

## Unique New Zealand



The essence of travelling is to find out what makes a place and its people **unique** and connect with it. New Zealand is certainly unique in many ways:

1. The **youngest country on earth**, it was the last to become populated
2. Not only a westernised country but **a real Polynesian nation** with its exciting Maori culture
3. It is **always lush and green**, even the trees keep their leaves in winter
4. Welcoming, friendly and humorous **locals** with pioneer spirit and a can do attitude
5. **Landscapes** from the dinosaur age, a fairyland from fantasy dreams
6. A **huge range of climates**, from harsh alpine to subtropical, from glaciers to rainforests
7. **80 million years of independent evolution** with 80% of the plants not found anywhere else in the world, and fascinating animal species, sadly many of them endangered
8. **Gorgeous beaches** that match any in the world
9. Some of the **world's best walks** (and no dangerous creepy crawlies)
10. The world capital for **adrenaline activities**
11. **Countless attractions** like geysers and hot springs, fiords, the best subtropical diving, swimming with dolphins, whale watching, active volcanoes, glowworm caves, penguin, seal and albatross colonies, modern museums, alpine climbing, heritage villages, over 400 golf courses, around 400 wineries, quiet offshore islands, helicopter skiing etc.
12. An **innovative place** with a great quality of life

13. Most people live in the big centres, **you'll have almost all of it to yourself!**

14. New Zealand is **peaceful**, it consistently enjoys top ranks in the overall Global Peace Index and is one of the least corrupt countries



## Landscape



Majestic Mount Taranaki

You may have heard of the many natural wonders of New Zealand: the active volcanoes, deep fiords, high snowy mountains, ancient native forests, glaciers close to the beach, smelly geothermal areas, deep glowworm caves and spectacular beaches. In fact, there is nearly no other country on earth with such diverse and contrasting geological and ecological features, all within a relatively small area. No wonder it's a great place for stunning film locations.

New Zealand itself has been on a long journey. Since its landmass parted from the ancient **Gondwana** continent 80 million years ago, many climate changes and tectonic movements have created today's scenery. New Zealand lies not only above a collision zone of the Pacific and Australian tectonic plates, these plates also subdue each other in opposite ways under the North and South Islands (the Pacific plate climbs over the Australian one in the south and gets pushed under in the north). These dynamics created dozens of volcanoes in the north and a high alpine range in the south, a generally hilly landscape with only a few plains created from rivers. The movement of fiords made by glaciers and the sinking of whole mountain regions generated sounds and coasts dotted with peninsulas and offshore islands. Actually the sunken landmass of New Zealand is so big that experts declared it to be its own 'drowned continent', naming it Zealandia.

You will be able to see the resulting beauty up close, there are hundreds of well maintained walks which take you into the heart of the landscape.



Key Summit in Fiordland

**Facts:**

The Department of Conservation alone manages **12,500 km of walking tracks** (especially famous are New Zealand's '9 Great Walks' through the most striking scenery, they need advance booking because they are so popular), and then there are many more regional council tracks.

**One third of New Zealand's land area is protected** by the Department of Conservation (DOC), in 14 National Parks (the first one, Tongariro, having been established in 1887 - the last one, Rakiura on Stewart Island, dates from 2002), 20 Forest Parks (13 in the North Island and 7 in the South Island), 3 World Heritage sites (Tongariro National Park, 'Te Wahipounamu' - South West New Zealand and the Sub-Antarctic Islands of New Zealand), over 30 marine reserves (7.6% of New Zealand's territorial sea) and over 3,500 other scenic, scientific, recreational, historic or cultural reserves.

New Zealand has **the 9th longest coastline in the world**, with a total length of over 15,000 kilometres. The Marlborough Sounds alone constitute 15% of this total length. There are also over 1000 rivers and around 40 lakes with a surface over 10 km<sup>2</sup>.



Punakaiki - Porari River

Due to the mountains and rivers being comparably young also **waterfalls** are very common (the highest at 580 m being the Sutherland Falls near Milford Sound), as well as exciting rapids.

Also many **caves** are accessible to visitors, 30 cave systems are longer than 3.5 km (the longest with over 50 km is Bulmer Cavern in Mt Owen) and 30 are deeper than 200 metres!

Do you want to know why the beaches and walking tracks are so empty? 203 countries have a higher population density than New Zealand. There are only 15 people per km<sup>2</sup>, compared with over 240 in the UK, and over 60% of the population lives in the 10 biggest cities!

And where the landscape is not spectacular there is always lush and green rolling farmland, with sheep and cows as far as the eye can see!



Stone Store in Kerikeri

## Regional overview



## Northland



Hokianga sand dunes

Follow the **coastal roads** to see hundreds of stunning beaches and bays. On the East Coast you will find the most beautiful and idyllic swimming coves fringed with Pohutukawa trees while you can find wild and lonely beaches on the West Coast stretching as far as the eye can see.

Take a **cruise** in the Bay of Islands or to the Poor Knights Islands to see what amazing things New Zealand has to offer in and on the water.

Learn about New Zealand **Maori and settler history** in the many heritage museums - this is where it all began!

Northland has a **warmer climate** than the rest of New Zealand, especially warmer nights and ocean temperature. The subtropical climate is also reflected in the dense Northland bush, some of the forests being ancient and untouched. Check out at least one of the many bush and coastal tracks - they can be found in all Northland corners.

### Northland highlights

**The coastal road via Mangawhai:** Take the Northland Twin Coast Discovery Highway towards the east and enjoy the beautiful coast line with the **Mangawhai Heads**, its gorgeous Cliff Walk and the beach communities **Langs Beach** and **Waipu Cove**. On the way back to SH1 you can stop at the interesting Scottish Settler's Museum in **Waipu**. Close by is **Ruakaka** beach with a stunning view to the Whangarei Heads, or take a stroll along **Uretiti Beach** right next to the highway.

**Whangarei:** Northland's main centre combines city feeling with an environment that's up there with New Zealand's best. You can find magnificent viewpoints from the top of extinct

volcanoes, a rich Maori and European heritage with many historic pa sites, a beautiful **Town Basin** that attracts yachts from around the world, protected bush and walking tracks wherever you go, the 26 m **Whangarei Falls** which are the best of at least 5 other nice waterfalls in the vicinity. Whangarei has a subtropical climate and a very high density of **artists and art galleries**, the last 'Hundertwasser House' in the world is due to be built and there are 'City of Colour' references everywhere. The Bay of Islands and West Coast are already within day trip distance and the Whangarei Heads and Tutukaka Coast with their wild ocean beaches and idyllic bays are only a short drive away.

**The Whangarei Heads:** The beautiful drive on the northern shore of Whangarei Harbour starts at the Town Basin in Whangarei. Along the Pohutukawa lined coast there are many picturesque bays, bush walks and Polynesian style volcanic summits, the roads end at wild ocean beaches - and only a few surfers and fishermen to share them with. After **Parua Bay** you can go straight towards the remote beaches of **Pataua** and **Taiharuru**, or take the right turnoff towards **McLeod Bay** and Ocean Beach. Soon **Mount Manaia** is towering above the landscape. At McLeod Bay you can detour to **Reotahi** behind **Mount Aubry** and get a close look at New Zealand's only oil refinery across the harbour or see a small island marine reserve and the freezing works ruins from where frozen meat was shipped to England nearly 100 years ago. The views from Mount Manaia are wonderful, as are the 476 m **Bream Head** and hidden **Smugglers Bay** on the way to the wildest surf beach in the region: **Ocean Beach**.

**Tutukaka Coast:** Another Northland gem with gorgeous bays, peaceful river estuaries and million dollar beaches, offering some of the finest beaches in the world. Thanks to its untouched and uncommercial nature the Tutukaka Coast is one of the top three coastlines in the world (according to the National Geographic Traveler magazine). The **Poor Knights Islands** benefit from warm northerly currents and are teeming with marine life in their protected reserve, offering the best diving and snorkelling in New Zealand and the best subtropical diving in the world, ranked as a top 10 dive spot by Jacques Cousteau. The coast starts at **Ngunguru** with its big estuary and a beautiful sandspit that sits between the village and the open ocean. Before the big game fishing port at **Tutukaka Marina** take the turnoff on the right to **Pacific Bay**, **Church Bay** and **Whangaumu (or Wellingtons) Bay**. Another gem of a beach is **Matapouri Bay** further north, the horseshoe shape is perfect and you can walk to the next highlight: **Whale Bay**. This fine beach is sheltered from the ocean and you can relax under Pohutukawa trees. The next 2 beaches **Wooleys Bay** and **Sandy Bay** are both wide and long which certainly appeals to many surfers. You can take a winding road back through rural countryside and join SH1 again at Hikurangi.

**Whangarei to Bay of Islands:** You can either drive directly to Paihia via the famous public toilets in **Kawakawa**, designed by **Friedensreich Hundertwasser** who once lived in the area, or take the longer and twisty **Old Russell Road** which leads you all the way along the coast to Russell. Alternatively you can take the **car ferry** from Opuā to Russell.

**The Bay of Islands - Paihia and Russell:** Paihia is the gateway to the bay - a cruise around the 144 islands is one of the absolute highlights of most New Zealand itineraries. The region is geared up for tourism: anything from island hopping on the way to the **Hole in the Rock** to swimming with dolphins to thrilling jetboats to relaxed sailing cruises to parasailing or kayaking etc. Just a short ferry ride away take a break from the action on the waterfront of the oldest town in the country, Russell, or catch a breathtaking view of the bay from **Flagstaff Hill** or **Tapeka Point**.

**The Bay of Islands - Waitangi:** Just north of Paihia is Waitangi, the birthplace of New Zealand as a nation, where Maori chiefs and Europeans signed the **Treaty of Waitangi** in 1840. Set in beautiful grounds overlooking the bay you can see a fantastically **carved marae** (meeting house) from inside, a **historical homestead**, an exhibition and the biggest **war waka** (a canoe named 'Ngatokimatawhaorua') under its carved shelter. The loop road or a walking track will bring you to the **Haruru Falls**.

**The Bay of Islands - Kerikeri:** This lovely 'boutique town' with many orchard and lifestyle farmers is set on an inlet north of the bay, home of the oldest house in New Zealand, the **Mission House** from 1822 and the oldest stone house, the **Stone Store** from 1836, both are accessible as museums. Near Kerikeri you can also visit **Rainbow Falls** and **Aroha Island** with a small Kiwi population.

**Whangaroa Harbour:** This gorgeous bay mainly attracts fishermen and well informed walkers who know that the two steep summits called **Duke's Nose** and **St. Paul's Rock** offer amazing 360 degree views.

**Doubtless Bay and Karikari Peninsula:** **Mangonui** with its waterfront drive and old settler houses is one of the most charming places in Northland, the detour from the highway takes only a few minutes. Behind the lovely **Mills Bay** you'll find access to **Rangikapiti Pa** with great views back over Mangonui and north over **Coopers Beach** and towards the **Karikari Peninsula**. Far away from any crowds you will find the silica white sands near **Puheke Hill** viewpoint and the perfect shaped **Maitai Bay**.

**The Far North:** Heading up into the Aupouri Peninsula it is still 100 km to **Cape Reinga** with its iconic lighthouse - the spot where two oceans meet and Maori believe their souls pass by

on their journey to legendary Hawaiki. The cape is not the only sight, also **Tapotupotu Beach** and the giant **Te Pahi sand dunes** where you can sandboard are close by, as well as the white silicate **Te Rarawa Beach**. Many travellers choose a bus tour to enjoy one leg of the trip driving on the impressive **90 Mile Beach** that ends at the **Ahipara** beach community.

**Hokianga Harbour:** The famous Polynesian discoverer Kupe once returned home to send his people back here. Catch a ferry between **Kohukohu** and **Rawene** - a lovely sight with early settler homes, wooden churches and houses on stilts. The Hokianga is a world apart, it seems to be from a different age and there is lots to explore: remote bush walks, New Zealand's biggest **sand dunes**, the bizarre **Koutu Boulders**, the fluted basalt valley called **Wairere Boulders** and the great viewpoint overlooking the harbour at **South Head**.

**Waipoua Forest:** South of Opononi and Omapere is Northland's biggest ancient forest with two short walks leading to the largest existing Kauri trees, **Te Matua Ngahere** (Father of the Forest) and **Tane Mahuta** (Lord of the Forest), who once were only allowed to be approached by Maori priests. Both are unique, Tane Mahuta in height and Te Matua Ngahere in width, both radiate with personality.

**Kauri Coast:** More Kauri trees can be seen in **Trounson Kauri Park** where chances to see a Kiwi in the wild at night are higher than most places in New Zealand. The heart of the Kauri Coast is **Dargaville**, a typical farming town. Don't miss a detour to **Baylys Beach**, a small beach community where you can access **Ripiro Beach**, the secret alternative to 90 Mile Beach, a spectacular wide and firm west coast beach stretching for 110 kilometres, good for some endless beach driving or lonely walks. South of Dargaville is **Matakohe** with its famous **Kauri Museum**, which has organically grown into a huge complex, it explains the interesting Northland history with its kauri logging and gumdigging.



Matapouri Bay - Tutukaka Coast

## **Recommended walks**

Mangawhai Cliffs Walkway - beach and cliff walk (2-3 h return, time it for low tide for an excellent loop walk), Wintle Street, Mangawhai

AH Reed Canopy Walkway to Whangarei Falls - combination of two big Kauri trees and an idyllic 26 m waterfall, connected by a nice river walk (1.5 h return), from Whareora Road or Whangarei Falls car park, Whangarei

Hatea Loop - walk around the yacht harbour, involving a sculpture walk and two newly designed bridges (40 min), Town Basin, Whangarei

Bream Head and Ocean Beach - volcano summit with native bush and great views towards Ocean Beach and offshore islands, in the end a short walk back via the road (3 h return), start at Peach Cove car park, Whangarei Heads

Smugglers Bay - loop walk around a peninsula to a hidden beach, Maori fortress and a war bunker lookout (1 h return), end of Urquharts Bay Road, Whangarei Heads

Mount Manaia - volcano summit with native bush, wonderful cliff views from top and from a rock 2/3 of the way up (1.5 h return), McLeod Bay, Whangarei Heads

Mount Aubrey - short ascent to a rock with 360 degree views (30 min one way, beware the steep dropoffs!), there's also a loop walk around the mountain, Tiller Park on Reotahi Road, McLeod Bay, Whangarei Heads

Matapouri Bay bis Whale Bay - coastal walk connecting two of the prettiest bays in New Zealand (1 h return), north end of Matapouri Bay or Whale Bay Car Park, Tutukaka Coast

Cape Brett Track - over endless ridges with many ascents and descents to a lighthouse in a spectacular location opposite the Hole in the Rock (8 h), overnight there or back with a water taxi from Deep Cove, start at Oke Bay, Rawhiti, Bay of Islands

Opuia to Paihia Coastal Walk - from Opuia via cliffs and mangrove boardwalk towards Paihia, back the same way unless you have organised transport (up to 2 h one way, no need to check the tides from that direction), Beechy Street, Opuia, Bay of Islands

Tane Mahuta, Te Matua Ngahere and Yakas Walk - to the largest Kauri trees of the Waipoua Forest (Tane Mahuta 10 min, Te Matua Ngahere 20 min, Yakas Walk 40 min return), from two different car parks along State Highway 12, Waipoua Forest

## **Recommended lookouts**

Mount Parihaka, Memorial Drive, Whangarei

Mount Manaia, Mount Aubrey and Bream Head at the Whangarei Heads (steep walks)

Tutukaka Head Lighthouse (1 h return, only at low tide), end of Landowners Lane, Tutukaka

Dolphin Place Lookout (10 min return), Dolphin Place above Whangaumu Bay, Tutukaka

Flagstaff Hill - view over Russell, Flagstaff Road, Russell

Tapeka Point - view over the Bay of Islands (15 min one way), access from Du Fresne Place, Tapeka Point, near Russell

Roberton Island - viewpoint on the island, only accessible by boat, Bay of Islands

Tareha Point - view to the Bay of Islands, Akeake Historic Reserve, Opito Bay, Kerikeri

St. Paul's Rock - steep climb to a wonderful 360 degree viewpoint (30 min one way, with ladders), end of Old Hospital Road, Whangaroa

Duke's Nose - spectacular views above the harbour (45 min one way, with ladders), start at Lane Cove Hut, by boat or from Totara North 2 h one way, Whangaroa Harbour

Rangikapiti Pa, Rangikapiti Road, between Mangonui and Coopers Beach

Puheke Hill (20 min one way), Puheke Road, Karikari Peninsula

Cape Reinga, views north of the lighthouse and towards Cape Maria van Diemen, end of State Highway 1

South Head Lookout in the Arai Te Uru Recreational Reserve, west of Omapere, Hokianga

Baylys Beach Lookout - view towards the Tasman Sea and Ripiro Beach (5 min one way), from Ocean View Terrace, Baylys Beach

Maunganui Bluff Track - views above the endless Ripiro Beach (good views at the beginning of the track), Aranga Coast Road, Aranga Beach

Maungaraho Rock - steep climb to the summit of a volcanic rock (20 min one way), Maungaraho Rock Road, Arapohue

Tokatoka Scenic Reserve Track - steep climb to the summit of a volcanic rock (20 min one way), Tokatoka Road, 17 km south of Dargaville

## **Recommended museums**

The Kauri Museum - everything about Kauri trees and the gum digging industry, Matakohe

Waipu Museum - the interesting history of a Scottish settler migration, The Centre, Waipu

Clapham's National Clock Museum, Town Basin, Whangarei

Whangarei Art Museum Te Manawa Toi - permanent and temporary art collections, Town Basin, Whangarei

Kiwi North - Whangarei Museum & Kiwi House at Heritage Park, State Highway 14, west of Whangarei

Far North Regional Museum, South Road, Kaitiaki

Dargaville Museum - regional collection with maritime focus, Mt Wesley Coast Road, Dargaville

## **Recommended historic sights**

Treaty House & Whare Runanga, Waitangi Treaty Grounds, Paihia

Kerikeri Mission Station (1822), Stone Store (1835) and Kororipo Pa (Hongi Hika's fortress), Kerikeri Basin

Pompallier Mission and Printery from 1842, first printing workshop in New Zealand, The Strand, Russell

Te Waimate Mission House from 1832, Te Ahu Ahu Road, Waimate North

Clendon House, Clendon Esplanade, Rawene

Mangungu Mission House from 1828, Motukiore Road, Horeke

Ruapekapeka Pa Historic Reserve - where Chief Kawiti withstood a long lasting British siege in 1845-46, he later advised the British about trench warfare, Ruapekapeka Road, south of Kawakawa

Reyburn House from 1865, now the Northland Society of Arts, Town Basin, Whangarei

**More information:** [www.northlandnz.com](http://www.northlandnz.com)