

## 5 Day Twin Coast Discovery

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### The Journey

The Twin Coast Discovery Highway leads you to the far north of New Zealand's North Island. If you love fishing, are intrigued by local culture or want to recharge soaking up the fresh air at an uninhabited beach, make sure you include this driving route as part of your holiday plans.

If you head north from the main Auckland Airport branch and follow this driving route you will get to enjoy both coasts to Cape Reinga (New Zealand's most northern point) and back again. White sand beaches are dotted all along the east coast.

If you are travelling in summer, you will see the vibrant red flowers of Pohutukawa trees lining the coast. You can also get a bite to eat at many of the relaxed seaside towns and ports – you may even want to venture out on a cruise.

The west coast is sparsely populated with beautiful rugged beaches and giant native Kauri trees. For further information please see [www.northlandnz.com](http://www.northlandnz.com). To follow this campervan driving itinerary, pick up and return your vehicle at our Auckland branch.



### Highlights of the trip

Whangarei	Kaitaia
Paihia	Kaikohe
Kerikeri	Dargaville
Cape Reinga	Warkworth

## Day 1 Auckland to Whangarei

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**Distance:**

162km



**Driving Time:**

2.25 hours

Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, is situated between two enormous harbours and dotted with 48 extinct volcanic cones. It's a place to enjoy marine adventures, wine trails, forest walks and urban sophistication.

At the beginning of your journey, you'll drive over the Auckland Harbour Bridge towards the bays and beaches of Auckland's North Shore. The motorway will quickly sweep you northward, until the suburban scenery gives way to peaceful farmland.

The town of Orewa spreads along the edge of a large, white sand surf beach. You can explore bush trails at the northern end of the town, visit the friendly shopping centre or dive into the waves for a refreshing swim. Driving north, you'll pass Hatfield's Beach before coming across Waiwera, which means 'hot water' in Maori. The hot springs are the main attraction in this small, seaside village.

Enjoy native forest and farmland scenery all the way to Warkworth. From here it's easy to explore the many attractions of the district – surf beaches, marine and wildlife sanctuaries, vineyards, golf courses, regional parks and islands.

Just before Whangarei a right turn will take you to the Marsden Point oil refinery. The visitors' centre has an interesting display that explains the refining process. Whangarei is a subtropical city on the edge of a beautiful harbour. At the Quayside Town Basin complex you'll find stylish cafes and restaurants, as well as museums, art galleries and shops. Be sure to visit Whangarei Falls.

## Day 2 Whangarei to Paihia

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**Distance:**

71km



**Driving Time:**

2.25 hours

A series of small settlements will lead you north. Just before Kawakawa, a side road runs to the glow-worm cave at Waiomio. Take a rest stop in Kawakawa, because it has a remarkable public toilet designed by Austrian artist Frederick Hundertwasser. From here the road to the Bay of Islands becomes quite twisty, but you'll enjoy some delightful scenery along the way. A short detour takes you to the port of Opuia, where cruise ships often call.

The resort town of Paihia makes an excellent base for exploring the Bay of Islands. Catch a cruise to the outer islands or a ferry to the charming township of Russell. The historic Treaty House at Waitangi marks the beginning of New Zealand as a nation.

## Day 3 Paihia to Kaitaia

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**Distance:**

122km



**Driving Time:**

1.75 hours

Just beyond Paihia you'll have to chance to visit Haruru Falls. These falls tumble down in a perfect horseshoe. A walking track runs from the falls all the way to Waitangi and includes a board walk through mangrove forest. The road leading into Kerikeri is bordered by orchards.

Kerikeri is a town of things to do. You'll find galleries, cafes and vineyards, gourmet food shops, several golf courses and historic sites such as the Stone Store and the Mission House. There are superb bush walks in the area – Rainbow Falls is a perfect picnic spot.

Scenic side trips on the road to Kaitaia include Matauri Bay (the resting place of the Rainbow Warrior) and Tauranga Bay. Nearby Whangaroa Harbour is a game fishing mecca. Sailing, sea kayaking, horse treks and golf are some of the other activities available in this district. If you have time, make the trip to the Cape Reinga lighthouse - then you can say you've been to the very top of New Zealand.

## Day 4 Kaitaia to Dargaville

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**Distance:**

211km



**Driving Time:**

3.15 hours

The backcountry route to Dargaville takes you past the Herekino Forest, where you can stretch your legs on the Kaitaia Walkway. Further on is Opononi, where you can arrange to go sand dune surfing.

Your next adventure is the awesome Waipoua Forest, home of New Zealand's largest Kauri trees, with Footprints Waipoua. The Trounson Kauri Park is another opportunity for tree gazing. Not far from Dargaville are the Kai Iwi lakes. These beautiful sand dune lakes are popular for camping, swimming, fishing and kayaking.

Dargaville is a perfect base for exploring the Kaipara Harbour, which offers fishing, quad biking, schooner trips and bird watching. The west coast beaches in this area form part of the longest driveable beach in New Zealand.

Kaitaia is the main centre for the 'subtropical' north. From here you can catch a bus trip along Ninety Mile Beach.

## Day 5 Dargaville to Auckland

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**Distance:**

185km



**Driving Time:**

2.25 hours

Travel across the river plain to Matakohe's Kauri museum, where you'll discover the district's fascinating history. In the village of Maungaturoto you can explore antique and craft shops.

At Brynderwyn you'll turn towards Kaiwaka. Further south is Wellsford, where you'll take a right towards Helensville. The hilly rural road provides amazing views of the Kaipara Harbour and surrounding farmland. There are hot springs at Parakai if you have time to spare. At Kumeu you'll turn towards Waitakere, where you'll embark on a beautiful scenic drive through the Waitakere Ranges. Auckland will reveal itself as you drive down from Titirangi village.