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 ISLAND HOPPING



What's your pleasure? (clockwise from top) Riding on Amelia Island; watersports at Biras Creek; overlooking a bridge and poolside at the Plantation; a reflecting pool at Halekulani

motorized Boston Whaler dinghies, all included in the nightly rate. Windsurfing and sailing lessons also are complimentary, as are local snorkeling excursions (snorkeling trips to other islands start at \$25).

After so many activities, you'll need to fill up on healthful dishes such as the grilled grouper with herbed couscous, green beans and

salsa at the resort's hilltop restaurant, which offers stunning views of the North Sound. Top off your stay with the Island Cooler massage and aloe wrap, a signature treatment featuring fresh-picked aloe and a scrub with sea salt from neighboring Salt Island (\$145; 90 minutes).

From \$525 per night, double occupancy; includes all meals (800-223-1108, biras.com)

— Katy Koontz



Best for Pure R & R Halekulani, Waikiki Beach, Oahu

The Hawaiian island of Oahu is known worldwide as a tropical playground; more than 4 million visitors annually flock to its sandy shores for sunbathing, shopping and round-the-clock revelry. But amid the bustle is an oasis of tranquility on Waikiki Beach: Halekulani, which means "House Befitting Heaven" in Hawaiian, has welcomed travelers since 1917, when it was a private beachfront estate.

Whether lounging by the pool, hiking at nearby Diamond Head crater or surfing in the crystal-blue Pacific, activities abound here. If sheer relaxation is your goal, visit the SpaHalekulani, which specializes in the healing techniques of Asia, Hawaii and the South Pacific. Try the Polynesian Nonu, a

Samoan-inspired massage with warm stones (\$180 for 75 minutes), or the Papaya Pineapple Body Wrap, an anti-aging treatment incorporating local ingredients (\$250 for 105 minutes).

Order one of Halekulani's famed mai tais (\$8) and enjoy a spectacular view of the sunset and the sea. For French cuisine, dine at La Mer, the hotel's romantic oceanfront restaurant. Treat yourself to a La Mer favorite: the trio of fresh island fish in a rosemary-salt crust (\$45).

From \$325 per night, double occupancy (800-367-2343, halekulani.com) — Jennifer M. Volland



Best for Watersports Biras Creek, Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands

This secluded 140-acre Caribbean hideaway — set on the lagoon side of Virgin Gorda island and just steps away from white-sand beaches — stocks each guest suite with bikes for cruising the property's trails (remember to ride on the left!). Or, if mellow waves are more your speed, choose from Hobie Cats, single-person Sunfish sailboats, windsurfers, sea kayaks and

Best for Nature Lovers Amelia Island Plantation, Amelia Island, Fla.

Located on the northernmost barrier island off Florida's Atlantic coast, Amelia Island Plantation beckons the adventurous with 1,350 acres of protected tidal marshes, oceanfront dunes, grassland and savannahs. The beach stretches some 3½ miles, with dolphins frolicking just offshore at dawn and dusk.

You could stay a month here and barely get through all the activities. The resort's Nature Center boasts more than 20 on-site programs (\$7.50 each) ranging from Bird Watching 101 to Crab Grab, where you'll burn calories chasing the quick creatures in the marsh. More-traditional workouts can be found at the health and fitness center, which offers classes like aqua aerobics, body sculpting and Pilates (\$8 each for one hour).

Find light dining options at the nearby Spa & Shops at Amelia Island Plantation. Stop for lunch at Marché Burette gourmet market, then head to the spa for the Watsu massage and aromatherapy wrap (\$125 for 90 minutes).

From \$181 per night, double occupancy (800-874-6878, aipfl.com) — K.K.



PHOTOGRAPHY: (CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT) COURTESY OF HALEKULANI; DAVE G. HOUSER/CORBIS; COURTESY OF BIRAS CREEK; COURTESY OF AMELIA ISLAND PLANTATION.