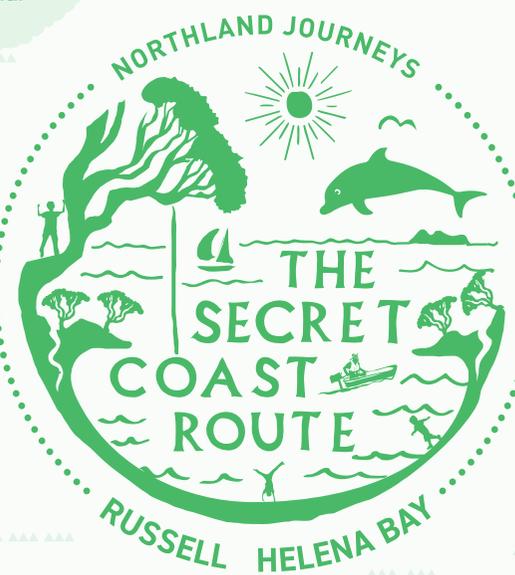


**Did you know?**  
 The area was reputedly named by Puhimoanariki, the captain of the legendary waka Mataatua, after searching for a long time he found shelter from bad weather there. Whangaruru means 'sheltered harbour' in the Maori language.

**Drivers Tip:**  
 Keep an eye in the mirror and let the locals pass safely.

**Kauri tree walks**  
 The unsealed section of Russell Rd is uneven with loose gravel so is unsuitable for campervans and inexperienced drivers.

**Did you know?**  
 Russell, formerly known as Kororaraka, was the first permanent European settlement and sea port in New Zealand.



**Drivers Tip:**  
 Please allow extra driving time to slow down and enjoy the scenery through these beautiful winding roads.

- Point of interest
- Tohu Whenua
- Pou Whenua markers for Hauai Trust, Te Rawhiti
- Route
- Walking track
- Swimming
- Food
- Cafe
- Shop
- Petrol station
- EV Charging
- Fishing charter
- Scenic views
- Iconic photo stop!
- Local favourite
- Don't miss
- Art gallery
- Surfing

Find more at [northlandjourneys.co.nz](http://northlandjourneys.co.nz)



# SECRET COAST ROUTE

(Russell Coast Route)

Can you keep a secret?

Follow these seemingly forgotten roads as they wind through Northland's coastal landscapes. Take your time and uncover the many hidden treasures along the way.

Rich in history, if this coastal route could talk it would tell tales of early Māori settlements, colonial settlers, whalers and missionaries. It could also let slip tales of happy fishermen and kiwi holiday makers that frequent this coast in modern times.

But you must discover and experience this journey for yourself, it is not for us to give away one of Northland's best kept secrets. Just be sure to have fun, we won't tell anyone.

- 1 The Gallery & Cafe Helena Bay Hill**  
Hidden in the bush, but surrounded by beautiful subtropical gardens, discover great art by leading New Zealand artists in this unique gallery setting. And don't miss, right next door, the fully equipped cafe with deck views, making this the perfect stop to refresh, regroup and restock.
- 2 Helena Bay / Te Mimiha Bay**  
Heading north this is the first taste of the coast, a great sheltered swimming beach with giant pohutukawas and a little carpark.
- 3 Teal Bay / Ngawhai Bay**  
Just over the hill from Te Mimiha Bay, Teal Bay offers sheltered swimming and fishing with more holiday homes.
- 4 Ngahau Bay**  
This very secluded rocky bay down the end of an unsealed road is also the start of the Paparahi Point Recreation Reserve
- 5 Mimiwhangata Marine and Coastal Reserve**  
This longer unsealed drive rewards the patient driver with spectacular beaches, and stunning walks. Unsuitable for campervans, instead pack your tent or book the lodge, cottage or beach house (check DOC for details).

- 6 Oakura Bay**  
A popular holiday destination especially for those into boating and fishing. Amenities include boat access, fuel, fish & chips and a handy shop.
- 7 Oakura Fish Dive & Cruise**  
Fishing charters from the sheltered Whangaruru Harbour can be customised for beginners through to experts. Best to pre-book before you arrive as they get busy.
- 8 Russell Forest walks**  
If you tire of beautiful, sunny, sandy beaches, sneak off to the peaceful Russell Forest and lose yourself in nature. There are stunning walks, streams, native trees, birds and views of the Bay of Islands.
- 9 Whangaruru Harbour**  
This sneaky harbour is quietly tucked away from the masses. It offers peaceful sheltered water, safe anchorage, places to swim, fish, picnic and explore.
- 10 The Farm**  
A 1000 acre working dairy farm and holiday base - bring your boats, boards, bikes, friends and horses, or simply use theirs! Stay in the farm house, cabin or tent, build your own wilderness camp. Prior booking recommended.
- 11 Northland Dive**  
Escape to dive locations within the Bay of Islands and Poor Knights or even lesser-known but equally stunning sites. Prior booking recommended.
- 12 Bland Bay / Whangaruru Peninsula**  
Whangaruru Harbour on one side, Pacific Ocean on the other. A great place to park up and get in the water. Accommodation and camping options. Keep your eyes and ears peeled; it's a great place for a kiwi encounter.
- 13 Taupiri Bay**  
Secluded with shady pohutukawas, a sandy beach and rock pools... it's another classic Northland beach hideout. Limited parking, be safe when pulling off the main road.
- 14 Elliot Bay**  
Perfect your sand castle making technique at this beautiful surf beach surrounded by private land with camping options.
- 15 Whangamumu Whaling Station Walk**  
This whaling station was the only one in the world that caught whales with nets. Nestled into one of Northland's most picturesque harbours, a safe boat anchorage and only a one-hour walk from the road. Access by private boat or the Whangamumu Track on Rawhiti Road.
- 16 Rawhiti**  
Te Rawhiti is a small beachfront town in the Bay of Islands, and is a holiday haven with beautiful beaches, spectacular views, sailing, fishing and water sports. Also starting point for the Cape Brett walk.
- 17 Cape Brett Walk**  
Get out on geographic limb, the Cape Brett walk offers a 16km rugged, bush clad track with exceptional coastal views ending at the Cape Brett lighthouse <sup>tw</sup> and hut.
- 18 Oke Bay**  
Picture perfect beach right at the start of the Cape Brett walk.
- 19 Water Taxi**  
A great way to explore islands or connect to Russell, Paihia or Deep Water Cove on the Cape Brett Track.
- 20 Te Uenga Bay**  
A picturesque little bay in the Bay of Islands offering a car park and beach access.
- 21 Paroa Bay Winery**  
Nestled in a beautiful setting, Paroa Bay Winery is a boutique vineyard producing traditional handmade, sustainable wines. Cellar door and luxury accommodation available.
- 22 Orongo Bay**  
The beach has a long coastal boardwalk through mangroves. Accommodation options including Holiday Park.
- 23 Russell Historic Township**  
It is no secret that Russell, (formerly known as Kororāreka), was once referred to as the 'hell hole of the Pacific'. The first permanent European settlement and sea port in New Zealand. The real secret is that Russell after all these years retains charm, character and warmth as a destination.
- 24 Pompallier Mission <sup>tw</sup>**  
Situated in a beautiful waterfront setting in Russell, this French made printery and tannery combines momentous Māori and Paheka history, glorious gardens, and hands-on fun.
- 25 Okiato**  
Site of NZ's first capital (1840-1841), before it moved to Auckland (then Wellington). Today, the only visible remnant of the former capital at this important site is the old water well.

## Must Do's

### Explore

Get out of your car somewhere nice and head down a walking trail, or down the beach or on a low tide walk around the rocks. Seriously, the coast and coastal native forest environments here are amazing. The more you look the more you'll see.

### Art

Reveal the artist within yourself and create a masterpiece of your own, perhaps in a notebook, or in the sand on the beach, a dusty rear window even. If not, pop into the Helena Bay Gallery and see how great NZ artists have interpreted this unique environment.

### Fresh air

The secret to success on this journey is all about taking your time. This isn't the quickest route to and from the Bay of Islands but it is arguably the best route. Grab an ice cream, find yourself a nice pohutukawa to sit under and simply relax.

<sup>tw</sup> **Tohu Whenua** are places around New Zealand that matter to us. Northland has nine 'Tohu Whenua' - places rich in historical or cultural significance. Visit [www.tohuwhenua.nz](http://www.tohuwhenua.nz)

