

Coromandel Region



Looking a bit like the side view of a hand with its middle finger raised (perhaps aimed at the nearby metropolis), the Coromandel Peninsula juts defiantly into the Pacific east of Auckland and forms the eastern edge of the Hauraki Gulf. Its dramatic, mountainous spine bisects it into two very distinct parts.

The eastern edge has some of the North Island's best white-sand beaches. Marinas and cafés cater to the chattering set in the wealthier enclaves, while sandy toes and board shorts are the norm elsewhere. The cutesy historic gold-mining towns on the west side escape the worst of the influx, their muddy wetlands and stony bays holding less appeal for the masses. This coast has long been a refuge for alternative lifestylers – although the hippy communes have gradually given way to organic farms and Buddhist retreats.

Down the middle, the mountains are crisscrossed with walking tracks, allowing trampers to lose themselves (hopefully only figuratively) among large tracts of untamed bush where kauri trees once towered and are starting to do so again. At the base of the peninsula the Hauraki Plains were once massive swampy wetlands, rich with bird life. Pockets remain, with Miranda being the premier holiday spot for feathered jetsetters and their admirers.

Although relatively close to Auckland, the Coromandel offers easy access to splendid isolation. Some of the more remote communities in these parts are still accessed by gravel roads, and an aura of rugged individualism hangs like mist over this compact and special region.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Travelling remote gravel roads under a crimson canopy of ancient pohutukawa trees in **Far North Coromandel** (p203)
- Staking out your own patch of footprint-free sand at **Opoutere Beach** (p210), **Otama Beach** (p204) or **Opito Beach** (p204)
- Exploring hidden islands, caves and bays by kayak from **Whitianga** (p205), **Hahei** (p208) or **Coromandel Town** (p201)
- Burning your butt in a freshly dug thermal pool in the sands of **Hot Water Beach** (p208)
- Pigging out on smoked mussels in **Coromandel Town** (p201)
- Penetrating the mystical depths of the dense bush of **Coromandel Forest Park** (p200) and **Karangahake Gorge** (p213)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 07

■ www.thecoromandel.com

■ www.ew.govt.nz

History

This whole area, including the peninsula, the islands and both sides of the gulf, was known to Maori as Hauraki. Various *iwi* (tribes) held claim to pockets of it, including the *Pare Hauraki* branch of the Tainui tribes and others descended from Te Arawa and earlier migrations. Polynesian artefacts and evidence of moa-hunting have been found, pointing to around 1000 years of continuous occupation.

The Hauraki *iwi* were some of the first to be exposed to European traders. The region's proximity to Auckland, safe anchorages and ready supply of valuable timber initially led to a booming economy. Kauri logging was big business on the peninsula. Allied to the timber trade was shipbuilding, which took off in 1832 when a mill was established at Mercury Bay. Things got tougher once the kauri around the coast became scarce and the loggers had to penetrate deeper into the bush for timber. Kauri dams, which used water power to propel the huge logs to the coast, were built. By the 1930s virtually no kauri remained and the industry died.

Gold was first discovered in NZ near Coromandel Town in 1852. Although this first rush was short-lived, more gold was discovered around Thames in 1867 and later in other places. The peninsula is also rich in semiprecious gemstones, such as quartz, agate, amethyst and jasper. A fossick on any west-coast beach can be rewarding.

Despite successful interactions with Europeans for decades, the Hauraki *iwi* were some of the hardest hit by colonisation. Unscrupulous dealings by settlers and government to gain access to valuable resources

MAORI NZ: COROMANDEL REGION

Although it has a long and rich Maori history (see above), the Coromandel doesn't offer many opportunities to engage with the culture. Pioneer pursuits such as gold-mining and kauri logging have been given much more attention, although this is starting to change.

Historic *pa* (fortified village) sites are dotted around, with the most accessible being Paku (p209). There are others at Te Puru (p200), Opito Beach (p204), Hahei (p208) and Hot Water Beach (p208).

COROMANDEL REGION FACTS

- Eat** buckets of bivalves at Whitianga's Scallop Festival (p206)
- Drink** boiled water from a mountain campsite
- Read** *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (2003) by the late Michael King, an Opoutere resident
- Listen to** Shona Laing, the quintessential Coromandel greenie
- Watch** the birds in the Firth of Thames (below)
- Swim at** Waihi Beach (p213)
- Festival** The peninsula-wide Pohutukawa Festival (www.pohutukawafestival.co.nz)
- Tackiest tourist attraction** L&P-addicted Paeroa (p214)
- Go green** Witness forest regeneration at Driving Creek Railway (p202)

resulted in Maori losing most of their lands by the 1880s. Even today there is a much lower Maori presence on the peninsula than in neighbouring districts.

Climate

Being mountainous, the region attracts more rainfall (3000mm or even 4500mm a year) than elsewhere on the east coast.

Getting There & Around

Car is the only option for accessing some of the more remote areas, but be careful to check hire agreements as there are plenty of gravel roads and a few streams to ford. Most of them are in good nick and even a small car can cope unless the weather's been particularly wet.

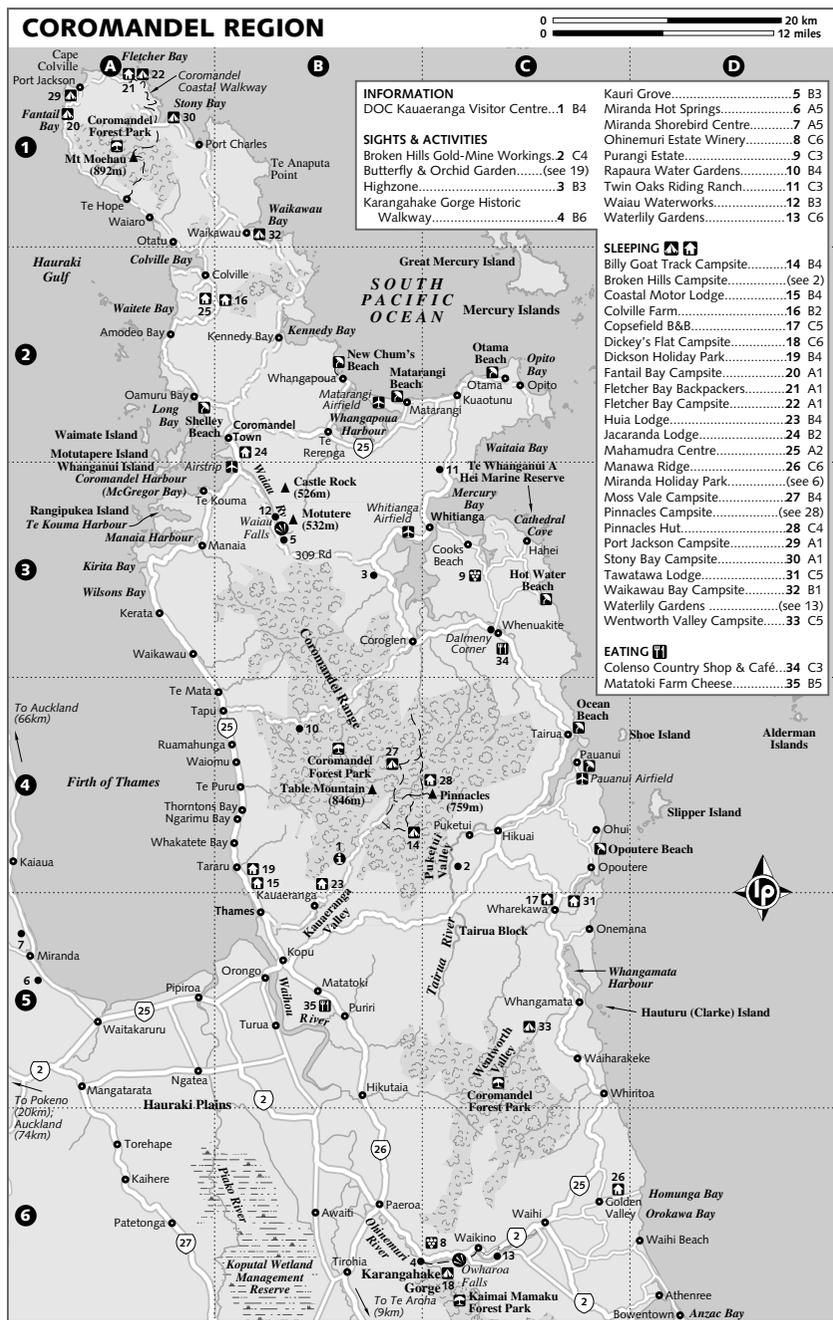
Daily buses on the Auckland-to-Tauranga route pass through Thames and Waihi, while others loop through Coromandel Town, Whitianga and Tairua. Thames is also well connected to the Waikato.

It's definitely worth considering the beautiful ferry ride from Auckland via Waiheke Island to Coromandel Town (see p203).

MIRANDA

It's a pretty name for a settlement on the swampy Firth of Thames, just an hour's drive from Auckland. The two reasons to come here are splashing around the thermal pools and bird-watching – but doing both at the same time might be considered impolite.

This is one of the most accessible spots for studying waders or shore birds all year round. The vast mud flat is teeming with aquatic



worms and crustaceans, which attract thousands of Arctic-nesting shore birds over the winter – 43 species of wader have been spotted here. The two main species are the bar-tailed godwit and the lesser or red knot, but it isn't unusual to see turnstones, sandpipers and the odd vagrant red-necked stint. One godwit tagged here was tracked making an 11,570km nonstop flight from Alaska. Short-haul travellers include the pied oystercatcher and the threatened wrybill from the South Island, and banded dotterels and pied stilts.

The **Miranda Shorebird Centre** (Map p196; ☎ 09-232 2781; www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz; 283 East Coast Rd; ☎ 9am-5pm) has bird-life displays, hires out binoculars and sells useful bird-watching pamphlets (\$2). Nearby are a hide and several walks (30 minutes to two hours). The centre offers clean bunk-style accommodation (dorm beds/double rooms \$18/50) with a kitchen.

Miranda Hot Springs (Map p196; ☎ 07-867 3055; Front Miranda Rd; adult/child \$10/7; ☎ 8am-9.30pm), 5km south, has a large thermal swimming pool, a toasty sauna pool and private spas (\$7 extra).

Next door is **Miranda Holiday Park** (Map p196; ☎ 07-867 3205; www.mirandaholidaypark.co.nz; sites per 2 people \$32, cabins/units \$58/120; ☎ P, ☎), which has excellent sparkling-clean units and facilities, its own hot-spring pool and a floodlit tennis court.

THAMES
pop 10,000

Thames dates from a time when gold-digging had a much different connotation to what it does today. Dinky 19th-century wooden buildings still dominate the town centre, but grizzly prospectors have been replaced by alternative lifestylers. If you're a vegetarian eco-warrior you'll feel right at home. It's a good base for tramping or canyoning in the nearby Kauaeranga Valley.

Captain Cook arrived here in 1769, naming the Waihou River 'Thames' 'on account of its bearing some resemblance to that river in England'. This area belonged to the Ngati Maru, a tribe of Tainui descent. Their spectacular meeting house, Hotunui (1878), holds pride of place in the Auckland Museum (p102).

After opening Thames to gold-miners in 1867, the Ngati Maru were swamped by 10,000 European settlers within a year. When the initial boom turned to bust, a dubious

system of government advances resulted in Maori debt and forced land sales.

Information

Post Office (Pollen St)
Thames i-SITE (☎ 07-868 7284; www.thamesinfo.co.nz; 206 Pollen St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) Information and internet access.

Sights

The i-SITE stocks free Historic Places Trust self-tour pamphlets of Thames' significant buildings. The Trust also runs 45-minute tours (on the hour) of the interesting **School of Mines & Mineral Museum** (☎ 07-868 6227; 101 Cochrane St; adult/child \$5/2; ☎ 11am-3pm Wed-Sun), which has an extensive collection of NZ rocks, minerals and fossils. The oldest section (1868) was part of a Methodist Sunday school, situated on a Maori burial ground.

The **Goldmine Experience** (☎ 07-868 8514; www.goldmine-experience.co.nz; cnr Moanataiari Rd & SH25; adult/child \$10/4; ☎ 10am-4pm) allows you to walk through a gold-mine tunnel, watch a stamper battery crush rock, learn about the history of the Cornish miners and try your hand panning for gold (\$2 extra).

The **historical museum** (☎ 07-868 8509; cnr Cochrane & Pollen Sts; adult/child \$5/2; ☎ 1-4pm) houses pioneer relics, rocks and old photographs of the town.

Kids (little or large) with a fairy complex will adore the **Butterfly & Orchid Garden** (Map p196; ☎ 07-868 8080; Victoria St; adult/child \$9.50/5; ☎ 10am-3pm), north of town within the Dickson Holiday Park. It's an enclosed jungle full of hundreds of exotic flappers.

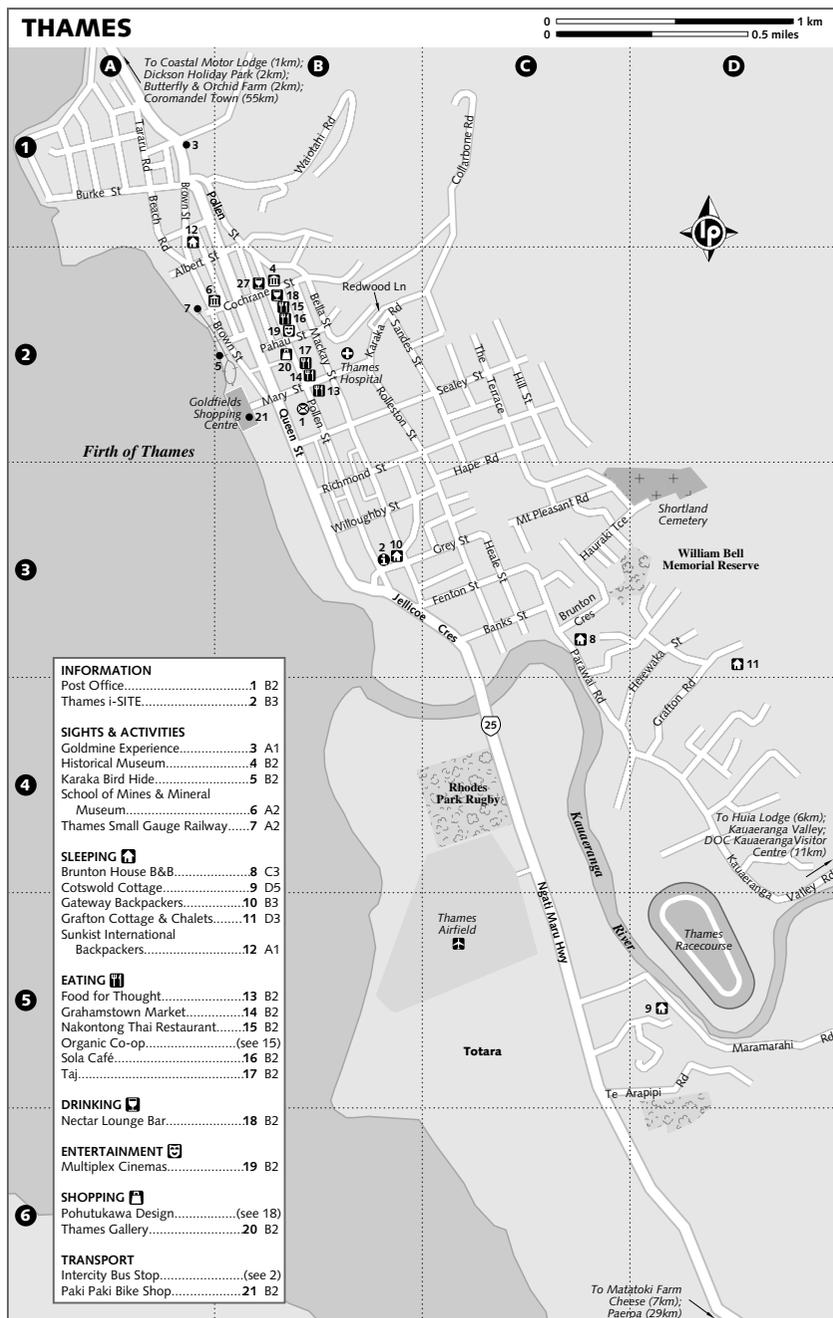
Activities

Bird lovers can take advantage of the **Karaka Bird Hide**. Built with compensation funds from the Rainbow Warrior bombing, it's reached by a boardwalk through the mangroves just off Brown St. Nearby, young 'uns can ride on the cute-as-a-button 900m **Thames Small Gauge Railway** (☎ 07-868 6803; tickets \$1; ☎ 11am-3pm Sun).

Eyez Open (☎ 07-868 9018; www.eyezopen.co.nz; per day \$30, half- to 4-day tours \$105-795) rents out bikes and organises small-group cycling tours of the peninsula.

K Valley Horse Treks (☎ 07-868 6129; www.kvalleyhorsetreks.co.nz; 2½-hr/half-day treks \$80/150) take you trotting through farmland and forestry blocks in the beautiful Kauaeranga Valley.

COROMANDEL REGION



Canyonz (☎ 0800 422 696; www.canyonz.co.nz; trips \$235) runs canyoning trips to the Sleeping God Canyon in the Kauaeranga Valley. Expect a vertical descent of over 300m, requiring abseiling, water-sliding and jumping.

Sleeping

Thames has a good crop of B&B accommodation, but budget operators are more thinly spread.

BUDGET

Sunkist International Backpackers (☎ /fax 07-868 8808; www.sunkistbackpackers.com; 506 Brown St; sites per person \$14, dm \$21-27, d & tw \$60; 📺) Not the warmest welcome, but this character-filled 1860s heritage building has spacious dorms, spotless bathrooms and a garden. They offer free bikes, 4WD hire (\$65 per day) and shuttles to the Kauaeranga Valley (\$25 return).

Dickson Holiday Park (Map p196; ☎ 07-868 7308; www.dicksonpark.co.nz; sites per person \$15, dm \$22-24, cabins \$50-65, units \$95-120; 📺 📺 📺) Tucked away in a valley 3km north of Thames, this pleasant, well-run camping ground has a shop, free bikes, bush walks and roaming ducks.

Gateway Backpackers (☎ 07-868 6339; 209 Mackay St; dm/s \$23/45, d & tw \$56-66; 📺 📺) Generations of Kiwis grew up in state houses just like this, giving it a homely feel. This relaxed hostel has clean, comfy rooms, a nice garden and simple facilities. Bathrooms are in short supply but free laundry and bikes are on offer.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Huia Lodge (Map p196; ☎ 07-868 6557; www.thames.info.co.nz/HuiaLodge; 589 Kauaeranga Valley Rd; s/d/tr \$65/100/130; 📺) The affable empty-nesters who own this homely farmhouse close to the forest park provide decent rooms, full cooked breakfasts and good advice for walkers.

Cotswold Cottage (☎ 07-868 6306; www.cotswoldcottage.co.nz; 36 Maramarahi Rd; s \$130-155, d \$140-165, tr \$240; 📺) Looking over the river and racecourse, this pretty villa has had a modern makeover with brand-new carpet and luxurious linen (225-thread-count sheets). The comfy rooms all open onto a deck.

our pick Grafton Cottage & Chalets (☎ 07-868 9971; www.graftoncottage.co.nz; 304 Grafton Rd; units \$125-195; 📺 📺 📺) Perched on a hill, most of these attractive wooden chalets have decks with awesome views and are self-contained. The hospitable hosts provide free internet

access and breakfast, as well as use of the pool, spa and three barbecue areas.

Coastal Motor Lodge (Map p196; ☎ 07-868 6843; www.stayatcoastal.co.nz; 608 Tararu Rd; units \$135-175; 📺) Superior cottage and chalet-style accommodation is provided at this smart, welcoming place, 2km north of Thames. It overlooks the sea, making it a popular choice, especially in the summer months.

Brunton House B&B (☎ 07-868 5160; www.bruntonhouse.co.nz; 210 Parawai Rd; d \$180-200; 📺 📺) Renovations were underway at this impressive two-storey kauri villa (1875) when we looked through – staying true to the historic credentials of the building (there are no en suites), but upgrading the kitchen, bathrooms and pool house.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Taj (☎ 07-868 8122; 620 Pollen St; mains \$11-15; 📺) lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, dinner Sun; 📺) A simple curry house perhaps, but Taj does a sublime *saag paneer* and all the other spicy favourites.

Nakontong Thai Restaurant (☎ 07-868 6821; 730 Pollen St; mains \$12-16; 📺) lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, dinner Sun; 📺) Although the bright lighting may not induce romance, the tangy Thai dishes should provide a warm glow.

CAFÉS

Food for Thought (☎ 07-868 6065; 574 Pollen St; meals \$5-12; 📺) 6.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri, 7am-1.30pm Sat) You might toy with a panini, cake or coffee, but it's really the award-winning pies that you come here for.

Sola Café (☎ 07-868 8781; 720b Pollen St; mains \$5-13; 📺) 8.30am-4pm; 📺) Bright and friendly, this meat-free café is first rate. Expect excellent coffee and a range of vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free options that include heavenly salads.

SELF-CATERING

Grahamstown Market (Pollen St; 📺) 9am-noon Sat; 📺) Lots of organic produce and handicrafts.

Organic Co-op (☎ 07-868 8797; 736 Pollen St; 📺) 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat; 📺) A good source of planet-friendly vegetables, nuts, bread, eggs and meat.

Matatoki Farm Cheese (Map p196; ☎ 07-868 1284; cnr SH26 & Wainui Rd; 📺) 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4.30pm Sat & Sun) Taste and buy cheeses handmade from milk produced by the farm's cows and ewes, including organic and vegetarian varieties.

Drinking & Entertainment

One thing you can say for Thames, it isn't short of historic pubs. Most of them have some rough edges and are clustered around Pollen St. You won't need us to plot your pub crawl.

our pick **Nectar Lounge Bar** (☎ 021 127 4326; 746 Pollen St; ☎ 5-11pm Tue-Fri, noon-1am Sat, noon-5pm Sun) The funkier little bar in the 'Mandel, with Art Deco chandeliers and regular backpacker/wwoofers nights and acoustic jams. It's the sort of place where a solo traveller of any gender can chill out over a glass of wine.

Multiplex Cinemas (☎ 07-868 6602; www.cinema-thames.co.nz; 708 Pollen St; adult/child \$13/8; ☎ 10.30am-7.30pm) Screening recent blockbusters, just down the street from Nectar.

Shopping

Pohutukawa Design (☎ 07-868 7925; 740 Pollen St; ☎ 9am-5pm Wed & Fri-Mon, 9am-7pm Tue & Thu) You'll find funky jewellery, well-crafted wooden products and fashion in this fabulous store that showcases the work of local designers. You can also do your laundry and check your email here.

Thames Gallery (☎ 07-868 8616; 661 Pollen St; ☎ 11am-6pm Thu-Mon) Locals are also at the forefront in this cutting-edge commercial gallery occupying two very white rooms on the main street.

Getting There & Around

Thames is the transport hub of the Coromandel. **InterCity** (☎ 0508 353 947; www.intercity.co.nz) has daily buses to/from Auckland (\$25, two hours), Coromandel Town (\$16, one hour), Tairua (\$17, 45 minutes), Paeroa (\$18, one hour), Waihi (\$18, 45 minutes) and Tauranga (\$25, 1 ¼ hours), stopping outside the i-SITE.

Busit! (☎ 0800 428 7546; www.busit.co.nz) has daily local buses to Hamilton (two hours). **Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) has four services per week to Auckland and Tairua, with advance fares starting from \$1. **Go Kiwi** (☎ 0800 446 549; www.go-kiwi.co.nz) has daily shuttles to/from Tairua (\$18, 45 minutes).

Paki Paki Bike Shop (☎ 07-867 9026; www.pakipaki-bikeshop.co.nz; Goldfields Shopping Centre) rents out bikes for \$25 a day and performs repairs.

COROMANDEL FOREST PARK

More than 30 walks crisscross the Coromandel Forest Park, spread over several major blocks throughout the centre of the peninsula.

The most popular hike is the challenging six- to eight-hour return journey up to the **Pinnacles** (759m) in the Kauaeranga Valley behind Thames. Other outstanding tramps include the **Coromandel Coastal Walkway** from Fletcher Bay to Stony Bay (see p204) and the **Puketui Valley** walk to abandoned gold mines (see p210).

The **Department of Conservation (DOC) Kauaeranga Visitor Centre** (Map p196; ☎ 07-867 9080; Kauaeranga Valley Rd; ☎ 8am-4pm daily Oct-May, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep) has maps (\$1) and good advice, and takes bookings for the Pinnacles hut. The centre is 14km off the SH25; it's a further 9km along a gravel road to the start of the trails. Enquire at the Thames hostels about shuttles.

The DOC **Pinnacles hut** (Map p196; adult/child \$15/7.50) has 80 beds, gas cookers, heaters, toilets and cold showers, and must be pre-booked. There are also three basic DOC **campsites** (Map p196; adult/child \$9/2) in this part of the park: one near the hut and others at Moss Vale and the Billy Goat Track. Expect only a toilet and running water. Other campsites in other parts of the park are mentioned later in this chapter.

THAMES TO COROMANDEL TOWN

Narrow SH25 snakes along the coast past pretty little bays and rocky beaches. Sea birds are plentiful, and you can fish, dig for shellfish and fossick for quartz, jasper and even gold-bearing rocks on the beaches. The landscape turns crimson when the pohutukawa (often referred to as the 'NZ Christmas tree') blooms in December. At Wilsons Bay the road heads away from the coast and climbs over several hills and valleys before dropping down to Coromandel Town, 55km from Thames. The view looking towards the island-studded Coromandel Harbour is exquisite.

A handful of stores, motels, B&Bs and camping grounds are scattered around the tiny settlements that front the picturesque bays. **Te Puru Coast View Lodge** (☎ 07-868 2326; www.tepurulodge.co.nz; 468 Thames Coast Rd, Te Puru; d & tw \$125-175), a Mediterranean-style stucco villa with frilly furnishings, enjoys heavenly sunsets. At night you can hear the calls of kiwi. Meals are available at the good on-site restaurant (dinner \$28 to \$32). The lodge is built on a *pa* site. Near the bottom of the driveway, a carved gate leads into a section of it that the owners have returned to the local *hapu* (subtribe).

At Tapu it's worth turning inland for a partly unsealed 6km drive to the **Rapaura Water Gardens** (Map p196; ☎ 07-868 4821; www.rapaurawatergardens.co.nz; 586 Tapu-Coroglen Rd; adult/child \$10/4; ☎ 9am-5pm), a harmonious marriage of water, greenery and sculpture. There's also accommodation (cottage/lodge \$175/275) and a café.

COROMANDEL TOWN

pop 1620

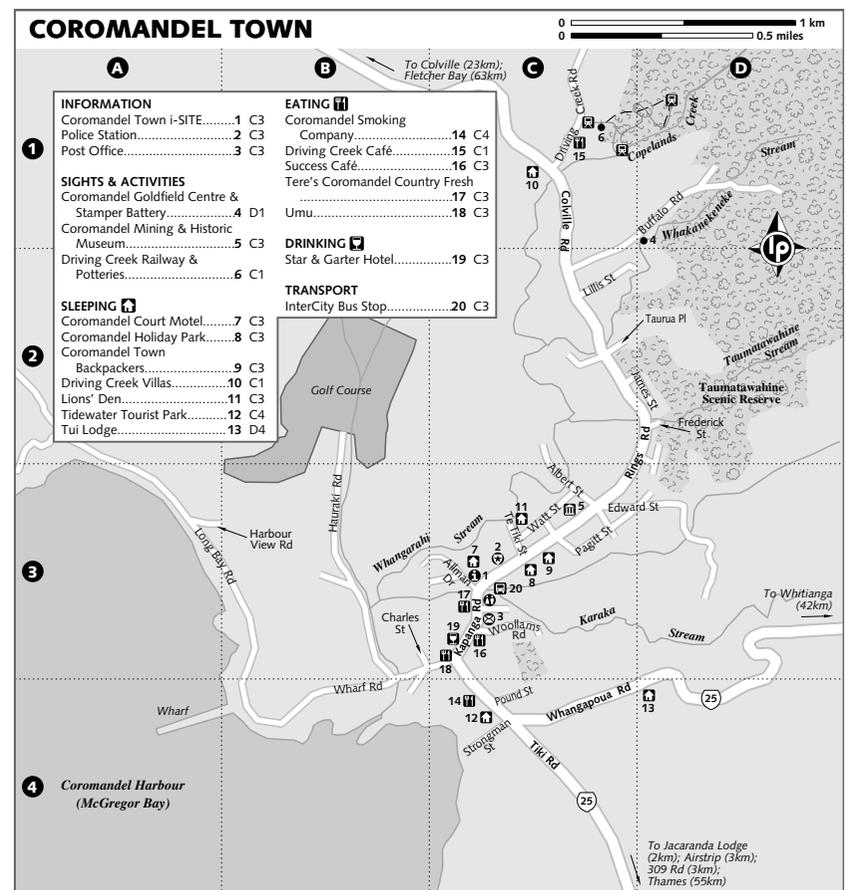
Even more crammed with heritage buildings than Thames, Coromandel Town is a thoroughly quaint little place. Its natty cafés, excellent sleeping options and delicious smoked mussels could keep you here longer than you expected.

Gold was discovered at Driving Creek in 1852. Initially the local Patukirikiri *iwi* kept control of the land and received money from digging licences. After initial financial success the same fate befell them as the Ngati Maru in Thames (see p197). By 1871, debt had forced them to sell all but 778 mountainous acres of their land. Today fewer than 100 people remain who identify as part of this *iwi*.

Information

Coromandel Town i-SITE (☎ 07-866 8598; www.coromandeltown.co.nz; 355 Kapanga Rd; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) Has internet access (\$6 per hour) and maps of local walks (\$1).

Police station (☎ 07-866 1190; 405 Kapanga Rd)
Post office (Kapanga Rd)



Sights

Heritage buffs can tour around 28 historic sites featured in the Historic Places Trust's Coromandel Town pamphlet (free from the i-SITE).

The **Coromandel Goldfield Centre & Stamper Battery** (☎ 07-866 7933; 410 Buffalo Rd; adult/child \$10/5; 🕒 tours 2.30pm Tue, Thu & Sun) is an 1899 rock-crushing plant with informative one-hour tours. You can also try panning for gold (\$5). Outside of the tours it's worth stopping for a gander at NZ's largest working water wheel.

The small **Coromandel Mining & Historic Museum** (☎ 07-866 7251; 841 Rings Rd; adult/child \$2/50c; 🕒 1.30-4pm Sat & Sun, 10am-4pm daily mid-Dec-late Jan) provides a glimpse (in terms of opening hours) of pioneer life.

Activities

The amazing **Driving Creek Railway & Potteries** (☎ /fax 07-866 8703; www.drivingcreekrailway.co.nz; 380 Driving Creek Rd; adult/child \$20/11; 🕒 departures 10.15am & 2pm) is 3km north of Coromandel Town. The unique trains run up steep grades, across four trestle bridges, along two spirals and a double switchback, and through two tunnels, finishing at the 'Eye-full Tower'. The hour-long trip passes artworks and regenerating native forest – more than 17,000 natives have been planted, including 9000 kauri. It's worth lingering for the video about the extraordinary guy behind it all, well-known potter Barry Brickell.

Mussel Barge (☎ 07-866 7667; trips \$40) offers fishing trips with a uniquely local flavour and lots of laughs. The same people run **Argo Tours** (2-3hr trips \$110-150), exploring old gold workings in a mini 8WD. If you can muster a posse (up to five people), prices drop as low as \$35 per person.

Go Kayak (☎ 07-866 7466; www.gokayak.co.nz; tours \$75-375) offers paddle-powered tours ranging from the three-hour Te Kouma Head Safari to the nine-hour fishing session (including lunch).

Tri Sail Charters (☎ 0800 024 874; www.trisailcharters.co.nz; half/full day \$50/100) will have you and your mates (minimum four) exploring the Coromandel Harbour on an 11.2m trimaran (three-hulled yacht).

Sleeping

Coromandel Town is spoilt for accommodation choice, with much better budget options than Thames.

BUDGET

Coromandel Town Backpackers (☎ 07-866 8327; coromandeltownbackpackers@orcon.net.nz; 732 Rings Rd; dm/d/tw \$20/46/46; 📍) Clean, friendly and cheap, this central hostel has enthusiastic new owners, big communal facilities, small modern rooms and free bikes.

our pick Lions' Den (☎ /fax 07-866 8157; 126 Te Tiki St; dm/d/tr \$22/50/70) Chill out to the hippy vibe in this magical place. A tranquil garden with fish pond, fairy lights and wisteria vines, and a relaxed collection of comfy rooms (dotted with African and North American bits and bobs) make for a soothing spot to rest your bones. Breakfast and dinner are also available. There are no locks on the doors, but we suspect the right spells have been set to protect your materialistic trappings. Hey, who really owns anything anyway?

Tui Lodge (☎ 07-866 8237; tuilodge@paradise.net.nz; 60 Whangapoua Rd; sites per person \$12, dm \$22, d \$50-70; 📍) Pleasantly rural, this cheery backpackers has plenty of trees, a sauna, free bikes, fruit (in season) and straight-up rooms. The pricier ones have en suites.

Tidewater Tourist Park (☎ 07-866 8888; www.tidewater.co.nz; 270 Tiki Rd; sites per person \$15, dm/d/tw/ste \$25/55/60/165; 📍) Units are natty, newish and well maintained at this friendly YHA associate, which has bicycles for hire and a sauna.

Coromandel Holiday Park (☎ 07-866 8830; www.coromandelholidaypark.co.nz; 636 Rings Rd; sites per person \$17, cabins \$77, units \$137-147; 📍) Well-kept and welcoming, with nicely painted cabins and manicured lawns. It gets busy in summer, so book ahead.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Jacaranda Lodge (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 8002; www.jacarandalodge.co.nz; 3195 Tiki Rd; s \$60-75, tw \$110-130, d \$110-150; 📍) Jacaranda is a two-storey cottage located among 6 hectares of bucolic farmland and rose gardens. Some rooms share bathrooms, but expect fluffy towels and personalised soap in mini *kete* (woven flax bags).

Coromandel Court Motel (☎ 07-866 8402; www.coromandelcourtmotel.co.nz; 365 Kapanga Rd; s \$120, units \$140-165; 📍) These spick-and-span units are spotless, smart and ideally located, just behind the information centre. The owners clearly love their lot.

Driving Creek Villas (☎ 07-866 7755; www.drivingcreekvillas.com; 21a Colville Rd; d/tr/q villas \$295/320/345; 📍) This is the posh, grown-up's choice – two spacious, self-contained, modern wooden

villas, with plenty of privacy. The interior design is slick (with a Polynesian bent), the appliances first-rate and the bush setting, complete with bubbling creek, sublime.

Eating

Success Café (☎ 07-866 7100; 104 Kapanga Rd; brunch \$5-12, dinner \$20-24; 🕒 breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Thu-Mon) This easy-going café delivers good coffee, cooked breakfasts, and local specialities such as mussel chowder. Dinners are solid meat, fish or chicken affairs.

our pick Driving Creek Café (☎ 07-866 7066; 180 Driving Creek Rd; mains \$7-13; 🕒 9.30am-5pm; 📍) Enter through flapping Tibetan prayer flags to this funky mud-brick café, where a large selection of vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, organic and fair-trade delights awaits. The food is wonderful – beautifully presented, fresh and healthy. Once sated, the kids can play in the sandpit while the adults check their email (\$6 per hour).

Umu (☎ 07-866 8618; 22 Wharf Rd; mains \$12-27; 🕒 breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Tue-Sun) Umu serves up classy café fare, including excellent pizza, mouthwatering counter food (tarts and quiches around \$5), superb coffee and tummy-taming breakfasts. The service is friendly if occasionally haphazard.

For a delicious snack or cooking supplies, **Coromandel Smoking Company** (☎ 07-866 8793; 70 Tiki Rd; 🕒 9am-5pm Sun-Thu, 9am-5.30pm Fri & Sat) has a wonderful range of smoked fish and seafood. You can't leave town without trying the extremely addictive smoked mussels.

Tere's Coromandel Country Fresh (☎ 07-866 8639; Kapanga Rd; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) is the place for organic meat and vegetables, hot bread and deli items.

Drinking

Coromandel doesn't have the same volume of pubs as Thames, but there are still several choices on the main street.

Star & Garter Hotel (☎ 07-866 8503; 5 Kapanga Rd; 🕒 noon-midnight Sun-Tue, 11am-1am Wed-Sat) Making the most of the simple kauri interior of an 1873 building, this smart pub has pool tables, decent sounds and a roster of live music on the weekends. The beer garden is awesome, smartly styled in corrugated iron.

Getting There & Away

By far the nicest way to travel from Auckland is by ferry. Operator **360 Discovery** (☎ 0800 888

006; www.360discovery.co.nz) has four boats weekly to/from Auckland (one way/return \$49/82, two hours) via Orapiu on Waiheke Island (one way/return \$39/65, 70 minutes). It makes a great day trip, and there's a guided-tour option (adult/child \$129/70) that includes Driving Creek Railway and the Goldfield Centre.

InterCity (☎ 0508 353 947; www.intercity.co.nz) has daily buses to/from Thames (\$16, one hour) and Whitianga (\$18, 80 minutes).

FAR NORTH COROMANDEL

Supremely isolated and gob-smackingly beautiful, the rugged tip of the Coromandel Peninsula is well worth the effort required to reach it. The best time to visit is summer, when the metal roads are dry, the pohutukawa are in their crimson glory and camping's an option (there isn't a lot of accommodation up here).

The 1260-hectare **Colville Farm** (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 6820; www.colvillefarmholidays.co.nz; 2140 Colville Rd; sites per person \$10, dm/s/d/tw \$22/25/50/50, units \$60-105; 📍) has a range of interesting accommodation, including bare-basics bush lodges and self-contained houses. Guests can try their hands at farm work (including milking) or go on horse treks (\$27, 1½ hours).

The nearby **Mahamudra Centre** (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 6851; www.mahamudra.org.nz; sites per person \$10, dm \$24, s \$30-41, tw \$62; 📍) is a serene Tibetan Buddhist retreat that has a stupa, meditation hall and regular meditation courses. It offers simple but comfortable accommodation in a parklike setting.

Another kilometre brings you to the tiny settlement of **Colville** (25km north of Coromandel Town). It's a remote rural community by a muddy bay and a magnet for alternative lifestyles. There's not much here except for **Colville Café** (☎ 07-866 6690; 2312 Colville Rd; 🕒 8am-4pm Sun-Fri, 8am-6.30pm Sat), which has sporadic opening hours in the off-season, and the quaint **Colville General Store** (☎ 07-866 6805; Colville Rd; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 8.30am-5pm Sun), selling just about everything from organic food to petrol (warning: this is your last option for either).

Three kilometres north of Colville the seal stops and the road splits to straddle each side of the peninsula. Following the west coast, ancient pohutukawa spread overhead as you pass turquoise waters and stony beaches. The small DOC-run **Fantail Bay campsite** (Map p196; adult/child \$9/2), 23km north of Colville, has running water and a couple of long-drop toilets

under the shade of puriri trees. Another 7km brings you to the **Port Jackson campsite** (Map p196; adult/child \$9/2), a larger DOC site right on the beach.

There's a spectacular lookout about 4km further on, where a metal dish identifies the various islands on the horizon. Great Barrier Island (p140) is only 20km away, looking every part the extension of the Coromandel Peninsula that it once was.

The road stops at **Fletcher Bay** – a magical land's end. Although it's only 37km from Colville, allow an hour for the drive. There's another DOC **campsite** (Map p196; adult/child \$9/2) here, as well as **Fletcher Bay Backpackers** (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 6712; js.lourie@extra.co.nz; dm \$20) – a simple affair that has four rooms with four bunks in each. Bring sheets and food.

The **Coromandel Coastal Walkway** is a scenic, three-hour, one-way hike between Fletcher Bay and **Stony Bay**. It's a relatively easy walk with great coastal views and an ambling section across farmland. If you're not keen on walking all the way back, **Coromandel Discovery** (☎ 0800 668 175; www.coromandeldiscovery.co.nz; adult/child \$90/45) will drive you from Coromandel Town up to Fletcher Bay and pick you up from Stony Bay four hours later.

There's another DOC **campsite** (Map p196; adult/child \$9/2) at Stony Bay, where the east-coast road terminates. Heading south you pass through **Port Charles**, where there are bachs (holiday homes) on a pleasant beach. Another 8km brings you to the turn-off leading back to Colville, or you can continue south to **Waikawau Bay**, where there's yet another DOC **campsite** (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 1106; adult/child \$9/2, bookings required Dec-Jan) in another section of the Coromandel Forest Park. The road then winds its way south past **Kennedy Bay** before cutting back to come out near the Driving Creek Railway.

COROMANDEL TOWN TO WHITIANGA

There are two routes from Coromandel Town southeast to Whitianga. The main road is the slightly longer but quicker SH25, which follows the coast, enjoys sea views and has short detours to pristine sandy beaches. The other is the less-travelled but legendary 309 Rd, an unsealed, untamed route through deep bush.

State Highway 125

SH25 starts by climbing sharply to an incredible lookout before heading steeply down with

craggy Castle Rock (526m) in the distance. The turn-off at Te Rerenga follows the harbour to Whangapoua. There's not much here but generic holiday homes, but you can walk along the rocky foreshore to the often-deserted **New Chum's Beach** (30 minutes).

Continuing east you soon reach **Kuaotunu**, a more interesting holiday town on a beautiful stretch of white-sand beach, with a café, store and ancient petrol pump. **Black Jack Backpackers** (☎ 07-866 2988; www.black-jack.co.nz; 201 SH25; dm/tw \$30/70, d \$75-95) has a prime position directly across from the beach. It's a lovely little hostel with smart facilities and bikes and kayaks for hire. The owners sometimes shut up shop in the off-season.

Heading off the highway at Kuaotunu takes you (via an unsealed road) to one of Coromandel's best-kept secrets. First the long stretch of **Otama Beach** comes into view – deserted but for a few houses and farms. There's extremely basic camping (think long-drop toilet in a corrugated shack) in a farmer's field at **Otama Beach Summer Camping Ground** (☎ 07-866 2362; Blackjack Rd; sites per person \$10; ☐).

Continue along the road and you'll be in for a shock. Just when you think you're about to fall off the end of the earth, the seal starts again and you reach **Opito** – a hidden-away enclave of 250 flash properties (too smart to be called bachs), of which only 16 have permanent residents. It's more than a little weird, but it is a magical beach. You can walk to a Ngati Hei *pa* (fortified village) site at the far end.

One of the 'real' residences houses the delightful folks of **Leighton Lodge** (☎ 07-866 0756; www.leightonlodge.co.nz; 17 Stewart Pl; d/tr \$140/175; ☐ ☐). This smart B&B has an upstairs room with a view-tastic balcony and a self-contained flat downstairs.

309 Road

Starting 3km south of Coromandel Town, the 309 cuts through the ranges for 21km (14km of which is unsealed but well maintained), rejoining SH25 7km south of Whitianga. The **Waiiau Waterworks** (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 7191; www.waiiauwaterworks.co.nz; 471 309 Rd; adult/child \$12/6; ☎ 9am-5pm), 5km from SH25, is a wonderfully bizarre park filled with whimsical water-powered amusements made from old kitchen knives, washing machines, bikes and toilets.

Two kilometres later there's a two-minute walk through a pretty patch of bush to the 10m-high **Waiiau Falls**. Stop again after another

500m for an easy 10-minute walk to an amazing **kauri grove** (Map p196). This stand of 13 600-year-old giants escaped the carnage of the 19th century, giving a majestic reminder of what the peninsula once looked like. The biggest has a 6m circumference.

WHITIANGA

pop 3580

If you come to Whitianga you'd better want to get wet. The big attractions are the sandy beaches of Mercury Bay and the diving, boating and kayaking opportunities afforded by the craggy limestone coast and nearby Te Whanganui A Hei Marine Reserve. If you've a lust for the luxe, a number of upmarket eateries and accommodation options have sprung up, catering to the boatie set who constantly breeze into the pretty harbour. Most of the restaurants are overpriced and not particularly interesting.

A genuine nautical hero, the legendary Polynesian explorer and seafarer Kupe, is said to have landed near here. The name Whitianga is a contraction of Te Whitianga a Kupe (the Crossing Place of Kupe). Nearby are two famous and fantastic natural attractions, Cathedral Cove and Hot Water Beach.

Information

Medical Centre (☎ 07-866 5911; 87 Albert St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9-11am Sat)

Post office (72 Albert St)

Whitianga i-SITE (☎ 07-866 5555; www.whitianga.co.nz; 66 Albert St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) Information and internet access (\$9 per hour).

Sights & Activities

Mercury Bay Museum (☎ 07-866 0730; 11a The Esplanade; adult/child \$5/50c; ☎ 10am-4pm) is small but interesting, focusing on local history – especially Whitianga's most famous visitors, Kupe and Cook.

Buffalo Beach stretches along Mercury Bay, north of the harbour. A five-minute **passenger ferry ride** (adult/child/bicycle \$2/1/50c; ☎ 7.30am-11.30pm Christmas-Jan, 7.30am-6.30pm & 7.30-8.30pm & 9.30-10.30pm Feb-Christmas) will take you across the harbour to **Whitianga Rock Scenic & Historical Reserve**, **Flaxmill Bay**, **Shakespeare's Lookout**, **Captain Cook's Memorial**, **Lonely Bay** and **Cooks Bay**, all within walking distance. Further afield are Cathedral Cove (p208; 15km), Hahei (p208; 13km) and Hot Water Beach (p208; 18km, one hour by bike). On the way to Hahei, **Purangi Estate** (Map

p196; ☎ 07-866 3724; www.purangiestate.co.nz; 501 Purangi Rd; ☎ 9am-5pm) has a café and free tastings of fruit wines and liqueurs.

Dive HQ (☎ 07-867 1580; www.divethecoromandel.co.nz; 7 Blacksmith Lane; trips \$120-225) is a PADI five-star accredited dive facility offering a range of shore, kayak and boat dives.

If you're more interested in catching fish than admiring them, the Whitianga marina is a base for **game-fishing** (particularly marlin and tuna) between January and March. There are numerous charters on offer, starting at around \$500 and heading into the thousands. Enquire at the i-SITE or around the marina. See the boxed text, p182, for a guide to sustainable fishing.

Seafari Windsurfing (☎ 07-866 0677; Brophy's Beach), 4km north of Whitianga, hires out sailboards (from \$25 per hour) and kayaks (from \$15 per hour), and provides windsurfing lessons (from \$40 including gear).

Another option for watery fun is a bright-yellow, motorised **Banana Boat** (☎ 07-866 5617; www.whitianga.co.nz/bananaboat; rides \$10-15), but these only operate between Boxing Day and the end of January.

Twin Oaks Riding Ranch (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 5388; www.twinoaksridingranch.co.nz; SH25; 2hr trek \$50) will take you horse-trekking over farmland and through bush 9km north of Whitianga.

Highzone (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 2113; www.highzone.co.nz; 49 Kaimarama Rd; activities \$15-60) offers high adventure on a ropes course, including a trapeze leap. It's located 7km south of Whitianga, just off the main road. Call for opening hours.

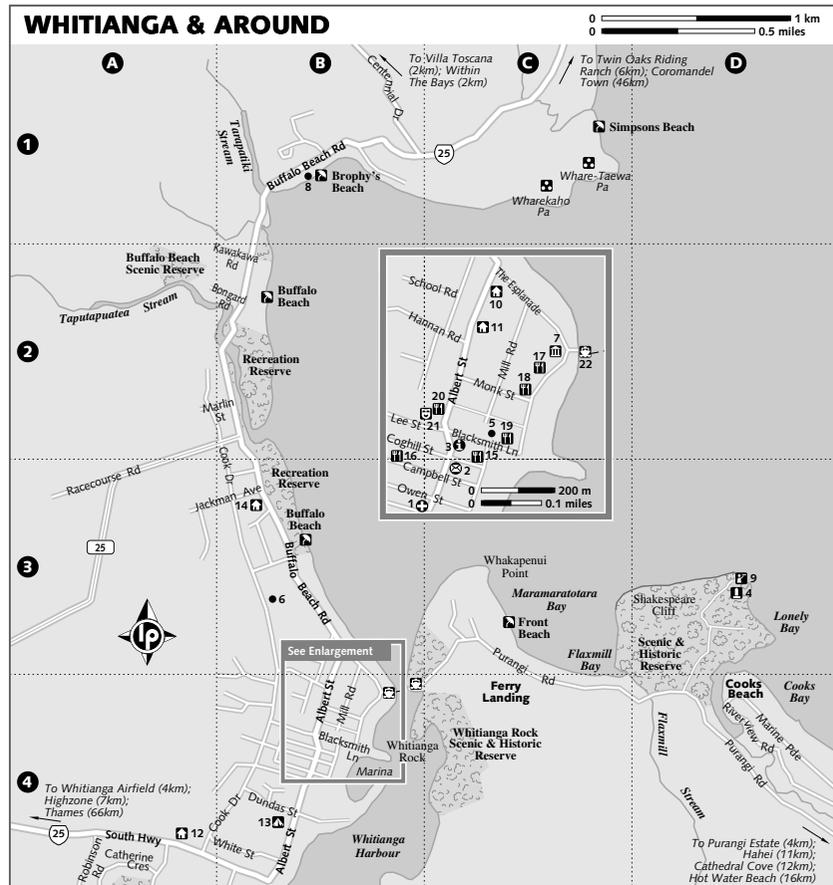
Under construction at the time of research, the **Lost Spring** (☎ 07-866 1456; www.thelostspring.co.nz; 121a Cook Dr) is an intriguing Disney-meets-Rotorua thermal project, involving a series of hot pools in a lush junglelike setting, complete with an erupting volcano. Check the website for opening dates and prices.

Tours

There are a baffling number of tours to **Te Whanganui A Hei Marine Reserve**, where you'll see amazing limestone formations and, if you're lucky, dolphins, fur seals, penguins and orcas. Some are straight cruises while others offer optional swims and snorkels. Options include:

Blue Boat (☎ 07-866 4904; 2hr tour adult/child \$50/10) A 12m launch.

Cave Cruiser (☎ 0800 427 893; www.cavecruiser.co.nz; 1-3hr tours \$50-100) A rigid-hull inflatable.



Glass Bottom Boat (☎ 07-867 1962; www.glassbottomboatwhitianga.co.nz; 2hr tour adult/child \$75/40)

Ocean Wave Tours (☎ 0800 806 060; www.oceanwave.co.nz; 1½hr tour adult/child \$55/35) A rigid-hull inflatable or a 9m trimaran.

Festivals & Events

In August, the **Scallop Festival** (www.scallopfestival.co.nz) provides a week of sublime food and entertainment.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Mercury Bay Motor Camp (☎ /fax 07-866 5579; 121 Albert St; sites per adult/child \$18/8, cabins \$75-140; ☎) Strangely planted in a suburban neighbourhood, this small camp is nonethe-

less comfortable and clean, with playgrounds and a refuge for garden gnomes.

Cat's Pyjamas (☎ 07-866 4663; www.cats-pyjamas.co.nz; 12 Albert St; dm \$23, d \$55-65; ☎) Good communal facilities and a charming manager make this place not just the cat's pyjamas but also the bee's knees. It's perfectly positioned between the pubs and the beach.

On the Beach Backpackers Lodge (☎ 07-866 5380; www.coromandelbackpackers.com; 46 Buffalo Beach Rd; dm \$24-26, s/d \$38/66, tw \$52-66; ☎) Bright-blue, beachside and brilliant, this well-run YHA has a large choice of sleeping options, including some with sea views and en suites. It provides free kayaks, boogie boards and spades (for Hot Water Beach).

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MIDRANGE

Cosy Cat Cottage B&B (☎ 07-866 4488; www.cosycat.co.nz; 41 South Hwy; s/d/tr/q \$70/105/120/160) Kooky in the extreme, this long-running B&B is crawling with feline images, including a human-sized one in the front garden. Not all rooms have en suites, but they're comfortable enough.

Albert Number Six (☎ 07-866 0036; www.albertnumbersix.co.nz; 6 Albert St; d \$120; ☎) Close to the beach and shops, these bright and sunny units are like motel rooms without kitchenettes. The chilled-out hosts provide a light breakfast.

TOP END

ourpick Within The Bays (☎ 07-866 2848; www.withinthebays.co.nz; 49 Tarapatiki Dr; d \$240-300; ☎) Modern European design couples with incredible views at this hilltop B&B. It's extremely well set-up for guests with restricted mobility – there's even a wheelchair-accessible bush track on the property.

Villa Toscana (☎ 07-866 2293; www.villatoscana.co.nz; Tarapatiki Dr; d/tr \$520/660; ☎) The charming Italian couple who own this palatial, Tuscan-style, hillside villa have imbued it with elegant luxury. The private two-bedroom apartment has a helipad, sumptuous linen and a spa with

breathtaking views. Kayaks and mountain bikes are available, and the owners' game-fishing boat *Mamma Mia!* can be chartered (\$950 per day).

Eating

Coghill Café (☎ 07-866 0592; 10 Coghill St; meals \$4-18; ☎ 7am-5pm) Get an early start on the sunny terrace of this side-street café, where the counter food beckons enticingly and the toasted sandwiches have gourmet aspirations.

ourpick Café Nina (☎ 07-866 5440; 20 Victoria St; meals \$5-16; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat, 8am-4pm Sun) Barbecue for breakfast? Why the hell not. Too cool to be constricted to four walls, the kitchen grills bacon and eggs on an outdoor hotplate while the punters spill out onto tables in the park.

Sangam Indian Cuisine (☎ 07-867 1983; 13/1 Blacksmith Lane; mains \$15-22; ☎ dinner; ☎) North India comes to Whitianga via this large, up-market restaurant with exotic light fittings. If the kids aren't spice-friendly there's a fish-and-chips lifeline.

Tuatua (☎ 07-866 0952; 45 Albert St; tapas \$5-14, mains \$20-30; ☎ 3-10pm Mon-Thu, noon-10pm Fri & Sat) The tapas craze has made it to Whitianga, but with a local flavour – try the Madrid-style Coromandel mussels.

Fire Place (☎ 07-866 4828; 9 The Esplanade; mains \$20-36; ☎ lunch & dinner) Living up to its name, the modern interiors wrap around big stone chimneys and open fires. The excellent wood-fired pizzas (\$20) are big enough for two, saving room for the phenomenal desserts. In the off-season look out for cracking specials like the \$15 Sunday roast.

Self-catering foodies should head to **Monk St Market** (☎ 07-866 4500; 1 Monk St; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat) for deli goods, imported chocolate and organic produce.

Entertainment

Mercury Twin Cinemas (☎ 07-867 1001; Lee St) Offers latest-release mainstream and independent films as an alternative to getting wet.

Getting There & Around

Great Barrier Airlines (☎ 0800 900 600; www.greatbarrierairlines.co.nz) connects Whitianga to Great Barrier Island and Auckland (both \$109, 30 minutes, twice weekly). The airfield is 4km west of town.

InterCity (☎ 0508 353 947; www.intercity.co.nz) has daily buses to/from Coromandel Town (\$18, 80

minutes), Tairua (\$17, 45 minutes) and Thames (\$33, 1½ hours), stopping at the i-SITE. Daily **Go Kiwi** (☎ 0800 446 549; www.go-kiwi.co.nz) shuttles head to Tairua (\$12, 45 minutes). **Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) has four services per week to Auckland (3¾ hours) and Tairua (45 minutes), with advance fares starting from \$1.

HAHEI

pop 270 (7000 in summer)

A legendary Kiwi beach town, little Hahei balloons to bursting in summer but is nearly abandoned otherwise – apart from the busloads of tourists doing the obligatory stop-off at Cathedral Cove. It's a charming spot, and a great place to unwind for a few days, especially in the quieter months. It takes its name from Hei, the eponymous ancestor of the Ngati Hei people, who arrived in the 14th century on the *Te Arawa* canoe.

Sights & Activities

Beautiful **Cathedral Cove**, with its famous gigantic limestone arch and natural waterfall shower, is best enjoyed early or late in the day – avoiding the worst of the hordes. At the car park, a kilometre north of Hahei, the signs suggest that the walk to the cove will take 45 minutes, but anyone who's not on a ventilator will do it in 25. On the way there's rocky **Gemstone Bay** (which has a snorkelling trail where you're likely to see big snapper, crayfish and stingrays) and sandy **Stingray Bay**.

It's a 70-minute walk along the coast from Cathedral Cove to **Hahei Beach**. From the southern end of Hahei Beach, it's a 20-minute walk up to **Te Pare**, a *pa* site with splendid coastal views.

Cathedral Cove Sea Kayaking (☎ 07-866 3877; www.seakayaktours.co.nz; 88 Hahei Beach Rd; half/full day \$75/125) runs guided kayaking trips around the limestone arches, caves and islands in the Cathedral Cove area. The Remote Coast Tour heads the other way when conditions permit, visiting caves, blowholes and a long tunnel.

Cathedral Cove Dive (☎ 07-866 3955; Hahei Beach Rd; dives \$60-95) takes dives two or three times daily. A Discover Scuba half-day beginners course costs \$145 including all the gear. It also rents out scuba gear (\$50), snorkelling gear (\$30), bikes (\$20) and boogie boards (\$25).

Sleeping & Eating

Hahei really does have a 'gone fishing' feel in the off-season. The local store remains open

and the eateries take it in turns so that there's at least one option every evening. For more choice, catch the ferry over to Whitianga.

Hahei Holiday Resort (☎ 07-866 3889; www.haheiholidays.co.nz; Harsant Ave; sites per 2 people \$34-50, dm \$22, cabins \$90-156, cottage \$353, villas \$177-398; (P)) The accommodation at this absolutely massive beachfront resort ranges from tent sites to pricey ocean-view villas. The communal facilities aren't great and the backpacker accommodation is best avoided, but you can't beat the location.

our pick **Tatahi Lodge** (☎ 07-866 3992; tatahi_lodge@xtra.co.nz; Grange Rd; dm/d/tw \$25/60/60, units \$185; (P) (Q)) A wonderful place where backpackers are treated with at least as much care and respect as the lush bromeliad-filled garden. The dorm rooms and excellent communal facilities are just as attractive as the pricier self-contained units. Gifts of free fruit in season provide much-needed vitamin replenishment to those hardcore bag-of-rice-a-week types.

Church (☎ 07-866 3533; www.thechurchhahei.co.nz; 87 Hahei Beach Rd; cottages \$125-165; (P) (Q)) These beautifully kitted-out, rustic timber cottages have stylish, modern but natural interiors in a photogenic garden setting.

Cathedral Court (☎ 07-866 3501; www.cathedralcourt.co.nz; 1 Cathedral Court; r \$170-180; (P)) Comfy beds and en suites are on offer in this modern B&B, right opposite the shops. In a supreme sacrifice, the friendly owners rent out the master bedroom, with its terrace, walk-in wardrobe and huge bathtub.

Church Restaurant (☎ 07-866 3797; 87 Hahei Beach Rd; mains \$25-36; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat) At the Church cottages, this is the town's best eatery, housed in the ultracharming wooden church at the top of the drive. The Scottish chef delivers an upmarket European menu with twists, such as stuffed chicken breast with black pudding.

Getting There & Around

Hahei isn't well served by transport providers. Without a car, the easiest way to get here is to take the ferry from Whitianga (see p205) and then arrange a ride with **Cooks Beach Taxis** (☎ 07-866 2644; one way \$25).

HOT WATER BEACH

Justifiably famous, Hot Water Beach is quite extraordinary. For two hours either side of low tide, you can access an area of sand in front of a rocky outcrop at the middle of the beach where hot water oozes up from beneath

GETTING YOURSELF INTO HOT WATER...

Hot Water Beach has dangerous rips, especially directly in front of the main thermal section. It's one of the four most dangerous beaches in NZ in terms of drowning numbers, although this may be skewed by the huge number of tourists that flock here. Regardless, swimming here is *not* safe, so restrict your activities to burning your bum.

the surface. Bring a spade, dig a hole and *voila*, you've got a personal spa pool. Surfers stop off before the main beach to access some decent breaks. The headland between the two beaches still has traces of a Ngati Hei *pa*.

Spades (\$5) can be hired from the **Hot Water Beach Store** (☎ 07-866 3006; Pye Pl; ☎ 9am-7pm summer, low tide winter), which has a café attached. The wonderful **Hot Waves Café** (☎ 07-866 3887; 8 Pye Pl; meals \$10-17; ☎ 8.30am-4pm) also hires spades (\$4) and serves excellent food in cool surroundings. In summer there are queues out the door.

Near the beach, **Moko** (☎ 07-866 3367; www.moko.co.nz; 24 Pye Pl; ☎ 10am-5pm) is full of beautiful things – art, sculpture, jewellery – with a modern Pasifika/Maori bent.

Auntie Dawn's Place (☎ 07-866 3707; www.auntiedawn.co.nz; 15 Radar Rd; dm \$25, units \$110-130; (P)) is a comfortable, spacious and homely house with a big garden that includes ancient pohutukawa trees. Backpacker beds are available in garden huts in summer.

A nice luxury-style pad, **Hot Water Beach B&B** (☎ 07-866 3991; www.hotwaterbedandbreakfast.co.nz; 48 Pye Pl; r \$250; (P)) has priceless views, a spa bath on the deck and attractive living quarters.

COROGLEN & AROUND

Coroglen is a blink-and-you'll-miss-it village on SH25, south of Whitianga and west of Hot Water Beach. The legendary **Coroglen Tavern** (☎ 07-866 3809; www.coroglentavern.com; 1937 SH25; ☎ 11am-10pm Sun-Tue, 11-1am Wed-Sat) is the archetypal middle-of-nowhere country pub that attracts big-name Kiwi bands in summer.

Coroglen Farmers Market (☎ 07-866 3315; SH25; ☎ 9am-noon Sun) sells a bit of everything produced in the local area, from vegetables to compost.

Nearby, the folks at **Rangihau Ranch** (☎ 07-862 3875; Rangihau Rd; 1/2hr trek \$30/50) will lead you

on horseback up a historic packhorse track, through beautiful bush to spectacular views.

Colenso Country Shop & Café (Map p196; ☎ 07-866 3725; Whenuakite; snacks \$6-16) has excellent fair-trade coffee, scones, cakes and light snacks, and a sweet atmosphere.

TAIRUA

pop 1566

Tairua and its twin town Pauanui sit either side of a river estuary that's perfect for windsurfing or for little kids to splash about in. Both have decent surf beaches (Pauanui's is probably a shade better), but that's where the similarity stops. Where Tairua is a functioning residential town (with shops, ATMs and a choice of eateries), Pauanui is an upmarket refugeecamp for over-wealthy Aucklanders – the kind who jet in and park their private planes by their grandiose beach houses before knocking out a round of golf. Friendly Tairua knows how to keep it real. Both are ridiculously popular in the summertime.

Information

Tairua Information Centre (☎ 07-864 7575; www.tairua.info; 223 Main Rd; ☎ 9am-5pm Oct-May, 9am-4pm Jun-Sep)

Sights & Activities

Forming the north head of the harbour is craggy **Paku**, which around seven million years ago was a volcanic island. More recently it was a Ngati Hei *pa*, before being invaded by Ngati Maru in the 17th century. It's a steep 15-minute walk to the summit from the top of Paku Dr, with the payoff being amazing views over Tairua, Pauanui and the Alderman Islands. Plaques along the way detail Tairua's colonial history, with only one rather dismissive one devoted to its long Maori occupation.

Tairua Dive & Fishinn (☎ 07-864 8054; www.dive.tairua.co.nz; The Esplanade; ☎ 8am-5pm) hires out kayaks, plus scuba, snorkel and fishing gear. The company also runs dive trips out to the Alderman Islands (dive and full gear \$195, trip only \$105, snorkelling \$75) and PADI courses (\$550). Come December, it also organises a **dive festival** (www.divefestival.co.nz).

Various operators offer fishing charters and sightseeing trips, including **Waipae Magic** (☎ 07-864 9415; dewy@slingshot.co.nz), **Taranui Charters** (☎ 07-864 8511; jim@taranui.co.nz) and **Epic Adventures** (☎ 07-864 8193; www.epicadventures.co.nz).

A local version of Crocodile Dundee, Doug Johansen offers informative day-long wilderness walks under the name **Kiwi Dundee Adventures** (☎ 07-865 8809; www.kiwidundee.co.nz).

Sleeping

Tairua Beach Villa Backpackers (☎ 07-864 8345; tairua.backpackers@xtra.co.nz; 200 Main Rd; sites per person \$18, dm/s \$26/45, d & tw \$55-59; P, ♿) The gregarious owner of this fantastic hostel works hard to keep everyone happy. Rooms are homey and casual, while the dorm scores great views. Guests can help themselves to avocados, feijoas, eggs, fishing rods, kayaks, sailboards and bikes, and windsurfing lessons cost a paltry \$20.

Pinnacles Backpackers (☎ 07-864 8448; http://pinnaclesbakpak.co.nz; 305 Main Rd; dm \$23, d & tw \$56; P, ♿) North of the town centre, this place has bright rooms, a balcony, a free pool table and bikes for hire. There's a bit of peeling paint, but it's otherwise well-kept.

Pacific Harbour Lodge (☎ 07-864 8581; www.pacific.harbour.co.nz; 227 Main Rd; chalets \$188-199; P, ♿) This 'island-style' resort in the town centre has spacious self-contained chalets, with natural wood and Gauguin décor inside and a South Seas garden outside. Discount packages are usually available.

Dell Cote (☎ 07-864 8142; www.dellcote.com; Rewarewa Valley Rd; s/d \$200/230; P) Nontoxic mud bricks and macrocarpa timber give this place an organic feel, and the swooping gardens add a dose of tranquillity. The loft room is particularly lovely.

Eating & Drinking

Punters Bar & Grill (☎ 07-864 9370; Main Rd; mains \$6-29; ☺ lunch & dinner) This is primarily a pub, but it also serves decent snacks (such as crunchy panini slices with dips) and giant burgers with a choice of scotch fillet or pork loin instead of the usual random meat patty.

Out of the Blue Café (☎ 07-864 8987; 227 Main Rd; meals \$9-17; ☺ 7.30am-3pm) This popular meeting place serves decent coffee, breakfast, deli snacks and light meals such as lovely salads and fat sandwiches.

Shells Restaurant & Bar (☎ 07-864 8811; 227 Main Rd; mains \$21-29; ☺ lunch & dinner daily Oct-Apr, dinner Tue-Sat May-Sep) Next to the Pacific Harbour Lodge, this place offers shipshape dining with tables decorated with said shells for effect. The food is Mod-NZ-ish and not all of it seafood as you might expect.

Getting There & Around

InterCity (☎ 0508 353 947; www.intercity.co.nz) has daily buses to/from Thames (\$17, 45 minutes) and Whitianga (\$17, 45 minutes). **Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) has four services per week to Auckland (three hours), Thames (45 minutes) and Whitianga (45 minutes), with advance fares starting from \$1. **Go Kiwi** (☎ 0800 446 549; www.go-kiwi.co.nz) has daily shuttles to/from Thames (\$18, 45 minutes) and Whitianga (\$12, 45 minutes).

Tairua and Pauanui are connected by a passenger ferry (one way/return \$3/5), which departs every two hours from 9am to 5pm, running more frequently and for longer hours in summer.

AROUND TAIRUA

Puketui Valley

Located 12km south of Tairua is the turn-off to Puketui Valley and the historic **Broken Hills gold-mine workings** (Map p196), which are 8km from the main road along a mainly gravel road. There are short walks up to the sites of stamper batteries, but the best hike is through the 500m-long Collins Drive mine tunnel. It takes two hours return; remember to take a torch and a jacket with you. You can stay here at the basic DOC **campsite** (Map p196; adult/child \$9/2), located in a pretty spot by the river. This is a wilderness area so take care and be properly prepared. Water from the river should be boiled before drinking.

Slipper Island

The privately owned **Slipper Island** (☎ 07-864 7560; www.slipper.co.nz) has campsites (adult/child \$15/10) in South Bay and chalet accommodation (self-contained units \$200 to \$750) in Home Bay. You'll need to call ahead to arrange transfers by charter boat (\$65 per person, minimum four), light plane or helicopter.

OPOUTERE

File this one under best-kept secrets. Maybe it's a local conspiracy to keep at bay the hordes of Aucklanders that seasonally invade Pauanui and Whangamata, as this unspoilt long sandy expanse has been kept very quiet. Apart from a cluster of houses there's nothing for miles around. Swimming can be dangerous, especially near Hikinui Islet, which is close to the beach. On the sand spit is the **Wharekawa Wildlife Refuge**, a breeding ground for the endangered NZ dotterel.

our pick **Oputere YHA** (☎ 07-865 9072; www.yha.co.nz; 389 Oputere Rd; sites per person \$15, dm \$19-22, d & tw \$55, f \$70-80; P, ♿) is a wonderful get-away-from-it-all hostel with plenty of birdsong and comfortable rooms. Kayaks, hot-water bottles, alarm clocks, stilts and Hula Hoops can all be borrowed. You can harvest shellfish from the beach but you'll need to bring other food with you.

One of the guardians of the secret is **Oputere Coastal Camping** (☎ 07-865 9152; www.oputerebeach.co.nz; 460 Ohui Rd; sites per adult/child \$15/10, cabins \$100-140; P) – its motto is 'remote and untouched, just the way we like it'. Numbers are strictly limited, so book ahead for this summer-only beachside paradise, offering flat, sheltered tent sites and comfortable cabins with views.

A peaceful country-style villa with kind hosts and en-suite rooms, **Copsefield B&B** (Map p196; ☎ 07-865 9555; www.copsefield.co.nz; 1055 SH25; s/d \$130/180; P) is set in attractive, lush gardens with a spa and a riverside swimming hole. For a real bargain, book the one-room cottage (\$100 for two then \$10 per extra person, maximum five).

Tawatawa Lodge (Map p196; ☎ 07-865 9091; www.tawatawa.co.nz; 82 Oputere Rd; r \$25-675; P, ♿) is luxury to the max. Impressively fitted out with large slabs of recycled kauri and rimu, imported marble and lots of art, it's completely over the top but still strangely tasteful. Each room is themed and individually scented; the Persian room is the last word in extravagance. There are even glowworms in the garden.

Go Kiwi (☎ 0800 446 549; www.go-kiwi.co.nz) runs shuttles between Oputere and Whangamata (\$22, 10 minutes).

WHANGAMATA

pop 3880

While Auckland's socially ambitious flock to Pauanui, the city's young and horny head to Whangamata to surf, get stoned and hook up. It can be a raucous spot over New Year, when the population swells to over 40,000. A true summer holiday town, in the off-season there may as well be tumbleweeds rolling down the main street.

Information

Bartley Internet & Graphics (☎ 07-865 8832; 706 Port Rd) Internet access.

Whangamata i-SITE (☎ 07-865 8340; www.whangamatainfo.co.nz; 616 Port Rd; ☺ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun)

Activities

Besides surfing, kayaking, fishing (game-fishing runs from January to April), snorkelling near Hauturu (Clarke) Island, orienteering and mountain biking, there are excellent walks. The **Wentworth Falls walk** takes two hours one way; it starts 3km south of the town and 4km down a good gravel road.

Sleeping

Wentworth Valley campsite (Map p196; ☎ 07-865 7032; adult/child \$9/2) More upmarket than most DOC camping grounds, it's accessed from the Wentworth Falls walk, and has toilets, hot showers and gas barbecues.

Southpacific Accommodation (☎ 07-865 9580; www.southpacific.co.nz; 249 Port Rd; dm \$24-26, d & tw \$63, tr \$75, units \$113-180; P, ♿) This hard-to-miss, corner-hogging complex consists of a big green barn for backpackers and self-contained motel units. Facilities are clean and modern; bikes and kayaks are available for hire.

Gabry's Place (☎ 07-865 6295; livio@xtra.co.nz; 103 Mark St; s/d \$40/70; P) If you feel like you missed out by not having Italian grandparents, come and stay here. The very sweet hosts will fuss around a bit, make sure you're set up with milk and cookies and then leave you to enjoy this large, scrupulously clean, self-contained unit.

Brook Lodge (☎ 07-865 6757; www.brooklodge.co.nz; 118 Brook Pl; st \$275-325; P) It's hard to pick what's more impressive: the elegant, brightly painted rooms or the sumptuous gardens (each suite has its own). Art, sculpture and water features are liberally sprinkled around this beautifully designed property.

Eating & Drinking

Craig's Traditional Fish & Chips (☎ 07-865 8717; 701 Port Rd; meals \$4-10; ☺ 11am-8pm) All you could ask for in a chippie, Craig's cooks up pieces of grilled fresh fish and fat, salted chips. The service is friendly and there's a TV and a stack of trashy mags to speed up the wait.

Lazy Lizard (☎ 07-865 7340; 427 Port Rd; mains \$6-14; ☺ 7.30am-3.30pm) Winning points for bizarre hand-shaped stools, this funky lizard does delicious counter food, cooked breakfasts, bagels and burgers. The fair-trade organic coffee is first rate.

Sandz (☎ 07-865 8028; 603 Port Rd; mains \$6-18; ☺ 7.30am-10pm) All things to everyone, this ice-cream parlour/café/bar serves everything from big breakfasts to burritos. You can't go far wrong with bacon and eggs for \$6.

The monster-sized **New World** (☎ 07-865 0400; 300 Aicken St; ☎ 8am-8pm) will take care of your grocery needs.

Getting There & Away

InterCity (☎ 0508 353 947; www.intercity.co.nz) offers limited bus services to/from Waihi (\$27, one hour).

WAIHI

pop 4700

Waihi isn't a complete hole, but it's in danger of becoming one. This isn't meant in the derogatory sense. Where most towns have hole-in-the-wall ATMs for people to access their riches, Waihi's main street has a giant open-cast gold mine. They've been dragging gold and silver out of Martha Mine, NZ's richest, since 1878. The town formed quickly and blinged itself up with grand buildings and a show-offy avenue of phoenix palms, now magnificently mature.

After closing down in 1952, open-cast mining restarted in 1988. The mine is still productive, but only just – it takes a tonne of rock to yield 3g to 6g of gold. It's expected to run out soon, and when it does, plans are afoot to convert the town's gaping wound into a major tourist attraction.

Information

Waihi visitor centre (☎ 07-863 6715; www.waihi.org.nz; Seddon St; ☎ 9am-5pm Oct-Apr, 9am-4.30pm May-Sep) Offers internet access.

Sights & Activities

The main drag, Seddon St, has interesting sculptures, information panels about Waihi's golden past and roundabouts that look like squashed daleks. Opposite the visitor centre, the skeleton of a derelict **Cornish Pumphouse** (1904) is the town's main landmark, atmospherically lit at night. From here the **Pit Rim Walkway** has fascinating views into the 250m-deep Martha Mine. If you want to get down into it, the mining company runs 1½-hour **Martha Gold Mine Tours** (☎ 07-863 9880; tours adult/child \$5/2); call for times.

The **Goldfields Railway** (☎ 07-863 8251; www.goldfieldsrailway.org.nz; Wrigley St; adult/child return \$15/\$8) runs vintage trains to Waikino, leaving Waihi Station daily at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm. The 7km-long scenic journey takes 25 minutes.

The **Gold Mining Museum** (☎ 07-863 8386; 54 Kenny St; adult/child \$5/3; ☎ 11am-3pm Thu-Sun) features dis-

plays and models of the region's gold-mining history and a gallery.

Waterlily Gardens (Map p196; ☎ 07-863 8267; www.waterlily.co.nz; 441 Pukekauri Rd; adult/child \$8.50/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Oct-Apr) is 18 acres of ponds, peacocks and pretty things, 7km southwest of Waihi. There's a café on-site.

Mathers Road Mountain Bike Track (☎ 07-863 8218; Mathers Rd; entry from \$15) is a rugged cross-country track that cuts through farmland and forest and affords the odd sea view.

Sleeping

Westwind B&B (☎ 07-863 7208; westwindgarden@xtra.co.nz; 58 Adams St; s/d \$45/85; ☎) Run by a charming couple who are inveterate travellers themselves, this old-fashioned but tasteful B&B has comfortable rooms with private bathrooms. Expect a good chat over breakfast.

Waterlily Gardens (Map p196; ☎ 07-863 8267; www.waterlily.co.nz; 441 Pukekauri Rd; r \$250) You get the gardens all to yourself after-hours if you're staying in one of the two gorgeous modern cottages. They're beautifully decked out with comfy beds, quality linen, polished floors and interesting art.

Manawa Ridge (Map p196; ☎ 07-863 9400; www.manawaridge.co.nz; Ngatitangata Rd; r \$650) At the time of research they hadn't quite finished this castlelike eco retreat, perched on a 310m ridge 6km northeast of Waihi. The views, taking in the entire Bay of Plenty, are incredible. Made entirely of recycled railway timber, mud brick and lime-plastered straw walls, rooms have an earthy feel – with Mexican-style dome fires to keep you warm in winter.

Eating

Ti-tree Café (☎ 07-863 8668; 14 Haszard St; brunch \$5-17, dinner \$17-24; ☎) breakfast & lunch Tue-Sun, dinner Fri & Sat) Housed in a cute little wooden building with punge-shaded outdoor seating, Ti-tree serves fair-trade organic coffee, cooked breakfasts and wood-fired pizza.

Chambers Wine Bar & Restaurant (☎ 07-863 7474; 22 Haszard St; mains \$16-28; ☎) lunch Thu-Sat, dinner Mon-Sat) These grand chambers once belonged to the local council. The cosy bar is more appealing than the cavernous dining room, but servings are massive and the slightly retro fare (like tandoori chicken with apricot) is surprisingly nice.

Getting There & Away

Lots of buses come in and out of this transport hub, stopping outside the visitor centre.

InterCity (☎ 0508 353 947; www.intercity.co.nz) has two daily buses to/from Auckland (\$33, three hours), Thames (\$18, 45 minutes) and Tauranga (\$18, one hour), and less frequent services to Whangamata (\$27, one hour).

Go Kiwi (☎ 0800 446 549, 07-866 0336; www.go-kiwi.co.nz) runs daily shuttles to Auckland (\$25, 2½ hours) and Tauranga (\$17, one hour). **Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) also has daily buses on the Auckland–Tauranga route, with advance fares starting from \$1.

WAIHI BEACH

pop 1700

While Waihi is interesting for a brief visit, it's Waihi Beach where you'll want to linger. The two places are as dissimilar as surfing is from mining, separated by 11km of farmland. The long sandy beach stretches 9km to Bowentown, on the northern limits of Tauranga Harbour, where you'll find sheltered harbour beaches such as beautiful Anzac Bay. There's a very popular 45-minute walk north through bush to pristine Orokawa Bay, which has no road access.

The township has a handful of shops, including **Bill & Lyn's Beachmart** (☎ 07-863 5500; 20 Wilson Rd; ☎ 7am-7pm), which doubles as the information centre.

The massive, resort-style **Waihi Beach Top 10 Holiday Park** (☎ 07-863 5504; www.waihibeach.com; 15 Beach Rd; sites per adult/child \$20/14, cabins \$67-155, units \$140-172; ☎) is pretty damn flash, with a pool, gym, spa, beautiful kitchen and smorgasbord of sleeping options.

Beachfront B&B (☎ 07-863 5393; mortons_garage@xtra.co.nz; 3 Shaw Rd; d/tr \$120/150) is true to its name, with absolute beachfront and spectacular sea views. The tastefully furnished downstairs flat has a TV, fridge and direct access to the surf.

Down the south end, **Bowentown Beach Holiday Park** (☎ 07-863 5381; www.bowentown.co.nz; 510 Seaforth Rd; sites per adult/child \$20/12, cabins \$80-120, units \$130-160; ☎) has nabbed a stunning stretch of sand. It's impressively maintained and even has a barbecue area with a water feature.

Another 8km south is **Athenree Hot Springs & Holiday Park** (☎ 07-863 5600; www.athenreehotsprings.co.nz; Athenree Rd; sites per person \$17, cabins s/d \$50/55, units \$95-190; ☎) with two clean outdoor thermal pools (adult/child \$6.50/4, open 10am to 7.30pm). Entry is free if you stay in the smart accommodation.

The **Porch** (☎ 07-863 1330; 23 Wilson Rd; brunch \$11-16, dinner \$22-30; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) is the

town's coolest chow-down spot, with slow-braised pork belly and loin of lamb competing for diners' affections.

Funky, licensed and right by the beach, **Flatwhite** (☎ 07-863 1346; 21 Shaw Rd; brunch \$11-17, dinner \$20-28; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm) has inventive breakfasts, decent pizzas and, naturally, excellent coffee.

KARANGAHAKE GORGE

The road between Waihi and Paeroa, through the bush-lined ramps of the Karangahake Gorge, is one of the best short drives in the country. There are also amazing walks in the area, taking in old Maori trails, historic mining and rail detritus, and spookily dense bush. In Maori legend the area is said to be protected by a *taniwha*, a supernatural creature. The local *iwi* managed to keep this area closed to miners until 1875, aligning themselves with the militant Te Kooti (see the boxed text, p369).

The very worthwhile 4.5km **Karangahake Gorge Historic Walkway** (Map p196) takes 1½ hours (each way) and starts from the car park, 14km west of Waihi. It follows the disused railway line and the Ohinemuri River to Owaharoa Falls and Waikino Station, where you can pick up the vintage train to Waihi. **Waikino Station Café** (☎ 07-863 8640; SH2; ☎ 9.30am-4pm daily, dinner Friday) is a perfect lunch stop before heading back.

There are a range of shorter walks and loop tracks leading from the car park; bring a torch as some head through tunnels. A two-hour tramp will bring you to Dickey's Flat, where there's a free DOC **campsite** (Map p196) and a decent swimming hole. River water will need to be boiled for drinking. You'll find DOC information boards about the walks and the area's history at both the station and the main car park.

Across from the car park, **Golden Owl Backpackers** (☎ 07-862 7994; www.goldenowl.co.nz; 3 Moresby St; dm/d/tw \$23/56/56) is a handy tramping base, sleeping only six. Allow \$5 extra for linen.

Further up the same road, **Ohinemuri Estate Winery** (Map p196; ☎ 07-862 8874; www.ohinemuri.co.nz; Moresby St; mains \$15-20; ☎ 10am-5pm daily Oct-Apr, 10am-5pm Fri-Sun May-Sep) has Latvian-influenced architecture and serves excellent lunches. The portions are large and the prices extremely reasonable. You'd be right if you thought it was an unusual site for growing grapes – the

winery imports fruit from other regions. Tastings are \$5, refundable with purchase. If you imbibe too much, snaffle a chalet-style hut and revel in the charming atmosphere of this secluded place (double/triple rooms \$110/120).

Nearby **Talisman Café** (☎ 07-862 8306; SH2; meals \$5-15; ☎ 9am-4pm) is more distinguished by its magical new-age décor and kitschy crafts (everything from baby booties to Asian jade) than its coffee and food, but there's plenty to sustain hungry hikers.

PAEROA

pop 4000

If you find yourself scratching your head in Paeroa, don't worry too much about it. The whole town is an elaborate Kiwi in-joke. It's the birthplace of Lemon & Paeroa (L&P), an icon of Kiwiana that markets itself as 'world

famous in NZ'. The fact that the beloved fizzy drink is now owned by global monster Coca-Cola Amatil and produced in Auckland only serves to make the ubiquitous L&P branding on every shopfront even more darkly ironic. Still, generations of Kiwi kids have pestered their parents to take this route just to catch a glimpse of the giant L&P bottles.

The small **museum** (☎ 07-862 8486; 37 Belmont Rd; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 10.30am-3pm Mon-Fri) has a grand selection of Royal Albert porcelain and other pioneer and Maori artefacts – look in the drawers. If pretty crockery is your thing, Paeroa is known for its antique stores.

L&P Café & Bar (☎ 07-862 7773; SH2; mains \$11-19; ☎ 8.30am-8pm) has a truck-stop ambience, but is as good a place as any to find out what all the fuss is about. All manner of L&P paraphernalia is on sale here, along with the lemony lolly water itself.