

bit stark for a garden, but it's starting to fill out. The rain forest area is a nice stroll and the Rainbow Walk adjacent to the visitor center has numerous plants neatly marked. Make use of the free mosquito repellent offered. Their exclusive view of Umauma Falls from their road (1/10 mile from the old highway—see map) is really the only reason to stop by and pay the \$13 per person entry fee. (See the photo on page 128 to see if it's worth it to you.) Whether you plan to pay for the gardens or not, *be sure* to backtrack 2/10 mile from the highway bridge turnout, then take the road on the mauka side across from the

16 mile marker and turn right at the T. This 4-mile-long, one-lane country road passes through sugar land before it takes you to a small tree tunnel and several striking gulches. This is the Hawai'i of yesteryear, when life moved a bit slower. You might want to do the same. Stop at one of the old bridges and enjoy the peace. Vine-covered trees and ever-chirping birds give this area an unforgettable feel. One of the small Depression-era bridges crosses **Nanue Stream** (it's stamped into the bridge). The guard-rail 75 feet beyond the bridge has a crude and steep trail that leads



down to the stream. From there a person could walk over to the top of the falls (don't fall off), or go upstream where taller waterfalls await. (The upstream falls, though only 900 feet away, require *very* awkward stream hiking.) If you don't have mosquito repellent, be prepared for the bloodletting of a lifetime.

Bypass any opportunities to reconnect with the highway until you pass rarely used **Waikaumalo Park** near a pretty stream. When you reacquire the highway just north of the 19 mile marker, you may want to backtrack less than a mile to see the densely jungled gulch and waterfall visible from the highway that you missed before continuing north.

As you effortlessly cruise these gulches on our modern bridges of today, try to visualize what a nightmare it must have been to cross them in



What a drop! 'Akaka Falls tumbles 420 feet.



From a picnic table at Kolekole Beach Park you can either watch the ocean or watch kids swinging off a rope swing next to a waterfall. Talk about an embarrassment of riches!

days gone by. It took many days to get from Hilo to Waipi'o Valley. When Isabella Bird toured this area by horse in 1873, she wrote of the utter dread she felt as she plunged down and then trudged up gulch after harrowing gulch on her way to Waipi'o, fording raging streams on a snorting, terrified horse. Today, the hardest thing about traversing these gulches is resetting the cruise control after a sharp bend.

Just past the 25 mile marker is the road leading mauka to the town of **Laupahoehoe**. (The short road on the ocean side sports a nice view of the point mentioned below.) The town itself doesn't offer much other than a '50s-style restaurant (see ISLAND DINING), plus a store down a road on the *ocean* side of the Hwy 3/10 past the 24 mile marker. It's just a store, and they usually only have one hot meal to eat, so just ask what's for lunch today. (Their curry stew's not bad.)

Also on the highway is the **Laupahoehoe Train Museum** (962-6300). This assortment of artifacts and photos of

Hamakua's history with trains is somewhat interesting. They have over a dozen volunteers. Some are extremely knowledgeable...and some aren't. It's \$4.

Just past the 27 mile marker is a road on the ocean side that leads 1 mile down the cliffs to **Laupahoehoe Point**. To many on the Big Island, Laupahoehoe is associated with tragedy.

During the April Fool's Day tsunami of 1946, twenty-one schoolchildren and three adults were swept to their deaths. Following this, the village was moved top-side. The views from the road down to the rugged point sport dramatic views of the sea cliffs beyond and is well worth the stop. There is a memorial at the bottom to those who lost their lives. From out on the jetty, the ocean's energy feels raw and menacing. Waves come in with powerful anger. You feel (and are) exposed to the ocean's fury on the jetty. Here it's not the calm, soothing ocean of Kona, but rather the unpredictable, hot-tempered ocean of Laupahoehoe. Away from the jetty the

