



LOCAL FOOD IN OAHU & THE BEST PLACES TO GET IT

Local food in Hawaii has a long and rich history. The diverse history of this Hawaiian culinary passion comes from all people that came to the islands to live, work, play, and lay their roots down. “*Local food*,” typically refers to a combination of fare from a variety of cultures that migrated to the Hawaiian Islands. This includes people of various Polynesian, American, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Portuguese origins.

Taro, the root that Poi is made from is an indigenous Polynesian root plant, and so is the delicious Pohole Fern. Baking Banana was introduced by the Tahitians, and Breadfruit was brought by the Marquesans. Korean immigrants introduced Kim Chee and Barbecued Meats, and Sashimi and Bento came from the Japanese. Rice was introduced by the Chinese, and Mac Salad was later introduced by the Americans. As more settlers came to Hawaii for various purposes, the Portuguese brought Sweet Bread and Malasadas, the Spanish added Pasteles and Spices, and the Filipinos introduced Adobo-style garlic dishes, peas and beans. So, with all this food culture history, it’s easy to see how Hawaiian-style local fare has been created, and how it has evolved.

Plate Lunch

Consisting of two scoops of rice, macaroni salad and everything from kalua pork, Korean barbecue, chicken katsu, beef teriyaki or mahimahi, the plate lunch is a staple of local food. In Kapahulu, the Rainbow Drive-In, Ono Hawaiian Foods and Zippy’s (Oahu’s 24-hour mainstay) offer local favorite plates. But throughout Oahu, from mom and pop shops to local chains, you won’t have to look far to find the perfect plate lunch.

Pupu

“Pupu” is the Hawaiian term for appetizer, and every local restaurant from Waikiki to the North Shore offers a wide range of creative pupu platters to dine on, from poke dishes (seasoned cubes of raw fish) to sushi.

Loco Moco

For big appetites, try a “loco moco,” which is a hamburger steak and egg over rice, covered in gravy. This hearty, blue-collar bowl can be found at plate lunch places and restaurants throughout Oahu. Some Hawaii Regional Cuisine chefs like Alan Wong have even created fine dining twists on this favorite.



Shave Ice

No matter what island you're on, grab a shave ice to cool off. These finely shaved snow cones are served with colorful flavors on the top with a choice of ice cream or azuki beans on the bottom. You'll find fine shave ice shops throughout Oahu but the most famous include Matsumoto's

Shave Ice on the North Shore, Waiola's Shave Ice in Kapahulu and Island Snow in Kailua Town near [Kailua Beach](#).

Malasadas

Treat your sweet tooth to a hot malasada (a Portuguese doughnut). Although Leonard's Bakery in Kapahulu is popular, ask any local and they can tell you their favorite bakeries on Oahu to find these fresh and tasty treats.

Best Local Places to Eat on Oahu

Honolulu

Diamond Head Market & Grill

Chef Kelvin Ro serves dishes that pay homage to Hawaiian plate lunch classics such as teriyaki beef and char siu pork, as well as portobello mushroom burgers, grilled tuna steak with wasabi aioli, and a vegetable medley of kabocha squash, zucchini, and eggplant.

Don't miss Chef Ro's tangy Korean barbecued chicken paired with fried pork wontons and spicy kimchi! *3158 Monsarrat Ave.; 808/732-0077; lunch for two \$15.*

Nico's at Pier 38

Chef Nicolas Chaize, creates favorites for dockworkers and fishermen, who order fried rice with hot Portuguese sausage and kamaboko (Japanese fish cake) or French toast made with Molokai sweet bread from Kaneohe Bakery.

Don't miss Chaize's loco moco—the Hawaiian version of a Denny's Grand Slam: white rice, two beef patties, and fried eggs, topped with a mushroom-onion gravy. *1133 N. Nimitz Hwy.; 808/540-1377; breakfast for two \$12.*

Rainbow Drive-In

What One of the last drive-in restaurants in Honolulu, its parking lot is often filled with vans topped with surfboards. Rainbow is a favorite pit stop of beachcombers in flip-flops and office workers hoping to catch some rays on their lunch break.

1961, the Ifuku family owns this drive-in that serves traditional American favorites such as chili dogs, slush floats; and of course, the popular plate- lunch specials such as barbecued ahi or chopped steak stir-fry.



Don't miss The fried chicken cutlet smothered in brown gravy with scoops of white rice. 3308 Kanaina Ave.; 808/737-0177; lunch for two \$14.

Side Street Inn

Side Street is an after-hours hangout for Honolulu's top chefs (Alan Wong and Roy Yamaguchi are regulars). It also provides workaday Honolulu with a hearty selection of fried pork chops, barbecued spare ribs, & the island's creamiest macaroni salad.

Who Chef Colin Nishida buys chow fun noodles from a mom-and-pop shop in Honolulu's Chinatown *and* serves organic microgreens grown in Waimanalo.

1225 Hopaka St.; 808/591-0253; dinner for two \$50.

The North Shore

Kuaaina Sandwich

Don't miss The enormous charbroiled burgers with slices of fresh avocado or pineapple are popular with the protein-loving surf crowd, but the grilled mahimahi steak on a kaiser roll is onolicious! 66-160 Kamehameha Hwy., Haleiwa; 808/637-6067; lunch for two \$20.

Romy's Kahuku prawns & shrimp

What A red shrimp shack, in Kahuku, near the Turtle Bay Resort, Romy's serves up its signature giant prawns wok-seared in butter with garlic.

56-781 Kamehameha Hwy., Kahuku; 808/232-2202; lunch for two \$25.

Sharks Cove Grill

Chef Willy Asprey grill's pesto shrimp skewers, & tuna skewers, drizzled with a creamy sesame-shoyu sauce, are a huge hit. A crunchy baby greens and brown rice are a healthier lunch plate version. 59-712 Kamehameha Hwy., Haleiwa; 808/638-8300; lunch for two \$20.

Ted's Bakery

The Nakamuras are famous for their fish sandwiches & bento boxes of chicken *katsu* or teriyaki beef. But the best part is dessert, try the silky chocolate pudding & coconut cream pie that is a classic! 59-024 Kamehameha Hwy., Sunset Beach; 808/638-5974; lunch for two \$12.