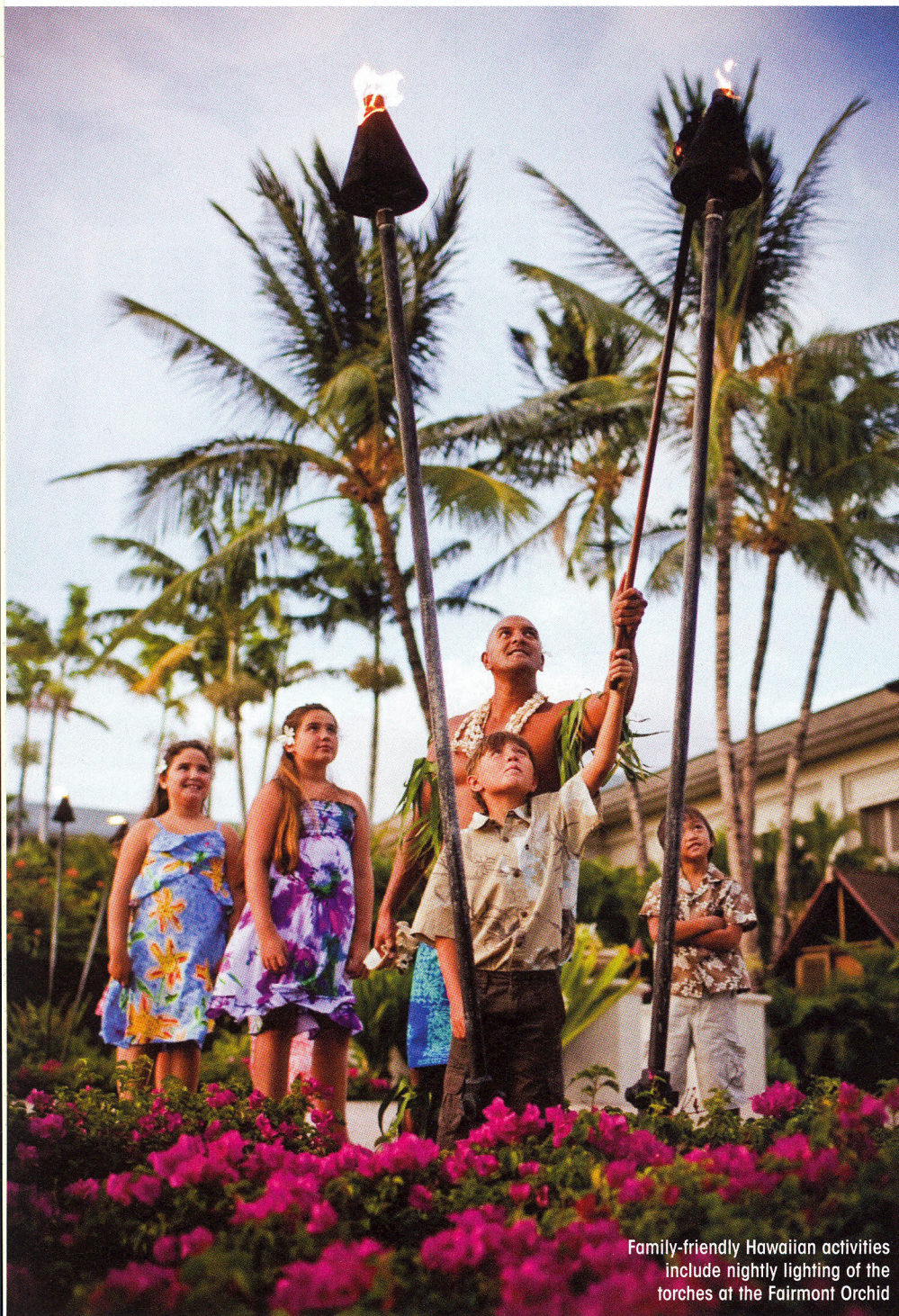


# Hawaii Holidays with the Kids

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Family-friendly Hawaiian activities include nightly lighting of the torches at the Fairmont Orchid

**Y**ou won't be able to build a snowman or roast chestnuts on an open fire, but Hawaii offers heaps of holiday spirit and endless opportunities for family fun.

If this is the year you've decided to skip shopping, wrapping, and decorating, and hang out with your kids instead — I hope you'll consider doing so in Hawaii. Holidays with aloha are the best gift you can give your family.

**Oahu** I'm not a huge fan of Honolulu, but I absolutely love Oahu's North Shore. Haleava is a cute little town where families crowd into Matsumoto's grocery store for an authentic old fashioned shave ice cone. While Matsumoto's is *well known*, the North Shore's huge winter surf is actually *world famous*. If your kids are surfers, they'll be able to tell you about the pros who gather here to ride big waves in competitions between November and February. You might even get lucky and cross paths with a surf legend at Ted's Bakery at Sunset Beach. This local hangout is famous for its chocolate haupia pie.

Places to stay? Turtle Bay Resort seems like it was designed for active families. Sprawling across almost 900 acres with five miles of waterfront, the property includes a quiet bay for kids (*keiki*) to swim and snorkel with green sea turtles (*hono*). Nearby, teens can take surf lessons from the resident pro. The whole family will have fun riding horses along scenic trails that wander between the beach and golf course, cut through a banyan forest, and provide wonderful water views. Magically, the tradewinds always make it feel like the perfect temperature.

Special kids programs this winter include hands-on pony experiences, ukulele lessons, lei-making classes, a tennis clinic, and hula lessons.

**Big Island** The Fairmont Orchid on the Kohala Coast is a great place for multi-generational holiday vacations. Guests in the North Tower Gold Rooms share a spacious lounge where they eat breakfast, enjoy afternoon tea, and gather for pre-dinner *pupus*.

The resort offers SUP and snorkeling for grownups and flotation boards with view ports for the kindergarten crowd. Also, not to be missed by the adults: the Ali'i (Royal) Experience in the Spa Without Walls. As the name suggests, these treatments are done in cabanas on the beach and huts (*hale*) tucked among the tropical gardens where waterfalls create the background music.

During the holiday season this year, The Fairmont Orchid will be offering a Keiki Cooking Club, a family oriented fishing tournament, canoe rides, and Hawaiian kite flying. And since this is Hawaii, Santa will arrive by canoe.

Elsewhere on the Kohala Coast, I like the luau at the Waikaloa Marriott and the casual eatery Lava Lava Beach Club on A'ā. The best sunsets in this area take place from October to December. In January and February, snow covers the peaks on Mauna Kea and Launa Loa and there's a good chance you'll see some humpback whales and their babies offshore.

**Maui** Home to the best beaches in Hawaii, Maui is a great destination for sandcastle builders, barefoot walkers, and anyone who just loves a great view. Families who enjoy learning about the environment will like The Ritz-Carlton Kapalua, which is home to Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ambassadors of the Environment. This center offers activities for guests of all ages and programs for children ages five and older. If you stay here, your kids could learn about sea turtles and humpback

Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the elves arrive at the Fairmont Kea Lani in an outrigger canoe



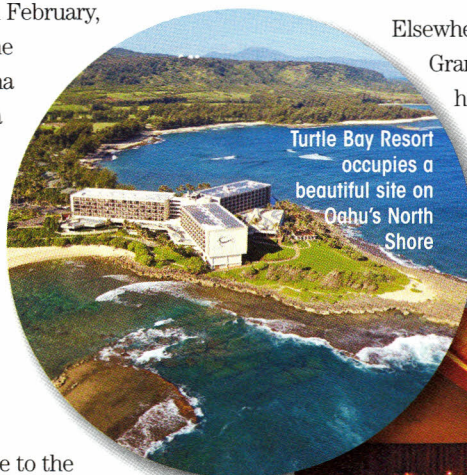
whales, hike to an ancient lava flow, and practice underwater photography.

During the holidays, The Ritz-Carlton Kapalua will light a Menorah daily at sundown, show "dive-in" movies at the pool, and offer holiday craft activities.

This pool is comprised of nine separate pools on six levels, including a "baby beach," seven waterslides, waterfalls, caves, white water rapids, grottos, and the world's first water elevator. The Hibiscus Pool is reserved for adults.

The best luau on Maui is the Old Lahaina Luau located in a scenic spot on the Lahaina waterfront. This popular extravaganza draws about 440 guests nightly for good food, dancing and music — so make reservations as soon as possible. I wouldn't want you and your family to miss out on your fair share of holiday aloha. ELIZABETH HANSEN

Elsewhere on Maui, the Grand Wailea Resort will have a live mermaid entertaining children in the famous Wailea Canyon Activity Pool during the holidays.



The Hawaiian holiday season includes palm trees and traditionally decorated Christmas trees, like this one at the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua