



HEADING

Aucklander's Sailing Away

INTRO

Auckland City is the ultimate play ground for anyone with access to a boat. The City's Hauraki Gulf offers remote romantic cruising, vineyards for visiting vino lovers, anchorages with easy access to bush walks and parklike grounds for picnics, channels for fisherman to catch their feasts as well as bustling beaches and beautiful empty bays – something for all tastes and times. It is no wonder that all summer the locals enjoy sailing away for evenings, days and nights.

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Photography:

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Auckland is constantly voted one of the worlds best lifestyle cities in international surveys. The cosmopolitan city centre is complemented by great island escapes within easy reach of the cities four main marinas and boat parks. Auckland 'the city of sails' has the highest per capita ownership of boats and yachts. On a sunny weekend it is not unusual to see a vast array of yachts of all shapes and sizes as well as kayaks, sailing dinghy's and windsurfers all enjoying the Hauraki Gulf. This Gulf spans from Waitemata Harbour to the Coromandle Peninsular and is home to some 50 islands and islets. For almost 1000 years the gulf has been a hub of human activity and home for generations of residents. In 2000 a Hauraki Gulf Marine Park

was to protect important areas within this region where Aucklanders work, live and play. Within the Hauraki Gulf there are a number of Islands each with something different to be discovered. Here are some of the resident's favourite Islands:

Rangitoto Island *The Hauraki Gulf's Land Mark*

It is hard to go anywhere on Aucklands Hauraki Gulf and not pass by Rangitoto. This local landmark and icon is a 2310 hectare Island with a distinctive shape situated in the center of the Gulf. From every direction Rangitoto rises out of the sea to a cone shaped summit with three nipples, it is 800 years old and one of the many volcanoes of Auckland. This Islands unique natural and geological attributes as well as it's walk to the summit's scenic vantage point and quaint anchorages make it a popular destination for visitors who want a work out and a view.

Motutapu Island *Beside Rangitoto to the East*

Motutapu Island is linked to Rangitoto by a causeway and this forms Islington Bay between the two islands.

Islington Bay: 6 Miles from Auckland City

Due to its location en route to Waiheke and close proximity to Auckland this Bay, which is protected on three sides is a popular port of call. The wharf here provides easy access to the rocky foreshore of Rangitoto and is the best spot from which to begin the hike to enjoy the panoramic view of city and islands provided from the summit, or to explore the more rugged greenery of Motutapu Island.

Motuihe Island *8 Miles from Auckland City*

For a beach barbeque Auckland boaties head to Motuihe. The northwestern point of this island offers two anchorages ideal for lunchtime because the land narrows and shelter can be found on either side of this skinny strip of Island at West Bay or Ocean Beach. Visitors to these bays can swim or snorkel ashore and go beachcombing or sunbathing then enjoy walks across the park-like grounds of the island. Motuihe Island is uninhabited, green grassy with some clusters of trees. It's ridge of hills roll down to bays and sandy beaches. The history of this island is that in the First World War it served as an internment camp and as a Naval base in the Second World War, it has also been a quarantine station and a farm, now it is part of the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park.

Running between Motuihe Island and Motutapu is the Motuihe Channel, a popular fishing spot for kingfish, snapper and kawahi and on a calm day there can be a number of boats in this area.

Waiheke Island 12 Miles from Auckland City

Stoneyridge Winery on Waiheke claims the Island is the 'Ibiza of the South Pacific' and they host regular dance parties to make it so, this place is popular with the Auckland party set. Waiheke Island also hosts a number of events throughout the year; there is the Waiheke Wine Festival, Jazz Festival, sculpture walks and a weekly market, all creating good reasons for boaties to shoot across to the island.

Waiheke is popular as a place of residence for people who can commute to work in downtown Auckland. There is a permanent population of about 7,000; the residential areas are in small village settings of character, with an eclectic mix of small holiday houses and large designer homes. Outside the villages the growing boutique wine and olive oil industry with accompanying eateries and luxury lodgings make this place a must see destination from Auckland City. The villages, vineyards, beautiful beaches and native bush reserves create far more than a day's or night's worth of activity to be had on this hospitable island.

Oneroa Bay

The ideal anchorage for some retail therapy this bay is just in front of Oneroa township, the largest settlement on Waiheke. The quaint strip of cafes and boutiques as well as general supply stores can easily occupy half a day. A highlight of a visit to Oneroa must be the art gallery, a delightful showcase of local and national art; here it is easy to find a special painting or ceramic of Kiwi flavour.

Onetangi Bay

This bay is almost two miles of fine sandy beach, pleasant at any tide, and was recently named by Metro Magazine as the best beach for swimming in Auckland. It bay is exposed to northern winds however in light conditions the western end provides a sheltered anchorage. At the eastern end of the bay and separated from the beach by a cliffy headland is the picturesque Pie Melon Bay. In the vicinity of this tidy bay boaties can easily gather a collection of green lipped mussel's ideal for a family feast on the BBQ.

Rakino Island One Mile North East of Motutapu

It has been suggested that Rakino Island is going to be the new Waiheke, although there are no real amenities there is great coastal property and an increase in gorgeous homes. Most of the Island is in private ownership with a small stretch being part of the Maritime Park.

Woody Bay

One of the more favoured anchorages on Rakino Island, it was especially popular during the America's Cup as its angle positioned it perfectly for sheltered viewing of the races. The bay is a popular weekend anchorage being 90 minutes from Downtown Auckland.

Tiritiri Matangi Island 18 Miles from Auckland City

Often called 'Tiri' this island is the place to visit for people who love bird life and enjoy waking up early to the sound of the dawn chorus. Tiri stands out in the Hauraki Gulf for its amazing collection of birds. Since 1984 volunteers have worked to re-establish the native bush and rare birds have been re-introduced and are now thriving. Here visitor can experience the way the islands of the Hauraki Gulf Islands once were. Things to do here include; great bush walks, scenic kayaking and good snorkeling. Perhaps the best experience on the island is to be had in spring when the number of birds and their volume at this time of the year creates the incredible, inspiring and almost deafening dawn chorus.

Kawau Island 25 Miles from Auckland City

Kawau Island has a rich history and is one of the larger islands in the Gulf. Until 1962 this island was a busy mining settlement. It was then purchased by Governor Sir George Grey who made the Island his home until 1888. Sir George Grey built a Mansion House on the Island in the 1860's being a keen gardener, he introduced exotic plants to the grounds, and he also introduced rock wallabies from Australia. The wallabies are exclusive to Kawau and thrive on the island.

Mansion House Bay

During the America's Cup Season the Super yacht Millennium Cup was raced between Auckland and Kawau with an evening of celebrations held in Mansion House Bay inside Bon Accord Harbour. For the evening Superyachts would fill the bay for an evening of swimming, water balloon throwing and the famous Millennium Cup Ball held in the Mansion House Grounds. Mansion House Bay is still a very popular destination with easy shore access from its jetty there are a number of bush tracks ranging from half an hour to several hours in duration. This attractive bay has some history in the Mansion House which is a museum and the grounds are home to wallabies, peacocks and other native birdlife.

Great Barrier Island 20 Miles from Kawau

The untouched beauty of Great Barrier, wild beaches, and secluded bays, excellent fishing and diving coupled with the small population contribute to it being one of the last wilderness areas of the region of

Auckland. This Island is rugged and intriguing; its location gives it the role as the sentinel of the Gulf providing protection from the Pacific Ocean. The two coasts are very different; the east has fine beaches, bluffs and ridges and is often exposed to swell while the east side has a number of secluded bays with peacefully lapping water. Great Barrier Island is a popular cruising destination at the peak of the summer when yet it remains unspoilt and has a real community spirit amongst the residents. Outside the main holiday period's vessels can easily be in one of the quiet deep green bays under a star studded night sky alone.

Port Fitzroy

Sail into Port Fitzroy for basic amenities, a beer at the local yacht club or a bush walk. This heavily indented port on the western side of the island and offers boaties many scenic arms to anchor in, mostly with dense native bush to the waters edge. The Port is a great starting point from which to visit other parts of the island. There are conservation reserves ashore with many scenic tracks, including one to the highest point on the Island, Mt Hobson.

From empty bays, to beautiful bush walks, the Islands of Auckland's Hauraki Gulf have something for all seasons. They are well protected and looked after by the Department of Conservation and as part of the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park. This is a boaties play ground with something different to be seen each weekend and a number of new adventures. So get you fishing gear, swimsuit, sandals and wallet, then set sail.

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MARINAS

Viaduct Harbour Marina in Central Auckland the best berths for 30m plus vessels with excellent access to the central city bars, restaurants and shops.

www.viaduct.co.nz

Westhaven Marina is one of the largest marinas in the Southern Hemisphere central to Auckland City and ideal for vessels up to 30m.

www.westhaven.co.nz

Orakei Marina is the latest addition to Auckland Marinas. It is a boutique Marina catering to vessels from 12-40m and is situated at Okahu Bay Landing in the Eastern Suburbs of Auckland City with excellent access to the Hauraki Gulf.

www.orakeimarina.co.nz