

## Recommendations for Activities, Eating and Events in Wellington during Australex, November 2008

Bound by its magnificent harbour, with wooden Victorian buildings terraced up steep hills, New Zealand's capital is home to its parliament and national treasures. Spectacular views, challenging walks, a hip cafe and entertainment scene, and serious dedication to the arts make Wellington an enormously enjoyable place in which to spend a few days. (Lonely Planet Guide)

Wellington is perhaps New Zealand's best kept visitor destination secret. It has traditionally been one of the most under-publicised, understated places to holiday in the country. But times have changed. Wellington is now on the must see list and just keeps on getting better and better. The capital city has style. Cafe culture and nightlife is thriving, shopping is superb and for scenic beauty alone it would be hard to find a harbour anywhere in the world as beautiful as Wellington on a sunny day. (NZ.com)

*Useful maps of Wellington city and region*

[http://www.wellingtonnz.com/about\\_wellington/wellington\\_maps](http://www.wellingtonnz.com/about_wellington/wellington_maps)

### Activities

A selection of the best of Wellington activities:

1. *Museums and galleries:* Start at New Zealand's national museum Te Papa for art, natural history and cultural exhibits, walk along the waterfront over the City and Sea Bridge to the City Gallery in Civic Square, stop for lunch at Nikau café, then walk back over the bridge, along the waterfront to the Museum of City and Sea.
2. *Around the bays:* Drive out from the city along Happy Valley Road to Owhiro Bay. Turn left and drive all around the bays (past the airport and right around the peninsula), stopping at spots such as the South Coast Gallery in Island Bay, the hip Maranui café in the surf lifesaving club at Lyall Bay, and picturesque Scorching Bay, watching out for little blue penguins, until you get to Oriental Bay. Have a beer at the Manhattan Lounge or a gelato at Kaffee Eis (see also number 13).
3. *Meet the seals:* When you get to Owhiro Bay (as per number 2), turn right instead and drive to the abandoned quarry at Red Rocks. Park your car and take the rugged 45 minute walk along the stony beach road, with views of the South Island on a clear day, until you meet the seal colony at Sinclair Head, just past the distinctive cleft in the rock. The seals are resident from May to August. You will smell them before you see them so watch out! Best done in the morning, on a fine day, with a warm jacket.
4. *Nature walks:* Go on one of Wellington's spectacular nature walks, such as the Northern, Eastern and Southern Walkways. Visit Karori Wildlife Sanctuary to experience New Zealand's native plants and animals in a natural setting.
5. *Ferry to Eastbourne:* Take the Dominion Post ferry from Queen's Wharf to Days Bay. Walk around the idyllic coast from Day's Bay to Eastbourne, check out the arts and

crafts in the local shops and have a coffee. Walk back around and take the ferry back to the city.

6. *Seat of Government*: Take a tour of Parliament and politician-watch on the Parliament lawn. View the largest wooden building in the Southern Hemisphere across the road (old Government Buildings). Visit the Treaty of Waitangi at the National Archives (Mulgrave St), and other exhibitions there and at the National Library (Molesworth St). Go to the Backbencher Pub (Molesworth St) to inspect the satirical models of politicians - and quite possibly the real thing at the next table.
7. *Views and flowers*: Get the Cable Car from Lambton Quay up to the Botanic Gardens. Expect a sedate rather than exciting ascent, but be impressed by the panoramic views at the top and walk through the gardens down to Tinakori Rd (see also number 12).
8. *Lord of the Rings tour*: A number of tour operators, e.g. Wellington Rover Tours ([http://www.wellingtonrover.co.nz/rover\\_rings\\_tour.htm](http://www.wellingtonrover.co.nz/rover_rings_tour.htm)) conduct tours of sites of filming for the Lord of the Rings, such as Rivendell, Helms Deep and the outskirts of the Shire, as well as the WETA studios in Miramar and other contemporary Wellywood locations. You even get to wear elf ears on the bus.
9. *Wine trail*: Drive to Martinborough and sample great New Zealand wines at various excellent wineries including Ata Rangi, Te Kairanga and Palliser Estate. Drive to quaint Greytown to visit the Cobblestones colonial museum and delicious Schoc chocolate shop/factory, where you can try chilli lime or strawberry and black pepper chocolate. If you are feeling affluent treat yourself to a night at the boutique Le Petit Hotel in Martinborough and have brunch across the road at the Village Café.
10. *Kapiti Coast*: Drive up to the picturesque Kapiti Coast (Pukerua Bay, Raumati, Waikanae, and Paraparaumu), where you can visit Lindale Farm for farm tours, celebrated Kapiti icecream and cheeses, and walk on the beautiful peaceful beaches facing Kapiti island.
11. *Zoo*: Meet the native Kiwi, morepork, kea, kereru, kotuku and tuatara, along with the usual lions, giraffes, kangaroos and meerkats, at Wellington Zoo in Newtown.
12. *Colonial New Zealand*: Head to Tinakori Rd to see some of Wellington's oldest and quaintest houses, particularly in the Tinakori Lanes (Aorangi Terrace, Poplar Grove, Calgarry Avenue and Torless Terrace, as well as Ascot St). Check out the antique stores, craft and book shops on Tinakori Rd, and walk past Premier House, the Prime Minister's official residence, before moving north to Katherine Mansfield's birthplace and museum. Other colonial sites worth visiting include the Nairn St Colonial cottage museum and a walk along Holloway Rd at the top of Aro St.
13. *Pools*: Have a swim or hot spa and sauna at the 'hot spots' in the 1960s retro Freyberg Pool at Oriental Bay, with views out over the Harbour. Try a fruit smoothie named after a Wellington beach at the Juice Doctor outside the pool, 'cycle' on an Enormous Crocodile along the waterfront, or walk towards the city past Waitangi Park to the Movenpick ice cream café.

14. *Shopping*: Shop in upper Cuba St for Kiwi made bicultural chic design items and hip vintage finds, on Willis and Featherston Streets for top end New Zealand designer clothing, off Courtenay Place (Allen and Blair Streets) for modern Maori art, on Tinakori Road for art and antiques, and in Petone (Jackson St) for ethnic wares and second hand.
15. *Movie theatres*: Courtenay Place has the restored Embassy Theatre and Blondinis cocktail lounge at the Mount Victoria end of the street, Reading Cinemas for mainstream movies and Paramount cinemas (opposite) for art house / festival flicks. Wellington also has several stylish boutique cinemas in the suburbs, including Penthouse Cinema in Brooklyn, Empire Cinema in Island Bay and Lighthouse Cinema in Petone, showing a mixture of mainstream and festival films, with occasional New Zealand features. The Film Archive on Ghuznee St has New Zealand documentaries, home movies, newsreels, television commercials, feature films and more, which you get to watch in your own private theatre.

#### *Useful websites for activities*

- Official Wellington tourism website, with activity suggestions, facts and information about Wellington [www.wellingtonnz.com](http://www.wellingtonnz.com)
- Know Wellington website, with sections such as 'know what to do on a rainy day', 'know what to do in the city for under \$5', [http://www.wellingtonnz.com/media/know\\_wellington](http://www.wellingtonnz.com/media/know_wellington)
- Wellington City Council's 'Feeling Great' guide to activities in Wellington <http://www.feelinggreat.co.nz/activities/>

#### **Restaurants, cafes and bars**

Wellington has over 300 restaurants, bars and cafes. The ones below are specially recommended after exhaustive personal testing.

##### *Top end (\$\$\$)*

- Boulcott St Bistro (Boulcott St) (modern European)
- Logan Brown (Cuba St) (modern European)
- Matterhorn (Cuba St) (modern European)
- Maria Pia's trattoria (Mulgrave St) (regional Italian)
- Crazy Horse Steak House (Willis St) (steak)
- The White House (Oriental Parade) (modern European)

##### *Mid range (\$\$)*

- The Flying Burrito Brothers (Cuba St) (Mexican fusion) (vege-friendly)
- Kai in the City (Marjoribanks St) (modern Maori)
- Roxy (Cuba St) (modern European)
- Simply Paris (Cuba St) (modern French)
- Le Metropolitan (Cuba St) (traditional French)
- Café Bastille (Marjoribanks St) (modern French)
- Monsoon Poon (Blair St) (South East Asian) (vege-friendly)
- Chow (Tory St) (pan Asian) (vege-friendly)

- Habebie (Dixon St) (Lebanese) (vege-friendly)
- Yangtze Restaurant (Willis Street) (Chinese)
- Some Reap (Dixon Street) (Cambodian)

#### *Cheap eats (\$)*

- Rasa (Cuba St) (Malaysian)
- Little India (Cuba St or Blair St) (Indian)
- Miyabi (Willis St Village) (Japanese)
- Phoenician Falafel (Cambridge Terrace) (Middle Eastern)
- Sweet Mother's Kitchen (Courtenay Place) (Southern/Mexican)
- Mediterranean Food Warehouse (Constable St, Newtown) (pizza)
- Long Bar (Brandon St) (Malaysian)
- Nandos (Victoria St) (chicken)
- Red Tomatoes (Upland Road) (Pizzas, pasta, salads)

#### *Delivery/take out (\$)*

- The Curry Club (Indian) (delivery) (vege-friendly)
- Hell Pizza (pizza) (delivery) (vege-friendly)
- Burger Fuel (gourmet burgers) (take out only) (vege-friendly) (Courtenay Place)
- Burger Wisconsin (gourmet burgers) (take out only) (vege-friendly) (Cleveland St, Brooklyn)

#### *Cafes*

- Olive (Cuba St) (arty)
- Fidels (Cuba St) (hip) (vege-friendly)
- Mojo (Willis St, Bond St, Lambton Quay, Taranaki St) (excellent coffee)
- Aro Café (Aro St) (homestyle) (vege-friendly)
- Astoria (Lambton Quay) (classic)
- Pravda (Featherston St) (stylish)

#### *Bars*

- Vivo (Edward St, off Victoria St) (wine bar)
- Wine Loft (The Terrace) (wine bar)
- Concrete (Lambton Quay) (corporate cocktails)
- Chow (Tory St) and the adjacent Motel (young and hip cocktails)
- Matterhorn (Cuba St) (young and hip cocktails)
- S & M (Scotty and Malcolm) Bar (Cuba Street) (gay and lesbian)
- General Practitioner (Willis St) (gastro pub)
- Molly Malones (Courtenay Place) (Irish pub)

#### *Useful websites for restaurants*

- Official Wellington tourism website [http://www.wellingtonnz.com/bars\\_restaurants](http://www.wellingtonnz.com/bars_restaurants)
- Menu mania (includes reviews) <http://www.menumania.co.nz/>
- Menus.co.nz [www.menus.co.nz/Wellington/](http://www.menus.co.nz/Wellington/)

*Walking:* Wellington Writers Walk (permanent):  
<http://www.nzlive.com/en/nzlivecom/wellington-writers-walk>

*Useful websites for events*

- NZ Live events website [www.nzlive.com](http://www.nzlive.com)
- 'Wotzon' website of events, locations and services in Wellington  
<http://www.wqtn.wotzon.com/>