

- Journey route
- Gravel road
- Point of interest
- Swimming
- Petrol station
- EV Charging
- Scenic views
- Don't miss
- Photo stop
- Local favourite
- Food
- Cafe
- Shop



Tasman Sea



According to Māori mythology, the two entrance headlands are taniwha named Arai Te Uru in the south, and Niniwa in the north, who guard the harbour entrance.



SS Ventnor
28 October 1902

The Hokianga is known by three names:

- Hokianga Whakapau Karakia - 'Hokianga expend karakia'
- Te Puna o Te Ao Marama - 'the wellspring of moonlight'
- Te Hokianga-nui-a-Kupe - 'the place of Kupe's great return'

Rawene 44KM
Omapere 68KM
Waipoua 99KM

Mitimiti

Red Gateway

Mitimiti Urupa

Te Pouahi - 'the post of fire' is the first landing place of the great Polynesian explorer Kupe, named for the way the light strikes the shore.

Niniwa (Taniwha)

Arai Te Uru (Taniwha)

15 Km

OPONONI & OMAPERE

Manea - Footprints of Kupe

Old Wharf Road

Waiotemarama

Waimamaku

ANCIENT KAURI TRAIL

All over Aotearoa New Zealand, when a tree is felled, thanks is given to Tāne Mahuta for giving up one of his children.

Tāne Mahuta

Waipoua Forest Visitor Centre

↑ Omapere 31KM
↑ Rawene 55KM
↑ Mitimiti 99KM

Hokianga Harbour

Koutu

Pakanae

Motukaraka

Car Ferry

RAWENE

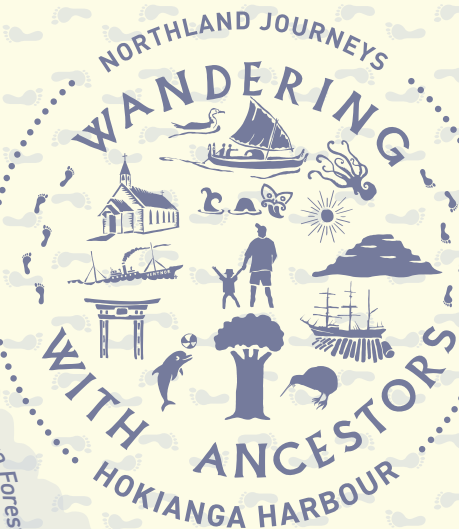
Rawene Cemetery

KOHUKOHU

Enter and leave buildings and property respectfully, closing doors and gates behind you.

TE ARA

Did you know:
In 1900, the busy Kauri milling township of Kohukohu had a population of almost 2,000 people.



WANDERING WITH ANCESTORS

History

Step back in time to wander in the footsteps of our ancestors and discover the stories of the people that call this region home.

The story of the Hokianga goes right back to the arrival of the first Polynesian explorers over 800 years ago. The great navigator Kupe and his crew, guided by the stars and currents, travelled thousands of miles across the Pacific Ocean, eventually arriving in Aotearoa. His journey inspired the great migration, and descendants of his people are the very same people who tell the stories of this area today.

Many years later, the Hokianga also became home to one of New Zealand's most moving stories of connection and community with the sinking of the *SS Ventnor*. Tragically, with the ship sank the remains of almost 500 Chinese goldminers who had died in New Zealand and were being returned home to China. Over the weeks and months following the sinking, the remains began to wash ashore, where they were collected and buried by the tangata whenua (people of the land) Te Roroa and Te Rarawa. The history was passed down from generation to generation, in expectation the Chinese families would return.

In 2007, more than 100 years later, a chance meeting connected the Chinese descendant community with the people of Te Roroa and Te Rarawa and the special bond between the two peoples continues today.

1 **Waipoua Forest Visitors' Centre**
 Outside the Waipoua Forest Visitors' Centre is a memorial plaque in the *Ventnor* Grove presented by the Chinese community to Te Roroa in 2013. People who want to pay their respects in the traditional way can offer incense sticks at the foot of the memorial.

2 **Tāne Mahuta**
 See the legendary Lord of the Forest and learn the story of how Tāne Mahuta brought light to the world by separating his parents – Ranginui Sky Father and Papatūānuku Earth Mother.

3 **Waiotemarama Falls**
 Three walks of varying difficulty start here, the first to the falls, the second to a grove of kauri trees, and the third advanced track to the top of Hauturu.

4 **Waimamaku Beach Road**
 Follow the biggest river system of the Hokianga out to the coast. This area is known for its white sand beaches, rock pools, fishing, and diving. The Waimamaku Coastal Track connects from here to Arai Te Uru Recreation Reserve.

5 **Signal Station Point: Arai Te Uru Reserve**
 The lookout point offers spectacular views of the Hokianga coastline and harbour. The wreck of the *SS Ventnor* lies approximately 15km out to sea in an westerly direction. To the south is Kawerua, where Te Roroa gathered and buried the Chinese remains, and to the north, Mitimiti, the last stop in the trail.

6 **Old Wharf Road**
 The end of Old Wharf Road is where one of the most famous photos of the *Ventnor* tragedy was captured in 1902. The image shows rescuers surrounding lifeboats and survivors. In all, 3 lifeboats made it ashore, the fourth washed ashore at Mitimiti, empty. Old Wharf Road offers an excellent view of the harbour entrance and sand dunes.

7 **Opononi and Omapere**
 Opononi and its sister town Omapere are the key to exploring the Hokianga. Tours of the forest and harbour depart here, and the new cultural centre Manea Footprints of Kupe is the best place to learn the stories of Kupe and visit the memorial sculpture dedicated to the sailors of the *SS Ventnor*. The Hokianga Archives and Museum in Omapere also holds photos of the *SS Ventnor* tragedy.

8 **Koutu Boulders**
 Time your visit and take a walk up the beach at low tide to discover unique spherical boulders up to 3m in diameter.

9 **Rawene Cemetery**
 On the hill overlooking the historic township of Rawene is a cemetery said to contain an unmarked grave for numerous Chinese remains. According to local accounts, superstitious crew refused to take the remains aboard a "cream boat" that was to transfer the remains for shipping back to China. With nowhere else to go, the remains were taken to the Rawene Police Station and a decision was made to store them in the cemetery until someone came to claim them.

~~~~~ **Cross the harbour** ~~~~~  
**10** **Kohukohu**  
 Take the ferry across to Kohukohu where you will discover historic houses, and an incredible arts community.

**11** **Motukaraka – Church of the Lady of our Assumption**  
 Visit for the beauty, both inside and out. Overlooking the Hokianga Harbour, this Roman Catholic Church was opened in the early 1900's and has a beautiful kauri interior.

**12** **Motuti**  
 A remote but beautiful settlement home to St Mary's church and soon, a museum. Time your visit with one of 4 dates when the casket of the Bishop Pompallier is on view.

**13** **Panguru**  
 A small settlement, home to a statue honouring the late Dame Whina Cooper and her historic land hikoi (march). Enter the Waipuna Marae grounds to read more on the storyboards.

**14** **Mitimiti Urupā – the magnificent Red Gateway**  
 The last stop on the trail is the hauntingly beautiful coastal settlement of Mitimiti – home to the people of Te Rarawa. Along the exposed stretch of beach Te Rarawa tūpuna collected the remains from the *SS Ventnor* wreck for burial. Over 100 years later, a modern-day tribute to the event was built on the hill above Matihetihe marae. Designed by Nick Grace, the magnificent Chinese inspired gate stands in a prime spot overlooking a spectacular ocean vista. In the same

cemetery you can also see the grave of Ralph Hotere who was born in Mitimiti and is widely regarded as one of New Zealand's most important artists.

## MUST DO's

**Tour**  
 A tour with a local guide is the only way to uncover some of the amazing stories of the Hokianga.

**Walk**  
 From easy short tracks, to long advanced hikes, this area is the place to really get off the beaten track, and feel like a discoverer yourself.

**Art**  
 Visit the galleries and appreciate the art of one of the largest art communities in New Zealand.

**Drive Safe**  
 The roads around the Hokianga Harbour are famous for their curves and views so please drive with care and remember that a friendly wave to the locals never goes amiss.

Ngā tapuwae o ō tātau tūpuna - The footsteps of our ancestors - Māori Proverb

