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40th Annual Kūpuna Hula Festival Returns to OUTRIGGER Kona, Celebrating the Stories of Hawai‘i

Two-day festival brings nearly four decades of cultural tradition to Kona with hula competition, international performances and a craft fair featuring Hawai‘i Island artisans



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KAILUA-KONA – OUTRIGGER Kona Resort & Spa will welcome the 40th annual Hawai‘i Kūpuna Hula Festival on Sept. 9–10, 2026, bringing together kūpuna dancers, kumu hula, musicians and audiences from Hawai‘i and around the world for two days celebrating hula, ‘ike and aloha.

Presented by the Hawai‘i County Department of Parks and Recreation’s Elderly Activities Division, the milestone festival honors and perpetuates Hawaiian culture through its most treasured resource – nā kūpuna. The 2026 festival theme, “He Lei Poina’ole Ko Hawai‘i,” or “Cherished moment of Hawai‘i woven into a lei,” invites participants to share mele and hula inspired by meaningful connections to Hawai‘i.

“Hosting the Kūpuna Hula Festival is a privilege and a beautiful reflection of what makes Hawai‘i Island so special,” said Geoff Pearson, General Manager at OUTRIGGER Kona Resort & Spa. “For 40 years, this festival has created a space where kūpuna can share their knowledge, passion and aloha for hula, while giving residents and visitors an opportunity to experience Hawai‘i’s culture through the people who carry these traditions forward. We are honored to welcome everyone to Kona for this special milestone.”

Over the two-day celebration, audiences can experience individual and group hula competitions, an international ho'olaule'a, special performances and award presentations. The festival is also an opportunity to experience the artistry and creativity of Hawai'i through a free craft fair, open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days, featuring local artisans and makers.

Wednesday, Sept. 9

8 a.m.–5 p.m. – Craft Fair: Browse local crafts, artwork and island-made goods.

4 p.m. / 5 p.m. – Doors open / Festival program begins

Individual competition: Tūtū Wahine and Tūtū Kāne | International Ho'olaule'a | Award presentations

Thursday, Sept. 10

8 a.m.–5 p.m. – Craft Fair

4 p.m. / 5 p.m. – Doors open / Festival program begins

Group competition: Nā Wahine, Nā Kāne and Hui Pū'ia | Special performances | Award presentations

The festival is open to senior dancers age 55 and older, with the competition providing a stage for kūpuna to share their mastery and love of hula. The 40th anniversary also builds on the festival's long-standing connection to Hawai'i Island and its international hula community. In 2025, nearly 300 kūpuna from Hawai'i Island, Moloka'i and Japan participated in the festival at OUTRIGGER Kona Resort & Spa.

Located on the Kona Coast, OUTRIGGER Kona Resort & Spa provides a fitting setting for the celebration, with its connection to Keauhou and its ongoing commitment to sharing the culture, history and natural beauty of Hawai'i with guests and the local community.

For event details or room reservations, visit outrigger.com. Special rates are available using promo code: HULA26

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ABOUT OUTRIGGER RESORTS & HOTELS

For more than 75 years, OUTRIGGER has charted a journey of discovery – expanding from Hawai'i to premier resort destinations including Fiji, Mauritius, Thailand and the Maldives. The privately held hospitality company invites guests to 'Come Be Here' with authentic Signature Experiences and the OUTRIGGER DISCOVERY loyalty program – a member of the award-winning Global Hotel Alliance (GHA). OUTRIGGER's multi-branded portfolio includes OUTRIGGER Resorts, Hawaii Vacation Condos by OUTRIGGER®, The Kapalua Villas Maui and OUTRIGGER Honua Kai Resort & Spa while also managing select properties from top international hotel brands including Embassy Suites by Hilton®. Find out more at [OUTRIGGER.com](https://outrigger.com) or visit @OUTRIGGERResorts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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