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Auckland

Administratively, Auckland consists of a number of cities forming one vast urban sprawl. Auckland City proper lies between the Waitemata and Manukau Harbours. North Shore City, including the suburbs of Takapuna and Devonport, is just over the harbour bridge. Manukau City is to the south of Auckland proper, Waitakere City is to the west.

The lively waterfront, with its stylish Viaduct Harbour and Princes Wharf development, is a good place to start an exploration of the city. The commercial heart is Queen St. It runs from Queen Elizabeth II Square near the waterfront uphill to cosmopolitan Karangahape Rd (K Rd), passing Aotea Square.

Parnell, just east of the city centre, is a fashionable area of renovated wooden villas

cramped with restaurants and boutiques. Tamaki Drive (sometimes called Waterfront Drive) starts from here and continues east all the way to St Heliers Bay, passing the swimming beaches at Okahu Bay and Mission Bay en route. Offshore, the Hauraki Gulf is dotted with islands. Southeast of the centre is the huge green expanse of Auckland Domain, one of 22 parks in the city. To the west are the fashionable cafe district of Ponsonby and upmarket Herne Bay. And visible from just about everywhere in Auckland is the Sky Tower, which soars above the city centre.

SIGHTS

Sky Tower

The imposing Sky Tower is part of the Sky City complex - a 24-hour casino with the works. At 328m (1076ft) it is the tallest structure in the southern hemisphere, with a lift that can shoot you up to the observation deck in 40 seconds. It's lovely to go in the late afternoon, when you can sip champagne in the Sky Lounge while watching the sun set.

*cnr Federal & Victoria Sts
City Centre
tel: 363 6000
tel: 363 6378*

Auckland Art Gallery (Toi o Tamaki)

One of New Zealand's premier art collections is on show at this gallery, which is housed in two stately buildings. An extensive permanent collection of NZ art (including Charles Goldie's stark Maori portraits of a vanished age) and contemporary art are now on show in the one building, the New Gallery, while the main gallery is refurbished.

*City Centre
Wellesley St & Lorne St
tel: 307 7700*

Auckland Museum (Tamaki Paenga Hira)

This monumental-looking museum sits atop a sweeping expanse of lawn that forms part of the Auckland Domain, one of Auckland's oldest parks. The museum has a comprehensive display on Pacific Island and Maori culture on the ground floor, including a magnificent 25m-long war canoe.

*Domain Dr
Auckland Domain
Parnell
tel: 309 0443*

University Clock Tower

The University Clock Tower is Auckland's architectural triumph. The stately 'ivory' tower (1926) tips its hat towards Art Nouveau (the incorporation of NZ flora and fauna into the decoration) and the Chicago School (the way it's rooted into the earth). It's usually open, so wander inside.

*Auckland University
22 Princes St
tel: 373 7999*

DINING

O'Connell Street Bistro

The delightful O'Connell Street Bistro is a grown-up treat, with elegant décor and truly wonderful food and wine. Its 12 tables satisfy lunchtime powerbrokers and dinnertime daters. The Eurocentric menu leans heavily on the duck, salmon and lamb side of things.

*3 O'Connell St
City Centre
tel: 377 1884*



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Auckland

Dizengoff

This super-stylish shoebox serves one of the great breakfasts in Auckland to a mixed crowd of business and bohemian types, locals and visitors. The menu is kosher-friendly with mouthwatering scrambled eggs and great coffee. Linger over the best stack of reading material in the city if you tire of eavesdropping and people-watching.

256 Ponsonby Rd
Ponsonby
tel: 360 0108

French Café

The legendary French Café has been rated as one of Auckland's top restaurants for around 20 years now and it still continues to excel. The cuisine is unsurprisingly French, but chef Simon Wright manages to sneak in some Pacific Rim touches. Book well ahead if you want to snag a table.

210 Symonds St
City Centre
tel: 377 1911



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Euro

The oft-lauded Euro holds a few surprises. Its sleek and sparse dining space belies its buzzy atmosphere and adventurous path taken by the kitchen. Euro's menu makes forays into molecular gastronomy, with mains featuring foams, wafers, jellies and jams. Made from superior local produce, the tastes and textures achieved are a true dining-out treat.

Shed 22
Princes Wharf
tel: 309 9856

Gion

The charming staff glide by in kimonos in this swish orange-and-purple room festooned with silk hangings. Auckland has excellent Japanese restaurants and this is one of the best.

197 Parnell Rd
tel: 09 379 3344

ENTERTAINMENT

Honey

This comfy-sofa'd champagne bar sells unique Kiwi drinks such as NZ-made gin (*South*) and vodka (*42 Below*), which can be infused with feijoa or manuka honey. There's also a great open-air deck on the roof if it all starts going to your head and you need a touch of the great outdoors.

5 O'Connell St
City Centre
tel: 369 5639

Civic Theatre

Millions have been spent restoring the Civic Theatre. It has a romantic, Eastern-style interior featuring a midnight-blue, star-studded ceiling in the main theatre and gold lions with blazing red eyes crouched in alcoves. Prior to its renovation it was a movie theatre; now the Civic features popular musicals like *Les Miserables* or *Phantom of the Opera*.

cnr Wellesley St W & Queen St
City Centre
tel: 309 2677



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Ivy

The wine list is almost too long at this excellent wine bar with exemplary food and occasional live music.

463 New North Rd
tel: 09 815 1535

Nuffield Street Brew Bar

Serving the beloved products of Mac's Breweries, this stylish modern bar has DJs and live music on the weekends.

23 Nuffield St
Newmarket
tel: 523 4554

Wine Loft

Head up the stairs for a chocolate-hued, sofa-filled loft that's perfect for wine quaffing and platter sharing by an open fire (or window come summer). An eclectic list takes in wine from NZ, Australia, South America and Europe.

67 Shortland St
Central Auckland

Pasha

Awesome cocktails and Moorish exoticism combine in this impressive Viaduct bar.

Shed 22, Princes Wharf
tel: 355 0077

HOTELS

Great Ponsonby Arthotel

The friendly, gregarious owners of this place weren't being in the least bit arrogant when they labelled this place 'great', because it is. Guests will find it the perfect combination of Auckland's best and brightest qualities.

30 Ponsonby Tce
Ponsonby
turn into Ponsonby Tce from Ponsonby Rd; hotel is near the end on the left
tel: 376 5989

Braemar on Parliament

Built in 1901, Braemar's is a beautiful place to stay in the city centre. Its historical details are some of the most glorious to have survived the city's inevitable development craze.

7 Parliament St
City Centre
from stop on Symonds St walk towards the water until you see Parliament St on your left
tel: 377 5463



© Peter Bennetts. Lonely Planet Images.



Auckland

Hampton Beach House

One of a fine strip of waterside mansions, this upmarket Edwardian B&B has rooms with views and others opening onto the rear garden. It's all very tastefully done; expect quality linen and gourmet breakfasts.

4 King Edward Pde
Devonport
tel: 445 1358

Westin

Auckland's newest luxury hotel has outdone itself with simple, exquisite design, Maori art and sumptuous furnishings (we love the goose-down pillows and 250-thread-count sheets). There's water everywhere you look - in the form of the harbour or tinkling water features.

21 Viaduct Harbour Ave
tel: 909 9000

Esplanade Hotel

This supremely beautiful boutique hotel in a lavishly renovated 1903 heritage building has retained all the best period features of such a place - ie very high ceilings, generous proportions, luxe carpeting and old-fashioned service.

1 Victoria Rd
Devonport
across the road from wharf
tel: 445 1291

FAST FACTS

Population

1300000

Language

English
Maori
NZSL

Currency

New Zealand Dollar
NZD

Money and costs

It's possible to travel economically in New Zealand. Budget travellers can expect to get by on less than 40.00 a day if camping or staying in hostels and self-catering.

Tipping is becoming more widespread in New Zealand, principally in the major centres like Auckland where there's been more foreign influence.

When to go

Auckland's busiest tourist season arrives with the warmer weather between November and April, hitting its peak during summer school holidays (20 December-late January).

Electricity

230V

Phone

country dialling code: 64
mobile network: GSM 900, CDMA 800, TDMA 800

Local Cathay Pacific contact information

Reservation numbers: 64(9) 379-0861, 0800-800-454
Check-in counters: Auckland International Airport, International Terminal Building, Counters 68-69, 87-94

