

stacle. (If you don't have some cheap water/reef shoes, navigating the rounded-boulder floor will be unpleasant.) There is shade near the pool until noon. Water splashes into the pool from the ocean. Only during big surf or very high tide is it anything but gentle in the pool. Bring a mask (though the water is so incredibly clear, you almost won't need one). Fishermen sometimes use it on weekends, but it's usually vacant during the week.

To get there, drive about 1½ miles from the end of the pavement (or 2¼ miles from the corner of Hwys 132 and 137—see map on page 113). The beautiful jungle-side road (which looks more like a tunnel drilled through hau bush) is easy to find: It's the first road on the right at the bottom of a short paved segment

A vast area of interconnected tide-pools await at Kapoho, providing endless snorkeling possibilities.



on the otherwise unpaved main road. It's 1,500 feet to the shoreline, and the pool is another 100 yards to the left.

Return to Hwys 132 and 137 when you're done.

Heading south on Hwy 137 leads past Kapoho-Kai Road. This road goes to one of the more unusual locations on the Big Island. Dozens and dozens of spring-fed, brackish pools and tide-pools, some volcanically heated, are strewn throughout the area known as the **Kapoho Tide-pools**. Many of the land-locked pools have been incorporated into people's front and back yards as swimming pools. The large pools adjacent to the ocean (called Wai'opae Ponds) are on public property and contain some of the most fascinating snorkeling around. If you wish to snorkel here, take Kapoho-Kai Road (just before the 9 mile marker). When it seems to dead end (on Waiopae), turn left, go ¼ mile and park when the ocean is visible. Snorkel exploration is

possible even for novice snorkelers. The largest pool snakes its way to the ocean and rises and falls each day with the tide. This creates slight currents that are fun to ride if the surf's not high. These pools are usually (but not always) very calm and protected. Closer to the reef edge brings more fish, but sometimes there's a current. We've spent many hours here and counted eight kinds of coral. Toward the back (west) a couple of pools are slightly heated by the volcano. The weather is sometimes snotty in the morning but usually clears up in the afternoon.

Note that the tide-pools are best visited during the week. Weekends are crowded since Puna residents have comparatively few beaches to choose from.

There are lots of vacation rentals available here (called Vacationland) and next door in the gated community of Kapoho Beach Lots. Make *sure* you see what you're getting beforehand because there are a number of charming-sounding dumps there alongside wonderful vacation rentals.

Farther down Hwy 137 past the 10 mile marker is **Ahalanui**. (Formerly called Pu'ala'a, the state discovered that they

Though it looks like an ordinary swimming pool, Ahalanui boasts a natural heating system powered by Kilauea Volcano.

had accidentally misnamed it for decades—*oops*.) This delightful gem is definitely worth stopping for. It's a spring- and ocean-fed pool with a manmade wall and an inlet separating it from the ocean. Although the original builders created this spot when the water was *ice cold*, the Kapoho eruptions of 1955 and 1960 reworked the lava plumbing here so that now, instead of coming out cold, this pool is *volcanically heated* to a toasty 91–95 degrees. (It occasionally gets *much* cooler and we're not sure what the mechanism is.) With palm trees all around and the sound of the surf over the seawall, you may have trouble hauling yourself out once you've experienced this genuine Pele bath, and it's easier to access than Champagne Pond, though it's more crowded, as well. *On occasion* we've noticed a slight sulphur smell on the skin when we've gotten out, but even then it's worth it. Closed Wednesdays.

