



PRESS RELEASE



'COOLEST LITTLE CAPITAL' WELLINGTON TO CELEBRATE 150TH ANNIVERSARY IN JULY

Wellington, New Zealand's coolest little capital in the world*, celebrates its 150th anniversary as being the nation's capital this month – and there's no better time to visit.

Pay homage to the birthplace of the flat white, discover the city's thriving craft beer scene or explore the area on two wheels. With supposedly more bars and cafes per capita than New York, and a packed festival calendar for 2015 / 2016 there is plenty to keep visitors entertained in this awesome city.

Wellington will mark her 150th birthday on 26th July with a two-day long party kicking off with performances from kiwi musician Dave Dobbyn and the Orpheus Choir of Wellington, and a 3D sound and light show. Visitors can also enjoy a free hop-on hop-off bus tour and gain a rare glimpse of New Zealand's national treasures, including the Supreme Court, Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Mount Cook Police Barracks and the Katherine Mansfield House and Garden.

To celebrate the milestone anniversary, Tourism New Zealand has rounded up its top tips and little known facts on the world's southernmost capital, together with some reasons why 2015 and 2016 are the years to visit.

THEN...

Auckland was the original choice of capital for the first European settlers, but by 1865, just 25 years after their arrival, Parliament was moved and Wellington officially took the crown.

It is, however, 'Kupe' - a legendary Polynesian explorer - who is credited with discovering Wellington Harbour back in the 10th Century, with different 'iwi' (tribes) settling the area over the next 1000 years.



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The city's earliest name is *Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui* or 'the head of Maui's fish'. According to Māori legend, the Polynesian navigator Maui hooked a giant fish that, when pulled to the surface, turned into the land form now known as the North Island.

NOW...

Coffee lovers rejoice - Wellington is credited as being the birthplace of the 'Flat White' making it a Mecca for those in search of a caffeine fix. Learn the art of 'cupping' at award-winning coffee house Mojo with insights into everything from green beans, to roasting and blending - by the end you'll taste coffee like the pros. www.mojocoffee.co.nz

Prefer something a little stronger? Wellingtonians are equally fond of their craft beer, with a growing scene of young internationally acclaimed brewers. Check out the Craft Beer Capital Garage Project, housed in a converted petrol station, whose Cockswain's Courage won silver at the prestigious Beer World Cup this year. The hipster owners produce delights as varied as the Umami Monster (brewed with seaweed, fish extract and sea water) and the less challenging Sauvignon Nouveau (pilsener brewed with Sauvignon Blanc). Their Cellar Door is now open for tours, tastings and sales www.garageproject.co.nz. Or head on a boutique beer tasting tour around the best watering holes with Wild about Wellington www.wildaboutwellington.co.nz

Maori Taste Sensations at Te Papa - Also celebrating 150 years is Te Papa Museum, New Zealand's national museum. The museum has recently added taonga Maori (cultural treasures) tours including the chance to visit Bush City, a living, growing exhibition that brings New Zealand great outdoors in to the city. Learn how early Maori gathered food, medicines, and materials for clothing from the forest and taste traditionally inspired food including Kawakawa (a bush herb) Tea served with Manuka (tea tree) Honey; Rawena Bread (Maori potato bread) served with Pikopiko (fern frond) pesto; Katai (mussel) and Karengo (edible seaweed) Salad and Kumara (sweet potato) Chips with Horopito (native bush pepper) Mayonnaise. Te Papa has also recently launched Twilight Tours, showing the museum's highlights after 5pm in just 45-minutes. www.tepapa.govt.nz

They love two wheels - Cycle mania has hit the city with a huge array of urban and off-road cycling opportunities. Built by local riders, Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park (www.makarapeak.org) is just 30 minutes ride from the city centre with more than 60km of track and 360-degree views stretching as far as the South Island. For a scenic ride, the 115km two/three day Rimutaka Cycle Trail

(www.wellingtonnz.com/rimutaka-cycle-trail) is part of the new New Zealand Cycle Trail, which takes in spectacular coastline and bush, as well as Wellington Harbour itself. A shorter two to three hour 'Around the Bays' ride is perfect for a sightseeing tour of Wellington's vibrant refurbished waterfront areas with numerous opportunities for cake and coffee stops en route

And Hobbits... Thanks to local boy Sir Peter Jackson, Wellington is the centre of New Zealand's film industry and his world-renowned production facilities on Miramar Peninsula. Glimpse behind the scenes and visit the sites where filming began for *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy including the summit of Mount Victoria, which provides 360-degree views of Wellington city and its environs – on a good day you'll see as far as the South Island. Don't miss a visit to Weta Cave - shop front of the world famous Oscar-winning Weta Workshop where they put the final touches to *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies*. www.wetaworkshop.com

And Kiwis... You don't have to go far to enjoy a wilderness experience in New Zealand and the eco-sanctuary of Zealandia, just 10 minutes from downtown, is a must visit to spot the elusive Kiwi bird and other native species with new night tours now available. www.visitzealandia.com

COMING UP...

More Festival Fever - A packed 2015 calendar will include food festival Wellington on a Plate (www.wellingtononaplate.com) in August, celebrating all things gourmet (the city is said to have more bars and cafes per capita than New York) and the World of Wearable Arts (www.worldofwearableart.com) fashion extravaganza in September

Glamping, Nature & Kiwis - Kapiti Island Nature has partnered with Canopy Camping to provide a unique overnight experience on Kapiti Island, just a short ferry ride from Paraparaumu Beach. The night tour is a great combination of island nature and Maori culture with private, secluded accommodation. Kapiti Island is one of the best places in New Zealand to spot a Kiwi in the wild with over 1,200 Little Spotted kiwis living on the island. www.kapitiislandnaturetours.co.nz

The Hotel Scene - new on the hotel scene is Sofitel Wellington (www.sofitel.com), opening late 2015 and located in the heart of Wellington in Bolton Street. The hotel will include 130 rooms and 15 suites. InterContinental Wellington (www.intercontinental.com/wellington) recently received a huge refurbishment, looking better than ever and Museum Art Hotel (www.museumhotel.co.nz) is currently being refurbished to be completed by the end of the year

Wild for Wildlife – Zealandia, a unique reserve home to some of New Zealand's most rare and extraordinary wildlife is now offering day and night tours. Explore the bush land on a guided tour and be lucky enough to see kiwi foraging on the forest floor, tuatara hunting for food, glow-worms shining, tiny Maud Island frogs in their enclosure, pāteke (brown teal) feeding at night, or kākā (parrots) coming in to roost.

www.visitzealandia.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

For more Wellington must do's visit: www.newzealand.com

*Lonely Planet named Wellington in New Zealand the 'coolest little capital in the world' in 2010.