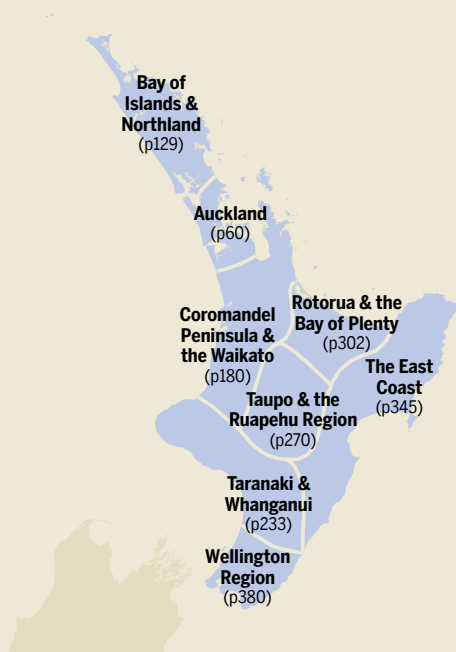




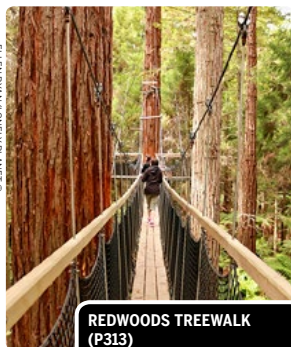
New Zealand's North Island (Te Ika-a-Māui)



Peter Dragicevich, Brett Atkinson, Anita Isalska, Sofia Levin

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Itineraries



2 WEEKS A Grand Circuit

Tracing a broad circuit around most of the North Island, this is an ideal route for travellers with time on their hands.

Kick off by exploring bustling **Auckland** before heading the long way around the Coromandel Peninsula, via Thames and Coromandel Town, to the legendary beach town of **Hahei**. Spend a day kayaking, visiting Cathedral Cove and digging a natural spa pool at nearby Hot Water Beach.

Continue south to **Rotorua**, the most dramatic of NZ's geothermal hot spots. Stop for the night at laid-back **Whakatane** before taking the winding coastal road right around isolated East Cape to beachy **Gisborne**. At **Napier**, pause to admire the art-deco architecture and acclaimed Hawke's Bay wineries. More wine awaits in **Martinborough**, a short hop from the nation's vibrant capital, **Wellington**.

After two nights in the capital, head north and then branch out west towards Whanganui and **New Plymouth**, a charming regional city with a brilliant art gallery, in the shadow of majestic Mt Taranaki. As you near the end of your North Island odyssey, take comfort that you've saved some highlights till last: the glowworm-lit magnificence of the **Waitomo Caves** and the chilled-out little surf town of **Raglan**.

10
DAYS

Auckland & the North

If you're travelling in summer and fancy an unhurried beach holiday, this one's for you.

Spend three days in **Auckland**, exploring its volcanoes, beaches, bars and eateries, and taking day trips to Waiheke Island and the west-coast beaches. Hit the highway and head north to sleepy **Tutukaka** for a day's diving around the Poor Knights Islands.

Continue on to the **Bay of Islands** for a dose of Māori and colonial history, and the timeless charm of pretty coves and coastal scenery. Stay for at least two nights and spend at least one day cruising between the islands.

Drop by **Doubtless Bay** for another lazy beach day and to feast on fish and chips on the wharf at Mangonui. The following morning, take a long, leisurely drive up to **Cape Reinga** at the very tip of the country – the most sacred site in traditional Māori spirituality.

Venture south, skirting the windswept expanses of Ninety Mile Beach, before hitting **Ahipara**. Continue south via the Hokianga Harbour and stop for the night at **Opononi**. Allow yourself time to pay homage to the majestic trees of the **Waipoua Forest** before commencing the long, scenic drive back to Auckland.



Central Highlights

This itinerary offers a short, sharp blast down the middle of the island, taking in NZ's two main cities and other highlights along the way.

After a couple of days in energetic and cosmopolitan **Auckland**, take a slow drive south, dropping in to briefly explore Hamilton and Cambridge en route to **Rotorua**. At your destination the classic combo of bubbling thermal activity and vibrant Māori culture awaits, and you can ease any travel aches with a lengthy soak in a hot spring.

Continue south to **Taupo** for jetboating thrills or the more relaxed appeal of trout fishing. If you're feeling brave, bungee jump from 47m above the Waikato River.

Follow the coves of Lake Taupo's picturesque eastern shore to **Tongariro National Park**, where there's good winter skiing, and the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, judged one of the world's best one-day walks.

Stop in at the National Army Museum at Waiouru and at the beach in Paekakariki before pushing on to **Wellington**. The nation's cute little capital has more than enough museums, galleries, bars and cafes to amuse you for a couple of days, and a good live-music scene to blast away the cobwebs at night.

Off the Beaten Track



PUREORA FOREST PARK

Hike to the summits of Mt Pureora and Mt Titirapunga, or cycle the two-day Timber Trail through the regenerating forest. (p232)

SUGAR LOAF ISLANDS MARINE PARK

Take a guided kayak trip or boat tour to these rugged islets off New Plymouth, home to 10,000 sea birds and a colony of NZ fur seals. (p242)

LAKE ROTOKURA

Hidden within the southern fringes of Tongariro National Park, this tapu (sacred) lake is accessed by a kilometre-long walk lined with ancient beech trees. (p300)

RIMUTAKA CYCLE TRAIL

It might start at Wellington Harbour, but this three-day ride traverses isolated hill country before landing at the little-visited western end of Palliser Bay. (p411)

LAKE WAIKAREITI

The vast mountainous wilderness of Te Urewera is the mist-shrouded home of the Tuhoe people. This secluded lake is reached by an hour's walk through dense native bush from Lake Waikaremoana. (p363)

WHIRINAKI TE PUA-A-TÂNE CONSERVATION PARK

Hike through podocarp forest to remote canyons, waterfalls, streams and lookouts, or tackle the 16km mountain bike track. (p322)

CASTLEPOINT

While it's easily reached by windy country roads, few travellers make it to this obscure stretch of Wairarapa coast. Take time to enjoy the beach and hike to the lighthouse and a vast limestone cave. (p412)



Behind the Scenes

SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK

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THIS BOOK

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Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Peter Dragicovich

Bay of Islands & Northland, Rotorua & the Bay of Plenty, Wellington Region After a successful career in niche newspaper and magazine publishing – both in his native New Zealand and in Australia – Peter finally gave in to wanderlust, and set out to chase his diverse roots around much of Europe. Over the last decade he has written dozens of guidebooks for Lonely Planet, covering an oddly disparate collection of countries – all of which he's come to love. He once again calls Auckland, New Zealand his home – although his current nomadic existence means he's often elsewhere.



Brett Atkinson

Auckland, Waikato & the Coromandel Peninsula, The East Coast Brett is based in Auckland, New Zealand, but is frequently on the road for Lonely Planet. He's a full-time travel and food writer specialising in adventure travel, unusual destinations, and surprising angles on better known destinations. Craft beer and street food are Brett's favourite reasons to travel, and he is featured regularly on the Lonely Planet website and in newspapers, magazines and websites across New Zealand and Australia. Since becoming a Lonely Planet author in 2005, Brett has covered areas as diverse as Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Morocco, California and the South Pacific. Brett also contributed to the Plan Your Trip and Survival Guide chapters of this guidebook.



Anita Isalska

Anita is a travel journalist, editor and copywriter. After several merry years as a staff writer and editor – a few of them in Lonely Planet's London office – Anita now works freelance between Australia, the UK and any Alpine chalet with good wi-fi. Anita writes about France, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and travelling off the beaten track. Read her stuff on www.anitaaisalska.com. Anita also contributed to the Understand and Survival Guide chapters of this guidebook.



Sofia Levin

Taranaki & Whanganui, Taupo & the Ruapehu Region Sofia Levin is a Melbourne-based journalist with an insatiable appetite for food and travel. A regular contributor to Lonely Planet, Fairfax newspapers and a range of magazines, she has been referred to as 'one of Melbourne's most influential and creative social media personalities' by Tourism Victoria. Driven by curiosity, Sofia is happiest when she's uncovering, learning and trying new things – both on the job and at home. When she's not travelling she runs Word Salad – a social media and copywriting business established in 2012 – and spreads smiles with her Insta-famous toy poodle, @lifeofjinkee. Follow her adventures on Twitter at @sofiaklevin.

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