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## **Guide to Hawaii Weddings:**

### **MARRIAGE LICENSE:**

If you are planning to marry in Hawaii whether in Kailua-Kona in the Big Island or in any of the neighbor islands (Maui, Oahu or Kauai) you will need to secure a marriage license. This must be done in person when you arrive in Hawaii. The good news is that it's very simple to get a marriage license in Hawaii. Marriage licenses are \$60, and you need to show photo identification. There are no blood tests, waiting period or residency requirements. You must be over 16 or older, and if under 18, you need parental consent. The license is then valid for any marriage ceremony held within 30 days of issuance. Many couples plan their own weddings, or have friends who live in the islands help them out ahead of time. Perhaps the best option is to ask the many ministers available for weddings in Kailua-Kona. Here are some resources to help you get started.

**Obtaining a Hawaii Marriage License** The State of Hawaii provides detailed information on how to obtain a marriage license on each of the islands of Hawaii.

### **Wedding on the Beach**

A beach where couples frequently get married at is Anaehoomalu Bay Beach - a wonderful crescent-shaped bay adjacent several large resorts, including the Hilton Waikoloa Village. This beach is a long stretch of sand surrounded by tall palm trees. At the outer edges of the beach you can find a quiet and private moment for a couple to celebrate their wedding. We often see wedding photographers setting up along the southern edge of this beach with long strands of ceremonial leis at their side. The sunsets here are absolutely incredible and any wedding photo shoot will be priceless here!

Some of the austere, yet incredibly beautiful beaches where you might consider a wedding - if you are not interested in the luxury resort treatment or if you want to plan the entire event yourself are:

Waialea Beach - a wonderful Kohala white-sand beach in a narrow, shaded cove just south of Hapuna Beach. If you didn't have a map, you wouldn't find this beach!

Holoholokai Beach Park - this Kohala beach is actually located on the grounds of the Mauna Lani Resort, but has easy public access

and there is never a crowd here and the scenery is gorgeous.

Kikaua Point Beach - this Kohala beach is off-the-beaten track, although the entrance is via a golf resort (public beach access). The beach itself stretches around a natural point surrounded by tall trees - easy to find a private nook here to have a wedding ceremony!

Want a memorable, unique, and adventurous wedding? Consider having your wedding on a Volcano? The Hawaii Volcanoes National Park offers its own serene beauty and offers a uniquely-Big Island backdrop to your ceremony. Or perhaps you might find a white-sand beach too trite - think about having your wedding at the Punaluu Black Sand Beach in the Puna district.

**Planning Factors**\_Here are a few other things to note when planning a wedding on the Big Island. If inviting guests, make sure you give them plenty of lead-time to get their plane tickets. Unlike travel within the mainland, plane tickets to Hawaii can vary greatly in price and are best booked well in advance. Get exotic when choosing your flowers! The Big Island is home to many beautiful and aromatic flowers that you don't normally see on the mainland such as the wonderful plumeria, dozens of orchids, and many hibiscus species. Although the lei is a traditional Hawaiian floral arrangement, many do not know that leis come in many different sizes and shapes too. Dress up or dress down. In Hawaii simple linen white outfits, barefoot on the sandy beach, is still very elegant and romantic. Want a truly memorable and unique experience? Why not get married on a black sand beach - such as Punalu'u Beach Park? Take advantage of the stunning beauty of the Big Island, get married there!

**WEDDING LOCATIONS:** HAWAII, THE BIG ISLAND

**KAILUA-KONA:**

## **WAIKOLOA:**

HILTON WAIKOLOA

MARRIOTT:

MAUNA LANI BAY HOTEL

FAIRMONT ORCHID AT MAUNA LANI

## **KEAHOU:**

KIAKAUA POINT:

### **Big Island Wedding Locations**

#### **Royal Kona Resort**

Overlooking beautiful Kailua Bay, this Oceanfront Resort features stunning vistas that provide the ideal setting for tha...

#### **Kona Village Resort**

On the Kohala Coast of Hawaii's Big Island, Kona Village Resort embraces the essence of aloha and is the ideal oceanfron...

#### **The Fairmont Orchid, Hawaii**

The Fairmont Orchid, Hawaii is a perfect setting for your Hawaiian wedding. The spectacular resort scenery, including go...

#### **Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa**

Facing 'Anaeho'omalua Bay on the scenic Kohala coast, Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa fuses upscale amenities.

#### **Saint Peter's Church, Big Island**

The "Little Blue Church" is located on famous Ali'i Drive in downtown Kona, and is situated right off the beach in Keauhou. This picture perfect Catholic church is surrounded by flowering foliage and the sparkle of the Pacific Ocean. The etched glass windows will add to the romance as the glow of the sun shines through

during your Hawaii sunset wedding. With only a few dozen pews, this serene Hawaii location is ideal for a small, intimate wedding. Built in 1889, Saint Peter's Church is one of the most photographed sites on the Big Island.

### **Kikaua Point Beach Park, Big Island**

Located just north of Kona, Kikaua Point Beach Park is becoming one of the most popular Big Island wedding locations. This luscious beach park is surrounded by lava rocks, white sand, green trees, and the turquoise ocean. Choose between a ceremony beneath the trees on the small green lawn, or on the crescent-shaped sandy beach with views of Maui and Mauna Kea. Consult with a Hawaii wedding consultant before you plan a wedding at the Kikaua Point Beach Park; permits and reservations are required and Kikaua Point Beach Park books up fast.

### **Pu'uuhonua o Honaunau, Big Island**

The Pu'uuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park is located in South Kona and offers a serene setting for a small Hawaii beach wedding. Dramatic colors from the black lava rock, white sand, green palm trees, and turquoise ocean is a wedding photographers dream. Also, Green sea turtles love to sun bathe on these beaches and will be a likely guest at your ceremony. The Pu'uuhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park is also known as the Place of Refuge: the sacred grounds where royal Hawaiians once resided and offered refuge to those that broke a kapu (ancient Hawaiian law). Incorporate Hawaiian history into your Hawaii wedding for a truly Hawaiian experience.

A Hawaii wedding is a dream-come-true for many brides, but there are numerous choices and challenges that come with having a destination wedding. Such challenges are: time-zone differences, catering, local permits and laws, local culture and courtesies, choosing the perfect location, and much more. A Hawaii wedding coordinator is your professional in the wedding industry and will eliminate many of the challenges and stress by being you on-location advocate. Your Hawaii wedding coordinator will help you plan, scout for vendors, handle meetings, and coordinate the details. He/she knows the venues, the providers, procedures - and the local pitfalls to avoid.

## **The Ceremony**

Before choosing a wedding coordinator or officiate, consider the type of wedding you want. Do you want a traditional ceremony? Or a Hawaiian ceremony? A blend of the two or something unique? Just as with getting married anywhere else in the United States, it's all up to you and your

fiance.

*Many like to include both traditional and Hawaiian elements. This may be religious or non-religious. Often in this type of wedding the officiate will speak of the beauty of Hawaii - its waters, mountains and flowers, plus how they symbolize your love and marriage. Sometimes the ceremony will be announced with the blowing of a conch shell, and there will be a lei exchange between bride and groom. The officiate will talk about the lei and how it encircles in never ending love. The wedding will be completed with the exchange of rings and vows and of course the kiss.*

To find a coordinator, I would search online along with the name of the island and maybe also the region or city (Kona's a long way from Hilo). If you want to marry on the beach, check for coordinators that specialize in beach weddings on the sand. Some will prefer parks near the ocean to avoid the beach permit (more on this later), so do read their sites and ask.

*Packages start around \$200 for a minister, maybe two leis and some consultation.*

## **The Wedding Performer (Officiate)**

As mentioned above, the wedding coordinator will help you find someone to perform the wedding. If you aren't using a coordinator, you can find an officiate in various ways. One is to ask the marriage license agent for recommendations but do so on the phone – don't wait till you get here. 9  
*Another place to look for marriage performers is to search online. If you wish to have an officiate with a specific religion perform your wedding ceremony, search online for places of worship on the island you wish to be married. Be sure that your marriage performer is licensed by the State of Hawaii.*

## **My Favorites on the Big Island**

**My favorite area:** Tough one on this really big island, but I'll say the Kohala Coast. This has two of my favorite beaches, Hapuna and the Mauna Kea Beach, and it's also got my favorite resort, the Hilton Waikoloa – a beautiful and fun place to visit whether you stay there or not!

**My favorite hotel:** This is easy – the Hilton Waikoloa. They've got Dolphin Quest, a great program for learning about dolphins – and if you want to spend the bucks, close encounters with them :-). The rooms are very nice, the pools with their slides and waterfalls are fantastic, there are several restaurants and lounges, tons to do, and you can ride around the place on the Disneyland-like free tram and boat shuttles. Also, they have a pretty lagoon and a cool art collection displayed around the pools, walkways and gardens.

**My favorite luau:** [Island Breeze](#). This is held on the historical royal grounds at King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel. The pre-luau activities begin when the royal court paddles in from Kailua Bay and the conch shell is blown. You can learn fun Hawaiian crafts and get a Hawaiian "tattoo." The show features various dances of Polynesia, including hula of course, and concludes with the Samoan fire dance. The menu is traditional Hawaiian featuring the underground baked pig, fresh catch of the day and chicken.

**My favorite Activity:** Really hard to choose just one, but I've narrowed it down to the [Fair Wind Snorkel Cruise](#) at Kealahou Bay (where I got to [swim with dolphins!](#)) and the lava flow view hike when the lava's pouring over the cliff into the sea. For up to the minute lava updates, call the Kalapana Lava Viewing Hotline at (808) 961-8093 or the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park at (808) 985-6000. 5  
For more general lava updates see here <http://www.hawaii-lisa.com/lavaupdate.html>

## Best Weather on the Big Island

Like all of Hawaii, the Big Island offers exceptionally good weather, especially on the west side.

Hawaii has two seasons: summer (May through October) and winter (November through April), and the temperatures change very little between these two seasons. Average daytime temperatures at sea level in the summer are 85°F and in the winter, 78°F. When the sun goes down temperatures at sea level rarely drop more than 5 to 10 degrees. The weather does change quite a lot from region to region (the island has all but two of the world's eco-climates), especially when you travel upland. Bring a sweater if you go up to Volcano. You can even find snow here in the winter at the top of Mauna Kea!

Like all of the Hawaiian Islands, the Windward side (here, that is the Hilo and Puna side) gets most of the rain. Hilo is the rainiest city on Earth in fact. The Windward side is very lush and tropical, and most of the rain falls at night and early morning, although sometimes in the winter the rain will fall for days on end. The Leeward side (Kona and Kohala) is usually sunny at sea level, and when it rains, it is usually in the late afternoon. Kohala is desert like in its dryness, which makes for lots of sunny beach days!

The ocean waters here aren't too cold either. Surface temperatures average 74° to 77°F in the winter and 78° to 83°F, with the warmer temperatures found on the Kohala Coast – at Hapuna, you'll feel like you are in a heated swimming pool.