

# Wellington Region



If your New Zealand travels thus far have been all about wilderness and lonesome, one-horse towns, rock into Wellington for a big-city hit. Art-house cinema, hip bars, designer boutiques, live music rooms and late-night coffee shops – it's all in 'Windy Welly'. Wellingtonians are geographically isolated and look inwards for inspiration, a habit that fosters a red-hot arts scene. Everyone here seems to be in a band and looks a tad depleted, like they smoke and drink too much and spend their time molesting canvasses and scribbling poetry....except for the politicians of course. NZ's capital city manages to strike a balance between creative exuberance and an institutional mindset crucial to the day-to-day running of the country. The city is neither altogether bohemian, nor overloaded with bureaucratic stuffed shirts.

Wellington is also the major travel crossroads between the North and South Islands. Travellers file through the city, giving it a free-moving, energetic vibe. Steep hills lined with gingerbread-pretty Victorian houses ascend from the harbour to spectacular view points. Wellington punches well above its weight – plan on spending a few days in the ring.

If city trappings are something you're trying to forget, there are great outdoor destinations less than an hour away. Cruise the Kapiti Coast, with its low-key beachy towns and mystical Kapiti Island; or head over the Rimutaka Range into the Wairarapa, where the delicate flavours of Pinot Noir (the local grape) are apt reward for a day spent exploring the wild coast.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Getting acquainted with NZ's finest museum, **Te Papa** (p405)
- Scaling the lighthouse steps on the wild and remote **Cape Palliser** (p429)
- Sampling the good coffee and quality beer that Wellingtonians demand at the city's slick **bars** (p416) and bohemian **cafés** (p415)
- Lassoing Wellington's wind with a lesson in **sailboarding** or **kiteboarding** (p409)
- Waxing-on about toasty noses and berry hints while sampling fine Pinot Noir in **Martinborough** (p427)
- Riding the ratchety **Cable Car** (p405) from Lambton Quay to the manicured **Wellington Botanic Gardens** (p405)
- Ripping up the trails at **Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park** (p408)



- TELEPHONE CODE: 04
- www.wellingtonnz.com
- www.naturecoast.co.nz

## Climate

When Wellington's weather turns bad, it can be *truly* foul: lacerating winds and sheets of freezing rain coming in sideways. Bus shelters look more like houses – it ain't called 'Windy Wellington' for nothing...

November to April are the warmer months and the best time to visit, with average maximums hovering around 20°C. From May to August it's colder and wetter – daily temperatures lurk around 12°C.

## Getting There & Around

Wellington is a major transport hub: anyone going from one NZ island to the other (by sea) passes through here. Wellington airport is serviced by international and domestic airlines.

Easy train and bus connections make commuting into Wellington a viable option – many people travel to work (or to party) in Wellington from the hinterland. Approaching the city from the north, you'll pass through either the Kapiti Coast to the west via State Highway 1 (SH1), or the Wairarapa to the east via State Highway 2 (SH2), before entering the heavily populated Hutt Valley and Wellington itself.

**InterCity** (www.intercity.co.nz) is the main North Island bus company, travelling just about everywhere. Commuter trains run from Wellington to the Kapiti Coast and The Wairarapa; long-distance **Tranz Scenic** (www.tranzscenic.co.nz) trains run from Wellington to Auckland via Palmerston North. See p420 for details on getting to/from Wellington.

# WELLINGTON

pop 164,000 (city), 424,000 (region)

Hemmed in by hillsides around a magnificent harbour, Wellington is NZ's capital. Locked in an age-old struggle for hip supremacy with Auckland, 'Welly' prides itself in its cultural and artistic wealth. Given the relatively small population, there's an astounding number of quality restaurants, cafés, bars, galleries, shops and theatres here. And it's certainly better-looking than Auckland: timber Victorian houses terrace up steep valleys from the waterfront in an almost San Franciscan manner.

In recent years Wellington has stamped its place firmly on the world map as the

## WELLINGTON REGION FACTS

**Eat** A Maori-fusion meal at Kai in the City (p414); lime-chilli chocolate at Greytown's Schoc Chocolate (p429)

**Drink** Too much caffeine at Welly's cool cafés (p415); Pinot Noir from Martinborough (p427) in The Wairarapa

**Read** Katherine Mansfield's *Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*

**Listen to** *The General Electric* by Wellington's rock legends Shihad

**Watch** Any film directed by revered local boy Peter Jackson

**Swim at** The beaches along the Kapiti Coast (p423)

**Festival** Fringe NZ (p411) – offbeat Wellington at its most theatrical, musical and visual

**Tackiest tourist attraction** The faux Stonehenge in the Wairarapa (p429)

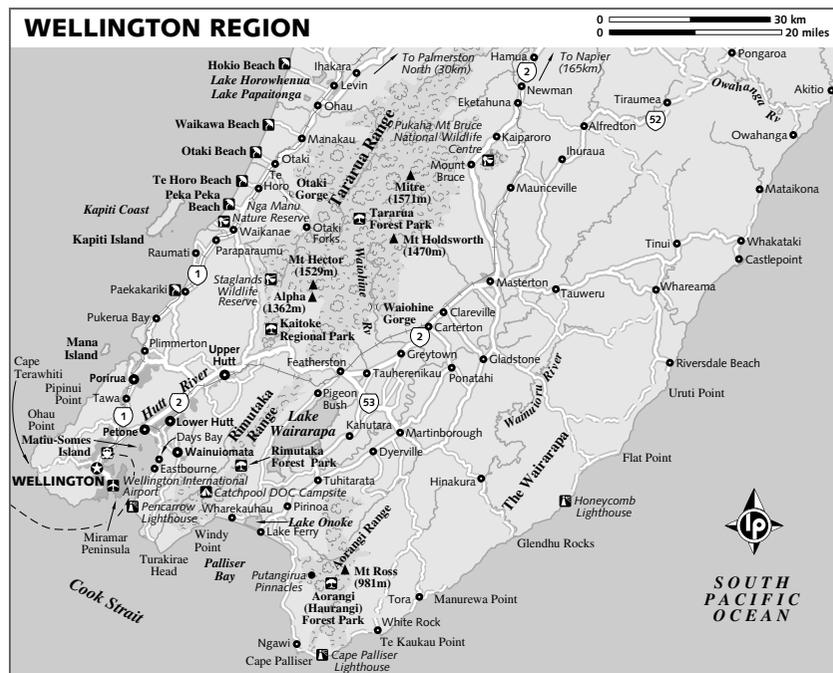
**Go Green** Check out rare and endangered NZ wildlife at Wellington's Karori Wildlife Sanctuary (p406)

home of NZ's dynamic film industry, earning itself the nickname 'Wollywood'. When the film crews hit town, the whole mood of the city lifts, and there's a palpable sparkle and boom in the air. Acclaimed director Peter Jackson still calls Wellington home; the success of his *Lord of the Rings* films and subsequent productions have made him a powerful Hollywood player, and have bolstered Wellington's reputation.

## HISTORY

Maori legend has it that the explorer Kupe was the first person to discover Wellington harbour. Wellington's original Maori name was Te Whanga Nui a Tara, Tara being the son of a Maori chief named Whatonga who had settled on the Hawkes Bay coast. Whatonga sent Tara and his half-brother to explore the southern part of the North Island. When they returned over a year later, their reports were so favourable that Whatonga's followers moved there, founding the Ngati Tara tribe.

The first European settlers arrived in the New Zealand Company's ship *Aurora* on 22 January 1840, not long after Colonel William Wakefield arrived to buy land from the Maori. The idea was to build two cities: one would be a commercial centre by the harbour (Port Nicholson) and the other, further north, would be the agricultural hub.



However, the Maori denied they had sold the land at Port Nicholson, or Poneke, as they called it, as it was founded on hasty and illegal buying by the New Zealand Company. Land rights struggles ensued – they were to plague the country for years, and still affect it today.

The city began as a settlement with very little flat land. Originally the waterfront was along Lambton Quay, but reclamation of parts of the

harbour began in 1852, and has continued ever since. In the 1850s Wellington was a thriving settlement of around 5000 people. In 1855 an earthquake razed part of Hutt Rd and the area from Te Aro flat to the Basin Reserve, which initiated the first major land reclamation.

In 1865 the seat of government was moved from Auckland to Wellington, due to its central location in the country.

### MAORI NZ: WELLINGTON REGION

In legend the mouth of Maui's Fish (see p56), and traditionally known as Te Whanga-Nui-a-Tara, the Wellington area became known to Maori in the mid-19th century as 'Poneke' (a transliteration of Port Nicholas, its European name at the time).

The major *iwi* (tribes) of the region in traditional times were Te Ati Awa ([www.whakarongotai.com](http://www.whakarongotai.com)) and Ngati Toa ([www.ngatittoa.iwi.nz](http://www.ngatittoa.iwi.nz)). Ngati Toa was the *iwi* of Te Rauparaha, who composed the now famous *Ka Mate haka* (see p59). Like most urban areas the city is now home to Maori from many *iwi*, sometimes collectively known as Ngati Poneke.

Wellington is home to the country's best-regarded museum, Te Papa (p405), where you'll find innumerable artefacts and displays on Maori culture, traditional and modern. History buffs can also see the Treaty of Waitangi (p34) at the National Archives (p405). For an authentic Maori meal, book a table at Kai in the City (p414). You might also want to visit **Pipitea Marae** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 1626; 55-59 Thorndon Quay; [pipiteamarae@xtra.co.nz](mailto:pipiteamarae@xtra.co.nz)) in downtown Wellington – a modern *marae* (meeting house) worth a look if you're waiting for the Bluebridge Ferry.

### WELLINGTON REGION IN...

#### Two Days

To get a feel for the lay of the Wellington land, drive up to **Mt Victoria** (p406), or ride the **Cable Car** (p405) up to the hilltop **Botanic Gardens** (p405). After lunch at a cool **Cuba St café** (p415), immerse yourself in all things Kiwi at **Te Papa** (p405) or the **Museum of Wellington City & Sea** (p404). Evening drinks at **Matterhorn** (p416) beckon.

The next day, fuel-up with brunch at **Cafe L'Affare** (p415) then head to a **wildlife sanctuary** (p406) to spy tuatara, or take a snoop around the **Beehive** (p407). For dinner try **Kai in the City** (p414) or **Pravda Café** (p414), then spend your evenings **bar-hopping** (p416) along Courtenay Pl. Nocturnal entertainment could involve live music, a midnight snack at a late-closing café, or a movie at the gloriously restored **Embassy Theatre** (p419) – or all three.

#### Four Days

Shake and bake the two-day itinerary, then decorate with the following: hightail it out of Wellington for some winery-touring around **Martinborough** (p427), followed by a seal-spotting safari along the wild **Cape Palliser** (p429). The next day, picnic in **Paekakariki** (p424) before taking a skinny-dip at one of the blissfully empty **Kapiti Coast beaches** (p423).

One blustery day back in 1968 the wind blew so hard it pushed the almost-new Wellington-Christchurch ferry *Wahine* onto Barrett's Reef just outside the harbour entrance. The disabled ship later broke loose from the reef, drifted into the harbour and slowly sank – 51 people drowned. The Museum of Wellington City & Sea (p404) has detailed information on this tragedy.

### ORIENTATION

The city congregates in the western corner of Wellington harbour, with the city suburbs clinging to the steep valleys and hills on all sides. Lambton Quay, the city's main business street, wriggles along parallel to the seafront (which it once was). The CBD stretches from the train station, at the northern end of Lambton Quay, southeast to Cambridge and Kent Tces. Thorndon, immediately north of the centre, is the historic area and embassy district.

The waterfront along Jervois Quay, Cable St and Oriental Pde is an increasingly revitalised area and houses Te Papa museum, Waitangi Park and a man-made beach. Queens Wharf has been redeveloped with restaurants, museums and a gallery. Oriental Pde is Wellington's premier seafront boulevard.

Cuba St (literate, arty types) and Courtenay Pl (young, drunken types) are the main night-life hotspots, while Willis St, Queens Wharf and Lambton Quay are peppered with eating, drinking and shopping opportunities.

The airport is 8km southeast of the city centre.

### Maps

Wellington's i-SITE visitors centre has free city maps, and sells more detailed maps and atlases.

The **Map Shop** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 1462; [www.mapshop.co.nz](http://www.mapshop.co.nz); 193 Vivian St; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) carries a range of NZ city and regional maps, plus topographic maps and GPS for trampers.

### INFORMATION Bookshops

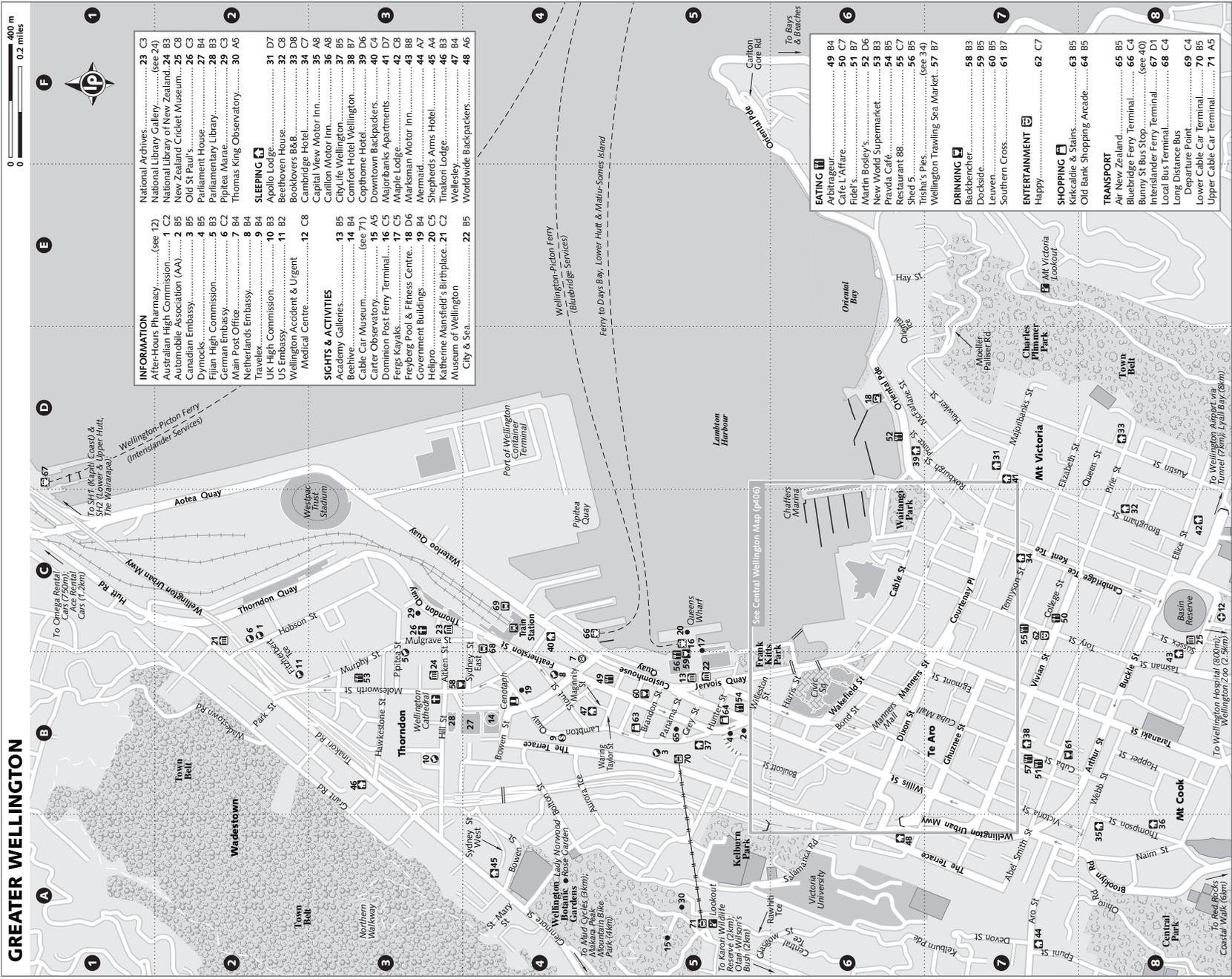
**Arty Bees Books** (Map p406; Courtenay Pl ☎ 04-385 1819; [www.artypees.co.nz](http://www.artypees.co.nz); 17 Courtenay Pl; Manners St ☎ 04-384 5339; The Oaks, Manners St; ☎ both stores 9am-9pm Mon-Thu, 9am-10pm Fri, 10am-10pm Sat, 11am-9pm Sun) Quality secondhand reads.

**Dymocks** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 2080; [www.dymocks.co.nz](http://www.dymocks.co.nz); 366 Lambton Quay; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-8pm Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) **Unity Books** (Map p406; ☎ 04-499 4245; [www.unitybooks.co.nz](http://www.unitybooks.co.nz); 57 Willis St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun) A Wellington institution, with an excellent fiction section, specialising in NZ literature.

**Whitcoulls** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 5240; [www.whitcoulls.co.nz](http://www.whitcoulls.co.nz); Courtenay Central, Courtenay Pl; ☎ 9am-10pm)

### Emergency

**Wellington Police Station** (Map p406; ☎ 04-381 2000; [www.police.govt.nz](http://www.police.govt.nz); cnr Victoria & Harris Sts; ☎ 24hr)



**INFORMATION**

After-Hours Pharmacy..... (see 12)  
 Australian High Commission..... 1 C2  
 Automobile Association (AA)..... 2 B5  
 Canadian Embassy..... 3 B5  
 Dymocks..... 4 B5  
 Filian High Commission..... 5 B3  
 German Embassy..... 6 C2  
 Main Post Office..... 7 B4  
 Netherlands Embassy..... 8 B4  
 Travelex..... 9 B4  
 US High Commission..... 10 B3  
 US Embassy..... 11 B2  
 Wellington Accident & Urgent..... 12 C8  
 Medical Centre..... C8

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

Academy Galleries..... 13 B5  
 Beehive..... 14 B4  
 Cable Car Museum..... (see 71)  
 Carter Observatory..... 15 A5  
 Dominion Post Ferry Terminal..... 16 C5  
 Fergs Kayaks..... 17 C5  
 Freyberg Pool & Fitness Centre..... 18 D6  
 Government Buildings..... 19 B4  
 Heliplo..... 20 C5  
 Katherine Mansfield's Birthplace..... 21 C2  
 Museum of Wellington City & Sea..... 22 B5

**SLEEPING**

Alpino Lodge..... 31 D7  
 Bopuena House..... 32 C8  
 Backpackers B&B..... 33 D8  
 Cambridge Hotel..... 34 C7  
 Capital View Motor Inn..... 35 A8  
 Carillon Motor Inn..... 36 A8  
 CityLife Wellington..... 37 B5  
 Comfort Hotel Wellington..... 38 B7  
 Copthorne Hotel..... 39 D6  
 Downtown Backpackers..... 40 C4  
 Majorbanks Apartments..... 41 D7  
 Maple Lodge..... 42 C8  
 Markman Motor Inn..... 43 B8  
 Mermaid..... 44 A7  
 Shepherds Arms Hotel..... 45 A4  
 Traknot Lodge..... 46 B3  
 Wellesley..... 47 B4  
 Worldwide Backpackers..... 48 A6

**EATING**

Archie's..... 49 B4  
 Cafe L'Affaire..... 50 C7  
 Fidele's..... 51 B7  
 Martin Bosley's..... 52 D6  
 New World Supermarket..... 53 B3  
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 Restaurant 88..... 55 C7  
 Shed 5..... 56 B5  
 Triha's Pies..... (see 34)  
 Wellington Trawling Sea Market..... 57 B7

**DRINKING**

Backbencher..... 58 B3  
 Dockside..... 59 B5  
 Leuven..... 60 B5  
 Southern Cross..... 61 B7

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Happy..... 62 C7

**SHOPPING**

Kirkcaldie & Stains..... 63 B5  
 Old Bank Shopping Arcade..... 64 B5

**TRANSPORT**

Air New Zealand..... 65 B5  
 Bluebird Ferry Terminal..... 66 C4  
 Bunny St Bus Stop..... (see D1)  
 Inland Ferry Terminal..... (see D1)  
 Inland Bus Terminal..... 68 C4  
 Long Distance Bus..... 69 C4  
 Departure Point..... 69 C4  
 Lower Cable Car Terminal..... 70 B5  
 Upper Cable Car Terminal..... 71 A5

GREATER WELLINGTON

WELLINGTON REGION

## Internet Access

Internet access rooms are plentiful; expect to pay around \$4 per hour.

**Cybernomad** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 5964; 43 Courtenay Pl; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Fri, 10am-11pm Sat & Sun)

**Cyber City** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 3717; 97-99 Courtenay Pl; ☎ 9am-11pm)

**iPlay** (Map p406; ☎ 04-494 0088; 1st fl, 49 Manners Mall; ☎ 24hr)

**Wellington i-SITE** (Map p406; ☎ 04-802 4860; www.wellingtonnz.com; Civic Sq, cnr Wakefield & Victoria Sts; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4.30pm Sat & Sun)

## Internet Resources

**Feeling Great** (www.feelinggreat.co.nz) Events, activities, courses and classes; run by the city council.

**Positively Wellington Tourism** (www.wellingtonnz.com) Official tourism website for the city.

**Texture** (www.texture.co.nz) Wellington nightlife, shopping and eating.

**Wotzon.com** (www.wotzon.com) Arts and events listings in Wellington and surrounds.

## Media

**Capital Times** (www.captimes.co.nz) Free weekly newspaper full of capital city happenings.

**Dominion Post** (www.stuff.co.nz) Online version of Wellington's newspaper, published Monday to Saturday.

**Wellington Guide** (www.theguide.co.nz) Online branch of the quarterly lifestyle magazine; restaurant and bar listings.

## Medical Services

**Wellington Accident & Urgent Medical Centre** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-384 4944; 17 Adelaide St, Newtown; ☎ 8am-11pm) No appointment necessary; onsite pharmacy.

**After-hours Pharmacy** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-384 4944; 17 Adelaide St, Newtown; ☎ 8am-11pm) At Wellington Accident & Urgent Medical Centre.

**Wellington Hospital** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-385 5999; www.cdhb.co.nz; Riddiford St, Newtown; ☎ 24hr) 1km south of the city centre.

## Money

Major banks have branches on Courtenay Pl, Willis St and Lambton Quay. Moneychangers include the following:

**City Stop** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 8669; 107 Manners St; ☎ 24hr) Convenience store that exchanges travellers cheques.

**Travellex** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 8346; www.travellex.com; 120 Lambton Quay; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat) Foreign-exchange office. Also has a branch at the airport.

## Post

**Main Post Office** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 501 501; www.nzpost.co.nz; cnr Whitmore St & Waterloo Quay; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat)

**Post Office** (Map p406; ☎ 0800 501 501; www.nzpost.co.nz; 43 Manners Mall; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat)

## Tourist Information

**Wellington Airport Information** (☎ 04-385 5100; www.wellington-airport.co.nz; 1st fl, Main Terminal; ☎ 8am-7pm) Info touch-screens.

**Automobile Association** (AA; Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-931 9999; www.aa.co.nz; 1st fl, 42-352 Lambton Quay; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat)

**DOC office** (Map p406; ☎ 04-472 7356; www.doc.govt.nz; 18 Manners St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3.30pm Sat) Information about walks, parks, outdoor activities and camping. Organise permits for Kapiti Island (p425) here.

**Wellington i-SITE** (Map p406; ☎ 04-802 4860; www.wellingtonnz.com; Civic Sq, cnr Wakefield & Victoria Sts; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4.30pm Sat & Sun; ☎) Official tourist information centre. Staff book almost everything, and cheerfully distribute the *Official Visitor Guide to Wellington*. Internet access and café.

## Travel Agencies

**STA Travel** (Map p406; ☎ 06-385 0561; www.statravel.co.nz; cnr Cuba & Ghunzee Sts; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat)

## SIGHTS Museums & Galleries

For an imaginative, interactive experience of Wellington's social and salty maritime history since Maori settlement, swing into the three-storey **Museum of Wellington City & Sea** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 8904; www.museumofwellington.co.nz; Queens Wharf; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm). Highlights include a moving documentary about the tragedy of the *Wahine* (see p399), and ancient Maori legends dramatically told using tiny hologram actors and special effects. The building itself is an old Bond Store dating from 1892.

Cricket buffs will be bowled over by the historical memorabilia at the **New Zealand Cricket Museum** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-385 6602; www.nzcricket.co.nz; Old Grandstand, Basin Reserve; adult/child \$5/2; ☎ 10.30am-3.30pm daily Nov-Apr, Sat & Sun May-Oct). Comprehensive displays cover the history and development of NZ cricket, including the sport's arrival in the colonies and NZ's first test match in 1894. The original 1743 Addington bat is a showstopper.

**City Gallery Wellington** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 3952; www.city-gallery.org.nz; Civic Sq, Wakefield St; admission by donation, charges may apply for major exhibits; ☎ 10am-5pm) presents regularly changing contemporary exhibitions of paintings, sculptures, photography and multimedia. NZ artists feature prominently, but international exhibitors also get a look-in. There's a decent café here too.

Showcasing Wellington's square-eyed dedication to film and TV, the **New Zealand Film Archive Mediaplex** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 7647; www.filmarchive.org.nz; cnr Taranaki & Ghunzee Sts; admission free, movie \$8; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Sat) is charged with collecting, protecting and connecting NZ's moving-image heritage. Mediaplex has an extensive collection of over 90,000 NZ films, TV shows and videos dating from 1895 to this year's sitcom. From Wednesday to Saturday, the cinema here screens treasures from the vault; call ☎ 04-499 3456 for a schedule.

Part of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, **Academy Galleries** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 8807; www.nzafa.com; 1 Queens Wharf; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) is an up-to-the-minute, international space for fine arts. When the gallery isn't exhibiting Academy graduates' work it's available for hire, and often shows work from around the planet.

The muscular grey concrete of the **National Library of New Zealand** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-474 3000; www.natlib.govt.nz; cnr Molesworth & Aitken Sts; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) houses the most comprehensive book collection in NZ. Also here is the Alexander Turnbull Library, an early colonial collection of historical books, maps, newspapers and photographs. The library regularly hosts cultural events, and the **National Library Gallery** (admission free;

☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4.30pm Sat, 1-4.30pm Sun) has changing exhibits.

One block away, the **National Archives** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 5595; www.archives.govt.nz; 10 Mulgrave St; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) is the official guardian of NZ's heritage documents. Inside are displays of significant national treasures, including the original Treaty of Waitangi (p34), NZ's founding document.

## Gardens & Lookouts

The expansive, hilltop **Wellington Botanic Gardens** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 1400; www.wellington.co.nz; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk) can be conveniently visited via a cable-car ride (nice bit of planning, eh?). The 25-hectare gardens feature protected native forest, conifers, specialised plant collections, floral displays and magical city views. Also here are a tea-house, visitors centre and the NZ headquarters of World Wide Fund for Nature, with information and displays. The gardens are also accessible from the Centennial Entrance on Tinakori Rd (take bus 3).

One of Wellington's prime attractions is the little red **Cable Car** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 2199; www.wellingtonnz.com/cablecar; one-way adult/child \$2.50/1, return \$4.50/2; ☎ every 10min, 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-10pm Sat, 9am-10pm Sun) that clinks up the steep slope from Lambton Quay to Kelburn. At the top are a café, the Wellington Botanic Gardens, two observatories and the small-but-nifty **Cable Car Museum** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-475 3578; www.cablecarmuseum.co.nz; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Nov-Apr, to 5pm May-Oct), which tells the cable car's story since it was built in 1902 to open up hilly Kelburn for development. Take

## TREASURES OF TE PAPA

**Te Papa** (Map p406; ☎ 04-381 7000; www.tepapa.govt.nz; 55 Cable St; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Wed & Fri-Sun, to 9pm Thu), the 'Museum of New Zealand', is an inspiring, interactive look at NZ's history and culture. Loosely (and affectionately) translated as 'Our Place', Te Papa dominates the Wellington waterfront and has become a national icon – an innovative celebration of the essence of NZ.

Among Te Papa's treasures is a huge Maori collection, including its own *marae*; dedicated hands-on 'discovery centres' for children; natural history and environment exhibitions; a re-creation of a European settlement; and contemporary art and culture. Exhibitions occupy impressive gallery spaces with a touch of high tech (eg a virtual bungee jump and a house shaking through an earthquake). Short-term changing exhibitions charge small admission fees.

You could spend a day exploring Te Papa but still not see it all. To target your areas of interest head to the information desk at level two. To get your bearings, the one-hour 'Introducing Te Papa' tour (\$10) is a good idea; return from the information desk at 10.15am and 2pm daily. Two cafés and an excellent gift shop round out the Te Papa experience.



### KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Often compared to Chekhov and Maupassant, Katherine Mansfield is NZ's most distinguished author, known throughout the world for her short stories.

Born Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp in 1888, she left Wellington at 19 for Europe, where she spent the rest of her short adult life. She mixed with Europe's most famous writers (DH Lawrence, TS Eliot, Virginia Woolf), and married the literary critic and author John Middleton Murry in 1918. In 1923, aged 34, she died of tuberculosis at Fontainebleau in France. It was not until 1945 that her five books of short stories (*In a German Pension*, *Bliss*, *The Garden Party*, *The Dove's Nest* and *Something Childish*) were combined into a single volume, *Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield*.

She spent five years of her childhood at 25 Tinakori Rd in Wellington; it's mentioned in her stories *Prelude* and *A Birthday* (a fictionalised account of her own birth). The house now opens its doors as **Katherine Mansfield's Birthplace** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-473 7268; www.katherinemansfield.com; 25 Tinakori Rd; adult/child \$5.50/2; ♿ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun), and is lovingly restored and maintained with a restful heritage garden. The excellent video *A Portrait of Katherine Mansfield* screens here and the 'Sense of Living' exhibition displays photographs of the period alongside excerpts from her writing. A doll's house has been constructed from details in the short story of the same name. The No 14 Wilton bus stops nearby.

in 1866, and it still looks good-as-new from the outside. The striking interior is a stellar example of early English Gothic timber work, with magnificent stained-glass windows and displays on Wellington's early history.

### Harbour Ferries

Locals have been jumping on the ferry and tripping across Wellington Harbour for a swim at Days Bay for decades. Book a seat on the **Dominion Post Ferry** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 1282; www.eastbywest.co.nz; Queens Wharf; return fare adult/child \$17/9; ♿ 6.15am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9.15am-5pm Sat & Sun), departing from Queens Wharf 15 times daily on weekdays, and eight times daily on weekends. It's a 30- to 40-minute chug over to **Days Bay**, where there are beaches, a park and a boatshed with canoes and rowboats for hire. A 10-minute walk from Days Bay leads to **Eastbourne**, a beachy township with cafés and picnic spots.

At least three Days Bay ferries per day also stop at **Matiu-Somes Island** (return fare adult/child \$18.50/10), a former prisoner-of-war camp and quarantine station. Now a reserve managed by DOC, the humpbacked island offers walking trails, beaches and a squabble of bird life. Take a picnic lunch.

On weekends the Dominion Post Ferry also runs between Queens Wharf and Petone Wharf on the Esplanade in Lower Hutt (one-way adult/child \$8.50/4.50, 20 minutes, two daily Saturday and Sunday), also calling at Matiu-Somes Island.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Cycling & Mountain Biking

Hilly Wellington isn't really cut out for cyclists, but not far away is **Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park** (www.makarapeak.org.nz), a council-run park in the hills of Karori, 4km west of the city centre. The main entrance is on South Karori Rd – catch bus 3 or 18. Laced through the 200-hectare park are 20km of bike tracks ranging from beginner to expert. **Mud Cycles** (off Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-476 4961; www.mudcycles.co.nz; 338 Karori Rd, Karori; half-/full-day/weekend bike hire \$30/45/70; ♿ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri) has mountain bikes for hire, is close to the park, and also runs guided tours catering for all levels.

**Penny Farthing Cycles** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 2279; www.pennyfarthing.co.nz; 89 Courtenay Pl; day/week bike hire \$50/150; ♿ 8am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 8pm Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) stocks a full range of bicycles and natty spandex gear, and can help with info on local clubs and trails.

#### Walking

If Wellington has a peak hour, it's along Oriental Pde at lunchtime (BYO jogging shorts and spray-on sweat), where business bods and glam locals strut their stuff. Other curious places worth exploring on foot include Thorndon, one of Wellington's oldest districts (pick up the *Thorndon Walk* brochure from the i-SITE), and Aro Valley, an old hippie enclave centred along hip Aro St and Holloway Rd, where improbably small houses crowd over the valley slopes.

See Tours (p410) for guided Wellington walks.

The wild-and-woolly **Red Rocks Coastal Walk** (off Map pp402-3; 8km return, two to three hours), 7km south of the city, follows the tumultuous volcanic coast from Owiro Bay through Te Kopahou Reserve to Red Rocks and Sinclair Head, where there's a seal colony. Take bus 4 to Owiro Bay Pde, then it's 1km to the quarry gate where the walk starts.

#### Other Stuff

With all this wind and water, Wellington is built for **sailboarding** and **kiteboarding** – sheltered inlets, rough harbours and wave-pummelled coastal areas are all within 30-minutes' drive of the city. **Wild Winds** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 1010; www.wildwinds.co.nz; Chaffers Marina, Oriental Bay; ♿ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun) runs two-hour sailboarding lessons for beginners from \$95, and three-hour kiteboarding lessons from \$175. Prices include equipment but not transport.

At the long-running **Fergs Kayaks** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-449 8898; www.fergskayaks.co.nz; Shed 6, Queens Wharf; ♿ 9am-8pm, to 6pm Sat & Sun) you can punish your tendons with indoor rock climbing (adult/child \$15/9), cruise the waterfront on a pair of inline skates (\$15 for two hours) or paddle around the harbour in a kayak (from \$15 for one hour). There's also a range of guided kayaking trips.

Gnarly surf rolls in from the ocean at **Lyal Bay** near the airport (though it's often too choppy or too small), and **Palliser Bay** (p429) en route to Cape Palliser, southeast of Wellington. The i-SITE can help with fishing and diving charter info.

**Freyberg Pool & Fitness Centre** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-801 4530; www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz; 139 Oriental Pde; adult/child \$5/3; ♿ 6am-9pm) has a heated indoor pool for lap swimming, plus a spa, sauna and gym (casual gym session \$18).

For something more dramatic, try the reverse **Bungy Rocket** (Map p406; ☎ 0800 932 8649; cnr Taranaki St & Courtenay Pl; per person \$40; ♿ noon-late), where you're strapped into a capsule-like contraption attached to a huge rubber band and slung into the air at disquieting speed (best attempted *before* a meal).

### WALKING TOUR

Kick-start your Wellington wander by admiring (or deploring, depending on your aesthetics) the modernist **Beehive** (1; p407), then head east along Bowen St and cross Lambton

Quay to the **Government Buildings** (2; p407) – yes indeed, they're timber, not stone.

Truck south along Lambton Quay, aka the 'Golden Mile' for all its retail revelry. Wink at the doorman as you enter elegant **Kirkcaldie & Stains** (3; p419). If you haven't done it yet, detour up Cable Car La and crank up the hillside on the **Cable Car** (4; p405), or continue along Lambton Quay and splash some cash at the Edwardian **Old Bank Shopping Arcade** (5; p419). Turn right onto Willis St then left at Mercer St, continuing along Wakefield St to Civic Square: book some theatre tickets at the **Wellington i-SITE** (6; p404), duck into the **City Gallery Wellington** (7; p405) or, if you've got the kids in tow, see what's cookin' at **Capital E** (8; p410).

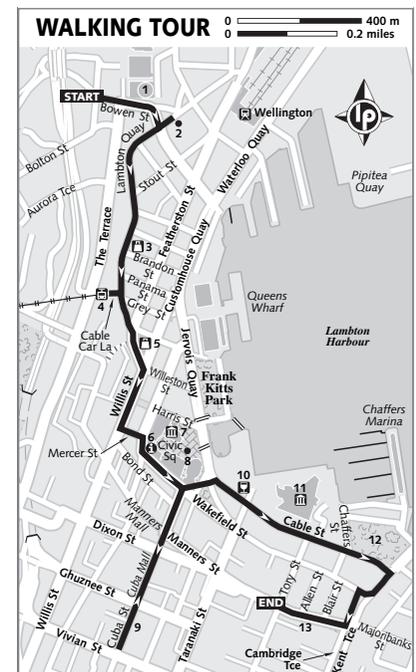
#### WALK FACTS

**Start** Beehive

**Finish** Courtenay Pl

**Distance** 3km

**Duration** Two hours to one day, depending on stops



From Civic Square, head south for a cruise up and down **Cuba St (9)**: bars, boutiques and coffee shops in the hip heart of the city. Back at Civic Square take the City to Sea footbridge to the waterfront and stroll past the boatsheds to **Mac's Brewery Bar & Restaurant (10)**; p417) for a quick tippie of Hop Rocker or Mac's Black. Suitably refreshed, it's time to tackle **Te Papa (11)**; p405). You could easily spend a day here, but once you've reached your museum maximum, pull up a patch of grass at **Waitangi Park (12)**, of hurl yourself into the evening fray on Courtenay Pl (13).

## WELLINGTON FOR CHILDREN

With ankle biters in tow, your best bet is a visit to colourful **Capital E** (Map p406; ☎ 04-913 3720; www.capitale.org.nz; Civic Sq; events free-\$60; ☎ 9am-5pm), an educational entertainment complex designed especially for kids. Expect interactive rotating exhibitions, children's theatre and TV, readings, workshops and courses. Call or check the website for the events calendar and prices.

**Te Papa** (p405) is not just for grown-ups; the Discovery Centres here are loaded with interactive activities, and StoryPlace is designed for children five and under. See the dedicated Kids page on the website for more details. Along the waterfront on either side of Te Papa are **Frank Kitts Park** and **Waitangi Park**, both with playgrounds perfect for expending pent-up energy.

A ride up the **Cable Car** (p405) and a lap around the **Botanic Gardens** (p405) will pump plenty of fresh air into young lungs, and when darkness descends head to the **Carter Observatory** (p406) where kids can gaze at galaxies far, far away. Of a more terrestrial bent, check out some living dinosaurs (aka tuatara) at the **Wellington Zoo** (p407) or **Karori Wildlife Sanctuary** (p406).

For online ideas, have a look at www.feelinggreat.co.nz, operated by the city council, and follow the Young People links for a rundown on events and courses targeted at young 'uns.

## TOURS

**Flat Earth** (☎ 0800 775 805, 04-977 5805; www.flat-earth.co.nz; full-day tours \$120-220) An excellent array of themed small-group tours (city highlights, Maori treasures, food, arts and Middle-earth filming locations), but they come at a premium.

**Hammonds Scenic Tours** (☎ 04-472 0869; www.wellingtonsightseeingtours.com; city tour adult/child \$50/25,

Kapiti Coast \$80/40, Wairarapa \$165/82.50; ☎ city tours depart 10am & 2pm, Kapiti 9am & 1.30pm, Wairarapa 8.30am) Runs a 2½-hour city highlights tour, four-hour tour of the Kapiti Coast, and a full-day Wairarapa experience, which includes Cape Palliser.

**Helipro** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 1550; www.helipro.co.nz; Shed 1, Queens Wharf; 8/15/20/35min flights per person \$95/150/210/350) Scenic helicopter flights and heli-lunch trips to Marlborough.

**Walk Wellington** (☎ 04-802 4860; www.walk.wellington.net.nz; adult/child \$20/10; ☎ tours 10am daily, plus 5.30pm Mon, Wed & Fri Nov-Mar) Informative two-hour walking tours focussing on the city and waterfront, departing the i-SITE. Booking not required – just turn up!

**Wellington Movie Tours** (☎ 027 419 3077; www.movietours.co.nz; tours from adult/child \$40/30) Three-to 7½-hour tours for the real movie fiends – more *LOTR* and *King Kong* than you can point a lens at. Confirm pick-up locations when booking.

**Wellington Rover** (☎ 021 426 211; www.wellingtonrover.co.nz; day pass adult/child \$40/25; ☎ departs i-SITE 9am, 11.30am & 2.30pm) A popular 2½-hour tour with a hop-on/hop-off option, visiting places that are tricky to reach without a car (Mt Victoria, south coast beaches, Red Rocks seal colony). Also offers 'Adventure Wairarapa' tours (per person \$195) and the 'Rover Ring Tour' (adult/child \$150/80), a *LOTR* tour complete with fake pointy Hobbit ears.

**Wild About Wellington** (☎ 0274 419 010; www.wildaboutwellington.co.nz; tours per person from \$85) Small-group fashion, sight-seeing, chocolate, beer and kid-focussed tours, from full-day to a few hours.

**Zest Food Tours** (☎ 04-801 9198; www.zestfoodtours.co.nz; tours from \$99) 2½- to 5½-hour small-group city food tours that seem pricey but include an excellent multi-course tasting lunch at a top restaurant. Also Wairarapa food and wine tours (full-day from \$195).

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Check at the i-SITE or visit www.wellingtonnz.com/events for comprehensive festival listings; most tickets can be booked through Ticketek (p417).

### January/February

**Summer City Festival** (☎ 04-499 4444; www.feelinggreat.co.nz) A two-month celebration of summer that begins on New Year's Eve and includes countless free outdoor events.

### February

**New Zealand International Sevens** (NZI Sevens; ☎ 04-389 0020; www.sevens.co.nz) The world's top seven-a-side rugby teams compete over the first weekend of February and the fans descend.

**Cuba St Carnival** (☎ 04-801 9390; www.cubacarnival.org.nz) NZ's largest street carnival, held in late February every odd-numbered year. Food, music and arts.

### February/March

**New Zealand International Arts Festival** (☎ 04-473 0149; www.nzfestival.nzpost.co.nz) A month-long biennial spectacular (held in even-numbered years) celebrating theatre, dance, music and visual arts. International acts aplenty.

**Fringe NZ** (☎ 04-382 8015; www.fringe.org.nz) More than three weeks of way-out-there experimental visual arts, music, dance and theatre.

### July/August

**International Film Festival** (☎ 04-384 3840; www.enzedff.co.nz) Two-week indie film fest screening the best of NZ and international cinema.

### September

**World of WearableArt Award Show** (WOW; ☎ 0800 4969 746; www.worldofwearableart.com) A bizarre (in the best possible way) two-week event featuring amazing garments. Read more about WOW on p464.

### November

**Toast Martinborough** (☎ 06-306 9183; www.toastmartinborough.co.nz) Wine-swalling Wellingtonians head to Martinborough for a day of indulgence. See also p428.

## SLEEPING

Typically, Wellington accommodation is more expensive than in regional areas. Our price listings for the city fall into the following categories: Budget – doubles (with or without bathroom) for under \$100; Midrange – doubles (with bathroom) between \$101 and \$200; Top End – over \$201. Accommodation standards here are generally high, and there are great places to stay right in, or within easy walking distance of, the city centre. One hassle is the lack of parking; if you have your own wheels, ask about where to park when you make a reservation (and be aware you'll probably have to pay for it). Sleeping reviews in this chapter feature a 'P' symbol if onsite parking is available.

Wellington's budget accommodation takes the form of either immaculate multistorey hostel megaliths, or grungy suburban houses, many of which are pretty weary – there's not much in between. There's no 'motel alley' in Wellington, but motels are scattered around the city fringe. Wellington is primarily a business destination, so self-contained apartments

are popular, and hotel rates drop dramatically (up to half-price) on weekends.

During the peak season (December to February), or during major festivals, book your bed well in advance.

## Budget

### HOSTELS

**Nomads Capital** (Map p406; ☎ 0508 666 237, 04-978 7800; www.nomadscapital.com; 118 Wakefield St; dm \$23-29, d with bathroom from \$85; ☎ ) Nomads occupies a formerly derelict building near the i-SITE. There's good security, spick-and-span rooms, an on-site café-bar (free basic nightly meals) and discounts for longer stays. Kitchen and lounge spaces are short on elbow room, but heritage features (such as the amazing stairwell) stop you dwelling on the negatives.

**Wellwood Backpackers** (Map p406; ☎ 0508 005 858, 04-381 3899; www.wellwoodbackpackers.co.nz; 58 Tony St; dm \$25-27, s \$50, tw & d with/without bathroom \$75/65; ☎ ) You'd have to be a zookeeper not to be impressed by this huge zebra-striped building off Courtenay Pl. Rooms are spacious, with weathered retro furniture dotted throughout the place, and unisex bathroom basins in the corridors – very social! Rock music wails over the speakers in communal areas (except the reading room); staff are downright amiable.

**Base Backpackers** (Map p406; ☎ 0800 227 369, 04-801 5666; www.basebackpackers.com; 21-23 Cambridge Tce; dm \$25-28, d & tr with bathroom from \$85; ☎ ) A slick chain hostel aimed squarely at young hedonists. The location is party-perfect (metres from Courtenay Pl), rooms are fresh and modern, and the female-only floor will come as a relief to some. Bag yourself a bunkmate at the Basement Bar downstairs. The only gripe: the kitchen and lounge are tiny given the hostel's 200-plus beds. Parking \$10 per day.

**Maple Lodge** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-385 3771; fax 04-938 5194; 52 Ellice St; dm/s \$26/45, tw & d \$62; ☎ ) Popular with soloists, Maple Lodge is a grungy option not far from Basin Reserve, with decent doubles and small dorms upstairs, and not-so-decent ones in the basement (dank, with nasturtiums growing in through the bathroom windows). There's no TV, but there's chilled-out music, board games and conversation. Limited free parking is a saving grace.

**Rosemere Backpackers** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 3041; www.backpackerswellington.co.nz; 6 MacDonald Cres; dm/s/tw/d incl breakfast \$27/50/62/66; ☎ ) A colour-spangled former brothel a short (steep!) walk uphill from the city centre. Free internet and

linen, and a couple of tent sites on the tiny lawn out the front. Happy vibe; international cast and crew.

**Worldwide Backpackers** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0508 888 555, 04-802 5590; www.worldwidenz.co.nz; 291 The Terrace; dm \$27, tw & d \$66; 📍) In a 100-year-old house, Worldwide is the most appealing small hostel in town. Clean and homely, with winning features like free internet and breakfast, regular barbecues, nautical reading lamps and wine in the evenings. It's down-to-earth and chilled.

**our pick** **YHA Wellington City** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 7280; www.yha.co.nz; cnr Cambridge Tce & Wakefield St; dm \$27-30, tw & d with/without bathroom \$94/70, f with bathroom \$114; 📍) These guys know how to hostel. Despite hot competition around town, YHA Welly wins points for the biggest and best communal areas: superior kitchens, cavernous dining areas (group dinner nights are a blast), a games room, a reading room and a dedicated movie room with hi-tech projector (the staff's pride and joy). Sustainable initiatives (recycling, composing and energy-efficient hot water) impress, and you can also book anything you need from here with zero fuss.

**Moana Lodge** (☎ 04-233 2010; www.moana lodge.co.nz; 49 Moana Rd, Plimmerton; dm \$28-31, tw & d \$60-74; 📍) OK, so it's not technically *in* Wellington, but Moana is just a short train ride away in Plimmerton, 25km from Welly off SH1. An exceptional backpackers guest-house right on the beach, it's immaculate and inviting, with friendly owners superkeen to infuse you with their local expertise. Kayaks and golf clubs available; occasional boat trips to Mana Island. From Wellington catch the Tranz Metro Paraparaumu train to Plimmerton.

Other serviceable city hostels:

**Downtown Backpackers** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 225 725, 04-473 8482; www.downtownbackpackers.co.nz; 1 Bunny St; dm \$24, s \$58-68, tw & d \$56-85; 📍) Grand old Art Deco hostel with plenty of character (check out the Maori carvings on the fireplace!). Opposite the train station; budget meals available.

**Beethoven House** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-939 4678; www.bbh.co.nz; 89 Brougham St; dm \$24, tw & d \$60; 📍) A beaut old Victorian house set above the street, Beethoven is strewn with old pianos, harpsichords and framed poetic musings. Not the cleanest joint, but twins and doubles are more than decent.

## HOTELS & MOTELS

**Cambridge Hotel** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 375 021, 04-385 8829; www.cambridgehotel.co.nz; 28 Cambridge Tce;

dm \$23-25, s/d/tw \$59/75/75, s/d/tw/tr/f with bathroom \$85/95/99/115/125; 📍) Top-quality pub accommodation at affordable prices in a noble heritage hotel. En-suite rooms have Sky TV, phone and fridge (try for a room at the back if you're a light sleeper). The backpacker wing has a well-stocked kitchen, luxurious bathrooms and sky-high ceilings. Cheap bar meals are another plus.

**Halswell Lodge** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 0196; www.halswell.co.nz; 21 Kent Tce; hotel r \$80, units \$135-160; 📍) Doggone handy to all the central sights without being too noisy, Tudor-esque Halswell has a few options, including small, affordable hotel rooms with TV, fridge and private bathroom. The upmarket lodge suites with spa are a better option for splurging couples; families pile into the two-bedroom motel units.

**Carillon Motor Inn** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-384 8795; www.carillon.co.nz; 33 Thompson St; s/d/tw/tr \$86/90/110/139; 📍) Wow, what a relic! Carillon is a rickety old Victorian mansion that's somehow evaded the wrecking ball, developers' ambitions and renovators' brush strokes. Endearing, old-fashioned and chaotic in a *Fawlty Towers* kind of way, it's clean, central and the cheapest motel in town by a long shot.

## CAMPING

Campsites are as rare as bad coffee in Wellington. Rosemere Backpackers (see earlier) can accommodate a few tents, or head to Hutt Valley (p423). There's also a DOC campsite with hot showers called **Catchpool** (Map p400; adult/child \$8/4) in the Rimutaka Forest Park, 10km south of Wainuiomata.

## Midrange

### GUESTHOUSES & B&BS

**Mermaid** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-384 4511; www.mermaid.co.nz; 1 Epuni St; s80-125, d \$90-140) In the über-cool Aro Valley 'hood, Mermaid is a small women-only guesthouse in a lavishly restored villa. Each room is individually themed with artistic flair (one with private bathroom, three with shared facilities). White robes and fluffy towels are luxurious, and there's a guest kitchen, lounge and deck area. The owners also have a self-contained apartment nearby (\$160).

**Tinakori Lodge** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 939 347, 04-939 3478; www.tinakorilodge.co.nz; 182 Tinakori Rd; s \$99-120, tw & d \$140-170; 📍) Built in 1868 from native timbers, Tinakori is central to stylin' Thorndon, but is a bit too close to the freeway for com-

plete comfort. Still, once you're inside you won't worry about the road, and the rooms are surprisingly stylish for such an old timer (five with en suites; four with shared facilities). Rates include breakfast; free street parking permits for guests.

**Booklovers B&B** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-384 2714; www.bbnb.co.nz; 123 Pirie St; s/d from \$150/180; 📍) Booklovers is a gracious old hillside B&B run by award-winning NZ author Jane Tolerton (her books are among the thousands festooned around the house). Four guest rooms have sweeping views, TV, CDs and CD player; three with en suites, one with private bathroom. Bus 2 runs from the front gate to Courtenay Pl and the train station, and the city's 'green belt' begins right next door. Free wireless internet and limited parking.

## HOTELS

**Shepherds Arms Hotel** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 393 782, 04-472 1320; www.shepherds.co.nz; 285 Tinakori Rd; s without bathroom \$75-85, d with bathroom \$129; 📍) Tinakori Rd in age-old Thorndon is a real locals' spot – great for walking-browsing-eating, with a village vibe. Augmented by the restaurant and bar downstairs, the character-filled rooms at the old Shepherds Arms pub seamlessly morph the old and the new. Shell out a few extra dollars for a larger room.

**Comfort Hotel Wellington** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 873 553, 04-385 2153; www.comfortwellington.com; 213 Cuba St; d \$150; 📍) We stayed in this place back when it was a dingy backpackers – my, how things have changed... Renovated to within an inch of its identity, the Comfort now sports small, modern en-suite rooms, with TV, phone, iron, hairdryer etc. Online deals can see prices drop below \$100 – great value for the heart-of-Cuba location.

**Copthorne Hotel** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 782 548, 04-385 0279; www.millenniumhotels.co.nz/copthorneentailbay; 100 Oriental Pde; d \$180-250; 📍) An upmarket operation on ritzy Oriental Pde, with global newspapers strategically placed through the lobby. It's split into two wings: the Bay wing has larger rooms with harbour views, the Roxburgh wing has smaller rooms with street views – the upgrade is worth it. Parking \$20 per day.

## MOTELS

**Apollo Lodge** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 361 645, 04-385 1849; www.apollolodge.co.nz; 49 Majoribanks St; d \$135-175; 📍) Within staggering distance of Courtenay Pl,

Apollo Lodge is a loose collation of 35 motel units (one and two bedroom), ranging from old-school self-contained studios to slick architecturally-designed suites. They also run Majoribanks Apartments across the street (sleeping up to four), with weekly rates from around \$600.

**Victoria Court** (Map p406; ☎ 04-472 4297; www.victoria court.co.nz; 201 Victoria St; r \$145-200; 📍) Our top motel choice, right in the city centre, with plenty of parking. The affable owners offer spotless, stylish studios and apartments with spas, cooking facilities, suede couches, slick blonde-wood joinery and new TVs. Two disabled-access units; larger units sleep six.

Other city options:

**Capital View Motor Inn** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 438 505, 04-385 0515; www.capitalview.co.nz; 12 Thompson St; d \$115; 📍) Max the cross-eyed cat greets you at the Capital View, a cream-and-yellow motel tower overlooking the city. Most rooms do indeed have capital views.

**Marksman Motor Inn** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-385 2499; www.marksmanmotel.co.nz; 40-44 Sussex St; units \$115-200; 📍) Clean, comfortable studios and apartments across from Basin Reserve. Can be a tad noisy, but handy for airport runs (or the cricket).

## Top End

**CityLife Wellington** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 368 888, 04-922 2800; www.citylifewellington.nz-hotels.com; 300 Lambton Quay; d Mon-Thu/Fri-Sun from \$200/150; 📍) Guest-spoiling serviced apartments in the city centre, ranging from studios to three-bedroom arrangements. Features include wireless internet, full kitchen, CD and video player, and in-room laundry facilities. Weekend rates are great bang for your buck. The vehicle entrance is from Gilmer Tce, off Boulcott St (limited free parking).

**Wellesley** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-474 1308; www.thewellesley.co.nz; 2-8 Maginnity St; r Mon-Thu/Fri-Sun from \$250/175) A stately CBD choice with buckets of old-world charm and impeccable service. Formerly a gentlemen's club, the Wellesley retains a refined vibe that makes you want to whisper. There are only 13 rooms, bedecked with original art, antiques and claw-foot baths. First-rate guest facilities include a gym, sauna, billiards room, superb guest lounge and restaurant. Sit back with a cigar and remember the Raj.

**Museum Hotel** (Map p406; ☎ 0800 944 335, 04-802 8900; www.museumhotel.co.nz; 90 Cable St; r & apt Mon-Thu \$190-325, Fri-Sun \$150-325; 📍) Sometimes called 'Museum Hotel de Wheels' (to make

way for Te Papa, it was rolled here from its original location 120m away), the Museum is a quirky, boutique affair. Eclectic décor (chandeliers, abstract art), sassy staff and rowdy Tom Jones blaring through the lobby make a refreshing change from homogenised business hotels. Tasty weekend and weekly rates.

## EATING

Eating in Wellington is an absolute joy, with a global array of cuisines peppered throughout the city. Cuba St is the main hunting ground for a café feed, and Courtenay Pl also has plenty of takeaways, food-focussed bars and restaurants. Predictably, most of the quality seafood restaurants adhere to the city's waterfront. You'll pay more for a fine dining experience here than in regional areas, but the sheer weight of budget options balances the ledger. Amazingly, Wellington boasts more cafés per capita than New York City.

## Restaurants

**Chow** (Map p406; ☎ 04-382 8585; Level 1, 45 Tory St; mains \$9-18; ☎ noon-midnight) Chow-down at chow, a stylish eatery-bar serving pan-Asian cuisine (manuka-smoked eel rolls, barbecue teriyaki squid) amid '70s decor: spiky plants, retro chairs and low-hanging orange lamps. There's weekend yum cha and \$12 lunch deals. The hip bar Motel is adjacent.

**our pick** **Sweet Mothers Kitchen** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 444; 5 Courtenay Pl; mains \$10-25; ☎ 8am-late Mon-Sat) Eternally busy (it's a wonder anywhere else on Courtenay Pl has any customers), Sweet Mothers serves victuals and chitins from the Deep South, just like momma used to make. Try a New Orleans po' boy, a breakfast burrito or some *huevos rancheros* (ranch-style eggs). Expect clusters of chilli sauce bottles on 1950s tables, Elvis crooning and much conversation.

**Tulsi** (Map p406; ☎ 04-802 4144; 135 Cuba St; mains \$13-17; ☎ 11.30am-late) The seductive waft of incense lures you into this big, bright, contemporary Indian joint with the best butter chicken in Wellington. Choose your spice level from mild, medium, 'Kiwi hot' or 'Indian hot'. Lunch deals are excellent.

**One Red Dog** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 9777; 9 Blair St; mains \$15-27; ☎ 10am-late) 'Some days you're the dog, some days you're the hydrant.' Ponder life's deeper issues as you launch into cocktails, boutique beers, antipasto platters and gourmet pizzas, pastas, calzones and salads.

**Floriditas** (Map p406; ☎ 04-381 2212; 161 Cuba St; mains \$17-25; ☎ 9am-10pm) From the outside this is one of Cuba St's loveliest buildings, and the interior is just as fine, with an old-world European feel helped along by velvet drapes and paisley wallpaper and peacock feathers. Quality bistro fare.

**Restaurant 88** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-385 9088; 88 Tory St; lunch \$14-16, dinner \$18-28; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm Thu-Sun, 5.30pm-late Thu-Sun) Beyond the rickety green rickshaw on the footpath, a mod-Vietnamese menu awaits. Try some wok-flushed prawns with chilli and lime, or some Hanoi pork and prawn noodles in a spiced tamarind broth. It's a tropical-flavoured space highlighted with wooden screens, plants and lanterns.

**Arbitrageur** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 5530; 125 Featherston St; mains \$18-32; ☎ 11.30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 5-10pm Sat) A polished operator, with a colour-coding system matching your classic European meal with a selection from the extensive wine selection. Sophisticated but affordable, with live jazz on Friday and Saturday night. The only thing worth arguing about is how to pronounce the name...

**Flying Burrito Brothers** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 8811; cnr Cuba & Vivian Sts; mains \$19-28; ☎ 4.30pm-late; V) Let it all hang out in this chilli-infused Tex-Mex cantina. Quesadillas, tortillas, tacos and tostadas laced with avocado and chilli, plus *bocaditos* (small bites, like tapas) and a kids menu too. A few tequila shots or an icy margarita will get your night pumping.

**Café Bastille** (Map p406; ☎ 04-382 9559; 16 Majoribanks St; mains \$23-30; ☎ 5.30pm-1am Mon-Sat) An unpretentious, cherry-coloured French restaurant with an emphasis on local produce, an expansive wine list, Art Nouveau posters and knowledgeable staff. Try an enduring fave like *coq au vin* then finish with orange-caramel crepes. No bookings, so arrive early or expect to wait.

**Kai in the City** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 5006; 21 Majoribanks St; mains \$23-30; ☎ 5.30pm-late Mon-Sat) A wee, Maori-run restaurant with a welcoming atmosphere and delicious Maori-fusion food. The glossary will help you pick your *heihei* (chicken) from your *kuku* (mussels), or try a feast from the *hangi* (ember oven dug into the ground) and some Tohu Wines (a Maori-owned winery). The owner regularly warbles Maori songs with his guitar.

**Pravda Café** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 5570; 107 Customhouse Quay; mains \$24-30; ☎ 7.30am-late Mon-Fri, 9am-late Sat) Another opulent downtown din-

ing space (far from a café by the Wellington definition), scoring well with readers and folks that hand out culinary excellence awards. It's a split-level, quasi-USSR interior, serving well-assembled duck, chicken, fish and NZ lamb mains. Fantastic desserts and coffee.

**Martin Bosley's** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-920 8302; 103 Oriental Pde; mains \$28-42; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 6-11pm Tue-Sat) Swish fish. The prices (and most certainly the harbour views) should leave you in no doubt that this is one of Wellington's finest restaurants. Everything is top quality, from the elegant interior and polished service to the seafood-loaded menu.

**Shed 5** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-916 4235; Shed 5, Queens Wharf; bar menu \$13-23, mains \$33-72; ☎ noon-late Mon-Fri, 10am-late Sat & Sun) Yes, it's a big cornflower-yellow shed, but it sure is classy! Sharp-dressed, clean-shaven staff glide between tables, taking hushed orders and delivering plates of steamed fish, Alaskan crab and prime steak cuts. Sit inside under the lofty rafters, or on the sunny waterside deck. Dress up nice.

**Logan-Brown** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-801 5114; 192 Cuba St; lunch \$38, dinner mains \$37-45; ☎ noon-2pm Mon-Fri, 6-9.30pm nightly) Despite the neighbouring sex shops, cavernous L-B oozes class – perfect for an 'I-love-you' dinner. It's inside a 1920s banking chamber, but you don't have to break the bank to eat here: lunch and pre-theatre set menus (\$38, out by 7.30pm) are top value. Love the fish-tank bar and brass wine-rack ladder. Try the paua ravioli.

**Citron** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 6263; 270 Willis St; 4-10-course menu \$78/110; ☎ 6.30pm-10pm Tue-Sat) Citron is the new star of Wellington's culinary galaxy. It's unassuming from the outside – a tiny lemon-coloured weatherboard house near the freeway – but the minute you sit down you'll realise what a treat you're in for. Degustation menus include the likes of black pudding tart with celeriac remoulade, apple and red wine jus, and aged beef fillet with manuka shin and porcini ragout. Intimate, gourmet fine dining for serious foodies.

## Cafés

**Midnight Espresso** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 7014; 178 Cuba St; meals \$5-14; ☎ 8am-midnight; V) Funky Cuba St stalwart serving food till about 2am – ideal for paper-reading, coffee-drinking and philosophising. Chew on primarily vegetarian and vegan food among hessian-sack art and

metal sculptures. Try the 'hashstuck' (nothing to do with hashish).

**EspressoHolic** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 7790; 128 Courtenay Pl; meals \$5-20; ☎ 7.30am-midnight Sun-Thu, to 3am Fri & Sat) A serious proponent of caffeine addiction is this grungy bunker, strewn with chipped black tables, rock posters and graffiti art. Insomniacs fail to improve their circumstance (its open till midnight or later), distracting themselves with salads, nachos and burgers, cool tunes and the courtyard.

**Aunty Mena's Vegetarian Café** (Map p406; ☎ 04-382 8288; 167 Cuba St; meals \$9-14; ☎ 5.30-9.30pm Sun & Mon, 11.30am-9.30pm Tue & Wed, 11.30am-10pm Thu-Sat; V) One of many Cuba St noodle houses, cheap 'n' cheerful Aunty Mena's plates up veggie/vegan Malaysian and Chinese dishes to shoestring students and travellers. Don't expect much from the interior design.

**Café L'Affare** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-385 9748; 27 College St; meals \$6-18; ☎ 7am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 4-8pm Sat) Roasting and distributing its own beans, L'Affare is Wellington's caffeine epicentre. It's a massive, semi-industrial room with outstanding baristas, speedy service, crowded communal tables, a disco ball and clunky stage lights. Kids raid the toy box while dads down double espressos. Sensational giant toastsies.

**Fidel's** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-801 6868; 234 Cuba St; meals \$6-18; ☎ 7.30am-midnight Mon-Fri, 9am-midnight Sat & Sun; V) A Cuba St institution for caffeine-craving, left-wing subversives, watched over by Castro mosaics. Eggs any-which-way, pizza, tacos and salads are pumped out of the itchy kitchen, along with Welly's finest muffins. Pierced, tattooed staff are studiously vague, but communistically friendly.

**Ernesto** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 6878; 132 Cuba St; lunch \$8-17, dinner \$15-24; ☎ 7.30am-late) 'Ernesto' was Che Guevara's real name (there's a strong Communist undertow on Cuba St). More upmarket than Fidel's, Ernesto is a charismatic Caribbean café-bistro behind an old stained-glass shopfront. Order some mussel-and-fish soup for lunch, or some black bean chipotle chilli with cornbread and roast red pepper salsa for dinner.

**Lido** (Map p406; ☎ 04-499 6666; cnr Victoria & Wakefield Sts; lunch \$9-16, dinner \$15-27; ☎ 7.30am-late Tue-Fri, 9am-late Sat & Sun) Swing into Lido, at the bottom of a very funky old office tower, for Japanese-style fish cakes, lime-and-lemon-grass chicken, or a roast veggie, potato and chorizo salad. Live jazz Sunday night.

## Quick Eats

**Pandora Panetteria** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 4478; 2 Allen St; items \$3-6; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun; ♻) Check out the baking action through the window of this hot-bread-smelling Italian bakery with smooth coffee, sweet and savoury muffins, stuffed breads, scrolls, cakes and tarts.

**Trisha's Pies** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-801 5515; 32 Cambridge Tce; pies \$4-5; ☎ 8am-3.30pm Mon-Fri) Super-chunky pies stuffed with traditional stuff (peppered steak, beef and mushroom) or something different (chicken, apricot and brie). Veggie and fruit pies too.

**Wholly Bagels** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 6011; 250 Wakefield St; bagels \$4-8; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) Authentic boiled bagels, sold 'naked' or with flavoured cream cheeses and fillings such as tuna salad or pastrami. Close to all the big hostels; one of several around town.

**Sushi of Japan** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 0290; 189 Cuba St; meals \$4-9; ☎ 10am-6pm; ♻) Superfresh, ready-to-run sushi slices that are cheap and tasty. Good meat-free options too.

**Crêpes a Go-Go** (Map p406; 57 Manners Mall; crêpes \$5-9; ☎ 9am-9pm; ♻) From a tiny yellow stall in the Manners Mall, a Breton batter-master whips up cheap crêpes with your choice of sweet or savoury fillings. *Loooong* queues.

**Phoenician Falafel** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385-9997; 12 Kent Tce; meals \$6-9; ☎ 11.30am-9.30pm Mon-Wed, to 11pm Thu-Sat; ♻) These authentic Lebanese falafels are the connoisseurs' choice. Staff sing disco classics as the outdoor tables fill with late-night munchers trying to stave off tomorrow's hangover.

**Wellington Trawling Sea Market** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-384 8461; 220 Cuba St; meals \$6-14; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Thu & Sat, to 9pm Fri, 9am-5.30pm Sun) Sells caught-that-morning fish and lip-smacking seafood packs with chips and salad. Fat burgers for non-fish fans.

Good-value (and very worldly) food courts: **BNZ Centre** (Map p406; ☎ 04-499 9300; Willis St; meals \$4-10; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat)

**Courtenay Central** (Map p406; ☎ 04-382 9526; Courtenay Pl; meals \$5-10; ☎ 10am-10pm)

## Self-Catering

**Commonsense Organics** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 3314; 260 Wakefield St; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) A brilliant range of organic produce (wine, fruit, veg, nuts, tea, herbs etc), and catering to those with food intolerances. Many-a-bicycle chained up out the front.

**New World Metro** (Map p406; ☎ 04-417 6580; 68 Willis St; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Fri, 8am-11pm Sat & Sun) Small, central branch.

**New World Supermarket** City (Map p406; ☎ 04 3848054; 279 Wakefield St; ☎ 7am-midnight); Thorndon (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04 499-9041; Molesworth St; ☎ 7am-11pm)

## DRINKING

Wellingtonians love to drink, whether it's stylishly in dim bars, or raucously in Irish bars and brew-pubs. Locals demand good beer – it's rare to find a bar without a decent drop on tap. Most places serve bar snacks and/or meals; in fact, many of the venues below could easily fit under Eating as well as Drinking – we'd happily recommend the Matterhorn, Hummingbird or Tasting Room for a feed as much as a cold hand.

Courtenay Pl is Wellington's nocturnal epicentre, and is overrun with young 'uns hitting the fizz. Blair and Allen Sts, running off Courtenay Pl, are flush with smooth, clubby booze rooms – don't dress down. Cuba St also has plenty of venues to keep you watered, enticing a (slightly) more mature crowd.

**Our pick: Matterhorn** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 3359; 106 Cuba St; ☎ 10am-late) All low lighting, glass walls and polished concrete floors, Matterhorn is brilliant, and consistently shines near the top of lists of NZ's best bars. Sexy military-clad staff dispense drinks to 20-somethings, while leather-bound menus reveal an array of taste sensations (lunch and seriously good dinner options, plus bar snacks). Weekend DJs spin ambient funk; occasional live music.

**Tasting Room** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 1159; 2 Courtenay Pl; ☎ 11am-late) In the thick of the action, this Monteiths gastropub features dark timber-and-stone décor, leather banquettes and an antler 'chandelier' (a city-slicker hunting lodge?). If you're game, the menu is game-heavy, and the beer is truly divine.

**Vivo** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 6400; 19 Edward St; ☎ 3pm-late Tue-Sat) You won't believe the wine list here (recently voted NZ's best) – sit yourself amongst the wine barrels and settle in for a seriously impressive read. The atmospheric brick-and-timber warehouse space is the perfect backdrop for NZ whites, French reds and everything before, between and thereafter. Great food too.

**Southern Cross** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-384 9085; 35 Abel Smith St; ☎ 9am-late) The best pub in Welly is a meandering, mishmash of many excellent things: brilliant beer garden, live jazz, NZ wines, Wobbly Boot and Tuatara on tap, Aretha wailing on the sound system, Knitting

Club nights (!), pool table, retro booths, kids running amuck and hip staff. Hard to beat.

**Mac's Brewery Bar & Restaurant** (Map p406; ☎ 04-381 2282; cnr Taranaki & Cable Sts; ☎ 10.30am-late) Occupying prime water frontage in a renovated warehouse, Mac's (originally produced in Nelson) takes beer seriously: sip into a Mac's Black, Mac's Gold or the excellent Hop Rocker and watch the skaters sprain themselves in the forecourt. There's a diverse clientele and moreish food at the bar.

**Leuven** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 2939; 135 Featherston St; ☎ 7am-late Mon-Fri, 9am-late Sat & Sun) The menu at this beer café is an ode to Belgium's best: mussels come 10 different ways, the *frites* (fries) are cooked to perfection, and the big brewing guns line up at the bar (Hoegaarden, Leffe, Stella, Chimay). Leuven has an appropriate accordion soundtrack and there's NZ wines by the glass.

**Hummingbird** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 6336; 22 Courtenay Pl; ☎ 11am-late Mon-Fri, 10am-late Sat & Sun) The little French outdoor tables are always packed and humming at Hummingbird, animated conversations challenging the cabaret/crooner music drifting out from under the eaves. It's a curvilinear Art Deco shopfront space serving NZ wines, beers and original cocktails, with a great day-turns-to-night tasting menu. Live jazz and blues on Sundays.

**Backbencher** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 3065; 34 Molesworth St; ☎ 11am-late) You might spot the odd parliamentarian on the turps at the Backbencher, a pub opposite the Beehive where rubbery puppets of NZ polities are mounted trophy-style on the walls (David Lange is a beauty). Annoying *Quando, Quando, Quando?*-type soundtrack, but great staff and good weekend brunches.

**Ponderosa** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 1064; 28 Blair St; ☎ 5pm-6am Tue-Sat) Swing down off your saddle and boot-scoot into Ponderosa, a hole-in-the-wall Wild West cocktail bar with tree-stump tables, cowhide cushions and skulls mounted on the walls (trust us, it's cooler than it sounds...).

**Good Luck Bar** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 9950; basement, 126 Cuba St; ☎ 5pm-late Tue-Sun) It seems every good Welly bar needs a theme – this one is 'Retro Chinese Opium Den'. Until recently, it was too cool to have a sign – now there's a small one guiding you down into the sultry lantern-light.

**Dockside** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-499 9900; Queens Wharf; ☎ noon-late Mon-Fri, 11am-late Sat, 10.30am-late Sun) A

Heineken-coloured, indoor-outdoor bar on stilts over the harbour, popular with Friday night after-work tie-looseners (nicknamed the 'drycleaners' – where city gals come to pick up a suit). Quality seafood menu, too.

**Basement Bar** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 5666; 21-23 Cambridge Tce; ☎ 6pm-late) Beneath Base Backpackers, Basement's happy hour(s) lures the folks down from upstairs, running from 7pm to 10pm (\$4 pints, wines and spirits – happy indeed). Regular live bands, DJs, quiz nights and competitions.

**Molly Malone's** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 2896; cnr Courtenay Pl & Taranaki St) It pains us to include an Irish chain bar here, but MM's is one place you're always guaranteed a good Guinness and live music to rouse your inner Celt. Well-priced pub grub does the rounds upstairs in the mildly more refined Dubliner Bar, which is sometimes graced with a Joel/John piano man.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Wellington is the undisputed king of NZ nightlife with copious clubs, bars and other insomniac refuges. The vibrant performing-arts scene puts plenty of bums on seats. You can purchase tickets for most events from the **Ticketek** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 3840; www.ticketek.co.nz; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) booths at St James Theatre and the Michael Fowler Centre.

The best city gig guide is the free weekly *Groove Guide* (www.grooveguide.co.nz), available at venues, cafés and record shops around town. Entertainment venues concentrate around Cuba St, Edwards St and Courtenay Pl, where it all starts to go rambunctiously messy in the wee small hours.

## Live Music

**San Francisco Bath House** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 6797; www.sfbh.co.nz; 171 Cuba St; admission free-\$15; ☎ 5.30pm-late Mon-Fri, 11am-late Sat & Sun) No, it's not a gay sauna, but rather Wellington's best mid-sized live-music room. Quality NZ (Katchafire, Fat Freddy's Drop) and Australian (Bernard Fanning, The Living End) acts queue up to play here. A beer on the balcony above the Cuba St fray is always interesting.

**Valve** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 1630; www.myspace.com/valvebarwgn; 154 Vivian St; admission free-\$15; ☎ 8pm-late Tue-Sat) Bust a valve to get in the door – Wellington's home of underground and emerging rock, punk, hardcore, metal and

## GAY & LESBIAN WELLINGTON

Wellington's G&L scene is tiny, but friendly and inclusive. The city's one gay nightclub closed down a few years back, but the Wellington nocturnal scene is so open-minded, stylish and sophisticated that G&L party-people fit right in almost everywhere. Most of the cafés and bars around Courtenay Pl, Lambton Quay and Cuba St are very gay-friendly.

Check out nationwide mags such as **express** (www.gayexpress.co.nz; \$3; every 2nd Wed) and **Out!** (www.out.co.nz; \$6; every two months) for the latest happenings, reviews and listings in the local gay scene; both are available at the bigger newsagents around town. Excellent online resources include www.gaynz.com, which has comprehensive national coverage of all things queer; and the Wellington-specific www.gayline.gen.nz, www.gaywellington.org and www.wellington.lesbian.net.nz. See www.gaystay.co.nz for G&L-hosted accommodation around town.

For phone information, or just to talk, contact **Wellington Gay Switchboard** (☎ 04-473 7878; gay.switchboard@extra.co.nz; ☎ 7.30-10.30pm) and **Lesbian Line** (☎ 04-499 5567; wgtnlesbianline@hotmail.com; ☎ 7.30-10.30pm Tue, Thu & Sat).

See also Gay & Lesbian Travellers, p698.

drum 'n' bass. Big hair, noise, bright lights, beer and sweat – all the good stuff.

**Happy** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-970 1741; www.myspace.com/happybar; cnr Tory & Vivian Sts; admission free-\$10; ☎ 8pm-late Thu-Sun) Happy makes us happy – a basement bar that picks up all the stray acts (small and large) that don't seem to fit in anywhere else: spoken word, jazz fusion, acoustic singer-songwriters, electronica, short films and experimental theatre. Open performance nights only.

**Bodega** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 8212; www.bodega.co.nz; 101 Ghuznee St; admission free-\$10; ☎ 4pm-3am Wed-Sun) It's seen better days, but the legendary 'Bodge' continues to be Welly's essential live-music venue. Expect to hear dirty rock, Latin, soul, DJs and reggae-mon. There are 17 beers on tap and the vibe is usually kickin'.

## Clubs

**Sandwiches** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 7698; www.sandwiches.co.nz; 8 Kent Tce; admission \$10-35; ☎ 5pm-late Wed-Sat) Funk it up beneath the bodacious sound system at Sandwiches, a converted-warehouse lounge bar and nightclub with top DJs and live acts (jazz, electronica, soul and multi-instrumentalists). There's a decent dinner menu available before the crowds crank it up later on.

**Subnine** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 9976; www.subnine.co.nz; 9 Edwards St; admission \$10-30; ☎ 8pm-late Wed-Sat) A hip club with a fab lounge area hosting international DJs and live bands. This (along with the other clubby bars around Edward St) is the place for bangin' beats – make sure you muster/swallow plenty of stamina.

**Attic Lounge** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 9976; www.subnine.co.nz; 9 Edwards St; admission free-\$10; ☎ 8pm-late Wed-Sat) A '70s porn-style bar attached to Subnine, popular with Wellington's bad-ass underground DJ set. Peer over the rim of your glass at hip-hop gangsters and hot bods shuffling between the two rooms.

## Theatres

Wellington's accessible performing-arts scene is a hotbed (or volcanic mud pool) of NZ theatre, sustaining a number of professional and quality amateur companies. Discount same-day tickets for some productions are often available at the i-SITE.

**BATS Theatre** (Map p406; ☎ 04-802 4175; www.bats.co.nz; 1 Kent Tce; tickets \$15-20; ☎ box office 10am-late Mon-Fri, 4pm-late Sat) Wildly alternative BATS is committed to presenting the best cutting-edge and experimental NZ theatre, whilst remaining accessible to both audiences and artists. BATS is also home the Fringe NZ festival (p411). Backpacker discounts often available.

**Downstage Theatre** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 6946; www.downstage.co.nz; cnr Courtenay Pl & Cambridge Tce; tickets \$35-50; ☎ box office 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-showtime Fri, 10am-showtime Sat) A professional theatre company with a strong presence in the Wellington scene, Downstage is NZ's most enduring theatre company (est. 1964). Original NZ plays, dance, comedy and musicals in a 250-seat auditorium.

**Circa Theatre** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 7992; www.circa.co.nz; 1 Taranaki St; tickets adult/stand-by \$35/18; ☎ box office 10am-4pm Mon-Sat) Circa's main auditorium seats 240 people; its studio 100. Cheap tickets are available for preview shows (the night

before opening night) and stand-by tickets an hour before the show (anything from pantomimes to international comedy).

**Michael Fowler Centre** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 4231; www.wellingtonconventioncentre.com; 111 Wakefield St; tickets \$10-175; ☎ Ticketek box office 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Part of the larger Wellington Convention Centre (22 venues!), the Michael Fowler has great acoustics and hosts all sorts of performances, from big-ticket bands to comedy and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

**St James Theatre** (Map p406; ☎ 04-802 4060; www.stjames.co.nz; 77 Courtenay Pl; tickets \$10-175; ☎ Ticketek box office 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) is a grand old heritage auditorium that, in conjunction with its sister venue, the nearby **Opera House** (Map p406; 111-113 Manners St), stages opera, ballet and high-profile musical extravaganzas. The Royal New Zealand Ballet (www.nzballer.org.nz) makes the St James its home; the New Zealand Opera (www.nzopera.com) warbles at the Opera House.

## Cinemas

Movie times are listed in the local newspapers and at www.film.wellington.net.nz. Most cinemas have a discount day early in the week (Monday or Tuesday).

**Embassy Theatre** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 7656; www.deluxe.co.nz; 10 Kent Tce; tickets adult/child \$15/9; ☎ 11am-midnight) The regal Embassy was built in the 1920s, and underwent major restoration in 2003 (after which it hosted the world premiere of *LOTR: The Return of the King*). It now screens mainstream films; film buffs can pay a few dollars extra for deluxe leather seats. On the 1st floor is Blondini's, a chilled-out jazz bar: sit, sip and dissect the plot.

Other cinemas:

**Paramount** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 4080; www.paramount.co.nz; 25 Courtenay Pl; tickets adult/child \$14/12; ☎ noon-midnight) Mainly art-house movies, documentaries and foreign flicks.

**Reading Cinemas** (Map p406; ☎ 04-801 4600; www.readingcinemas.co.nz; Courtenay Central, Courtenay Pl; tickets adult/child \$14.50/8.50; ☎ 9.30am-midnight) Mainstream new-release fodder.

**Regent on Manners** (Map p406; ☎ 04-472 5182; www.hoyts.co.nz; 73 Manners Mall; tickets adult/child \$10/6; ☎ 9am-midnight) All the latest Hollywood blockbusters.

**Rialto Cinemas** (Map p406; ☎ 04-382 8543; www.rialto.co.nz; cnr Jervois Quay & Cable St; tickets \$12; ☎ 10.30am-midnight) Offbeat, Hollywood-gauche and independent cinema magic.

## SHOPPING

Lambton Quay is known as the 'Golden Mile' for its designer boutiques, speciality stores and array of money pits into which to pour your hard-earned dollars. For secondhand records and books, retro clothing and funky furniture, take a stroll along Cuba St. Keeping fashionistas in the loop is the *Fashion Map* – the guide to NZ and international designers and boutique clothes shops in Wellington, and a must-have for anyone keen to indulge in serious expenditure; pick one up at the i-SITE.

Along Lambton Quay, don't miss a visit to **Kirkcaldie & Stains** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-472 5899; 165-177 Lambton Quay; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun), NZ's answer to Bloomingdale's or Harrods, which has been running since 1863. Look for the natty doorman in the top-hat and coat. Nearby is the **Old Bank Shopping Arcade** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 04-922 0600; cnr Lambton Quay & Willis St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun) (yes, it's an old bank), full of upmarket cafés, boutiques and gift shops.

Outdoor shops amass around Mercer St; your best bet for tramping and kayaking gear is **Bivouac Outdoor** (Map p406; ☎ 04-473 2587; 39 Mercer St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun).

Wellington's offbeat, punky and designer boutiques are many and varied. Some of the more interesting include:

**Frutti** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 6965; 176 Cuba St) Hyper-coloured street gear, party wear and one-off designer pieces.

**Hunters & Collectors** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 8948; 134 Cuba St) Off-the-rack and pre-loved leather (punk, skate and mod), plus shoes and accessories.

**Ziggurat** (Map p406; ☎ 04-385 1077; 144 Cuba St) Hip buy-and-sell boutique full of retro, vintage and unusual clothes at decent prices.

If you're looking for something uniquely NZ, try the gift shop at Te Papa museum (p405), or the sophisticated indigenous galleries around town. Our favourites:

**Iwi Art Gallery** (Map p406; ☎ 04-803 3253; 19 Tory St) Gorgeous Maori weavings and carvings: pouamu, bone and paua.

**Kura** (Map p406; ☎ 04-802 4934; 19 Allen St) Contemporary indigenous art: painting, ceramics, jewellery and sculpture.

**Ora Gallery** (Map p406; ☎ 04-384 4157; 23 Allen St) The latest in Pacific and Maori art: beautiful sculpture, weaving and jewellery.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

Wellington is an international gateway to NZ. See p709 for information on international flights. **Wellington Airport** (WLG; ☎ 04-385 5100; www.wellington-airport.co.nz; ☎ 4am-1.30am) has touch-screen information kiosks in the check-in hall. There's also currency exchange, ATMs, car rental desks, cafés, shops etc. If you're in transit or have an early flight, you can't mangle overnight inside the terminal. Departure tax on international flights is adult/child \$25/10.

**Air New Zealand** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 737 000, 04-474 8950; www.airnz.co.nz; cnr Lambton Quay & Grey St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) offers flights between Wellington and most domestic centres, including:

Destination	Price	Frequency
Auckland	from \$69	up to 20 daily
Christchurch	from \$109	15 daily
Dunedin	from \$129	4 daily
Rotorua	from \$99	5 daily
Westport	from \$89	2 daily

**Qantas** (☎ 0800 808 767; www.qantas.co.nz) flies between Wellington and Auckland (from \$69, five daily).

**Soundsair** (☎ 0800 505 005, 03-520 3080; www.soundsair.com) flies between Wellington and Picton (\$79, six to eight daily), Kaikoura (\$125, two daily), Nelson (\$75, one daily) and Blenheim (\$79, one daily).

### Boat

On a clear day, sailing into Wellington Harbour or through the Marlborough Sounds is magical. Cook Strait is notoriously rough, but the ferries are big enough to handle it, with lounges, cafés, bars, information desks, even cinemas! There are two options for crossing the strait between Wellington and Picton (timetables subject to change):

**Bluebridge Ferries** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 844 844, 04-471 6188; www.bluebridge.co.nz; adult/child \$55/25) Crossing takes three hours, 20 minutes. Departs Wellington at 3am, 8am, 1pm and 9pm daily (no 3am service Saturday; no 8am service Sunday). Departs Picton at 2am, 8am, 2pm and 7pm daily (no 8am service Saturday; no 2pm service Sunday). Additional sailings December to January. Cars and campervans under 4m long \$130; campervans under 5.5m \$165; motorbikes \$60; bicycles \$15.

**Interislander** (Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 802 802, 04-498 3302; www.interislander.co.nz; adult/child \$72/37) Crossing takes three hours, departing Wellington at 1.55am,

### DROPPING IN

If you're an adrenaline fiend, skip the mundane ferry or flight between the North and South Islands and call **Skydive the Sounds** (☎ 0800 373 264, 03-573 9101; www.skydivethesounds.com). For \$620 they'll fly you from Wellington Airport across Cook Strait, then give you a non-traditional Picton landing via of a tandem skydive. Your luggage will arrive the old-fashioned way (ie on the plane). An unforgettable scenic Wellington and Marlborough Sounds flight, practical transport and the requisite adrenaline hit all rolled into one!

8.25am, 2pm and 6.15pm; departing Picton at 5.45am, 10am, 1.15pm, 6pm and 10.05pm. From mid-November to April there's an extra 10.35am sailing from Wellington; an extra 2.25pm sailing from Picton. The most flexible (and expensive) fare for a car is \$163; for a 5.5m campervan it's \$208; a motorbike \$78. Sizable discounts apply for advance, non-changeable and internet bookings. Bicycles \$15.

Book ferries at hotels, by phone, online, at travel agents and with operators directly (online is the cheapest option). Bluebridge is based at Waterloo Quay, not far from Wellington Train Station. The Interislander terminal is about 2km northeast of the city centre; a free shuttle bus runs to/from Platform 9 at Wellington Train Station (where long-distance buses also depart). There's also a taxi stand at the terminal.

Car-hire companies allow you to pick-up/drop-off vehicles at ferry terminals. If you arrive outside business hours, arrangements can be made to collect your vehicle from the terminal car park.

### Bus

Wellington is a bus-travel hub, with connections north to Auckland and all major towns in between. **InterCity** (☎ 04-385 0520; www.intercity.co.nz) and **Newmans** (☎ 04-385 0521; www.newmans.co.nz) buses depart from Platform 9 at the train station. Tickets are sold at the Intercity/Newmans ticket window in the train station (see under Train, following). Typical fares include: Auckland (from \$70, 12 hours, four daily), Palmerston North (from \$33, 2½ hours, six daily), Rotorua (from \$70, 7½ hours, four daily). Fares booked online can be half price!

**White Star City to City** (☎ 06-758 3338; www.whitestarbus.co.nz) departs once daily from Bunny

St, opposite the railway station, running to Palmerston North (\$24, 2¼ hours), Wanganui (\$29, 3½ hours) and New Plymouth (\$47, 6½ hours). Connect at Palmerston North for services to Masterton, Hastings, Napier and Gisborne. Call for ticket info or visit Freeman's Lotto & Cafe at 23 Lambton Quay.

**Kiwi Traveller** (☎ 0800 500 100, 04-384 7031; www.kiwitraveller.co.nz) runs daily through the heart of the North Island, from Wellington to Palmerston North (\$31, 2¼ hours), Taupo (\$62, seven hours) and Rotorua (\$80, eight hours). With a ticket to your final destination, you can hop-on/hop-off off along the route.

**Bay Xpress** (☎ 0800 422 997; www.bayxpress.co.nz) has a daily service connecting Wellington with Palmerston North (\$20, 2¼ hours) continuing to Hastings (\$35, 4¾ hours) and Napier (\$35, five hours).

**Naked Bus** (☎ 0900 625 33; www.nakedbus.com) runs north from Wellington to many North Island destinations, including Palmerston North (from \$16, 2½ hours, three daily), Napier (from \$14, five hours, three daily), Taupo (\$39, 6½ hours, one daily) and Auckland (\$54, 12 hours, one daily), with myriad stops en route. Buses depart from the Bunny St bus stop. Book online or at Wellington i-SITE; cheaper fares for advance bookings.

### Train

Wellington Train Station has two **ticket windows** (☎ 04-498 3000, ext 44324; ☎ 6.30am-8pm Mon-Thu, to 1pm Fri & Sat, to 3pm Sun), one selling tickets for Tranz Scenic trains, Interislander ferries and InterCity and Newmans coaches; the other ticketing local/regional Tranz Metro trains (Johnsonville, Melling, Hutt Valley, Paraparaumu and Wairarapa lines).

Long-haul **Tranz Scenic** (☎ 0800 872 467; www.tranzscenic.co.nz) routes include the *Overlander* between Wellington and Auckland (\$119, 12 hours, one daily) departing Wellington at 7.25am (Friday, Saturday and Sunday only May to November); and the *Capital Connection* between Wellington and Palmerston North (\$22, 2¼ hours, one daily Monday to Friday) departing Wellington at 5.17pm. Online discounts (as low as \$79 Wellington-Auckland) are often available.

### GETTING AROUND

**Metlink** (☎ 0800 801 700; www.metlink.org.nz) is the one-stop-shop for Wellington's regional bus and train network, including the Stagecoach

Flyer, Stagecoach and After Midnight buses, and Tranz Metro trains, all detailed below.

### To/From the Airport

**Super Shuttle** (☎ 0800 748 885; www.supershuttle.co.nz; 1/2 passengers \$15/20; ☎ 24hr) provides a door-to-door minibuss service between the city and airport, 8km southeast of the city. It's cheaper if two or more passengers are travelling to the same destination. Shuttles meet all arriving flights.

The **Stagecoach Flyer** (☎ 0800 801 700; www.stagecoach.co.nz/flyer; airport-city \$5.50) is a local bus running between the airport, Wellington and Lower Hutt, calling at major stops. Buses run from the city to the airport between 5.45am and 7.45pm weekdays, 6.15am to 8.15pm weekends; and from the airport, between 6.20am and 8.20pm weekdays, 6.50am to 8.50pm weekends.

A taxi between the city centre and airport costs around \$22.

### Bus

Frequent and efficient **Stagecoach** (☎ 0800 748 885; www.stagecoach.co.nz/wellington) buses run from 7am to 11.30pm on most suburban routes. Buses depart the Lambton Quay Interchange (near the train station), or the main bus stop on Courtenay Pl near the Cambridge Tce intersection. Colour-coded route maps and timetables are available at the i-SITE and convenience stores around town. Fares are determined by zones: there are nine zones, and the cheapest fare is \$1.50 for rides in zone one, \$2.50 for two zones (maximum fare \$9.50). A Wellington Daytripper ticket (within zones one to three) costs \$5, allowing unlimited bus travel for one day (excluding the Stagecoach Flyer, After Midnight buses and services to Hutt Valley). An all-day STARPass for \$10 allows unlimited rides on all bus services.

**After Midnight** (☎ 0800 801 700; www.metlink.org.nz) bus services depart the central entertainment strips (Courtenay Pl and Cuba St) at 1am, 2am and 3am Saturday and Sunday on a number of routes to the outer suburbs. Fares range from \$4 to \$7, depending on how far away your bed is.

### Car

There are a lot of one-way streets in Wellington, the traffic is surprisingly snarly and parking is a royal pain in the rump. If you've got a car or a caravan, park on the

outskirts and walk or take public transport into the city centre.

Aside from the major international rental companies (all with desks at the ferry terminals; see p716), Wellington has several operators that will negotiate cheap deals, especially for longer-term rental of two weeks or more, but rates generally aren't as competitive as in Auckland. Rack rates range from around \$40 to \$85 per day; cars are usually a few years old and in pretty good condition. Operators include:

**Ace Rental Cars** (off Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 535 500, 04-471 1176; www.acerentalcars.co.nz; 126 Hutt Rd; ☎ 8am-5pm)

**Apex Car Rental** (Map p406; ☎ 0800 939 597, 04-385 2163; www.apexrentals.co.nz; 186 Victoria St; ☎ 8am-5pm)

**Omega Rental Cars** (off Map pp402-3; ☎ 0800 667 722, 04-472 8465; www.omegarentals.com; 96 Hutt Rd; ☎ 7.30am-5pm)

If you plan on exploring both North and South Islands, most companies suggest you leave your car at Wellington and pick up another one in Picton after crossing Cook Strait. This is a common (and more affordable) practice, and car-hire companies make it a painless exercise.

There are often cheap deals on car relocation from Wellington to Auckland (most renters travel in the opposite direction). A few companies offer heavy discounts on this route, with the catch being that you may only have 24 or 48 hours to make the journey.

**Turners Auctions** (☎ 04-587 1400; www.turners.co.nz; 120 Hutt Park Rd, Lower Hutt; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat), not far from the Top 10 Wellington Holiday Park, buys and sells used cars by auction. Also check noticeboards at backpackers for cheap deals.

## Taxi

Taxi ranks are conveniently placed around town (Cambridge Tce, Courtenay Pl, Te Papa museum etc). Operators include:

**Green Cabs** (☎ 0508 447 336)

**Wellington Combined Taxis** (☎ 0800 384 444)

**Wellington City Cabs** (☎ 0800 388 8000)

## Train

**Tranz Metro** (☎ 0800 801 700; www.tranzmetro.co.nz) operates five electric train routes running through Wellington's suburbs to regional destinations. Trains run frequently from

6am to midnight, departing Wellington Train Station. The routes are: Johnsonville, via Ngaio and Khandallah; Paraparaumu, via Porirua, Plimmerton and Paekakariki; Melling, via Petone; the Hutt Valley; and the Wairarapa, calling at Featherston, Carterton and Masterton. Timetables are available from convenience stores, the train station, Wellington i-SITE and online. Standard fares from Wellington to the ends of the five lines range from \$3.50 to \$14. A Day Rover ticket (\$10) allows unlimited travel on all lines except Wairarapa.

## HUTT VALLEY

pop 110,000

The Hutt River defines the western boundary of Wellington's dormitory cities, slowly-improving Lower Hutt and functional Upper Hutt. Apart from some forest parks, Wellington's closest camping options and a few museums, there's not a whole lot of shakin' goin' on here. Both cities are a hop, skip and jump from Wellington by train or bus.

Lower Hutt fronts onto Wellington Harbour at the mouth of the Hutt River; Upper Hutt is also on the river, about 15km upstream. Stick your head into the **Hutt City i-SITE** (☎ 04-560 4715; www.huttvalley.com; 25 Laings Rd, Lower Hutt; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) for the local low-down.

## Sights & Activities

The shell-strewn Lower Hutt waterfront is home to the Art Deco **Petone Settlers Museum** (☎ 04-568 8373; www.petonesettlers.org.nz; The Esplanade; admission by donation; ☎ noon-4pm Tue-Fri, 1-5pm Sat & Sun), with stories of migration and settlement in the area. The **New Dowse** (☎ 04-570 6500; www.dowse.org.nz; 35 Laings Rd, Lower Hutt; admission free; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun) art museum is a showcase for NZ art, craft and design. The old Dowse wasn't bad, but the shiny renovated version is nothing short of impressive. Cool café, too.

The drive journeying from Upper Hutt to Waikanae (on the Kapiti Coast) along the windy, scenic Akatarawa Rd passes the 10-hectare **Staglands Wildlife Reserve** (☎ 04-526 7529; Akatarawa Valley; www.staglands.co.nz; adult/child \$14/7; ☎ 10am-5pm) where the rare blue duck has been successfully bred. It's 17km from SH2, 20km from SH1.

To the south of the Hutt Valley, **Days Bay** and **Eastbourne** make a laid-back afternoon detour via road or ferry from Petone (see p408).

**Rimutaka Forest Park** is 45 minutes' drive east of Wellington. Catchpool Valley, 14km south of Wainuiomata, is the main park entrance; there's a sporadically staffed **DOC office** (☎ 04-564 1249; www.doc.govt.nz; ☎ 11am-4pm daily Nov-Mar, weekends only Apr-Oct) just off Coast Rd. Further on from DOC is a **campsite** (adult/child \$8/4) in a creek-side setting – a decent spot to base yourself for short and long walks into the forest (*shhhh*, you might see a kiwi!).

The **Kaitoke Regional Park**, 16km north of Upper Hutt on SH2, is good for swimming, camping, picnicking and walks ranging from 15 minutes to six hours long. LOTR fans make the pilgrimage here to size-up the fabled site of Rivendell.

## Sleeping

**Harcourt Holiday Park** (☎ 04-526 7400; www.harcourtholidaypark.co.nz, 45 Akatarawa Rd, Upper Hutt; unpowered/power sites \$24/28, cabins & tourist flats \$35-75, motels \$90-95; ☎ ☎) Veritably verdant park 35km northeast of Wellington, just off SH2 (from Wellington it's a 30-minute drive), set in native bushland by the trout-filled Hutt River. Facilities aren't as numerous as the Wellington Top 10 Holiday Park, but the location is more appealing.

**Wellington Top 10 Holiday Park** (☎ 0800 488 872, 04-568 5913; www.huttpark.co.nz; 95 Hutt Park Rd, Seaview, Lower Hutt; sites \$35, cabins \$55-65, units \$95-138, motels \$115-161; ☎ ☎) Formerly known as the Hutt Park Top 10 (no, it hasn't moved any closer to Welly), this busy park is 13km northeast of Wellington. Family-friendly facilities are excellent (three communal kitchens, games room, jumping pillow, playground etc), but its industrial location detracts. It's a 15-minute drive from the ferry (follow the signs off SH2 for Petone and Seaview), or take any bus bound for Eastbourne (81, 83 and 85).

## KAPITI COAST

With wide, people-free beaches and water just begging to be swum in (depending on your constitution), the Kapiti Coast acts as a summer playground and suburban extension for Wellingtonians. The region takes its moniker from Kapiti Island, a bird and marine sanctuary 5km offshore from Paraparaumu.

In the Tararua Range, Tararua Forest Park forms a dramatic backdrop along the length of the coastline and has some accessible day walks and longer trips.

The Kapiti Coast makes an easy daytrip from Wellington, but if you're after a few restful days or are heading further north, there are some quality accommodations here. Pick up a copy of the *Kapiti Coast Arts Guide* from the local visitor information centres if you're interested in the region's abundant galleries, artists and studios.

## Orientation & Information

The Kapiti Coast stretches 30km along the North Island's west coast from Paekakariki (41km north of Wellington) to Otaki. Most towns are a tale of two settlements: one along the highway (banks, petrol, hamburger joints) and another by the water (cafés, motels, hamburger joints). Paraparaumu is the biggest town here, but still runs at a beachy pace.

The most comprehensive visitor information centres are at Paraparaumu (p425) and Otaki (p426). Online, check out www.naturecoast.co.nz.

## Getting There & Around

Getting here from Wellington is a breeze: just track north on SH1. By car, it's about a 45-minute drive to Paraparaumu, and an hour to Otaki, much of it by motorway.

## BUS

**InterCity** (☎ 04-385 0520; www.intercitycoach.co.nz) has buses between Wellington and Palmerston North (\$34, 2¼ hours, six daily), stopping at Paekakariki (\$20, 40 minutes), Paraparaumu (\$22, 45 minutes) and Otaki (\$27, 1¼ hours).

The daily services into/out of Wellington run by White Star City to City, Kiwi Traveller and Bay Express (see p420) also stop in major Kapiti Coast towns en route to points further north.

From SH1 in Paraparaumu, local buses 71, 72 and 73 run to the beach. Bus 70 heads to Otaki, calling at the highway settlement and the beach.

## TRAIN

**Tranz Metro** (☎ 0800 801 700; www.tranzmetro.co.nz) commuter trains between Wellington and the coast are easier and more frequent than buses. Services run from Wellington to

Paraparaumu (\$9, one hour, generally half-hourly between 6am and 11pm), stopping en route in Paekakariki (\$8). Weekday off-peak fares (9am to 3pm) are \$2.50 cheaper.

**Tranz Scenic** (☎ 0800 872 467; www.tranzscenic.co.nz) has long-distance *Overlander* trains connecting Wellington and Auckland stopping at Paraparaumu, while the weekday-only, peak-hour *Capital Connection* travelling between Wellington and Palmerston North stops at Paraparaumu, Waikanae and Otaki. See p421 for details of these services.

## PAEKAKARIKI pop 1730

Paekakariki is a little seaside village stretched along a black-sand beach, just two blocks from the train station and the highway. Almost within spitting distance of Wellington (41km south), Paekakariki is an unhurried place to escape for a few days.

**Queen Elizabeth Park** (☎ 04-292 8625; qepanger@gw.govt.nz; admission free; ☎ 8am-8pm) is a rambling 650-hectare dune-scape park behind the beach, with plenty of opportunities for swimming, walking, cycling and picnicking. There are three entrances: off Wellington Rd in Paekakariki, at MacKays Crossing on SH1, and off The Esplanade in Raumati to the north.

About 5km north of Paekakariki, just off SH1, the **Tramway Museum** (☎ 04-292 8361; www.wellingtontrams.org.nz; Queen Elizabeth Park, MacKay's Crossing; admission free, tram rides adult/child/family \$5/2.50/12.50; ☎ 11am-4.30pm Sat & Sun, daily 26 Dec-Jan) has restored wooden trams that ran in Wellington until its tram system kicked the bucket in 1964. A 2km track curls from the museum through Queen Elizabeth Park down to the beach.

**Stables on the Park** (☎ 04-298 4609, 06-364 3336; www.stablesonthepark.co.nz; Queen Elizabeth Park, MacKay's Crossing; half-/1-2hr rides \$35/55/75; ☎ 10.30am-3.30pm Sat & Sun) runs coastal horse-riding from its base behind the Tramway Museum. You'll generally find the stables staffed on weekends, but it's best to call ahead to ensure someone's there (weekday trips can be arranged).

## Sleeping & Eating

**Paekakariki Backpackers** (☎ 04-902 5967; www.wellingtonbeachbackpackers.co.nz; 11 Wellington Rd; dm \$25, tw & d with/without bathroom \$66/60; (P) (Q)) Atop a steep hill crawling with dense gardens, most rooms here have sea and sunset views. It's

a small, ramshackle hostel with free boogie boards if you want to hit the surf. Rooms with private bathroom and deck are backpacking luxury; ask the owners about their plans to build travellers' yurts in the bush.

**Paekakariki Holiday Park** (☎ 04-292 8292; paekakariki.holiday.park@xtra.co.nz; 180 Wellington Rd; sites \$24, cabins & flats \$42-70; (P)) A large, un-revolutionary beachside park with individually hedged sites. It's roughly 1.5km north of the township at the southern entrance to Queen Elizabeth Park, about 200m from the beach.

**Finn's** (☎ 04-292 8081; finnskapiti@xtra.co.nz; 2 Beach Rd; mains \$10-20, d \$155-185; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon, to 7pm Tue, to 9pm Wed, to 10pm Thu-Sat, to 8pm Sun; (P)) Brand spankin' new Finn's has just unwrapped the plastic – get in there and see if you can knock a few edges off. A slick, corporate café-bar with accommodation upstairs, it seems oddly out of place (and pace) with the rest of the coast. Still, a cold beer, some live music or a fresh fish sandwich might lure you through the door.

**Paekakariki Café** (☎ 04-292 8860; 7 Beach Rd; meals \$5-16; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon, Wed & Thu, to 5pm Fri-Sun; (V)) The perfect small-town café: a welcoming space with green-velvet and wrought-iron chairs and exhibitions by local artists. Early-risers can enjoy a city-standard caffeine fix; lunchtime visitors can expect delicious, innovative global cuisine: pizzas, *tajines* (Moroccan stews) and Middle Eastern platters.

## PARAPARAUMU pop 6835

Lower-than-low-key Paraparaumu is the principal town on the Kapiti Coast, and a suburban satellite of Wellington. The rough-and-tumble beach is the coast's most developed, sustaining plenty of cafés, motels and takeaway joints. Boat trips to Kapiti Island set sail from here (see opposite).

The correct pronunciation is 'Pah-ra-pah-ra-oo-moo', meaning 'scraps from an oven', which is said to have originated when a Maori war party attacked the settlement and found only scraps of food remaining. It's a bit of a mouthful to pronounce; locals usually just corrupt it into 'Para-par-am'.

## Orientation & Information

Coastlands Shoppingtown, the hub of Paraparaumu's highway settlement, is on the left as you head into town from Wellington. Three kilometres west along Kapiti Rd (just past Coastlands) is Paraparaumu Beach;

Seaview Rd is the main road here. Sleeping and eating options are most atmospheric (and plentiful) by the beach.

Coastlands has all the services you'll need: banks, ATMs, post office, supermarkets, cinema. The small, amenable **Paraparaumu Visitor Information Centre** (☎ 04-298 8195; www.naturecoast.co.nz; Coastlands car park, SH1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun) is slap-bang in the middle of the Coastlands car park. Pick up the *Nature Coast* brochure while you're here.

## Sights & Activities

**Paraparaumu Beach**, with its beachside park, decent swimming and other watery activities, is the town's *raison d'être*.

**Paraparaumu Beach Golf Club** (☎ 04-902 8200; www.paraparaumbeachgolfclub.co.nz; 376 Kapiti Rd; 9/18 holes \$45/90; ☎ 7am-dusk) is ranked among NZ's best courses, and has hosted the NZ Open twelve times (Tiger was here in 2002). Visitors are welcome: call for tee times, or book online. Clubs, carts and shoes can be hired.

On SH1, 2km north of Paraparaumu, the **Lindale Centre** (☎ 04-297 0916; www.lindale.co.nz; farm walk adult/child/family \$8/5/22; ☎ 9am-5pm) is a rambling tourist complex encompassing the Lindale Farm Park, with daily farm shows (2pm), farm walks and speciality food shops selling regional cheese, olive oil, honey and ice cream. Tasty! There's a farmers market here on Saturday morning too.

Another kilometre north, just off SH1 in an incongruously mod hangar, the **Southward Car Museum** (☎ 04-297 1221; www.southward.org.nz; Otaihanga Rd; adult/child \$10/3; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) has one of Australasia's largest collections of antique and unusual cars. Check out the DeLorean and the 1950 gangster Cadillac.

## Sleeping

**Barnades Seaside Inn** (☎ 0800 555 856, 04-902 5856; www.seasideyha.co.nz; 3 Marine Pde; dm/s/f \$25/45/80, tw & d \$50-70; (P) (Q)) Opposite Paraparaumu Beach, Barnacles is a creaky, old-style YHA hostel in a 1920s heritage building. Snug rooms are individually decorated with antique dressers and have sinks and heaters; some have electric blankets and sea views.

**Ocean Motel** (☎ 0508 668 357, 04-902 6424; www.oceanmotel.co.nz; 42-44 Ocean Rd; r \$89-120; (P) (Q)) There's no view here (the beach is a short stroll away), and the motel isn't much to look at either, but there's a smattering of spacious units here, some with cook-

ing facilities and/or spa. Top value on a quiet street.

**Copperfield Seaside Motel** (☎ 0800 666 414, 04-902 6414; www.seasidemotel.co.nz; 7-13 Seaview Rd; r \$105-145; (P) (Q)) No spookily coiffed magicians here, just an attractively updated motel not far from the beach. Accommodation ranges from studios to two-bedroom apartments with full kitchen and balcony. Most units have a spa.

## Eating

**Macleans Street Fish Supply** (☎ 04-298 5041; Maclean St; meals \$5-18; ☎ 11.30am-8pm) Battering and deep-frying anything from tinned pineapple to fresh, plump scallops, Maclean's does a roaring trade. Grab an impressively-sized pot of tartare sauce and an essential serving of fat, hand-cut chips.

**Fed Up Fast Foods** (☎ 04-902 6686; 40 Marine Pde; meals \$6-14; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-9.30pm Fri-Sun) Locals rave about this place, which is a weird hybrid of café-takeaway-restaurant. Food takes the form of set-price chicken, fish and steak 'dinners', which are good value any time of day. We're not sure what it is, but we don't mind.

**Ambience Café** (☎ 04-298 9898; 10 Seaview Rd; lunch \$12-18, dinner \$20-28; ☎ 8am-4pm daily, to 9pm Thu-Sat) Some Wellingtonians think it's worth the drive to Paraparam for this place alone, and who are we to argue? Ambience offers old-time classics such as goulash and fish fritters, done with new century élan. Sexy, contemporary interior design (and staff).

## KAPITI ISLAND

A humpy 10km by 2km rectangle, Kapiti Island is the coastline's dominant feature. Since 1897 the island has been a protected reserve. It's a predator-free place – many bird species that are now rare or extinct on the mainland still thrive on the island. All visitors receive an introductory talk; BYO lunch. **Kapiti Island Alive** (☎ 06-362 6606; www.kapitiislandalive.co.nz; walks \$20) runs one hour guided walks.

Access is limited to around 70 people per day, and it's essential that you book and obtain a permit (adult/child \$9/4.50) at Wellington's DOC office (p404) – in person, by phone or via email (kapiti.island@doc.govt.nz). During summer DOC recommends booking up to one month in advance for a weekday visit, two months for a weekend visit. DOC also publishes the detailed *Visiting Kapiti Island* brochure.

Transport is booked separately from the permit (arrange your permit before your boat trip). Two commercial operators are licensed to take visitors to the island, both running to/from Paraparamu Beach. Departures are between 9am and 9.30am daily, returning between 3pm and 4pm; call in the morning to confirm departure time and that the weather is OK. Both companies can arrange transport between Wellington and Paraparamu Beach:

**Kapiti Marine Charter** (☎ 0800 433 779, 04-297 2585; www.kapitimarinecharter.co.nz; adult/child \$45/20)

**Kapiti Tours** (☎ 0800 527 484, 04-237 7965; www.kapititours.co.nz; adult/child \$45/20)

## WAIKANAE

pop 6930

About 5km north of Paraparamu at Waikanae is the turn-off to **Nga Manu Nature Reserve** (☎ 04-293 4131; www.ngamanu.co.nz; 281 Ngarara Rd; adult/child/family \$10/4/20; ☞ 10am-5pm), a 15-hectare bird sanctuary littered with picnic areas, barbecues, bush walks and a nocturnal house with kiwi, owls and tuatara. You can also feed the greedy eels at 2pm daily, or take a weekend guided tour at 1.30pm (Sunday only in winter). To get here, turn seawards from SH1 onto Te Moana Rd and then right down Ngarara Rd and follow the signs; the sanctuary is 3.5km from the turn-off.

## OTAKI

pop 5650

Sprawling, unremarkable Otaki is primarily a gateway to the Tararua Range. It has a strong Maori history and presence: the little town has nine *marae* and a Maori college. The historic Rangiatea Church, built under the guidance of Ngati Toa chief Te Rauparaha nearly 150 years ago, tragically burnt to the ground in 1995 but has been rebuilt. This was the original burial site of Te Rauparaha.

### Orientation & Information

Most services, including the train station where buses also stop, are on SH1. The main centre of Otaki, with the post office and shops, is 2km seawards on Tasman Rd. Three kilometres further on the same road brings you to Otaki's windswept beach. Note that the telephone area code in Otaki is ☎ 06, not ☎ 04 like the rest of the Kapiti Coast.

The **Kapiti Coast i-SITE** (☎ 06-364 7620; www.naturecoast.co.nz; Centennial Park, SH1; ☞ 9am-5pm Mon-

Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun) is just south of the main roundabout in an 1891 court house.

### Activities

Two kilometres south of Otaki, scenic Otaki Gorge Rd trucks inland from SH1 and leads 19km (5km unsealed) to **Otaki Forks**, the main western entrance to **Tararua Forest Park**. Otaki Forks has picnic areas, swimming and **camp-sites** (unpowered sites per adult/child \$5/2.50), plus bush walks from 30 minutes to 3½ hours in the immediate area; longer tracks lead to huts. The i-SITE sells detailed maps and knowledgeable staff proffer information and advice about the walks. Ask at DOC in Wellington (p404) for advice on longer tracks in the park. You can walk across the Tararua Range, but you must bring adequate clothing and be well prepared for wild weather; be sure to sign the intentions book.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Byron's Resort** (☎ 0800 800 122, 06-364 8119; www.byronsresort.co.nz; 20 Tasman Rd; unpowered/powerd sites \$28/30, tourist flats & motels \$85-110; ☎ ☞) A traditional, family-fuelled resort by the beach. The Scuttlebutt Bar & Grill (meals \$17 to \$26) opens nightly, a welcome haven after a day spent at the pool, spa, sauna, tennis court and playground. Phew...

**Red House Café** (☎ 06-364 3022; 885 SH1, Te Horo; meals \$6-25; ☞ 9.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun, 6pm-late Thu-Sun Dec-Feb) The pick of highway pit stops 'round these here parts is this eye-grabbing house at Te Horo, 5km south of Otaki – look for the fire-engine-red exterior. Inside it's all warm polished wood, all-day breakfasts, cabinet snacks and a blackboard menu. Everybody sing: *'There's a red house over yonder, that's where my baby stays...'*

## THE WAIRARAPA

The Wairarapa is the large slab of land east and northeast of Wellington, beyond the craggy **Tararua Range** and **Rimutaka Range**. Named after Lake Wairarapa (Shimmering Waters), a shallow 8000-hectare lake, the region has traditionally been a frenzied hotbed of sheep-farming – there are more than three million sheep within 16km of Masterton (we counted 'em). More recently some brilliant wineries have sprung up around Martinborough and Greytown (Pinot

Noir is the speciality), which has turned the region into a decadent weekend escape for Wellingtonians. A vigorous foodie culture has evolved alongside the wineries and restored B&B cottages. All this boozey hubbub doesn't seem to impress some long-term locals, who remain bound to Bible Belt mentality – highway billboards warn, 'You have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.'

See www.wairarapanz.com for regional info. Note that the telephone area code over here is ☎ 06, not ☎ 04 like the rest of the Wellington region.

### Getting There & Around

#### BUS & TRAIN

From Wellington, **Tranz Metro** (☎ 0800 801 700; www.tranzmetro.co.nz) commuter trains run to Masterton (\$14, 1½ hours, five or six daily on weekdays, two daily on weekends), calling at Featherston and Carterton. For other Wairarapa towns, connect with the local bus services below.

**Tranzit Coachlines** (☎ 0800 471 227, 06-377 1227; www.tranzit.co.nz; Masterton i-SITE, 316 Queen St) has a bus between Masterton and Palmerston North (one-way \$19, 1¾ hours, one daily), plus local daily services (bus 200) between Featherston and Masterton (\$4) via Greytown and Carterton.

**Wairarapa Coach Lines** (☎ 0800 666 355, 06-308 9352; www.waicoach.co.nz) operates buses between Featherston and Martinborough (\$3.50, 20 minutes, four to five daily) and between Masterton and Martinborough (\$6, 1¾ hours, three daily).

#### TOURS

Without your own wheels, it might be easier to take a Wairarapa day-tour from Wellington: **Hammond's Scenic Tours** (☎ 04-472 0869; www.wellingtonsightseeingtours.com; full-day tour adult/child \$165/82.50) Tours winding through Cape Palliser and Martinborough.

**Tranzit Coachlines** (☎ 0800 471 227, 06-377 1227; www.tranzit.co.nz; Masterton i-SITE, 316 Queen St)

Two daily Wairarapa tours from Wellington or the main Wairarapa towns. The Gourmet Wine Escape (\$115/89 from Wellington/Martinborough) visits Martinborough vineyards and includes tastings and lunch. The Natural Discovery (\$115/111 from Wellington/Martinborough) tour visits Pukaha Mt Bruce National Wildlife Centre plus Masterton's attractions.

**Wellington Rover** (☎ 021 426 211; www.wellingtonrover.co.nz; tours per person \$195) Adventure tours

including horse trekking, glow-worm caves and the Martinborough Wine Centre.

**Zest Food Tours** (☎ 04-801 9198; www.zestfoodtours.co.nz; full-day tour \$195) Small-group Wairarapa food and wine tours.

## MARTINBOROUGH

pop 1360

Martinborough, with its dozens of vineyards (some no bigger than a front lawn), is prime 'minibreak' territory and the Wairarapa's tourist heartland. On weekends, Gucci replaces gumboots as gourmands dine in the excellent restaurants, nose the Pinot and lap up the boutique accommodation. The best time for an overnight visit is midweek, when accommodation is cheaper (although many restaurants shut up shop on Monday and Tuesday).

### Orientation & Information

Martinborough is arrowed off the SH2 from both Featherston and Greytown; it's about 20km from either town. The **Martinborough i-SITE** (☎ 06-306 9043; www.wairarapanz.com; 18 Kitchener St; ☞ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) is full of brochures and information.

### Sights & Activities

Nearly 50 small, often family-owned **wineries** are scattered around town; pick up the *Martinborough Wine Village Map* to aid your navigations. Although production volumes are small, much of NZ's best Pinot Noir originates here. Read all about it at www.winesfrommartinborough.com.

You can sample and purchase many wines under one gabled roof at the **Martinborough Wine Centre** (☎ 06-306 9040; www.martinboroughwinecentre.co.nz; 6 Kitchener St; tastings free-\$1.50; ☞ 9am-5pm), which doubles as a gourmet food shop. While you're here, duck into the outstanding Village Café (see Eating, following) next door.

An easy way to tour the wineries is by **bicycle** – the flat landscape makes for puff-free cruising. **Christina Estate Vineyard** (☎ 06-306 8920; christina.estate@xtra.co.nz; 28 Puruatanga Rd; bike hire per hr/half-/full-day \$15/25/35; ☞ 8.30am-6pm) has bicycles for hire (including tandems!). Martinborough Village Camping (see Sleeping, following) also has bikes for \$35 a day. See also Martinborough Cycle Tours (see Tours, following).

About 3km from town off Oxford St is **Olivo** (☎ 06-306 9074; www.olivo.co.nz; Hinakura Rd; admission free; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri), which grows, presses,

bottles and sells its own olive oil (the fennel-infused version is a beauty).

**Patuna Farm Adventures** (☎ 06-306 9966; www.patunafarm.co.nz; Ruakokoputuna Rd) offers horse treks (from \$35), a challenging pole-to-pole rope course (from \$20), and a four-hour guided walk through native bush and a limestone chasm (\$15). The chasm is open late October until Easter; other activities operate year-round.

## Tours

**Martinborough Cycle Tours** (☎ 027 447 0783; martinboroughcycletours@gmail.com; 10 Ohio St; unguided/guided tours from \$35/60; ☎ 10am-5pm Sat & Sun, weekdays by arrangement) Equips you with a bike, helmet, map, water bottle and lunch and sets you a-rollin'.

**Martinborough Wine Tours** (☎ 06-306 8032; www.martinboroughwinetours.co.nz; 5hr/full-day tours per couple \$595/650) Dust off your wallet for these personalised, chauffeur-driven tours: 'Total Winery Experience', or 'Martinborough in a Day'.

**Zest Food Tours** (☎ 04-801 9198; www.zestfoodtours.co.nz; full-day tour Greytown/Martinborough \$450/195) Pricey food and wine tours including a tasting or three-course lunch with wine.

## Festivals & Events

**Toast Martinborough** (☎ 06-306 9183; www.toastmartinborough.co.nz; tickets \$60), Martinborough's famous wine, food and music festival, is held annually on the third Sunday in November – Martinborough swells by around 11,000 wine-swillers. Local winemakers save vintage specifically for the festival; around 8500L of wine is swallowed over the day. Book well ahead.

## Sleeping

The i-SITE has a lengthy list of local B&Bs, farmstays and self-contained, weekend-away cottages, and can book them for you. Expect to pay around \$150 per night for two people.

**Martinborough Village Camping** (☎ 06-306 8946; www.martinboroughcamping.com; cnr Princess & Dublin St; unpowered sites \$28, cabins s/d \$35/50; (P)) A much-needed revamp has turned this campground, encircled by grapevines, into an appealing patch of green. It boasts shady trees and a brand-new kitchen and amenities block, and the town pool is over the back fence. Plans for more cabins are on the drawing board. Bike hire is \$35 per day.

**Kate's Place** (☎ 06-306 9935; www.katesplace.co.nz; 7 Cologne St; dm \$25-30, d with bathroom \$80; (P) (Q))

Kate's is an unpretentious, lime-coloured homestay-backpackers with a welcoming owner and a laid-back vibe. The two dorms have solid bunks with extra-wide mattresses. Mull over your day's misdemeanours on the front porch couches.

**Claremont** (☎ 0800 809 162, 06-306 9162; www.theclaremont.co.nz; 38 Regent St; d \$110-150, 4-person apt \$225-275; (P)) A classy accommodation enclave off Jellicoe St, the Claremont has two-storey, self-contained units in great nick, modern studios with spa baths, and sparkling two-bedroom apartments, all at reasonable rates (even cheaper in winter and/or midweek). Barbues, bike hire and a babysitting service too.

**Peppers Martinborough Hotel** (☎ 06-306 9350; www.peppers.co.nz; The Square; d incl breakfast \$275-355; (P)) Grand old hotel on the main square that's been magnificently restored, with 16 spacious, luxe rooms, each individually decorated with pizzazz. All open onto either a wide veranda or courtyard garden. Downstairs the Settlers Bar (mains \$12 to \$18) serves posh pub nosh and local wines by the glass; the adjacent restaurant has an innovative menu and top-notch wine list.

## Eating & Drinking

Eating and drinking is what Martinborough's all about, with award-winning restaurants and gourmet cafés, delicatessens and food shops. Peppers Martinborough Hotel is the best place to join the locals for a drink.

**our pick Village Café** (☎ 06-306 9040; 6 Kitchener St; mains \$10-20; ☎ 8.30am-3pm; (V)) Gourmet home-made meals, cheese platters and wines by the glass in a lofty space next to the Martinborough Wine Centre. Order a pizza, Caesar salad, a big breakfast or a generous slab of cake, flip through a newspaper, and sip a strong coffee or peppery local vino. Great staff, plus it's kid-friendly. Good one!

**est Wine Bar & Eatery** (☎ 06-306 9665; The Square; lunch \$14-20, dinner \$27-35; ☎ 11am-3pm Sat & Sun, 6-10pm daily) A highbrow option that wouldn't feel out of place in the Big Smoke. Long, languorous lunches might involve tapas, lamb shanks or salmon fish cakes; at night the kitchen struts its stuff. Flight of four Pinots \$28.

**Circus** (☎ 06-306 9442; www.circus.net.nz; 34 Jellicoe St; mains \$16-23, tickets adult/concession/child \$14/12/10; ☎ 2.30pm-late Wed-Sun) Absorb an art-house flick in this boutique cinema before adjourning to the sleek café-bar to critique the film over a

bottle of something local and a pizza, salad or pasta of the day.

## CAPE PALLISER

The Wairarapa coast south of Martinborough around **Palliser Bay** and **Cape Palliser** is remote and pleasantly people-free. The bendy road to Cape Palliser is utterly scenic: turquoise ocean, white breakers and black sand beaches on one side; barren hills and sheer cliffs on the other. Beyond the rippling horizon are hints of the South Island, visible on a clear day. On the way, you pass the Wairarapa wetlands and the Spit at Lake Onoko, both noted bird-watching spots. The exposed coast here is also the most reliable place around Wellington for surfing.

Standing like giant organ pipes in the Putangirua Scenic Reserve are the **Putangirua Pinnacles**, formed by rain washing silt and sand away and exposing the underlying bedrock. Accessible by a track near the car park on Cape Palliser Rd, it's an easy 1½-hour return walk along a streambed to the pinnacles, or take the 3½-hour loop track past hills and coastal viewpoints. For some rugged Wairarapa tramping nearby, head to **Aorangi (Haurangi) Forest Park**. For maps and access info contact DOC in Wellington (p404).

Further south is the archetypal fishing village **Ngawi**. The first things you'll notice here are the 20-odd rusty bulldozers on the beach, used to drag fishing boats ashore. Nest stop is the malodorous **seal colony**, the North Island's largest breeding area. Whatever you do in your quest for a photo, don't get between the seals and the sea. If you block their escape route they're likely to have a go at you!

Get your thighs thumping on the steep, 250-step (or is it 249?) climb to **Cape Palliser Lighthouse**, from where there are yet more amazing coastal views, as far as the South Island if it's not hazy.

Martinborough i-SITE (p427) can help with accommodation options in the Lake Ferry and Cape Palliser area, which include camping grounds and holiday homes for rent.

## GREYTOWN

### pop 2000

Several small-town rural communities pop up along SH2 (Carterton, Featherston etc), each with a minor attraction or two and varying degrees of appeal. Greytown has spruced itself up over recent years, and is the pick of the crop: Wellington city-slickers descend on weekends,

filing into rental cottages, high-quality eateries, boutiques and galleries. Check out www.greytown.co.nz for more information.

## Sights

Greytown was the country's first planned inland town: intact Victorian architectural specimens line the main street. The oh-so-quiet **Cobblestones Village Museum** (☎ 06-304 9687; 169 Main St; www.cobblestonesmuseum.org.nz; adult/child \$2.50/1; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sun) is an early settlers museum. There's an old school, hospital and stables onsite. Don't miss **Schoc Chocolate** (☎ 06-304 8960; www.chocolatetherapy.com; 177 Main St; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-5pm Sat & Sun), in a 1920s cottage at the entrance to Cobblestones. Schoc produces heavenly choccies in zany flavours; they can't make enough explosive lime-chilli chocolate to keep up with demand.

About 10km southeast of Carterton is **Stonehenge Aotearoa** (☎ 06-377 1600, 027 2466 766; www.stonehenge-aotearoa.com; adult/concession/child \$15/12/5; ☎ 2pm Sat & Sun by appointment), a life-size recreation of the original. Weird? Yes. Tacky? Absolutely. Highlight of your trip to NZ? Maybe not. To get here, follow the signs off Park Rd in Carterton.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Greytown Camping Ground** (☎ 06-304 9837; Kuratawhiti St; unpowered/power sites \$28/35; (P)) A basic camping ground (with equally basic facilities) scenically spread through Greytown Park, 1km from town.

**The Green Man** (☎ 06-304 9569; thegreenman@xtra.co.nz; 53 Main St; d without bathroom \$75; (P)) Decent pub accommodation on the main drag, with farmer-sized bar meals (lunch and dinner mains \$17 to \$25), and a brilliant stone-walled beer terrace by the street.

**Oak Estate Motor Lodge** (☎ 0800 843 625, 06-304 8188; www.oakestate.co.nz; cnr SH2 & Hospital St; r \$120-185; (P)) Behind a stand of oaks by the roadside are these stylish self-contained units: studios, one- and two-bedroom options.

**White Swan** (☎ 06-304 8894; www.thewhiteswan.co.nz; 109 Main St; r \$139-259; (P)) Painted duck-egg blue and easily the most elegant accommodation in the region, White Swan began life as a pub in Lower Hutt. It was trucked here in six pieces in 2003! Each room is individually decorated, and there are cheaper garden studios and suites. Even if you're not sleeping here, stop by for a beer or meal in the Governor's

Bar (mains \$10 to \$23) or Lilac Dining Room (mains \$10 to \$33).

**Cuckoo Pizza** (☎ 06-304 8992; 128 Main St; mains \$14-18; ☎ 11am-8.30pm Wed-Sun) Refreshingly unruly pizza joint littered with mismatched retro furniture in an old house on the main street. Try the 'moa' pizza (pepperoni, mushrooms, anchovies, olives and chilli), or the broccoli pesto spaghetti. Good coffee too.

**Saluté** (☎ 06-304 9825; 83 Main St; lunch \$10-18, dinner \$28-33; ☎ noon-2.30pm Tue-Sun, 6-10pm Tue-Sat, 11am-2.30pm Sat & Sun) This super-popular restaurant serves gourmet pizzas, *mezze* (small dishes) and African/Mediterranean meals to an appreciative crowd. Try the Moroccan meatballs with sour cherry sauce, watercress, tabouleh, yoghurt and char-grilled flatbread (\$19).

## MASTERTON & AROUND

pop 19,500

Masterton is the Wairarapa's utilitarian hub, but it's not as urbane or geared towards visitors as Martinborough (some say that's a good thing). The town's main claim to immortality is the international **Golden Shears** ([www.goldenshears.co.nz](http://www.goldenshears.co.nz)) competition, held annually in the first week of March. Over three days, sheep-shearers are raised to the level of deities, and spectators experience a sniff of rural life. Short detours from Masterton are beaches, mountains and forest parks.

## Orientation & Information

State Highway 2 runs through the centre of town. From the south SH2 is named High St, which then becomes Chapel St. Queen St runs parallel to High/Chapel St, one block east. The town's prime attractions are another block east on Dixon St. The **Masterton i-SITE** (☎ 06-370 0900; [www.wairarapanz.com](http://www.wairarapanz.com); 316 Queen St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) exudes local passion and pride. Transitz Coachlines (p427) is also based here.

## Festivals & Events

**Wairarapa Wines Harvest Festival** (☎ 027 477 4717; [www.wairarapawines.co.nz](http://www.wairarapawines.co.nz); tickets \$25-35) A high-quality annual event (usually on a Saturday in mid-March) showcasing food and wine from throughout the Wairarapa. Held at a remote riverbank setting 10 minutes from Masterton.

**Wairarapa International Balloon Fiesta** (☎ 06-3700 900; [www.nzballoons.co.nz](http://www.nzballoons.co.nz)) Dozens of hot-air balloons from across the globe take to the Wairarapa skies in this five-day balloon bash. Late March.

## Sights & Activities

Stretch your car-cramped legs in the 32-hectare **Queen Elizabeth Park** (Dixon St; ☎ 24hr), with its aviaries, duck-filled lake, children's playgrounds and impossibly green cricket oval. Opposite the park is **Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art & History** (☎ 06-370 0001; [www.aratoi.org.nz](http://www.aratoi.org.nz); cnr Bruce & Dixon Sts; admission free; ☎ 10am-4.30pm), documenting the art and cultural heritage of the region, both Maori and Pakeha.

Occupying two historic woolsheds next to Aratoi is **Shear Discovery** (☎ 06-378 8008; [www.sheardiscovery.co.nz](http://www.sheardiscovery.co.nz); Dixon St; adult/child/family \$5/2/10; ☎ 10am-4pm), passionately dedicated to NZ's sheep-shearing and wool-production industries (keep the sheep-shagging jokes to a minimum). It also hosts the annual Golden Shears festival (left).

**Castlepoint**, on the coast 68km east of Masterton, is an awesome, end-of-the-world place, with a reef, the lofty 162m-high Castle Rock, protected swimming and walking tracks. There's an easy (but sometimes ludicrously windy) 30-minute return walk across the reef to the lighthouse, where 70-plus shell species are fossilized in the cliffs. Another one-hour return walk runs to a huge limestone cave (take a torch), or take the 1½-hour return track from Deliverance Cove to Castle Rock. Keep well away from the lower reef when there are heavy seas. Ask the staff at Masterton i-SITE (left) about accommodation here.

**Pukaha Mt Bruce National Wildlife Centre** (☎ 06-375 8004; [www.mtbruce.org.nz](http://www.mtbruce.org.nz); adult/child \$8/free; ☎ 9am-4.30pm), 30km north of Masterton on SH2, is an important sanctuary for native NZ wildlife (mostly birds). Large aviaries and outdoor reserves harbour some of the country's rarest species, and there's a nocturnal house with kiwis (sightings aren't guaranteed), tuatara and other reptiles. Feed the fat eels daily at 1.30pm; guided park tours (\$15) at 10.30am and 2pm on weekends.

The turn-off to the eastern entrance of the **Tararua Forest Park** is just south of Masterton on SH2; follow Norfolk Rd about 15km to the gates. Mountain streams dart through virgin forest in the tramping area here known simply as 'Holdsworth'. At the park entrance are swimming, picnic areas and **campsites** (unpowered sites per adult/child \$5/2.50). Park walks include short, easy family hikes, excellent one- or two-day tramps, and longer, challenging treks for experienced bush-bods (through to the west coast near Otaki). The resident caretaker (☎ 06-377

0022) has maps and hut accommodation info. Check weather and track updates before setting off, and be prepared to be baked, battered and buffeted by fickle conditions.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Empire Lodge** (☎ 06-377 1902; [www.empirelodge.co.nz](http://www.empirelodge.co.nz); 94 Queen St; backpackers dm/s/d \$20/25/45, hotel s/d \$65/75; ☎ P) A central, 1870s budget hotel and backpackers, complete with communal kitchen, TV room and views of the Tararua Range from the rear deck. Hotel rooms are good value, with bathroom, TV and décor dating back to the Queen's visit in 1954.

**Discovery Motor Lodge** (☎ 0800 188 515, 06-378 7745; [www.discovery.co.nz](http://www.discovery.co.nz); 210 Chapel St; d \$110-180; ☎ P) Midrange motels pepper the highway, particularly in the southern part of town. U-shaped Discovery is a cut above the rest, with its tidy modern studio, one- and two-bedroom units, plus swimming pool.

**Café Strada** (☎ 06-378 8450; 232 Queen St; lunch \$15-20, dinner \$22-28; ☎ 8am-late; ☎ V) The best (only?) place in town for a city-standard

meal, recommended for its friendly service and crowd-pleasing menu. All-day choices include gluten- and wheat-free dishes, with a menu split into 'Veg' and 'Not-so-veg' selections. Live music on Thursday nights; Art Deco cinema next door.

**Lounge Wine Bar** (☎ 06-379 6065; 78-81 Main St, Carterton; tapas \$4-13; ☎ 3.30pm-late Wed-Sun; ☎ V) The undisputed highlight of Carterton is this bohemian booze room, with Kiwi-style tapas (marinated mussels, char-grilled mushrooms), art-house movies on Wednesday and Thursday nights, and live music on Friday and Saturday. Local wines flow.

**Gladstone Inn** (☎ 06-372 7866; 51 Gladstone Rd, Gladstone; lunch \$13-17, dinner \$17-28; ☎ 11am-late) Gladstone, 18km south of Masterton, is less a town, more a state of mind. There's very little here (not even a town, actually), but the roadside Gladstone Inn is unmissable. It's a brawling, old-time country pub with a pool table, jukebox and all-Kiwi beers a-flowin'. The kitchen pumps out 200 pubby meals a night in summer – make sure you book!

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