

# WALKING ON *Sunshine*



Ocean Beach, Bream Bay

## Waterfront looks at six of New Zealand's best-loved coastal walks, from a leisurely stroll to a five-day expedition.

### Bream Head Coast Walks, Whangarei Heads, Northland

From a privately-owned lodge at Whangarei Heads, embark on a flexible three-day self-guided walk across mixed terrain encompassing farmland, native bush, rural roads, coastal forest reserves and deserted beaches.

Go at your own pace – choose to traverse more challenging high ridgelines if you're game or take less strenuous paths, amble along the shoreline, view seabird nesting grounds, enjoy the prolific birdlife and see remnants of Northland's volcanic past like Mt Lion, Mt Manaia, and Mt Aubrey.

Bream Head Coast Walks has hosted thousands of walkers since launching in 2008, with packages available for accommodation, transport and food – leaving you to simply lace up your boots or shoes and drink in the sights and sounds of Northland's striking coastline.

At the end of an epic day's walking, enjoy a meal back at the lodge and kick back with a glass of wine in the outdoor bush bath.

**Best swim spot:** Cool off at Ocean Beach

### Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island

Waiheke Island's biennial Sculpture on the Gulf event has been lauded far and wide, with *The New York Times* dubbing it a "must-see".

Located along the Matiatia coastal walkway, the sculpture exhibition is backdropped by bush, hills and headlands with compelling views across the Matiatia Channel to Motuihe, Motutapu and Rangitoto islands.

The walk starts close to the Matiatia Wharf, where the Waiheke ferry from Auckland arrives, and the two-kilometre route takes you towards Church Bay.

It's described as a moderate intensity walk, but there's no rush – take your time to appreciate the scenery and the art works.

With Waiheke boasting world-class wineries and a vibrant food scene, the sculpture walk is your gateway to exploring the island further.

Next held in March 2024, Sculpture on the Gulf encourages you to walk, play, connect, and reflect.

**Best swim spot:** Nearby Oneroa and Palm Beach offer great options

### Mauao Walkway, Mount Maunganui, Bay of Plenty

Dominating the landscape in the Bay of Plenty region, and part of an historic reserve, Mauao or Mount Maunganui (The Mount), beckons locals and visitors.

The iconic dormant volcanic cone sits at the end of a peninsula and the well-maintained tracks entice walkers and runners year-round with plenty of options for all levels of fitness.

Wend your way up the 232m-high summit taking the Oruahine or Waikorire tracks which begin on the ocean side, or circle the stroller and wheelchair-friendly 3.4-kilometre lower base track which takes around 45 minutes – either anti-clockwise from the surf lifesaving clubrooms, or clockwise from harbourside Pilot Bay.

Up or around, the views are outstanding, but for Instagram-worthy snaps, climbing Mauao (meaning "caught by the dawn") at sunrise can't be beaten, with 360-degree views to the vast Pacific Ocean, Mount Maunganui township, Pilot Bay, Matakana Island, Tauranga, and beyond.

**Best swim spot:** Maunganui Beach or Mount Hot Pools



Palm Beach, Waiheke Island



Tora, Wairarapa

### Tora Coastal Walk, Wairarapa

Around 35 kilometres from Martinborough in the southern Wairarapa, the three-day catered Tora Coastal Walk will take you across impressive privately-owned hill-country farmland, through large tracts of native bush, down into river valleys and out to the impressive Tora coast complete with seal colonies.

Get a taste of rural Kiwi hospitality on this acclaimed walk experience with freshly-prepared meals using local produce, comfy beds each night (including a stay at the architecturally-designed Stony Bay Lodge) and a hot shower at day's end.

Your luggage is transported between accommodation venues leaving you with just your day pack and walking poles (recommended) to carry.

Switch off the mobile, get back to nature, experience a working sheep and beef farm and discover why the Tora Coastal Walk has attracted walkers for more than 25 years.

The walk is open from October 1st – April 30th each year, fitting around farm operations, and requires a reasonable level of fitness across mixed terrain.

**Best swim spot:** Stony Bay

### Abel Tasman Coast Track, Tasman

Abel Tasman National Park in Golden Bay is the smallest of New Zealand's national parks, but has arguably the loveliest of the country's 10 Great Walks.



Mt Maunganui



Abel Tasman

The Abel Tasman Coast Track is 60 kilometres in its entirety, and you can walk the whole track in either direction taking three-five days stopping in huts or campsites along the way, take a water taxi or kayak between different locations, or do a day trip.

The one-day walk from Torrent Bay to Onetahuti Beach (with water taxi to and from Marahau) demonstrates the unsullied golden sand beaches, lush native bush and well-maintained trails that this Great Walk is renowned for.

The whole track is laden with highlights. There's Cleopatra's Pool – a natural rock pool with a moss-covered waterslide; a 47-metre suspension bridge over Falls River; crystal-clear waters of Tonga Island Marine Reserve, sea caves at Watering Cove, and secluded Awaroa Lodge for a special meal or stay.

**Best swim spot:** Don't make us choose! Awaroa Beach, Te Pukatea Bay and Torrent Bay for starters...

### Kaikōura Peninsula Walkway, Canterbury:

The Department of Conservation's popular Kaikōura Peninsula Walkway starts in the centre of town and ends at South Bay around 12 kilometres later – or, you could drive to the Point Kean car park if you're pressed for time and just do smaller segments of the walkway.

This walk has it all – historic pā and whaling sites, seals (give them a wide berth), little blue penguins (if you're lucky), plenty of seabirds, interesting coastline, mountain vistas and potential whale spotting opportunities from clifftop viewing spots.

A series of information panels along the family-friendly walkway give insights to the area's history, geology, flora and fauna that characterise this special part of the world.

The Kaikōura coast is famed for its crayfish and seafood, so carve out time to stop at one of the roadside pit stops or the legendary Pier Hotel for a taste of the sea.

**Best swim spot:** Safe and sandy Gooch's Beach at the southern end of the esplanade

*"This is the best walk I have ever done, and I have done lots. It really is out of this world."*

TRIP ADVISOR REVIEW OF ABEL TASMAN COASTAL WALK



Kaikōura