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Best Cocktails on Maui

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By Local Expert: Kyle Ellison



Ask a Question



Credit: Susan Seubert

The fruity drink with a flowery garnish—it’s an image as iconic to vacationing in Maui as sunsets, waterfalls, or surf. Ever since sailors from the South Pacific introduced the Mai Tai and tiki bar, the fusion of beach with mixed libations has defined a party in paradise. Recently, however, the days of sipping a “Blue Hawaii” have modernized, popularized, and localized; craft cocktails made with local ingredients now dominate island menus.

Professional mixology is exploding in Maui, and between local distilleries opening their doors and the pan-Pacific offering of flavors, island cocktails are racing forward in creativity, complexity and depth. Nearly all resort bars and high-end restaurants now feature signature cocktails, although smaller venues are also drawing attention for their progressive and boozy creations. So while slowly sipping a Lava Flow poolside will never go out of style, the following bars are raising the bar on how Maui mixes its drinks.



Credit: Foursquare

1 No Ka Oi, Monkeypod Kitchen

In Hawaiian, “No Ka Oi” simply means “the best,” and it’s a fitting name for this smooth martini, poured by the bartenders at chef Peter Merriman’s restaurant. Maui-made Ocean Vodka is blended with Thai basil and lime, and lightly topped with a honey-lilikoi purée for a tropical, flavorful finish.

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Credit: Foursquare

2 Resort Grown Rosemary Pina Rocks, Molokini Bar and Grille

Locally-made spirits and locally-sourced fruit have become common in Maui cocktails, but this bar at the Makena Beach and Golf Resort goes a step further by using produce grown right on property. Fresh rosemary from the resort's herb garden adds a twist to this island classic, which combines lime, coconut, pineapple, and rum.



Credit: Foursquare

3 Dragonberry Bomb, Relish Burger Bistro

While it's graced the menu of this Westin Maui restaurant for years, the Dragonberry Bomb keeps racking up awards and remains a Ka'anapali classic. The drink's creator, Freddie Sconfienza, rode this rum and elderflower cocktail to his second consecutive Star Mixologist award for all of Starwood's resorts. Made with lime juice and muddled blackberries, it's unforgettably good.



Credit: Foursquare

4 Pho-Bang!, Dazoo

This curious and casual Pa'ia enclave opened in 2013, and has been turning heads with its cross-cultural creations and Korean inspired cuisine ever since. Local reader polls have voted the cocktails as some of the best on island; to see why, try a Pho-Bang!—a concoction of locally made pineapple vodka, lapsang souchong black tea, lemongrass, ginger, Thai basil, jalapeno, and a garnish of kimchi olive.



Credit: Foursquare

5 Tropical Itch Mai Tai, Ka'anapali Beach Hotel Tiki Bar

While nearly every Maui bar has some sort of award-winning Mai Tai, there's something to be said for consistency. Dale, the bartender at the Ka'anapali Tiki Bar, has poured these for 40 years, and the drink gets bonus points for its practical garnish—a 16-inch, wooden backscratcher that rises high above the rim of the glass.

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