

ROTORUA

NEW ZEALAND



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ROTORUA
feel the spirit
Manaakitanga

Rotorua – a town built on tourism

In the 1880s, two glistening silica terraces lay on the shores of Lake Rotomahana, near Mt Tarawera.

The Pink and White Terraces were renowned as the eighth wonder of the world, drawing visitors to Rotorua from far and wide. These visitors were Rotorua – and New Zealand's – first tourists, and the people of Te Arawa were their hosts.



People came overland from Tauranga via a bridle track to Ohinemutu on the shore of Lake Rotorua. From there a coach took them to Te Wairoa, where a two-hour canoe journey and a walk over the narrow isthmus separating the swampy shores of Lake Rotomahana from Lake Tarawera ended at the foot of the fabled terraces.

The white terrace (Te Tarata - the Tattooed Rock) covered seven acres; it was 30m high and 240m wide. The pink terraces of Otukapuarangi (Fountain of the Clouded Sky) were smaller and lower. The steps led down to the crater platform, where 3m-deep basins were filled with warm, clear blue water, making superb bathing places.

In the early morning of June 10th 1886, Mt Tarawera erupted. By 2.30am its three peaks were in eruption. Columns of lava and ash blasted thousands of



metres into the sky. Basalt magma mixed with the hydro-thermal system under Lake Rotomahana, and at 3.20am the lake bed exploded, taking the Pink and White Terraces with it. Nearby villages of Te Ariki and Moura were buried under a scalding pyroclastic flow (a fast-moving current of hot gas, ash and rock).

The terraces were completely destroyed and more than 100 people were killed. The survivors moved to the thermal village of Whakarewarewa, where they continued to host visitors. Today, people from around the world still visit Mt Tarawera, and can trace the story of the eruption Rotorua Museum or the excavated site of The Buried Village of Te Wairoa.

Feel the spirit - Manaakitanga

Rotorua - feel the spirit – Manaakitanga” is the region’s catchcry, and it holds a powerful promise as well as an invitation to experience the essence of this extraordinary piece of New Zealand.



A deep-rooted Maori cultural concept, Manaakitanga makes everyone in Rotorua responsible, as hosts, for giving visitors a warm welcome, and offering the best of themselves, their time and the region’s history. The welcoming spirit of the Te Arawa people who were the region’s first guides has been passed down through the generations, and this warmth envelops everyone who comes here. Visitors can enrich their Rotorua experience by sharing in the laughter and stories of the Te Arawa people.

The spirit of Rotorua also lies in the region’s stunning landscape, which has enchanted visitors for more than 160 years. It is like no other place in the world. Where else can you stand on active volcanoes or massive craters, or see boiling mud pools, exploding geysers, native forests, a buried Maori village and a sacred green lake?

Manaakitanga will make itself felt the moment visitors arrive and continue throughout their stay, regardless of the purpose of their trip. They’ll return home knowing they experienced the best the region can offer.

Nau mai haere ma ki Rotorua. Me te mea ko kopu kit e rangi ko te Waiariki ki te whenua.

Welcome to Rotorua – please enjoy your stay and take pleasure in your beautiful surroundings.



The takarangi

The double spiral of the takarangi is an iconic element of the Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing brand.

It symbolises many things: the encircling of the past, present and future, the embrace and support of the ancestors, the blend of Maori and European, and the new life of a koru (an unfolding fern frond).

Traditionally the open double spiral was incorporated in the carved design on the taurapa (stern post) of a waka (Maori canoe) to allow the wind to blow through, thus helping to stabilise the vessel and maintain its true course.

Spirit of a living culture

“Toi te kupu, toi to mana, toi te whenua”
The permanence of the language, of prestige, and land



Maori culture flourishes in Rotorua, and nowhere else can visitors immerse themselves in it so thoroughly. Explore historic thermal villages where locals bathe and cook in the hot pools. Participate in cultural singing and dancing, try carving or weaving, or grab the chance to taste modern dishes infused with indigenous flavours.

At Whakarewarewa Thermal Village, the descendants of the survivors of the Mt Tarawera eruption continue the hosting tradition begun in the 1880s when people flocked from around the world to see the Pink and White Terraces. The village is an active geothermal area and offers cultural performances twice a day.

On the fringe of the Whakarewarewa thermal reserve is Te Puia, which opened in 1963 to teach traditional Maori crafts such as carving and weaving. Te Puia is a renowned attraction offering visitors insight into Maori culture and history, and the chance to see thermal activity.

Ohinemutu has been home to the Ngati Whakaue people for hundreds of years. Open to visitors since the early 1880s, it is the site of Rotorua's Te Papaouru Marae and St Faith's Church, which was built in 1910. It has a richly decorated interior and features an image of Jesus Christ, dressed in a traditional Maori cloak and seemingly walking on water.

These attractions display to best advantage a culture that is part of everyday life in Rotorua but retains its specialness.

discover nature's spirit

"He pai rangi tahi"
The beauty of a single day



With 14 publicly accessible lakes packed with trout, and acres of walking trails, the Rotorua region is the perfect place to free your spirit. Marvel at native bush or stately forests, cook or bathe in the hot springs running into the lakes, or take a helicopter flight up Mt Tarawera. Find your own space.

Rotorua has a large selection of secluded spots with awe-inspiring scenic vistas, and is the ideal place to relax and indulge in a bit of soul searching.

There are unlimited ways to discover nature's spirit here, whether it be a quiet day's fishing, a stroll through native bush, or relaxing on a lake beach.

Lakes Rotoiti and Tarawera are renowned for quality trout. What could be better than catching a trout, cruising to Hot Water Beach on the shores of Lake Tarawera, digging a hole and cooking it, while you soak in water heated by thermal vents beneath the sand?

Scenic vistas are everywhere, with walkways and tracks of varying lengths. For short walks, the Redwood Grove in Whakarewarewa Forest is ideal. If you have time, enjoy a walk around Blue Lake or head into the forest. The Department of Conservation provides many walks between lakes, such as tracks at Lakes Tarawera, Okareka and Okataina.

The climb to the top of Rainbow Mountain, named for its colourful make-up and geothermal beauty, is a great walk with beautiful views.

challenge your spirit

“Werohia te wero”
Take up the challenge



Rotorua has always drawn people with an adventurous spirit, and people looking for adrenalin-pumping action can't go past this region. Rotorua boasts an awesome selection of activities guaranteed to get even the bravest visitor's heart racing.

Run, slip or slide down the slopes of an extinct volcano, speed along luge tracks down a mountain, throw yourself from a bungy tower, sledge over white-water rapids or raft the world's highest commercially rafted waterfall.

Mountain biking is huge in Rotorua. Take up the challenge and enjoy one of their many scenic mountain bike tracks and trails in Whakarewarewa or Whirinaki Forests.

Gain a different perspective on the city with a helicopter or floatplane trip, land on the slopes of Mt Tarawera or White Island, New Zealand's only marine volcano. Try tandem skydiving and marvel at the stunning lake views, tumble head over heels down a hillside in the revolutionary Zorb, hang on tight for 360 degree jetboat spins, or ride over rugged land on horseback, farm bike, or in a four-wheel drive.

From a family group to a solo traveller, there is something for everyone in Rotorua. We don't do boring. So whether it is a little taste you are after, or an adventure-filled break, Rotorua is sure to challenge your spirit.

rejuvenate your spirit

“Kei te kamakama te tikanga”

It is a proper thing to be joyful and full of high spirits



With its abundance of geothermal properties and hot sulphur springs, Rotorua is the spa capital of New Zealand. Known – with good reason – as Nature’s Spa of the South Pacific, the region knows how to spoil its visitors. People can soak in the healing waters of various hot springs, unwind with a therapeutic spa or massage, or ease aches and pains with a mud wrap.

The main thermal belt runs northeast from the three volcanic peaks in the centre of the North Island to White Island, an active volcano off the Bay of Plenty coast. The heat and springs this belt generates is used in unique spa treatments, including geothermal mud therapies, sulphur baths, and hydro massages.

Rotorua’s history as an important spa centre began more than 160 years ago when the first Maori people used the boiling water for cooking and medicinal purposes. The therapeutic use of these waters has continued; hot mineral springs can help ease ailments and provide relief for rheumatic sufferers.

Natural thermal pools are dotted throughout the region. These include Kerosene Creek, nestled in the bush south of Rotorua, Hot Water Beach, in the western corner of Lake Tarawera, and Hinemoa’s Pool on Mokoia Island in Lake Rotorua.

Spa and mud therapies are so healing and relaxing that a short break in Rotorua is better than therapy, making the city an ideal place to rejuvenate your spirit. Where else can you sit in naturally heated baths of natural mineral-enriched mud, smear it all over your body and come out feeling revitalised?

spirit of the earth

“Toitu he kainga, whatu ngarongoaro he tangata”
Only the land remains, when the people have disappeared



Approaching Rotorua, steam billows overhead and the sulphur smell the city is famous for makes itself known; a pungent introduction to a region that has captivated visitors for more than 160 years. Bubbling mud, steaming geysers and the rumbling of the earth underfoot comprise Rotorua's unique landscape. There are four main thermal areas in the region.

Whakarewarewa is one of Rotorua's most active geothermal areas, and home to the powerful Pohutu Geyser, which erupts up to 20 times a day. Boiling mud pools, hot springs, a Maori pa and the chance to see traditional craftsmen at work at Te Puia makes Whakarewarewa a popular attraction.

The inferno crater is a highlight of Waimangu Volcanic Valley, with bright blue steaming water and sheer crater falls. Waimangu's thermal pools were formed when the Mt Tarawera eruption caused a series of explosions along the fissure the mountain sits on, creating 10 craters.

Further down the road is Waiotapu Thermal Wonderland, which features the stunning Champagne Pool and huge steaming craters. Time a visit for 10.15am to see the Lady Knox Geyser erupt.

At Hells Gate visitors soak away your worries in geothermal spa pools or mud baths surrounded in native manuka trees.

With all this on offer, Rotorua is a volcanic paradise, and a great place to see nature at its most powerful.

Fun facts



Waimangu Volcanic Valley is the only hydro-thermal system in the world created within written history.

The roar from the eruption of Mt Tarawera, on June 10, 1886, was heard as far away as Christchurch and Auckland, and that an estimated two billion-plus cubic yards of ash were scattered over an area larger than 6000 square miles.

Lake Rotomahana is the deepest lake in the North Island.

Rotorua's reputation as a natural spa destination dates back more than 160 years, when the Pink and White Terraces were considered the eighth wonder of the world.

The world-renowned Zorb was invented in Rotorua.

One third of Rotorua's population is Maori.

Most Maori people live in the urban areas, but there are around 35 marae in the wider region.

Rotorua has won the title of most beautiful city in New Zealand four times.

The Polynesian Spa complex is built on the site of the Priest Springs, named for an Irish priest. Tauranga-based Father Mahoney reputedly cured himself of arthritis in 1878 by bathing in a hand-dug pool daily for three months.

There are more than 400 tourism-related businesses in Rotorua, employing 25 per cent of Rotorua's total workforce.

Within the city limits there are 150 flower beds using from 100 to 2500 plants each twice a year.

Rotorua is nearly 300 metres above sea level.

Top 10 reasons to visit Rotorua

Hosts with the most

An impressive array of cafes and restaurants, bars and clubs offer food, wine and entertainment to tempt the palate and the senses. Go traditional with a Maori hangi feast or try the latest in modern cuisine at any of the city's eateries.



Nature's spa of the South Pacific

Rotorua is renowned worldwide as a top spa destination. The various spa and health service providers understand that today's visitors want relaxation and rejuvenation, and offer this in abundance.



The opportunity to soak in a thermally heated or hot mineral pool remains a favourite and there is an increasing range of other health, beauty and spa treatments on offer based on Rotorua's natural mineral and geothermal resources.

Aquatic paradise

Rotorua's many fishable lakes add sparkle and interest to the landscape around Rotorua and provides a host of leisure and sporting opportunities.



Ringed by scenic tracts of bush, forest and farmland, Rotorua's lakeland chain was formed and shaped by cataclysmic volcanic activity in times past. Lake Rotomahana, a "warm lake" adjacent to Waimangu Volcanic Valley, was largely formed as a result of the eruption of Mt Tarawera in 1886. Lake Rotorua is the largest lake, and the Blue Lake among the smallest.

Cruise, kayak, water-ski, fish, wakeboard, windsurf, sail or jet-ski. Most lakes are easily accessible to visitors so whatever your pleasure, Rotorua's stunning natural setting offers endless possibilities for relaxation, fun and adventure in, on and around our scenic waterways.

These lakes and rivers teem with trout that provide sport and thrills. Professional guides (who provide all the gear plus the fishing licence too) are on hand to provide expert help but you're likely to find Rotorua is the easiest place in the world to hook a trout.

Adventure playground

Looking for adrenalin-pumping action? Rotorua offers thrills and adventure guaranteed to get the pulse racing, all in a stunning natural setting.

Run, slip and slide down a scree slope inside an extinct volcano, go lugging, or try mountain



biking on some of the world's best tracks. Jump off a bungee tower or try freefalling on to a cushion of air - without a harness. Sample the highest commercially rafted (7m) waterfall in the world, tumble head over heels down a hillside in the revolutionary Zorb or go for a spin in a jet sprint boat.

Try a safari through native forest and over rugged farmland on horseback or farm-bike, or test driving skills in a four-wheel drive adventure.

Family fun

Rotorua amazing mix of attractions, activities, lakes, eateries and accommodation options make it the perfect choice for a family holiday. Add a host of free things to do and it makes Rotorua an affordable option too.



Check out the 26km Rotorua walkway, some of the world's best mountain bike trails, forest hikes, Kuirau Park thermal displays, 15 lakes to play in or on, and the lakefront volcanic playground.

When it comes to dining there is an array of cafes with alfresco dining, or families can opt for a picnic or barbecue at one of the spectacular lakes or parks.

Get close to nature at Paradise Valley Springs, the Agrodome, Rainbow Springs Nature Park or Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre. If faster moving fun appeals, check out the luge where children from as young as six can ride the beginner track (younger children can double up with an adult). Whakarewarewa Forest, five minutes' drive from the city centre, is home to a vast network of walking, horse trekking and mountain biking tracks.

Thermal pools and aquatic adventures are plentiful too. Relax at Waikite Valley Thermal Pools, Hells Gate or Polynesian Spa, or for a fun water playground for the kids, try the Aquatic Centre.

Location, location, location

Located at the heart of the North Island of New Zealand, in the aptly named Bay of Plenty region, Rotorua is easily accessible from the international gateway city of Auckland, which is just 2.5 hours away by car.

Rotorua is also 75 minutes' drive from Hamilton International Airport, 60 minutes' drive from Tauranga and Taupo, two hours from the skifields of Mt Ruapehu, 2.5 hours from the wine region of Hawke's Bay, and a half day's drive from Wellington. It is just over an hour's flight from Christchurch and also has a direct connection to Queenstown.



Where it's happening

Week in, week out, Rotorua hosts sporting, cultural, musical and business events as well as conferences and incentive groups, media and film crews and school and educational visits.

Major sporting events that have made their home in Rotorua include the Fletcher Challenge Forests marathon, Cateye Moonride, International Rally of Rotorua, Xterra off-road multisport, International Two-Day Walk, Kurungaituku netball tournament, Reebok Ekiden Relay, Waikato Tough Guy, the 100k Rotorua-Taupo Flyer, the Watties Creamed Rice half-marathon, and the Special K women's triathlon.



The region also delights in cultural events such as the Lockwood Aria, Opera in the Pa, Te Arawa Kapa Haka Festival, biennial Arts Festival, and Chamber Music Festival.

The New Year's Mardi Gras, Central North Island Swap Meet, International Trout Fishing Contest, and Tagged Trout Competition also draw visitors from near and far.

Geothermal wonderland

Rotorua is at the centre of an active thermal area. Just minutes from the city centre, you will see geysers of hissing, steaming, scalding water roar from deep within the earth's crust and hurl spray 30m into the air. Pools of bubbling mud plop and belch.



In geothermal fields out of the city, crater lakes are constantly refilled with hot water; rich mineral deposits paint the landscape from a multi-coloured palette of white, pink, yellow, gold, orange, and red, steam escapes from cracks in cliff faces. Visitors will need to work overtime to photograph the stark beauty and splendour of the volcanic landscape.

Good looks

Clean cobbled streets, beautifully planted parks and gardens, and lovingly- restored Tudor architecture celebrate Rotorua's colonial past, and are evidence of the major investments made by Rotorua District Council in recent years.



Rotorua has proudly claimed the title of the country's most beautiful city several times. It was judged tops in the annual Keep New Zealand Beautiful Awards in 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2006.

Vibrant culture

Rotorua is the heartland of New Zealand's Maori culture. Visitors will find an enveloping warmth, a proud spirit, a deep sense of history and a quick humour here. For more than 160 years the Arawa people of Rotorua have been guiding visitors through the area's natural thermal wonders they have called home for more than 600 years. Their welcoming tradition has been passed on down from generation to generation - and you'll find it expressed in Rotorua with true warmth and energy. Opportunities to come face-to-face with Maori culture abound in Rotorua - in performances, arts, crafts, in expertly conceived displays, through the traditional hangi meal, song, dance and in encounters with local Maori. Be impressed by modern Maori innovation and technology, and share the history.



Rotorua Sustainable Tourism Charter

The Rotorua Sustainable Tourism Charter represents 54 businesses within the Rotorua tourism industry. Charter members include accommodation providers, attraction and activity operators, transport providers, and tourism service providers.



Collectively the 54 member businesses are estimated to represent up to 80 per cent of all the visitor activity in the Rotorua area.

The charter requires all members' businesses to commit to continual improvement in these areas:

- Community and tangata whenua support
- Natural and human environment protection
- Efficient use of natural and human resource
- Compliance with legislation
- A safe, enjoyable and informative experience for visitors

Some of the improvements made by charter members are as follows:

- Millennium Hotel Rotorua is diverting up to 200 plastic bags a day from landfill by using paper towels instead of plastic bags in guest room bins.
- The Buried Village and Hells Gate Thermal Reserve use an all-purpose enzyme-based cleaning product that helps their septic tanks process wastewater.
- Rotorua Duck Tours and Tamaki Heritage Experiences use bio-diesel in some of their vehicles, and are finding a significant reduction in emissions from those vehicles.
- Peppers on the Point has recycled used building materials to create an on-site chapel popular for small wedding parties.
- Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs Nature Park has opened its kiwi crèche to the local community by offering a locals' volunteer programme, which sees locals involved in nurturing the chicks.

Visitors also have a role to play in the sustainability chain. Demand for sustainability by visitors is a strong motivator for operators to be more sustainable. For more information visit www.sustainableNZ.com

Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing

The vision of Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing (DRTM) is:

To have a visitor sector that is making a maximum contribution to Rotorua's economic, social and environmental well-being by continually promoting Rotorua to existing and new markets as an exciting, vibrant, high quality destination.

To strengthen its unique international position as the cultural and geothermal capital of New Zealand and continue to develop Rotorua as *Nature's Spa of the South Pacific*.

To encourage a 'flying in formation' approach recognising a need to collectively work together in a common direction, while recognising businesses and business sectors are individualistic and increasingly more competitive.

To have a balanced approach to resource the marketing of domestic, conference and incentive, events, retail and international markets and therefore sustaining a robust visitor industry to minimise seasonal fluctuations in markets and Rotorua's economic benefit.



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