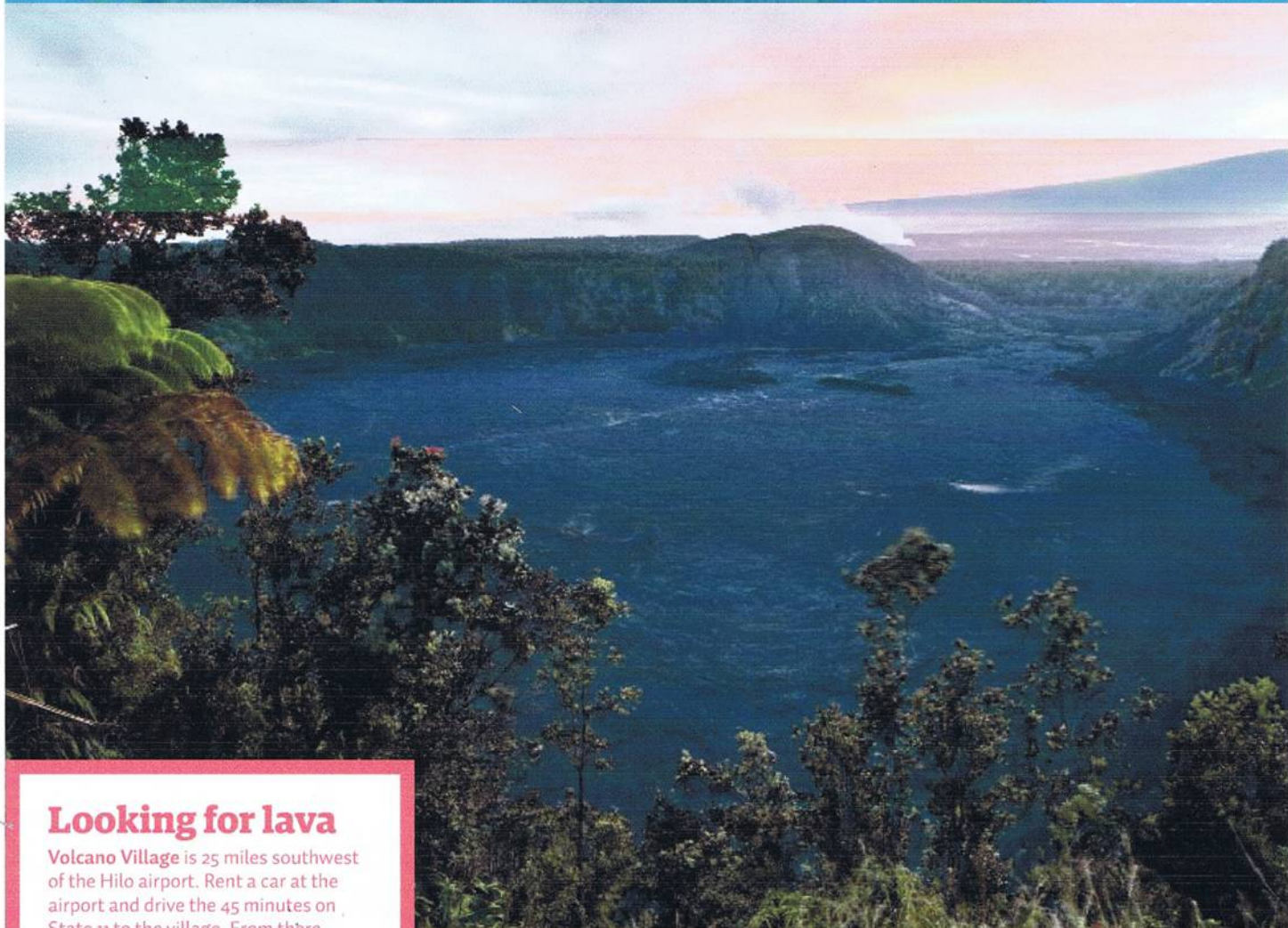


Sunset Travel Guide



Looking for lava

Volcano Village is 25 miles southwest of the Hilo airport. Rent a car at the airport and drive the 45 minutes on State 11 to the village. From there, **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park** (\$10 per vehicle; nps.gov/havo) is 1 mile away.

STAY When you arrive at the **Crater Rim Cabin**, chances are a fire will be lit, the kitchen will be stocked for breakfast, and fresh flowers will greet you. From \$155; two night minimum; craterrimcabin.com.

GO Stop by contemporary gallery **Volcano Garden Arts**, which also rents out a cottage (from \$129). Closed Mon; 19-3834 Old Volcano Rd.; volcanogardenarts.com

For impressive volcanic activity, try the **Kalapana Lava Viewing Area**, in Puna, at the end of State 130; call for hours and daily lava update; 808/961-8093

EAT The **Kilauea Lodge**, a beautifully renovated YMCA camp from 1938, serves dinner nightly. \$\$\$; 19-3948 Old Volcano Rd.; kilauealodge.com For lunch, grab a salad at **Kiawe Kitchen**. \$; 19-4005 Haunani Rd.; 808/967-7711.

Kona's white-sand beaches, is to enter a world where steam vents cough, solid earth rumbles, and fiery orange lava pours into the ocean below.

I start my damp descent on the Kilauea Iki Trail. Mossy trees feel luxe beneath my palms, and the sulfur dioxide warnings issued by the park that morning only add to the adventure. I bound onto a crusted lava lake bed, a vast sci-fi landscape of craggy red and purple rocks with steam vents spewing, feeling entirely lost in space. In a good way. Guided by stacked lava-rock cairns, I trek over burgeoning red lehua blossoms toward the cavelike Thurston Lava Tube. When I emerge, the rain has let up. I squint skyward and the iridescence is like the inside of an abalone shell. There's a faint rainbow in the distance. *I'm beautiful, Kilauea is saying. And I can kill you.*

Soon enough, I'm back in my car, driving

from the park to the black-rock beaches where Kilauea's molten lava flows into the ocean. It feels counterintuitive to be driving toward an enormous roiling ball of steam, like the aftermath of an explosion, but that's what I do, and then walk out to the farthest point, the Kalapana Lava Viewing Area. It's a little disappointing. The sulfur dioxide levels at the end of State 130 are so high today that it is as close as I am allowed to get. I want more.

I spend my final night on the island at the cozy Crater Rim Cabin. It hits me, as I sit in front of the gas fireplace, that our everyday lives are full of people wanting to catastrophize even the smallest of transgressions. But here, in this strange and magical place where the possibility of catastrophe exists every day, a disappointment is nothing. You can always look toward Kilauea, with its lava and danger, and think: Wow. *That is something.*