

1 spirit of adventure • • hawaii

Take the family on a true Pacific Ocean adventure with these amazing activities on Oahu, the 50th state's most populous island

WORDS SUSAN GOUGH HENLEY

Explore the grounds on horseback



SAIL AN OUTRIGGER CANOE

There's something about water and boats that appeals to all kids, and Hawaiian Ocean Adventures taps into the islands' earliest history while giving families a terrific water and wildlife experience. Owner Nakoa Prejean has been involved with ocean canoes since he was 17, when his family began the Hawaiian Sailing Canoe Association to honour the art of Hawaiian canoe sailing. Since then he has learned the craft of traditional canoe building, and joined the crew of a Big Island canoe on her maiden voyage from Hawaii to Tahiti and back using traditional navigating techniques.

While sailing and paddling (you can join in if you wish), Prejean tells you and your kids stories about the remarkable history of



Polynesian voyaging canoes, and how traditional sailing canoes are built with native plants, as well as explaining the historical significance of the Hakipuu and Kualoa area. He sails around the island of Mokoli'i (also known as "Chinaman's Hat" for its resemblance to the straw headgear), offshore from Kualoa. Often you will encounter spinner dolphins riding the waves just in front of the canoes, while at the island there is time for snorkelling with green turtles (known locally as *honu*).



Catamaran tour; BELOW: Swim with turtles; OPPOSITE PAGE, MAIN/INSET: Go sailing or canoeing to explore the islands

SWIM WITH SEA CREATURES

Family cruises aboard the 42ft-long *Island Spirit* offer close encounters with Oahu's remarkable diversity of marine life. Water-savvy marine biologists help guests immerse themselves (literally) in the ocean's wild realm, with snorkelling gear and flotation devices ensuring an enjoyable, safe and family-friendly adventure.

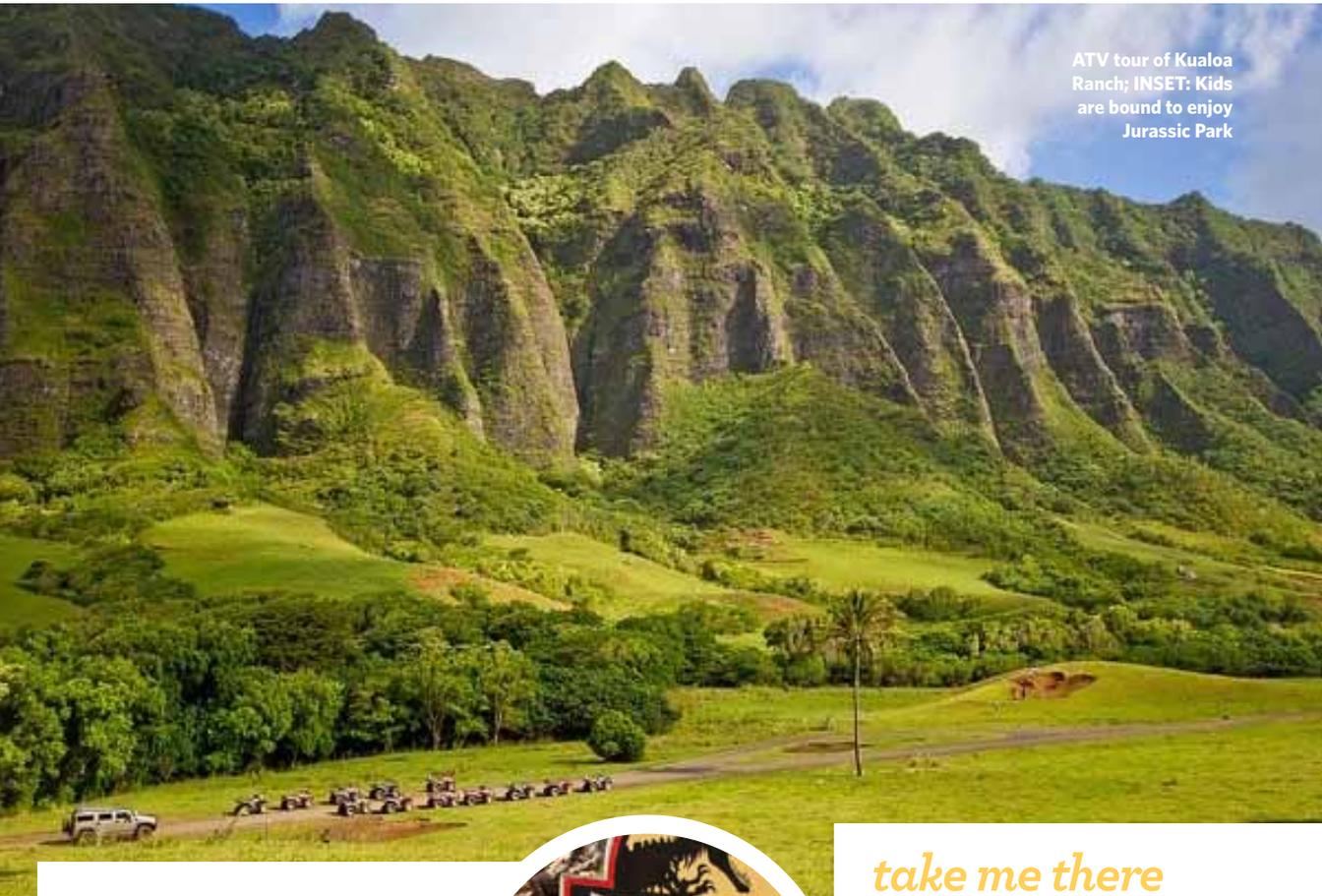
"Swimming with the island's turtles is a life-changing experience, for children and grown-ups," says Wild Side Specialty Tours' owner Tori Cullins. "The sound of kids squealing with delight through their snorkels makes me grin just thinking about it."

There are reef snorkel hunts, the opportunity to swim with bottlenose and spinner dolphins (according to appropriate wildlife-friendly dolphin "wet-iquette"), and during the winter season, watching humpback whales breaching. On any given trip you might also see monk seals, manta rays and albatross, as well as a wide range of colourful reef fish.

Kids will also be amazed to hear the whales sing and dolphins chatter with their characteristic clicks and squeaks via the on-board hydrophone, which broadcasts the mammals' vocalisations from underwater.



ATV tour of Kualoa Ranch; INSET: Kids are bound to enjoy Jurassic Park



VISIT JURASSIC PARK - FOR REAL

The lush terrain of 4,000-acre Kualoa Ranch on the windward side of Oahu is every kid's paradise - a majestic landscape that ranges from broad green valleys and dense rainforest to verdant cliffs plunging to white-sand beaches. This working cattle ranch includes a petting zoo and horsemanship lessons for young children, as well as a cruise to a secret island.

The highlights, however, are undoubtedly the horse, ATV and jeep tours. Yes, your kids will be looking for tyrannosaurus right where *Jurassic Park* was filmed. Parts of *Godzilla*, *George of the Jungle*, *Lost* and both the old and new *Hawaii Five-O* television shows were also shot here. Teenagers



love the freedom of exploring the wilderness on ATVs, while one five-year-old said travelling in the jeep "was like the Indiana Jones Ride at Disneyland, but way better!"

In the evening you can tuck into the buffet at a traditional *luau* (feast) while enjoying a "Legends of Kualoa" performance, where ancient Hawaiian stories are told through chants and traditional hula dance.

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SAIL A CANOE



Hawaiian Ocean Adventures runs two-hour tours around Chinaman's Hat; hawaiianoceanadventures.com

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