



# Rotorua & the Bay of Plenty

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## Best Outdoors

- ➔ Rotorua Canopy Tours (p278)
- ➔ Surfing at Mt Maunganui (p298)
- ➔ Redwoods  
Whakarewarewa Forest (p289)
- ➔ Waikite Valley Thermal Pools (p292)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Regent of Rotorua (p285)
- ➔ Warm Earth Cottage (p304)
- ➔ Captain's Cabin (p308)
- ➔ Opotiki Beach House (p312)

## Why Go?

Captain Cook christened the Bay of Plenty when he cruised past in 1769, and plentiful it remains. Blessed with sunshine and sand, the bay stretches from Waihi Beach in the west to Opotiki in the east, with the holiday hubs of Tauranga, Mt Maunganui and Whakatane in between.

Offshore from Whakatane is New Zealand's most active volcano, Whakaari (White Island). Volcanic activity defines this region, and nowhere is this subterranean sexiness more obvious than in Rotorua. Here the daily business of life goes on among steaming hot springs, explosive geysers, bubbling mud pools and the billows of sulphurous gas responsible for the town's 'unique' eggy smell.

Rotorua and the Bay of Plenty are also strongholds of Maori tradition, presenting many opportunities to engage with NZ's rich indigenous culture: check out a power-packed concert performance, chow down at a *hangi* (Maori feast) or skill-up with some Maori arts-and-crafts techniques.

## When to Go

- ➔ The Bay of Plenty is one of NZ's sunniest regions: Whakatane records a brilliant 2350 average hours of sunshine per year! In summer (December to February) maximums hover between 20°C and 27°C. Everyone else is here too, but the holiday vibe is heady.
- ➔ Visit Rotorua any time: the geothermal activity never sleeps, and there are enough beds in any season.
- ➔ The mercury can slide below 5°C overnight here in winter, although it's usually warmer on the coast (and you'll have the beach all to yourself).



## Rotorua & the Bay of Plenty Highlights

- 1 Watching Rotorua's geysers blow their tops at **Te Puia** (p275) or **Whakarewarewa Thermal Village** (p276).
- 2 Oglng kaleidoscopic colours and bubbling mud pools at **Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland** (p292).
- 3 Mountain biking in the

**Redwoods Whakarewarewa Forest** (p289).

- 4 Carving up the surf over NZ's first artificial reef at **Mt Maunganui** (p298)
- 5 Flying or boating out to NZ's only active marine volcano, **Whakaari** (p309)
- 6 Kicking back for a few days

in **Whakatane** (p305) – NZ's most underrated seaside town?

- 7 Swimming with dolphins at **Tauranga** (p292)
- 8 Drinking in **Mt Maunganui** (p302) after a beach afternoon
- 9 Climbing the pohutukawa-studded flanks of **Mauao** (Mt Maunganui; p300)