

Discovering Port FitzRoy

If you had to design the perfect boatie's spot, this would be it. Good on you for finding it!

All you need to know to enjoy exploring this area for a day.

Waste on Aotea/ Great Barrier
Rubbish collection on Aotea Great Barrier has changed in 2019. Residential waste is collected weekly using supplied bins and bags. Take casual rubbish and recycling home or drop it off at the Aotea Community Recycling Centre and Claris Landfill at 70 Gray Road, Claris. Please support us in our goal to go Zero Waste.

A circular icon containing a green mountain bike with a blue frame and orange wheels, positioned above the text 'Grade 2. Easy'.

Grade 3.
Intermediate

Steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and/or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the track's outside edge.



Walk safe: many of these tracks are managed by the Department of Conservation. Before you head out, refer to the detailed track information in the 'Aotea/Great Barrier Island' brochure (available from local information centres) or visit doc.govt.nz.

Aotea Great Barrier Local Board



Places of interest

1 Port FitzRoy village	4 Kaiaraara Hut, forest and stream	7 Coopers Castle summit
2 Glenfern Sanctuary	5 Hirakimatā (Mt Hobson) summit	8 Okiwi Park
3 Waterfall	6 Motu Kaikoura	9 Karaka Bay, Hillary Outdoors Education Centre, Orama Oasis



A logo consisting of a white 'P' inside a blue circle, followed by the text 'Please recycle' in a blue sans-serif font.

Wood Island
(Motuahu)

Port Abercrombie

Please recycle

Wood Island (Motuahu)

Port Abercrombie

Karaka Bay

Kotuku Point

Bradshaw Cove

Haukaraka (Mt Overlook) 179m

Airfield

Mitre Peak 185m

Perimeter Track (16 hr walk)

Man O' War Passage

Motu Kaikoura

Quoin Island (Graves Island)

Akapoua Bay

Kaiaraara Bay Road

Blair's Landing

Port FitzRoy Harbour

Glenfern Sanctuary tracks

Glenfern Road

Predator proof fence

Rarohara Bay

Bridle Track

Port FitzRoy wharf

Warrens Track

Kiwi Track

Line W Track

Bush's Beach Track

Kaiaraara Track

Kaiaraara Hut

Hirakimatā (Mt Hobson) 627m

South Fork Track

Forest Road

South Fork Track

Mt Heale Hut

To Whangapoua Beach
to Katherine Bay

Okiwi Park

Okiwi School

Okiwi

To Claris

Nabey Road

Aotea Road

To Windy Canyon

To Whangaparapara

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Mountain bike trail grades

Grade 2. Easy
Mostly flat with some gentle climbs on smooth track with easily avoidable obstacles such as rocks and potholes.

Grade 3. Intermediate
Steep slopes and/or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and/or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the track's outside edge.

Dog Information

No dogs on DOC reserves, campgrounds and tracks, or on Motu Kaikoura. Dogs on leash allowed on all beaches, Auckland Council reserves and tracks and public places. Dogs off-leash only in 'under control off leash areas' marked on the map - this includes some of the beaches and the northern side of Okiwi airfield. Please pick up after your pet.

1km



Laid back and local

Easy to see what makes Port FitzRoy special.

There are passionate locals, lovely intimate bays, a small village with a shop, a library and info centre.

Walking, boating, chilling out at a secluded bay - Port FitzRoy is tops with these options.

Shelter from the storm

The sanctuary of Rarohara is known today as Port FitzRoy. Used traditionally as a landing place and shelter from rough seas, this port was renamed by settlers in honour of Captain Robert FitzRoy, governor of New Zealand 1843-45.

With the stunning combination of crystal clear water, bush covered hills and just enough modern conveniences, boaters are drawn here in all seasons.

About 35 hardy souls keep the home fires burning year round, welcoming and hosting visitors with hospitality in the tradition of manaakitanga as practiced by Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea since the 1700s.

The port has seen exports of gold, trees, fish, livestock and now mussels, and it's a short trip by boat or land to the cultural centre of Aotea: Motairehe Whanga or Katherine Bay. Here you can be welcomed at two marae which are the pride and joy of mana whenua.



Submerge yourself into Aotea culture.

Must-do activities

Don't miss these highlights:

The Mussel Fest 1 A highlight! Held every year in January at the Port FitzRoy Boat Club.

Glenfern Sanctuary 2 Next door to Port FitzRoy is a wonderful example of native forest restoration. A great introduction to what real New Zealand forests can look like. Book a guided tour before you head out.

Waterfall 3 For a delightful local walk, head up Warrens Track to visit a gorgeous waterfall.

Kaikoura Island 6 If you're waterborne, go explore Kaikoura Island. A new bush track takes you around the island to secluded bays. Or wander up one of the peaks for great views.

Kaiaraara Bay and the route to Kaiaraara Hut 4 A lovely bush walk to a beautiful wide stream bed with an impressive suspension bridge, a great place to splash on a hot summer's day.

Okiwi Park 8 is a lovely, easily accessible, sheltered sanctuary with mature native trees, a cool bike trail and a special story. Go check it out.

Left: Sheltered anchorage at Port FitzRoy Harbour.



Lookout Rock, a worthwhile side trip off Old Lady Track.
Photo: Kay Stowell.

Old Lady Track

Maybe they should rename it "They were tougher in the good ol' days" track - because whoever the Old Lady was, she was fit and strong! Still, this is one of the best walks in the area, well worth the effort.

Begins on Glenfern Road. For best views of the harbour go all the way to Lookout Rock.
90 minutes return.

Kai moana (seafood) fest

The annual Mussel Fest in January happens right here at Port FitzRoy.

Chow down, as much as you like, while listening to totally authentic music from near and far and browse stalls of local produce and handicrafts.



Mussel Fest at Port FitzRoy - legendary!

Bridle Track

A nice stroll away from the road, from Port FitzRoy central to Akapoua Campsite.

15-20 minutes one way. Or do a 90 minute loop combined with the following:

Warrens Track to waterfall 3

A gentle grade to a pretty decent waterfall, complete with a popular swimming hole. From Akapoua Campsite you'll be gradually climbing the hill and descending the steps to the waterfall.

The former Forest Service experimented with a kauri timber plantation here, but this forest is now protected. These kauri will live a full and un-harvested life.

1 hour loop from Akapoua Campsite.

Bush's Beach Track 10

A local favourite, get away from it all and have a swim at this gorgeous beach.

30 minutes one way from the Kaiaraara Hut.



First flights

The world's first regular airmail service began between the Barrier and Auckland in 1897, using pigeons.

The pigeon-gram service started at Okupu, and was later also established at Port FitzRoy and Whangaparapara. Birds took it easy on the weekly steamer to the Barrier and flew back to Auckland with messages written on 'flimsies' attached to their legs.

Two rival pigeon-gram companies were soon in business. Their stamps are very sought after.

The beautiful birds were made redundant when the first telegraph cable was laid to Barrier in 1908. Apparently the cable was more reliable.



The sheltered harbour is ideal for kayak trips.

Underwater views

As with most Aotea harbours, Port FitzRoy has beautiful clear water. It's worth exploring underwater.

Dive tanks can be filled at Port FitzRoy, too.

Motu Kaikoura tracks 6

Got a boat? Start at Motu Kaikoura wharf on the south side, and head northwards across the island to check out World War II bunkers at Bradshaw Cove. Good views of the narrow Man O' War Passage as you pass the airfield.

A pest-eradication project is underway on this island, which is open to public access. A new track around the island has been established, opening up the whole island for walkers.

Entire circumference: 16 hrs.



Rope swing, Motu Kaikoura. Photo: Kym Tremain.



Kauri is making a comeback after extensive logging.

Photo: www.BENisLAND.co.nz

Future bush

A lot has happened since European settlers stripped these hills of forest. Major replanting and pest control programmes are under way. All Department of Conservation land on the island became the Aotea Conservation Park in April 2015.

Glenfern Sanctuary walk

Inspirational, in a word. Visitors can walk among more than 15,000 planted native trees, in a revegetation haven with a predator-proof fence.

Glenfern Sanctuary offers guided tours by prior arrangement. Phone 09 429 0091.

Allow 2 - 3 hours.

Coopers Castle walk 7

This is big and challenging, with some steep sections and rugged tracks. Best option is to walk up from the Aotea Road carpark to the summit and come back the same way.
4 hours return.



Local wildlife features in the school bus stops on the island.

Forest Road

A 13km long unsealed road (closed to vehicles) that follows exposed ridgelines and some deep gullies. Great for mountain bikes - a Grade 3 ride. Start at the Kaiaraara Bay car park going south. You can get all the way to Whangaparapara on this track.

2 hours by bike, 4-5 hours walking (one way).



Cycling the Forest Road. Photo: GBI Eco experiences.

Okiwi Park 8

You can keep walking down Aotea Road to Okiwi, a rural community. There's a lovely shady domain just north of the school there, on the Mabey Road to Whangapoua Beach. A perfect picnic spot, with a BBQ. The local primary school has a close bond with this park, which has rich bird life, so look out for their special messages.

Okiwi Park circuit: 30-40 minutes.

Want more? Shorts and long walks

The Aotea Track is a beautiful three-day walk through the heart of the island, all on Department of Conservation land. Or you can try the shorter walks shown on the AKL Paths website, such as the stroll at Okiwi.



Maps produced with support from the Ngāti Rehua Ngātiwai ki Aotea Trust Board.

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