



The East Coast

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Best Outdoors

- » Cape Kidnappers (p361)
- » Cooks Cove Walkway (p338)
- » Hawke's Bay Cycle Trails (p352)
- » Surf Gisborne (p340)
- » Lake Waikaremoana Track (p345)

Best Places to Stay

- » Kennedy Park Top 10 Resort (p353)
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- » Knapdale Eco Lodge (p341)

Why Go?

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 earthy settlements of the East Cape to Havelock North's wine-soaked streets, there's a full spectrum of NZ life.

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 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.

When to Go

The East Coast basks in a warm, mainly 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 out sections of the Pacific Coast Hwy (State Hwy 35, SH35).

East Coast Highlights

- 1 Time-warping to the 1930s amid the art-deco delights of **Napier** (p348)
- 2 Sniffing and sipping your way around the wineries of **Hawke's Bay** (p360) or **Gisborne** (p339)
- 3 Losing yourself in the mighty forests and Maori culture of **Te Urewera National Park** (p344)
- 4 Cruising the coast, taking in landmarks such as **Cape Kidnappers** (p361), **Tolaga Bay** (p337), **Tokomaru Bay** (p337) and the **East Cape Lighthouse** (p336)
- 5 Searching for wood nymphs among the magical forest paths of **Eastwoodhill Arboretum** (p9)

