

Embarking on a campervan journey allows you to unlock the freedom of the open road, providing an unparalleled opportunity to discover hidden gems and picturesque landscapes. In this blog, we'll take you on an unforgettable adventure from Auckland to Cape Reinga, exploring some of Northland's most stunning coastal destinations. So pack your bags, hop into your campervan, and get ready to experience the beauty of New Zealand's North Island.

Heading up the East Coast to Cape Reinga

Auckland:

As the starting point of your journey, Auckland offers a vibrant blend of urban delights and natural wonders. Take the time to explore its iconic landmarks like the Sky Tower and Auckland Harbour Bridge. If you're a nature enthusiast, head to the nearby Waitakere Ranges for breathtaking rainforests, waterfalls, and scenic hiking trails.

Orewa:

Just a short drive north of Auckland lies the seaside town of Orewa. With its beautiful sandy beach and a bustling town center, it's an ideal spot to relax and enjoy water activities like swimming, kayaking, or paddleboarding. Take a leisurely stroll along the Orewa Estuary Walkway or indulge in delicious local cuisine at one of the beachfront eateries. All within short walking distance of Orewa Campground. Oliver's Cafe for your much needed coffee stop.

Sullivan's Bay:

Continue your journey towards the stunning Sullivan's Bay, located within the Mahurangi Regional Park. This secluded bay offers pristine white sands, crystal-clear waters, and a peaceful atmosphere. It's an ideal spot for camping, beachcombing, picnicking, and swimming. Take a moment to immerse yourself in the natural beauty of the park's native forests and coastal landscapes.

Kaiwaka and Langs Beach:

Heading further north, you'll reach the charming town of Kaiwaka. While it may be small, it's known for its friendly locals and cozy cafes. Just a short drive away lies Langs Beach, a hidden gem with its golden sands and azure waters. Spend a day unwinding on the beach, exploring the nearby caves, or embarking on coastal walks to fully appreciate this coastal paradise.

Waipu Cove and Uretiti Beach:

As your campervan adventure continues, make a stop at Waipu Cove. This quaint seaside village is famous for its surf breaks and family-friendly atmosphere. Enjoy a swim, try your hand at paddleboarding, or simply bask in the sun. A short distance away, Uretiti Beach offers a scenic camping spot with stunning sand dunes and breathtaking sunsets. Feoh Coffee in Waipu is a must-visit destination for coffee enthusiasts.

Waipu Caves:

Waipu Caves are captivating limestone caves near Waipu, New Zealand, featuring stunning stalactite and stalagmite formations. The caves also showcase a magical glowworm display, creating a surreal and enchanting experience. Waipu Caves are not developed for tourism with extensive facilities. They are more of a natural attraction, so visitors should come prepared with appropriate footwear, a flashlight, and a sense of adventure.

Piroa Waterfall:

Piroa Waterfall is a picturesque waterfall located near Waipu, New Zealand. Surrounded by lush greenery and native bush, it offers a serene and refreshing setting. A short hike through the forest leads to the waterfall, where visitors can relax and enjoy the captivating cascade of water.

Whangarei:

Venture inland for a short detour to Whangarei, a vibrant city nestled between hills and a picturesque harbour. Explore the town's vibrant art scene at the Quarry Arts Centre or visit the renowned Whangarei Falls, where you can take a refreshing dip or go for a bushwalk in the surrounding Pukenui Forest. Don't miss the opportunity to sample fresh local seafood at the marina or indulge in some retail therapy in the city center.

Oakura Beach and Ohawini Beach:

Continuing your coastal journey, visit Oakura Beach and Ohawini Beach, both renowned for their untouched beauty and serene surroundings. These off-the-beaten-path destinations offer a chance to unwind, explore rock pools, and enjoy beachfront camping.

Helena Bay Cafe:

A Culinary Delight Our first stop on this campervan expedition is Helena Bay Cafe, nestled on the Northland coastline. This charming café is known not only for its breathtaking ocean views but also for its delectable menu.

Russell:

From here, drive on to Russell, one of New Zealand's earliest European settlements. Immerse yourself in the rich history of the town, visit the Pompallier Mission and Printery, and take a stroll along the waterfront to soak up the charming ambiance. Indulge in fresh seafood at one of the local restaurants and enjoy the picturesque views across the bay.

While in Russell, make your way to the picturesque Long Beach, a true gem awaiting discovery. Situated near Russell, Long Beach offers a secluded and idyllic retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life. As you arrive at this hidden paradise, the expansive stretch of golden sand and crystal-clear waters will leave you in awe.

After exploring Russell, hop back on the ferry to Opuia, a small seaside village and popular port for sailing enthusiasts. Take a stroll along the marina and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere before continuing your journey.

Paihia:

Next, head to Paihia, a vibrant and bustling town located in the heart of the Bay of Islands. Paihia serves as a gateway to the region's stunning islands, marine reserves, and abundant wildlife. Embark on a dolphin-watching cruise, go kayaking in the pristine waters, or take a scenic hike to the Haruru Falls. Don't miss the opportunity to visit the historic Waitangi Treaty Grounds, where the treaty between the British Crown and Māori chiefs was signed.

From Paihia, make your way to Kerikeri, known for its rich history, beautiful orchards, and charming cafes. Explore the Kerikeri Basin, home to New Zealand's oldest stone building, the Kerikeri Mission House, and the iconic Rainbow Falls. Indulge in local produce at the Kerikeri Farmers' Market and learn about the region's significant role in New Zealand's early settlement. Don't miss the opportunity to visit the Makana Chocolate Factory and indulge in delectable handmade chocolates. Third Wheel Cafe is a not to be missed coffee stop.

Matauri Bay:

Continuing your journey, head towards Matauri Bay, a hidden paradise renowned for its stunning sandy beaches and clear turquoise waters. Snorkel or dive the famous Rainbow Warrior wreck, a sunken Greenpeace vessel turned vibrant marine habitat. Take in the breathtaking coastal scenery and enjoy a relaxing beachside picnic.

Te Ngaere:

Venture to Te Ngaere, a tranquil coastal destination nestled in nature's embrace. This secluded area offers pristine beaches, rugged cliffs, and lush greenery. Take a leisurely stroll along the shoreline, bask in the serenity, and embrace the natural beauty of the surroundings. It's an ideal spot for picnicking, birdwatching, and connecting with nature.

Whangaroa:

As you continue your journey, make a stop at Whangaroa, a picturesque harbor town renowned for its stunning natural beauty. The area is known for its excellent fishing and boating opportunities. The Whangaroa Holiday Park is a convenient campground option, providing powered sites, communal facilities, and access to the waterfront.

Matai Bay:

Next, venture towards Matai Bay, a hidden gem with pristine white sands and crystal-clear waters. It's an ideal spot for swimming, snorkeling, and beachcombing. The Matai Bay Campground offers a tranquil setting for camping, nestled amidst native bush and just a short walk from the beach.

Taipa:

Continuing along the journey, Taipa is a vibrant coastal town with a beautiful beach and a range of recreational activities. Visit the Taipa Bay Resort Campground, which offers powered sites, modern facilities, and stunning ocean views. Enjoy beach walks, water sports, and nearby attractions like the historic Mangonui Village.

Ahipara:

A popular destination for surfers, known for its long stretches of sandy beaches and impressive surf breaks. The Ahipara Holiday Park is an excellent choice for camping, providing powered sites, BBQ areas, and easy access to the beach. Take time to enjoy the surf, explore the sand dunes, or go horseback riding along the coast.

Cape Reinga:

Where the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean meet, and the iconic Cape Reinga Lighthouse stands tall. This significant cultural and natural site offers stunning panoramic views. While camping is not available at Cape Reinga itself, there are several campgrounds in nearby areas, such as Houhora Heads Holiday Park and Spirits Bay Camping Ground.

Heading back to Auckland down the west coast.

Ninety Mile Beach:

As you head south, consider driving along the famous Ninety Mile Beach, a stunning stretch of pristine coastline. While camping is not permitted directly on the beach, you can find campgrounds in nearby towns such as Ahipara and Kaitaia.

Waipoua Forest:

Next, make a stop at Waipoua Forest, home to ancient kauri trees and rich Maori heritage. Explore the enchanting forest trails and pay a visit to Tāne Mahuta, the largest known kauri tree in New Zealand. The Waipoua Forest Camping Ground is a convenient option for camping, providing facilities amidst the serene forest surroundings.

Opononi and Hokianga Harbour:

Travel further south to the picturesque Opononi and the stunning Hokianga Harbour. Enjoy stunning views of sand dunes and take a stroll along the waterfront. The Opononi Holiday Park offers campervan sites, amenities, and proximity to the beach.

Baylys Beach:

Continuing your journey, make a stop at Baylys Beach, a beautiful coastal spot known for its long stretches of sandy shores. Enjoy beach walks, surf the waves, or simply relax and soak up the sun. The Baylys Beach Holiday Park offers powered sites, facilities, and beach access.

Muriwai Beach:

As you approach Auckland, visit Muriwai Beach, known for its rugged black sand and impressive gannet colony. Take a walk along the beach, watch the surfers, and observe the gannets nesting on the cliffs. The Muriwai Beach Motor Camp provides camping facilities near the beach.

Piha:

After exploring Muriwai Beach, continue your journey south to Piha, a must-visit destination for nature and beach enthusiasts. Piha Beach is famous for its dramatic beauty, with its black sand contrasting against the lush surrounding rainforest and rugged cliffs. It's a surfer's paradise, attracting wave riders from around the world. Take a stroll along the beach, admire the iconic Lion Rock formation, and if conditions permit, enjoy a refreshing swim or surf. The Piha Domain Campground offers camping facilities right next to the beach, allowing you to fully immerse yourself in the tranquil coastal ambiance.

Throughout your campervan journey, be sure to take in the breathtaking scenery, immerse yourself in the rich Maori culture, and savour the delicious local cuisine. The Northland region is filled with natural wonders and unique experiences, making this campervan trip from Te Ngaere to Cape Reinga an unforgettable adventure.