

Driving times from Claris

- Tryphena - 20 minutes
- Okupu -15 minutes
- Whangaparapara - 20 minutes
- Awana - 10 minutes
- Harataonga - 30 minutes
- Okiwi - 40 minutes
- Port FitzRoy - 50 minutes
- Mabey Road end - 60 minutes

This map is not suitable to use as a walking map. Please refer to the Auckland Council Discovery Maps, the Department of Conservation track brochures (available from local Information Centres) and doc.govt.nz for detailed information about local walkways and tracks.

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.

Aotea Great Barrier Island

Driving map

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.

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.
- Grade 4. Advanced**
A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and difficult obstacles to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.

Take care swimming at the eastern beaches. There are serious swells and rips all along this coast and Great Barrier has no lifeguards.



Key

- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Beach
- Dog off leash area
- Public walking/ tramping track
- Mountain bike trail (also tramping track) See grade description text box
- Information
- Shop/store
- Camping
- Ferry
- Postal service
- School
- Public toilets
- Art, craft gallery
- Campervan site
- Air strip
- Medical centre
- Golf
- Cafe
- Heritage site
- Dumping station
- Boat ramp
- Fishing
- Tennis court
- Restaurant/ bar
- Cemetery
- Recycling
- 4WD only
- Ship wreck
- Playground
- Barbecue
- Scenic site
- Refuse transfer
- Petrol/ diesel
- Surf break

Places of Interest and landmarks

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Cape Barrier lookout | 9 Harataonga Bay |
| 2 Tryphena Bay area | 10 Windy Canyon |
| 3 Station Rock lookout | 11 Okiwi/Harataonga track lookout |
| 4 Medlands Beach | 12 Port FitzRoy Village and walks |
| 5 Okupu Bay and Iona Mine | 13 Karaka Bay, Hillary Outdoors Education Centre, Orama Oasis |
| 6 Kaitoke Hot Springs | 14 Kawa Marae |
| 7 Whangaparapara historic sites | 15 Motairehe Marae |
| 8 Awana Bay | 16 SS Wairarapa graves, Whangapoua Bay |

Drive safely: Great Barrier's roads are not wide and never straight. Slow down and look out for pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles.

Find out more: phone 09 301 0101 or visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz



A world of its own

Aotea Great Barrier Island is a world apart from Auckland City - or any city for that matter.

It’s the environment that most New Zealanders long for. Aotea is all about relaxation, renewal and regeneration. There’s simply no need to rush anywhere on the Barrier. You can’t help noticing this as soon as you venture out - no highways here. Just chill out and breathe.

Please take care, drive carefully, and trust the signs when they say ‘4WD only’. They mean it.



The main centres

The main areas you are likely to see while cruising the island are:

Claris - the main facilities

The main airport and centre of most things, Claris has the police station, council offices and the health centre. It would be the capital if Aotea was a country.

This is where incoming aircraft passengers pick up rental cars, stock up on supplies, post a letter or take in the art gallery and museum. It’s a hub for accommodation, food and nightlife as well.

After that, the rest of Aotea Great Barrier Island beckons. But before you hit the road, make sure you check with the GB i-Site Claris Airport. They can tell you the opening times (and location) of cafes, eateries and lodges, as some places are not open all year round.



Claris has most of the island’s public facilities.

Port FitzRoy - bays, boats and bush

Sheltered Port FitzRoy Harbour ¹² is best explored by boat. There are kayaks for hire at the Hillary Outdoors Education Centre at Karaka Bay ¹³ and at Glenfern Sanctuary.

But there is more - a charming village where you can shop, post a letter or access the library and information centre, eat at the Boat Club (site of the world famous annual mussel fest) or set off on a walk. Tracks for all levels of fitness start from the village.

Some Port FitzRoy highlights are listed in the ‘Must Do’ activities (right).

While there, book a guided tour through Glenfern Sanctuary, and see what a New Zealand forest should be like. It’s an inspiration, and only a minute’s drive from Port FitzRoy.



The annual Wharf to Wharf running and cycling race is a popular fundraiser for Kaitoke Primary School.
Photo: Geoff Woodhouse.

Tryphena - civilisation, Barrier style

² The first port of call for many people coming by ferry. First rules, put your watch in the glove box and toss away the events diary of your otherwise hectic life. Take a deep breath. You’ve arrived.

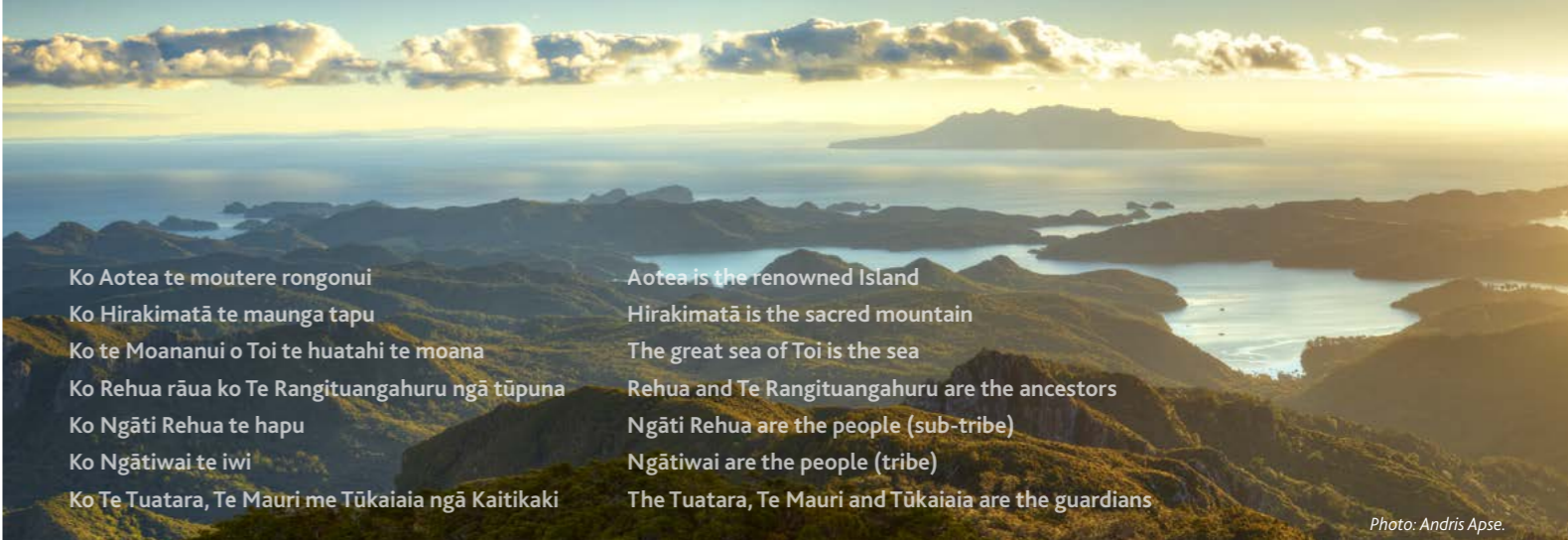
Take it easy on the coastal road and enjoy lovely beaches, good eateries and artist studios.

Cape Barrier Road ¹ leads you to some fine views. But no rush, remember. Likewise along Pūriri Bay Road and Schooner Bay Road.

Look for seabirds, schools of fish, dolphins and Brydes whales in and around the harbour.



Pou (Māori marker) along the road to Kawa and Motairehe Marae.



Ko Aotea te mouere rongonui
Ko Hirakimatā te maunga tapu
Ko te Moananui o Toi te huatahi te moana
Ko Rehua rāua ko Te Rangitūangahuru ngā tūpuna
Ko Ngāti Rehua te hapu
Ko Ngātiwai te iwi
Ko Te Tuatara, Te Mauri me Tūkaiaia ngā Kaitikaki

Aotea is the renowned Island
Hirakimatā is the sacred mountain
The great sea of Toi is the sea
Rehua and Te Rangitūangahuru are the ancestors
Ngāti Rehua are the people (sub-tribe)
Ngātiwai are the people (tribe)
The Tuatara, Te Mauri and Tūkaiaia are the guardians

Photo: Andris Apse.

Must Do activities

OK, what to do when faced with so much choice? Here’s a short list.

Harataonga Bay ⁹ Possibly the most beautiful campsite in the world. With lovely historic trees, and a beach to die for. There’s a 1 hour loop walk, or a longer coastal track to Okiwi.

Medlands Beach ⁴ The ultimate white sand surf beach, with rocks and a wee island to gaze upon. A perfect spot for a stroll, holding hands...

Okupu Bay and Iona mine ⁵ Giant magic pōhutukawa trees, a picnic heaven, and a drive across historic bridges to a lovely jetty. Stop at the Iona mine on the way down to Okupu.



Many western beaches are lined with pōhutukawa.
Photo: John Kjargaard.

Port FitzRoy ¹² Every Auckland boatie’s favourite landfall, and the best harbour anywhere. Sit and watch things happen (or not), explore the local walks. Find out what’s on offer at the information office next to the local shop.

Tryphena ² An easy coastal road takes in top views, waterfront accommodation, stores and cafes. If you slow down to appropriate Barrier speed, you could lose a lovely day right here.

Whangaparapara ⁷ Where the history of Barrier is alive, and your imagination is engaged. A place worth loitering at, a wharf where time ticks slowly, and some great short walks.

Windy Canyon ¹⁰ The kind of lookout that leaves you gasping for superlatives. Views to the far side of the world. Only 15 minutes walk one way.

Okiwi Park - A charming picnic spot, full of birds, and with a special relationship to the neighbouring primary school.

Whaler’s Lookout ¹ Look across the Colville Channel to the Coromandel, and maybe spy a whale. A fine meditation spot. Two hours return walk.

History

On the road to, and in the quiet bay of Whangaparapara, ⁷ you’ll be surprised at the scale of previous industry on the Barrier - gold mining, kauri felling and whaling. Now mere remnants remain, but tantalising tales still simmer in the air. The tangata whenua (original Māori settlers) had the right idea - protecting the area with a number of fortified Pā. But it was a slow and peaceful place even with the trade in obsidian, a valuable commodity.

Whaling stopped here in the 1960s, and the remains of the whaling station can be seen across Whangaparapara Bay.

Also on that shore was a huge timber mill and wharf, connected to the forest with tramlines. Only the foundation piles are there now. The island was a source of beautiful kauri timber.

A short-lived gold rush happened, as well as copper mining. A surprising early export was honey - shipped to Europe in the 1880s.

Barrier has also had its share of famous shipwrecks. ¹⁶

This is just a hint at the Aotea Great Barrier’s rich history. Now the island mostly exports good memories and relaxed visitors...



The SS Wairarapa sunk off Great Barrier, 1894. Photo: Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, 581-6927.

Toi: Art and culture

Aotea Art Gallery at Claris shows the varied work of local artists, and is well worth visiting.

Elsewhere you may also find other art studios and craftspeople, and even an ‘honesty box’ gallery with no-one around - just take your painting and leave your money (Rosalie Bay Road). Only on the Barrier...

The Milk, Honey & Grains Museum just south of Claris is a charming stop, that breaks all the rules of ordinary museums - yet will leave you enchanted, entertained and informed.

For more culture, history and stories, talk to your accommodation hosts - or check with one of the information offices.

Hīkoi: Venturing out

The best short walks must end in a reward, right? Any beach, any wharf is lovely – see the Must Do’s on the left.

And venturing further, try the stroll to Kaitoke Hot Springs ⁶ off the Whangaparapara road.

A meander along lonely Whangapoua Beach ¹⁶ is to experience calmness and quietude. And to reflect on the fate of those who died in the 1894 wreck of the SS Wairarapa. Head out to Kawa (in Katherine Bay) to see more graves from this tragedy. If you’re lucky, local Māori will tell you of their ancestors’ role in the rescue.

Haerenga: For the fit

If you have the time and are keen on a big adventure, consider the three day Department of Conservation (DOC) Aotea Track starting near the Kaitoke Hot Pools, through the forested heart of the island. For any serious walking on Aotea Great Barrier Island, please get the proper hiking maps produced by DOC – available at island info centres. Don’t use this map for hiking.

Kaitiaki: Wildlife

Animals are significant to Māori, often viewed as kaitiaki or guardians of people and places.

Aotea has the biggest population of pāteke (brown teal, a rare native duck), plenty of noisy, cheeky kākā parrots, and many other birds and lizards. We also have one of the few nesting places for tāiko (black petrels) - spectacular seabirds that roam as far as Australia and Ecuador.

The waters around Great Barrier abound in dolphins and Brydes whales. Great Barrier Island is fortunate not to have pest ferrets, hedgehogs, Norway rats, possums, stoats or weasels - but we do have a vast number of kiore (Polynesian rats) ship rats and feral cats filling the gap.

Help us protect our biodiversity. Do whatever you can not to import pests. Clean your footwear, equipment and bike tyres to stop the spread of kauri dieback disease. Stay on tracks and boardwalks and heed the signs.



Great views on the Harataonga Track, near Okiwi.
Photo: Ben Island.