

MAKE IT HAPPEN

NEW ZEALAND



Known as the 'City of Sails', Auckland is New Zealand's biggest and busiest city, with waterfront cafés, quiet gardens, stylish cocktail bars and museums – all built near the craters of ancient volcanoes



The waterfront in Auckland sees the Sky Tower looming large behind it

ESSENTIALS

Getting there

Air New Zealand flies from Heathrow to Auckland in around 25 hours (from £950; airnewzealand.co.uk). Other airlines include Qantas, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, Etihad and Singapore Airlines.

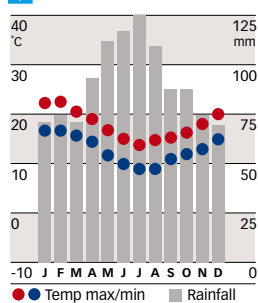
Getting around

Auckland's buses (from 90p per trip) and trains (from 85p) are good, but can be limited outside the city centre (see maxx.co.nz). A good option for further afield is car hire (from £69 per day; budget.co.uk).

Further reading

For more information about travelling to New Zealand, visit newzealand.com/travel. Also, pick up the Lonely Planet *New Zealand* guide (£16.99; lonelyplanet.com).

Climate



THE FINAL WORD

'There's a real purity in New Zealand that's not easy to find in the world anymore.'

Elijah Wood, Lord of the Rings actor

3 WAYS TO DO AUCKLAND...



The Auckland Art Gallery

Budget



Stay at Peace and Plenty Inn

Mid-range



Hotel de Brett's Drawing Room

Luxury

SLEEP

THE PARNELL INN is located in the heart of its namesake historical suburb in the city's inner east. Stay in motel-style rooms with modern furniture and local photography on the walls (doubles from £50; parnellinn.co.nz).

PEACE AND PLENTY INN is a comfy period house, set on the waterfront at Devonport, across the bay. Stocked with antique furnishings and fittings, it has claw-foot baths and Victorian stained-glass windows (doubles from £95; peaceandplenty.co.nz).

A refurbished historic hotel in the city centre, the **HOTEL DE BRETT** has stylish stripy carpets, big windows and designer touches like art deco mosaics throughout its 25 individually decorated guest rooms (doubles from £150; hoteldebrett.com).

EAT

Head to **REVIVE** for healthy, vegetarian dishes and salads (right), such as tangy not-chicken burrito with pumpkin and tofu (mains from £5; revive.co.nz).



THE ENGINE ROOM, an award-winning bistro set in an art deco post office on the city's North Shore, serves up steak frites and veal schnitzel with local wines (mains from £15; engineroom.net.nz).

Fine dining in Auckland is at its best at **THE GROVE**, a low-lit, romantic restaurant featuring dishes such as Wagyu ox cheek or market fish with cider-smoked clams, fennel fricassée and seaweed butter (mains from £21; thegroverestaurant.co.nz).

DRINK

THE BLUESTONE ROOM is a traditional drinking hole set in an 1861 stone building – restored to create a relaxed, heritage setting. Come here to sample a range of modern artisan beers and ales (beer from £3; thebluestoneroom.co.nz).

With rustic leather couches, an open fireplace in winter – or sea breezes in summer – and a jazz soundtrack, **THE WINE LOFT** is a great place to relax with a glass from the extensive wine list (wines from £4.50 a glass; wineloft.co.nz).

Located in the harbourfront Viaduct area, **BUNGALOW 8** is a modern bar with Pacific touches, think: fish tanks and bamboo ceilings. Here you can sip a cocktail and dance the night away (cocktails from £8; 00 64 09 307 1500).

SEE

THE AUCKLAND ART GALLERY has the country's biggest collection of artworks, with a particular emphasis on Maori and Pacific Islands pieces from the 19th century through to the modern day (admission free; aucklandartgallery.com).

A hideaway in the middle of Auckland, the **EDEN GARDEN** boasts acres of plants and blooms, and is close to the Mount Eden volcano crater (admission £4; edengarden.co.nz).



Take in Auckland from the tallest free-standing structure in the Southern Hemisphere – the iconic, 328-metre high **SKY TOWER** (admission £14; skycityauckland.co.nz).



Kaikoura is a
prime spot to catch
whale sightings



3 OTHER AMAZING NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCES

WATCH MARINE LIFE IN KAIKOURA

Further down the east coast from the Marlborough wine region (see p92) on South Island is the picturesque peninsula town of Kaikoura, backed by the peaks of the Seaward Kaikoura Ranges. Its rugged beauty is a draw, but most come here for the abundance of local wildlife: whales – including the elusive sperm whale – orcas, dolphins, fur seals and penguins. There are a variety of ways to encounter these creatures, such as marinelifespotting boat trips complete with hydrophones (underwater microphones) to pick up whale song (£70 for 2.5-hour tour; whalewatch.co.nz), as well as helicopter tours, which can allow you to see the creatures from top to tail, as opposed to just a flipper or spout that might be seen from a boat (from £110 per person in a group of four; worldofwhales.co.nz). Stay at the Hapuku Lodge to continue the nature theme, with its designer treehouses set 30-feet up in the air among a grove of manuka trees, featuring hand-crafted wooden furniture and large windows (doubles from £190; hapukulodge.com).

CLIMB WEST-COAST GLACIERS

The west coast of New Zealand's South Island is home to two glaciers, Fox and Franz Josef – great rivers of ice that descend the steep sides of Mount Tasman and Mount Cook, making their way through the rainforest of the Westland National Park to the sea. They are among the most dynamic glaciers in the world – moving up to a metre a day, which is ten times faster than regular valley glaciers – leaving dramatic glacial valleys in their wake. Franz Josef is known to be particularly scenic, and it's possible to hike through the surrounding forest and even on its surface. Take a half-day, small-group walk on Franz Josef with experienced guides (£60, with boots, jacket and other equipment supplied; franzjosefglacier.com), or you can 'heli hike', where you are lifted high up on the glacier and can explore the blue ice-caves, columned seracs and other pristine ice formations on foot (£195; website as above). Stay at the wisteria-draped Holly Homestead B&B. Built with native timbers in the 1920s, it offers rooms with alpine views (doubles from £100; hollyhomestead.co.nz).

DISCOVER GLOW WORMS IN WAITOMO

Located in the King Country (see p89) on the North Island is Waitomo, which looks like a simple town above ground, but beneath it lies an extraordinary system of subterranean rivers and limestone caves. Over 300 caves have been mapped, featuring acres of stalactites and stalagmites, all illuminated by thousands of native glow worms. These can be viewed in a sedate and claustrophobe-friendly way, such as a walking tour and boat ride through the ethereally beautiful (but rather unimaginatively named) Glow Worm Cave (£32; waitomo.com). For the more adventurous, there is black-water rafting – a combination of caving, jumping down waterfalls and floating through underground waterways, with a Milky Way of glow worms passing overhead (£59, including wetsuit, helmet and other equipment; website as above). A quick two-minute walk from the caves' visitor centre is the Waitomo Caves Guest Lodge, with cabins set in a garden and views of the countryside (doubles from £64; waitomocavesguestlodge.co.nz).

HAPPY CAMPERS

With snow-capped mountains, rivers, glaciers, fjords and forests, New Zealand is the perfect place to drive around. A popular option is to hire a camper van – check your rear-view mirror on any far-flung road and you'll likely see a shiny vehicle packed with travellers, bikes and portable barbecues behind you.

- Most towns have a campsite or campervan park with powered sites for around £20 per night (newzealand.com/camping). There are also over 200 vehicle-accessible Department of Conservation (DOC) campsites, ranging from free to £8 per person per night (doc.govt.nz).
- New Zealand is full of ecologically sensitive areas, so you should never camp off the beaten track before checking at the local DOC office – and be sure to clean up when you leave. For tips on 'freedom camping', visit camping.org.nz.
- Campervan hire is available throughout the country, starting at around £60 per day for a simple two-berth cabin with cooker and refrigerator (autorentals.co.nz).