

*Did you know?*  
The Waikato River is the longest river in Aotearoa New Zealand, running for 425 kilometres through Te Ika-a-Māui / the North Island!

*Driving tip:*  
Driving into the west in the afternoon is beautiful but can mean looking into te rā / the sun for periods. Stay safe by keeping a pair of sunglasses handy!

*Driving tip:*  
Head west to get off the beaten track and experience this remote coast in all its glory. Plan ahead, stock up and take your time on these winding rural roads.

*Did you know?*  
Taranaki Maunga / Mount Taranaki, is a dormant stratovolcano and at 2,518 metres is the second highest point in Te Ika-a-Māui / the North Island.

**MAP LEGEND**

- Journey route
- Backroad journey route (may include gravel sections)
- Township
- Place of Interest
- Cafe
- Scenic lookout
- EV Charging Station
- Information centre
- Walking track
- Museum

**Understanding place names along your journey:**  
Wai ~ water / Kato ~ rapid  
Wai ~ water / Tomo ~ cave

**THE WAIKATO TO TARANAKI WAY**  
A Mighty Road Journey - Like No Other

Slow down and replenish your mind, body, and soul on a journey that takes you over hills and rivers, to iconic caves and along spectacular coastlines.

We invite you to relax on a mighty road-journey like no other. A journey where you can rediscover, recharge, and reconnect with what's real in the places you visit and the precious time spent with those you are traveling with.

This map will help you to discover some great things to do, learn some amazing stories and facts, and explore some really special places and views that will feed your soul.

## 1. Port Waikato

Where the Mighty Waikato river meets the Tasman Sea (*Te Puaha o Waikato - mouth of Waikato river*) you'll love: the beach, sand dunes, Port Sculpture Park, Sunset Beach, the historic Port Waikato Wharf Store and Post Centre. Cafe by the surf club. Maraetai Reserve.

## 2. Nikau Cave

Cave and cafe open daily at the junction of Highway 22 and Waikaretu Valley Road.

## 3. Dirt biking

Tracks, bike hire and tuition as well as café, check availability online.

## 4. Rangiriri

Reserve, pā sites, history explained, trenches, tours, historic pub, and cafe.

## 5. Ngāruawahia

At the confluence of the Waikato and Waipa rivers check out: Te Awa cycleway, Hākarimata and Kauri Loop, Tūrangawaewae, Kingaitanga Reserve, the Point, and a number of cafes and eateries.

## 6. Te Kōwhai / Whatawhata

A range of great eateries. PYO berries (seasonal) and berry icecreams!

## 7. Raglan/Whāingaroa

With its black sand, fine surfing, tranquil harbour, amazing sunset views and laidback vibe you'll enjoy: Te Toto Gorge lookout, Wainui Reserve, Wairēnga / Bridal Veil Falls, learning to surf, a beach, sunset cruise, golf, Te Kōpua Campground and wide range of quality eateries and fresh fish meals.

## 8. Pirongia

On the banks of the Waipā River, beneath Mt Pirongia is this great little heartland town, enjoy: The Te Ara Wai Journeys stops, a great range of cafes, Pirongia tracks and the Mangakara Nature Walk.

## 9. Kāwhia

Remote west coast twin harbours will reward you with; a hot water beach Aotea Harbour, the Pohutukawa tree the Tainui waka was tied to, Kāwhia Museum, fresh fish 'n chips by the beach, and fishing charters.

## 10. Ōtorohanga

Enjoy New Zealand's self-made 'kiwiana' town and the Sir Edmund Hillary Walkway, Ōtorohanga Kiwi House, and the range of eateries.

## 11. Waitomo Caves

Famous underground glow worm caves and many fun activities above ground: Marokopa Falls, Ruakuri Bush Walk, Waitomo Caves Museum, and cafe options here.

## 12. Te Kūiti

Quaint Waikato town full of character, see famous statues of the sheep shearer and rugby legend Sir Colin Meads, the Te Tokanganui-ā-noho meeting house, ride through the forests of the Timber Trail or relax in the Tatsuno Japanese Garden.

## 13. Piopio

This quaint rural community, is a great half way stop and home to a number of off the beaten track attractions and the Fat Pigeon cafe.

## 14. Awakino Gorge Forest and River

This scenic drive has been improved with recent road and bridge upgrades. Stop and see the old tunnel and breathe the fresh forest air.

## 15. Mōkau

View the Mōkau River mouth from the rest area lookout, visit the museum and historic mine, enjoy a whitebait fritter picnic or take a walk along the sands of the west coast.

## 16. Tongapōrutu

This picturesque settlement at the mouth of the Tongapōrutu River you'll find: a great rest area, beach access, caves, Three Sisters, Elephant Rock, and a cafe (during summer).

## 17. Mount Damper & Waitaanga Conservation Area

Enjoy an easy short 30 minute walk to one of the North Islands tallest waterfalls.

## 18. Urutī

Ready for something different? Enjoy a traditional German sausage at The Bratwurst Bros Urutī stop.

## 19. Urenui

Stretch your legs for a stroll along the black sand at Urenui Beach and admire the ocean and bush clad cliffs. Ensure you stop in at a local cafe to refuel.

## 20. Waitara Lookout

The Manukōrihi Lookout provides an inspiring overview of Waitara. The Waitara River is popular for fishing, boating, kayaking, and white-water rafting. Bridge swinging is another fun river activity.

## 21. Puke Ariki

Regional museum and i-SITE with views, the Wind Wand, heritage sites and walks nearby.

## 22. Govett-Brewster Art Gallery / Len Lye Centre:

Contemporary art museum and showcase of a pioneering filmmaker and kinetic sculptor.

## 23. Back Beach / Paritutu

Paritutu Rock is an iconic sight in New Plymouth. It's about 15 minutes to walk up the remnants of this ancient volcanic crater.

Your checklist for mind, body, and soul:

Rediscover these places and challenge your thinking or learn something new e.g. get off the main road and visit a seaside community. Learn about place names in Te Reo Māori.

Recharge or Replenish yourself with great food, fresh air and the power of the elements ... and recharge your EV at the same time.

Reconnect with your travel companions or

Rejoice in the new perspectives from places that provide far deeper sense of place gained as you travel over, under and along this remarkable route.

## Awesome things to experience:

1. See a spectacular sunset
2. Bike some of the Te Awa River Ride
3. Walk in nature - *Eg. Damper Falls Walk*
4. Rivers meeting - *Waipā - Waikato Rivers, Waikato - Tasman Sea, Mōkau - Tasman Sea*
5. Float under the glow worms at Waitomo
6. Whitebait patties in Mōkau
7. Black sand beach walking *Raglan, Kāwhia, the Three Sisters monoliths at Tongapōrutu River mouth*
8. Photograph a waterfall *e.g. Mt Damper Falls*
9. Walk the Coastal Walkway that connects Bell Block with New Plymouth
10. Visit Puke Ariki, a famous pā site and now a famous museum.

more info > [waikatonz.com](http://waikatonz.com) - [taranaki.co.nz/visit](http://taranaki.co.nz/visit)