



# Auckland

POPULATION: 1.4 MILLION

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## Why Go?

Paris may be the city of love, but Auckland is the city of many lovers, according to its Maori name, Tamaki Makaurau. Those lovers so desired this place that they fought over it for centuries.

It's hard to imagine a more geographically blessed city. Its two harbours frame a narrow isthmus punctuated by volcanic cones and surrounded by fertile farmland. From any of its numerous vantage points you'll be astounded by how close the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean come to kissing and forming a new island.

As a result, water's never far away – whether it's the ruggedly beautiful west-coast surf beaches or the glistening Hauraki Gulf with its myriad islands. And within an hour's drive from the high-rise heart of the city there are dense tracts of rainforest, thermal springs, wineries and wildlife reserves. No wonder Auckland's rated as offering the third-best quality of life of any major city.

## Best Places to Eat

- » Grove (p88)
- » La Cigale market (p91)
- » Depot (p88)
- » Clooney (p89)
- » MooChowChow (p89)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel de Brett (p83)
- » Auckland Takapuna Oaks (p87)
- » Verandahs (p84)
- » 23 Hepburn (p84)
- » Waldorf Celestion (p83)

## When to Go

Auckland has a mild climate, with the occasional frost in winter and high humidity in summer. Summer months have an average of eight days of rain, but the weather is famously fickle, with 'four seasons in one day' possible at any time of the year. If you're after a big-city buzz, don't come between Christmas and New Year, when Aucklanders desert the city for the beach en masse. The sights remain open but many cafes and restaurants close, some not surfacing again until well into January.



## Auckland Highlights

- 1** Going with the flows, exploring Auckland's fascinating **volcanic field** (p71)
- 2** Getting back to nature on the island sanctuaries of the beautiful **Hauraki Gulf** (p100)
- 3** Being awed by the Maori *taonga* (treasures) of the **Auckland Museum** (p67)
- 4** Going west to the mystical and treacherous black sands of **Karekare** and **Piha** (p115)
- 5** Swimming with the fishes at **Goat Island Marine Reserve** (p123)
- 6** Schlepping around world-class wineries and beaches on **Waiheke Island** (p103)
- 7** Buzzing around the cafes, restaurants and bars of **Ponsonby** (p89)
- 8** Soaking up the Polynesian vibe at the **Pasifika Festival** (p81), held in March at Western Springs Park