

A general guide is:

all-time: great, fantastic.

angle: riding across the face of a wave or toward the shoulder.

arch: a back bend used mainly in turns.

backing out: pulling off a wave.

back pedal: overlapping the feet in walking to the back of the board.

backwash: a wave washing back to seaward from the shore.

baggies: the large flap-legged boxer type shorts worn by the surfer.

bail out: to leave the board suddenly in the face of a wipe-out.

barge: a very heavy, large board.

beach break: waves breaking close inshore on sand.

big gun: a big-wave board, used mainly in the giant Hawaiian surfs and still at times in Australia.

blown out: a surf so whipped up by winds as to become unrideable.

bombed out: to be wiped out, or thrown off the board in a wave.

boomer, dumper: with blaster, whomper, crusher, terms to describe violent, hard breaking waves.

bottom turn: a turn on the front of a wave at the bottom of the wall.

carving up the mob: derived in Australia, to describe reckless riding through a crowd of body surfers or swimmers.

caught inside: a surfer shoreward of a breaking wave is considered to be caught inside.

channel: a deep spot where waves don't break and where the incoming waves retreat back to sea. Used for getting out.

chip: name given to first all-balsa wood boards constructed in the late forties. Much smaller than the giant planks, they were referred to as 'potato chips'. Also known as Malibu boards.

choppy: many little waves created by local winds, making a very bumpy and difficult surface to surf on.

classic: perfect surfing form; a perfect or fantastic day.

clean-up: a wave that breaks outside of most surfers, causing them to lose their boards, 'cleaning-up the area'.

climbing: steering the board up the face of the wave toward the top or crest.

close-out: when waves break all the way across a bay or normally safe channel, rendering a surf spot unrideable. When a spot is closed-out, it is usually considered too big to ride.

concave: a type of surfboard designed by Bob Simmons.

conservative: a rider who stays away from the curl or the hot part of the wave, taking no chances.

cornering: an Australian term for angling.

crack: Australian term for a ride. 'Crack a good wave.'

crest: the highest point of a wave before it breaks.

critical: a very steep and difficult-to-ride wave.

crouch: a leaning-forward, squatting position to

- (1) duck the breaking part of the wave,
- (2) reduce wind resistance, and
- (3) obtain better balance in the big-wave drop.

curl: the breaking part of the wave, spilling over and creating a space between the main body of the wave and the spilling crest.

custom surfboard: a surfboard built especially for the rider. His size, weight, and the type of riding he wishes to do are generally taken into consideration.

cut back: to turn back toward the curl or breaking part of the wave.

cut out: same as pull-out or kick-out. A second meaning is that of being forced out of the wave by another surfer, i.e., 'He cut me out.'

deck: the top surface of a surfboard.

dig a rail: when the side of the board or rail digs into the wave, usually ending in a wipe-out. Generally caused by poor positioning on a turn, trying to turn from too far forward.

ding: a hole in the surfboard.

double-ender: a surfboard that is almost symmetrical with a slightly pointed tip at both ends.

down: referring to the surf, the surf is flat or down.

down the mine: an Australian term for a wipe-out.

driving: exerting extra effort to trim the board and gain the most possible speed.

drop: the initial downward slide after taking off in a wave.

drop-in: sliding down the face of the wave immediately after it is caught.

dropping: moving down on the face of the wave toward the trough.

dump: a wipe-out in surfing. Often referred to in body surfing.

el espontanio: a squatting position where the surfer looks back between his legs. In a pure el espontanio the fingers must be interlocked behind the surfer's back.

elephant gun: same as big gun; a surfboard designed especially for the big surf or heavies.

face: the unbroken front of a wave between the crest and the trough.

fade: riding toward the curl or hot part of the wave before turning and riding across the face away from the curl. A manoeuvre used to

stay in the hottest part of the wave.

fin: see skeg.

fins: rubber flippers used as aids in swimming or body surfing; called swim fins.

floater: a large, buoyant board.

foot paddle: while standing, dipping one foot over the side of the board and paddling to increase forward motion.

free fall: occasionally, while riding high or taking off on a very steep wave, a surfboard will slip out and the board and rider will fall in mid-air down the face of the wave. This is a free fall.

full suit: a rubber suit consisting of long pants, full jacket, long sleeves, hood, boots, and possibly gloves.

fun surf: small or medium surf not big enough to make the surfer think twice before taking off or to make him worry about taking a wipe-out.

glass-off: when the wind dies (usually in the afternoon), causing the water to become very smooth or glassy slick.

glassy: an extremely smooth surface or wave, usually giving off a glasslike reflection.

goofy-foot: a rider who surfs with his right foot as the lead foot.

grab the rail: when the surfer is about to be hit by the wave or white water, he grabs the rail of his board away from the wave, leans toward the wave, and pulls his board into the wave to keep from being knocked off and to continue on in the curl or on the unbroken wave ahead.

green: an unbroken wave; sometimes referring to the shoulder of a wave.

hanging five: five toes over the nose of the board.

hanging ten: ten toes over the nose of the board.

head dip: while riding, the surfer bends over, trying to stick his head into the wave or white water. If his head gets wet from the wave, this is a successful head dip.

heavies: the big surf.

highway surfer: one who spends all his time in the car and never gets to the surf.

ho-dad, ho-daddy: a greaser or hood from the back streets, generally with hopped-up car. May or may not be a surfer.

hollow: an extremely concave or curling wave.

hook: the curling part of the wave.

hot-dog: to perform or show a great deal of ability in the surf; usually denoted by fancy turns, walking the nose, and taking chances.

Huey: the Australian 'god' of the surf.

humpers: medium-to-large unbroken waves.

inshore: referring to either the beach or the area of water just off the beach.

inside: (a) shoreward of the normal breaking point of the waves; (b) completely within the curling part of the wave or inside the tunnel.

Kahuna: Hawaiian witch doctor adopted by modern surfers as an imaginary surfing god, as the Australian 'Huey'.

Kamaaina: an old-timer to the waves of Hawaii. In surfing—experienced.

kami-kaze: a planned wipe-out; taken on purpose with no hope of saving the board or avoiding the swim.

kelp skeg: a shallow or slowly tapered fin designed so as not to hang-up or catch on the kelp (seaweed).

kick-out: flipping the board over the back or through the back of a wave, while falling off the tail of the board into the wave. A kick-out is a last ditch effort to keep from losing your board.

knee paddling: paddling while balanced on the board in a kneeling position.

Kona wind: a south wind in the Hawaiian Islands, generally onshore at most of the southern exposure beaches. Occasionally offshore or glassy on the north shore.

kook: a beginner; know-nothing; generally blundering and in the way.

kook box: a paddle board.

lava tube: a hollow cave or tube carved out of the lava rock, generally referring to submarine caves beneath surfing spots.

left slide: a ride where the surfer slides to his left.

let down: a wave breaking.

line: a long wave.

line-up: the point where the waves are consistently starting to break.

lip: the fringing crest of the wave starting to break, but not yet curling.

locked in: surfer in a position where it is impossible to pull-out. Yet, the wave may still be makeable. He is considered locked in the curl.

log: a very heavy surfboard.

loomer: a big wave suddenly appearing outside.

looper: a wave that curls or throws out in front of itself, often breaking over a surfer so as to make his ride 'in the tunnel'.

Makaha board: a board designed in the 1950s, especially for riding through the Makaha bowl. The tail was pointed with a flat bottom and this design was supposed to help the board glide across the flat part of the wave and thus enable the surfer to make it through the 'bowl'. The board featured the sharp break-away edge on the bottom of the tail block.

Malibu board: the balsa wood board or 'chip' designed in the late forties and ridden predominantly at Malibu.

malihini: a newcomer to the Hawaiian Islands. Newcomers to the sport of surfing are also referred to as malihinis.

mat: a rubber mattress inflated and used to ride the waves. Some of the newer mats are constructed of plastic foam.

mat surfer: a surfer who rides waves with a rubber surf mat.

mob: an Australian term for a group of surfers—usually many.

mushy: a slow, sloppy wave that has little power.

mysterioso: an adornment' or surf trick,

popular in the late fifties. Created by Mickey Muñoz, the stance is with the surfer bending over, hiding his head in his hands.

outrigger: a pontoon used to stabilize a narrow, dug-out-type canoe.

outrigger canoe: a canoe employing the use of an outrigger.

outside: (a) referring to any point seaward of the normal breaking point of the wave;

(b) an exclamation used to describe an approaching set of waves.

out-the-back: an Australian term for outside or seaward.

over the falls: the pouring part of the breaking wave is considered the falls. A surfer caught and carried over in the breaking part goes 'over the falls'.

paddleboard: a square-sided, hollow surfcraft usually constructed of plywood.

paipo board: a small bellyboard used in the Hawaiian Islands.

paraffin: a wax most commonly applied on the deck of a surfboard to reduce slickness.

peak: a narrow, humping wave that has little wall, generally tapering fast from the middle or high point of the wave to almost flat on the shoulders; the highest point of the wave.

pearl or pearling: while riding, the nose of the surfboard goes beneath the surface and continues downward, usually throwing the rider off (originally taken from pearl diving).

peeler: a fast, curling wave that curls perfectly without sectioning ahead.

performer: a hot-dogger who does a lot of turning and creative riding on a wave.

pig board: a surfboard with an extremely pointed nose, with the widest area of the board toward the rear.

pintail: a surfboard with a long, drawn-out, pointed tail.

plank: name given to heavy boards, usually referring to the redwood giants ridden prior to the 1950s.

pole set: waves breaking adjacent to or immediately inside of a large pole jutting out of the water at Ala Moana in Hawaii. Generally takes surf of at least eight feet or larger to break by or outside the pole.

poly: Australian term used for foam surfboard.

polystyrene foam: a type of foam which differs from polyurethane foam only in that a different type of gluing agent is used. Owing to problems with glassing, this foam is seldom used in surfboard construction.

polyurethane foam: a type of plastic foam that is presently most used in the construction of surfboards.

pop-out: a mass-produced surfboard; little hand work involved.

pounder: an unusually hard-breaking wave.

pour over: when a wave breaks, it is pouring over. An over-the-falls wipe-out may also be considered a pour over.

psyched out: mentally incapacitated; generally referring to a surfer's reaction to the big surf. To become frightened, shook up, or psyched out.

pull-out: steering the board over or through the back of the wave, as to end the ride.

push through: originally a method of getting your surfboard through the wave. The surfer climbed off his board and, holding on to the rear of the board, pushed it ahead of him through the wave. Push through has now come to mean any method of going through the surf or white water.

quasimodo: a hunchback position where one arm is stretched forward, the other arm stretched to the rear.

Queen Mary: a board too big for the rider, usually very large and buoyant.

rails: the rounded sides of the surfboard.

reef: a line or ridge of rock, coral, or sand lying at or near the surface of the water. Reefs are important in the forming of good surfing waves.

resin: the liquid plastic that is coated on the fibreglass to bind it to the surfboard.

reverse kick-out: same as kick-out, with the surfer executing a half spinner as he kicks his board out of the wave.

reverse take-off: a skeg-first take-off where the surfer lies on his board and once in the wave spins his board around and stands up, riding in the correct manner.

right of way: the surfer who is already on the wave and riding has the right of way and others coming into the wave should respect this right.

right slide: a ride where the surfer slides to his right.

rip tide: a current or river of water moving seaward, generally accompanying big surf where a lot of water is moving toward shore and must have a way to get back out to sea.

rocker: (a) an Australian ho-dad; a 'rock and roller'; (b) the curvature of a surfboard—from front to back.

roll: while paddling directly into an oncoming broken wave, the surfer turns his board over—bottom up—sometimes wrapping his legs around the board while the wave passes over. After the wave passes, he rolls the board over and continues paddling outside.

roller: a wave that does not curl or tube; the white water slides down the face of the wave.

roto-moto: continuous spinners.

rubber arms: a description for the surfer who doesn't paddle hard enough to get a wave because it's too large.

sand bar: a mound or plateau of sand caused by surf or sea currents and occasionally acting as an underwater reef, creating good surfing waves. Sand bars are not permanent.

scratching: paddling hard.

section: a part of the breaking wave.

sectioning: a wave that is not breaking evenly; breaking ahead of itself.

shelf: referring to a reef or rock formation

underwater that drops off sharply. Shore-bound waves hitting this shelf often jump up, creating a larger and faster-breaking wave than if the wave ran its normal course. Waimea Bay is a good example of a shelf-type break.

shooting the curl: riding through the curling or tubing part of the wave; making a hot section.

shore pound: a very hard-breaking wave, usually thick and pounding right on the shore.

shorebreak: waves breaking very close to the beach.

shoulder: the unbroken, tapering part of the wave from the curl or white water.

shoulder turn: a turn where the shoulders are rotated in the direction of the turn.

shuffle: moving toward the nose of the board without crossing foot over foot, usually a sliding manoeuvre.

skeg: the fin or rudder of a board.

slide: to ride either left or right somewhat parallel to shore.

slope: the curvature of the face of an unbroken wave.

slot: the perfect spot in the wave; in the curl.

snuff out: a fast wipe-out where the surfer is covered by the curl or tube and either disappears or is blasted off his board.

soup or froth: same as white water or foam.

spin out: the skeg or rudder comes out of the water, usually on a turn or on a very fast or steep wave.

spinner or 360°: a surfer turning around on his board until he faces the same direction in which he started.

spitter: air caught in the tunnel or curl must go somewhere when the wave collapses. If there is an open end to the wave, the air and spray hiss out of this opening and the wave is then called a 'spitter'.

spoon: referring to the upturned nose of a surfboard; also called scoop. The spooned or scooped nose was designed to keep the surfboard from pearling.

squaretail: a surfboard with the tail squared off rather than rounded or pointed.

stacked up: (a) several surfers grouped closely—one above another—in a wave; (b) a group of many lines or waves coming toward shore.

stall: a slowing of the board while waiting for the wave to steepen ahead.

standing island: a type of pull-out where the rider slashes through the back of a wave, standing toward the front or on the nose of his board.

stick: a surfboard.

stoked: excited or jazzed, usually about the surf.

storm surf: waves tossed up or generated by a local storm, generally not clean surf and usually big.

straight off: a ride straight toward shore without turning or angling, directly in line with the movement of the wave.

straighten off: a turning from a definite angle across the wave to directly toward shore or in the same direction as the wave is actually moving.

stringers: strips of wood laminated into a surfboard, generally used for strength or design.

stripes: decorations applied on the outside of a surfboard.

strips: narrow pieces of wood used to reinforce a surfboard; sometimes used for decoration only.

submarine: a board too small for the rider, floating him under the surface.

suck out: a wave that breaks extremely fast, throwing out in front of itself, creating a space, tube, or tunnel. Caused by the wave coming suddenly over a shallow spot and throwing forward.

Surf Day: a day in Peru when the surf is too large for freighters to dock at piers and load or discharge their cargoes.

surf safari: a trip in search of surf, generally considered to be more than just a short drive.

surfing knobs, bumps, knots, etc.: calcium deposits over the knees and on the feet where the knees and feet come into contact with the board while kneeling. Medically termed Osgood-Schlatter disease, it is also known as housemaid's knee. Can be very painful when just starting to surf or just returning from a long lay-off. Particularly common among young surfers.

swell: either one unbroken wave or all of the waves coming from one particular storm. Example: a storm in the North Pacific sends waves to the north shore of Hawaii that are ten feet the first day, twenty feet the second day, and twelve feet the third day, all with good shape. The surfers would refer to this surf as a good swell.

switchfoot: a surfer who rides with either right foot or left foot forward, depending on which direction he is headed—usually trying to face the wave at all times.

tail: the rear of the board to which the skeg is attached.

tail flutter: on bigger waves the tail of the board may sometimes go out of control and become very unstable. This is caused by too wide a tail, a board bottom that is too flat, or by riding too far to the rear of the board.

take-off: to launch into a wave; to begin a ride.

take-off point: the exact spot where the waves are consistently breaking in such a way as to provide a good ride for the surfer.

taking gas: getting a wipe-out; being knocked off the board.

tandem: two persons riding one surfboard, generally a boy and a girl.

toes over: any number of toes over the nose of your surfboard; also referred as hanging five or hanging ten.

top-to-bottom: a wave that pours out in front when it breaks, with the initial point of contact matching the height of the wave.

trade wind: a wind that blows toward the equator from the northeast on the north side of

the equator and from the southeast on the south side; the prevailing winds in the Hawaiian Islands. The trade winds generally blow off-shore at most of the good Hawaiian surfing beaches.

trail foot: the foot toward the tail of the board in a normal stance.

trimming: steering the board into a position nearest to parallel with the line of the wave, thus gaining the most possible speed out of the wave.

tube: the space formed by a particularly long or fast wave throwing out in front of itself.

undertow: a current of water moving beneath and in a different direction from the surface water; said especially of a seaward current beneath breaking surf.

up: referring to the surf; the surf is up or big.

wahine: a girl.

walk the nose: foot over foot walking toward the nose of the board.

wall: the face of a wave before it has broken.

wax: paraffin wax used to coat the glassy surface of a surfboard to reduce the slickness.

wet suit: a neoprene rubber suit designed to hold water within the foam. The water soon reaches body temperature, thus keeping the surfer warm.

white cap: a wind-blown chop or wave with its crest broken into white foam; generally rolls a short distance and backs off.

white water: soup or foam; the result of a breaking wave.

wind lift: offshore winds blowing up the face of the wave, making it very difficult to drop in and sometimes blowing the surfer and his board back over the top.

wind peaks: waves with a short wave length caused by strong, local winds; very narrow and generally choppy.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

Material on surfing's origin and early history is drawn from *Surfing, The Sport of Hawaiian Kings* by Ben. R. Finney and J. D. Houston (Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, 1965) and from the following series of articles by Ben. R. Finney:

'Surfboarding in Oceania: its Pre-European Distribution', *Wiener Voelkerkundliche Mitteilungen*, II, 23-36, Vienna, 1959

'Surfboarding in West Africa', *Wiener Voelkerkundliche Mitteilungen*, V, 41-42, Vienna, 1962

'Surfing in Ancient Hawaii', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, LXVIII, 327-347, Wellington, 1959.

'The Development and Diffusion of Modern Hawaiian Surfing', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, LXIX, 315-331, Wellington, 1962

Readers interested in a more comprehensive analysis of surfing's history, or in referring to the extensive but scattered documentary sources on the sport, should consult these works.