

Honolulu restaurants

Dear Colleagues:

Honolulu has a large number and variety of restaurants for its size. This is probably a result of the large number of tourists that come here. However, in our opinion, few of the restaurants in Waikiki are any good.

This is a listing of restaurants that we or our friends like; most are frequented by locals. It is meant to be a substitute for random guessing! Since our favourite Italian restaurant was sold in late 2006, we have been revisiting our old favourites to check them out (a few have dropped off the list) and also to check out some new places. We are still working on this evaluation process and will update this list.

Chris Measures and Karen Selph, May 14th, 2007

BYOB = Bring your own alcohol, no liquor license.

R = takes reservations

NR = won't take reservations

Mekong (Thai), 1295 South Beretania, 591-8841, BYOB, NR except for > 6
Thai is simply the best food in the world, and that found in Hawaii is much better than the mainland. All local Thai restaurants cater to carnivores and vegetarians. Mekong is part of Keo's empire. Cheaper prices than Keo's, same food, no yuppies. Small parties, best Thai vegetarian meals.

Ono Hawaiian Foods (Hawaiian), 726 Kapahulu Ave., 737-2275, BYOB, NR
If you want to try Hawaiian food, go here. Vegetarians beware! They close early and can only handle small parties. Mixed plate is recommended for a 1st try.

Irifune (Japanese), 563 Kapahulu Ave., 737-1141, BYOB, NR
Good, cheap Japanese food, funky atmosphere, small, expect to wait for a table.

The Pyramid (Egyptian and Mediterranean), 758 Kapahulu Ave., 737-2900, R
Moderate to expensive, has good belly-dancers, and great food. Try the shwarma!

Hale Vietnam (Vietnamese), 1140 12th Ave., 735-7581, NR
Best Vietnamese in town: try the fondue!

Sam Choy's Breakfast, Lunch and Crabs (brewpub/local food/seafood too), 580 N. Nimitz, no reservation usually needed (valet parking, though)
Decent brewpub, food good/basic, fairly inexpensive, lively atmosphere.

Brew Moon (brewpub), 1200 Ala Moana Blvd. (Ward), 593-0088, NR
Beer usually good, appetizers a good deal, dinner a bit pricey for what you get.

Indigo (Upscale Eurasian), 1121 Nuuanu (downtown), 521-2900, R
Fancy fusion food, pricey, nice atmosphere.

Cisco's Cantina (Mexican), 123 Hekili, Kailua, 262-7337, NR
If you go to the other side of the island (Kailua), then check this place out. Wonderful Margueritas. The best Chimichanga on the island. Be sure to order mushrooms and corn (instead of beans and rice) as part of your meal.

Azteca (Mexican), 3617 Waialea Ave., 735-2492, NR
Have a Negra Modello, good standard Mexican fare.

Maple Garden (Chinese), 909 Isenberg St., 941-6641
Typical Chinese.

E & O Trading Company (South East Asian), 1200 Ala Moana Blvd., (Ward Centre, upstairs) 591-9555, R. Moderately expensive, interesting fusion foods. We enjoyed our first visit and intend to return.

Chin's Kahala 4230 Waiālae Ave, 737-7188, Kahala R
Moderately expensive but good quality fancy, Chinese food.

Dew Drop Inn (Chinese) 1088 S. Beretania St., 526 9522. R. BYOB. Good, cheap unpretentious local Chinese eatery.

Spices (Laotian/Thai) 2671 S. King St., 949-2679, R, BYOB. Closed Monday. Modest prices. A lot of dishes that are different from the standard Thai, try the very spicy Laotian sausage appetiser, and the other Laotian specialties.

Pasta & Basta (Italian) Restaurant Row Suite 4A, 523-9999, NR, BYOB (currently, may change). Inexpensive and surprisingly good. Pizza and pasta a cut above regular "American-Italian" restaurants, very informal (no table service) – order at the counter, pay and they will call out your number when your food is ready. Advice: order and pay for your appetizers first, then go back and order your mains, that way the latter won't get cold – it all will come out at the same time!

LUNCH SPOTS

Ku'a Aina (Burgers), 1116 Auahi St. (across from Pier 1 Imports), 591-9133
Best local burger place, also has sandwiches.

Kozo Sushi (Japanese), 625 Kapahulu Ave., 739-2785 (note: other locations, too)
Good, fresh, cheap sushi. Take out place.

Manoa Sushi (Japanese), Manoa Marketplace, 988-5577
Ditto above.

Island Manapua Factory (local Chinese), Manoa Marketplace, 988-5441
Best manapua and try the pork hash and fried rice! Take out place.

Diamond Head Grill (local food, healthy options), Monsarrat Ave.,
Traditional plate lunches, as well as ones with grilled salmon or portabella mushrooms. Drive-up window and in-door deli, too. Also open for dinner, but nowhere nice to sit.

Big City Diner (local food), 3569 Waiālae Ave., 738-8855, NR
Local style diner. Good for breakfast or lunch. Hearty portions. Also open for dinner.

Volcano Joe's (sandwiches and pizza), 1810 University Ave., 941-8449
Across the street from UH, also open for dinner (BYOB). Extremely slow service, so don't be in a hurry!

Kona Brewing Co. (brewpub), 7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy., Hawaii Kai, 394-5662
Beers good, food only ok, good marina view. Also open for dinner.

Eggs' n Things (breakfast), 1911 Kalakaua Ave., 949-0820, NR
Best breakfast, in Waikiki, open very early and also for the very late night crowd. Expect to wait for a table. Try the Cajun fish special with eggs!

The Shack (burger-sport's bar), 377 Keahole, Hawaii Kai, 396-1919
Good burger place, popular with the tv sports crowd.