

General Information

New Plymouth is the main center of the Taranaki region. It is a bustling city with population around 70,000. The city is renowned for its beautiful parks and gardens (Pukekura being one of the main ones), where cultural events frequently take place. Besides its famous gardens and parks, Pukekura also has a popular waterfront area with a paved multiuse path traversing the coastline.

New Plymouth is considered the northern gateway to the region for those who want to explore Egmont National Park, the natural area surrounding Mt Taranaki. New Plymouth has plenty of accommodations and dining options, making it the perfect base for exploring the national park.

Mt Taranaki (formerly known as Mt Egmont) is the dominating natural feature of the region. This huge cone-like shaped mountain rising straight from the sea level to 8,261 ft/2,518m is one of the most symmetrical volcanic cones in the world. It is rare to see the snow-covered top of Mt Taranaki, because most of the year it is shrouded in clouds; but when the weather allows, the view is simply magnificent.

Total # of Rides Listed: 1

Family Rides: 0

Road Rides: 1

MTB Trails: 0

Bike Path Rides: 0

 Loop Rides: 1

 Out & Back Rides: 0



When to Visit

The best time to visit Taranaki region is during the summer months and early autumn (southern hemisphere), when the maritime weather is calmer and at its warmest. The days are also at their longest, so one can take advantage of exploring the local beaches and/or visiting some of the areas of interest such as Lucy's Gully redwoods grove. If you are planning to visit during December and January, it is advisable that you make reservations for lodging ahead of time.

Climate and Weather

The weather of the Taranaki region is influenced by Mt Taranaki; the summers are generally warm and relatively humid, while winters are mild and wet. The Taranaki region, especially the area surrounding Mt Taranaki, is one of the wettest in New Zealand. The moist winds from the Tasman Sea are trapped by the huge mountain and pushed into freezing heights, where the warm moist air they carry rapidly cools and falls down in form of rain. The average maximum temperature in New Plymouth is 70°F (20.5°C) in January and around is 53°F (11.5°C) in July. The wind, which can be strong at times, blows predominantly from the west.

How to Get There

New Plymouth is well-served by buses. The InnerCity and White Star both operate services from Auckland, Hamilton from the north, and Wanganui, Palmerston North and Wellington from the south. It is best is to check their web sites to find out the latest schedule, prices, and policies for carrying bicycles.

If you are traveling by car, the primary highways to New Plymouth are SH1 and SH3 from the south (from Wellington) and SH3 from the north (from Hamilton and Auckland).

New Plymouth is also served by Air New Zealand Link with direct flights from Auckland, Hamilton, Nelson, Wanganui, and Wellington.

Accommodations

There are plenty of accommodations in New Plymouth and in the small towns surrounding Mt Taranaki such as Hawera, Stratford, Eltham, and Inglewood. They range from campsites, youth hostels and simple motels, to hotels and luxury B&Bs and lodges. Although accommodation choices are plentiful, reservations are recommended during the high season from December to the end of January and on holiday weekends such as the Easter Holiday, etc.

The Roads

The roads around Mt Taranaki are mostly of paved sealed chip surface and can be narrow in places. However, some of the main roads do have a nice shoulder to ride on.

What You Need To Know

New Plymouth is the host to the annual Taranaki Rhododendron Festival each November.

Because of its resemblance to Mount Fuji, Mt Taranaki provided the backdrop for the movie The Last Samurai.

One of New Zealand's premier cycling events, The Yarrows Taranaki Cycle Challenge (previously called the Dutch Mill Taranaki Challenge) is hosted by New Plymouth each January, with up to 2,500 competitive and recreational cyclists participating in the event. The single-day ride circumnavigates Mt Taranaki and covers over 100 miles/160 km.

