



Chris Gin

## Way out west

### **Auckland, 3 Days**

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Day 1: Organise a day trip with Bush and Beach NZ for a guided walk through the temperate rainforest of the Waitakere Ranges, and finish with a dinner at Gracehill Vineyard Restaurant. Day 2: Explore Auckland's west coast with excursions to Bethell's beach (and make the most of the cafe for lunch) and Muriwai (don't miss the gannet colony). Finish the day at Coopers Creek Vineyard. Day 3: Explore the southern part of the Waitakere Ranges with by travelling through Titirangi to Huia (walk up to Mt Donald McLean and see Huia Lodge), before heading out to Whatipu for views out across the Tasman Sea and back towards Auckland across the Manukau Harbour.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Auckland

**DAY NOTE:** This first day is a good introduction to the natural beauty of Auckland's west coast.



### Gracehill Vineyard Restaurant

Tranquility, grace and fine dining



### Bush & Beach Ltd

Explore the West Coast

## Day 2 - Auckland

**DAY NOTE:** Day 2 allows for more freedom now that you have had your first introduction to the west coast.



### Bethells Beach (Te Henga)

Wild West coast beach



### Muriwai Gannet Colony

View up Muriwai Beach



### Muriwai Beach

West coast beach with a gannet colony



### Coopers Creek Vineyard

Huapai vineyard

## Day 3 - Auckland

**DAY NOTE:** Finally, explore the southern end of Auckland's rugged Waitakere Ranges to finish off this trip.



### Whatipu

West Coast beach



### Mt Donald McLean

Views over Waitakere Ranges



### Acacia Cottage and Huia Lodge

Oldest wooden house in Auckland

# Day 1 - Auckland

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## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** This first day is a good introduction to the natural beauty of Auckland's west coast.

**contact:**

tel: 64 9 412 8622  
fax: +64 9 412 7098  
<http://www.gracehill.co.nz/>

**location:**

34 Pomona Road  
Kumeu 0891

**hours:**

Lunch: Sa-Su Noon-3:30p,  
Dinner: W-Su 6p-12:30a

## 1 Gracehill Vineyard Restaurant

**DESCRIPTION:** In West Auckland's wine country, Gracehill Vineyard offers buffet and set menus in a charming country garden setting overlooking the vineyards. It specialises in hosting functions from weddings to corporate events where there are also set menus for canapes and hors d'oeuvres. Guests can enjoy lunch in the courtyard or a more cosy dinner by the open fire. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Gracehill Vineyard Restaurant

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 837 4130  
fax: +64 9 837 4193  
<http://www.bushandbeach.co.nz>

**location:**

P.O. Box 12  
Auckland 1007

**hours:**

Coach Tours: 12:30p-5:30p  
M-Su

## 2 Bush & Beach Ltd

**DESCRIPTION:** This company has been in operation since 1984, and offers eco-tourism on and around Auckland's wild West Coast - a wilderness experience. There are many tour options and places to take in on your travels. Karekare Beach, huge Kauri trees, the Waitakere Ranges, Arataki Visitor Centre, Auckland City Highlights, the Muriwai Gannet Colony, and a Winery Tour, to name but a few. All travel is in luxury mini-coaches. Coach tours cost NZD95 per person. © wcities.com

# Day 2 - Auckland

## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** Day 2 allows for more freedom now that you have had your first introduction to the west coast.

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 979 7070 (Tourist Information)

<http://www.newzealand.com/travel/sights-activities/scenic-highlights/coastal-highlights/coastal-highlights-home.cfm>

**location:**

Bethells Road  
Auckland 1008

## 1 Bethells Beach (Te Henga)

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Head the warnings of the surf lifesavers because this beach is sometimes unsafe even when it looks OK. If there are no surf lifesavers around it means the sea is too rough. Opt for a refreshing walk rather than a swim in this case. Or you can take a dip in the creek.

**DESCRIPTION:** Bethells Beach has a much more wild feel about it than Piha, which is even more apparent on windy or rainy days. There are sweeping views and a large cave at the far end that is well worth the walk to. There are toilets near the car park and sometimes a little mobile cafe opens which is lovely for a sit down and a coffee. Don't count on this, though! You should definitely bring your own snacks and drinks, just in case. When the waves get nasty there will often be a warning sign which you should definitely heed as this can be a dangerous beach. There is always the creek. It's warmer and calmer and great for kids to play in. Sometimes you will see children being trained in surf lifesaving, which makes for a nice photo op with their hats on.  
© NileGuide



by Marie Szamborski on NileGuide

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 979 7070

<http://www.hb.co.nz/gannets/>

**location:**

Muriwai Beach  
Auckland 1250

## 2 Muriwai Gannet Colony

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

The colony is at its peak for activity between August and March and will provide the best viewing.

**DESCRIPTION:** There are many things to admire about the Gannet Colony at Muriwai beach. First, it's the breathtaking scenery. As you look down the black sand beach with the surf smashing into the rocks and spilling over on to the beach, you think it goes on forever. It actually extends 60 kilometers to the North. Moving toward the colony, you will see an almost 90 degree angle of an island. When you get used to the scenery, it's the bird's themselves. They arrive there amidst the chaos. There are estimated to be 1,200 of the birds weighing in at 2.5 kg's each fighting for space on the island. They nest just centimeters apart and lay one egg. The Parents take turns on the nest adding to the chaos (each has a wingspan of almost 2 meters). The chicks hatch and begin the process of getting feathers on their wings. They are destined for a one-shot take



off (miss it and you fall into the ocean) that will lead them on an adventure that will see them cross the Tasman to Australia. The survivors will return a few years later to the site and repeat the process. The colony is an hour's drive from Auckland. It is well signposted (head to Muriwai Beach) and provides parking. Once parked, you follow the walking track around to the viewing areas. There are some great insights on the signs so go ahead and take the time to read about your fellow winged travelers. © NileGuide

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 979 7070 (Tourist Information)  
fax: +64 9 366 2155  
<http://www.newzealand.com/travel/sights-activities/scenic-highlights/coastal-highlights/coastal-highlights-home.cfm>

**location:**

Muriwai Road  
Auckland 1250

**3 Muriwai Beach**

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Get there about 30 minutes before sunset, grab an ice cream from the shop and watch the sun disappear into the surf.

**DESCRIPTION:** Overshadowed by its more famous neighbor, Piha, Muriwai beach is a wonder to behold. For a start, it is a true black sand beach. Then there is the surf. Don't wade in without taking a good look around. be sure only to be within the flags set out by the surf lifesaving team (it should be a clear note of warning that any beach requiring something called the "surf lifeguard team" requires some awareness). Watch the surfers and be amazed at the surf fisherman. It was possible to drive on the beach (it goes for 60 Km's), but limitations are in place now so check the signs. You can walk the beach or adjourn to the nearby Muriwai Golf course, one of the finest links courses in the country if not the world. The views from the golf course rival any of those on the western coast of the US. Lastly, as this is almost a purely western facing beach, check out the sunsets. They are truly amazing with surf, Pohutukawa trees and black sand all with the back drop of the disappearing sun. © NileGuide



wcities

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 412 8560  
fax: +64 9 412 8375  
<http://www.cooperscreek.co.nz/>

**location:**

35kilometres north-west of Auckland  
Auckland 1006

**4 Coopers Creek Vineyard**

**DESCRIPTION:** This is a fine place to taste some top quality West Auckland wines. Group tasting is by appointment only, up to 25 people at a time. The tasting room has an open fire in the winter months. Other than the wine, the vineyard has a playground for the children, barbeque and picnic areas, and a petanque terrain. Although no tours are offered, visitors are invited to look around the vineyard grounds, but not the winery (for safety reasons). Wine can be purchased at the shop. © wcities.com

**hours:**

Cellar Doors: 9:30a-5:30p  
M-F, 10:30a-5:30p Sa-Su & public holidays

# Day 3 - Auckland

## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** Finally, explore the southern end of Auckland's rugged Waitakere Ranges to finish off this trip.

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 979 7070 (Tourist Information)

<http://www.newzealand.com/travel/sights-activities/scenic-highlights/coastal-highlights/coastal-highlights-home.cfm>

**location:**

Whatipu Road  
Auckland 1008

**hours:**

24 hours M-Su

## 1 Whatipu

**DESCRIPTION:** Overlooking the Manukau Harbour entrance and South Head, Whatipu is a wild wind and spray-driven beach popular for walking and surfing. Accessible from Huia along a twisty gravel road, Whatipu was once a major kauri (native timber) shipping port with a wharf built along Cutter Rock. Manukau Entrance was the scene of the sinking of the HMS Orpheus in 1863 with the loss of 189 souls. Some survivors managed to make it to Cutter Rock. See Orpheus artefacts at the small museum at Huia, open summer weekends. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: +64 9 379 6476  
(Department of Conservation Visitor Centre)

**location:**

Donald McLean Road  
Auckland 1008

## 2 Mt Donald McLean

**DESCRIPTION:** The steep 30-minute walk from the car park to the lookout at the summit (elevation 390 metres) is well rewarded with spectacular views of the regenerating forests in the valleys and exposed steep slopes of the southern Waitakere Ranges. On clear days you can see Taranaki 200 kilometres to the south. Mt Donald McLean is accessible from a gravel road branching off from the main Huia-Whatipu road. © wcities.com

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 630 8485  
fax: +64 9 524 6433  
<http://www.cornwallpark.co.nz/>

**location:**

P.O. Box 26072  
Auckland 1051

**hours:**

7a-dusk M-Su

## 3 Acacia Cottage and Huia Lodge

**DESCRIPTION:** Acacia Cottage and Huia Lodge stand opposite each other in Cornwall Park near one end of the Olive Grove Road. Acacia Cottage was built in Shortland Street in the city in 1841 and is reputed to be the oldest wooden house in Auckland. It is a fine example of how the earliest little settler cottages were built and furnished. Huia Lodge was built between 1901-3. It is a delightful and cosy example of an early twentieth century timber lined home. It now functions as the Cornwall Park Visitors Information Centre. © wcities.com



wcities

# My List

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 833 7859  
fax: +64 9 833 9929  
<http://www.babichwines.co.nz>

**location:**

Babich Road  
Auckland 1008

## 1 Babich Wines

**DESCRIPTION:** This West Auckland vineyard is less than half an hour from the city but you would swear you were out in the country. Established in 1916, this company now exports to at least 14 countries worldwide. Tours can be organised by arrangement. Wine tasting for groups over 15 must be booked in advance. Casual tasting is also offered for one or two people at a time. There is a picnic area, a petanque terrain, and a well-stocked wine shop at which to purchase some of the product. © [wcities.com](http://wcities.com)

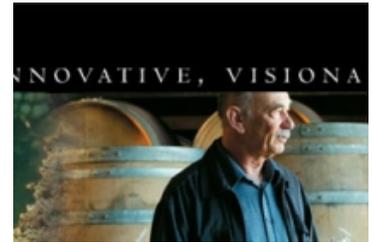


Photo courtesy of Babich Wines

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 979 7070 (Tourist Information)

**location:**

Piha Beach  
Auckland 1008

## 2 Lion Rock

**DESCRIPTION:** At 101 metres, Lion Rock towers over the windblown surf at Piha Beach and offers spectacular views of the black sand beach and bush-clad Waitakere Ranges to the west. Strongly fortified as a Maori pa or fortress in pre-European times, Lion Rock is the solidified lava plug of an ancient volcano that has since eroded away. A steep trail with steps cut out of the rock leads to the top. Give yourself about an hour for the return trip. Access is from the car park reached from Piha Road off Scenic Drive, the main route through the Waitakere Ranges. © [wcities.com](http://wcities.com)

**contact:**

tel: +64 9 372 9999 (Tourist Information)  
<http://www.waiheke.co.nz/index1.htm>

**location:**

Hauraki Gulf  
Auckland 1240

## 3 Waiheke Island

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

When heading out to Onetangi, check the tide tables. When the tide is out it is the perfect walking beach with about 50 meters of exposed area.

**DESCRIPTION:** Waiheke Island is the 2nd largest island in the Hauraki Gulf and is 17.7 kilometers from Auckland's CBD. It features many wineries (a new one every month it seems) and has one of New Zealand's best beaches, Onetangi. The easiest way for a visitor to get to Waiheke is by ferry. Ferries leave just about every hour on the hour (check the schedule as it varies on the weekend) and return until around 11 PM (earlier on Sunday). When you arrive at the Matiatia wharf, you can then select from the option of a taxi, public bus or hire car. There are many famous wineries and almost all of them have a restaurant on the premises to sample the wines and nibble some local delicacies. Two of the more popular wineries are Stonyridge and Mudbrick, but there really is no bad one. If you can pull yourself away from the vino, head to Onetangi beach for a walk or a swim. With views heading straight out to the Coromandel and one of the country's best white sand beaches, it is a great place to enjoy the natural beauty of Auckland. © NileGuide



# Auckland Snapshot

## Local Info

As New Zealand writer Kevin Ireland once observed, Auckland has a weight problem: "It is one of the biggest cities in the world. Its swollen bulk hangs out over the constricting belt of its isthmus and bulges further than the eye can see. Its head cannot locate its toes."

Over a quarter of the nation's inhabitants live in the Auckland region. Since the Maori alighted from their waka (canoes) to occupy the densely forested land, a steady stream of migrants have followed; Europeans, Asians and Polynesians have all made the journey to create the largest Polynesian enclave in the world. More than 50 volcanoes have erupted in Auckland, permanently scarring its landscape. The last, 600 years ago, gave birth to Rangitoto Island. Today, the buzz, aggression and vitality of the city echoes this turbulent past.

## Central Business District

The main artery, Queen Street, studded with retail and commercial buildings, flows from Newton to Downtown, with the shadow of the Sky Tower reflected in every gleaming, glass tower. Take a cultural stopover at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, the Auckland Town Hall, the Aotea Centre or the Civic.

The main fashion hub is located nearby on High Street, and is home to some of the world's hottest new labels: World Deluxe Store, Karen Walker and Zambesi. Queen Street eventually converges with the waterfront and the revamped Viaduct Harbour Marina.

A passion for uprooting the past (Auckland was once dubbed the "City of Cranes") began with Pakeha (European settlers) removing entire volcanic cones in order to revamp the waterfront. Now it is an essential playground for all. Millions have been spent beautifying Viaduct Harbour Marina, a perfect backdrop for the New Zealand National Maritime Museum, Waitemata Plaza, the Ferry Building and a bevy of restaurants and nightspots.

On the inner city fringe lies the infamous Karangahape Road, although its garish sex parlors now compete with many exotic shops and restaurants. On the fringe is Grafton, location of Auckland Hospital, the ice-cream colored Starship Children's

Hospital and Auckland's major recreational park—the Auckland Domain, with its sports fields, Wintergardens, duck ponds and the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

South of the Domain, you can fully appreciate the city from the summit of Mount Eden (Maungawhau). Try one of the trendy village cafés nestled at its base. Another volcanic vantage point, offering views to both the Waitemata and Manukau harbors, is One Tree Hill (Maungakiekie). Stargazers will enjoy the Auckland Observatory and Star Dome situated in surrounding Cornwall Park.

West of downtown, you'll find Ponsonby—The Strip, a cluster of popular restaurants. Although competition has become fierce with the new waterfront restaurants and bars, many remain loyal to Ponsonby icons such as Prego, S.P.Q.R. and other institutions like the Hero Parade, Auckland's own gay pride Mardi Gras, voted best annual event by Metro Magazine.

## Newmarket and Parnell

Heading east, but still hovering on the fringes of the city, are the suburbs of Newmarket and Parnell. Newmarket is a fashion addict's delight, and perhaps a smarter, slicker version of Parnell, once the domain of yuppie excess. A more sober past is reflected in historic buildings such as Kinder House and Whitby Lodge, which sit alongside a lively mix of shops and restaurants. Further east along Tamaki Drive is Auckland's own Riviera of crescent beaches, stretching from Okahu Bay and Bastion Point to Mission Bay, Kohimarama and Saint Heliers Beach. Along the drive you will find Kelly Tarlton's Antarctic Encounter & Underwater World, more street cafés and seaside playgrounds.

## South Auckland

Manukau City, with 50 different ethnic communities, is proudly multi-cultural. It shows off its Polynesian flair in a cornucopia of markets, festivals, community churches and some of the region's most diverse shopping, including Otara Market. For an adrenaline rush, there is Rainbow's End theme park.

## West Auckland

West Auckland offers rugged scenic beauty and, as home to the Dalmatian population, has a unique cultural heritage. To fully

appreciate its natural attractions, drive 45 minutes west from the city to the black sand and surf beaches at Piha Beach, Karekare Beach and Muriwai Beach. Also check out the nearby Gannet Colony. For outdoor enthusiasts there are over 140 bushwalks in the Waitakere Ranges, trails for bikes and four wheel drive vehicles, and horse riding opportunities.

There are a number of established family wineries here also, notably Delegat's and Corbans, near Henderson and Matua Valley, House of Nobilo and Coopers Creek, near Kumeu. Several of the wineries have excellent restaurants—the Hunting Lodge at Matua Valley and Allely House at Selaks are both worth the drive to enjoy their beautiful settings.

## The North Shore

Across the Harbour Bridge lies North Shore City and miles of superb beaches. Seaside suburbs with relaxed shopping centers and restaurants wind their way north, with a major highlight being the historic village of Devonport accessible by boat from the Ferry Building. To view some expensive real estate, walk along Takapuna Beach and continue on to Milford Beach along the sea wall at low tide.

Beyond the confines of the city lie the 47 islands of the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park, including Rangitoto Island, Motutapu and Waiheke Island, which attracts many visitors to its idyllic bays and beaches, galleries, vineyards and restaurants, and the annual Montana Waiheke Island of Jazz Festival.

©

## History

Long long ago, Maui, a mischievous demigod, went fishing one day with his brothers, deep in the southern ocean. Using his grandmother's jawbone for a hook, he caught a huge fish and hauled it out of the sea. His brothers were jealous and fought over the fish. The fish became the North Island of New Zealand, and the landforms were created by their actions, the sea flowing into the gaps left by the hungry brothers. The resulting narrow Auckland isthmus was surrounded by water, between the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea.

## Auckland Snapshot continued

Theiwi, or tribes, of the Auckland area descend from those who arrived in the original waka (canoes) from Hawaii about 800 years ago. They brought with them the dog and native rat and food plants such as taro, gourd, yam and kumara. Their descendants include Tainui, Hauraki and Kawerau-iwi, and Ngati Whatua from the north, considered to be the official tangata whenua (people of the land), of Auckland today.

Auckland is built on an active field of 48 volcanoes, dating back 150,000 years. The youngest, Rangitoto Island, blew up just 600 years ago, and stands like a guardian over the city. The isthmus, Tamaki Makaurau, was fertile with plants, trees, fish and bird life and blessed with a mild climate. Early coastal settlements show evidence of fishing and seasonal food gathering. Later, large-scale agriculture was practiced and archaeological sites frequently show seashell middens and terraces used for housing and gardens.

There are still many tapu (sacred) places, associated with important events, ancestors and graves of these early inhabitants. The volcanic cones offer the greatest evidence of old Maori settlements and were probably developed as fortified pa during the 17th century, when inter-tribal conflict escalated. The volcanoes remain the most distinctive feature of Auckland's landscape and, like most landforms, had great symbolic and spiritual importance to the Maori.

Early European visitors included Captain Cook, missionary Samuel Marsden, British naval boats seeking timber for masts and spars, and whalers and sealers provisioning their ships. They brought iron tools, alcohol and tobacco, serious diseases and, most significantly, muskets! As well as Christianity, the missionaries introduced farm animals, the plow, fruit trees, cereal and vegetable crops. Traditional Maori ways of life were changed forever.

In 1840 many local chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi with Britain. There have been problems in defining its true meaning ever since, resulting in frequent land disputes. However, it is an important document, embodying the ideal "We are One People".

Auckland became the capital of the new colony in 1840 on land purchased from Ngati Whatua. Farming developed along with copper mining and timber, and

Maori communities participated widely in agriculture and trade. Relations with European settlers were friendly during the 1840s-50s, despite the military settlements at Onehunga, Otahuhu, Panmure, Howick and Albert barracks. The Land Wars of the 1860s decimated the South Auckland tribes, and much of their land and that of Tainui was confiscated.

In 1865 the country's capital was transferred to Wellington. Auckland grew to become New Zealand's main industrial center and port over the next 30 years. From 1870 immigration from Britain increased, and gum digging, brick making, flour milling, brewing and boat building were added to the local trades. The introduction of refrigeration in the late 1880s had a major impact on the entire country. Now it was possible to transport fresh food to Britain and much produce passed through the port of Auckland.

Through the 1880s Auckland had 8,000 inhabitants and 20,000 people lived on the isthmus. Many large buildings were built, such as the Customhouse, the City Library and Art Gallery. Fortifications at Takapuna, Bastion Point, North Head and Mt Victoria were built to defend the city in case of attack.

By the 1890s Auckland was described as a "sophisticated cosmopolitan center." Venues such as the Domain were developed for sport, and new leisure activities included steamer excursions to beaches like Devonport and the Gulf Islands, horse racing, walking, cycling and brass band concerts. After the hard early pioneering days, people could now discover and enjoy the attractions of the Auckland region.

During the early 1900s, the Ferry Building, the Post Office, the Town Hall and the Parnell Baths were all examples of new building thought suitable for a sophisticated and civilized city. Grafton Bridge was built and internationally acclaimed as the first reinforced concrete arch in the Southern Hemisphere. The Maori population, however, was decreasing.

The War Memorial Museum honors the thousands of young New Zealanders killed and wounded in the First World War and others. During the Second World War, large coastal gun batteries, such as those along Tamaki Drive, were installed around the city.

Auckland's population reached 630,000 by 1970, due to both urban migration and immigration—mostly from Britain and Holland in the 1950s and the Pacific Islands in the 1960s. Motorways were built in the 50s and the Harbour Bridge opened in 1959, drawing the North Shore into the growing metropolis.

Auckland has seen its share of debate and political action, from Flower Power and anti-Vietnam War rallies to Peace Squadron anti-nuclear flotillas on the Waitemata Harbour and enormous protests against the 1981 Springbok Tour. Bastion Point was the focus of a long Ngati Whatua occupation in the 1980s and national attempts to resolve Maori land issues continue today. In 1985 French secret agents sank the Greenpeace boat Rainbow Warrior in the harbor.

Auckland's population reached one million in 1996. Waves of new immigrants have recently made Auckland their home and more and more people try to cram onto the narrow isthmus each year. From the different languages spoken in the street, and the variety of ethnic food now available, you would never guess Auckland was a small place, right down-under in the South Pacific. Tourism is vital, and an exciting variety of activities and experiences await visitors to this vibrant, multi-cultural city.

©

### Hotel Insights

Auckland accommodation choices can basically be divided into three main locations; the airport, the city centre and the suburbs. Unless you are headed straight out to other areas of New Zealand for the first part of your visit, it's best to avoid the airport hotels as there is a minimum 30 minute drive into the city with limited public transport options. Auckland's CBD (Central Business district) is easily walkable so for accessibility to restaurants, bars and many of the activities on offer, staying in the city centre puts you in amongst it all. Quirky B&Bs and homestays are often located in the suburbs and beyond. Longer-term visitors, such as those on working holiday visas, also often prefer the quiet "backpackers" (NZ speak for hostels) in the suburbs. If you do elect to stay in one of the suburbs, there is a bus system to get you in to and out of the city centre but you may need to consider taking taxis after hours.

## Auckland Snapshot continued

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### Restaurants Insights

As an island nation, and a remote one at that, seafood from the clean waters of the Pacific is what it's all about down here. For the poshest nosh, head down to the Viaduct on the waterfront where you can look at the sea while you indulge in some Pacific rim cuisine. Prices are generally mid-range and up although you can get some reasonably priced fish and chips in one of the pubs if that's all you're after. Another thing not to be missed is Asian food. Geographically New Zealand is much closer to Asia than Europe and that is reflected in how Kiwis eat. Grab your chopsticks and head in to an Asian foodcourt. A far cry from the usual offerings of fast food, these foodcourts are reminiscent of those in Singapore, Malaysia or Hong Kong. Prices are low to mid-range and everything is cooked fresh to order. If you're brave, you can even ask for extra chilli. All along Queen Street you can find the usual fast food outlets with kebab and sushi take away places in between. But don't forget to try at least one traditional New Zealand pie while you are here. Standard choices are steak and cheese, steak and mushroom, chicken and mushroom, and smoked fish, but be on the lookout for specialties such as silverbeet and cheese.

© NileGuide

### Nightlife Insights

Nightlife in New Zealand is of the laid back variety. Kiwis often entertain at home or at the beach with barbecues in the summer and bring-a-dish type affairs in the winter. But that's not to say there aren't plenty of bars and clubs in Auckland. The Viaduct Harbour, also referred to as "the Waterfront" is packed full of restaurants, bars and clubs. Occasionally they may have a dress code, but in general it's a pretty relaxed atmosphere. K' Road (Karangahape Road), at the top of Queen Street is considered the alternative area and there are bars and clubs in every nook and cranny both on and off the main thoroughfare. Other areas to consider are Ponsonby and Parnell. These areas have more of a focus on bar-restaurants rather than clubs, but both are compact and walkable once you get there. From the city centre you just hop on a Link

bus. You will see posters up all over the place announcing gigs and performances. Because venues are spread far and wide, just pick the thing that interests you and ask around for how to get there. In the city centre you can find the Vector Arena, The Edge, and The Civic which host larger concerts and events, plays and special film screenings.

© NileGuide

### Things to Do Insights

With Auckland being one of the biggest cities in the world, land-wise, your choices of things to do run from urban to rural. Learn about the history of this young country through the museums or take in some Maori culture at a cultural performance. Fling yourself off of something on a bungy like the Harbour Bridge or the Sky Tower or get back to the land on a farmstay or at one of the black sand beaches. Of course there's always sport and if you are lucky enough to see the All Blacks play rugby or the Black Caps play cricket you'll have some exciting memories to take home with you. If you are looking for some high-quality hiking gear you'll find yourself in merino wool and Gortex heaven in the many outdoor shops. Art? Galleries are dotted about the city but pay particular attention to the areas of Ponsonby, Parnell or Waiheke Island which is just a short ferry ride away. And while you are out there don't forget to sample some of New Zealand's finest wines. Have you been considering a tattoo and think this might be the time? You're in luck! Head up to Karangahape Road, known locally as "K' Road" where you can choose from Maori designs or anything else your little travelling heart desires. In the summertime grab a blanket and head out to one of the many free festivals such as Symphony in the Park, Pasifika, or the Grey Lynn festival. Each has its own character or cultural flavour. For a rest you can indulge in some good, strong coffee and cakes in the local café scene or enjoy some fish and chips on the beach. Be prepared to fend off the seagulls though!

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### Travel Tips

#### Getting There

#### By Air

Auckland Airport(+64 9 275 0789/ <http://www.auckland-airport.co.nz/>) is New Zealand's largest and busiest airport and is located 21 km(14 mi) from downtown Auckland. The airport provides direct service and connections to domestic and international destinations from the following airlines:

Air New Zealand(+64 9 336 2400/ <http://www.airnz.co.nz/>) Air Pacific(+64 9 379 2404 8482/ <http://www.airpacific.com/>) Asiana Airlines(+64 9 256 6681/ <http://us.flyasiana.com/>) Cathay Pacific Airways(+64 9 379 0861/ <http://www.cathaypacific.com/>) Emirates(+64 9 377 6004/ <http://www.emirates.com/>) EVA Air(+64 9 358 8300/ <http://www.evaair.com/>) Freedom Air(0800 600 500(from NZ only)/ <http://www.freedomair.co.nz/>) Garuda Indonesia(+64 9 366 1862/ <http://www.garuda.com/>) Korean Air(+64 9 914 2000/ <http://www.koreanair.com/>) Lan Chile(+64 9 309 8673/ <http://www.lanchile.com/>) Malaysia Airlines(+64 9 373 2741/ <http://www.malaysiaairlines.com/>) Polynesian Airlines(+64 9 309 5396/ <http://www.polynesianairlines.co.nz/>) Qantas Airways(+64 9 357 8900/ <http://www.qantas.com.au/>) Royal Brunei Airlines(+64 9 302 1524/ <http://www.bruneiair.com/>) Singapore Airlines(+64 9 303 2129/ <http://www.singaporeair.com/>) Thai Airways International(+64 9 377 3886/ <http://www.thaiair.com/>)

#### From the Airport

Bus: Airbus(+64 9 375 4730/<http://www.airbus.co.nz/>) offers service to and from the airport and Auckland City every 20 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes after 6p.

Taxis& Shuttles: Taxis and shuttle buses are located at the western side of the International Terminal and in front of the Domestic Terminals. A taxi from the airport to the city center of Auckland is approximately NZD40.

Rental Car Companies: ACE Rental(+64 9 256 9944/ <http://www.acerentals.co.nz/>) ARF Rental(+64 9 256 9430/ <http://www.hirecar.co.nz/>) Avis(+64 9 256 8366/ <http://www.avis.com/>) Budget(+64 9 256 8451/ <http://www.budget.co.nz/>) Hertz(+64 9 256 8690/ <http://www.hertz.com/>) Maui Campervans and Motorhomes(+64 9 275 4748/ <http://www.maui-rentals.com/>)

## Auckland Snapshot continued

### By Train

Tranz Scenic(+64 4 495 0775/ <http://www.tranzscenic.co.nz/>) is New Zealand's only passenger rail service. The Overlander route offers service to Auckland from Wellington.

### By Bus

InterCity Coachlines(+64 9 913 6100/ <http://www.intercitycoach.co.nz/>) offers frequent daily coach service throughout all of New Zealand. The bus stops are located at the Sky City Coach Terminal on 102 Hobson Street and outside the main doors of the Auckland International Airport. Northliner Express(+64 9 307 5873/ <http://www.northliner.co.nz/>) has frequent routes throughout the Northland area with the Auckland stop located at 172 Quay Street.

### Getting Around

#### Public Transport

The Link(+64 9 366 6400 or+64 9 309 6269/ <http://www.stagecoach.co.nz/>) provides bus service between central Auckland locations including Downtown, University, Victoria Park, Sky City, Queen Street and more. Rideline(+64 9 366 6400/ <http://www.rideline.co.nz/>) provides public transportation throughout the Auckland region via bus, ferry and train.

#### Ferry

Kawau Kat Cruises(+64 9 425 8006/ <http://www.kawaukat.co.nz/>) offers daily Harbour

cruises as well as ferry service to Waiheke Island and Ragitoto Island in Auckland.

### Car and Motorcycle Companies

A 2 B Rentals Ltd(+64 9 377 0825/ <http://www.a2brentals.co.nz/>) ACE Tourist Rentals(0 800 50 22 77(NZ only)/ <http://www.acerentals.co.nz/>) Adventure NZ Motorcycle Tours& Rentals(+64 21 969 071/ <http://www.GoTourNZ.com/>) Alternative Rental Cars(+64 9 373 3822/ <http://www.hireacar.co.nz/>) Apex Car Rentals(0800 737 009(NZ only)/ <http://www.apexrentals.co.nz/>) Asian Rental Car Co(+64 9 570 6284/ <http://www.asian-rentalcars.co.nz/>) Avis(0800 655 111(NZ only)/ <http://www.avis.co.nz/>) Bargain Rental Cars(+64 9 444 4573/ <http://www.bargainrentals.co.nz/>) Hertz(+64 9 367 6350/ <http://www.hertz.co.nz/>)

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### Fun Facts

1. Big fact: Auckland is the largest Polynesian city in the world.
2. Interesting fact: The Maori name for Auckland is Tamaki Makaurau.
3. Historical fact: Auckland was the capital of New Zealand for 25 years from 1842-1865.
4. Fun fact: It only takes four hours to walk from the Pacific Ocean to the Tasman Sea on the Coast-to-Coast Walkway.
5. Weird fact: You can still use pigeon post on Great Barrier Island.

6. Tall fact: The Sky Tower is the tallest structure in the Southern Hemisphere at 328 metres.

7. Nickname fact: Due to one in three Aucklanders having a boat, the city's nickname is the City of Sails.

8. Association with Japan fact: The outer lanes on the Harbour Bridge were not part of the original structure. Japanese engineers invented a way to clip them on when the bridge needed widening. Some refer to the lanes as the "Nippon Clip ons"

9. Superfluous bridge fact: The Harbour Bridge has 8 lanes but the central barrier is moveable, by a really cool machine, so that the lanes can be situated as 3/5, 5/3, or 4/4, depending on traffic flows.

10. Volcano fact: There are about 50 volcanoes around Auckland.

11. Baby volcano fact: Rangitoto, the volcano you can see out in the harbour is only about 600 or 700 years old. This means that some of the early Maori in New Zealand viewed its birth.

12. Super fact: Controversially, Auckland has recently engulfed other nearby areas to become what is known as a "Super City". Len Brown was elected mayor and residents are divided as to how, or if, the Super City will pan out. Alternatively, they were thinking of calling it the "World's Most Awesome City". Just kidding. We do like it though.

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