

Waipi'o Valley
Horses Ride Review

Waipio Valley Horseback Adventure

www.naalapastables.com

Reservations required. A little under \$100 each (\$155 +\$20 tip with Kamaaina discount for two). Check in at Waipi'o Valley Artworks at top of hill and ride tour van down into valley.

{written in 2008 or so}

Waipi'o Valley is a wonder to view and if you're not a local, taking a tour is the best way to go. You can either do a van tour, a horse and buggy ride (rumored to have tipped over more than once in the last year sending passengers to the hospital *{this was written in 2008}*), or by horseback. I recommend taking the horses.

The ride down via van is quite bumpy, and is sure to be hard on anyone with a bad back or neck. To be honest, as we drove down, I wasn't too thrilled with the drivers antics, "Look ma no hands," and/or the like. The boy was an idiot. Clue to tour guides around the world: most of you are not funny, and if you make jokes about everything, and I do mean everything, I will stop listening to you. Actually, from my perspective I'm not hiring a tour guide, I'm going on a tour, so the less I realize that you're with me, the better. Bottom line, my tour guide was an idiot. Nothing personal... or then, yes it is, quite personal actually. I mean, we're on a freaking mountain road. Keep your hands on the fucking wheel.

Past that complaint the tour was wonderful. The day was sunny, by all appearances we had the valley to ourselves (I think the tour operators have hired out all the locals as guides), and the scenery was just divine, to kill for--I suppose that's why the white man did it. But hey, at least we didn't get a Hawaiian Separatist lecture on this ride *{as I once got with another tour operator}*.

Anyhow, back to the horseback ride. I liked the horses. They were behaved, and well mannered. I did not witness any biting, kicking, snarls, tantrums or anything like that, and the horses walked the entire time (a selling point for me--trotting is not fun). I do have the need to mention that this is the first time I've ever been on a ride where the guide kept on telling folks to straighten their saddles. Sure, I suppose we might not have been sitting straight... or then, maybe, just maybe the saddles weren't on tight enough. I'll let you decide.

The real high point was all the wading through streams that we did. There were lots of streams and lots of wading with water coming up to the horses bellies at times. I thought my shoes were going to get wet at one point. That was fun, and basically I had a great time. I've probably got a bad attitude, and I habitually try to phase out tour guides, so it's not unusually for me not to like them. I don't figure that they are there for me. They're there to protect the horses, but then, that's just my point of view.

I'd do this ride again. I'd do this tour operator again. And I would recommend Waipi'o Valley to anyone who hasn't seen it before. It reminded me of the pictures that I've seen of Machu Picchu.

{I like riding horses in Hawaii. One of the better tourist activities, if you ask me.}

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