

# New Zealand



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# New Zealand Highlights

New Zealand is spectacular, sure, but what is it about this small nation that makes it a must-visit destination?

We asked a passionate bunch of Kiwis to tell us what part of Aotearoa they love the most. From the Far North to the Deep South, from bustling cities to lonely beaches – in the following pages we present their personal choices of the very best of NZ.

After you've browsed their selection, you're going to want to get out there and find your own favourite NZ spot. You might find it between these pages, or you might find it on your own. Either way, you'll discover an intriguing land of diverse highlights, and you'll understand why Lonely Planet keeps coming back year after year.



MICAH WRIGHT



## GOLDEN BAY, MARLBOROUGH

Golden Bay (p475) has all the elements of wonder for me: beautiful, rugged terrain, an amazing array of artists and world-class food. It's my annual trip there, however, that really gets the wildlife excited. You haven't lived until you've been chased by a wild seal. That's what happened to me the last time I visited Wharariki Beach with its wild windswept dunes and giant rock formations. It really is the land of the lost. You must traverse farmland, hills and bush to get there, but it's well worth it for the stunning ocean views. After this adventure I recommend a hearty meal of wild-boar pie at the Naked Possum Café. While you're there be sure to buy some possum-fur nipple warmers. Then, to complete the day, you should aim for the Mussel Inn for their wonderful Captain Cooker Manuka Honey Beer, but be sure to stop on the way for a cold dip in any one of the refreshing rivers. Could be a bit nippy...but hey, you've got your warmers!

**Rhys Darby, Actor & Stand-up Comic**



OLIVER STREWE



## WAITOMO CAVES, WAIKATO

The best way to experience the Waitomo glowworm caves (p242) is via black-water rafting. It's an exhilarating experience and involves getting dressed up in a wetsuit (laughing at how funny everyone looks is half the fun), choosing an inflatable inner tube to sit in (another hilarious experience) and travelling through the limestone caves with two guides, your wits, and the glowworms. It is a real hands-on experience and requires some agility and the guts to jump backwards down some small waterfalls as you make your way through the tunnels. You finish off the trip quietly drifting through the caves in your tube, looking at the glowworms with your head lamp turned off.

**Dr Farah Rangikoepa Palmer, Former Captain of the Black Ferns (NZ's Women's Rugby Team)**



KIERAN SCOTT



## WAIHEKE ISLAND, AUCKLAND REGION

Thirty years ago, Waiheke Island (p131) was home to an eclectic mix of outlaws who could not (or chose not to) live in 'normal' society: hippies and hermits, alternative healers and writers, potters and pot growers, and everything in between. Sometime in the late eighties, Waiheke was 'discovered', and it's quite a different place now. But even with all the changes – fine dining, vineyards and luxury holiday homes – Waiheke Island's identity and spirit are still undeniable. The beautiful weather remains the same, as do the phenomenal vistas, the lush bush and native birds, the chooks in your neighbours' backyards, the feeling that everything deserves to move a little slower (we call it 'Waiheke time'), the smell of honeysuckle, the crystal waters, the best fish and chips ever, the house I was born in and, probably, still a few pot growers. Waiheke was, and remains, like nowhere else on the planet.

**Zoë Bell, Stuntwoman & Actor**

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# Auckland Region



Paris may be the city of love, but Auckland is the city of many lovers, according to its Maori name, Tamaki Makaurau. In fact, her lovers so desired this beautiful place that they fought over her for centuries.

It's hard to imagine a more geographically blessed city. Its two magnificent harbours frame a narrow isthmus punctuated by volcanic cones and surrounded by fertile farmland. From any of its numerous vantage points you'll be astounded at how close the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean come to kissing and forming a new island.

As a result, water's never far away – whether it's the ruggedly beautiful west-coast surf beaches or the glistening Hauraki Gulf with its myriad islands. The 135,000 pleasure crafts filling Auckland's marinas have lent the city its most durable nickname: the 'City of Sails'.

Within an hour's drive from the high-rise heart of the city are dense tracts of rainforest, thermal springs, deserted beaches, wineries and wildlife reserves. Yet big-city comforts have spread to all corners of the Auckland Region: a decent coffee or chardonnay is usually close at hand.

Yet the rest of the country loves to hate it, tut-tutting about its traffic snarls and the supposed self-obsession of the quarter of the country's population that call it home. With its many riches, Auckland can justifiably respond to its detractors, 'Don't hate me because I'm beautiful'.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Going with the flows, exploring Auckland's fascinating **volcanic field** (p98)
- Getting back to nature on the island sanctuaries of the beautiful **Hauraki Gulf** (p129)
- Being awed by the Maori *taonga* (treasures) of the **Auckland Museum** (p98)
- Going west to the mystical and treacherous black sands of **Karekare** (p142) and **Piha** (p142)
- Swimming with the fish at **Goat Island Marine Reserve** (p150)
- Schlepping around world-class wineries and beaches on **Waiheke Island** (p131)
- Buzzing around the cafes and bars of **Kingsland** (p120) and **Ponsonby** (p120)
- Soaking up the Polynesian vibe at the **Pasifika Festival** (p113), held in March at Western Springs Park



NZ's cities. A sizable Asian community rubs shoulders with the biggest Polynesian population of any city in the world.

The traditional Kiwi aspiration for a free-standing house on a quarter-acre section has resulted in a vast, sprawling city. The CBD was long ago abandoned to commerce, and inner-city apartment living has only just started to catch on. While geography has been kind, city planning has been less so. Unbridled and ill-conceived development has left the centre of the city with some architectural embarrassments. To get under Auckland's skin you're best to head for the rows of Victorian and Edwardian villas in its hip inner-city suburbs.

## HISTORY

Maori occupation in the Auckland area dates back around 800 years. Initial settlements were concentrated on the coastal regions of the Hauraki Gulf islands, but gradually the fertile isthmus beckoned and land was cleared for growing food.

Over hundreds of years Tamaki's many different tribes wrestled for control of the area, building *pa* (fortified villages) on the numerous volcanic cones. The Ngati Whatua *iwi* (tribe) from the Kaipara Harbour took the upper hand in 1741, occupying the major *pa* sites. During the Musket Wars of the 1820s they were decimated by the northern tribe Ngapuhi, leaving the land all but abandoned.

At the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Governor Hobson had his base at Okiato, near Russell in the Bay of Islands. When Ngati Whatua chief Te Kawau offered 3000 acres of land for sale on the northern edge of the Waitemata Harbour, Hobson decided to create a new capital, naming it after one of his patrons, George Eden (Earl of Auckland).

Beginning with just a few tents on a beach, the settlement quickly grew, and soon the port was kept busy exporting the region's produce, including kauri timber. However, it lost its capital status to Wellington after just 25 years.

Since the beginning of the 20th century Auckland has been NZ's fastest-growing city and its main industrial centre. Political deals may be done in Wellington, but Auckland is the big smoke in the land of the long white cloud.

## AUCKLAND REGION FACTS

**Eat** Multiculturally, at one of the city's numerous food halls (p118)

**Drink** Waiheke Island rosé on a hot summer's day  
**Read** *Under The Mountain* (1979) – Maurice Gee's teenage tale of slimy things lurking under Auckland's volcanoes

**Listen to** *One Tree Hill* (1987) – U2's elegy to their Kiwi roadie is no less poignant now the tree's gone (see p99)

**Watch** *Sione's Wedding* (2006), Chris Graham's comedy set in Grey Lynn and central Auckland

**Swim at** Onetangi (p131)

**Festival** Pasifika (p113)

**Tackiest tourist attraction** Sheepworld's fluorescent flock of sheep – New Rave goes too far (p148)

**Go green** Encounter endangered birds among the regenerated forest of Tiritiri Matangi Island (p135)

## ORIENTATION

The Auckland isthmus runs roughly west-east, with Waitemata Harbour lying to the north (feeding into the Hauraki Gulf) and Manukau Harbour to the south (feeding into the Tasman Sea). The Harbour Bridge links the city to the North Shore, with the CBD to its east.

The commercial heart of the city is Queen St, which runs from the waterfront up to Newton's Karangahape Rd (K Rd), a lively, bohemian, sometimes gritty strip of inexpensive restaurants and boisterous bars.

In the early days, the area immediately east of the city tended to be upmarket and Anglican, while the west was more Catholic and working-class. While they're all rather pricey neighbourhoods nowadays, Parnell and Remuera retain vestiges of old-money snobbery while Ponsonby and Grey Lynn are slightly more alternative. Mt Eden sits somewhere between the two, both physically and sociologically.

The airport is 23km south of the city centre.

## Maps

**Auckland Map Centre** (Map p100; ☎ 09-309 7725; www.aucklandmapcentre.co.nz; 209 Queen St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat)

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Unity Books** (Map p100; ☎ 09-307 0731; 19 High St; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-9pm Fri, 9am-6pm

## MAP LEGEND

### ROUTES

	Tollway		Mall/Steps
	Freeway		Tunnel
	Primary		Pedestrian Overpass
	Secondary		Walking Tour
	Tertiary		Walking Tour Detour
	Lane		Walking Trail
	Under Construction		Walking Path
	Unsealed Road		Track
	One-Way Street		

### TRANSPORT

	Ferry		Tram
	Rail		Cable Car, Funicular
	Rail (Underground)		

### HYDROGRAPHY

	River, Creek		Glacier
	Intermittent River		Canal
	Swamp		Water
	Mangrove		Mudflats
	Reef		

### BOUNDARIES

	State, Provincial Marine Park		Regional, Suburb Cliff
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### AREA FEATURES

	Airport		Land
	Area of Interest		Mall
	Beach, Desert		Market
	Building		Park
	Campus		Rocks
	Cemetery, Christian		Sports
	Forest		Urban

### POPULATION

	CAPITAL (NATIONAL)		CAPITAL (STATE)
	Large City		Medium City
	Small City		Town, Village

### SYMBOLS

<b>Sights/Activities</b>	<b>Eating</b>	<b>Information</b>
	<b>Entertainment</b>	
	<b>Shopping</b>	
	<b>Sleeping</b>	
		<b>Geographic</b>
	<b>Transport</b>	

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