



Wellington Region

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Best Places to Eat

- Ortega Fish Shack (p363)
- Logan Brown (p363)
- Ombra (p363)
- Duke Carvell's (p363)
- Nikau Cafe (p362)

Best Places to Drink

- Goldings Free Dive (p364)
- Hawthorn Lounge (p365)
- Little Beer Quarter (p364)
- Havana (p365)
- Micro Wine Bar (p374)

Why Go?

If your New Zealand travels thus far have been all about the great outdoors and sleepy rural towns, Wellington will blow the cobwebs away. Art-house cinemas, funky boutiques, hip bars, theatres and lashings of restaurants – all can be found in the ‘cultural capital’.

As the crossing point between the North and South Islands, travellers have long been passing through these parts. The likes of Te Papa and Zealandia now stop visitors in their tracks, and even a couple of days’ pause will reveal myriad other attractions – a windswept and interesting harbour with a walkable waterfront, hillsides clad in pretty weatherboard houses, ample inner-city surprises and some of the freshest city air on the planet.

Less than an hour away to the north, the Kapiti Coast has a slower, beachy vibe, with Kapiti Island nature reserve a highlight. An hour away over the Rimutaka Range, the Wairarapa farm plains are dotted with quiet towns and famed wineries, hemmed in by a rugged, wild coastline.

When to Go?

- The capital has its fair share of blustery, cold, grey days, but such conditions prevail only part of the time. ‘Windy Welly’ breaks out into blue skies and T-shirt temperatures at least several days a year, when you’ll hear folk exclaim ‘You can’t beat Wellington on a good day’.
- November to April are the warmer months, with average maximums hovering around 20°C. From May to August it’s colder and wetter – daily temperatures lurk around 12°C.
- The Kapiti Coast and Wairarapa are a different story – they are both warmer, less windy, with more blue-sky days.



Wellington Region Highlights

- 1** Getting interactive at NZ's finest museum, Wellington's **Te Papa** (p354)
- 2** Scaling the lighthouse steps on wild and remote **Cape Palliser** (p374)
- 3** Meeting real live kiwi on a **Kapiti Island** (p370) night-time walk
- 4** Exploring the capital's creative side around **Cuba Street**
- 5** Rambling the dunes of **Queen Elizabeth Park** (p370) near beachy **Paekakariki**
- 6** Riding the ratchety **cable car** (p352) from Lambton Quay to the leafy **Wellington Botanic Gardens** (p349)
- 7** Maintaining a straight line on your bicycle as you tour the picturesque **Martinborough wineries** (p373)
- 8** Discovering hidden shortcuts to surprising lookout points around **hilly Wellington** (p349) city

i Getting There & Around

Wellington is a major transport hub, being the North Island port for the interisland ferries. Long-distance **KiwiRail Scenic Journeys** (☎ 04-495 0775, 0800 872 467; www.kiwirails-scenic.co.nz) trains run from Wellington to Auckland via Palmerston North. Wellington Airport is serviced by international and domestic airlines.

InterCity (☎ 04-385 0520; www.intercity.co.nz) is the main North Island bus company, travelling just about everywhere. Approaching Wellington city from the north, you'll pass through either the Kapiti Coast to the west via State Hwy1 (SH1), or the Wairarapa and Hutt Valley to the east via State Hwy2 (SH2).

Getting into and out of Wellington on regional trains and buses is a breeze. **Metlink** (☎ 0800