

# Rotorua & the Bay of Plenty



It was Captain Cook who christened the Bay of Plenty as he sailed into harbour in 1769, and plentiful it remains to this day, blessed with buckets of sunshine and a stunning sandy coastline. The Bay stretches from Waihi Beach in the west to Opotiki in the east, with a sprinkling of seaside towns and the bustling hub of Tauranga in between. Mt Maunganui – the sand-spit suburb that takes its name from the green mound at the end – has been popular with Kiwi holidaymakers for generations who love it for its lashings of salt-licked leisure activities.

East along the pohutukawa-covered coast is Whakatane, the launching point for tours to New Zealand's most active volcano, Whakaari (White Island). Volcanic activity studs the landscape from here to the Central Plateau, constant reminders that under this fertile soil lies a molten core, oozing upwards to the surface.

This hotbed of activity is no more obvious than in Rotorua, NZ's most famous tourist destination. Here the daily business of life goes on among steaming hot springs, explosive geysers, bubbling mud pools, and the clouds of sulphurous gas responsible for its unique eggy smell.

Rotorua and the Bay remain strongholds of Maori tradition and history, so there are plenty of opportunities to explore the rich culture of the indigenous people of NZ – whether it's attending a powerful concert performance, chowing down at a *hangi* or discovering the meaning and techniques of Maori arts and crafts.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Tucking into a Maori *hangi* and taking in a concert at **Tamaki** (p328) or **Mitai** (p328) Maori villages
- Watching the kaleidoscopic colours swirling at the geothermal wonderland of **Wai-O-Tapu** (p341)
- Kayaking **Lake McLaren** at night in a quest to discover the secret glow-worm canyon (p343)
- Mountain biking on tracks from humble to hardcore at **Whakarewarewa Forest** (p330)
- Surfing NZ's first artificial reef at **Mt Maunganui** (p348)
- Flying or boating out to NZ's only active marine volcano, **Whakaari** (White Island; p357)
- Swimming with dolphins at **Tauranga** (p343) or **Whakatane** (p354)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 07

■ [www.rotoruanz.com](http://www.rotoruanz.com)

■ [www.bayofplenty.co.nz](http://www.bayofplenty.co.nz)



## ROTORUA AREA IN...

### Two Days

Up with the lark and breakfast near the lakeside at **Lime Caffeteria** (p335) by which time the **Rotorua Museum of Art & History** (opposite) will be open. Stroll along the waters' edge to **Ohinemutu** (opposite) and back to town via steamy **Kuirau Park** (p327). Then head to the **Blue Baths** (p326) for a relaxing soak. In the evening, catch a *hangi* and concert at **Tamaki** (p328) or **Mitai** (p328) Maori villages.

Start the second day with a tour of **Te Whakarewarewa** (p326) and watch **Pohutu** geyser blow its top. From there, it's a quick hop to the **Whakarewarewa Forest** (p330) for a couple of hours exploration by mountain bike. Hop across town to luge, swing and dine at the unmissable **Skyline Skyrides** (p339), but not before catching the falcons at **Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust** (p337).

### Four Days

Take the two-day itinerary, then explore further afield starting with **Agroventures** (p339) where you can while away several hours with a farm show, bungy, giant swing and the zany Zorb. A compulsory stop en route for nature-lovers is **Rainbow Springs Nature Park** (p337). Learn more about the kiwi on a tour of **Kiwi Encounter**. On your last day, head southeast and visit the **Buried Village** (p340), swim in **Lake Tarawera** (p340), or take a long walk on one of the tracks at nearby **Lake Okataina** (p328).

## Tourist Information

**Automobile Association office** (AA; Map p326; ☎ 07-348 3069; www.aatravel.co.nz; 1121 Eruera St) Has maps and other travel information.

**Tourism Rotorua i-SITE** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 768 678; www.rotoruanz.com; 1167 Fenton St; ☎ 8am-6pm) The hub for all travel information and bookings including DOC walks. It also has an exchange bureau, café and other services including showers and lockers.

**TravelCafe** (Map p326; ☎ 07-343 6525; www.travel.cafe.co.nz; 1221 Tutaneikai St; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat) Handles bookings for all local accommodation and activities as well as transport here and abroad. Internet access on site.

## Travel Agencies

**Galaxy United Travel** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 7444; 1183 Amohau St) Books planes, buses and accommodation, local and international.

**House of Travel** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 4152; www.houseoftravel.co.nz; cnr Fenton & Eruera Sts; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Domestic and international travel bookings including interisland ferries.

## SIGHTS

### Lake Rotorua

Lake Rotorua is the largest of the district's 16 lakes and is – underneath all that water – a spent volcano. Sitting in the lake is **Mokoia Island**, which has for centuries been occupied by various subtribes of the area. The lake can

be explored by boat with several operators situated at the lakefront.

**Mokoia Island Wai Ora Experiences** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 665 642; www.mokoiaisland.co.nz; Lakefront, at Volcanic Air Safaris) has exclusive rights to take visitors to Mokoia Island and offers two tours. The Ultimate Island Experience (adult/child \$90/47.50, 2½-3hr) tour includes hearing the most famous tales of the island and takes you to the legendary hot pool of Hinemoa (see the boxed text, opposite). This is followed by an indigenous food tasting. The shorter Taste of Mokoia (adult/child \$70/35, 1½-2hr) is similar but with less of a walkabout.

The **Lakeland Queen paddle steamer** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 572 784; www.lakelandqueen.co.nz; Lakefront) offers one-hour breakfast (adult/child \$35/18), and longer lake cruises (lunch \$47/24, dinner \$68/34).

To explore the lake under your own steam, head for **Mana Adventures** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 463 925; www.manadventures.co.nz; Lakefront; ☎ 9am-5.30pm), which offers (weather permitting) rental of pontoon boats (per hour \$95), pedal boats (per 20 mins \$8/5 per adult/child) and kayaks (per hour/half day \$20/35). It also hires fishing boats and runs fishing tours (see p330).

Speed things up by jetboating with **Kawarau Jet** (☎ 0800 538 7746; www.nzjetboat.co.nz; Lakefront; 30min/2½hr \$69/120), which tears around the lake.

## Ohinemutu

Ohinemutu is a charming lakeside Maori village that traces the fusing of European and Maori cultures. The historic **St Faith's Anglican Church** (Map p326; cnr Mataiawhea & Korokai Sts; admission by donation; ☎ 8am-6pm) is intricately decorated with Maori carvings, *tukutuku* (woven panels), painted scrollwork and stained-glass windows. One window features an image of Christ wearing a Maori cloak as he appears to walk on the waters of Lake Rotorua.

Opposite the church is **Tama-te-kapua Meeting House**, built in 1905 and named for the captain of the *Arawa* canoe. This sacred meeting house for Te Arawa people is not open to visitors but can be admired from the outside.

## Rotorua Museum of Art & History

This impressive **museum** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 4350; www.rotoruumuseum.co.nz; Government Gardens; adult/child/family \$12/5/27; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Sep, Oct-Mar to 8pm, tours 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 2.30pm & 4pm) is housed in a grand mock-Tudor building originally constructed as a spa retreat in 1908. Displays in the former shower rooms offer an insight into the eccentric therapies once practised here, including exposure to radium as a cure for gout, and running an electri-

cal current through baths as a treatment for 'nervous exhaustion'.

A gripping 20-minute film on the history of Rotorua, including the Tarawera eruption, runs every 20 minutes. There's a collection of *taonga* (treasures) of Te Arawa, featuring woodcarving, flax weaving and jade. Other exhibits relate the stories of the WWII 28 Maori Battalion, a revered military unit formed of local Arawa people. There's also a pleasant café with picturesque garden views, although the best view (arguably the best in town) can be had from the viewing platform on the rooftop. At the time of research, a new gallery was in the works.

The English-style **Government Gardens** surrounding the museum are pretty indeed with roses aplenty and civilized amenities such as croquet lawns and bowling greens, with steaming thermal pools dotted about. If you fancy **bowls** (☎ 07-348 0385; 30min/1hr \$15/20; ☎ 3-7pm), reservations are essential. Otherwise there's **golf** (☎ 07-348 9126; www.thegolfcompany.co.nz; ☎ 7.30am-8pm) – either the nine-hole course (adult/child \$14/9), mini golf (adult/child \$9/7) or the driving range (80 balls \$10). The golf people also have a **baseball batting rig** where balls are fired at you to hit your home runs (35 balls \$8).

## HINEMOA & TUTANEKAI

Hinemoa was a young woman of a *hapu* (subtribe) that lived on the western shore of Lake Rotorua, while Tutaneikai was a young man of Mokoia Island *hapu*. The pair met and fell in love during a regular tribal meeting. While both were of high birth, Tutaneikai was illegitimate and so, while Hinemoa's family thought he was a fine young man, marriage between the two was forbidden.

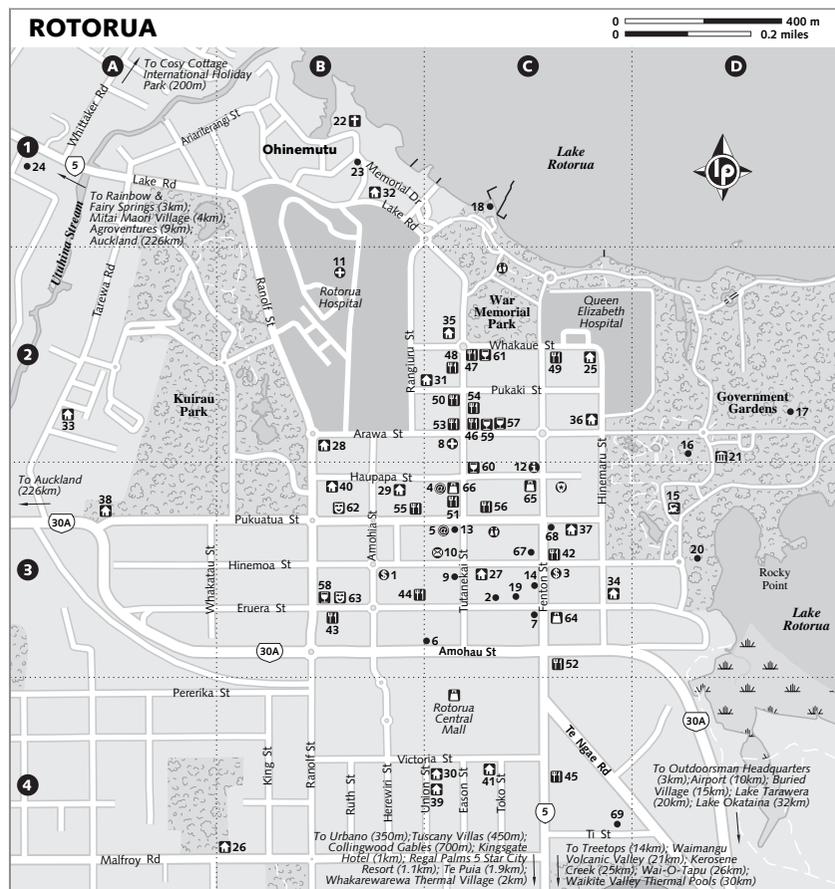
Home on Mokoia, the lovesick Tutaneikai played his flute for his love, the wind carrying the melody across the water. Hinemoa heard his declaration; her people took to tying up the canoes at night to ensure she wouldn't go to him.

Finally, Tutaneikai's music won her over. Hinemoa undressed and swam the long distance from the shore to the island. When she arrived on Mokoia, Hinemoa found herself in a quandary. Shedding her clothing in order to swim, she could hardly walk into the island's settlement naked! She hopped into a hot pool to think about her next move.

Eventually a man came to fetch water from a cold spring beside the hot pool. In a deep man's voice, Hinemoa called out, 'Who is it?' The man replied that he was Tutaneikai's slave on a water run. Hinemoa grabbed the slave's calabash and smashed it to pieces. More slaves came, but she smashed their calabashes too, until finally Tutaneikai came to the pool and demanded that the interloper identify himself – imagine his surprise when it turned out to be Hinemoa! He secreted her into his hut.

Next morning, after a suspiciously long lie-in, a slave reported that someone was in Tutaneikai's bed. The two lovers were rumbled, and when Hinemoa's superhuman efforts to reach Tutaneikai had been revealed, their union was celebrated.

Descendants of Hinemoa and Tutaneikai still live around Rotorua today.



Also within the gardens are the gorgeous Spanish Mission-style **Blue Baths** (Map p326; ☎ 07-350 2119; www.bluebaths.co.nz; adult/child/family \$9/6/25; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Nov, Dec-Mar to 7pm), opened in 1933. Today you can visit a small museum recalling the building's heyday, with recorded anecdotes and displays in the old changing rooms. If it all makes you feel like taking a dip yourself, there's a modern heated pool (adult/child \$5/free).

**Te Whakarewarewa & Te Puia**

Pronounced 'fa-ka-re-wa-re-wa', this area's full name is Te Whakarewarewatanga o te Ope Taua a Wahiao, meaning 'The Gathering Together of the War Party of Wahiao', although many people just call it 'Whaka'.

Whatever you prefer, this thermal reserve is as famous for its Maori cultural significance as its steam and bubbling mud. There are two separate visitor attractions here, both located around 3km from the city centre at the south end of Fenton Street. City buses stop near Tryon St.

Whakarewarewa's most famous natural attractions are the geysers, which can be visited at **Te Puia** (Map p338; ☎ 0800 837 842; www.tepuia.com; Hemo Rd; entry incl tour & daytime concert adult/child \$50/25, Mai Ora evening concert & hangi \$90/45, combination \$130/65; 🕒 8am-6pm summer, 8am-5pm winter), the most polished of NZ's Maori cultural attractions. Its principal purpose is as the home of the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. Here you can discover the work and methods of many tradi-

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ANZ Bank.....1 B3	Tama-te-kapua	Lovely India.....50 C2
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tional Maori weavers, wood and greenstone carvers. More of these arts are displayed at Rotowhio Marae, which has a carved meetinghouse, a café and a gift shop which stocks an excellent range of arts and crafts.

There are more than 500 springs in the reserve, varying from cold to boiling cauldrons. The most famous spring is **Pohutu** ('Big Splash' or 'Explosion'), which erupts up to 20 times a day, spurting hot water up to 30 metres skyward. You'll know when it's about to blow because the **Prince of Wales' Feathers** geyser will start up shortly before. There's a specially lit Kiwi house on the reserve, too.

Tours of Te Puia take 90 minutes and depart on the hour. Daytime concerts (45min) start at 10.15am, 12.15pm and 3.15pm, while nightly **Mai Ora hangi** concerts are held in the evenings at 6.15pm.

**Whakarewarewa Thermal Village** (☎ 07-349 3463; www.whakarewarewa.com; Tryon St; adult/child/family incl tours & concerts \$25/12.50/62.50; 🕒 8.30am-5pm, tours 9am-4pm, concerts 11.15am & 2pm), on the eastern side of Whaka, is a living village, where *tangata whenua* (the locals) still reside, as they and their ancestors have for centuries. It's these local villagers who show you around and tell you the stories of their way of life and

significance of the steamy bubbling pools, silica terraces and the geysers that, although inaccessible from the village, are easily viewed from vantage points.

The village shops sell authentic arts and crafts, and you can learn more about traditions such as flax weaving, carving, and *ta moko* (tattooing). Nearby you can eat tasty, buttery sweetcorn pulled straight out of the hot mineral pool – the only genuine geothermal *hangi* in town. There are cultural performances at 11.15am and 2pm, and guided tours at 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.45am, 12.30pm, 1.30pm and 3.30pm.

Want some cheap geothermal thrills? Close to the centre of Rotorua is **Kuirau Park**, a volcanic area that you can wander around for free. Its most recent eruption in late 2003 covered much of the park (including the trees) in mud, drawing crowds of spectators hoping for more displays. It has a crater lake, pools of boiling mud, plenty of huffing steam and mineral baths for dipping.

**Maori Concerts & Hangi**

Maori culture is a major drawcard in Rotorua and, although some find it heavily commercialised, it's a great opportunity to learn more

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about the indigenous culture of NZ. The two big activities are concerts and *hangi* meals, often packaged together in an evening's entertainment that feature the famous *hongi*, *haka*, and *poi* dances.

An established favourite is **Tamaki Maori Village** (Map p338; ☎ 07-349 2999; www.maoriculture.co.nz; 1220 Hinemaru St; adult/child \$95/55; 🚗 tours depart 5pm, 6pm & 7pm summer, 5pm & 7pm winter), which does an excellent twilight tour to a *marae* (meeting house) and Maori village 15km south of Rotorua. Buses collect from accommodation and feature a briefing on traditional protocol required to visit a *marae* by a Maori 'entertainer' (aka hilarious bus driver). The concert is followed by a meat-heavy *hangi*.

A similar package is offered by **Mitai Maori Village** (Map p338; ☎ 07-343 9132; www.mitai.co.nz; 196 Fairy Springs Rd; concert & hangi adult/child \$92/18-46; 🚗 6.30pm). This family-run outfit offers a popular three-hour evening event of concert performance, *hangi* and glowworm bushwalk, which can be combined with a tour of Rainbow Springs Nature Park (see p337) next door where you can enjoy the coloured nightlights and walk through the open Kiwi enclosure (four hrs total, adult/child \$103/\$29-56). Pick-ups are available.

**Te Puia** (p326) puts on three daily shows (10.15am, 12.15pm & 3.15pm) and one nightly show (6.15pm), while **Whakarewarewa** (p327) has two daylight shows (11.15am & 2pm; included with admission), great for busy people.

A long-standing player offering a quality *hangi* and concert experience is **Rotoiti Tours** (off Map p338; ☎ 07-348 8969; www.worldofmaori.co.nz; Rakeiao Marae; adult/child \$99/50; 🚗 6.30pm), based at Rakeiao Marae, on Lake Rotoiti shore, 20 minutes' drive from Rotorua. They offer *marae* stays by arrangement and offer pick-ups from most Rotorua hotels.

A contemporary twist is offered by **Tribal Lights** (p326; ☎ 0800 874 225; www.triballights.co.nz; 37 Geddes Rd; adult/child show \$50/30, show & meal \$85/45; 🚗 summer 7pm, winter 6pm, Mon-Sat), who present two hours of colour-filled interpretations of traditional legends, hamming up every dramatic moment. Roast buffet & *hangi* optional extra, with courtesy bus pick-ups around town.

Many of the big hotels offer Maori concerts and *hangi*, making up for what they lack in ambience with convenience. Some of the main venues:

**Kingsgate Hotel** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 0199; www.kingsgaterotorua.co.nz; Fenton St; concert adult/child \$22.50/11.25, incl hangi \$45/22.50; 🚗 6.45pm)

**Novotel Lakeside Hotel** (Map p326; ☎ 07-346 3888; novotelrotorua.co.nz; Tutanekei St; concerts adult/child \$30/15, incl hangi \$60/30; 🚗 7pm)

**Millennium** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 1234; cnr Eruera & Hinemaru Sts; concert adult/child \$20/10, incl hangi \$60/30; 🚗 6.30pm)

**Pohutu Cultural Theatre (Heritage Rotorua)** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 476 488; www.pohututheatre.co.nz; cnr of Froude & Tryon St; concerts & hangi adult/child \$65/32.50; 🚗 6.30pm)

## ACTIVITIES

### Thermal Pools & Massage

The **Polynesian Spa** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 1328; www.polynesianspa.co.nz; Lakefront, off Hinemaoa St; pools main adults only \$17, private adult/child per 30min \$17/5, spa therapies from \$80; 🚗 8am-11pm, spa therapies 9am-8pm) is in the Government Gardens. A bathhouse was opened at these springs in 1882 and people have been swearing by the waters ever since.

There is mineral bathing (36°C to 42°C) in several picturesque pools at the lake's edge, marble-lined terraced pools and a larger, main pool. Also housed in the modern complex are several more commercial activities such as luxury therapies (massage, mud and beauty treatments) as well as a café and gift shop.

Approximately 30km south of Rotorua on SH5 are the open-air **Waikite Valley Thermal Pools** (Map p338; ☎ 07-333 1861; www.hotpools.co.nz; public pools adult/child/family \$12/6/30, private pools 40min \$14; 🚗 10am-10pm). As well as the large main pool there are two more relaxing pools and four private spas ranging from 35°C to 40°C. Turn right at the signpost opposite the Wai-O-Tapu turn-off, and continue for 6km. There's a café and camping on site (pools free for campers).

For a natural hot water dip, visit **Kerosene Creek** (Map p338), 26km out on SH5. Turn left on the unsealed Kerosene Creek Rd and follow it for 2km. This is one of the few places where the public can bathe in natural thermal pools for free. At least, it will be free if your car doesn't get broken into by thieves – take care not to leave any valuables in your vehicle.

### Walking

There are plenty of opportunities to stretch your legs around Rotorua, with day walks a speciality. The booklet *Walks in the Rotorua Lakes area* (\$2.50), available from the i-SITE,

### MAORI NZ: BAY OF PLENTY

The Bay of Plenty's traditional name, Te Rohe o Mataatua, recalls the ancestral *Mataatua* canoe, which arrived here from Hawaiki to make an eventful landfall at Whakatane (see the boxed text, p356). The region's history stretches back further than that, though, with the Polynesian settler Toi setting up what's claimed to be Aotearoa's first settlement in about AD 800.

Major tribal groups in the region are the Ngati Awa (www.ngatiawa.iwi.nz) of the Whakatane area, Whakatohea (www.whakatohea.co.nz) of Opotiki, Ngaierangi (www.ngaierangi.org.nz) of Tauranga, and Te Arawa (www.tearawa.iwi.nz) of Rotorua. Tribes in this region were involved on both sides of the Land Wars of the late 19th century (see the boxed text, p36), with those fighting against the government suffering considerable land confiscations that have caused legal problems right up to the present day.

There's a significant Maori population in the Bay, and there are many ways for travellers to learn about their culture. Opotiki has Hiona St Stephen's Church (p360) – the death here of government spy, Rev Volkner, in 1865 inspired the charming eyeball-eating scene in *Utu*. Whakatane has Toi's Pa (p354), perhaps NZ's oldest *pa* site. Rotorua has traditional villages such as Te Whakarewarewa (p326), cultural performances and *hangi* meals (p327), and much, much, much more.

showcases town walks including the popular lakefront stroll (20 minutes).

All the following walks are shown on the map on p338.

The area around **Lake Okataina** offers walks of varying distance and difficulty. One of the most popular – albeit not for beginners – is the **Western Okataina Walkway** (seven hours), which takes in lake views and a dry crater known as the 'Bullring'. The track runs from Millar Rd at Lake Okareka to Ruato on Lake Rotoiti with public transport past the Ruato end only.

The **Eastern Okataina Walkway** (three hours) goes along the eastern shoreline of Lake Okataina to Lake Tarawera and passes the **Soundshell**, a natural amphitheatre that has *pa* (fortified village) remains, and several swimming spots. The **Northern Tarawera Track** (three hours one way) connects to the Eastern Okataina Walkway, creating a two-day walk from either Lake Okataina or Ruato to Lake Tarawera with an overnight camp at either **Humphries Bay** (sites free) or **Tarawera Outlet** (sites \$7). From Tarawera Outlet you can walk on to **Tarawera Falls** (see p358).

The **Okere Falls** are about 21km northeast of Rotorua on SH33, with an easy **track** (30 minutes) through native podocarp forest to the 7m falls, which are popular for rafting. Other walks continue up the Kaituna River to the lookout at **Hinemaoa's Steps** and Tutea Caves.

Just north of Wai-O-Tapu on SH5, the **Rainbow Mountain Track** (one way 1½ hours) makes for a strenuous walk up to the summit of the peak known to Maori as Maungakakamea (Mountain of coloured

earth). There are spectacular views from the summit with a panorama that takes in Lake Taupo, Tongariro National Park and the Paeroa Range.

### White-water Rafting & Sledging

Thrillseekers can find plenty of white-water action around Rotorua with the chance to take on the Grade V Kaituna River, complete with a startling 7m drop at Okere Falls. Most of these trips take a day, but times are often negotiable. Some companies head further out to the Rangitaiki (Grade III-VI) and Wairoa River (Grade V), raftable only when the dam is opened every second Sunday. Sledging (in case you didn't know) is zooming downriver on a highly manoeuvrable body board.

Most operators can arrange transport. **Kaitiaki Adventures** (☎ 0800 338 736; www.kaitiaki.co.nz) Offers white-water rafting trips on the Kaituna (\$82) and Wairoa (\$89), a sledge-raft combo on the Kaituna (\$170) and Wairoa sledge (one guide per person) \$299. **Kaituna Cascades** (☎ 0800 524 8862; www.kaituna-cascades.co.nz) Does rafting on the Kaituna (\$72), Rangitaiki (\$99) and Wairoa (\$92).

**Raftabout** (☎ 0800 723 822; www.raftabout.co.nz) Does rafting on the Kaituna (\$85), Rangitaiki (\$95) and Wairoa (\$95) with sledging on the Kaituna (\$99).

**River Rats** (☎ 0800 333 900; www.riverrats.co.nz) Takes on the Wairoa (\$99), Kaituna (\$85), Tongariro (\$99) and runs two trips on the Rangitaiki – for adults (\$110) and a gentler, more scenic trip, good for youngsters (\$69).

**Wet 'n' Wild** (☎ 0800 462 7238; www.wetnwildrafting.co.nz) Runs trips on the Kaituna (\$89), Wairoa (\$99), the Mokau (\$120) as well as longer, helicopter-access trips to remote parts of the Motu and Mohaka (2-5 days \$395-875).

## Fishing

There's always good fishing to be had somewhere around the lakes. You can hire guides to trout fish or go solo, but either way a licence (per day/season \$19/96) is essential, available from **O'Keefe's** (Map p326; ☎ 07-346 0178; 1113 Eruera St). You can fish Rotorua's lakefront with a licence, though not all lakes can be fished year-round; check with O'Keefe's or the i-SITE (see p324).

Recommended guides include:

**Clark Gregor** (☎ 07-347 1123; www.troutnz.co.nz; per hr \$95) Does fly- and boat fishing.

**Gordon Randle** (☎ 07-349 2555; www.rotoruatrout.co.nz; per day \$650) Does river fishing with gear and lunch supplied.

**Silver Hilton Trout Fishing** (☎ 07-332 3488; www.troutfly.co.nz; per day \$650) Does river fishing with gear and lunch supplied.

**Trout Man** (☎ 021 951 174; www.waiteti.com; 2hrs/day trip from \$25/110) Learn to fish and share the passion with experienced angler and fishing correspondent Harvey Clark, from a couple of hours to multiday trips.

Boats can be hired from **Mana Adventures** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 463 925; www.manaadventures.co.nz; Lakefront), who also run lake trout fishing in the area (boat hire per 2 hours \$190, 3-hr trip from \$280).

## Kayaking

Three companies can get you paddling on the waterways.

**Adventure Kayaking** (☎ 07-348 9451; www.adventurkayaking.co.nz; hire per day \$40, trips half-full day from \$70-110) takes trips on Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti, Tarawera and Okataina; and also offer freedom hire.

**Kaituna Kayaks** (☎ 0800 465 292; www.kaituna.kayaks.com; half-day trip \$150, lessons half/full day \$149/290) offers guided tandem trips and kayaking lessons on the Kaituna.

**Sunspots Kayak Shop** (☎ 07-362 4222; www.gokayaking.co.nz; 391 SH 33, Mourea; 2-hr trip adult/child \$40/20, hire per hr/day \$20/45) offers a self-guided paddle down the Ohau channel from Lake Rotorua to Rotoiti, as well as freedom hire.

## Mountain Biking

On the edge of town is **Whakarewarewa Forest** (see p340), home to some of the best **mountain bike trails** in the country. There are close to 100km of tracks to keep bikers of all skill levels happy for days on end. Note that not all tracks in the forest are designated for bikers, so adhere to the signposts. The Redwoods area of the forest has a **visitor cen-**

**tre** where you can get a trail map and learn more about the area.

At the Waipa Mill carpark entrance to the forest, the starting point for the bike trails, you can hire bikes (including children's, for cheaper rates) from **Planet Bike** (Map p326; ☎ 07-346 1717; 027-280 2817; www.planetbike.co.nz; bikes per 2hr/day \$35/55, guided rides 2hr from \$69). They will also arrange shuttles to get you to the park.

Mountain bikes can also be hired from **Bike Vegas** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 1151; www.bikevegas.co.nz; 1275 Fenton St; bikes per half/day \$35/55; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat).

To explore Rotorua township by bike, you can hire bikes from **Lady Jane's Ice Cream Parlour** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 9340; cnr Tutanekei & Whakaue Sts; per hr/day \$10/25; ☎ 10am-late)

## Other Activities

Another opportunity to get limbered up is at the **climbing wall** (Map p326; ☎ 07-350 1400; www.climbthewall.co.nz; basement, 1140 Hinemoa St; admission \$14; ☎ noon-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun).

**NZONE** (☎ 0800 376 796; www.nzone.biz; dives \$249-399) offers tandem skydives from 9000ft, 12,000ft or 15,000ft, giving you a birds-eye view of the lakes and volcanoes. They are based at Rotorua Airport, with town pick-ups available.

Several companies will help you saddle up for horse treks on idyllic trails around Rotorua. At the **Farmhouse** (Map p338; ☎ 07-332 3771; Central Rd, Ngongotaha; 1hr/2 \$40/70), take a shorter trip for beginners, and a longer trip for experienced riders, north of Rotorua; **Paradise Valley Horse Treks** (off Map p338; ☎ 07-348 3300; www.paradisetreks.co.nz; 679 Paradise Valley Rd; treks 1hr/2hr \$55/110) takes treks for novices and experienced riders through a 700-acre farm north of Rotorua; and **Peka Horsetreks** (Map p338; ☎ 07-346 1755; treks 1hr/2hr \$50/80) guides riders through the Peka forest south of Rotorua.

20km north of Rotorua, **Off Road NZ** (Map p338; ☎ 07-332 5748; www.offroadnz.co.nz; 193 Amooore Rd) is the place for self-drive tours through bush. You can zip around in a 4WD (\$85 per hour), or steer 'monster trucks' (\$40) and sprint cars (\$35) through purpose-built courses. It also offers claybird shooting (\$20 for five shots) and archery (\$20 for 10 arrows).

**Pure Dirt Tours** (Map p338; ☎ 027 2888 243; www.puredirttours.co.nz; Fairy Springs Rd; tours from 40min \$100) roars though the local scenery on 50cc to 160cc trail bikes. If you like this, you'll probably like **Drift Kartz** (☎ 07-345 6211; www.driftkartz.co.nz; 10 Old Taupo Rd; 1/3/5 races \$25/35/50), go-kart races around a speedway track which guaran-

tees plenty of sideways slides. Each race takes about 10 minutes.

## WALKING TOUR

Start out from **Rotorua Museum of Art & History** (1; p325); once a bathhouse for the affluent, it remains the town's most impressive building. Follow the road west through the elegant Government Gardens, which conclude at Princes Gate Arches. Through the arch you'll see the grand **Princes Gate Hotel** (2; p334), moved here in the 1920s from Waihi.

Follow this street to the roundabout before heading right down Fenton St, towards the lake. Head left before you hit the water and walk alongside the glittering lake. The road veers away from the water onto Memorial Dr, which in turn takes you to the historic Maori village of Ohinemutu with its intri-

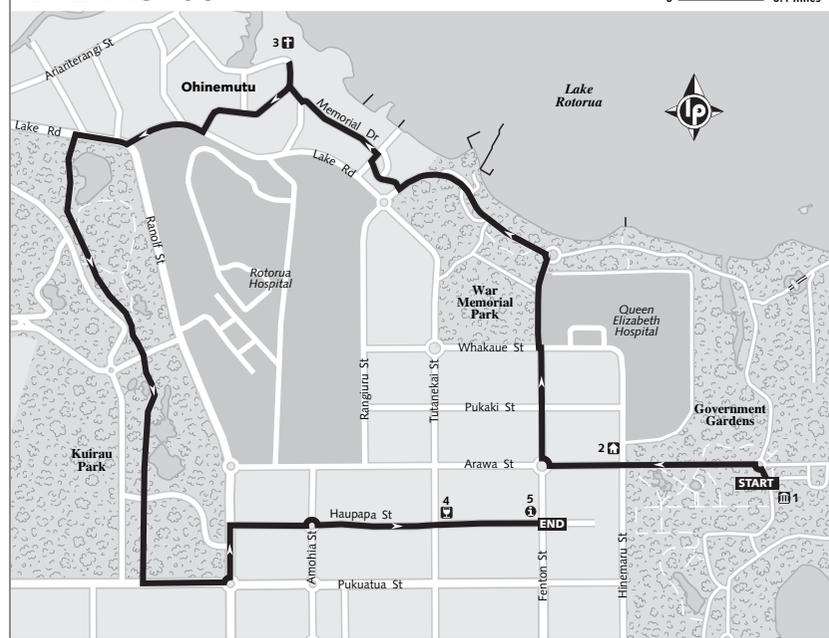
### WALK FACTS

**Start** Rotorua Museum

**Finish** i-SITE

**Distance** 2.9km

## WALKING TOUR



cately carved Tama-te-kapua Meeting House and **St Faith's Anglican Church** (3; p325), which combines Christian and Maori traditions.

Double back to Lake Rd and head up the hill to Kuirau Park, with its steamy scenes and whiffs of sulphur. Once you're done exploring, turn left into Pukuatua St, left into Amohia St and left again into Haupapa St. Head up this street to the old police station, now the **Pig & Whistle** (4; p336) – have you earned yourself a drink yet? Keep on up Haupapa St to the mock-Tudor **i-SITE** (5; p324) and stock up on maps and pamphlets to explore further.

## ROTORUA FOR CHILDREN

Rotorua is bound to be a hit with kids. Many of the geothermal areas such as Wai-O-Tapu and Te Puia have pram-able boardwalks, so bring the stroller for when little legs get tired. For legs with energy to burn, go to **Whakarewarewa Forest** (p340) for a mini mountain bike ride or walk in the woods.

To climb up high without dragging your feet, take a gondola ride at **Skyline Skyrides** (p339) and luge the afternoon away. See the sights on land and lake with the bio-fuelled

**Rotorua Duck Tours** (below), or under your own steam by pedal boat from **Mana Adventures** (p324) at the lakefront.

Tree-huggers and animal patters have plenty of choice with a plethora of nature parks (p337). And if all else fails you can threaten to strap troublesome teens into a **Zorb** (p339) and roll them down the hill.

## TOURS

To make sense of it all, or if time is tight, take a tour – book at the i-SITE or via many hostels and hotels.

**Elite Adventures** (☎ 07-347 8282; www.tour-guide.co.nz) Two half-day tours (adult/child from \$75/55) and a full-day tour (adult/child \$195/110) covering some of the major cultural and natural attractions.

**Geyser Link Tours** (☎ 0800 000 4321; www.geyserlink.co.nz) Tours of most of the major sights, including Wai-O-Tapu and Te Puia (adult/child \$85/40, 4½ hours) and Hell's Gate (adult/child \$20/10, 2 hours).

**Mt Tarawera New Zealand** (☎ 07-349 3714; www.mt-tarawera.co.nz) Guided half-day 4WD tours to the top of Mt Tarawera (adult/child \$133/78) as well as helicopter landings on the summit (\$435) and the Volcanic Eco Tour, which combines the 4WD trip with Wai-O-Tapu and Waimangu (\$230/153). Add-ons include traversing the volcano on foot (\$149) or helibiking (\$610).

**Newmans Coach Lines** (☎ 07-343 1730; www.newmanscoach.co.nz) Tours taking in three, four and five sights around town (adult/child \$113/76, \$141/95, \$159/107).

**Rotorua Duck Tours** (☎ 07-345 6522; www.rotorua-ducktours.co.nz; adult/child/family \$58/35/139; ☎ 11am, 1pm & 3.30pm summer, 11am & 2.15pm winter) A quacker 90-minute trip departing from the i-SITE, taking in the major sites of town then heading out onto the lake in an amphibious, bio-fuelled, fun fashion.

## Scenic Flights

Just as well there are only window seats ... there's plenty of see.

**Air Discovery** (☎ 07-308 7760; www.airdiscovery.co.nz; Rotorua Airport; 12min-4hrs \$50/600) Offers short around-town trips through to volcanic explorations including a White Island landing and walk-about.

**Helipro** (☎ 07-357 2512; www.helipro.co.nz; 8min-4hrs \$89/855) Based at the Agrodome, Skyline Skyrides and Te Puia, Helipro does a variety of helicopter trips including city flights, and Mt Tarawera and White Island landings.

**Volcanic Air Safaris** (☎ 0800 800 848; www.volcanic-air.co.nz; 6min-3hrs \$60-800) Floatplane and helicopter flights from the lakefront, including a combined flight and jetboat experience or combined helicopter flight and guided tour of Hell's Gate. The company also runs a 3hr trip exploring White Island and Mt Tarawera.

## SLEEPING Budget

Rotorua's ever-expanding backpacker scene offers many good options close to the action.

**Rotorua Central Backpackers** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 3285; 76 Pukuatua St; dm/d&tw \$21/50; ☎ ☎) This heritage hostel was built in 1936 and retains historic features including dark-wood skirting boards and door frames, deep bathtubs and geothermal radiators. Dorms are no more than six beds (and no bunks), plus there's a spa pool and barbecue, all within strolling distance of the museum.

**Cactus Jacks Backpackers** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 3121; www.cactusjackbackpackers.co.nz; 1210 Haupapa St; dm/s/d/tw \$22/37/55/50; ☎) If you're looking for character, partner, then this Western-themed spot is just your gunfight. Rooms range from Jail (dorms) to Madam Fifi's bordello (two twins), and although older, they're well kept. Sociable staff, relaxed lounges, courtyard, and undercover thermal pool make it an ideal spot for weary cowpokes.

**ourpick Funky Green Voyager** (Map p326; ☎ 07-346 1754; 4 Union St; dm/d from \$22/53; ☎ ☎) Green on the outside and the inside – due to several cans of paint and a dedicated environmental policy – while the funk is largely confined to some laid-back tunes and plenty of sociable chat among a spunky bunch of guests and worldly-wise owners who know what you want when you travel. The best doubles have bay windows and their own en suites, while dorms are roomy. Bike hire is a bonus.

**In The Zone Backpackers** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 3338; www.inthezonebackpackers.co.nz; 1181 Pukaki St; dm/d from \$23/65; ☎) The good news for mature, tranquility-loving travellers is that this hostel has opened just for you. Right in town but on a quiet street, this comfortable hostel has carefully assembled amenities including homely lounge and roomy rooms ranging from four to eight bunk dorms to double and family rooms.

**Kiwi Paka YHA** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 0931; www.kiwipaka-yha.co.nz; 60 Tarewa Rd; sites unpowered/powerd \$21/25, dm/d from \$26/58; ☎ ☎ ☎) One kilometre from town, this hostel is away from the action and a little more tired than the average YHA. It's relatively quiet though, with acceptable amenities and a range of accommodation from tent sites to plain four-bed dorms to pine chalet-style doubles. The Twisted Pippie café is on site.

**Base Backpackers Rotorua** (Map p326; ☎ 07-350 2040; www.basebackpackers.com; 1140 Hinemoa St; dm/d from \$26/58; ☎) Just off the main drag and surprisingly quiet, this rambling hostel in a former shopping mall has generous rooms and communal areas. The female-only area, Sanctuary, and lockable wardrobes show security smarts. Bonus facilities are a climbing wall and arthouse cinema in the basement.

**Base Hot Rock Rotorua** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 027 369; www.stayatbase.co.nz; 1286 Arawa St; dm/s/d from \$26/60/60; ☎ ☎ ☎) Another link in the Base chain, this huge hostel is ever-popular with partying backpackers who love the Lava Bar. Rooms can be tight, with up to 12 beds in some dorms, but extras such as thermal pools, large outdoor heated pool and off-street parking compensate.

**Treks Rotorua Backpackers** (Map p326; ☎ 0508 487 357; www.treks.co.nz; 1278 Haupapa St; dm/d&tw \$27/64-74; ☎ ☎) Bright and new, this purpose-built and well-maintained hostel is great for those wanting to get outdoors, with staff eager to assist with trip bookings, and storage for bikes and kayaks. Pricier rooms come with en suites, and there's a barbecue area and deck for hanging out on. Off-street parking a bonus.

**Cosy Cottage International Holiday Park** (off Map p326; ☎ 0800 222 424; www.cosycottage.co.nz; 67 Whittaker Rd; unpowered/powerd sites \$32/40, d units/cottages \$55/110; ☎ ☎ ☎) This green park on the Utuhina stream offers basic but neat camping and accommodation, with the attractions of lake proximity, hot mineral pools and bike hire. Thanks to the miracle of geothermal activity, sites are thermally heated, the beach is heated and you can boil a spud in a puddle.

**Rotorua Thermal Holiday Park** (Map p338; ☎ 07-346 3140; www.kiwhiholidayparks.co.nz; Old Taupo Road; sites \$26-30, dm \$30, d cabins/motel from \$45/90; ☎ ☎) This epic holiday park on the edge of town has a real holiday resort feel with rows of cabins and tourist flats, a 100-bed lodge, tents sites galore and convenience facilities such as a shop and café. There's plenty of room to move with lots of open grassy areas, plus hot mineral pools for the soakers.

**Waiteti Trout Stream Holiday Park** (Map p338; ☎ 07-357 5255; www.waiteti.com; 14 Okona Cres, Ngongotaha; sites \$26, dm \$20, d cabins/motel from \$45/85; ☎ ☎) This is a great option for folk who like it rustic and don't mind a short 10-minute drive into town. Set in two acres of garden and nestled on the banks of the (allegedly) trout-filled stream, this cute old classic has character filled motel

units, compact cabins, a backpackers' lodge and relaxed camping.

**Rotorua Top 10 Holiday Park** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 1886; www.rotoruatop10.co.nz; 1495 Pukuatua St; sites from \$34, d cabins/studio/motel from \$60/105/90; ☎ ☎ ☎) A small but perfectly formed holiday park with a continual improvement policy that has seen a nice new pool plumbed in and various other revamps on the agenda. Cabins are in good nick and have kitchens with a small fridge and microwave. Powered sites are popular with campervans for their shrubby and picnic tables.

## Midrange

Generic motels crowd Fenton St, but better and often more interesting rooms can be found away from the main drag.

**Ann's Volcanic Rotorua** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 768 683; www.rotoruaotel.co.nz; 107 Malfroy Rd; d/f from \$79/129; ☎) Ann's is a unique and affordable motel that has family charm, homely gardens, and an ever-friendly host with loads of advice on things to see and do. Larger rooms feature courtyard spas and facilities for travellers with disabilities, with a house available for big groups (price negotiable).

**Six on Union** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 100 062; www.sixonunion.co.nz; 6 Union St; d/f from \$95/150; ☎) This modest place is a budget bonanza with pool, spa and small kitchenettes. Rooms are functional and pleasant, as is the swimming pool area. The location is away from traffic noise, but still an easy walk to the city centre.

**Sandi's B&B** (Map p338; ☎ 0800 726 3422; www.sandis-bedandbreakfast.co.nz; 103 Fairy Springs Rd; s/d/f \$60/100-120/130; ☎) A friendly family-run B&B run by the well-humoured Sandi who offers helpful tourist tips and a ready smile. The best bet is the A-frame chalet with TV and plenty of room to move. Thoughtful extras including fresh fruit with brekky and sun deck ensure rave reviews from former guests.

**Ambassador Thermal Motel** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 479 581; www.ambassrotorua.co.nz; cnr Whakaue & Hinemaru Sts; d/f from \$105/165; ☎ ☎) Handily located in a quiet corner just a few minutes' walk to town and the lakefront, this motel boasts no fewer than four pools: two indoor mineral pools, an outdoor spa and a large figure-eight swimming pool. Comfortable rooms of various sizes can sleep up to seven and feature full kitchens.

**Jack & Di's Lake Road Lodge** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 522 526; www.jackanddis.co.nz; 21 Lake Rd; s/d/apt \$99/117/250;

(P) Lakeside views and a central-but-secluded location make this boutique hotel a persuasive option. The upstairs penthouse is ideal for couples, while downstairs is better for families or groups. A spa pool, lazy lounge areas and full kitchens add to the appeal.

**Collingwood Gables** (off Map p326; ☎ 0800 921 292; www.motelrotorua.co.nz; 325 Fenton St; s/d/f \$90/120/170; (P)) A nice example of the small, owner-operated motel, with 12 gabled, ground floor units surrounding courtyard parking and a homely garden out front. On the main road, roadside rooms are reasonably quiet, with back-section units quieter still. Catherine is proud of her rooms: slightly worn at the edges but fastidiously kept. Kitchens are ovenless but have two-hob cook-top and fridge.

**Victoria Lodge** (Map p326; ☎ 0800 100 039; www.victorialodge.co.nz; 10 Victoria St; d/apt \$120/180; (P)) From small balconies in apartments to extra toiletries, this excels at little luxuries. All rooms feel individual, not cut from the same cloth, and the studios are particularly attractive with their thermally heated hot pools. Fully equipped apartments can squeeze in seven adults, though four would be very comfortable.

**Troutbeck Lodge** (Map p338; ☎ 0800 522 526; www.jackanddis.co.nz; 5 Arnold St, Ngongotaha; d/cottage from \$120/450; (P)) A lakeside position in a quiet, secluded spot makes this large house a good retreat from central Rotorua. Multiple rooms cater for families or groups up to 10, and high-end facilities such as dishwasher, spa and full kitchen make for pleasant stays.

**Tuscany Villas** (off Map p326; ☎ 0800 802 050; www.tuscanyvillasrotorua.co.nz; 280 Fenton St; d from \$130; (P)) A real eye-catcher from the road with its Italian-inspired architecture, this family-owned hotel pitches itself perfectly at both the corporate and leisure traveller – although who but a relaxed holiday-maker could truly appreciate the lavish furnishings, digital television, and huge, deep spa baths?

## Top End

**Regal Palms 5 Star City Resort** (off Map p326; ☎ 0800 743 000; www.regalpalms.co.nz; 350 Fenton St; d from \$160; (P) (Q) (E)) This 44-room place is packed with features you'd expect in pricier motels, including huge spa baths and a big, heated swimming pool. All rooms are spacious, stylishly decorated and kitted out with dishwashers, large fridges and DVDs – all good for families, as is the minigolf and a slide in the garden.

**Princes Gate Hotel** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 1179; www.princesgate.co.nz; 1057 Arawa St; d/ste from \$185/275; (P) (Q) (E)) A well-loved and warmly welcoming 19th-century dame with 50 different rooms such as the richly decorated Marvely suite – perhaps too pink for all but Barbara Cartland. Sink into the bottomless bath, however, and all is forgiven. Other amenities include cascading mineral baths, sauna, restaurant and street-side café.

**Millennium Hotel Rotorua** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 1234; www.millenniumrotorua.co.nz; cnr Eruera & Hinemaru Sts; d from \$315; (P) (Q) (E)) The slick Maori-inspired lobby sets the scene for this elegant motel. Lakefront rooms afford excellent views as does the club room, a laid-back lounge available exclusively to guests. The poolside *hangi* is one of the better motel entertainments in town and Nikau (see opposite) is a dependable dining option.

**Treetops** (off Map p338; ☎ 07-333 2066; www.treetops.co.nz; 351 Kearoa Rd, Horohoro; s/d r from \$840/1680; (P) (Q)) Set in bush at the edge of an extinct volcano with peacocks and pheasants wandering the grounds, these private, individual lodges feature every comfort, from big-screen TVs to floor heating and super king beds. Luxury doesn't come at an environmental price though, as lodges are designed for minimal ecological impact right down to the biodegradable toiletries. The dining room serves contemporary NZ cuisine incorporating traditional Maori ingredients, washed down with classic Kiwi drops.

**Peppers on the Point** (Map p338; ☎ 07-348 4868; www.peppers.co.nz; 214 Kawaha Point Rd; d from \$1400; (P) (Q) (E)) With breathtaking views and lake access for swimming and fishing, luxurious Peppers boasts seven suites in a stunning main building, two cottages and a larger villa house. There are lashings of amenities including a delightful small chapel, wellness centre, grand piano and a farmyard of animals. Rates include meals.

## EATING

The lake end of Tutanekai St has a strip of good eating places, but there are plenty of others all over town. The pubs do some excellent food, too.

## Restaurants

**Yamamoto** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 1938; 1123 Pukuatua St; mains \$12–22; ☎ lunch & dinner) A super sushi bar with kimono-clad waitresses and Mr Sashimi

himself prepping fresh plates of fishiness out front while tempura and udon noodles pile on in from out the back.

**Lewisham's Restaurant** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 1786; 1099 Tutanekai St; breakfast \$9–16, mains \$13–35; ☎ 9am–late) A real local stalwart, Lewisham's is a homely, well-run establishment serving meaty Euro-food such as burgers and pork sandwich with sauerkraut.

**Lovely India** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 4088; 1123 Tutanekai St; mains \$14–20; ☎ lunch Tue–Sat, dinner daily). This lovable little spot serves up good-value generous portions of all your Indian favourites including a good vegetarian selection.

**Restaurant Nikau** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 1234; cnr Eruera & Hinemaru Sts; mains \$18–32; ☎ lunch & dinner) Inside the Millennium hotel, this is the pick of the hotel restaurants with a Pacifica vibe and an internationally eclectic menu featuring boutique NZ ingredients fashioned into wood-fired pizza, burgers and steaks.

**Amazing Thai** (Map p326; ☎ 07-343 9494; 1246 Fenton St; mains \$19–28; ☎ lunch & dinner) This large restaurant dishes up better-than-average, spicy-as-you-like Thai food in generous servings. Glutton's buffet Wed & Thurs (\$26).

**Urbano** (off Map p326; ☎ 07-349 3770; cnr Fenton & Grey Sts; mains \$30–35; ☎ 11am–late) A bold new move by reputable local restaurateurs in this suburban café with mega-checkerboard floor and striking wallpaper. Some of the most delicious fare in town – mostly meaty – rich and well executed. Fine wines and five star service.

**Bistro 1284** (Map p326; ☎ 07-346 1284; www.bistro1284.co.nz; 1284 Eruera St; mains \$31–34; ☎ dinner) Definitely one of RotoVegas' hot dining spots, this intimate place serves stylish NZ cuisine with an Asian influence. It's an excellent place to sample some great local ingredients, and be sure to leave room for some delectable desserts.

## Cafés

**Zippy Central** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 8288; 1153 Pukuatua St; snacks \$4–8, mains \$10–22; ☎ 7am–8pm) A snappy little café with a decidedly retro groove (Laminex tables, fresh art, ultracool booths...), Zippy zips up all sorts of tasty food from breakfast, sandwiches, snacks, and stir-fries to curries, with plenty of healthy options, which is probably why this place is popular with cyclists and other wholesome types.

**Relish** (Map p326; ☎ 07-343 9195; 1149 Tutanekai St; lunch \$7–15, dinner mains \$20–30; ☎ 8am–5pm Sun–

Wed, 8am–late Thu–Sat) A top spot serving all-day breakfast, pizza and the like, with a keen eye on delicate spices, aromatic herbs and wood smoke. A modern and relaxed interior with local artwork on the walls.

**Lime Caffeteria** (Map p326; ☎ 07-350 2033; cnr Fenton & Whakaue Sts; mains \$12–21; ☎ 8am–4.30pm) Sitting on a fairly quiet, leafy corner near the lake, this refreshing café is especially good for alfresco breakfasts and offers dishes with a welcome twist: vanilla risotto, eggs with mint and feta, and jambalaya. Counter snacks combine old-school classics with new-fangled fancies, and the coffee is excellent.

**Fat Dog Café** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 7586; 1161 Arawa St; mains \$12–30; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner; (V)) With paw prints up the walls and silly poems painted on the chairs, this is the town's friskiest and most child-friendly eatery. During the day it dishes up big bowls of brekky, nachos, salads and sandwiches, and in the evening it goes candlelit and serves up more refined food along the lines of lamb and venison. Sunny courtyard and street-side seating.

**ourpick Capers Epicurean** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 8818; 1181 Eruera St; mains \$16–19; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon–Sun, dinner Tue–Sat; (V)) This slick deli is barnlike in size yet always busy with diners showing up for cabinets crammed full of delicious gourmet sandwiches, pastries, salads and cakes and its excellent blackboard menu of brekkies and other tasty hot foods.

## Quick Eats

**Mecca Kebabs** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 2466; 1213 Tutanekai St; meals \$7–13; ☎ lunch & dinner; (V)) A pleasant meatery in the middle of town serving good quality kebabs, good vegetarian options, plus smoothies, iced coffee and home-baked biscuits.

**Weilin's Noodle House** (Map p326; ☎ 07-343 9998; 1148 Tutanekai St; mains \$8–16; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed–Mon) A neat and tidy shop serving oodles of noodles in soups and stir-fries.

**Lady Jane's Ice Cream Parlour** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 9340; 1092 Tutanekai St; ☎ 10am–late) A compulsory stop by the lake for a cone of ice cream: some churned on the spot, with other famous brands of ice creams on offer too.

## Self-catering

If you're whipping up your own meals there's the choice of **Countdown** (Map p326; 246 Fenton St; ☎ 24hr) or **Pak N Save** (Map p326; cnr Fenton & Amohau Sts; ☎ 8am–10pm).

## DRINKING

There are a few good spots to slake your thirst, with Euro-style pubs well represented.

**Pig & Whistle** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 3025; cnr Haupapa & Tutanekei Sts; mains \$16-25; ☎ 11.30am-late) This excellent microbrewery pub in the former police station offers a conducive atmosphere in which to enjoy their Swing lager (big-screen TV, beer garden, live music Thurs/Fri/Sat), while serving up some of the best simple grub in town. Their menu runs the gamut from spare-ribs to a gluten-free vegetarian toastie.

**Chambers Belgian Café and Bar** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 6190; 1151 Arawa St; ☎ 11.30am-late) The best bar in town for lovers of gigs and good beer. Half a dozen Euro-beers on tap and 42 in the bottle make for quality supping while a menu of meatballs, mash, and *moules et frites* will allow you to stick around and sup a few more.

**Pheasant Plucker** (Map p326; ☎ 07-343 7071; 1153 Arawa St; mains \$15-36; ☎ 4pm-late Mon-Fri, 3pm-late Sat, 11am-late Sun) Another place for a proper pint, but this time à l'Anglais. The Pheasant profers locally brewed and British beer, along with bangers 'n' mash and non-stop carvery with Yorkshire pud.

**O'Malley's** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 6410; 1287 Eruera St; mains \$9-20; ☎ 11am-late Tue-Sat, 2pm-late Sun & Mon) A proud Irish pub with much to recommend it including civilized clientele, Kilkenny, Murphy's and Guinness on tap, plus cheery meals along the lines of steak-and-ale pie.

**Seismic** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 2082; 1158 Whakauae St; mains \$20-34; ☎ 11.30am-late Mon-Fri, 10am-late Sat & Sun) With just the leafy park separating Seismic from the lake-side, this sleek longbar is best enjoyed outside where you can people-watch or sip a beer in the sunshine.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Several local pubs such as the Pig & Whistle and Chambers regularly host bands. For late-night action, head to **Barbarella** (Map p326; ☎ 07-347 6776; 1263 Puukuatua St), where on weekends you may find bands and DJs playing to a nocturnal crowd.

**Princes Gate Hotel** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 1179; www.princesgate.co.nz; 1057 Arawa St; show & meal \$69; ☎ 7.15pm Fri & Sat) hosts dinner alongside a 1930s-style cabaret show.

**Reading Cinema** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 0061; 1281 Eruera St; adult/child \$13/9) shows mainstream movies, while **Basement Cinema** (Map p326; ☎ 07-350 1400; www.sirius.net.nz/basement; basement, 1140 Hinemoa St; adult \$14) shows art-house and foreign films.

## SHOPPING

Being the tourist centre of NZ, Rotorua has an abundance of gifts and souvenirs. Genuine Maori and other NZ-made arts and crafts will be clearly labelled.

**Jade Factory** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 3968; www.jadefactory.com; 1280 Fenton St; ☎ 9am-6pm) Specialises in high-end, handcrafted greenstone jewellery and carvings.

**Out of New Zealand** (Map p326; ☎ 07-346 296; 1189 Fenton St; ☎ 9am-6pm) Stocks predominantly NZ-made artwork, plus craft and gifts including carvings, ceramics and jewellery. Plenty of affordable, packable souvenirs.

**Raukura/Red Feather Gallery** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 1193; www.nativeartsnz.com; cnr Tutanekei & Haupapa Sts; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) Has a wide assortment of Maori craftwork, including woodcarvings, greenstone jewellery and clothing.

To the south of town, Te Puia and Te Whakarewarewa (p326) have excellent selections of genuine Maori-made arts.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**Air New Zealand** (Map p326; ☎ 07-343 1100; cnr Fenton & Hinemoa Sts; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat) offers daily direct flights to Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, with onward connections to other destinations.

**Qantas** (www.qantas.com.au) flies direct to Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown, with onward connections.

### Bus

All the major bus companies stop outside the i-SITE (see p324), from where you can arrange bookings.

**InterCity** (☎ 07-348 0366; www.intercitycoach.co.nz) and **Newmans** (☎ 07-348 0999; www.newmanscoach.co.nz) run daily buses to and from Auckland (\$56, four hours), Hamilton (\$40, 1½ hours), Tauranga (\$30, 1½ hours), Whakatane (\$31, 1½ hours), Gisborne (\$57, 4½ hours) via Opotiki (\$31, 2¼ hours), and Taupo (\$26, one hour), Napier (\$64, three hours), and Wellington (\$90, eight hours).

**Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) runs daily services to Auckland (\$39, 3½ hours), Hamilton (\$24, 1½ hours), Waitomo (\$49, 2½ hours), Tauranga (\$9, 1½ hours), Whakatane (\$24, 1½ hours), Taupo (\$19, one hour), Napier (\$24, three hours), and Wellington (\$49, 6½ hours). Substantial fare savings can be made by booking in advance.

## GETTING AROUND

### To/From the Airport

The airport is about 10km out of town to the east. **Super Shuttle** (☎ 07-345 7790; www.supershuttle.co.nz) offers a door-to-door airport service for \$15 for the first person and \$3 for each additional passenger. **Luxury Airport Shuttle** (☎ 0800 454 678; luxuryshuttles.co.nz) offers similar services for \$35 per person. A taxi from the city centre costs about \$25. **Cityride** (see below) runs an airport bus service Monday to Saturday.

### Bus

If you're trying to get around local attractions, ask about their shuttle services: many offer courtesy pick-up and drop-off.

**Cityride Rotorua** (☎ 0800 422 928; www.baybus.co.nz) operates local bus services around town (\$2), to Ngongotaha (\$2), the airport (\$2) and Tauranga (adult/child \$11/6.50).

Several shuttles run around the town's attractions with pick-ups at most hotels and hostels:

**Affordable Adventures** (☎ 0508 278 946; www.affordableadventures.co.nz) Runs a small bus wherever you want to go for whatever it costs; good for groups up to 14.

**Geysers Link Tour Service** (☎ 0800 000 4321; www.geyserslink.co.nz) Goes to Wai-O-Tapu (return \$25) and Paradise Valley Springs (return \$20).

**Tim's Thermal Shuttle** (☎ 0274 945 508) Goes to Wai-O-Tapu (\$50) and the Buried Village (\$50). Fares are return and include entry fee.

### Car

In Rotorua car-rental competition is fierce so there are bargains to be had. Try the following:

**Avis** (☎ 07-345 7133; Rotorua Airport)

**Budget** (Map p326; ☎ 07-348 8127; 1230 Fenton St)

**Rent-a-Dent** (Map p326; ☎ 07-349 3993; 14 Ti St)

### Taxi

You can grab a cab from either **Rotorua Taxis** (☎ 07-348 1111) or **Fast Taxis** (☎ 07-348 2444).

## AROUND ROTORUA

### NORTH OF ROTORUA

#### Nature Parks

Surrounding Rotorua are several places devoted to native wildlife.

**Rainbow Springs Nature Park** (Map p338; ☎ 0800 724 626, 07-350 0440; www.rainbowsprings.co.nz; Fairy Springs Rd; adult/child \$24.50/14.50; ☎ 8am-10pm) is a

must-do for nature-lovers. At the heart of the park are the natural springs, home to wild trout and eels, which you can see from the underwater viewer. There are walkways for wanderings with interpretive displays along the way. Animals abound, both introduced species such as wallabies, emus and rainbow lorikeets, and interesting native birds such as kea, kaka and pukeko.

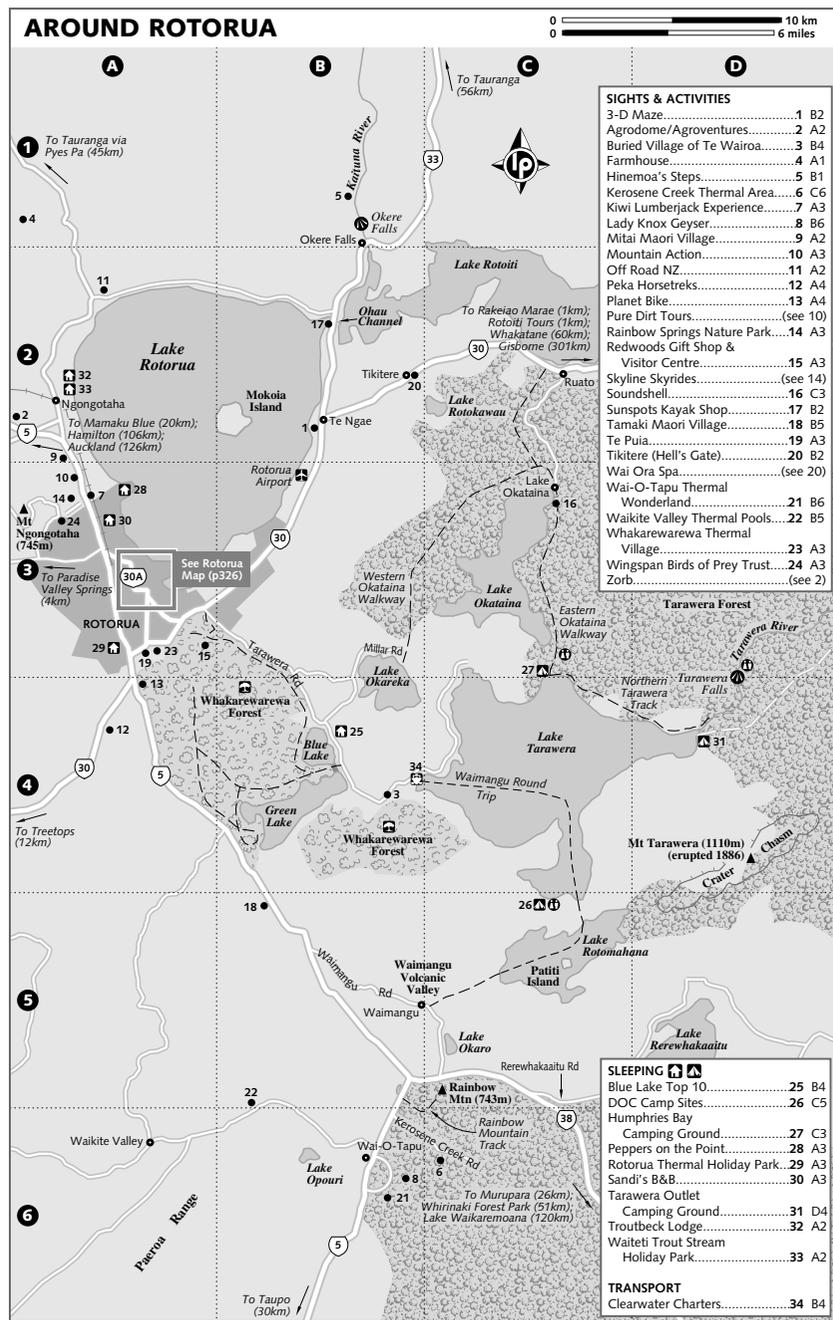
The highlight of the park is **Kiwi Encounter** (www.kiwiencounter.co.nz; adult/child \$27.50/17.50; ☎ tours on the hr 10am-4pm), home to NZ's largest kiwi recovery programme – a nationally significant non-profit conservation project. It offers visitors a rare peek into the lives of not only these greatly endangered birds, but the people trying to save them from extinction. Be prepared for an emotional roller-coaster on the excellent 45-minute tours that have you tiptoeing through the actual incubator and hatchery areas.

Rainbow Springs comes alive at night with colourful illuminations and a chance to walk through the outdoor kiwi enclosure. Also offered are special joint four-hour evening tours with the neighbouring Mitai Maori Village (see p328). Rainbow Springs is 3km north of central Rotorua on SH5 towards Hamilton and Auckland.

Across the road, the **Kiwi Lumberjack Experience** (Map p338; ☎ 07-349 0380; www.kiwilumberjack.co.nz; 171 Fairy Springs Rd; tour adult/child \$22/10, walk & show \$25/12; ☎ shows 11.30am, 1pm & 3pm) is the place for those after a slice of rural Kiwi life with guided and freedom walks to meet the animals and even milk or feed them. Watch the chips fly at three daily shows of lumberjack action, and meet Charlotte the incredible log-rolling pig.

In Paradise Valley at the foot of Mt Ngongotaha are two wildlife parks. Eight kilometres from town is **Paradise Valley Springs** (Map p338; ☎ 07-348 9667; www.paradisivalleysprings.co.nz; adult/child \$22/11; ☎ 8am-5pm) a six-hectare park with trout springs, big slippery eels, and various land-dwelling animals such as deer, alpaca, possums and a pride of lions (fed at 2.30pm).

**Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust** (Map p338; ☎ 07-357 4469; www.wingspan.co.nz; 1164 Paradise Valley Rd; adult/child \$15/5; ☎ 9am-3pm) is dedicated to conserving three threatened NZ birds: the falcon, hawk and owl. Learn about the birds in the museum display, then take a sneaky peek into the incubation area before walking through



the all-weather aviary. Go in time to see the 2pm flying display.

## Mamaku Blue

You may find grapes overrated once you've visited this **blueberry winery** (Map p338; ☎ 07-332 5840; www.mamakublue.co.nz; Maraeroa Rd, Mamaku; tours \$16, museum \$2; ☎ 9.30am-5pm). There are delicious daily tastings, and also on offer other blueberry delights such as chutneys, jams, sauces, chocolates, vinegars and liqueurs. Take a tour and find out more, and visit the upstairs museum which has a collection of photos documenting the history of the area.

Mamaku Blue is 20km northwest of Rotorua; take SH5 and turn off onto Maraeroa Rd. It's well signposted.

## Skyline Skyrides

Swinging up Mt Ngongotaha is **Skyline Skyrides** (Map p338; ☎ 07-347 0027; www.skylineskyrides.co.nz; Fairy Springs Rd; gondola adult/child/family \$23/10/55, luge 5 rides \$27.50, sky swing \$30/20; ☎ 9am-11pm). This gondola cruises up to a hill-top of fun which features panoramic views of the lake and a speedy luge on which you can scoot part-way back down on three different tracks before coming back up on a chairlift (to do it all over again). For even speedier antics, try the sky swing, a screaming swoosh through the air at speeds of up to 160km/h. Also at the top are a restaurant, a café and walking tracks around the mountain.

## Agroventures

**Agroventures** (Map p338; ☎ 07-357 4747; www.agroventures.co.nz; Western Rd, Ngongotaha) is a veritable hive of entertaining activities, 9km north of Rotorua on SH5 (courtesy shuttle available). Prices that follow are for single activities but there are lots of deals for combos.

Starting with something educational and culturally important, visit the **Agrodome** (www.agrodome.co.nz; ☎ 07-357 1050; adult/child/family tour \$30/15/70, show \$24/12/65, tour & show \$46/23/99; ☎ shows 9.30am, 11am & 2.30pm; tours 10.40am, 12.10pm, 1.30 & 3.40pm). Learn everything you need to know about sheep during a one-hour extravaganza that parades champion rams, runs a livestock auction, and shows shearing and doggy displays. The farm tour allows a chance to get 'up close and personal' with farm animals including, among others, sheep. Other agro-attractions include a woollen mill display, souvenir shop and the Barking Dog Café.

Next door to the Agrodome is **Agroventures**, home to more adrenalinised action including the 43m **Swoop** (www.rotoruaswoop.co.nz; adult \$90) and the **Swoop** (www.swoop.co.nz; adult/child \$45/35), a 130km/h swing that can be enjoyed alone or with friends. If that's not enough, try **Freefall Xtreme** (www.swoop.co.nz; 2/4min \$49/79) which simulates skydiving by blasting you 5m into the air on a column of wind. The newest addition to this hub is the **Schweeb** (\$45), a monorail velodrome from which you hang in a clear capsule and pedal yourself along recumbently at speeds of up to 60km/h.

Alongside is the **Agrojet** (adult/child \$45/35), allegedly NZ's fastest jetboat, speeding and splashing around a 1km man-made course.

Across the road from Agroventures is the **Zorb** (☎ 0800 227 474; www.zorb.co.nz; \$49; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Nov, to 7pm Dec-Mar). You will identify this attraction by the grassy track down the hill with what looks like large, clear, people-filled spheres bouncing and rolling down at some speed. Your eyes have not deceived you. There are two courses: 150m straight, or the 180m zigzag. Do your zorb strapped in and dry, or freestyle with a whole lot of water thrown in.

## NORTHEAST OF ROTORUA Tikitere & Wai Ora Spa

Known as Tikitere to Maori, **Hell's Gate** (Map p338; ☎ 07-345 3151; www.hellsgate.co.nz; SH5; adult/child \$25/10; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm) is 16km northeast of Rotorua on the road to Whakatane (SH30). Tikitere is an abbreviation of *Taku tiki i tere nei* (My youngest daughter has floated away), remembering the tragedy of a young girl jumping into a thermal pool. The English name originates from a 1934 visit by George Bernard Shaw. The impressive geothermal reserve covers 10 hectares, with a 2.5km walking track to the various attractions, including the largest hot thermal waterfall in the southern hemisphere. Here you can also see a master carver at work, learn about flax weaving, *ta moko* (tattoo) and other Maori traditions.

Long regarded by Maori as a place of healing, Tikitere also houses the **Wai Ora Spa** (mud bath & spa adult/child \$70/30, 1hr massage \$130) where you can relax with a variety of mud and spa treatments. The **UltiMUD** package (adult/child \$230/175) includes entry to the reserve, mud bath, spa and one-hour massage, plus some manuka tea. A courtesy shuttle to/from Rotorua is available.

### 3-D Maze

Three kilometres beyond the airport, **Te Ngae Park** (Map p338; ☎ 07-345 5275; adult/child \$7.50/5; 🕒 9am-5pm) is a 3-D, 1.7km-long wooden maze that entertains kids for an hour or two and makes a pleasant picnic spot.

## SOUTHEAST OF ROTORUA Whakarewarewa Forest

This **forest park** (Map p338; www.rdc.govt.nz) is 3km southeast of town on Tarawera Rd. It's home to over 170 tree species, originally planted from 1899 to see which could be grown successfully for timber. Radiata pine proved a hit (as evident throughout New Zealand), but it's the mighty Californian redwoods that give the park its grandeur today.

Clearly signposted walking tracks range from a half-hour wander through the **Redwood Grove** to an enjoyable whole-day route to the Blue and Green Lakes. Most walks start from the **Redwoods Gift Shop & Visitor Centre** (Map p338; ☎ 07-350 0110; Long Mile Rd; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Apr-Sep; 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) where you can get maps and view displays about the forest. There's also a shop featuring a good selection of hand-crafted wooden items.

Aside from walking, the park is great for picnics, and is acclaimed well beyond the town for its enjoyable and accessible mountain biking (see p330).

### Buried Village of Te Wairoa

Fifteen kilometres from Rotorua on the Tarawera Road, which passes the pretty Blue and Green Lakes, is the **buried village** (Map p338; ☎ 07-362 8287; www.buriedvillage.co.nz; adult/child/family \$26/7/52; 🕒 9am-5pm Nov-Mar, to 4.30pm Apr-Oct), the site of one of the most dramatic natural events to occur in NZ in the last 150 years – the 1886 eruption of Mt Tarawera. Here you can see the buildings submerged by the eruption, creating an odd time capsule of NZ in the 19th century with highlights such as the Rotomahana Hotel, a blacksmith's shop and several *whare* (houses).

A small museum tells the stories of the eruption and includes an interesting short film. Of particular interest is the story of the *tohunga* (priest) Tuhoto Ariki who, according to some, was blamed for the destruction. His *whare* has been excavated and reconstructed.

There's a short bush walk through the valley to Te Wairoa Falls, where the Wairoa River

drops 30m over a series of rocky outcrops. The end of the track is steep, slippery and unsuitable for young children.

### Lake Tarawera

Tarawera means 'Burnt Spear', named by a visiting hunter who left his bird spears in a hut and on returning the following season found both the spears and hut had been burnt. The lake is picturesque and good for swimming, fishing, cruises and nature walks.

A good place to access the lake is at The Landing, about 2km past the buried village. Here you'll find **Clearwater Charters** (☎ 07-362 8590; www.clearwater.co.nz; 537 Spencer Rd, Lake Tarawera; per hr cruise vessel \$280-485, self-drive runabout \$165-195) which runs scenic cruises and trout fishing trips aboard a variety of vessels, with self-drive boats available. At time of print these folks were bringing on board pedal boats and kayaks, as well as taking over the wonderfully located café, **Sofia's** (☎ 07-362 8595; 🕒 10am-7pm) with a promise of gourmet pizza, a garden bar and a general store.

There are **DOC campsites** at Hot Water Beach (adult/child \$8/4) on Te Rata Bay, Tarawera Outlet (adult/child \$7/2) and Humphrey's Bay (free). **Blue Lake Top 10 Holiday Park** (☎ 07-362 8120; www.bluelaketop10.co.nz; 723 Tarawera Rd; sites unpowered/powerd \$32/36, cabin \$93-182) offers lakeside camping and good facilities.

## SOUTH OF ROTORUA Waimangu Volcanic Valley

This interesting **thermal area** (off Map p326; ☎ 07-366 6137; www.waimangu.com; walking tour adult/child \$30/7.50, boat cruise \$37.50/7.50; 🕒 8.30am-5pm daily, to 6pm Jan) was created during the eruption of Mt Tarawera in 1886, making it young in geological terms. Waimangu (Black Water) refers to the dark, muddy colour of much of the water here.

Taking the easy downhill stroll through the valley you'll pass many spectacular thermal and volcanic features, including Inferno Crater Lake, where overflowing water can reach 80°C, and Frying Pan Lake, the largest hot spring in the world. The walk continues down to Lake Rotomahana (meaning 'Warm Lake'), from where you can either get a lift back up to where you started or take a half-hour boat trip on the lake, past steaming cliffs and the former site of the Pink and White Terraces.

Waimangu is approximately a 20-minute drive south from Rotorua, 14km along SH5 (towards Taupo) and then 6km from the marked turn-off. Last admission is at 3.45pm (4.45pm in January).

### Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland

Also south of Rotorua, **Wai-O-Tapu** (Map p338; ☎ 07-366 6333; www.geyserland.co.nz; adult/child \$27.50/9; 🕒 8.30am-5pm), meaning 'Sacred Waters', is one of the most famous of the thermal reserves. It has many interesting features packed into a small area, including the boiling, multi-hued **Champagne Pool**, bubbling mud, stunning mineral terraces and the **Lady Knox Geyser**, which spouts off (with a little prompting from an organic soap) punctually at 10.15am and gushes up to 20m for about an hour. A fairly commercial attraction, it has a large shopping area and café which makes for a reasonable pit stop.

Wai-O-Tapu is 27km south of Rotorua on SH5 (towards Taupo), and a further 2km from the marked turn-off.

### Whirinaki Forest Park

The exceptional feature of this park is some of NZ's finest podocarp forest, although there is much more to see here including canyons, waterfalls, lookouts, and many streams and rivers. The Oriuwaka Ecological Area and Arahaki Lagoon are also here.

You can explore the park via a network of tracks varying in length and difficulty. The best source of information is **DOC Rangitaiki area office** (☎ 07-366 1080) in Murupara. The DOC booklet *Tramping & Walks in Whirinaki Forest Park* (\$2.50) gives details about walking and camping in the park.

A good short walk is the **Waterfall Loop Track** (three to four hours), which follows the Whirinaki River, while one of the longer walks is the **Whirinaki Track** (two days, 27km), which can be combined with **Te Hoe Track** (four days).

There are several easily accessible **camping areas** and 12 **backcountry huts** (\$5-10); pay at the DOC office.

Whirinaki Forest Park is 90km southeast of Rotorua, with access off SH38 on the way to Te Urewera National Park; take the turn-off at Te Whaiti to Minginui. The closest town to the park is Murupara, where there are basic amenities.

## WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY

The Western Bay of Plenty stretches along the coast from Waihi Beach to Maketu and inland as far as the Kaimai Range. This is where New Zealanders have come on holiday for generations, lapping up salt-licked activities and lashings of sunshine.

### TAURANGA pop 112,000

Tauranga has been booming since the 1990s and remains one of NZ's fastest-growing cities. The increasingly busy port serves the land for miles around, but it's the migrants (many from Auckland) and holidaymakers who have seen the old workhorse reborn as a show pony. Restaurants and bars line the revamped waterfront, fancy hotels rise high, and the once-sleepy suburbs of Mt Maunganui and Papamoa have woken up to new wealth and homogeny.

Tauranga is the place to fulfil all your wet dreams. With two marinas chock-a-block with beautiful boats, sandy surf beaches and water sports aplenty, this is about as Riviera as NZ gets.

### Information

**Tauranga i-SITE** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 8103; www.bayofplenty.co.nz; 95 Willow St; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) offers local tourist information, makes bookings and sells InterCity bus tickets. You can also get DOC maps and hut passes here.

The local NZ post branch is at **Take Note** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 9911; 17 Grey St). For books and maps, visit **Dymocks** (Map p342; ☎ 07-927 7476; 50 Devonport Rd). Maps are also available from the **AA office** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 2222; cnr Devonport Rd & First Ave).

Internet access is readily available from hostels but also at **Cyberzone** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 6983; 75 Grey St; 🕒 10am-late) which also has luggage lockers and a jobs board.

### Sights

In 2007, the eagerly awaited **Tauranga Art Gallery** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 7933; www.artgallery.org.nz; cnr Wharf & Willow Sts; admission by donation; 🕒 10am-4.30pm) opened its doors and what an asset it is to the town. Presenting historic and contemporary art, it houses a permanent collection

### CENTRAL TAURANGA

INFORMATION	DRINKING
Automobile Association (AA)... 1 D4	Cornerstone Pub.....31 D2
Cyberzone..... 2 C3	Crown & Badger.....32 D2
Dymocks..... 3 D3	De Bier Haus.....33 D3
Take Note/NZ Post..... 4 C3	
Tauranga i-SITE..... 5 D2	
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	ENTERTAINMENT
Brain Watkins House..... 6 C3	Baycity Cinemas.....34 D4
Cargo Shed..... 7 D2	Baycourt.....35 C3
Dive HQ..... 8 C3	Buddha Lounge.....36 D2
Elms Mission House..... 9 C1	Rialto.....(see 23)
Monmouth Redoubt.....10 D1	
Robbins Park.....11 D1	TRANSPORT
Tauranga Art Gallery.....12 D2	Air New Zealand.....37 D4
Te Awanui Waka.....13 D2	Bay Hopper Bus Stop.....38 D2
	Bus Terminal.....(see 5)
SLEEPING	
Harbour City Motor Inn.....14 C3	
Harbourside City Backpackers.....15 D3	
Hotel on Devonport.....16 D3	
Loft 109 Backpackers.....17 D4	
Puriri Park Boutique Hotel.....18 C2	
Roselands Motel.....19 C1	
Tauranga on the Waterfront.....20 D4	
Tauranga YHA.....21 B3	
EATING	
Bravo.....22 D3	
Collar & Thai.....23 D3	
Elixir.....24 D3	
Fresh Fish Market.....25 D2	
Little India.....26 D3	
Mediterraneo Café.....27 D3	
Turkish to Go.....28 D4	
Wharf Street Restaurant & Bar.....29 D3	
Zeytin.....30 D2	

along with frequently changing local and visiting exhibitions. The building itself is a former bank, although you'd hardly know it – it's an altogether excellent space with no obvious compromise (cue: applause!). Touring the ground and mezzanine galleries, with a stop to poke your nose into the video cube, will take an hour or so.

Built in 1847, **Elms Mission House** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 9772; Mission St; admission \$5; ☞ 2-4pm Wed, Sat, Sun & public holidays) is the oldest building in the Bay of Plenty. Furnished in period style, it sits among other well-preserved mission buildings in leafy grounds. The **mission cemetery** lies not far away at the intersection of Marsh Street and Dive Crescent – a good spot for reflection and a little epitaph-reading.

**Brain Watkins House** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 1835; cnr Elizabeth St & Cameron Rd; admission \$2; ☞ 2-4pm Sun) was built in 1881 from kauri (wood) and remains one of Tauranga's best-preserved colonial homes.

**Te Awanui Waka** (Map p342), a replica Maori canoe, is on display in an open-sided building at the top of The Strand. Up the hill, **Monmouth Redoubt** (Map p342; Monmouth St) was once a fortified site during the Maori Wars. **Robbins Park** (Map p342; Cliff Rd) is a verdant pocket of roses with excellent views across to Mt Maunganui.

**Mills Reef Winery** (☎ 0800 645 577; Moffat Rd, Bethlehem; ☞ tastings 10am-5pm), 7km from the town centre at Bethlehem, has tastings of its award-winning wines and a restaurant.

## Activities

### WALKING

There are many walks around Tauranga and Mt Maunganui, a number of which are outlined in the free *Tauranga City Walkways* pamphlet, including the fascinating **Waikareao Estuary Walkway** (9km, two hrs) and the popular **Mauro Base Track** (3½km, 45 min).

The backdrop to the Western Bay of Plenty is the rugged 70km-long **Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park**, 35km southwest of Tauranga on SH29, or 43km northwest of Rotorua, with tramps and basic camping (sites free to \$5, huts \$5 to \$10) for the intrepid. More information is provided in DOC's pamphlet *Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park Day Walks* (\$1.50).

**McLaren Falls Park** (admission free; ☞ 8am-5.30pm winter, to 7.30pm summer), found in the Wairoa River valley, 15km southwest of Tauranga just off SH29, is a 170-hectare lakeland park, with great trees and picnic areas. There are three basic modern hostels (capacity 18 to 28, \$70 to \$100 per night) and campsites (\$10). Contact **Tauranga City Council** (☎ 07-577 7000; www.tauranga.govt.nz) for bookings. Also accessible from McLaren Falls is **Marshall's Animal Park** (☎ 07-543 1099; ☞ 10am-2pm Wed & Thu, to 4.30pm Sat & Sun) which has family fun such as animal petting, a flying fox, playground and pony rides.

### SWIMMING WITH DOLPHINS

The waters around Tauranga are particularly blessed with dolphins and even the odd whale in summer. Several operators offer a chance to see or even swim with them.

**Butler's Swim with Dolphins** (☎ 0508 288 537; www.swimwithdolphins.co.nz; adult/child \$125/100; ☞ leaves Tauranga 9am, Mt Maunganui 9.30am) Even without dolphins, the trips are always entertaining, particularly with Cap'n Butler, a real old salt who protested against nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll.

**Dolphin Seafaris** (☎ 0800 326 8747; www.nzdolphin.com; 90 Maunganui Rd, Mt Maunganui; adult/child \$100; ☞ trips leave 8am summer, 9am winter). Book at Harbourside Backpackers in Tauranga or Mount Central Backpackers in Mount Maunganui.

**South Sea Vagabond** (☎ 07-579 6376; www.southseasailing.com; adult/child \$120/85). Runs trips on an 18m catamaran. Kayaks available for non-swimmers.

### DIVING AND FISHING

The Bay of Plenty is renowned for its marine life and fishing – especially big game such as marlin and mako sharks, although there are snapper for your supertime too. A day-

long fishing trip will cost around \$70 to \$90 per person, with several companies offering 24-hour trips for around \$120. More than a dozen charter companies offer diving, cruising and fishing trips, most of which can be chartered by the hour. The i-SITE can assist you with bookings.

**Bay Fishing Charters** (☎ 0800-229 347; www.taurangafishingcharters.co.nz) Fishing, diving and sightseeing trips on the Nimble II out of Mount Maunganui.

**Blue Ocean Charters** (☎ 0800 224 278; www.blueocean.co.nz) Fishing, diving and sightseeing trips including Tuhua Island on the TS Ohorere, MV Te Kuia and MV Ratahi.

**Dive HQ** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 4050; www.divehq.tauranga.co.nz; 213 Cameron Rd; courses from \$600, trips from \$95) PADI-qualifying courses or trips to local wrecks and reefs, plus gear rental.

**Earth2Ocean** (☎ 07-571 5286; www.earth2ocean.co.nz; courses from \$500, trips from \$100) Runs diving courses and trips; moving premises at time of print.

**Fat Boy Charters** (☎ 07-575 5986; fatboycharters@xtra.co.nz) Runs small-group fishing and diving trips on a 7m runabout.

**Tauranga Marine Charters** (☎ 07-552 6283; www.taurangamarinecharters.co.nz) Daily fishing trips and diving trips once a month, on the MV Manutere.

### KAYAKING

The Wairoa River is a great place for kayaking, with something for paddlers at all levels. **Waimarino Adventure Park** (☎ 07-576 4233; www.waimarino.com; 36 Taniwha Pl, Bethlehem; kayak tours from \$85, park day pass adult/child \$37/29), on the banks of the river, offers freedom kayak hire for leisurely paddles along 12km of flat water, runs unguided tours from further up the river, and sea kayaking trips. The best kayak trip, however, is the glow-yak – a magical after-dark journey at McLaren Falls Park where you slip into a secret glow-worm filled wonderland. Waimarino has lots of other fun things to do such as a river cruise, kayak slide, low ropes course, warm pools and wildlife spotting – a great place to spend all day, especially if there are children in tow.

### WHITE-WATER RAFTING & SLEDGING

White-water rafting is popular around Tauranga, particularly on the Wairoa River, although it's definitely a rafting trip for thrill-seekers. The Wairoa's levels are controlled by a dam, so can only be rafted 26 days of the year: advance bookings are essential. You can find a list of rafting operators on p329.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

If you're new to water sports and want to get safely into the action, visit **Elements Watersports** (Map p346; ☎ 0800-486 729; www.elementsonline.co.nz; Kulim Park, Otumotoai; lessons per hr from \$20). They offer tuition in sailing, windsurfing, powerboating and jetskiing, and have gear for hire.

Landlubbers in town on the weekend might want to consider calling into the **Cargo Shed** (Map p342; ☎ 07-552 5555; www.thecargoshed.org.nz; 5 Dive Cres; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat/Sun), the town's creative art market with lots of local art and craft for sale including a good selection of Maori-made and inspired wares.

Landlubbers might also consider jumping out of a plane... or maybe they won't. **Tauranga Tandem Skydiving** (Map p346; ☎ 07-576 7990; 2 Kittyhawk Way; from \$220) with views of White Island, Mount Ruapehu and the East Cape, from 8000 to 12,000 feet.

**Tours**

**Adventure Bay of Plenty** (☎ 0800 238 267; 2hr/day from \$75/100) Offers an enticing array of adventure tours by boat, kayak, mountain bike and horse.

**Mount Classic Tours** (☎ 07-574 1779; www.mctours.co.nz; tours \$60-185) Half- and full-day guided tours around the region and as far as Waitomo and the Coromandel.

**Tauranga Tasting Tours** (☎ 07-544 1383; www.tastingtours.co.nz; tours \$130) Whips around a local brewery, Mills Reef, Morton Estate and back to town for cocktails.

**Touring Company** (☎ 07-577 0057; www.newzealandadventure.co.nz; tours from \$130) Half- and full-day local scenic tours and trips further afield to Waitomo, Rotorua and White Island.

**SCENIC FLIGHTS**

While you're out at the airport, you may want to consider dropping into **Classic Flyers NZ** (☎ 07-572 4000; www.classicflyersnz.com; 8 Jean Batten Dr; ☎ 7.30am-5pm), a fascinating aviation museum with café on site.

You can book the following aerial escapades through the i-SITE or at the airport. Tauranga's airport is at Mt Maunganui. There are minimum passenger numbers for most trips.

**Aerius Helicopters** (☎ 0800 864 354; www.aerius.co.nz; tours from 6min \$59) Local flights and excursions as far as Waitomo and White Island, based in Te Puke.

**Air Discovery** (☎ 07-575 7588; www.airdiscovery.co.nz; Tauranga Airport; \$299) Offers 1-1½hr fixed-wing flights over White Island and Mt Tarawera.

**Gyrate** (☎ 07-575 6583; www.gyrate.co.nz; Tauranga Airport; from \$80) Flights in a gyroplane (the jetski of the sky), from local, scenic flights to learn-to-fly packages.

**M\*A\*S\*H Chopper Scenic Flights** (☎ 07-572 4077; www.kiwiwopters.co.nz; Tauranga Airport; flights 12min/20min \$110/120) As seen on TV but without Hot Lips Houlihan. City and surrounds.

**Volcanic Air Safaris** (☎ 0800 737 700; www.volcanicair.co.nz; Tauranga airport; flights 10min/3hr \$95/695) Does tours of town and trips to White Island and the Rotorua Lakes.

**Festivals & Events**

This town is no cultural desert, with several events on the calendar including:

**National Jazz Festival** (☎ 07-577 7188; www.jazz.org.nz, www.ticketdirect.co.nz) An Easter extravaganza of big blowers and scoobee-doobee-dooop, with concerts and food galore.

**Tauranga Arts Festival** (www.taurangafestival.co.nz) Kicking off on Labour weekend in October (in odd-numbered years), showcasing dance, comedy, plays and other things arty.

**Sleeping BUDGET**

**Just the Ducks Nuts Backpackers** (Map p346; ☎ 07-576 1366; www.justtheducksnuts.co.nz; 6 Vale St; dm/d \$21/50; ☎) Just out of the town centre, this is a friendly place where you can be left to your own devices. Comfy rooms and a fulsome library make it a relaxed spot, with shuttles to the city. Quirky touches such as flowers planted in the bathtub and duck-themed toilets are fun, but older couples might prefer the flats up the back, which are more private.

**Tauranga Tourist Park** (Map p346; ☎ 07-578 3323; 9 Mayfair St; unpowered/powerd sites \$22/24, cabins/flats \$45/70; ☎) Located on the harbour edge, this is a good option for tenters and campervans with nice grassed sites and pleasant gardens. The amenities are a bit pokey, but it's all well maintained, clean and tidy.

**Loft 109 Backpackers** (Map p342; ☎ 07-579 5638; www.loft109.co.nz; 109 Devonport Rd; dm/d/tr \$23/54/60; ☎) This central spot has the feel of a flat with its intimate kitchen and lounge, rooftop balconies in upper rooms, and a boat built into the roof. It's bright with skylights, plus on colder days there's a gas fire in the common area.

**Harbourside City Backpackers** (Map p342; ☎ 07-579 4066; www.backpacktauranga.co.nz; 105 The Strand; dm/d/tw \$23/64-70; ☎) Enjoy sea-views from this sociable hostel with handy access to The Strand's bars. Rooms are small, but good for groups. There's no car park, but down the

road is a public car park that's empty at the right time.

**Tauranga YHA** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 5064; www.yha.co.nz; yha.tauranga@yha.co.nz; 171 Elizabeth St; sites \$34, dm/d \$26/62; ☎) A well-kept YHA with a big grassy backyard complete with hammocks for those lazy days and a nearby mangrove swamp to walk through on a boardwalk. Camping spots are spot-on, though the dorms are inviting and come complete with individual lockers.

**Harbour View Motel** (Map p346; ☎ 07-578 8621; www.harbourviewmotel.co.nz; 7 Fifth Ave; s/d from \$75/105; ☎) This large, older complex has a variety of spacious units, the best with harbour views. Ground-floor rooms have less impressive vistas, but all rooms have full kitchens. Kayak rental is available.

**MIDRANGE**

**Roselands Motel** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 2294; www.roselands.co.nz; 21 Brown St; d/ste from \$105/135; ☎) A sweet old-style motel in a quiet but central location that has roomy units with kitchens, highchairs and other family-friendly features. Home-cooked meals (by arrangement), a spa pool and barbecue mean you could easily enjoy a few days at this affordable motel.

**Ambassador Motor Inn** (Map p346; ☎ 0800 735 294; 9 Fifteenth Ave; www.ambassador-motorinn.co.nz; d/f \$105/160; ☎) Located on one of the main roads into town, this tidy motor inn has noise-reducing glass for peaceful sleeps and excellent facilities for families including swimming pool, basketball hoop and trampoline. All rooms have spa bath and kitchen facilities, and are fully equipped with ironing boards, hairdryers and other useful domestic gadgetry.

**Harbour City Motor Inn** (Map p342; ☎ 07-571 1435; www.taurangaharbourcity.co.nz; 50 Wharf St; d from \$125; ☎) In the middle of town with plenty of parking, this newish motor inn has all the mod cons such as a spa bath, TV and business desk in every room. Friendly staff offer sound local advice on your itinerary.

**Puriri Park Boutique Hotel** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 1480, 0800 4787 474; 32 Cameron Rd, ste \$130-225; ☎) With large rooms (all with either terrace or balcony), king-sized beds, spas, heated pool and secure parking, this upmarket hotel is popular with business and leisure travellers who prefer exclusive luxury with the personal touch, rather than the big bold hotels.

**Tauranga on the Waterfront** (Map p342; ☎ 0800 109 007; www.thetauranga.co.nz; 1 Second Ave; d/ste \$150-295; ☎) This slick place has excellent harbour-view

suites, recently refurbished and looking sleek, sexy and perfect for romantic getaways. Some rooms have deluxe spa baths that will definitely get you in the mood.

**TOP END**

**Hotel on Devonport** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 2668; www.hotelondevonport.net.nz; 72 Devonport Rd; d/ste \$150/200; ☎) The Devonport is top of the town with rooms affording bay views and noise-reducing glass for silence in the city centre, all of which appeals to business travellers and luxury weekenders. All rooms feature broadband internet and comfy couches so the rooms suit whether you're working or relaxing.

**Sebel** (Map p342; ☎ 0800 937 373; www.mirvac hotels.com; 51 Dive Cres; d from \$180; ☎) Tauranga's newest high-rise hotel is on the waters' edge near the harbour bridge. A slick lobby in the contemporary style – retro white vinyl and trendy plush greys – leads off to Halo, the in-house restaurant, all glass and sharp edges, and promising to become a key player in the local cuisine scene. Rooms are super-sized and luxurious in tones *au naturel*. Amenities include an under-utilised gym and infinity edge swimming pool.

**Eating**

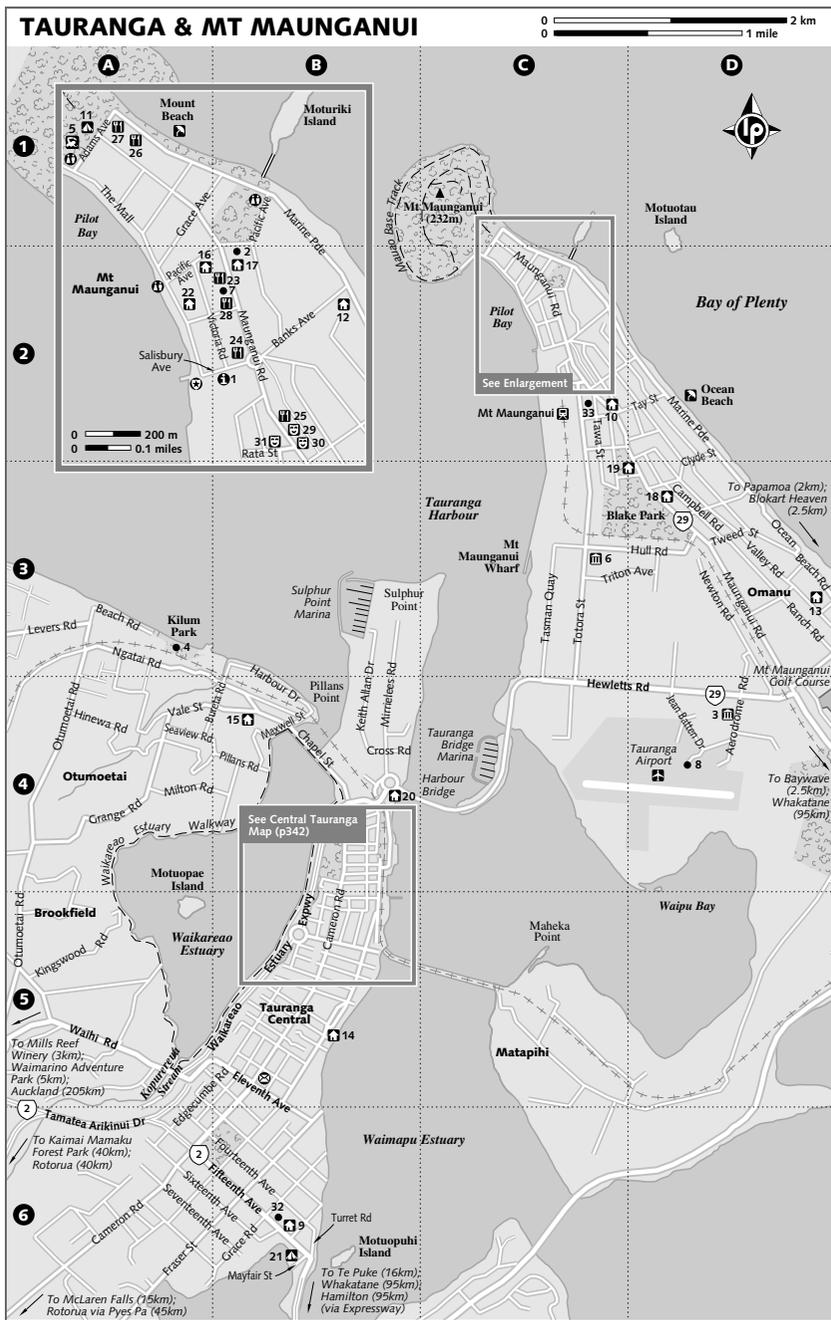
Devonport Rd is the place to grab lunch, but places on The Strand excel at dinner and drinks to follow. You can pick up the advertorial *Dinefind* guide at the i-SITE.

**Elixir** (☎ 07-571 3016; 114 Willow Street; snacks \$3-10; ☎) breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) All natural and healthy, with some gluten-free options. Juices, smoothies and home-made muesli, plus coffee, pancakes and gelato, are delivered all bright and breezy.

**Fresh Fish Market** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 1789; 1 Dive Cres; mains from \$5; ☎) lunch & dinner) A local legend serving up fresh fish and chips right on the water's edge.

**Turkish to Go** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 7296; 3/109 Devonport Rd; kebabs \$6-12; ☎) lunch & dinner) Swiftly serving tasty kebabs; the large ones should satisfy even the most epic of appetites.

**Zeytin** (Map p342; ☎ 07-579 0099; 83 The Strand; mains \$10-20; ☎) lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) Ask the locals to name their favourite restaurant, and odds-on they'll name Zeytin – a real Turkish delight. Real food, real cheap, with something for everyone along the lines of kebabs, delicious home-made breads, dips and healthy salads, wood-fired pizza and a few exotic surprises.



<b>INFORMATION</b>		Belle Mer.....12 B2	Gusto.....24 B2
Mt Maungnau i-SITE.....1 B2	Cosy Corner Motor Camp.....13 D3	Harbour View Motel.....14 B5	Kwang Chow.....25 B2
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>		Just The Ducks Nuts	Slow Fish.....26 A1
Assault.....2 B2	Backpackers.....15 B4	Mission Belle Motel.....16 A2	Turkish to Go 2.....27 A1
Classic Flyers NZ.....3 D4	Mount Backpackers.....17 B2	Pacific Coast Lodge & Backpackers.....19 C3	Zambezi.....28 B2
Elements Watersports.....4 A3	Mount Maungnau B&B.....18 D3	Sebel.....20 B4	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b> (E)
Hot Saltwater Pools.....5 A1	Sebel.....20 B4	Tauranga Tourist Park.....21 B6	Cinema 4.....29 B2
Mount Surf Museum.....6 C3	Tauranga Tandem Skydiving.....8 D4	Westhaven.....22 A2	Mount Mellick Hotel.....30 B2
Mount Surf Shop.....7 B2			Rosie O'Grady's.....31 B2
<b>SLEEPING</b> (S)			<b>TRANSPORT</b>
Ambassador Motor Inn.....9 B6			Bus Depot.....(see 1)
Baywatch Motor Inn.....10 C2			Rent-a-Dent.....32 B6
Beachside Holiday Park.....11 A1			Rite Price Rentals.....33 C2
<b>EATING</b> (F)			
Astrolabe.....23 B2			

**Mediterraneo Café** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 0487; 62 Devonport Rd; mains \$12-18; ☺ 7am-4pm Mon-Fri; 7.30am-4pm Sat, 8am-4pm Sun) A hot spot, bustling with regulars enjoying lashings of terrific coffee and scrumptious all-day breakfasts. Order off the blackboard or from the cabinet stuffed with sandwiches, flans and cakes. Lunchtime crowds can be frantic.

**Bravo** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 4700; Red Sq; mains \$13-30; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This trendy, well-regarded restaurant and bar is a pleasant spot for breakfast, flash sandwiches, salads, wood-fired pizza and freshly-squeezed juices. There's outside seating on the pedestrianised street.

**Little India** (Map 342; ☎ 07-579 0910; 113 The Strand; mains \$14-18; ☺ lunch & dinner) Part of a consistent nationwide chain, this flavoursome curry house offers the best value on The Strand, especially for lunch specials.

**Collar & Thai** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 6655; Goddards Mall, Devonport Rd; mains \$20-25; ☺ lunch Mon-Sat, dinner daily) No tie required at this upstairs, uppend eatery that artfully elaborates on Thai standards and uses plenty of fresh seafood. This place has good value lunch specials.

**Wharf Street Restaurant & Bar** (Map p342; ☎ 07-578 8322; Upstairs, 8 Wharf St; mains \$20-30; ☺ lunch & dinner) Wharf Street could live off its harbour views alone, but gets down to business with its extensive wine list and good value seafood, served in a refreshingly unpretentious dining room.

**our pick Somerset Cottage** (Map p346; ☎ 07-576 6889; 30 Bethlehem Rd; mains \$32-35; ☺ lunch Wed-Fri, dinner Tue-Sun) The most awarded restaurant in the Bay and owner-operated for 20 years, Somerset Cottage is an elegant venue for that special treat. The food is highly seasonal, made from the best NZ ingredients, impressively executed without being too fussy. Stand-out dishes include wild rabbit terrine, duck with coconut kumara and their famous licorice ice cream.

**Drinking**

Very few NZ towns offer a strip as splendid as the Strand. Here's three tips to get you going.

**Crown & Badger** (Map p342; ☎ 07-571 3038; cnr The Strand & Wharf St) A particularly convincing Brit boozier which does pukka pints of Bass and Guinness, and food along the lines of bangers 'n' mash. Things get lively at the weekends when live bands play.

**De Bier Haus** (Map p342; ☎ 07-928 0833; 109 The Strand; ☺ 11am-late) As evident by a pavement packed with happy punters, this is a hot Haus with its Belgian beers and a sophisticated environment to enjoy them in. The interior's a classic bruin meets manly hunting lodge with an antler or two in the midst. Kitchen-work is swift and savvy, turning out Euro-offerings such as German sausage, *brezels*, *moules*, *frites* and an excellent squid salad.

**Cornerstone** (Map p342; ☎ 07-928 1120; 55 The Strand; mains \$13-26; ☺ 10am-late) A cheerful watering hole attended by on-the-ball staff and much enjoyed by a mature crowd (let's say over 25). A solid no-surprises menu offers whopping meals, while sports fans can watch the game on the big telly and groovers can swing a hip on live music nights (Thursday to Saturday).

**Entertainment**

**Baycourt** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 7189; www.baycourt.co.nz; cnr Durham & Wharf Sts) This big venue hosts an eclectic mix of theatre, visiting big bands, world-music concerts and music festivals.

**Buddha Lounge** (Map p342; ☎ 07-928 1516; www.thebuddhalounge.co.nz; 61b The Strand; entry price varies; ☺ 5pm-late Thu, 4pm-3am Fri, 8pm-3am Sat) A cocktail lounge and dance venue hosting local and visiting DJs on some nights.

Two cinemas in town offer Hollywood's latest flicks: the upstairs **Rialto** (Map p342;

ROTORUA & THE BAY OF PLENTY

ROTORUA & THE BAY OF PLENTY

☎ 07-577 0445; www.rialtotauranga.co.nz; Goddards Mall, Devonport Rd; adult/child \$14/8) and **Baycity Cinemas** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 0800; www.movie.net.nz; Elizabeth St; adult/child \$14/8).

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

**Air New Zealand** (Map p342; ☎ 07-577 7300; cnr Devonport Rd & Elizabeth St) has daily direct flights to Auckland and Wellington, and to Christchurch from Monday to Friday, with connections to other centres. Local outfit **Island Air** (☎ 0800 545 455; www.islandair.co.nz; Tauranga Airport) does scheduled and charter flights to Great Barrier Island and Whitianga. Tauranga's airport is at Mt Maunganui.

### BUS

**InterCity** (☎ 07-578 8103) connects Tauranga with Auckland (\$41, 4½ hours), Hamilton (\$29, two hours), Rotorua (\$31, 1½ hours), Taupo (\$51, three hours) and Wellington (\$106, nine hours). Tickets and timetables are available at the i-SITE.

**Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) runs daily services to Auckland (\$29, 3½ hours), Hamilton (\$22, 1½ hours), Waitomo (\$39, 2½ hours), Whakatane (\$11, one hour), Rotorua (\$9, 1½ hours), Taupo (\$39, three hours), Napier (\$59, five hours) and Wellington (\$59, 12 hours). Substantial fare savings can be made by booking in advance.

**Bay Hopper** (☎ 0800 422 928; www.baybus.co.nz) runs a morning and afternoon weekday bus to Rotorua (\$11, 1½ hours) via Te Puke (\$4.50, 30min). Daily buses go to Whakatane (\$12, 1½ hours) with onward connections to Ohope and Opotiki. Bay Hopper buses leave from Wharf St (Map p342).

**Supa Travel Express** (☎ 07-571 0583) runs on-demand buses to Auckland Airport (one way \$80), as does **Tauranga Airport Shuttles** (☎ 07-571 6177). **Coastline Shuttles** (☎ 07-541 0888; www.coastlineshuttles.co.nz) runs airport transfers to Auckland (\$80), Hamilton (\$60) and Rotorua (\$55) by arrangement.

### CAR

If you're heading to Hamilton on route K, don't forget the toll road costs \$1.

## Getting Around

Tauranga's bright yellow **Bay Hopper** (☎ 0800 4229 287; www.baybus.co.nz) buses run Monday to Saturday to most locations around the area,

including Mt Maunganui and Papamoa. There's a central stop at Wharf St. The timetable is available from the i-SITE.

Numerous car-rental agencies have offices in Tauranga including:

**Rent-a-Dent** (Map p346; ☎ 07-578 1772; 19 Fifteenth Ave)

**Rite Price Rentals** (Map p346; ☎ 0800 250 251; www.ritepricerentals.co.nz; 25 Totara St, Mt Maunganui)

A taxi from Tauranga's centre to the airport costs around \$16. Local taxi companies:

**Citicabs** (☎ 07-577 0999)

**Mount Taxis** (☎ 07-574 7555)

**Tauranga Mount Taxis** (☎ 07-578 6086)

## MT MAUNGANUI

pop 18,600

Named for the massive 232m hill that dominates the township, Mt Maunganui (Large Mountain) is often just called 'the Mount', or Mauao. It's famous for the beautiful beaches, one either side, and was made even saucier still when its 100m artificial surf reef opened in 2005. Sun-seekers flock to the Mount in summer, supplied by an increasing number of imposing apartments and luxury hotels studding the spit.

## Information

The friendly **Mt Maunganui i-SITE** (☎ 07-575 5099; Salisbury Ave; ☎ 9am-5pm) will assist you with information and bookings.

## Sights & Activities

The Mount can claim to be NZ's premier surf city, though there's top swimming on the beach between Moturiki and Maunganui. To hit the waves, head for the **Mount Surf Shop** (☎ 07-575 9133; www.mountsurfshop.co.nz; 96 Maunganui Rd; rental per day wet suits/body boards/surfboards \$15/20/30) or **New Zealand Surf School** (☎ 021 477 873; www.nzsrfschools.co.nz; ½hr lessons incl all gear \$50/80). For a more womanly approach, try **Hibiscus** (☎ 07-575 3792; lessons 2hr/2-day clinic \$80/150), run by experienced surfer Rebecca Taylor. To learn more about surfing in the area (and beyond) visit the **Mount Surf Museum** (☎ 07-927 7234; www.mountsurfshop.co.nz; 139 Totara St). Learn to surf with **Assault** (☎ 07-575 7831; 24 Pacific Ave; www.assault.co.nz; 1hr surfing lesson \$45).

For more salty escapades, try **Big Sky Parasail** (☎ 0800 724 4759; www.bigskyparasail.com; \$65-85). Note that they operate only in summer.

The mountain itself can be explored via **walking trails**, around it and up to the summit. The summit walk takes about an hour

and gets steep near the top. You can also climb around the rocks on **Moturiki Island**, which is joined to the peninsula. Check out the *Tauranga Walkways* pamphlet, available from the i-SITE (opposite). The island and the base of the Mount also make up the **Mauao Base Track**, offering spectacular views of the pohutukawa trees when they're blooming between November and January. **Mauao Tours** (☎ 07-575 6961; www.mauaotours.co.nz; tours from 1hr \$25) runs guided walking tours around the Mount and Papamoa with a focus on Maori history.

After all that walking you'll have earned a soak at the **hot saltwater pools** (☎ 07-575 0868; Adams Ave; adult/child \$9/6.50; ☎ 6am-10pm Mon-Sat, 8am-10pm Sun & holidays) at the foot of the Mount. For traditional swimming pool action plus wave pool and hydroslide, visit **Baywave** (☎ 07-575 0276; www.baywave.leisurecentre.co.nz; cnr Girven & Gloucester Rds; adult/child \$6/4; ☎ 6am-9pm Mon-Fri, 7am-7pm Sat & Sun).

**Hovercraft Tours** (☎ 0800 737 700; www.adventuraviation.co.nz; per person from 10 min \$30) operates a six-seater craft out of the airport and offers short joy-rides and charters around the waterways. Also at the airport is a must-see for wing nuts, **Classic Flyers NZ** (☎ 07-572 4000; www.classicflyersnz.com; Tauranga Airport; adult/child \$10/5; ☎ 9am-4pm), an aviation museum with several working aircraft and a Spitfire replica.

For speedsters, there's **Blokart Heaven** (☎ 07-572 4256; www.blokartheaven.co.nz; 176 Parton Rd, Papamoa; 15min \$15; ☎ 10am-6pm summer, noon-5pm winter), NZ's first purpose-built course for land-based windsurfing on small carts.

## Sleeping

Mt Maunganui is a hugely popular holiday destination with plenty of accommodation – particularly apartment style – with prices higher than Tauranga.

## BUDGET

**Pacific Coast Lodge & Backpackers** (☎ 0800 666 622; www.pacificcoastlodge.co.nz; 432 Maunganui Rd; dm/d from \$24/35; ☎ ☎) Not far from the action, this efficiently run, clean hostel is the pick for those who want a good night's sleep, with curfews discouraging boisterousness. Bunkrooms are roomy and pleasant, decorated throughout with jungle murals.

**Mount Backpackers** (☎ 07-575 0860; www.mountbackpackers.co.nz; 87 Maunganui Rd; dm/d from \$25/35; ☎) A tight and slightly tired hostel, redeemed by location: close to the beach and a mere stagger

away from the restaurants and bars. There are boogie boards and bikes for hire, and deals on activities including surf lessons.

**Cosy Corner Motor Camp** (☎ 07-575 5899; www.cosycorner.co.nz; 40 Ocean Beach Rd; sites \$26, cabins/d flats \$50/70; ☎ ☎) This family camping ground has a sociable feel with barbecues, trampolines for kids and a dedicated boat park. Cabins may prove too cosy for some guests, but the convenience of the beach more than compensates.

**Beachside Holiday Park** (☎ 07-575 4471; 1 Adams Ave; sites from \$30; ☎) With three different camping areas all nestled into the base of Mt Maunganui, this community-run park has spectacular camping with all the expected facilities, plus it's handy to the saltwater pools and a strip of good eateries.

**Mount Maunganui B&B** (☎ 07-575 4013; www.mountbednbreakfast.co.nz; 463 Maunganui Rd; s/d from \$60/100; ☎ ☎) This five-room B&B is an affordable spot with presentable, if tight, rooms and cooked breakfast. Front rooms cop some traffic noise, but owners are friendly and helpful.

## MIDRANGE

**Westhaven** (☎ 07-575 4753; www.westhavenmotel.co.nz; 27a The Mall; courtyard from \$100; ☎) The 1970s style here pays homage to *Brady Bunch* architecture, with wooden shelving between kitchen and lounge, and bathrooms sizable enough to retune your afro. Full kitchens are perfect for self-caterers, plus there are views from the front rooms. Friendly hosts also offer fishing rods and dinghies for family fun.

**Mission Belle Motel** (☎ 0800 202 434; www.missionbellemotel.co.nz; cnr Victoria Rd & Pacific Ave; d/f \$115/160; ☎) With a distinctly Spanish exterior, this family-run motel goes all modern and airy inside with especially good two-storey family rooms with large bathtubs, plus sheltered barbecue and courtyard areas.

**Baywatch Motor Inn** (☎ 0800 229 928; www.baywatchmotorinn.co.nz; 349a Maunganui Rd; d/ste \$160/200; ☎ ☎) An Art Deco charmer a few minutes' walk from the shops and beach. Rooms are modern, spacious and immaculate, with king-size beds, compact kitchenettes, a pool and barbecue area making it a good option for families.

## TOP END

**Belle Mer** (☎ 0800 100 235; www.bellemer.co.nz; 53 Marine Pde; apt \$200-320; ☎ ☎) A classy beachside complex of two- and three-bedroom apartments,

some with balcony sea views and others opening out on to private courtyards, although you'll probably be reclining around the fabulous resort-style pool terrace. Rooms are tastefully decorated in warm tones with soft edges, and have everything you need for longer stays, with a proper working kitchen and in-room laundry.

### Eating & Drinking

Just when you think the Mount township has plenty of good eating options, you discover the high-density strip of super-duper delights at the Mauao end of Marine Parade...

**Zambezi** (☎ 07-575 4202; 108 Maunganui Rd; snacks \$4-12; ☎ 9am-4pm) A cheap and cheerful café which, unlike virtually any place for miles around, makes a nice simple sandwich (gourmet sandwiches, mind you, but still a welcome change from all those wretched wraps). There's eggy brekkies and all that, of course, but plenty of healthy options such as juices and salads.

**Gusto** (☎ 07-575 5675; 200 Maunganui Rd; breakfast \$5-12.50, lunch \$9-13; ☎ breakfast & lunch) This friendly spot keeps its menu affordable but interesting with Kiwi standards such as lamb and kumara (sweet potato) given a refreshing treatment.

**Turkish to Go** (☎ 07-575 8090; 6 Adams Ave; kebabs \$6-12; ☎ lunch & dinner) One of a family of kebab shops, serving consistently tasty kebabs, catering to everyone from the felafel-lover to salad-freak and meat-eater.

**Slow Fish** (☎ 07-574 2949; Marine Parade; mains \$10-18; ☎ 7am-5pm) Known as slow for its promotion of the art of savouring fine food, there's no slacking about in the kitchen at this award-winning café. It's so popular you'll have to crow-bar yourself in the door or pounce wildly on any available alfresco seat, but it's absolutely worth it for its free-range eggs and ham, greek salads and divine counter selection.

**Kwang Chow** (☎ 07-575 5063; 241 Maunganui Rd; lunch \$12, dinner \$17-18; ☎ lunch & dinner) This all-you-can-eat Chinese place is a local favourite with a bargain bite that maintains tasty flavours rather than resorting to a bland melange. Discount dinners from Monday to Wednesday.

**Astrolabe** (☎ 07-574 8155; 82 Maunganui Rd; brunch \$12-18, dinner \$22-32; ☎ brunch & dinner) A clever combo of swish and style with a definite note of Pacifica-rustica, the Astrolabe is the Mount's most famous restaurant, catering largely to a deep-pocketed hip crowd who indulge in gourmet goodies such as venison and

oysters. You can also come in for a boutique beer on tap and a whack of pool.

### Entertainment

Once the sun goes down, your best bet for entertainment is the pub or bar where, with luck, you stumble across a live band or DJs. **Mount Mellick Hotel** (☎ 07-574 0047; 317 Maunganui Rd) is a blokey Irish pub with regular live music and DJs on Friday nights. **Rosie O'Grady's** (☎ 07-575 3135; 2 Rata St) is a slightly less blokey Irish pub with NZ boutique beer on tap, quiz nights and Texas hold-em poker tournaments.

Go to the movies at **Cinema 4** (☎ 07-572 3311; 249 Maunganui Rd; adult/child \$14/8).

### Getting There & Away

You can reach Mt Maunganui across the harbour bridge from Tauranga or from the south via Te Maunga on SH2. See p348 for public transport details for the Mount. Tauranga airport is at Mt Maunganui.

Supa Travel, Coastline Shuttles and Intercity all serve Tauranga. Their buses stop at Mt Maunganui i-SITE. **Bay Hopper** (☎ 0800 422 9287) buses run from Wharf St in Tauranga to the Mount, stopping at the i-SITE and hot pools.

### AROUND TAURANGA Tuhua (Mayor Island)

Commonly known as Mayor Island, this dormant volcano is located 40km north of Tauranga. The island is known for its black, glass-like obsidian rock and diverse bird life including a clutch of kiwi, introduced to the predator-free island in 2006. Walking tracks cut through the now-overgrown crater valley, and the northwest corner is a marine reserve. The area is managed by the Tuhua Trust Board and to land here you need permission from DOC, with a \$5 landing fee.

There's limited **camping and lodge accommodation** (☎ 07-579 5493; sites \$10, dm from \$10) with only a barbecue for cooking; bring your own food (there are no fridges either). Several boat charter companies will take you to the island including Blue Ocean Charters (p343).

### Matakana Island

Twenty-four kilometres long and forming, more or less, the seaward side of Tauranga harbour, Matakana Island is laced with secluded white-sand surf beaches on its eastern shore (for the experienced only) and enjoys

a laid-back island lifestyle. The best way to explore it is on a tour with **Adventure Bay of Plenty** (see p344). Alternatively you can catch the **ferry** (☎ 0274 927 251; one way passenger/car & passenger \$3/22.50; ☎ runs 7.45am, 2pm & 4pm) from Omokoroa, though you cannot visit the *marae* without permission.

### Katikati pop 2900

This small town was the only planned Ulster settlement in the world, and celebrates this history with colourful **murals** on many of the town's buildings – hence its moniker of 'the mural town'. The **Katikati Information Centre** (☎ 07-549 1658; www.katikati.co.nz; 36 Main Rd; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) sells a guide to the various murals for \$2.50 (as well as doing other good deeds), but you can also take a **guided tour** (☎ 07-549 0869) by arrangement. From the information centre you can also take the **Haiku Pathway**, a pleasant walking route past boulders inscribed with haiku verses, which follows the Uretara River.

**Katikati Heritage Museum** (☎ 07-549 0651; cnr SH2 & Wharawhara Rd; adult/child \$6/4, minigolf adult/child \$4/3; ☎ 9.30am-3.30pm) traces local history with an engaging mix of Maori artefacts and Ulster history, some moa bones and reputedly the largest bottle collection in the southern hemisphere. There's also minigolf and a barn-row of micro-shops including a quilting supplier and Maori crafts. There's a carvery serving roast lunches and dinners, too.

Booklovers should head to **Titles Book Gallery** (☎ 07-552 0925; www.titles.co.nz; 21 Aongatete Rd; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun), a second-hand bookshop which holds rare and out-of-print books (NZ titles a speciality) as well as prints of early maps and illustrative works.

**Morton Estate** (☎ 07-552 0795; SH2; ☎ tastings 9.30am-5pm), one of NZ's bigger wineries, is located on SH2, 8km south of Katikati, and open for tastings and stock-ups. Try the famous Chardonnay.

### SLEEPING

Accommodation is scattered around the countryside surrounding Katikati, with several farmstays available.

**Sapphire Springs Holiday Park** (☎ 07-549 0768; www.sapphiresprings.co.nz; Hot Springs Rd; sites \$30, dm/d from \$20/40; ☎) A verdant park in peaceful surroundings, with plenty of activities to keep every-

one busy: bushwalks, barbecues, playgrounds, volleyball, minigolf and thermal pools with a kid's slide.

**Katikati Motel** (☎ 07-549 0385; katikati@ihug.co.nz; cnr Main & Fairview Rds; d \$80-95; ☎) This budget motel may be one of the town's oldest, but it still has a spa and sauna. It's well kept and remains a solid option for the budget-watchers.

**Kaimai View Motel** (☎ 07-549 0398; www.kaimaiview.co.nz; 78 Main Rd; d/f \$109/149; ☎) This modern motel is opposite the Katikati Motel, offering neat rooms that include kitchenettes, CD players and, in larger rooms, spas. Breakfast and dinner are also available.

**Panorama Lodge** (☎ 07-549 1882; www.panoramalodge.co.nz; 901 Pacific Coast Hwy; d from \$170; ☎) This neat little B&B is set in a diverse orchard 10km north of town and lives up to its name with sweeping views of the bay. It's a real farm experience, with quail and alpacas wandering the grounds. Luxury rooms have extras beyond brass beds and DVDs, including slippers and fresh coffee.

**Warm Earth Cottage** (☎ 07-549 0962; www.warmearthcottage.co.nz; 202 Thompsons Track; d \$200; ☎) Re-ignite your romance or just simmer in simple pleasures at this rural idyll, not far off SH2. Two pretty cottages sit riverside, electricity-less, so indulge in wood-fired outdoor baths and candlelit evenings. There's no kitchen either, so enjoy one-pot wonders on the outside gas hob; a big brunch is included in the price, as is the odd dram of moonshine.

### EATING

**Rustic Pumpkin** (☎ 07-549 1924; 603 SH2; lunch \$8-17; ☎ 8am-4pm) It's well worth going the extra 5km north of town for this cracker little café on the main road, especially if you like generous portions of home-made food such as soup, quiche, sandwiches and cakes.

**Katz Pyjamas** (☎ 07-549 1902; cnr SH2 & Beach Road; meals \$12-22; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) Home-made food and the best coffee in town in a convenient main road location.

**Twickenham Homestead** (☎ 07-549 1383; cnr SH2 & Mulgan St; lunch \$13-29, dinner \$24-38; ☎ 9.30am-3.30pm Tue-Sun; dinner from 6pm Tue-Sat) In a century-old villa surrounded by elegant gardens, this restaurant is a bit twee but makes amends with admirable Devonshire teas. Lunch and dinner runs pricily along the lines of panini and ribeye respectively.

**Talisman Hotel & Bar** (☎ 07-549 3218; 7 Main Road; meals \$15–32; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) The local pub, with occasional live music and karaoke, and the Landing restaurant serving all-day grub including pizza and steak.

Self-caterers will find **Woolworths** (☎ 07-549 0444; ☺ 7am–9pm) just south of the town centre on Main Rd.

### Omokoroa

Just 22km west of Tauranga, this popular summer spot has harbour views, a safe swimming beach and pleasant riverside reserve. There are a couple of campervan parks, including **Omokoroa Thermal Holiday Park** (☎ 07-578 0857; www.omokoroa.co.nz; 165 Omokoroa Rd; sites \$34, cabins/units \$55/150; ☐ ☑ ☒), a family-oriented park with a wide range of accommodation, thermal hot pools and cheery gardens. From Omokoroa you can visit Matakana on the ferry.

### Minden Lookout

From Minden Lookout, about 10km west of Tauranga, there's a superb view back over the Bay of Plenty. To get there, take SH2 to Te Puna and turn off south on Minden Rd; the lookout is about 4km up the road.

### Papamoa

pop 7460

Papamoa is a fast-growing suburb near the edge of the Mount, separated now by just a paddock or two also destined for subdivision. Burgeoning with big new houses on pristine streets, parts of Papamoa have the air of a gated community about them. That said, the beaches beyond the sheltering dunes are truly spectacular, so you can't blame folk for moving in.

### HOT FUZZ

The humble kiwifruit earns NZ over a billion dollars every year, and with the Bay of Plenty in the thick of the action, it's no wonder the locals are fond of this fruit.

The fruit's origins are in China, where it was called the monkey peach because they were considered ripe when the monkeys munched them. As they migrated to NZ, they were renamed the Chinese gooseberry – they were a lot smaller then, but canny Kiwis engineered them to more generous sizes and began exporting them in the 1950s.

Following in the footsteps of champagne in France, the fruit was sexily rebranded the Zespri. Today the Zesprians grow two types of kiwifruit: the common fuzzy-covered green fruit, and the gold fruit with its smooth complexion. To learn more about the kiwifruit, visit Kiwi 360 (see opposite).

For visitors after a dollar or two, there's always kiwifruit work around the area – most of it during harvest (May and June) and odd jobs at other times. Check the noticeboard at the Te Puke visitor information centre (above) or for horticulture work across NZ check out www.picknz.co.nz.

**Papamoa Beach Top 10 Holiday Resort** (☎ 07-572 0816; www.papamoabeach.co.nz; 535 Papamoa Beach Rd; sites \$34–68, villas from \$170; ☐) is a modern park that has been primed and priced-up beyond its caravan-park origins, with an array of accommodation options, including self-contained villas.

**Beach House Motel** (☎ 0800 429 999; www.beachhouse.motel.co.nz; 224 Papamoa Beach Rd; d \$100–240; ☐ ☑ ☒), with its corrugated-iron exterior and tasteful cane-ware interior, offers a taste of the Kiwi bach holiday, relaxed and close to the beach.

**Turkish to Go** (☎ 07-542 1404; cnr Beach & Domain Rds; kebabs \$8–12; ☺ lunch & dinner) wraps up very big small kebabs and even bigger big ones, with free coffee and apple tea.

**Bluebiyou** (☎ 07-572 2099; 559 Papamoa Beach Rd; mains \$13–33; ☺ 11am–late) is a casual restaurant right on the beachfront, serving big brunches and seafood specialities.

The slightly creepy **Fashion Island** shopping precinct (Gravatt Rd) has a slew of international stodgoramas and the odd independent café.

### Te Puke

pop 6775

Welcome to the 'Kiwifruit Capital of the World', a busy town during the picking season when there's plenty of work around for willing workers (see the boxed text, below). The **Te Puke visitor information centre** (☎ 07-573 9172; 130 Jellicoe St; ☺ 8am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat) is located in the same building as the public library.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Te Puke offers a rare opportunity to brush up on your kiwifruit knowledge. Where did it come from? What exactly does it contribute to

NZ's cultural and economic life? And should you eat that brown, fuzzy skin?

Thankfully, **Kiwi360** (☎ 0800 549 4360; www.kiwi360.com; 35 Young Rd, off SH2; adult/child \$20/free; ☺ 9am–5pm), at the turn-off for Maketu, has all the answers and more. Sitting amongst orchards of nashi pears, citrus, avocados and (you guessed it) kiwifruit, this visitor centre peels off a range of attractions including a 35-minute kiwicart orchard ride, kiwifruit viewing tower, a café serving up kiwifruit delights, and a shop stocked with an inordinate array of kiwifruit gawags and other kiwiana. From here you can also take helicopter tours with **Aerius Helicopters** (p344).

If you're after something even sweeter, you're in luck. Not far away is **Comvita visitors centre** (☎ 0800 493 782; www.comvita.com; SH33, Paengaroa; admission free; ☺ 8.30am–5pm, tours 10am & 2pm), home of New Zealand's most famous honey- and bee-derived health-care products. There's an educational gallery, shop, café and enjoyable tours that take you to the hive and introduce you to the Queen.

**Longridge Fun Park** (☎ 0800 867 386; www.longridgepark.co.nz; Paengaroa; adult/child jetboat \$89/39, farm tours \$20/14, 4WD \$89/39; ☺ 9am–5pm summer, to 4pm winter) offers many different adventures from half-hour jet boat rides on a gorgeous stretch of the Kaituna River, to cute tours of a kiwifruit farm including occasional sheep-milking demos. Alternatively, you can jump into a 'hill-hopper' 4WD buggy for a bit of hill-hopping. There's a café and shop on site.

### SLEEPING

There's not a wide selection of accommodation in Te Puke town, but there's a bit more in home- and farmstays in the surrounding area, a list of which is available from the visitor centre.

**Lazy Daze B&B** (☎ 07-573 8188; 144 Boucher Ave; \$120; ☐) This pretty, private self-contained cottage – with a relaxing deck overlooking its own garden – sits at back of Mel and Sharron's property. Delicious breakfast provisions are included in the price.

**Beacon Motel** (☎ 07-573 7825; 173 Jellicoe St; s/d \$99/120; ☐ ☒) This old-style but well-presented motel is right on the main road, well situated for those passing through.

### Maketu

pop 1000

By taking SH2 through Te Puke and turning left onto Maketu Rd, you'll find yourself at

this historic seaside town. The volunteer-run **visitors centre** (☎ 07-533 2343; Maketu Rd) is open occasionally, but Big Harry can help you if you ring.

Maketu played a significant role in NZ's history as the landing site of *Te Arawa* canoe (see p322), which is commemorated with a somewhat underwhelming stone monument on the foreshore. Arguably, though, the town is more famous for **Maketu Pies** (☎ 07-533 2358; 6 Little Waihi Rd), baked fresh daily here and employing a good proportion of the population. Very good pies they are, too.

Beach bums should head for **Newdick's Beach**, reached by following Town Point Rd to a small dirt track. It's on private property, so pay the \$3-per-car donation at the gate. From here you can walk to Little Waihi, a few kilometres down the coast towards the estuary. Beachside horse treks can be had with **Briars Seaside Ride** (☎ 07-533 2582; www.briarshorsetrek.co.nz; Town Point Rd, 2hr rides \$85).

Overnight at **Beach Holiday Park** (☎ 07-533 2165; www.maketubeach.co.nz; 1 Town Point Rd; unpowered/power sites \$20/25, d \$55–115; ☐), right on the beach with camp sites, log cabins and motel rooms.

## EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY

Stretching from Maketu to Opotiki, the Eastern Bay of Plenty's main drawcard is long stretches of sandy beaches with a backdrop of cliffs covered in majestic pohutukawa trees. It's beautiful country, and often overlooked, which is absolutely integral to its charm.

### WHAKATANE

pop 17,700

A true Pohutukawa paradise, the town of Whakatane (fa-ka-ta-ne) sits in a natural harbour at the mouth of the river of the same name. It's the hub of the Rangitaiki agricultural district, but there's much more to Whakatane than farming, with blissful beaches and volcanic Whakaari (White Island) for starters.

### Information

**Whakatane i-SITE** (☎ 0800 924 528; www.whakatane.com; Quay St; ☺ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat & Sun summer, 8am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun winter) has free internet access, books tours, accommodation and handles general enquiries

for DOC. Nearby is the **post office** (☎ 07-307 1155; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12pm Sat) with a Kiwibank for foreign exchange, although all major banks have branches in town. For emergency medical treatment, visit **Whakatane Hospital** (07-306 0999; Stewart St).

## Sights

**Whakatane Museum & Gallery** (☎ 07-306 0505; www.whakatanemuseum.org.nz; 11 Boon St; admission by donation; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat & Sun) is an impressive regional museum with artfully presented displays on early Maori and European settlers. Of particular interest are the *taonga* (treasures) of local Maori tracing their lineage back to the *Mataatua waka* (see the boxed text, p356), while the art gallery presents a varied programme of NZ and international exhibitions.

Beside the roundabout is **Pohaturoa** (nr The Strand & Commerce St), a large *tapu* (sacred) rock outcrop, where baptisms and other rites were performed. The Treaty of Waitangi was also signed here by Ngati Awa chiefs in 1840 and there's a monument to the Ngati Awa chief Te Hurinui Apanui. Another Maori site is **Muriwai's Cave** (partially collapsed), which once provided shelter to Muriwai, Wairaka's aunt and famous seer. A **ceremonial waka** is displayed opposite the caves.

## Activities

### MARINE MAMMAL-WATCHING & FISHING

The sea along the Whakatane coast is alive with marine mammals including common dolphins, fur seals, orca, pilot and minke whales; as well as bird life such as gannets and little blue penguins. The area is also renowned for fishing, from big game such as marlin and sharks, down to teatime treats such as tarakihi and kahawai. Several operators can get you out amongst it, including swimming with the dolphins.

**Diveworks Charters** (☎ 07-308 5896; www.diveworks-charters.com; 86 The Strand; boat per hr \$200) Fishing and diving trips on sport fishing boats, with all gear available.

**Dolphin and Whale Nature Rush** (☎ 0800 733 529; www.dolphinandwhale.co.nz; The Strand; trips adult/child \$80/50; ☎ 10am daily Dec-Mar; Sat-Mon Apr-Nov) Offers a two-hour fast-boat trip out to Motuhora (Whale Island).

**Whales and Dolphin Watch** (☎ 0800 354 7737; www.whalesanddolphinwatch.co.nz; 96 The Strand; view adult/child \$110/80, swim \$150/130; ☎ 7.15am, 8.30am

& 1pm) Dolphin-viewing and swimming trips year-round.

## WALKING

The i-SITE sells *Discover the Walks Around Whakatane* (\$2), a booklet detailing walks ranging from 30 minutes to half a day. Most walks are part of the **Nga Tapuwae o Toi** (Footsteps of Toi) walkway (13 hours, 18km), a large loop that takes in Ohope Beach and several historic sites along the way. A flatter option is the **River Walk** (2-3 hours), following the Whakatane River past the Botanical Gardens, Muruwait's Cave and on to Wairaka's statue.

Another popular stroll is **Kohi Point Walkway** (four hours, 5.5km), which extends through the Kohi Point Scenic Reserve, passing lookouts and **Toi's Pa** (Kapua te Rangi), reputedly the oldest *pa* site in NZ. Other walks are **Latham's Hill Track** (17km out of town), **Puketapu Lookout** and **Papaka Redoubt**. **White Pine Bush Walk** (30 minutes) starts 20km south of Whakatane and is accessible by wheelchair and pram.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

**Kiwi Jet Tours** (☎ 0800 800 538; www.kiwijectboats.com; adult/child \$70/60) rockets along Rangitaiki River from Matahina Dam to Aniwhenua Falls for a hair-raising ride.

**Matata Eco Tours** (☎ 0800 628 282; www.matataecotours.co.nz; tours half-/full day \$60/110) runs tours of the Tarawera Valley where you can learn about the native flora, fauna, and cultural heritage of the area.

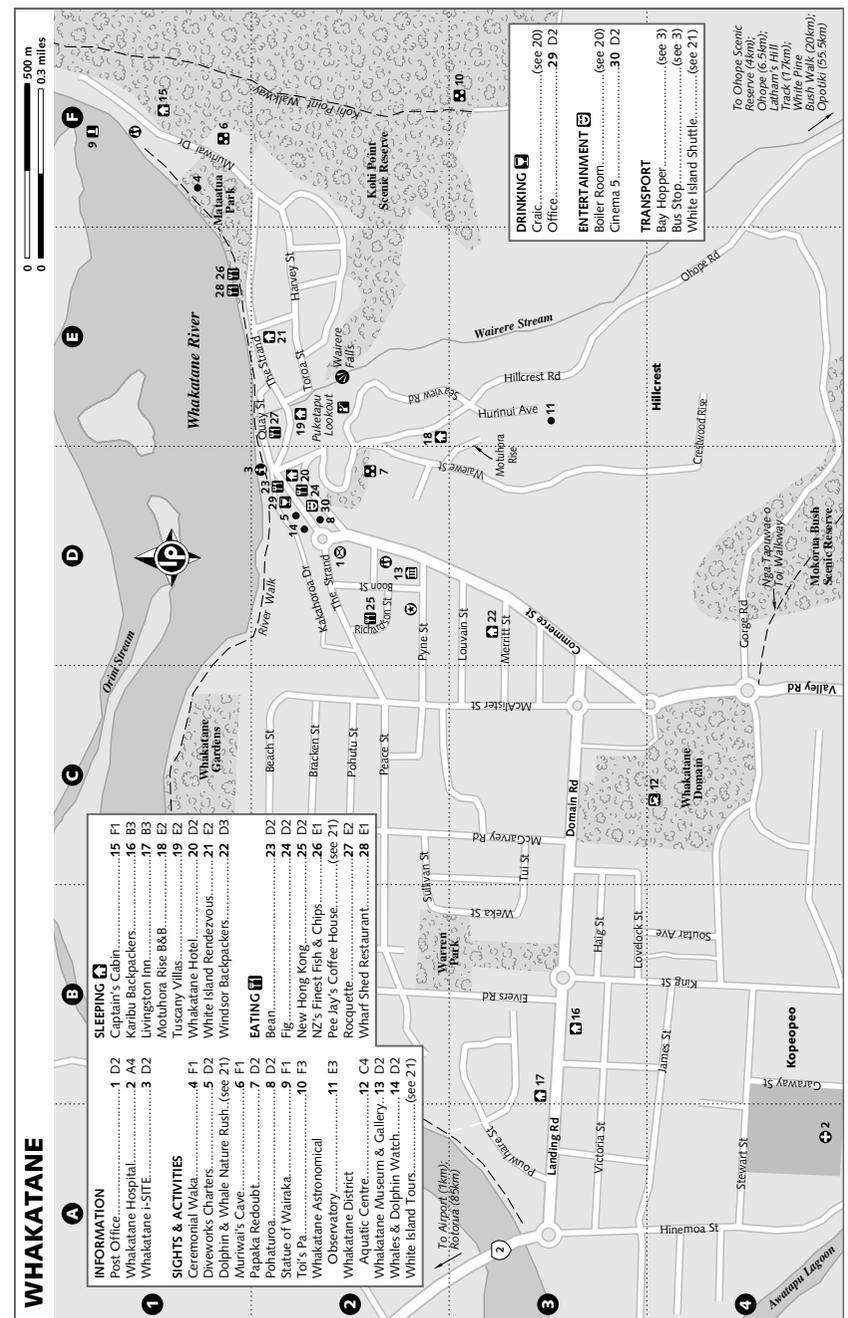
**Whakatane Astronomical Observatory** (☎ 07-308 6495; Hurinui Ave, Hillcrest; adult/child/family \$10/4/15; ☎ dusk Tue & Fri) offers a great chance to star-spot when the sky is clear.

**Whakatane District Aquatic Centre** (☎ 07-308 4192; Short St; adult/child \$3.50/1.70; ☎ 6am-8pm Mon-Fri, 7am-6pm Sat & Sun) is a modern swimming complex with indoor and outdoor pools, spa pools and a waterslide.

**White Island Tours** (☎ 0800 733 529; www.whiteisland.co.nz; The Strand; adult & child \$175; ☎ departure times vary betwn 7am-9.15am, & also 12.30pm during peak season) offers boat trips to Motuhora (Whale Island) and Whakaari (White Island).

## Sleeping BUDGET

Cheap accommodation in Whakatane is limited, but of a high standard.



**Whakatane Hotel** (☎ 07-307 1670; 79 The Strand; dm/s \$20/40, d \$55-65) This Art Deco classic has basic rooms to suit lively backpackers who carry ear-plugs to muffle weekend band noise, or those who love to be in the thick of it.

**Windsor Backpackers** (☎ 07-308 8040; whaka\_bpack@xtra.co.nz; 10 Merritt St; dm/s \$25/35, d \$50-80; P) Whakatane's newest backpackers is freshly converted from a funeral parlour, so expect a restful sleep. Excellent rooms range from dorms to motel-standard doubles, and the communal kitchen, lounge area and barbecue courtyard are spacious and tidy.

**Karibu Backpackers** (☎ 07-307 8276; www.karibubackpackers.co.nz; 13 Landing Rd; sites \$28, dm \$24-26, d units \$100-150; P) This converted house has dorms, two-bed units, and a large garden with tent sites. Barbecues and free bikes are attractive extras for those after cheap thrills.

#### MIDRANGE

**Captain's Cabin** (☎ 07-308 5719; 23 Muriwai Dr; r \$115; P) In a serene part of town with breathtaking views of the harbour entrance, this homely self-contained unit is the perfect spot for those hanging round for a few days. A cosy living area cleverly combines bedroom, lounge, kitchen and dining, with a second smaller room and bijoux bathroom – all sweetly decorated along nautical lines.

**Livingston Inn** (☎ 0800 770 777; www.livingston.co.nz; 42 Landing Rd; d/f \$120/180; P) The Livingston remains one of the better motels in town, with spacious, well-kept units that are popular with the motor-inn crowd. Large spas in executive suites are a great fringe benefit.

**White Island Rendezvous** (☎ 0800 242 299; www.whiteisland.co.nz; The Strand; d/f from \$130/150; P) An immaculate 25-room complex run by the on-the-ball White Island Tour people. Lots of balcony and deck space for enjoying the sea air, with interiors decked out in timber floors for a beach cottage vibe. Deluxe rooms come with spas and there are facilities for travellers with disabilities. Breakfast available from the terrific in-house café, Pee Jay's.

**Tuscany Villas** (☎ 0800 801 040; www.tuscanyvillas.co.nz; 57 The Strand; d \$135-180; P) This modern motel may be a long way from Florence, but still offers a few rays of Italian sunshine with interesting architecture, wrap-around balcony and attractive floral plantings wherever there is room. Rooms are luxurious and comfy, with spa pools and super king beds.

#### WHAKA LIKE A MAN

Whakatane's name originated some eight centuries ago, 200 years after the original Maori settlers arrived here. The warrior Toroa and his family sailed into the estuary in a huge ocean-going *waka* (canoe), the *Mataatua*. As the men went ashore to greet local leaders, the tide turned, and the *waka* – with all the women on board – drifted out to sea. Toroa's daughter, Wairaka, cried out 'E! Kia whakatane au i ahau!' (Let me act as a man!) and, breaking the traditional *tapu* on women steering a *waka*, she took up the paddle and brought the boat safely ashore. A **statue of Wairaka** stands proudly atop a rock in Whakatane's harbour in commemoration of her brave deed.

#### TOP END

**Motuhora Rise B&B** (☎ 07-307 0224; 2 Motuhora Rise; s/d \$190/205; P) At the top of the town in both senses, this hilltop spot affords great views across to Whale Island. You can expect a gourmet cheeseboard on arrival, along with other extras such as a DVD home-theatre suite, outdoor spa pool on decking and fishing rods and golf clubs.

#### Eating

**NZ's Finest Fish & Chips** (☎ 07-307 1100; The Strand; meals \$5-13; ☎ 11am-8pm) The name is quite a claim, but we strongly suggest you see for yourself whether these fishy fryers live up to it. The fresh, locally sourced fish is a good start, and the chips certainly score well on the crispometer.

**Bean** (☎ 07-307 0494; 54 The Strand; bagels \$6-8; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, Sat 10am-2pm) The loungiest spot in town to get good coffee (roasted on the premises). Pull up a chair, and get yourself going with a quick fix and a freshly baked biscuit or bagel.

**New Hong Kong** (☎ 07-308 5864; 32 Richardson St; mains \$6-10; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sun) This no-fuss Asian restaurant does Sino-Kiwi grub such as chop suey, chow mein and, of course, chips. Lunch deals (\$6) are a good bet, as is the two-hour \$10-dish 'happy hour' from 5.30pm. These folk have a takeaway outlet around the block at 11 Boon Street.

**Pee Jay's Coffee House** (☎ 07-308 9500; The Strand; meals \$8-18; ☎ 6.30am-2pm) Located in the White Island Tours building, this is a good

place for a pre-tour tank-up or if you fancy breakfast or lunch during a stroll along the foreshore. Some of the best café-style fare in town, with healthy brunch options, pasta, fritters and salad, plus mammoth brownies and eye-opening coffee.

**Fig** (☎ 07-308 6549; 93 The Strand; lunch \$12-16, dinner \$20-24; ☎ breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Thu-Sat) A buzzy café attended by a happy crew making tasty fare such as pastries and home-made burgers, and daily specials such as Thai soup.

**Rocquette** (☎ 07-307 0722; 23 Quay St; lunch \$13-20, dinner mains \$17-34; ☎ lunch & dinner) A modern waterside restaurant on the ground floor of one of the town's big new apartment blocks, this popular newcomer serves up refreshing Mediterranean-influenced fare with lots of summery salads, risotto and fish dishes.

**Wharf Shed Restaurant** (☎ 07-308 5698; The Strand; mains \$22-45; ☎ lunch & dinner) An award winner for beef and lamb but famous for its fish dishes which include locally bagged crayfish and corpulent mussels. Right on the waterside with delightful alfresco dining on balmy evenings.

#### Drinking & Entertainment

There are only a few nocturnal options and the fine-looking **Whakatane Hotel** (☎ 07-307 1670; 79 The Strand; ☎ 11am-late) is home to two of them. The Craic is a busy locals' pub after the Irish fashion, enjoyable for a drink or two or a cup of hot chocolate if you prefer. Next door, the Boiler Room is a cavernous space with pool tables and the occasional live band.

Across the road is **Office** (☎ 07-307 0123; 82 The Strand; ☎ 11am-late), doing what it does well: beer, big meals with chips and salad all over, clean tables, and a small but pleasant smokers' deck. A sliding door leads to the sometime Whakatane disco den, on occasion all a-glitz with mirror ball and flashing lights.

**Cinema 5** (☎ 07-308 7623; 100 The Strand; adult/child \$12/7) is the place to go for movies.

#### Getting There & Around

**Air New Zealand** (☎ 07-308 8397; Whakatane airport) has daily flights linking Whakatane to Auckland, with connections to other centres.

**InterCity** (☎ 07-308 6058; www.intercitycoach.co.nz) buses stop outside the i-SITE and connect Whakatane daily with Rotorua (\$31, 1½ hours) and Gisborne (\$41, three hours), with connections to other places. All buses to Gisborne go via Opotiki.

**Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) runs daily services to Auckland (\$39, 5½ hours), Hamilton (\$39, 3½ hours), Tauranga (\$11, one hour), Gisborne (\$29, three hours), Waitomo (\$59, 4½ hours) and Wellington (\$49, 10 hours). Substantial fare savings can be made by booking in advance.

The local **Bay Hopper and Beach Runner** (☎ 0800 422 928; www.baybus.co.nz) run to Ohope (several daily, \$2.50), Opotiki (Monday and Wednesday, \$7.50) Tauranga (Monday to Saturday, \$12.50), Kawerau (Tuesday and Friday, \$6).

**GKM Shuttles** (☎ 0800 007 005) to/from the airport cost \$20 per adult for the first adult, with discounted prices per additional passenger. Taxi services are available from **Dial a Cab** (☎ 0800 342 522).

**White Island Shuttle** (☎ 0800 733 529; return adult/child \$60/35; ☎ Mon-Sat) runs a shuttle service for their tours that can be used by non-tour people. The shuttle departs Rotorua from pre-arranged pick-up points between 7pm to 7.30pm, and returns to Rotorua around 4pm.

#### WHAKAARI (WHITE ISLAND)

New Zealand's most active volcano lies 49km off the Whakatane coast. The small island was originally formed by three separate volcanic cones of different ages. The two oldest have been eroded, while the younger cone has risen up between them. Mt Gisborne is the highest point on the island at 321m. Geologically, Whakaari is related to Motuhora (Whale Island) and Putauaki (Mt Edgecumbe), as all lie along Taupo Volcanic Zone.

The island is dramatic, with hot water hissing and steaming from vents over most of the crater floor. Temperatures of 600°C to 800°C have been recorded.

The island is privately owned so you can only visit the island with a licensed tour operator. Fixed-wing air operators run flyover tours only, while boat and helicopter tours will usually include a walking tour around the island including a visit to the ruins of the sulphur mining factory – an interesting story in itself.

Numerous helicopter and fixed-wing operators run trips out of Rotorua (see p332) and Tauranga (see p344), while local operators include:

**Dive White** (☎ 0800 348 394; www.divewhite.co.nz; diving with own gear/hire gear \$225/295) Offers day-long diving trips.

**Vulcan Helicopters** (☎ 0800 804 354; www.vulcan.heli.co.nz; tours \$435) A 2½hr trip to White Island which includes a one-hour guided walk on the volcano.

**White Island Tours** (Map p355; ☎ 0800 733 529; www.whiteisland.co.nz; The Strand; adult & child \$175; ☎ departure times vary betwn 7am-9.15am, & also 12.30pm during peak season) The classic six-hour boat trip to the island, with dolphin-spotting en route and 90min tour of the island.

## MOTUHORA (WHALE ISLAND)

Nine kilometres off Whakatane is Motuhora, or Whale Island – so-called because of its levathan shape. This island is yet another volcano along the Taupo Volcanic Zone but is much less active, although there are hot springs along its shore. The summit is 353m high and the island has several historic sites, including an ancient *pa* site, quarry and camp.

Whale Island was originally home to a Maori settlement. In 1829, Maori massacred sailors from the trading vessel *Haweis* while it was anchored at Sulphur Bay. In the 1840s the island passed into European ownership and remains privately owned, although since 1965 it has been a DOC-protected wildlife refuge for sea and shore birds.

The island's protected status means landing is restricted. Trips run only from 30 December to 24 February, and are operated by **Coastguard Whakatane** (\$60, four hours) but need to be booked through **White Island Tours** (see above).

## OHOPÉ

pop 3010

Just 7km over the hill from Whakatane, Ohope has great beaches, perfect for lazing or surfing, and is backed by sleepy Ohiwa Harbour. Just beyond the harbour is the small Sandspit Wildlife Refuge. You can explore the harbour with **KG Kayaks** (☎ 07-315 4005; www.kgkayaks.co.nz; tours \$75, 2hr hire s/d \$35/60) who run a 2½-hour guided tour, and other trips by arrangement as well as freedom kayak hire.

If you want to take on the surf, get some lessons from Beaver at **By Salt Surf School** (☎ 07-312 4909; 2hr lesson \$90) who provide all gear and offer discounts for groups.

There's plenty of accommodation around the town including **Ohope Beach Top 10 Holiday Park** (☎ 07-312 4460; www.ohopebeach.co.nz; 367 Harbour Rd; unpowered/powerd sites \$38/40, cabins \$70-130, units \$90-160, apts \$165-250; P, ♿, ♿), a family-friendly caravan park with sports courts, minigolf and

pool. For a quieter, motel-style option, try **Aquarius Motor Lodge** (☎ 07-312 4550; www.aquarius.motorlodge.co.nz; 103 Harbour Rd; d \$75; P) a basic complex with various options, all with kitchens and just 100m from the beach. Dinghy hire available.

The most popular of several dining options is **Ohope Chartered Club** (☎ 07-312 5008; Bluett Rd; mains \$16-22; ☎ from 4.30pm Mon-Sun) – to which you must feign membership. Sign on the dotted line and meet the locals, drink cheap beer and enjoy amenities such as free pool, darts and big-screen telly. There's good pub grub on offer, and a quieter dining option upstairs at **CVue** (☎ 07-312 5808; mains \$20-29; ☎ from 6pm Wed-Sun).

On the highway to Opotiki is **Ohiwa Oyster Farm** (☎ 07-312 4565; Wainui Rd), perfect for a fish and chip (and oyster) picnic.

## WHAKATANE TO ROTORUA

Sixteen kilometres from Whakatane to Rotorua along SH30 you'll come to the **Awakeri Hot Springs** (adult/child \$5/3). Complete with springs, spa pools, picnic areas and **holiday park** (☎ 07-304 9117; www.awakerisprings.co.nz; SH30; sites from \$25, cabin/flat/unit \$50/65/90; P), there's a bed for every budget.

Eighteen kilometres further on from Awakeri Hot Springs is the timber town of **Kawerau**, surrounded by pine forest regularly harvested by **Tasman Pulp & Paper Mill** (☎ 07-323 3788; ☎ tours by appointment). In the shadow of the factory is the biggest small thing in town – **Aotearoa Breweries** (☎ 07-323 8370; www.mata.net.nz; 57 Onslow St), brewing 'a beer from the edge' (of civilization?) called Mata. Pull in for supplies and see why this brewery won gold at four months old. Kawerau's **visitor centre** (☎ 07-323 7550; www.kawerau.co.nz; Plunkett St; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun) has details of accommodation and other amenities.

Almost in Kawerau, **Tui Glen Farm** (☎ 07-323 6457; www.tuiglen.net.nz; SH30, south of Kawerau; 1hr rides adult/child \$35/25) offers horse treks through bush and farm for beginners and the adventurous.

**Tarawera Falls** are a half-hour drive from Kawerau, along a well-graded road through pine forests (watch out for logging trucks). Visits require a permit (\$3.50 per vehicle) from the visitor centre. From the car park, the **Tarawera Falls Track** (40 minutes return, 1.4km) passes through native forest to the falls. **Tarawera Outlet Track** (four hours return, 10km) continues on to Lake Tarawera where

there are impressive views and **campsites** (see p340).

Dominating Kawerau is **Putauaki (Mt Edgecumbe)**, a volcanic cone with panoramic views of the entire Bay of Plenty (often closed in summer due to high fire risk). Access permits are \$3, available from **Maori Investments** (☎ 07-323 8146) located on the road up. They're closed at the weekends so you need to obtain a permit in advance for weekend tramps.

## OPOTIKI

pop 7070

This charming town has much to recommend it. The beaches – Ohiwa and Waiotahi – are worth the trip alone, but it's also the gateway to the East Cape and the rugged forests and river valleys of the Raukumara and nearby ranges. Just recently, an excellent local museum was opened, a credit to the proud townsfolk and yet another good reason to pay a visit.

The Opotiki area was settled from at least 1150, some 200 years before the larger 14th-century migration. Maori traditions are well preserved here, with the work of master carvers lining the main street.

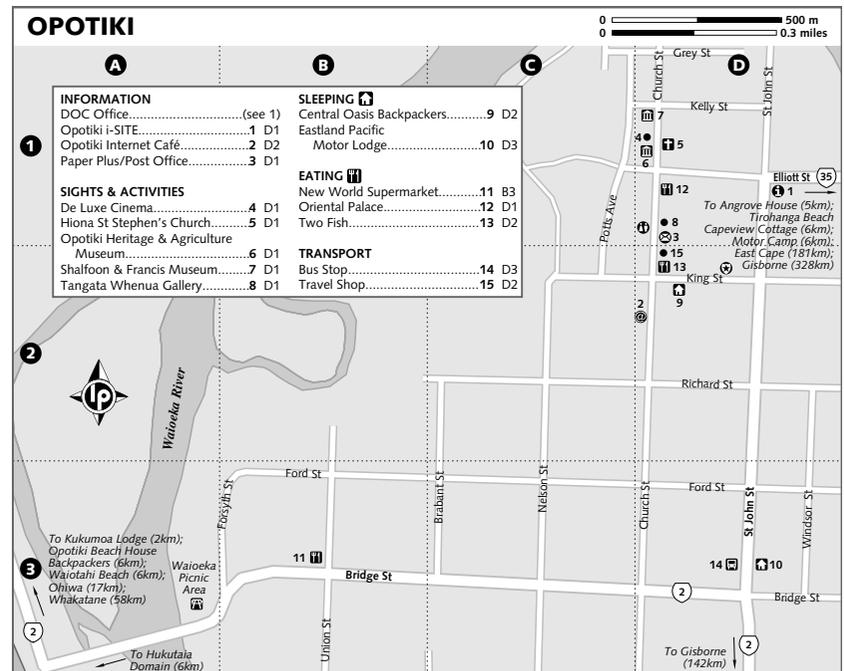
## Information

The **Opotiki i-SITE** (☎ 07-315 8484; www.opotikin.z.co.nz; cnr St John & Elliott Sts; ☎ 8am-5pm) and **DOC office** (☎ 07-315 1001) are in the same building. The centre takes bookings for a variety of activities and stocks the indispensable free booklet *Pacific Coast Highway*. Internet access is available at **Opotiki Internet Café** (☎ 07-315 7632; 97 Church St).

The post office is located at **Paper Plus** (☎ 07-315 6155; 106c Church St).

## Sights & Activities

The new **Opotiki Heritage and Agriculture Museum** (☎ 07-315 5193; ohas@extra.co.nz; 123 Church St; adult/child \$5/2; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) offers a chance to learn more about the rich history of the area. Run by volunteers and opened early in 2008, the museum has interesting heritage displays including Maori *taonga* (treasures) and agricultural items including a horse-drawn wagon. Just down the road is the adjacent **Shalfoon & Francis Museum** (☎ 07-315 5169; 129 Church St; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm; gold coin entry). This is in fact the original general store, born again. With shelves piled high with old



grocery and hardware products, it offers a fascinating insight into how shopping used to be – you name it, they had it.

Known by the local Whakatohea tribe to have acted as a government spy, Rev Carl Volkner was murdered in 1865 in the **Hiona St Stephen's Church** – you can still see the blood-stains near the pulpit. You can pick up the key from the secondhand shop next door.

Around 8km south of the town centre is **Hukutaia Domain** (Woodlands Rd; ☎ daily), home to one of the finest collections of native plants in NZ. In the centre is Taketakerau, a 23m puriri tree estimated to be more than 2000 years old and a burial place for the distinguished dead of the Upokorere *hapu* (subtribe) of Whakatohea. The remains have been since reinterred elsewhere.

The charming old **De Luxe Cinema** (☎ 07-315 6110; 129 Church St) shows the occasional movie and is home to school and brass band concerts. Check in the window for upcoming events.

In the middle of the town's shopping street is **Tangata Whenua Gallery** (☎ 07-315 5558; 127b Church St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri), stocking Maori- and New Zealand-themed arts and crafts, including *kete* (baskets) and *pounamu* jewellery.

**Motu River Jet Boat Tours** (☎ 07-325 2735; adult/child \$85/50) has as many as three 1½-hour trips daily on the Motu River. **Wet 'n' Wild** (☎ 0800 462 7238; www.wetnwildrafting.co.nz) offers two- to four-day rafting and camping adventures on the Motu (from \$395).

**Waioeke River Kayaks** (☎ 07-315 5553; www.newzealandsbestspot.co.nz; trips 1 & 2hr adult/child \$40/30 & \$60/50) run one- and two-hour kayaking trips down the scenic and easy Waioeke River.

Come late December, don a cowboy hat for the annual **Opotiki Rodeo** (www.rodeonz.co.nz/rodeos/opotiki.htm).

## Sleeping

**Central Oasis Backpackers** (☎ 07-315 5165; www.centraloasisbackpackers.co.nz; 30 King St; dm \$19, d & tw \$21) This central backpackers is a snug spot with relatively spacious rooms with crackling fires and a big front yard to hang out in.

**Tirohanga Beach Motor Camp** (☎ 07-315 7942; East Coast Rd, Tirohanga; unpowered/powerd sites \$24/28, dm \$20, cabins \$50-75; ☎) In the nearby town of Tirohanga, this park has several camping options with cabins closer to the beach costing a little more.

**Opotiki Beach House Backpackers** (☎ 07-315 5117; Appleton Rd; dm \$23, d & tw \$56; ☎) A cruisy beachside pad with a big deck offering good

sea views and plenty of opportunities to get in the water with free kayaks, body boards and surfboards. As well as dorms there are attractive doubles and a caravan alongside for those who want a real slice of the Kiwi summer holiday.

**Eastland Pacific Motor Lodge** (☎ 0800 103 003; www.eastlandpacific.co.nz; cnr Bridge & St John Sts; d \$95-140; ☎) Eastland is a well-kept motel with conservative decor, spa baths as standard, and a ship-shape rose garden in the car park.

**Kukumoa Lodge** (☎ 07-315 8545; www.kukumoa.lodge.co.nz; 19a Bairds Rd; d \$110; ☎) This imposing family lodge is located five minutes from town on the way to Ohope, and sports a spacious double and a family area sleeping up to eight. It has a games room for the kids, pool and spa, and a large balcony and patio for lounging around in the sunshine.

**Capeview Cottage** (☎ 0800 227 384; www.capeview.co.nz; Tablelands Rd; d \$145; ☎) Set amid chirruping birds and kiwi-fruit orchards, this serene cottage has two bedrooms, a spa and idyllic coast views. Weekly rates are available.

## Eating

Opotiki has a smattering of reasonable eateries.

**Two Fish** (☎ 07-315 5548; 102 Church St; snacks \$4-8, mains \$9-19; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) Undoubtedly the best bet for café-fare and a coffee fix, serving up hefty portions of burgers, chowder, toasties and salads plus a jumbo selection in the cabinet. Retro-groovy interior and courtyard.

**Oriental Palace** (☎ 07-315 5879; 120 Church St; mains \$12-17; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) A popular Indian restaurant serving up good standards with \$10 curries on Tues and Wed.

**Angrove House** (☎ 07-315 6565; 105 Beach Rd; lunch \$7-16, dinner \$22-30; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Sun) Ten minutes drive from town and the highlight of the culinary scene, set in stunning floral gardens overlooking a kiwifruit grove. Fresh, delicious fare with plenty made from scratch: eggs benie, paté, curry and seafood specialities.

Self-caterers should make a beeline for **New World supermarket** (19 Bridge St; ☎ 8am-8pm).

## Getting There & Away

Travelling east from Opotiki there are two routes: SH2, crossing the spectacular Waioeke Gorge, or the SH35 around East Cape (see the East Coast chapter for this route). The SH2 route offers some scenic day walks in

the **Waioeke Gorge Scenic Reserve**, with the gorge getting steeper and narrower as you travel inland, before the route crosses typically green, rolling hills, dotted with sheep, on the descent to Gisborne.

Buses pick up/drop off at the Hot Bread Shop on the corner of Bridge and St John Streets, though tickets and bookings are through the **Travel Shop** (☎ 07-315 8881; 104 Church St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri).

**InterCity** (☎ 07-308 6058; www.intercitycoach.co.nz) has daily buses connecting Opotiki with Whakatane (\$20, 40 minutes), Rotorua

(\$31, two hours) and Auckland (\$64, 6¼ hours). Heading south, the buses connect Opotiki with Gisborne (\$31, two hours) by a daily service.

**Naked Bus** (www.nakedbus.com) runs daily services to Tauranga (\$19, three hours), Gisborne (\$29, two hours), Auckland (\$49, 6½ hours), Waitomo (\$59, six hours) and Wellington (\$49, 11 hours). Substantial fare savings can be made by booking in advance.

The local **Bay Hopper** (☎ 0800 422 928; www.baybus.co.nz) runs to Whakatane (Mon & Wed, \$7.50).

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