

Kalalau Trail

The Kalalau trail is the only land access to the rugged Nāpali coastline from Hā'ena to Kalalau. The trail traverses 5 major valleys before ending at Kalalau Beach where it is blocked by sheer, fluted cliffs. The graded trail is narrow and rarely level as it crosses above towering sea cliffs and through lush valleys. The trail only drops to sea level at the beaches of Hanakāpī'ai and Kalalau.

The current trail was built around 1860 by the Hawaiian Government to foster transportation and commerce for the residents living in the remote valleys. Local labor and dynamite were used to construct a trail wide enough to accommodate pack animals loaded with oranges, taro, and coffee being grown in the valleys. Stone paving and retaining walls from that era still exist along the trail.



Photo: Bishop Museum

Permits Required

Permits are required for camping beyond Hanakāpī'ai and boat landings (allowed in summer only). Camping permits can be obtained online (<http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dsp>) or at a State Parks office. Camping is allowed at Hanakoa (one night stopover only) and Kalalau. There is a maximum stay of 5 nights within the park. Camping fees apply.

Permits for Kalalau shall be valid for Hanakoa on the first and/or last night of camping along the Kalalau Trail. Hikers are encouraged to stopover and camp at Hanakoa if they possess a valid permit for Kalalau and feel the need to break up their hike due to fatigue, weather, or darkness.

Facilities

As a wilderness area, the park facilities are primitive. Composting toilets are located at Hanakāpī'ai, Hanakoa and Kalalau. There is no drinking water or showers. No picnic tables or trash cans are provided. Open fires are not allowed - bring camp stove and fuel.

Weather Conditions

Temperatures seldom drop below 60°F. Summer months (May to September) are generally hot and humid with tradewinds and occasional rain. Winter months (October to April) are marked by frequent tradewind showers, and possible storms with flash flooding and high surf.

Hunting

Nāpali Coast State Wilderness Park is open to year-round archery hunting for feral goats and pigs. Bowhunting permits are available at the Līhu'e office of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife (808-274-3433).

Hiking & Camping Safety

No Emergency Services. In the event of injury or illness, someone must hike out for help or signal a passing helicopter or boat. There is no cell phone reception along the coast. Be prepared with a first aid kit.



Stream Water. Boil or treat all drinking water (water purification pump, tablets, or iodine). It is possible to contract leptospirosis by drinking untreated water or swimming in streams. This potentially fatal disease invades the body through cuts and openings.

Sunburn & Heat Exhaustion. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated in the hot, humid hiking conditions. Use sunscreen to protect against ultraviolet radiation, even when overcast.



! WARNING



Strong Current!

You could be swept away from shore and could drown.

If in doubt, don't go out.



Dangerous Shorebreak!

Waves break in shallow water. Serious injuries could occur, even in small surf.

If in doubt, don't go out.



Falling Rocks!

If you proceed, be alert! Rocks may fall without warning causing serious injury or death.

If in doubt, stay away.



Hazardous Cliff!

The ground may break off without warning and you could be seriously injured or killed.

Stay back from the edge.



Flash Flood!

Be alert, water may rise without warning. Fast moving water may result in serious injury or death.



No Rock Climbing!

Mountains are crumbly with weathering basalt that is not suitable for rock climbing and roping.

Heed all posted warning signs.

Hiking Tips

Know Your Limits. The Kalalau Trail is suitable for expert hikers in good physical shape only. The trail is steep, slippery and narrow with sheer drop-offs in places. Novice hikers and anyone with a fear of heights should not hike beyond the first 2 miles to Hanakāpī'ai Beach.



Boots. The trails are muddy, slippery, rocky, and uneven. Lightweight hiking boots with good traction are recommended.

Water. Carry plenty of water and bring water purification or iodine tablets as back-up. Never drink untreated water from the streams or waterfalls.

Stay on the Trail. Vegetation can mask steep drop-offs. Avoid short-cuts and making new trails around wet and muddy areas or over stacked rock walls.

Harmful Plants & Animals. Never taste or eat unfamiliar plants or use them for food skewers. Spiders, scorpions, centipedes, and other harmful insects like leaf litter and rocks. Keep backpacks and tents fully zipped.

Watch the Time. The high cliffs and dense vegetation mean that it can grow dark quickly, especially in the winter months. Allow adequate time to get to your destination.

Camping Tips

Camping Gear. A lightweight sleeping bag or blanket, sleeping pad, tent with rainfly, cooking stove and fuel are recommended. You may also want to have mosquito repellent.



Campsites. Camp in the designated camping areas at Hanakoa and Kalalau only. Do not move rocks or dig as you may disturb an archaeological site. Always use the nearby composting toilets. Streams are the only freshwater sources and biodegradable soap should be used for bathing and dishes. Use soap away from the stream to protect the water source. Leave your campsite clean.

Pack out what you pack in.

Please do not leave excess food or equipment behind and assume that others can use it. These items will eventually become trash and contribute to illegal campers overstaying their welcome and degrading fragile resources.



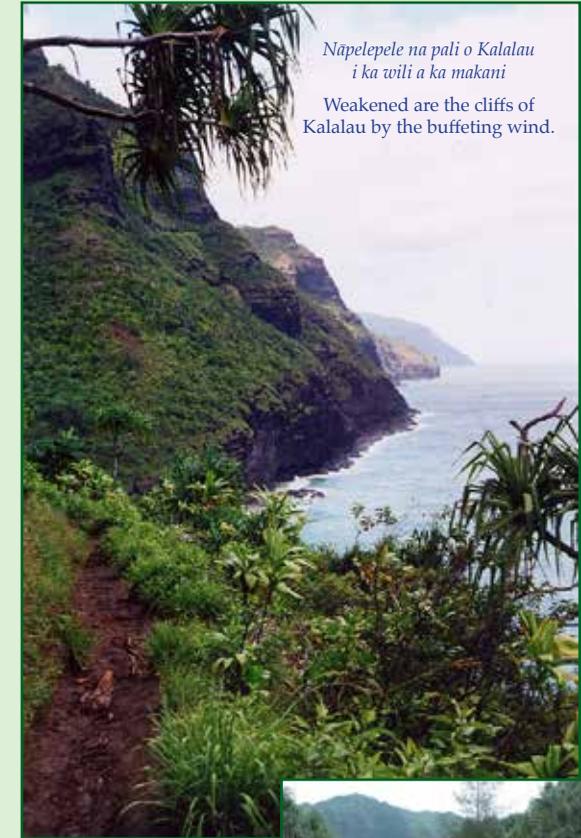
State of Hawai'i
Department of Land & Natural Resources
Division of State Parks

<http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dsp/>

Kaua'i District Office
3060 Eiwa Street, Suite 306
Līhu'e, HI 96766
Phone: 808-274-3444

O'ahu District Office
1151 Punchbowl Street, #310
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-587-0300

KALALAU TRAIL



*Nāpelepele na pali o Kalalau
i ka wili a ka makani*
Weakened are the cliffs of
Kalalau by the buffeting wind.



Nāpali Coast
State Wilderness Park
Kaua'i



Trailhead

The Kalalau trailhead is located in Hā'ena State Park at the end of Kūhiō Highway (Hwy. 56). A 2-mile hike (one-way) takes you to Hanakāpī'ai Beach. Hiking the first 1/2 mile will offer spectacular views of the Nāpali coastline. Allow about 3 to 4 hours (round-trip) for a leisurely day hike.

A camping permit is required past Hanakāpī'ai and it is 6 miles to Hanakoa where stopover camping is permitted. The 11-mile trail ends in Kalalau Valley. Past Hanakāpī'ai is a strenuous backpacking trip that is recommended for experienced hikers only.

Kē'ē to Hanakāpī'ai (2 miles)

Use caution when crossing Hanakāpī'ai Stream - rocks may be slippery. The sand beach and breaking waves can be dangerous - avoid swimming due to riptides and currents.

A 1.8-mile trail into the valley leads to a spectacular 300-foot waterfall. About a mile up the valley, the trail becomes more difficult as it meanders over rocks and crosses the stream twice. The upper half of the trail should be hiked only in good weather to avoid dangerous flash floods. If you take the hike to the falls, add another 4 hours to your hike time.

Hanakāpī'ai to Hanakoa (4 miles)

Hiking becomes more strenuous as the switchback trail climbs 800 feet out of Hanakāpī'ai to the highest point on the entire route. The trail goes through the Hono O Nā Pali Natural Area Reserve which is home to a variety of native lowland forest plants.

Just past Hanakoa Stream, there is a 0.3-mile trail upvalley to 500-foot high Hanakoa Falls. Enjoy the view of the falls from a safe distance. The Hanakoa Falls Trail is often muddy and slippery. The camping area is located on old agricultural terraces along both sides of Hanakoa Stream.

Hanakoa to Kalalau (5 miles)

After Hanakoa, the trail becomes drier and more open. The hike across 7 small gulches and the vertical slope of Pōhakuao ends with a steep hike down Pu'ukulua (Red Hill) to Kalalau Stream. The trail at Pōhakuao is especially narrow with steep drop-offs on the seaward side.

Cross Kalalau Stream to the beach and the camping area. The Kalalau Valley Trail is a 2-mile hike upvalley over former kalo (taro) terraces with several stream crossings. Stay on the trail and avoid disturbing the rock faces of these terraces.