

New Zealand North Island 2020

Wellington-Rotorua-Auckland
Monday 10 February, 2020 to Saturday 07 March, 2020

Day to Day

Daily distances are set out below. Shorter distances and support vehicle also available.

Location	Distance	Date	B	L	D	A
Wellington Arrival Day	NA	Mon 10 Feb 2020	--	--	Y	Y
Wellington to Martinborough	85km	Tue 11 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Martinborough to Masterton	76km	Wed 12 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Masterton to Dannevirke	122km	Thu 13 Feb 2020	Y	Y	--	Y
Dannevirke to Waipukurau	70km	Fri 14 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Waipukurau to Napier	77km	Sat 15 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Napier REST DAY	NA	Sun 16 Feb 2020	Y	--	--	Y
Napier to Wairoa	118km	Mon 17 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wairoa to Gisborne	99km	Tue 18 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gisborne to Tokomaru Bay	89km	Wed 19 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tokomaru Bay to Hicks Bay	88km	Thu 20 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hicks Bay to Te Kaha	83km	Fri 21 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Te Kaha to Whakatane	110km	Sat 22 Feb 2020	Y	Y	--	Y
Whakatane to Rotorua	87km	Sun 23 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rotorua REST DAY	NA	Mon 24 Feb 2020	Y	--	--	Y
Rotorua to Taupo	94km	Tue 25 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Taupo to Taumarunui	114km	Wed 26 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Taumarunui to Waitomo	102km	Thu 27 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Waitomo to Hamilton	77km	Fri 28 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hamilton to Tauranga	122km	Sat 29 Feb 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tauranga REST DAY	NA	Sun 1 Mar 2020	Y	--	--	Y
Tauranga to Whangamata	97km	Mon 2 Mar 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Whangamata to Hot Water Beach	59km	Tue 3 Mar 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hot Water Beach to Coromandel	62km	Wed 4 Mar 2020	Y	Y	--	Y
Coromandel to Miranda	85km	Thu 5 Mar 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Miranda to Auckland	102km	Fri 6 Mar 2020	Y	Y	Y	Y
Auckland	NA	Sat 7 Mar 2020	Y	--	--	--
Total distance cycled	2018km		26	22	20	26
Average daily distance	92km					

Meal and accom inclusions noted as B, L, D, A (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Accom)

Wellington Arrival Day — NA — Mon 10 Feb 2020 — - - D A

Day 1 (arrival day). Arrive by 3pm today (or earlier) into the harbour city of Wellington - New Zealand's capital. Surrounded by nature and fuelled by creative energy, Wellington is a compact city with a powerful mix of culture, history, nature and cuisine. Fuel your visit with strong coffee and world-class craft beer – Wellingtonians are masters of casual dining, with plenty of great restaurants, night markets and food trucks that surround our centrally located hotel. This afternoon at 3pm we will hold our orientation talk, briefing and registration and go over the route planned for the days and weeks ahead, having a close look at tomorrow's route discussing the snack stops, meeting points, potential hazards and attractions. From 4pm our bike mechanic will be available to assist in re-assembling bikes after air travel or a few last-minute tune-ups if required. Finally we will all enjoy a welcome group dinner together at our accommodation restaurant as we get to know each other better, catching up with old and new friends. Get an early night and save your energy as we prepare for the exciting first day of cycling tomorrow, heading north out of Wellington.

Wellington to Martinborough — 85km — Tue 11 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 2. We are on the way! Leaving the compact CBD behind quickly we follow the Hutt Rd as it hugs Wellington Harbour to the right with the lush green hills to the left. There is a saying here that "you can't beat Wellington on a good day", and if the sun is shining you can look back over the water to the city and you'll see what they mean. At Petone we leave the harbour and won't see the sea again until Hawkes Bay. Fear not though, the beautiful ride continues, shadowing the Hutt River through Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt before taking on the Rimutaka Hill. This is a big challenge for your first day on the bike as you climb 336m over 6.6km, averaging 5% gradient with a few pinches pushing 20%. It is one of the toughest climbs on the whole tour though so once you are over it, it's all downhill until the town of Featherston which welcomes you to the flatlands and wine country of the Wairarapa. We pull up in Martinborough for the night, packed with colonial charm and featuring over 20 wineries, most within cycling and walking distance of the quaint village square, where some of New Zealand's best pinot noir comes from the town's predominately family-owned vineyards.

Martinborough to Masterton — 76km — Wed 12 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 3. Leaving Martinborough township the terrain changes again from the flat wine-growing country to rolling hills and farmland as the road winds its way through the valleys with plenty of ups and downs along the way but no major climbs until a short stint half way through the day up Kaurarau Hill. Our overnight stop is the largest town in the Wairarapa region, Masterton, and it's focus on art, farming, family, great food and history creates a special sense of community around the town. That's if you make it into town of course - it may be hard to pull yourself away from our refreshing retreat accommodation on the outskirts of the main centre. It's set in 24 acres of landscaped parklands, native bush and fragrant gardens and includes a relaxing heated indoor pool, tennis courts, squash courts and sophisticated design integrated throughout the property.

Masterton to Dannevirke — 122km — Thu 13 Feb 2020 — B L - A

Day 4. More beautiful rolling hills today as you make your way north up the middle of the island with the Tasman Sea and the South Pacific Ocean out to the west and east respectively approximately the same distance away as the crow flies. It's a long day in the saddle today - the equal longest on tour - so get into your rhythm and soak up the rural atmosphere of today's ride. We skirt past the turn-offs for the small towns of Pahiatua and Mangatainoka and by then you'll know that you are on the home straight as you near Dannevirke which will be the first town that we will have seen since leaving this morning. Dannevirke has a strong Scandinavian history and a Viking theme throughout the town. The district was settled by 20 Danish and Norwegian families in 1872 and 1873. Dannevirke means, literally, 'Danes' Work'.

Dannevirke to Waipukurau — 70km — Fri 14 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 5. It's a lovely ride today over the last pastoral lands of the Manawatu before crossing over into the Hawkes Bay region and veering towards the coast. The dips and rises offer spectacular vantage points at various stages to look out over the green hills and native bush that stretch on for miles out to the horizon. Our destination of Waipukurau ("Waipuk") is a charming little town with a passion for aviation - the local airport often buzzing with gliders and hot air balloons when the conditions are right.

Waipukurau to Napier — 77km — Sat 15 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 6. Today has a generally downhill motion about it as you make your final gradual descent from the hills down to sea level. The landscape changes as you get nearer the larger settlements of the Hawkes Bay, passing through the lovely hamlet of Havelock North, skirting past Hastings, and cycling up the beautiful coastal road to the Art Deco capital of Napier, where we park up for two nights at our luxury hotel perfectly situated on the beautifully transformed Marine Parade.

Napier REST DAY — NA — Sun 16 Feb 2020 — B - - A

Day 7. Relax in the covered & heated pool at the hotel or wander over the road for a stroll along the beautiful Pacific Ocean Beach or to the CBD just a few blocks away, which offers a wide range of fantastic cafes and restaurants. Street after street of stunning and beautifully-restored Art Deco buildings have made Napier famous as one of the most complete collections of Art Deco buildings in the world. In 1931 an earthquake rocked Hawke's Bay for more than three minutes, killing nearly 260 and destroying the commercial centre of Napier. Rebuilding began almost immediately, and new buildings reflected the architectural styles of the times - Stripped Classical, Spanish Mission and Art Deco. Napier is often referred to as a 1930s film set, and one of the best ways to enjoy the streetscape is on a self-guided walk - ask for a map at the information centre or at the Art Deco Trust. Guided walks around the city are also available every day. It would also be a pity to come to the Hawkes Bay and not sample some of the famous wine. Either cycle to one of the near-by cellar doors, catch a taxi out to one of the most famous wineries, Craggy Range (Te Mata Peak), or Moana Park, or do it the easy way and take a [full-day](#) or [half-day](#) premium gourmet tour with a local such as [odysseynz.com](#) where you will visit 4-6 different wineries with expert commentary and insight into the wines, the region and the local culture.

Napier to Wairoa — 118km — Mon 17 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 8. Today begins with a smooth ride arching out of Napier and alongside the sparkling waters of Hawkes Bay. It's a great way to start the day before heading inland into more hilly terrain as the road leaves the beachfront and winds in and out of the valleys before touching the coast again briefly at Te Kiwi Stream, then again at Wairoa, a small town situated at the mouth of the Wairoa River as it enters the north end of Hawkes Bay. It's a friendly little town on the edge of the famous Te Urewera region known for spectacular walks, fishing, kayaking and scenery. If you have some time, the lighthouse and local museum are worth a visit.

Wairoa to Gisborne — 99km — Tue 18 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 9. The last leg of the loop around Hawkes Bay is the opening scene for today's ride and you'll get one last look at the bay before turning left and north into the Gisborne Region and towards the town of Gisborne itself which is situated at the mouth of two rivers entering Poverty Bay. Jumping from one bay to another also means jumping over a range of hills that separate the two districts making a nice climb for the cyclist between two flat sections at the start and end of the day. As you near Gisborne you may notice the fruit orchards that lounge around the landscapes of the outskirts of the city - including grapes which have made this area the unofficial 'Chardonnay Capital of New Zealand'. Kaiti Beach is the site of Captain Cook's first landing in New Zealand (9 October 1769) and oral history records Titirangi (Kaiti) Hill as the point of arrival for the migratory waka (canoe), Horouta, which brought the first Maori to the area. Maori traditions are still evident in many parts of the city as is a vibrant surf culture.

Gisborne to Tokomaru Bay — 89km — Wed 19 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 10. Today's ride is a gem and a great introduction to the scenic Pacific Coast Highway drive - one of the most spectacular drives in NZ (some say the world), which we will be doing on two wheels (even better). You will leave Gisborne city and the shelter of Poverty Bay and hit the open ocean coast just 5km from the CBD. The suburbs of Wainui and Okitu sit windswept and sandblasted on the shores of arguably the best surfing beaches in New Zealand and the locals wouldn't have it any other way. This is the home of NZ surfing and on our ride this morning you'll likely see why. The coastal scenery is beautiful before we head inland for a while, then back to the beach at the small town of Tolaga Bay - home to New Zealand's longest pier, stop here for some great photo opportunities. Then it's back inland as the road winds its way between high hills keeping a surprisingly low profile for most of the journey until one last 5km climb about 8km out from our overnight stop. The climb is worth it though as you are rewarded with a downhill of long, slow, sweeping turns and glimpse of the ocean as you descend into Tokomaru Bay, a small hamlet popular with artists, musicians and craftspeople: "interesting people doing interesting things". Also nearby is the Te Puia Springs which will be a nice option for well-used cyclist legs.

Tokomaru Bay to Hicks Bay — 88km — Thu 20 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 11. This morning could be a very special day for you - you could be the first person in the world to see the sun. Get up early and head to the beach for sunrise and besides perhaps a few fishermen out on the ocean, nobody will have yet seen the sun on 20 Feb 2020 as The East Cape has the honour of witnessing the world's first sunrise each and every day. Back in 2011, Samoa took the decision to move position on the international dateline to bring them more in line with the working week in New Zealand and Australia, so they technically became the first country in the world to welcome in the new day, however thanks to the curvature of the earth the East Cape of NZ is still

the first to see the sun (so the locals say anyway!). Fun Fact: Unlike the Prime Meridian, which is a straight, vertical line at 0 degrees down one side of the earth (Greenwich Time), The International Date Line is jagged so that countries and territories would all be on the same day to avoid confusion. Due to this jagged boundary, there are actually two hours each day where three different days are observed at one time! After spending time with the rising sun, head back to our accommodation to fuel up for the day ahead at breakfast. You'll begin the ride climbing up into the hills and dropping back down to the Waiapu River near Ruatoria and following the river to the sea again at Tikitiki. From here we cut across the East Cape, the most easterly point in New Zealand, and climb a few hills to once again reach the ocean at Hicks Bay.

Hicks Bay to Te Kaha — 83km — Fri 21 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 12. Hicks Bay is close to the same longitude as Tokomaru Bay so again worth getting up for an early sunrise if you want to welcome the sun to the world for the day. After sunrise and breakfast, the first half of today's ride cuts through the hills and the second half hugs the coastline. The second half is a sign of things to come as tomorrow will also be spent winding in and out of sun-drenched surf beaches without the crowds of the beaches around Gisborne. It's a rugged coastline full of secluded hidden bays and a place with a rich cultural heritage not yet commercialised. Our overnight stop is in a 19th Century whaling town, Te Kaha, which is steeped in NZ history and still has an original whaling boat on display.

Te Kaha to Whakatane — 110km — Sat 22 Feb 2020 — B L - A

Day 13. Known for its striking beauty, Maori culture and lack of modern amenities, on this road you'll step back in time to New Zealand as it was 30 years ago, travelling through remote farming communities and windswept bays. Resplendent in craggy cliffs, pohutukawa trees, white sandy beaches, native forests and endless ocean, the area is steeped in Maori history. Sometimes described as being stuck in a time warp, the East Cape hasn't changed much for decades and is the best place to get a taste of New Zealand's 'chilled out coastal way of life'. Today's ride has all of that and will leave you wanting more as you finish the famous Pacific Coast Highway drive around the East Cape at Whakatane - a sunny main centre for the Bay of Plenty region at the mouth of the river and our overnight stop for the night. Today you will also hit the 1000km mark from Wellington - congratulations! After the rural and simple amenities of the East Cape you'll appreciate the boutique service and high quality of our beautiful accommodation here in a larger town.

Whakatane to Rotorua — 87km — Sun 23 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 14. Our last day on Stage One! We leave the coast behind for the next 7 days but we are not without water - after a relatively flat 65km you start climbing up into the higher elevation of the central North Island where you begin to hit the beautiful lakes of Rotoma, Rotoehu, Rotoiti and finally Rotorua. Our route takes us past all of these beautiful bodies of water and you will have plenty of time to stop and soak it all in and take a few photos. The township of Rotorua itself is on the southern end of Lake Rotorua and a great place to ride into for a rest day at our great hotel right on the lake-front and across the road from the Polynesian Spa and the Rotorua Museum - two places definitely worth considering spending some time in on your break here. Tonight as a celebration we attend the Maori Cultural Show and hangi dinner at our hotel where you will get a good insight into the culture and learn a bit more about NZ's people and traditions (and food). This is included in the Stage One and Full Tour price. If you are on Stage Two only you are welcome to join us - just select the optional extra on the booking form.

Rotorua REST DAY — NA — Mon 24 Feb 2020 — B - - A

Day 15. Today is the changeover day from Stage One to Stage Two so we may have a few people coming and going to finish or begin their tour. Rotorua has it all and we are lucky enough to be able to offer our guests a genuine 'locals' experience on the rest day. We have arranged a morning guided walking tour led by Ken Buchanan, a long time resident of Rotorua and retired Operations Manager of the award winning Rotorua Museum of Art and History. The walking tour is highly recommended and a great value optional extra at just \$50pp (minimum numbers apply). Ken has spent his career involved in the tourism, hospitality and museum world and has extensive knowledge of the Rotorua region (not to mention lots of cycling experience around here). The tour will take approx 2.5-3 hrs (approx 7km) and explore the areas around the shores of Lake Rotorua in Rotorua City including the Historic Bath House building, the geothermal shoreline of the lake, the historic Government Gardens, the Sulphur Point area, views of Mokoia Island and a stroll on the boardwalk over the boiling lake in Kuirau Park with the opportunity to stop for a soothing warm foot pool bath. A number of local Maori legends are woven through the tour as well as associated stories on visited locations and the violent eruption of nearby Mt Tarawera in 1886. Back at the hotel you can do some washing, catch up on emails, enjoy a swim in the heated swimming pool, relax in one of three private spas, or book in for some relaxing massage therapy.

Rotorua to Taupo — 94km — Tue 25 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 16. After your rest day you'll be rearing to go and today won't disappoint as the road from Rotorua to Taupo is lined with large tracts of pine forest and interesting volcanic landscapes and is a beautiful ride with long sweeping bends and many interesting sites based on the volcanic activity. As you approach Taupo you will pass through the Wairakei Geothermal Power Station and Wairakei Golf Course - one of the country's best. A must-stop before Taupo is the Huka Falls - this incredible rocky gap pushes water through from Lake Taupo at the rate of 200,000 litres per second, enough to fill five Olympic-sized swimming pools in less than a minute. It marks the very start of the Waikato River's 425-kilometer journey to the sea. After checking out the falls, it's a downhill run into the township of Taupo - a holiday haven for many Kiwis and as the largest lake in Australasia, Lake Taupo is a trout fisherman's dream. There is also a wide range of other water and land-based activities in what is one of New Zealand's liveliest resort towns. From our accommodation a stone's throw from the waterfront you can head down to the hit a few golf balls out into the lake at the 'Hole in One Challenge', walk into the town, or walk a bit further up the beach to one of the natural hot water springs where you can dip your toes into where the steaming hot water meets the cool lake water. You may even be able to head down to the boat ramp or a booking office in town to get on a late fishing charter to catch a trout or two.

Taupo to Taumarunui — 114km — Wed 26 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 17. Today begins with a lovely ride down the eastern side of the lake to Turangi, based at the southern end of the lake, where we turn west and head into the hills. It's a great climb up and over the boundary between the Waikato Region where we have spent the last couple of days, and into the Wanganui region. Just before the top of the hill, which will mark the highest elevation of the entire tour, take a break at Waituhi Lookout on the right hand side with almost 360 degree views over the North Island. From there it's a quick climb to reach the very top, then a long downhill until you hit the Whanganui River where the road flattens out to Taumarunui, often used as a base for exploring Whanganui and Tongariro National Parks, Pureora Forest and beyond. Nestled in green hills at the junction of the Whanganui and Ongarue Rivers, Taumarunui's rich history starts with early Maori (who named it 'the place of big shelter') and rolls through the railways and associated pioneering industries of coal-mining, forestry and farming.

Taumarunui to Waitomo — 102km — Thu 27 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 18. Today we begin by following the lead of the Ongarue River which finds its way cleverly through the ranges before splitting off from the river and following State Highway #4 which also cleverly avoids steep climbs and hills in its journey through this land of jagged textures and landscapes. We arrive in Waitomo in time for an optional tour of the famous Caves and one of the most world-renowned tourist attractions in the country. The glowworm, *Arachnocampa Luminosa*, is unique to New Zealand. During the boat ride included in the entry price, thousands of these tiny creatures radiate their unmistakable luminescent light as the guides provide informative commentary on the Caves' historical and geological significance. Marvel at Mother Nature's light display as you glide silently through the starry wonderland of the Glowworm Grotto. Our hotel here is an early 19th Century grand tour hotel giving a taste of the old world, majestically positioned on a promontory above the Waitomo village and the caves, offering sweeping views across the lush farmland, the hills and bush of the King Country.

Waitomo to Hamilton — 77km — Fri 28 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 19. Today is a nice easy one. The distance is reasonably short, the terrain is reasonably flat, and the scenery is great as always with the hills and ranges to the left and the farming flatlands to the right. It's one of those mid-tour days where you are into your cycling rhythm and just soaking it all in. Overnight in Hamilton will be a different experience as we hit the largest city that we have seen since Wellington, located on the banks of the mighty Waikato River, which is best appreciated from one of the scenic riverside walks or boat cruise. The visually stunning Hamilton Gardens are webbed by paths that journey through a gallery of themed gardens from grand Italy to tranquil Asia.

Hamilton to Tauranga — 122km — Sat 29 Feb 2020 — B L D A

Day 20. Today is leap day, 29 Feb. And because it is sort of a 'bonus' day we figure that we may as well make the most of it as today's ride is one of the longest at over 120km. It's a mostly flat cycling day punctuated a third of the way through by a big climb into the beautiful Kaimai-Mamaku Forest Park as once again we change regions, this time from the Waikato back to the Bay of Plenty, which we left a week ago at Whakatane. This time our downhill after the peak takes us into Tauranga - the largest city in the Bay of Plenty and one of the fastest growing population centres in the country. It is also just 6km from one of New Zealand's most popular beach towns, Mount Maunganui. It's worth the short bike ride to check it out. Downtown Tauranga has several historically significant areas to view during a scenic walk around the area. The Strand waterfront area is modern and always buzzing, and is home to a number of cafes, restaurants and pubs. Across the road on the water's edge, tidal stairs bring the harbour literally to your feet. Our accommodation here tonight and for our rest day tomorrow is a real treat.

Tauranga REST DAY — NA — Sun 1 Mar 2020 — B - - A

Day 21. Rest day today to catch up on your washing, emails and rest. Our 4.5 star urban retreat is a great place to do it as the building reaches out to the ever-changing waters of the Tauranga Harbour and captures the very essence of New Zealand hospitality. This is a truly unique hotel located on and over the water's edge, that radiates a relaxed and welcoming ambience and includes a gym and outdoor pool. Enjoy it all here or check out the town or head down to the Mt Maunganui Hot Salt Water Pools - an appealing seaside spa located near the waterfront. Sit back and soak while enjoying a fizzing salt water spa pool as it massages your aching muscles.

Tauranga to Whangamata — 97km — Mon 2 Mar 2020 — B L D A

Day 22. The first half of today's ride will see you loop around the sheltered inlet of Tauranga Harbour created between Mt Maunganui and Shelly Bay by Matakana Island. It's a beautiful body of calm water that is utilised and loved by the locals for fishing, boating and other water sports. After Shelly Bay you leave the seaside for a while to embark on the second half of today's journey through the ranges that sit close to the coast before descending into Whangamata. Famous for its unique combination of beach and rainforest and voted best beach in New Zealand 2018, Whangamata's amazing ocean beach provides some of the best surfing breaks, yet safest swimming in the country. The Coromandel Forest Park bordering the town provides many outdoor experiences, including short walks, mountain bike trails and old gold mining sites, and the town is also home of the 'Beach Hop', a five day celebration of '50s and '60s culture (which we will miss by a few weeks!).

Whangamata to Hot Water Beach — 59km — Tue 3 Mar 2020 — B L D A

Day 23. Today is the shortest day on tour at just under 60km so you can take your time up the hills that will present themselves as you delve deep into the Coromandel Forest Park up and down through the hills, following the rivers, alongside the harbours and bays, then finally past the farmlands that lead into the small hamlet of Hot Water Beach where every low tide, a wave of beach-goers arrive and dig their own personal spa pools in the sand. There are two fissures at Hot Water Beach issuing water as hot as 64 deg C. This water contains large amounts of salt, calcium, magnesium, potassium, fluorine, bromine and silica. There are other hot water springs nearby but the location of these two springs on the beach make them very unique. Tonight's low tide is at 8pm and the best time is 1-2 hours either side of that time so we will have time to take a drive out to Hahei village where you can walk out to the much-photographed Cathedral Cove, one of the top attractions of the Coromandel Peninsula (approx 1.5 hour walk, plus travel time). Upon returning from Hahei head down and check it all out down at Hot Water Beach just a short stroll from our accommodation.

Hot Water Beach to Coromandel — 62km — Wed 4 Mar 2020 — B L - A

Day 24. If you missed last night's low tide or want to have another crack at it, this morning's low tide is at 8:30am so with another relatively short day of cycling ahead you will have time to check out the beach in the 1-2 hours either side of low tide before heading off for the day. It's hard to imagine that the cycling and scenery can keep up the consistent quality but it really does. There are quaint little seaside villages to pass through, a lovely ferry crossing at Whitianga, roads that coast along smoothly beside the coast itself, white sand beaches and a couple of hilly peaks to conquer along the way before a snaking long descent into Coromandel town - a haven for talented artists and craftspeople who have moved here from around New Zealand. The town has a unique character, soul and ambience reflecting art and heritage. Homegrown cuisine is in abundance from its raw form, to elegantly cooked at the many local restaurants. The discovery of gold in 1852 brought a boom to Coromandel Town, and the area has continued to flourish while retaining a rich stock of surviving heritage buildings.

Coromandel to Miranda — 85km — Thu 5 Mar 2020 — B L D A

Day 25. The winding Pohutukawa Coast road from Coromandel to Thames begins with spectacular hill country with far reaching views back down to dotted islands at the mouth of the Hauraki Gulf. From here we are pretty much due east from Auckland which sits across at the other side of the Gulf. Once over the hills and reaching the water again

at Wilsons Bay the road winds along pebbled bays not spoilt by development of any kind, with rocky headlands wrapped in the gnarled, grey trunks of old Pohutukawa trees. This is the sheltered side of the peninsula with the Firth of Thames a long and constant companion on what is yet another magical coastal ride which I know has been said before, but there is no other way to describe it. Drop in to the Thames 'Seagull Centre' if you have time - a fantastically popular charitable trust recycling and recovery centre offering affordable second-hand goods, funding local employment and inspiring people to reduce, reuse and recycle. After Thames you'll cross over the famous, one lane Kopu Bridge, which was built in 1928 and has a Historic Places Trust listing and take the last short leg to Miranda Hot Springs where we stay at an award winning holiday park / motel complex with its own Hot Thermal Mineral Pool, shaded and beautifully landscaped with a waterfall and temperatures maintained between 36°C and 39°C, or head down to the public pools at Miranda Hot Springs. Bird Watcher or Bird Lover? Don't miss the Miranda Shorebird Centre.

Miranda to Auckland — 102km — Fri 6 Mar 2020 — B L D A

Day 26. Our last day on the bike! And wouldn't you know it, it begins with (another) beautiful, smooth, coastal cruise up the other side of the Firth of Thames. It's not until we cross from the Waikato region to the Auckland region and the Firth opens out into the Hauraki Gulf that we get some hills to negotiate as the bitumen pulls away from the coast to carve a short-cut through to Auckland. We only meet the water again a couple of times during the day's journey at the bays of the gulf before the suburbs become more built-up and we have our final ride alongside the water at Mission Bay with its famous view out to Rangitoto Island. then it's one last crossing into the CBD via Quay Street to our hotel right near the harbour and Viaduct Basin, Wynyard Quarter and Queen St right downtown. Tonight we celebrate with our final dinner together and reminisce on what has been an outstandingly beautiful ride with unsurpassed scenery, culture, community, activities and fun.

Auckland — NA — Sat 7 Mar 2020 — B - - -

Day 27. Our tour officially disbands after breakfast. Take some time to explore Auckland or continue touring around NZ for a while. Thanks for joining us on this wonderful ride.



New Zealand
North Island
2020

