

# Crowned North America's Top Adventure Operator, EXP Journeys Turns Its Compass to Hawaii

*Fresh off its World Travel Awards win, EXP Journeys announces Hawaii as its top winter destination, offering journeys rooted in culture and sustainability.*

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[EXP Journeys](#), recently named North America's Leading Adventure Tour Operator 2025 by the World Travel Awards, announces Hawaii as its top winter destination for 2026. The announcement comes as Hawaii reclaims its place as a top-tier luxury destination, welcoming travelers back with renewed vitality and reimagined properties following the devastating 2023 coastline fires. Thanks to the newly expanded Alaska Airlines-Hawaiian Airlines partnership, traveling to and between the islands has never been easier. With numerous new direct routes from the West Coast, including San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle, travelers can now fly straight to individual islands, with quick inter-island connections via Hawaiian Airlines or private charter taking less than an hour. As winter descends on the mainland, Hawaii stands out as the ultimate place to defrost, where warm ocean breezes, black-sand beaches, and a vibrant spirit of aloha meet thoughtful stewardship of land and tradition.



EXP Journeys Hawaii Surf



EXP Journeys Logo

Against this backdrop, EXP Journeys is unveiling the ultimate Hawaii getaway, with experiences designed not just to highlight the best of the islands, but to do so the 'EXP way.' That means exclusive access, creative approaches, seamless logistics, and some of the most knowledgeable guides in the business. With so many options across the archipelago, planning can feel overwhelming, but EXP removes the stress. Every detail is handled in advance, from matching travelers to the right island to preparing private residences fully stocked with surfboards, snorkel gear, and farm-fresh food. What remains is the freedom to arrive and immerse in Hawaii's beauty, culture, and wonder, while EXP ensures every moment feels effortless.

## Seven Ways EXP Journeys Does Hawaii Differently

### 1. Luxury Villas Instead of Hotels

Hawaii is home to some of the world's most celebrated resorts, but EXP Journeys takes a different approach: private residences that serve as sanctuaries. Villas like the newly reimagined [Hale 'O Ka La](#), a 5,358-square-foot estate within Mauna Kea Resort, which recently debuted after an \$8 million renovation, allow guests to experience the islands in privacy and comfort. These homes offer more than a place to sleep; they are curated spaces where every need is anticipated, from the surfboards and snorkel gear waiting by the door to the chef who sources ingredients at local farmers' markets. The benefit of this



EXP Journeys Hale O Ka La Exterior



EXP Journeys Hawaii Sunrise at Maui's Haleakala



EXP Journeys Hawaii Canoe Sail

model is freedom: travelers can choose what they want to do and when, while EXP crafts customized versions of each experience, turning the familiar into something entirely personal.

## 2. Surfing, But with a Pro

For many, Hawaii is synonymous with surfing, but few visitors ever experience it beyond a beginner's lesson. EXP Journeys elevates this rite of passage. Families begin with guides who deliver boards to the beach, offering instruction tailored to every age and skill level. Once travelers are ready, EXP brings in a local professional surfer, someone whose connection to the waves is as cultural as it is athletic. This is not about watching from the shore but joining them in the lineup, catching waves together, and sharing laughs between sets. Often, the pros themselves return for more sessions, not out of obligation, but because the joy of surfing is magnified when it's shared. It's surfing not as a sport, but as a window into Hawaii's soul.

## 3. Sunrise at Maui's Haleakalā, But in Comfort

The sunrise from the summit of Haleakalā, Maui's dormant volcano, is a bucket-list moment. But most travelers endure an early-morning alarm, a long drive in the dark, and the chill of waiting among crowds. EXP Journeys transforms this into something magical. Guests are driven in comfort, wrapped in blankets with pillows and hot cocoa in hand, arriving rested as the horizon begins to glow. Instead of jostling for a spot, they walk with guides to a secluded vantage point, where silence and anticipation build until the first rays crest the ocean. Once the sun has risen, they descend away from the crowds, where their chef is waiting with a made-to-order breakfast in a quiet campground. What could be grueling becomes serene, a memory as nourishing as it is spectacular.

## 4. Get Out on the Water, But Canoe Sail

Hawaiian culture is deeply rooted in the sea, and EXP Journeys connects guests to this heritage through the experience of outrigger canoe sailing. Guided by a renowned local artist who hand-built his vessel, travelers experience not only the thrill of sailing but the deeper narrative of tradition, craftsmanship, and survival tied to these waters. Later, the ocean reveals another face: at night, guests head out under the stars, dive lights illuminating the depths as manta rays materialize from the dark. Snorkeling, freediving, or scuba, travelers find themselves floating beside these gentle giants as they glide with quiet grace. The encounter is transformative, a reminder of how vast, alive, and fragile the Pacific truly is.

## 5. Dine Locally, But With Your Private Chef

Hawaii's fertile soils and microclimates create one of the most diverse growing environments on Earth, and EXP Journeys makes food part of the adventure. Guests follow their private chef to island farmers' markets, weaving among stalls piled with tropical fruit, fresh greens, and line-caught fish. Together, they select the day's ingredients, letting the bounty dictate the menu. Back

at their villa, guests can choose to observe or participate, learning hands-on as the chef transforms their selections into dinner. Meals are not just eaten but experienced with conversations over technique, recipes gifted to take home, and flavors that ground travelers in Hawaii's terroir. Dining becomes as much about connection as it is about cuisine.

## 6. Travel Responsibly, But Support Local Research

EXP Journeys ensures that travel isn't just about taking, but also giving back. On Kauai, travelers meet with NOAA scientists and the nonprofit Malama i na Honu, learning about the island's beloved sea turtles. By day, they watch turtles bask on Poipu Beach, gaining insights into their ecology. By night, they return with researchers to scan, measure, and track individual turtles as part of ongoing conservation. Guests don't just witness, but contribute, becoming part of a story much larger than their own vacation. These experiences exemplify EXP's philosophy: that travel, done thoughtfully, can be a force for good.

## 7. Explore, But Do It Responsibly

Hawaii's landscapes, from its waterfalls, lava fields, and valleys, are treasures protected by strict regulations, and for good reason. Rather than sidestepping these rules, EXP Journeys works hand-in-hand with local landowners who steward their ancestral properties. Through these partnerships, guests gain respectful access to places otherwise off-limits: a hike through a tropical fruit farm to a private Kohala waterfall, followed by a catered lunch overlooking Waipi'o Valley; or a trek across native forests on Hualālai Volcano that ends inside a cavernous lava tube. In every case, the experience is shaped not only by the scenery but also by the voices of the locals who share the land's history and meaning. It's exploration grounded in reverence.

## Certified B Corp: Travel as a Force for Good

EXP Journeys' B Corp Certification underscores its commitment to the belief that travel should benefit everyone it touches. Meeting rigorous standards of verified social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency, EXP has joined a global movement of businesses committed to building a more inclusive and sustainable economy. This ethos is reflected in every Hawaiian itinerary: supporting local farmers and artisans, partnering with conservationists, and ensuring travelers leave the islands not just rested, but enriched and aware of their role in safeguarding the places they explore.

For more information about EXP Journeys' Hawaii experiences or to start planning a custom itinerary, visit [www.expjourneys.com](http://www.expjourneys.com) or email [hello@expjourneys.com](mailto:hello@expjourneys.com).

## About EXP Journeys

Founded in 2012 by veteran guides Kevin Jackson and Andrew Roberts, EXP Journeys is a [Certified B Corporation™](#) travel company curating bespoke travel experiences across North and

South America to Antarctica. With roots deeply embedded in the guiding community and a proprietary training program that sets the industry standard, EXP approaches every itinerary with a blend of creativity, experience, and environmental responsibility, ensuring that each journey is both memorable and sustainable. Whether it's heli-accessed wilderness or their 'Leave No Trace' mobile camps tucked into the most breathtaking corners of the American West, EXP specialises in crafting experiences that are at once intimate and impactful.

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