

The East Coast



New Zealand is known for its mix of wildly divergent landscapes, but in this region it's the sociological contours that are most pronounced. From the remote settlements of the East Cape to Havelock North's prosperous, wine-soaked streets, the East Coast displays a spectrum of authentic Kiwi experiences that anyone with a passion for *Maoritanga* (things Maori) will find fascinating.

Maori culture is never more visible than on the East Coast. Exquisitely carved *marae* (meeting house complexes) dot the landscape, and while the locals may not be wearing flax skirts and swinging *poi* (flax balls on strings) like they do for the tourists in Rotorua, you can be assured that *te reo* and *tikanga* (the language and customs) are alive and well.

Intrepid types will have no trouble losing the tourist hordes – along the Pacific Coast Hwy, through the rural back roads, on remote beaches, or in the mystical wilderness of Te Urewera National Park.

When the call of the wild gives way to caffeine withdrawal, a fix will quickly be found in the urban centres of Gisborne and Napier. You'll also find plenty of wine, as the region strains under the weight of grapes. From *kaimoana* (seafood) to berry fruit and beyond, there are riches here for everyone.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Time-warping to the 1930s amid the art-deco delights of **Napier** (p378)
- Avoiding being the designated driver as you embark on a grand wine-tasting tour of **Gisborne** (p369) or **Hawke's Bay** (p388)
- Meeting with Maori culture in the hidden nooks of **East Cape** (p361) and **Te Urewera National Park** (p374)
- Beach-hopping between secluded gems such as **Maraehako Bay** (p363), **Tokomaru Bay** (p364), **Anaura Bay** (p365), **Waimarama** (p386), **Mangakuri** and **Aramoana** (p392)
- Searching for wood nymphs among the magical forest paths of **Eastwoodhill Arboretum** (p368)





The East Coast basks in a warm, dry climate. Summer temperatures around Napier and Gisborne nudge 25°C, rarely dipping below 8°C in winter. The Hawke's Bay region also suns itself in mild, dry grape-growing conditions, with an average annual rainfall of 800mm. Heavy downpours sometimes wash

Getting There & Around

The region's only airports are in Gisborne and Napier. Air New Zealand flies to both from Auckland and Wellington, and also to Napier from Christchurch. Sunair Aviation