

Eastern North Island

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ride the rugged and renowned mountain bike trails in **Rotorua** (p89)
- Hike the otherworldly environs of the **Tongariro Crossing** (p122)
- Discover the rugged solitude of the **East Cape** (p94)

TERRAIN

The Central Plateau is awash with volcanic mountains that rise from the earth with foothills all around. The eastern interior and coastal areas are a rolling mass of farmland and windy shores.

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The eastern North Island contains a diverse collection of sights and landscapes, from the volcanic peaks of the Central Plateau to the rugged coastline of the East Cape and the wonderfully preserved Art Deco architecture of Napier. There are towering volcanoes, picturesque lakes, forests, beaches, towns rich in Maori culture and plenty of quiet roads.

Mountain bikers will find plenty of trails to ride in Rotorua and those seeking a break by the lake will find picturesque Taupo fits the bill. Those seeking solitude only need to head out to the East Cape where deserted roads and tiny towns beckon. This region is a mix of the high-profile NZ you already know about and the rarely seen – just about everything you could want for a memorable cycling adventure.



The East Cape enjoys warm summers and mild winters, with an average maximum temperature in Gisborne of 24.9°C in January and 14.1°C in July. The Central Plateau has similarly warm summers, but because of its altitude (Taupo is at 360m) tends to experience colder winters than much of the North Island. Maximum temperatures in Taupo are 23.3°C in January and 11.2°C in July. Night-time temperatures in particular can get quite low on the Central Plateau, with an average minimum for Taupo in July of 2.2°C. Snow is rare, however, below 500m.

days a year in Taupo and 111 in Gisborne, producing total rainfall figures of 1099mm and 1044mm respectively, quite low by North Island standards.

Winds tend to blow from the southwest in the Central Plateau and from the northwest across the East Cape region.

The *AA North Island Touring Map* 1:550,000 covers the Eastern North Island region in good detail and also has town maps of most of the larger centres. It's available from AA centres for \$2.95.

Rotorua see p106.

