

American Airlines 

# *Celebrated Living*

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017



## THE PLATINUM LIST

THE WORLD'S BEST HOTELS,  
RESORTS, RESTAURANTS AND  
TRAVEL EXPERIENCES



# RESORTS



## BEST SPORTING RESORTS

# Four Seasons Maui

From paddleboard yoga to undersea scooter snorkeling, this Hawaiian resort offers guests much more than just a holiday on the beach

**A**fter stepping onto the balcony of my suite at the Four Seasons Resort Maui overlooking Wailea Beach, the view immediately catches me off guard. The sight of Kaho‘olawe—the smallest of the eight volcanic Hawaiian Islands—looming in the distance is, of course, stunning. However, what I’m most struck by is the number of resort guests balancing atop paddleboards, snorkeling along the water and zipping over waves in kayaks. They far outnumber those simply lounging on the beach under umbrellas sipping Mai Tais. While relaxing on the sand is a popular way to pass the time here, loyal guests return year after year for the abundance of oceanic activities—from whale watching to scuba diving.

“We have a fabulous oceanfront,” says director of recreation Jeff Melcher. “And people keep coming back for the staff, who treat you like a family member. They make sure you know what you’re doing and are as safe as possible.”

On the first morning of my Four Seasons Maui sojourn, I meet up at 6:45 a.m. outside the spa for the resort’s newest offering: stand-up paddleboard yoga. My group is led out and individually anchored to buoys in the middle of the ocean for the most exhilarating yoga I’ve ever experienced. Surrounded by the morning sun and emerald green water, it’s idyllic. From child’s pose to downward dog, I mostly make it all the way through the guided lesson without falling off my board. That is,

until we attempt warrior pose. I can’t quite keep my balance without plopping into the drink. The instructors keep assuring me the refreshing dips are part of the fun.

After a breakfast smoothie, I grab a paddle for an outrigger canoe lesson, the resort’s most popular recreational activity. It’s part scenic tour, part cultural lesson—with a little bit of an upper-body workout. From the third seat of the outrigger, I hunt for sea turtles and urchins while hearing about the history of Maui. “It’s a way to connect to our past because our ancestors were voyagers,” chef concierge Sam Wilhelm tells me.

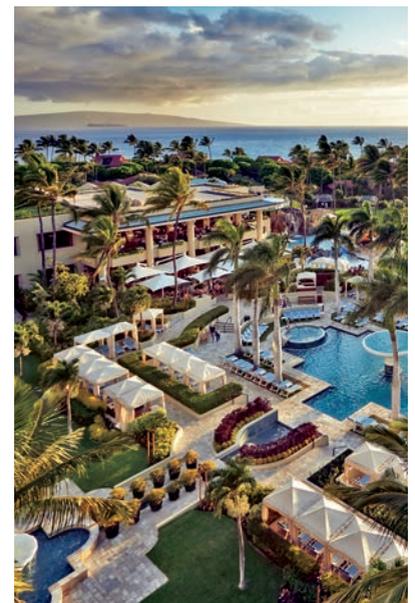
The next morning, after some time on an elliptical machine in the open-air gym, I meet up with Rob Lohle of Maui Undersea Adventures, which operates the resort’s underwater activities. I opt for scooter snorkeling, where a bright yellow personal propeller allows me to cover three times more area than relying solely on fins. During the 90-minute session amid coral reefs located just offshore, Lohle and I zip alongside schools of colorful butterflyfish and several green sea turtles.

After a couple of days, I’ve only scratched the surface of the resort’s offerings (which also include a compressive children’s program). I didn’t do any scuba diving. I also missed the spa, tennis courts and Wailea Golf Club. Heck, I didn’t even have a Mai Tai on the beach.

—DERRIK J. LANG  
[fourseasons.com/maui/](http://fourseasons.com/maui/)



Outrigger canoe lessons are the resort’s most popular recreational activity. Below: The Four Seasons Maui at Wailea Beach





“IT’S A WAY TO CONNECT TO OUR PAST BECAUSE OUR ANCESTORS WERE VOYAGERS.”



Scooter snorkeling allows guests to cover three times more area than relying on fins

### MORE ACTION-PACKED RESORTS

In Colorado and Wyoming, these properties offer exciting activities in spectacular settings

#### The Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO

Dating to 1918, this majestic retreat is known as the “grande dame” of the American West. Perched 6,230 feet above sea level and featuring 20 restaurants and cafes, the sprawling property provides rock climbing, mountain biking, flyfishing, falconry, pickleball and golf, among many other options. It’s an “exalted atmosphere that celebrates the grand outdoors in every sport imaginable,” says PL expert Samantha Brown. [broadmoor.com](http://broadmoor.com)

#### Brush Creek Ranch, Saratoga, WY

For adventure seekers who also like a touch of luxury, this 30,000-acre cattle ranch and resort channels the Old West with back-to-nature activities and log cabins (happily, with modern amenities). “There is so much to do, from hiking to horseback riding,” says designer Tory Burch. “It’s like being back at summer camp.” [brushcreekranch.com](http://brushcreekranch.com)

SIDEBAR TEXT BY JACQUELYNN POWERS MAURICE. TOP: DON RIDDLE; BOTTOM LEFT: CHRISTIAN HORAN; BOTTOM RIGHT: ROE LOHLE