

Snorkel in Salt Pond

The waters of the Pacific Ocean off the shores of Salt Pond Beach Park are a sight to behold. The real eye-fel, however, is what lies beneath the surf.

Salt Pond Beach Park is located near Hanapepe on Kauai's Westside. The area was named for the traditional Hawaiian sea salt produced in pools located near the beach. For many generations during summer months, Hawaiian families have dug out pans from the red soil to evaporate seawater and produce natural sea salt. After the salt is produced it is bagged and used not for cooking. The natural sea salt is also used for an Epsom salt-like medicine, offered plain or mixed with red clay. Even now, traditional Hawaiian salt is still available at some markets on the island.

When you visit Salt Pond Beach Park, you may see some families at work in their salt pans. The knowledge and skill is handed down from generation to generation, and the art is practiced with pride. Observing these people as they work, you'll get a real feel for the traditional lifestyle of families. Take care not to walk too close to the salt pans, as they provide necessary livelihood and time-honoured tradition to the people of Hanapepe.

In addition to this charming glimpse of island living, Salt Pond Beach Park offers gentle waves rolling in year-round, making it a popular destination for family outings. Young body surfers love the gentle rolling waves, and snorkelers will find clear water at each end of the crescent beach.

The time pools fronting the salt ponds are definitely worth exploring. It seldom rains at Salt Pond, so when it pours elsewhere on your Hawaiian vacation, visit this piece of paradise and have a fantastic time on the beach. You don't have to be an accomplished swimmer to enjoy snorkeling the waters of Kauai's Salt Pond Beach. With minimal instruction, even beginners can learn to snorkel in no time. With proper floatation devices, even non-swimmers can enjoy snorkeling.

Snorkeling Safety Tips:

- * Mornings are the best time to snorkel, as are calm, clear waters.
- * Never snorkel alone; always snorkel in areas where there are other snorkelers and swimmers.
- * Do not snorkel if the water is rough, choppy or unclear.
- * Do not snorkel near surfers or body surfers.
- * Scan the area outside of the water periodically to keep your bearing. This easy precaution will keep you from drifting off course by mistake.
- * Do not feed the fish under any circumstances, as it fouls the water and sickens the fish, making them susceptible to predators.
- * If you want to attract fish, bring along a zip lock bag. Put a coloured object like a leaf in the bag, fill it with water, and let it float near you. You'd be surprised at how many curious fish will swim up to inspect the bag.
- * Protect Kauai's reefs. Coral reefs are marvelous ecosystems that take thousands of years to develop but only seconds to destroy. Float over shallow reefs, but never walk on them. Instead of standing on a coral reef, paddle to a sandy spot.
- * Sea turtles and monk seals should be admired from a distance. The Endangered Species Act protects both the monk seal and the Pacific green sea turtle. It is illegal to harm or harass these creatures in any way, including touching. Law officials in Hawaii strictly enforce these rules. If you are fortunate enough to spot one of these rare creatures in the water, enjoy them from a respectful distance.
- * Always check to ensure local conditions are safe before entering the sea. Storm surges and high surf can be very dangerous wherever they occur. Talk to local residents, listen to weather forecasts and choose your snorkel location accordingly.

A Hawaiian vacation is a dream come true. Plan your vacation at Salt Pond Beach Park, and discover beauty and adventure beyond your wildest dreams both on land, and below the tides.