



SURF **HIGHWAY 45**

**Your guide to the Taranaki
coastline touring route**



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WELCOME TO THE SURF HIGHWAY

Surf Highway 45 is the 105km coastal route connecting New Plymouth **(1)** in the north to Hāwera **(2)** in the south. Between these centres there are dozens of notable places to stop, from surf breaks, beaches, points of historic and cultural interest, scenic spots, and cafés in vibrant and welcoming villages. A journey along the Surf Highway traces the route of generations of surfers, but it offers much more than just surf. The highway weaves through a number of Taranaki stories – the surf, the landscape, the rich history, and the creativity, all the while under the watchful gaze of Taranaki Maunga.

For more information head to
[taranaki.co.nz/visit](https://www.taranaki.co.nz/visit)

RICH IN HISTORY

The history of Taranaki begins with our picture-perfect ancestor Taranaki Maunga and his mythical journey from the Central Plateau (brokenhearted after losing a battle for Mount Pihanga) and includes historic land battles, the birth of the passive resistance movement, and pioneering industrial growth, all of which have contributed to modern-day Taranaki and the many vivid stories we have to tell. These stories are best experienced through the many museums on offer, with the following located on or near Surf Highway 45.



- New Plymouth's waterfront **Puke Ariki (1)** is a museum, library and i-SITE providing information about the city's past and present. A fascinating guided walk is also available – book at the i-SITE, 1 Ariki St, New Plymouth.



- **Tawhiti Museum and Traders & Whalers (3)** has been repeatedly judged one of the country's best museums, and has to be experienced to be believed. 401 Ohangai Rd, just north of Hāwera, check opening hours/days on their website.



- Striding along the Surf Highway as it passes through Ōpunake is a bronze sculpture of legendary New Zealand 1500m runner **Peter Snell (14)**, who was born in the town in 1938.



- **Aotea Utanganui (7)**, the Museum of South Taranaki, tells the stories of the area in central Pātea. 127 Egmont St, Pātea.

LIGHTING THE WAY

The **Cape Egmont Lighthouse (6)**, at the end of Cape Road, Pungarehu marks the western-most point of Taranaki. Built in London, and shipped to New Zealand in 1865, the lighthouse was originally installed on Mana Island near Wellington. In 1881 the tower was carried in sections to Cape Egmont, though its reconstruction was interrupted by the actions of another remarkable Taranaki story, that of nearby Parihaka, birthplace of passive resistance. The people of Parihaka, in protest to the confiscation of their lands, used non-violent protest to delay reconstruction until 40 members of the Armed Constabulary were stationed there to ensure its completion. The lighthouse first beamed out from Taranaki in 1881, and was automated in 1986. The story of the lighthouse is told at the **Historic Cape Light and Museum (5)** located 4km further north at the end of Bayly Road, and open Sat-Sun, 11am-3pm or by appointment.

Cape Road is also home to some of the best examples of a geographic feature unique to Surf Highway 45 – the small rounded hills created by ancient lahars flowing from Taranaki Maunga. These hills are also visible from the Highway, and several still display the earthworks of ancient Māori fortifications.

DROP A LINE

The Surf Highway offers many spots for fishing, including **Lee Breakwater (21)** at Port Taranaki. There are guides and charters for all types of fishing, including beach surf casting or fly-fishing. Contact the i-SITEs to get more information.





THE PERFECT WAVE

The surf coast that gives the highway its name leads to dozens of surf breaks. Almost every road that heads off the highway towards the coast leads to a wave: from gentle sandy beach breaks to waves peeling along rocky points. Surf spots such as **Rocky Rights on Paora Road (31)**, **Stent Road (8)**, the **Kumara Patch (9)**, **Fitzroy Beach (10)**, **Mangahume (27)**, and **Arawhata Road (11)** have become legendary in New Zealand surfing over the decades, while **Kina Road (28)** is synonymous with wave sailing and **East End Beach (12)** is becoming known as a kite surfing destination. The region's surf shops are integral to the story of surfing in Taranaki, and provide everything from custom boards hand-crafted for local conditions, great coffee, expert advice and hire boards and wetsuits. There are shops located all around the coast.

A LITTLE BIT OUT THERE

Surf Highway 45 offers some out-of-the-ordinary adventures. Explore the murals of Ōpunakē, stopping at the classic **Everybody's Theatre (14)** to catch a film. Check the pulse of local creativity at the annual **Ōakura Arts Trail (12)** held over two weekends in spring. **Yarrow's Bakery (22)** in Manaia is a local institution hot bread shop fit to fuel the family. Take a snap of the **Hāwera Water Tower (2)**.

TAKE A WALK

Surf Highway 45 offers a number of short walks to get you out and into the landscape:

- New Plymouth's shared-use **Coastal Walkway (1)** passes artworks, outdoor cafés, surf breaks and a bike park as it traces the city's coastline for 13km. Don't miss Len Lye's iconic Wind Wand sculpture – a teaser to the nearby **Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Len Lye Centre (1)**.
- **Te Rewa Rewa Bridge (4)**, across the Waiwhakaiho River, is a popular destination, as is the nearby Lake Rotomanu and the **Taranaki Cycle Park (30)**, further along the Coastal Walkway towards Bell Block.
- The **Nowell's Lakes Walkway (15)**, on Rifle Range Road, Hāwera, offers a short walk through a growing bush area.
- The 10km **Ōpunake Loop Trail (14)** has numerous access points around the town, and offers it all – clifftop views, historic sites, lookouts and a lake.
- **Stony River (Hangatahua) Walkway (16)** starts at Hickford Place in Ōkato, and offers historic and scenic points of interest over its 3km return journey.
- At low tide, the coastal walk from **Waihi Beach to Ohawe Beach (17)** offers a unique perspective of the coast, from rockpools to old tram rails.
- South of Ōakura is **Lucy's Gully (18)**, with walks through exotic plantings and native forests on the Kaitake Ranges.



THE OCEAN'S POWER

A drive down Timaru or Weld Roads leads to the shipwreck of the **SS Gairloch (19)**, which has been a local landmark for the last century. The ship ran aground on Timaru Reef on 5 January 1903, and has been slowly rusting into the Tasman Sea since. The last vestiges of the hull can still be seen extending from the rock pools just off the coast, and closer inspection of the reef will uncover more parts of the wreck.

While no lives were lost in the grounding of the Gairloch, the crew of the Lizzie Bell, an iron barque bound from Wellington to New South Wales, suffered a far worse fate when she ran aground off the South Taranaki coast on the night of 24 July 1901, when 12 of the 18 crew perished.

A memorial, featuring the ship's anchor (20), which was recovered in the 1960s, can be found on Puketapu Road, 9km south of Ōpunake.



SWIMMING SPOTS

Sheltered beaches between the SH45 surf breaks offer a safe and often secluded place to swim or sunbathe:

- **Fitzroy (10)** is a popular surf beach, patrolled in summer, close to cafés and the Coastal Walkway.
- **East End (12)** is family-friendly with summer patrols and an easy link to the Coastal Walkway.
- **Ōakura (13)** combines safe swimming and summer surf patrols with a relaxed seaside village vibe.
- **Ōpunakē (14)** has a wide sandy beach, a beachfront playground, and is the perfect spot for family fish and chips.
- **Ngāmotu (21)** is a calm harbour beach with gentle water, great for kids and paddling.
- **Kaupokonui (29)** sits at a sheltered river mouth and is a favourite for family swims and picnics.

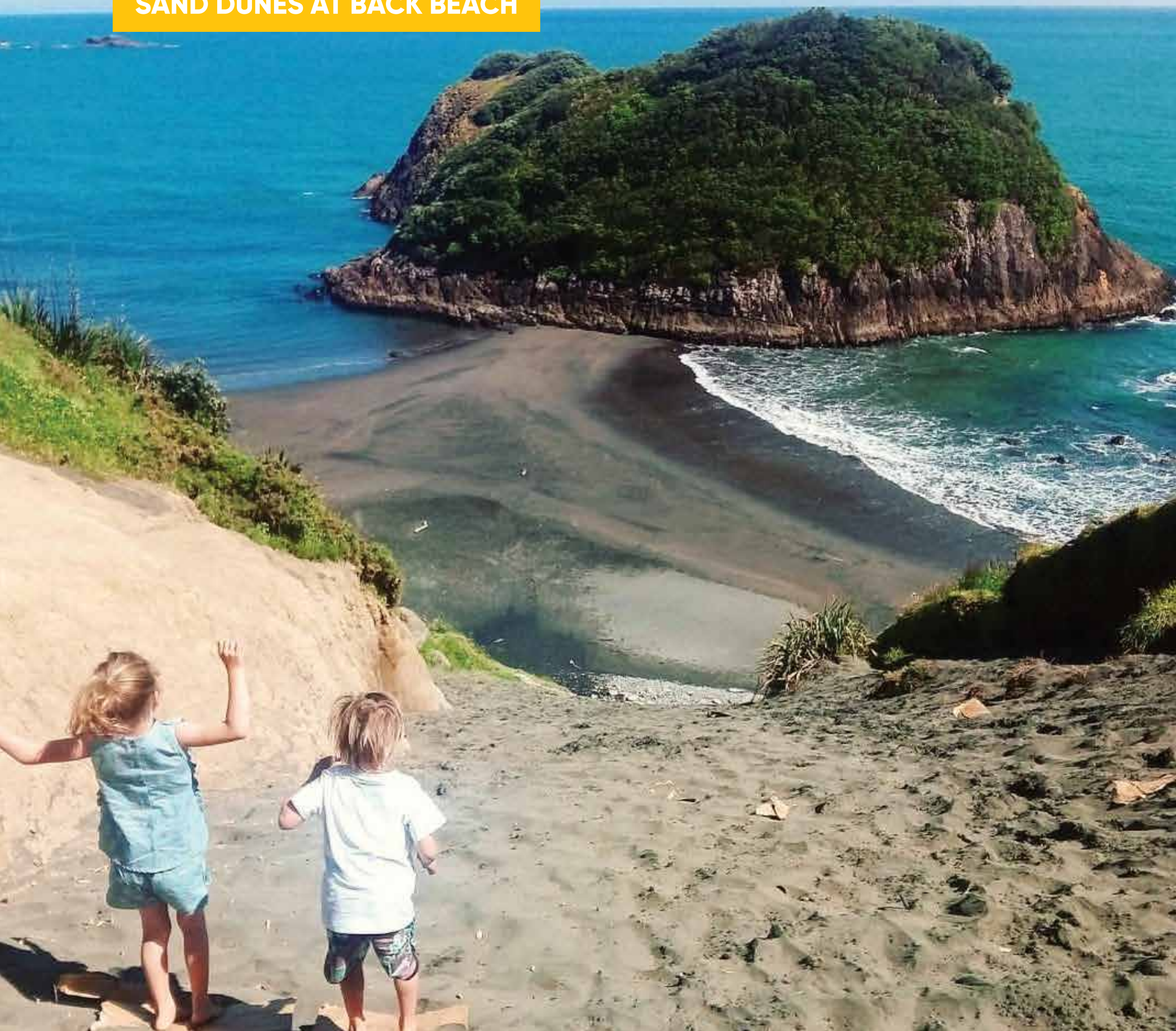


A LEGENDARY LANDSCAPE

At the northern end of the highway stands the lava outcrop of **Paritutu (23)**, and the nearby **Sugar Loaf Islands (23)** (Ngā Motu). Paritutu can be climbed for spectacular views over New Plymouth and the coast, while nearby Back Beach offers many vantage points to watch the sunset over the sugarloaves, catch a wave, or run down the massive black-sand hills.

Taranaki is home to many well-preserved and historically significant pā or battle sites. The immense **Koru Pā (24)** (Surrey Hill Road, Ōakura) was a stronghold for centuries in pre-European times, while **Te Ngutu o te Manu (25)** (Ahipaipa Road, near Skeet Road, Kapuni) saw a pivotal moment in the South Taranaki land wars as the base of revered Māori warrior Titokowaru. Both are easily accessed from the Surf Highway, while **Turuturu Mokai (26)** (Turuturu Road, Hāwera) offers a scale that belies the fact it was created by hand. Along with countless sculpted hilltops around the province, these sites provide an insight into the region's vivid history.

SAND DUNES AT BACK BEACH





GET A TASTE OF TARANAKI

From coffee to fine dining, the Taranaki hospitality scene is legendary. Choose where to eat at [taranaki.co.nz/visit](https://www.taranaki.co.nz/visit)

SURF HIGHWAY 45

HUGE SURF ON SURF HIGHWAY 45



Visitor information, maps, souvenirs, internet facilities, and accommodation, activity and transport bookings for Taranaki and all of New Zealand are available from:

NEW PLYMOUTH ISITE VISITOR CENTRE

Puke Ariki, 1 Ariki Street, New Plymouth

Email: i-site@npdc.govt.nz **Phone:** 06 759 0897

Hours: Monday–Sunday 10.00am–5.00pm

SOUTH TARANAKI ISITE VISITOR CENTRE

121 High Street, Hāwera

Email: visitorinfo@stdc.govt.nz **Phone:** 06 278 8599

Hours: Monday–Friday 8.30am–5.00pm.

Weekends and public holidays 10.00am–3.00pm.

All isites are closed Christmas Day.

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Te Puna Umanga

