

# ALTERNATIVE HAWAII

## BIG ISLAND

### KAU DRIVE GUIDE

**Southernmost Spot in the United States**  
**Mark Twain's Tree, Theatre Museum**  
**Black Sand Beach**

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Created by: [Alternative-Hawaii.com](http://Alternative-Hawaii.com)

- Drive starts from the Parking Lot of King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel, 75-5660 Palani Road, Kailua-Kona.
- Approx. 90 miles from Start to End of Drive.
- Approx. 3-1/4 hours driving time from Start to End of drive excluding time spent at "stops".
- For your safety, please observe Cautionary Notes on drive "stops" below.
- Set Odometer to Zero between "stops" below.
- All distances are to the nearest tenth of a mile.
- Do not leave valuables in vehicle or unattended

(Photographs are not viewable on this Printer Friendly page. To view photographs return to Color page.)

**STOP 1: KA LAE (SOUTH POINT) PHOTOGRAPH**

**START: KING KAMEHAMEHA'S KONA BEACH HOTEL PARKING LOT**

**DIST/TIME: Approx. 63.7 Miles / 2-1/4 hrs.**

**WATCH FOR: Sign - South Point Rd (Right Side - after MM70)**

**ROUTE:**

- Turn Left from Hotel parking lot onto Palani Street & go short way (0.3 mile) to Queen Kaahumanu Hwy (Hwy 11 on right side - 3rd traffic light)
- Turn Right onto Hwy 11 & go 52.4 miles to South Point Road (right side)
- Turn Right onto South Point Road & go 10 miles to fork in road
- Take Right Fork (left fork goes to Green Sand Beach) & go approx. 1 mile to parking area for Ka Lae (end of the road).

*Ka Lae("South Point") is the southernmost spot in the United States - the next Continental landfall is Antarctica - 7500 miles to the south. This desolate coastline has extensive archaeological sites, and is believed to be the site of the first Polynesian landings in 300 A.D. or earlier.*

Note: Green Sand (Papakolea) Beach. You'll need good hiking shoes and a four-wheel-drive vehicle to get to this green crescent, one of the most unusual and prettiest beaches on the island. The greenish tint is caused by an accumulation of olivine that forms in volcanic eruptions. Swimming is dangerous. Take the road toward the left at the end of the paved road to Ka Lae (South Point). Park at the end of the road and follow the trail approx. 2-1/2 mi along the shoreline.

Caution: The last 5 miles of South Point Road are very rough - a 4-wheel drive is required.

**STOP 2: MARK TWAIN MONKEY POD TREE IN WAIOHINU VILLAGE PHOTOGRAPH**

**LEAVE: KA LAE (SOUTH POINT)**

**DIST/TIME: Approx. 14.5 Miles / 45 Mins.**

**WATCH FOR:** Hawaiian Warrior Sign (Left Side - just past Shirakawa Motel)

**ROUTE:**

- Leave Ka Lae Parking Area & return 10.6 miles to Hwy 11 (on route turn left at fork & stay to left - do not turn right until you reach Hwy 11)
- Turn Right onto Hwy 11 & go 3.9 miles to HVCB Warrior Marker for "Mark Twain Monkey Pod Tree" (left side)

*Spot where author Mark Twain's Monkeypod Tree once grew. Blown down in a heavy windstorm in 1957, a shoot from the original trunk has grown to become a sizeable descendant. Waiohinu's only claim to fame.*

**STOP 3: NAALEHU THEATER MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPH**

**LEAVE:** MARK TWAIN MONKEY POD TREE IN WAIOHINU VILLAGE

**DIST/TIME:** Approx. 1.5 Miles / 2 Mins.

**WATCH FOR:** Theater (Right Side)

**ROUTE:**

- Leave Mark Twain Monkey Pod Tree & continue 1.5 mile to Naalehu Theater Museum

*The rural communities of the big island in the early to mid-20th century were full of people who worked on the sugar plantations. When silent movies became available, the plantation management provided each town with its own movie theatre. As few remain, the Naalehu Theatre is being preserved as a historic relic of this bygone era.*

Note: Tel. 929-9133. Naalehu, the largest town in the area and the most southern town in the United States. Nearby is the Punaluu Bakeshop & Visitor Center - home of the famous Portuguese sweet bread.

**STOP 4: PUNALUU BLACK SAND BEACH COUNTY PARK PHOTOGRAPH**

**LEAVE:** NAALEHU THEATER MUSEUM

**DIST/TIME:** Approx. 9.2 Miles / 12 Mins.

**WATCH FOR:** Sign - Punaluu Black Sands Beach (Right Side)

**ROUTE:**

- Leave Naalehu Theater Museum & continue 7.3 miles on Hwy 11 to Ninole Loop Road (right side)
- Turn Right onto Ninole Loop Road & go 1.9 mile to Punaluu Black Sand Beach parking lot (right side)

*One of the most famous black sand beaches on the island of Hawaii - situated at the head of a small bay - a source of fresh water bubbles up from the ocean bottom. Home to many endangered Green Sea turtles.*

Note: Parking, restrooms, showers, picnic tables, pavilion, camping.

Caution: Sea turtles are an endangered species. Touching, disturbing or harassing them is illegal.

END OF DRIVE - RETURN TO KING KAMEHAMEHA KONA BEACH HOTEL  
(Approx. 66.9 Miles / 90 Minutes)

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