



TURANGI

Among the region's attractions is Huka Lodge, which regularly reels in the world's rich and powerful; visit Tongariro National Trout Centre on Tongariro River from Turangi, the world's 'Trout Fishing Capital'.

PICTURES: HUKA LODGE, GEOFF BILLING, TRACIE ANGELL/DESTINATION GREAT LAKE TAUPO, INSTAGRAM/HUKAPRAWNPARK, FACEBOOK/LAVAGLASSNZ

1 LAKE TAUPO

Located at the geographic centre of the North Island, Lake Taupo has been a favoured spot since ancient Maori times. Its name, Taupo-nui-a-Tia (the great cloak of Tia, a fabled Polynesian chief) hints at its size: at 616sq km the vast freshwater lake is the size of a small sea with all the moods to match. Fishing, boating, sightseeing and swimming are perennial attractions along with impressive water- and skiescapes.

Top vantage points include the Great Lake Walkway and cycleway (voted New Zealand's Favourite Urban Ride in 2017) and the chic lakefront bar at Millennium Hotel and Resort Manuels Taupo. Or take a scenic 60km drive south for a

waterside lu
Restaurant.
LOVETAUPO.CO
BRAXMERE.CO

2 HUKA LODGE

If your dream begins where the Lodge will a secluded bend just north of pre-eminent hosts royalty world's rich

Huka Lodge include one Lovers pack guided tour magnificent private garden two-night Kai introduces of the Maori Tuwharetoa and fauna from HUKALODGE.CO

3 ORAKEI

Orakei Korako emerges out of the lush green countryside north of Taupo like a silvery mirage. A series of terraces formed by silica-rich hot springs flowing down a hillside into a lake, its name in Maori means "place of adorning white glitter" and with its clouds of drifting steam and rainbow-coloured algal pools it's weirdly and impressionistically beautiful.

The terraces are reached by a short

boat ride across the lake from where well-constructed walkways take visitors safely past fizzing geysers and burping mud pools. The experience is natural, untouched and timeless. Lonely Planet calls Orakei Korako "arguably the best thermal area left in New Zealand."

ORAKEIKORAKO.CO.NZ

4 LAVA GLASS

In 2002, world-renowned glass artist Lynden Over and his wife, painter Christine Robb, wondered what to do with a cow paddock on their property.

Sixteen years later the former pasture (still with the neighbouring cows) has been endorsed by the New Zealand Gardens Trust as a "Garden

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people who the 13th gnise the rous hot ettlers in practice of

renely aces, near re-blue ere an

adults only policy boost the tranquility factor. The adjacent visitor complex offers massage and reflexology therapies and regular Maori cultural experiences.

WAIRAKEITERRACES.CO.NZ

6 THE BISTRO

The Bistro is the flagship of a quiet revolution that is transforming the Taupo-Turangi dining scene. After working in top US and British

restaurants, chef Jude Messenger returned home with a vision of offering locals European-style dining with unpretentious service and affordable prices. It has proved to be a smash success.

There's a similar story at The Storehouse, a thriving cafe, kitchen and florist that is sandwiched

between a Beaurepaires tyre outlet and an automotive electrical shop.

Other good eats in Taupo include Vine Eatery, Replete, Cafe Baku, L'arte Cafe in Acacia Bay and Fast & Fresh Bakery Cafe, a gold medal-winning maker of meat pies. At the weekly Taupo Market you'll find Baked With Love's huge irresistible doughnuts and Lula's Empanadas. In Turangi, try trout-themed Creel Tackle House & Cafe, and Rust Licensed Gourmet Burger Bar.

THEBISTRO.NZ

7 KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK

A few minutes east of State Highway 1, near Turangi, you can drive or hike into 77,000ha of pristine New Zealand wilderness that includes several mountain ranges and river systems.

The Kaimanawa Ranges have an iconic status in New Zealand for their hunting and fly-fishing, and the many forest trails are popular with hikers and mountain bikers. Logan Devine, of Go Explore NZ, offers year-round guided tours of the ranges'

hauntingly beautiful landscapes as well as other experiences, from food to thermal bathing, in the Taupo-Turangi region where he grew up.

GOEXPLORENZ.COM

8 GRAFFIATO

Graffiato is an annual three-day festival of street art in Taupo whose results stay on display year-round. Every October for the past eight years, 10 artists from across Australasia have been invited to create original designs on walls, building facades and

laneways in the centre of town. Taupo is now New Zealand's most important destination for mural art. The artists come from diverse backgrounds including illustration, typography, animation and studio painting and the results are beautiful. Free walking