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FEEL
THE BEATING HEART OF
NEW ZEALAND

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KIA ORA

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Rotorua’s unique experiences will capture your heart and elevate your soul.

Rotorua is the birthplace of New Zealand tourism with the famed pink and white terraces considered one of the eight wonders of the natural world.

They were reclaimed by Mount Tarawera when it erupted late in the 19th century but Rotorua has gone on to thrive as a tourism destination.

Rotorua is the heart of New Zealand tourism; it is the place where you can discover authentic culture and explore physical pursuits that will leave you both thrilled and inspired.
Rotorua allows you to indulge in unique spa therapies, soak up the best of New Zealand’s fascinating Māori culture, explore the great outdoors, satisfy your inner adrenalin junkie, visit geothermal wonderlands, wildlife attractions, museums, parks and much more.

The 16 sparkling lakes in the region are ideal for fishing, sailing and bathing in lake-edge thermal hot pools, whilst magnificent stands of native and exotic trees in Whakarewarewa Forest create an awe-inspiring setting to experience the world-class mountain bike trails.

Rotorua is also part of the Volcanic Zone and its array of geothermal features – volcanic crater lakes, spouting geysers, bubbling mud pools, hissing fumaroles and colourful sinter terraces – are sure to impress.

There are a host of family activities including the sheep show at Agrodome, lugging down Mt Ngongotaha with Skyline Rotorua and spotting a Kiwi at Rainbow Springs, as well as world first activities including the Zorb or OGO, the Shweeb, Sledging and Railcruising.
If you’re after a quiet, relaxing time, then being pampered at one of the region’s famous spas will entice you. Traditional Māori treatments and thermal mud therapies will leave you feeling brand new at Wai Ora Day Spa and outdoor mineral pools amid native bush with a view over Lake Rotorua can be found at Polynesian Spa, consistently voted one of the world’s top 10 spas by Condé Nast Magazine.
Experience New Zealand’s only mud baths at Hell’s Gate which have been likened to playing in silk with curative and invigorating properties and at Wai Ora Day Spa pamper yourself with a traditional Māori Miri Miri massage and rejuvenating mud therapies.

QE Health is renowned for its balneotherapy (mineralised water healing) of conditions like arthritis and at Polynesian Spa you can experience 26 mineral hot pools, some of which have alkaline water from the Rachel Springs which is good for the skin, while acidic water from the radium hot spring is beneficial for tired muscles, aches and pains, arthritis and rheumatism.

Overlooking native forest scenery and Lake Rotorua, Polynesian Spa is consistently voted one of the world’s top 10 spas by Condé Nast magazine. Here you can also experience contemporary treatments such as Aix therapies which combines massage with jets of geothermal water for a unique and relaxing therapy.

Often called “The Great Spa of the South Pacific,” Rotorua’s geothermal water, mineral-enriched muds, Māori massage and indigenous herbs play a special role in local spa culture.
FEEL THE EARTH’S POWER

The faint scent of sulphur in the air and escaping curls of steam are the first hints of the region’s dramatic geothermal character when entering Rotorua.

Part of the Volcanic Zone, a geothermal field extending from White Island off the Bay of Plenty coast to Mt Ruapehu far to the south, Rotorua’s array of geothermal features – volcanic crater lakes, spouting geysers, bubbling mud pools, hissing fumaroles and colourful sinter terraces – are sure to impress.

This volcanic activity has drawn visitors to Rotorua since the 1800s and remains a huge draw card at spectacular thermal parks such as Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland – well known for its colourful waters and the famed Champagne Pool; Te Puia, where the Pohutu Geyser is the undisputed star of Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley erupting up to 20 plus times a day to heights of 30 metres; Hells Gate is New Zealand’s most active geothermal reserve renowned for its mud baths, while Waimangu Volcanic Valley is the youngest geothermal eco-system in the world with the largest hot water spring (3.8 hectares) called Frying Pan Lakes.

In addition to the power of imposing geysers, the beauty of porous silica fashioned into sinter terraces and everything else in between that captures the imagination of photographers worldwide, there are also rejuvenating spa treatments based on thermal mud and water as well as the opportunity to eat food cooked by geothermal steam or boiling water.
FEEL THE SPIRIT
MANAAKITANGA

Offering genuine warmth of welcome and hospitality (manaakitanga) is something that the Te Arawa Māori have been providing visitors to the Rotorua region for well over 150 years.

Local Māori share their culture, history, music, art, language, and even their homes. Whether it’s an encounter with a Māori guide, a hongi greeting, talking to a carver or weaver, eating indigenous food, experiencing traditional massage, hearing age-old stories, or attempting a few words in Te Reo; visitors will be enriched by the experience.

A hangi (food cooked in an earth oven) and concert is the most popular way to experience authentic Māori culture. Te Puia - The New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, set in the magnificent Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley is where you can also watch wood carvers and flax weavers keeping their art alive, or visit Whakarewarewa, The Living Thermal Village.

Visitors can also discover the history behind rugby’s famous haka Kamate Kamate and learn the words, actions and posture to perform it at Haka World.
FEEL PARADISE

The 16 sparkling lakes dotted around Rotorua makes the area an aquatic paradise.

Take it all in while relaxing in a lake edge thermal hot pool or explore the lakes at length discovering glow worm caves and fresh water springs by kayak or on a stand up paddle board.

Cruise Lake Rotorua on a traditional paddle steamer – the Lakeland Queen, or explore Lake Rotoiti with Pure Cruise on their sleek 53ft luxury catamaran ‘Tiua’, that you can help sail. For a family fun option, hop on board an amphibious WWII landing craft to experience the lakes with Rotorua Duck Tours.

The region is also a fisherman’s dream with trophy trout to be had year round on the lakes, rivers and streams.

For fast-paced adventures, try white water sledging or rafting the Grade 5 Kaituna River with 14 rapids and the world’s highest commercially raftable waterfall at 7m high with any one of Rotorua’s world class rafting companies such as Kaitiaki, River Rats, Raftabout, Rotorua Rafting, Wet’n’Wild, Kaituna Cascades or Multi-Day Adventures.

If it is a luxury experience you are after, take a scenic helicopter flight with HeliPro to Mt Tarawera or a floatplane with Volcanic Air Safaris from Lake Rotorua to White Island.
FAMILY FUN

Stop in at Rainbow Springs for an intimate peek at New Zealand’s iconic kiwi and to learn about New Zealand’s ecological evolution on its log flume ride ‘The Big Splash’.

More daring families will love the chance to roll downhill in a plastic globe at Zorb or OGO, to hurtle down Mt Ngongotaha in a Luge cart at Skyline Rotorua, or to experience world-first adventure activities at Agroventures like the Shweeb and Freefall Xtreme. You can also take a walk or a mountain bike ride in Rotorua’s renowned Whakarewarewa forest.

Other fun options in the city include Rotorua Duck Tours, Paradise Valley Springs, aMAZEme, Wingspan Birds of Prey, Putt Putt Mini Golf, horse trekking, the Polynesian Spa and the Agrodome. Or you could simply splash around with the kids in an inviting lake and engage the whole family in a game of beach cricket, ending the day with a lakeside barbeque.
TASTE ROTORUA

Traditional hangi experiences where food is cooked in an earth oven are offered at various cultural attractions. Mokoia Restaurant is New Zealand’s only fine dining restaurant specialising in indigenous herbs and spices.

The Kuirau Park Saturday Farmers Market is a great place to pick up fresh produce and every Thursday night, central Rotorua comes alive with a market showcasing gourmet foods, boutique beers, art, fashion, homewares and local performers. If you’d rather someone else did the cooking, Rotorua’s vibrant dining strip along Tutanekai Street – known as ‘Eat Streat’, boasts plenty of family restaurants and cafes serving a colourful array of exotic and traditional dishes. The country’s first and only organic lodge restaurant is Le Manoir at Hamurana Lodge and Bistro 1284 is another of Rotorua’s longstanding food heroes.

If coffee is key head to cafés such as Zippy Central, Lime Cafeteria, Picnic Café, The Library Store, Third Place, Capers Epicurean or Fat Dog.

Rotorua is also home to New Zealand’s best pies at Gold Star Bakery and Oppies, which won the country’s top chip shop in 2011.
FEEL THE THRILL

From jet boating to the human-powered Shweeb monorail, Kiwi’s are an innovative bunch who also invented bungy jumping, the luge, the Zorb or OGO, body flying, the Swoop and white water sledging – all of which can be experienced in Rotorua.

Daredevils can race their friends down Mt Ngongotaha on a Luge cart or take the Sky Swing at Skyline Rotorua and at nearby Zorb or OGO, roll down specially designed hill tracks inside a large see-through inflatable globe. Freefall Xtreme at Agroventures is an amazing experience with a tunnel creating wind speeds of up to 220km/hour making your body fly – the only place you can do so in the Southern Hemisphere.

Skydiving with NZONE is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Unsurpassed views over Rotorua’s 16 lakes, geothermal activity, forests, Mt Ruapehu and White Island make the jump worth braving. Choose from 9000, 12,000 or 15,000ft.

White water rafting has also never been more exhilarating than on the Kaituna River with the opportunity to raft over the world’s highest commercially rafted waterfall at 7m high. Any stay in Rotorua will be an endless adventure.
FEEL THE BUZZ

Mountainbikers from across the country and around the globe agree mountain biking doesn’t come any better, with free access to more than 130km of scenic, continually evolving forest trails.

The Whakarewarewa forest’s unbeatable blend of riding surfaces, topography and scenery cater for all skill and fitness levels with more than 60 trails ranging from Grades 2 (beginner) through to Grade 6 (expert) levels.

Just 20 minutes’ drive north of Rotorua you’ll find Off Road NZ, home to New Zealand’s newest and longest A-rated KartSport circuit. The squeal of tyres, the G-forces in hairpin bends and the ground rush at speeds of up to 100kph in the 390cc 4-stroke French Sodi karts offers a fantastic adrenalin buzz and there is also the best self-drive, off road vehicle experiences around on offer. Quad biking tours are another great thrill – take on mud and waterholes on an exhilarating tour through native bush.

Want a tailored adventure?
Rotorua has specialists that offer exclusive packages in varying lengths designed just for you. Whether it is mountain biking, rafting, rock climbing, hiking or kayaking, they can make it happen. Expert guides and unforgettable adventures are guaranteed.
FEEL AT HOME

Many of Rotorua’s accommodation options are within a short walk of the heart of the city including international hotels, motels, B&Bs and backpackers. Rotorua’s famous ‘motel mile’ on Fenton Street places a myriad of choice at your feet.

Rotorua is home to a large range of luxury accommodation options from speciality, 5-star luxury lodges offering lavish rooms and gourmet dining, through to boutique bed and breakfasts which give guests the opportunity to push off the lakes edge in a kayak just moments from their room.

We also cater for those more budget-conscious visitors, with a range of backpackers accommodation and holiday parks, all within proximity of nearby attractions.

Many of Rotorua’s accommodation options come with benefits that become holiday experiences in themselves. For instance a farm stay is a chance to interact and feed farm animals, go trout fishing while camping close to lakes and streams, or bathe in thermal baths at Waikite Valley Thermal Pools camp. A marae stay is also an opportunity to interact with Māori and learn about New Zealand’s indigenous culture firsthand.

It’s easy to find out more about Rotorua’s accommodation options online at: rotoruaNZ.com/accommodation
Ihenga named the lakes Te Rotoiti-kite-a-Ihenga (the small lake seen by Ihenga), and Te Rotorua-nui-a-Kahumatamomoe (the second great lake belonging to Kahumatamomoe).

Over time, the lakes were settled by the descendants of Kahumatamomoe, Ihenga and others from Te Arawa waka, said to have made landfall at Maketu in 1350AD. Drinking water, fertile soil, rich food sources (koura and eels), as well as geothermal waters for bathing and cooking, attracted settlement principally at Ohinemutu and Whakarewarewa.

Rotorua’s European influence dates back to 1830, when a Danish flax trader began doing business in the area, followed by a church missionary five years later. The city’s tourism industry took off in 1870 following a visit from the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Government Gardens is now home to the Rotorua Museum (previously the Bath House opened in 1908), the Gardiner’s Cottage (1899), the Band Rotunda (1900), Prince’s Gate Archway (1901), Te Runanga tearooms (1903), the Croquet Pavilion (1907), and the stunning Blue Baths (1933). City signboards also relate some of the city’s history and offer directions to visitors exploring the city on foot.
Along with stunning floral displays, perfectly manicured gardens and litter free streets, sustainability also has a crucial role to play in Rotorua being perceived as a ‘beautiful’ destination.

However small, what each individual does during a visit to the Rotorua region makes a difference. It is vital that visitors play their part by acting responsibly to preserve and protect the region’s natural environment so that everyone may continue to enjoy the magnificent natural resources and scenic beauty on offer.

Key steps are recycling / disposing of rubbish thoughtfully and not damaging fragile geothermal eco-systems. By choosing to support tourism activities, attractions and businesses that opt to make a difference, visitors make a difference too. Rotorua was the first region in New Zealand to form a Sustainable Tourism Charter group in 2001. Over 60 Rotorua tourism businesses are members, and the Charter has been extended to include all businesses, as they can all influence the city’s sustainability as a destination.
Rotorua is at the heart of the central North Island.

It is only a 2.5 hour drive from Auckland if you want to explore the city with the freedom of your own vehicle or there are daily coaches. Rotorua International Airport offers a twice weekly direct service from Sydney, as well as daily links to Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown. The city is compact and easy to drive around with all visitor attractions, the airport, scenic lookouts and restaurants within 15 minutes drive of the city centre.

The best place to gather information is at the Rotorua i-SITE. There is plenty of parking close by, heaps of information available and the friendly staff will be able to assist you to make the most of your stay.

**Tauranga - Rotorua**

1) State Highway 2/State Highway 33 is the main highway from Tauranga through to Rotorua. Rotorua is well signposted and is 75km away.

2) State Highway 36 known as Pyes Pa Road is a 70km route to Rotorua.

The official tourist information website for Rotorua is rotoruaNZ.com