

TOP 10



Not to be missed!

Our TOP 10 hits – from the absolute No. 1 to No. 10 – help you plan your tour of the most important sights.

★ FIORDLAND ▶ 170

This remote mountainous region is our number one destination thanks to its magnificent fiords, majestic waterfalls and thrilling hiking routes through mysterious jungles.

★ BAY OF ISLANDS ▶ 52

This beautiful bay sprinkled with almost 150 islands (image left) is an enchantingly idyllic subtropical paradise where the nation of New Zealand was born. Don't leave without experiencing a boat tour over to the Hole in the Rock.

★ WEST COAST ▶ 148

The west coast is where the mighty, glacier-filled Southern Alps meet a tangle of rainforest by the raging Tasman Sea. It's a wonderfully wild region that's home to some unconventional individuals.

★ THERMAL AREAS ▶ 86

Rotorua is the centre of a thermal wonderland filled with bubbling waters, gurgling mud pools, picturesque silica terraces and geysers that shoot high into the air.

★ QUEENSTOWN ▶ 173

Take to the land, water and skies for thrills and spills at this veritable adventure playground in the upland region of Central Otago.

★ DUNEDIN & OTAGO PENINSULA ▶ 175

Check out the pioneers' historic buildings before heading to the enchanting peninsula nearby to come face to face with penguins and rare royal albatrosses.

★ ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK ▶ 130

Many hikers maintain that New Zealand's smallest national park is also its prettiest – explore the Coast Track that runs alongside the stunning beaches of Tasman Bay.

★ TE PAPA ▶ 110

New Zealand's national museum in Wellington gives visitors an imaginative, often tongue-in-cheek insight into the characteristics of the country and its inhabitants.

★ COROMANDEL ▶ 55

The eastern side of this peninsula is a real paradise for beach fans. Don't leave without paying a visit to Hot Water Beach with its warm springs right beneath the sand.

★ KAIKOURA ▶ 132

This lovely harbour town offers some spectacular whale watching tours – the massive marine mammals venture close to the coast in the deep, nutrient-rich waters nearby.

SHAKY ISLES

New Zealand is perched on the Pacific Ring of Fire, a collision zone between two gigantic chunks of the Earth's crust. Here, the Pacific and Indo-Australian tectonic plates grind against each other to create unique landscapes and at times their force is released with devastating consequences.

A Dynamic Land

The boundary between the tectonic plates runs right down the country – from the Bay of Plenty through Wellington and along the South Island. The plates move at approximately the same rate as fingernails and hair grow: about 30–60mm (1–2in) per year.

In the North Island, this friction has caused volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, but it has also created the extraordinary thermal areas of the Central Plateau (► 86) and the spectacular peaks of Tongariro National Park (► 93). The South Island also experiences regular tremors and landslides, the most recent being the tragic earthquake that hit Christchurch in early 2011 (see below). The Alpine Fault (which runs along the length of the Southern Alps and continues to push up the mountains) has formed snow-topped peaks, glaciers, lakes and fjords.

The Human Cost

On 22 February 2011, the destructive force of nature was experienced by the inhabitants of Christchurch as an earthquake reaching 6.3 on the Richter scale hit the country's second city with shattering results. While



Bubbling and steaming mud pools are just one of the fascinating formations caused by tectonic plate movement

memories of the devastation and human losses caused by the 1931 Napier earthquake (► 99) still linger, and scars in the landscape are testimony to a powerful 1987 tremor at Edgecumbe in the Bay of Plenty, this most recent quake is the worst to have hit the country in over 80 years. You can still see lasting signs of the damage it caused in the town and its surroundings today. The tragic loss of life in that fateful year will be felt by the families affected for generations to come.

With growing cities sitting alongside fault lines and volcanoes, the reliance on technology and geologists to monitor the mood of each active volcano is essential. Even the sleeping volcanoes dotting Auckland's cityscape

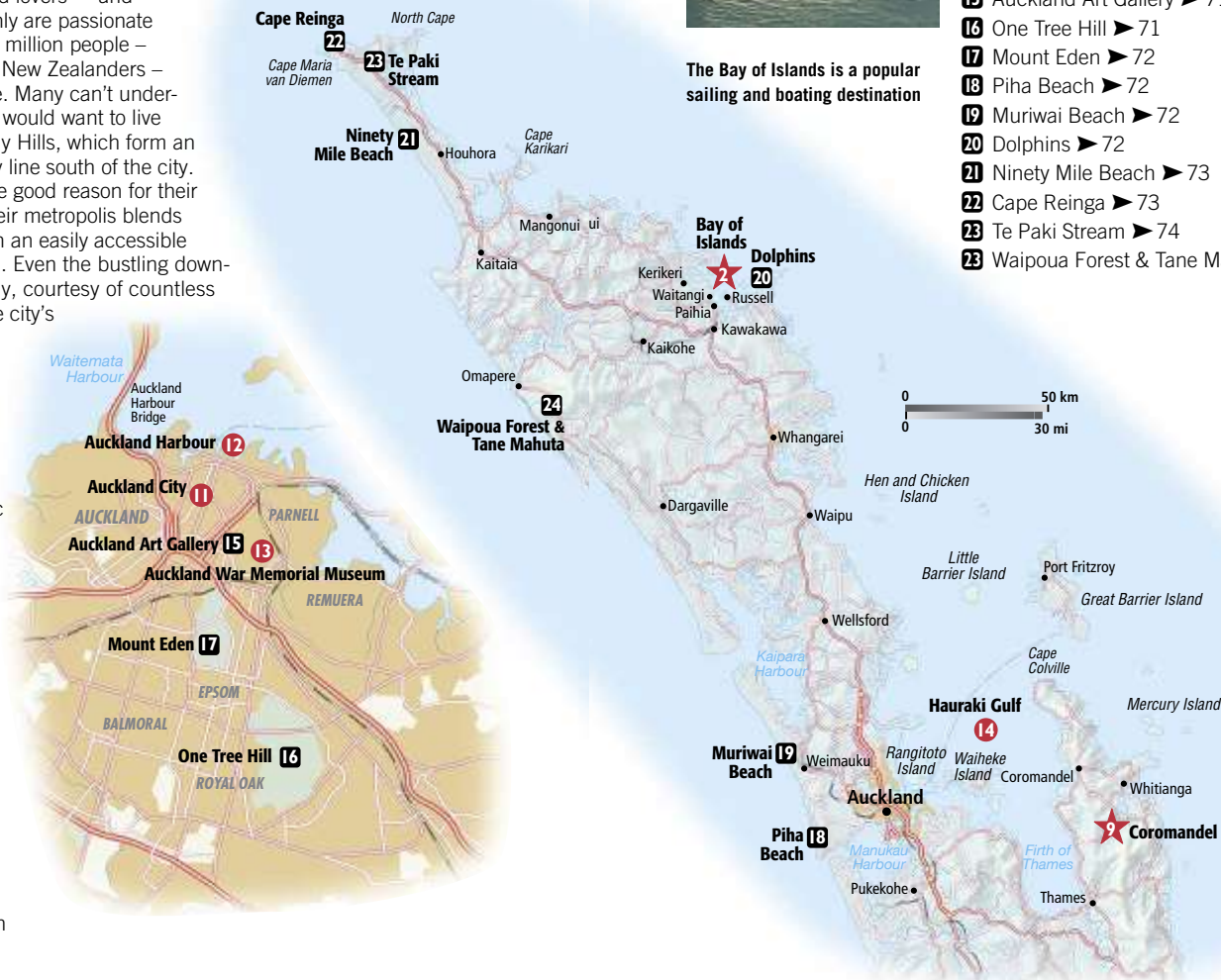
Getting Your Bearings

Auckland is New Zealand's only truly big city, but size has not diminished its charms. The "City of Sails" is regularly voted one of the world's top 10 cities for its cosmopolitan lifestyle and exhilarating recreational opportunities.

Set between two harbours, Auckland's heart is the waterfront, with its busy wharf, attractive marinas and an inviting café scene. In the Maori language, Auckland is known as *Tamaki Makau Rau* – "the spouse of a hundred lovers" – and Aucklanders certainly are passionate about their city. 1.4 million people – almost a third of all New Zealanders – call Auckland home. Many can't understand why anybody would want to live south of the Bombay Hills, which form an imaginary boundary line south of the city.

Aucklanders have good reason for their local patriotism. Their metropolis blends modern city life with an easily accessible outdoor playground. Even the bustling downtown breathes easily, courtesy of countless parks that cover the city's dramatic volcanic landscape.

Auckland is also home to the world's largest concentration of Polynesian people, who add an eclectic mix of languages and traditions, and who make the city pulsate to the rhythm of the Pacific. The city is the ideal gateway to subtropical Northland and the Bay of Islands, or the Coromandel peninsula. And mountain ranges, rainforests and the glistening Hauraki Gulf with its myriad islands are all within reach.



The Bay of Islands is a popular sailing and boating destination

TOP 10

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Don't Miss

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At Your Leisure

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