



# Pristine Wonder

New Zealand's largest city has no lack of activities, with big-city fun and stunning natural areas.



#### SKY HIGH

At 328 metres, Auckland's **Sky Tower** is the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere. At such a lofty height, it naturally offers the best views of the city. There's even a rotating restaurant called **Orbit** from which you can watch the city below.

#### GETTING AROUND

Auckland has great public transportation, with connections to almost anywhere in the city by bus and train. Ferries go to places like **Waiheke Island**, a getaway in the Hauraki Gulf famed for its stunning beaches and wineries. **Uber** is popular among locals, especially for airport transfers.

#### SUMMER FUN

January is the sunniest month in Auckland, with an average of just eight days of rain. It's also among the warmest months, perfect for outdoor events and activities, including the **ASB Classic** tennis tournament. Taking place on 2-14 January at the ASB Tennis Centre in the Parnell neighbourhood, this year's edition is expected to be the biggest ever. Just a short ferry ride away on Waiheke Island is **Headland Sculpture on the Gulf** (27 January – 19 February), New Zealand's premier contemporary outdoor sculpture exhibition featuring artists from around the world. A great way to experience New Zealand's famous native Māori culture is

at the **Tāmaki Herenga Waka Festival** (28-30 January at Viaduct Events Centre and Viaduct Basin). Visitors can enjoy three days of musical performances, traditional *kapa haka* (Māori performing arts) dance groups, and more.

#### BE (IN) A SQUARE

Just off Queen St in the city centre is **Aotea Square**. The site of numerous cultural festivals and concerts, it's a great place to people-watch. To boot, it's right next to **The Civic**, an atmospheric theatre built to look like an old Moorish palace. The theatre had a starring role in Peter Jackson's 2005 *King Kong* remake.

#### BRUNCHING AWAY

Brunch is beloved by many Aucklanders, known for their slow pace of life. **Kokako** is one of the best places to indulge, with dishes like chopped avocado on rye bread with edamame, buffalo feta, pickled onions and soft-boiled egg. **Atomic Coffee Roasters** does good smashed avocado on bread with feta. **Bestie Café** has an elegant feel in a beautiful shopping arcade, and Algerian-themed **Little Algiers** is an underrated gem with meat-laden dishes and friendly staff.

#### GET HIP

Chock-full of trendy shops, cafés and restaurants, **Ponsonby Road** is known as a place to see and be seen. A must-visit is **Ponsonby Central**, a collective space where artists sell their wares alongside upmarket gastrpubs and barbers specialising in beard trims.

#### CITY OF SAILS

One of Auckland's nicknames is the City of Sails, and with literally thousands of vessels anchored at all times of the year, it's easy to see why. A stroll through the vibrant **Viaduct Harbour** (formerly known as Viaduct Basin) is one of the best ways to experience the city's maritime culture. It's worth making a stop at the historical **Ferry Terminal** or eat at the nautical-themed waterfront restaurant **Swashbucklers**.

#### HITTING THE BEACHES

Being sandwiched between the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean, there's no shortage of spectacular beaches in Auckland. Not far from Ponsonby Road in the **Herne Bay** neighbourhood is **Sentinel Beach**, which has great views at sunset and of the Auckland Harbour Bridge. About an hour's drive west of the city centre are **Piha** and **Muriwai**, which aside from the scenery also boast great surfing and swimming opportunities.

#### SHOPPING FOR SHEEP

There are almost 30 million sheep in New Zealand (compared to about 4.5 million people). The country is particularly famed for its ultra-soft merino wool, and to buy high-quality merino sweaters, blankets and more. One of the best places to go is **Parnell Village**, a collection of upmarket boutiques in Auckland's oldest suburb. **Icebreaker** is a New Zealand company known for its merino clothing that has several locations in the city.

**High Street** in the central city is also a good bet. The central city's **Britomart** is where many international luxury brands can be found. There's also **Karen Walker**, probably New Zealand's most famous designer, who has a few outlets in the city bearing her name.

#### INTO THE KITCHEN

**Tanuhi's Cave** is also next to Aotea Square. Serving Japanese cuisine, it's worth a visit simply for the experience. To get to the dining area, visitors have to climb a flight of metal stairs against the side of an old brick building and walk right through the bustling kitchen. As for the food, the chicken tenderloin with cheese *yakitori* is especially sumptuous.

#### BURGERS GALORE

If burgers are your thing, then you're in luck. **Burger Burger** at Ponsonby Central uses tender lamb with blue cheese as one of its specialties. **Tiger Burger** offers a Korean-inspired take in a casual setting. Better Burger uses organic and locally sourced ingredients, while **Velvet Burger** and **BurgerFuel** are popular chains that also have a wide selection of gourmet milkshakes.

#### KEEPING IT CASUAL

A laid-back vibe pervades Auckland. A haven for artists, writers, actors, musicians and other creative types, the **Grey Lynn** neighbourhood is chock-full of beautiful multi-storey homes and friendly residents. It's also just a few minutes' walk from Ponsonby Road, and because it's on a hill it has great views of the Sky Tower and city centre. **Mount Eden** is another place to go to for great views. **Domain Wintergardens** and **Myers Park** are good places to take a stroll within the city centre.

#### LISTEN UP

English is spoken by most New Zealanders, but "Kiwis" (as New Zealanders are known) also use a lot of **slang**. Phrases like "sweet as" and "good as gold" mean something is OK, while "mean" means something is good, "chur" means "thank you", and if someone is "crook", it means they are unwell. "Kia ora" is a phrase borrowed from Te Reo Māori that means "hello". Expect to hear it a lot.

#### Travel Tips



#### EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

**Temperatures** in Auckland are usually pleasant year-round, but the weather can change very suddenly – sometimes in just minutes. This is why it's best to wear clothing suitable for all types of weather.



#### GET SOME SLEEP

The **Langham Hotel** is a five-star hotel that's one of the most luxurious in the country, hosting numerous black-tie events and high teas. The **Hilton Auckland** looks like a large ship from a distance, and its waterfront views are legendary. **SKYCITY Grand Hotel** is also famed for its luxury and helpful staff.



#### APPS FOR ALL THAT

Wi-Fi coverage throughout Auckland is excellent – and there are numerous apps to help visitors take advantage of all the city has to offer. **Hello Auckland** covers great things to see and do, places to eat, where to shop and stay, plus events and deals. **Auckland Map and Walks** offers great self-guided walking tours suitable for all tastes and interests, from popular attractions to hidden gems.

Malaysia Airlines operates seven times weekly flights from Kuala Lumpur (KUL) to Auckland (AKL), New Zealand