THE COROMANDEL FOOD TRAIL GUIDE

The Coromandel FOOD COLLECTIVE
GOOD FOR YOUR SOUL
A small selection of places to visit

1 THAMES
The Wharf Coffee House and Bar
The Wharf
Queen St, Thames
P: 07 868 6828

The Depot
713 Pollen St, Grahamstown
Thames
P: 07 868 3519

Savour & Spice @ The Depot
715 Pollen St
Grahamstown, Thames
info@savourandspice.co.nz

The Cheese Barn at Matatoki
Wainui Rd Matatoki
P: 07 868 1284
www.thecheesebarn.co.nz

Omahu Valley Citrus
146 Omahu Valley Road
RD 4, Paeroa
P: 07 868 1274
www.omahuvallycitrus.co.nz

2 KAUERANGA VALLEY, THAMES
Kauaeranga Valley Café
955c Kauaeranga Valley Rd
[DOC Visitor Centre]
Kauaeranga Valley
P: 07 868 3152

3 THAMES COAST
Waiomu Café
622A Thames Coast Rd
P: 07 868 2554

4 COROMANDEL
Coromandel Oyster Company
1611 Manaia Rd
Coromandel Town
P: 07 866 8028

Pepper Tree Restaurant and Bar
31 Kapanga Rd
Coromandel Town
P: 07 866 8211
www.peppertreerestaurant.co.nz

Star and Garter
5 Kapanga Rd
Coromandel Town
P: 07 866 8503
www.starandgarter.co.nz

Admirals Arms Hotel
146 Wharf Road
Coromandel Town 3506
P: 07 866 7069 or
Restaurant 07 866 8272
www.admiralsarms.co.nz

Hereford ‘n’ A Pickle
2318 Colville Rd
Colville
P: 07 866 6937
www.kairautapolliehereford.com

5 WHANGAPOUA – KUAOTUNU
Castle Rock Café
1242 Whangapoua Rd
Te Rerenga
P: 07 866 4542
Mob: 022 391 2070
www.castlerockcafe.co.nz

Luke’s Kitchen
20 Blackjack Rd
Kuaotunu Village
P: 07 866 4480
www.lukeskitchen.co.nz

6 WHITIANGA
Salt Restaurant & Bar
1 Blacksmith Lane
Whitianga
P: 07 866 5818
www.salt-whitianga.co.nz

The Lost Spring Restaurant & Licenced Café
121A Cook Drive
Whitianga
P: 07 866 0456
www.thelostspring.co.nz

Wilderland Shop
SH25 Whitianga-Tairua
www.wilderland.org.nz

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Cooks Beach – Hahei
Mercury Bay Estate
761A Purangi Rd
Cooks Beach
P: 07 866 4066
www.mercurybayestate.co.nz
Cathedral Cove Macadamias Orchard Tour
335 Lees Rd
Hahei
P: 07 867 1221
www.cathedralcovemacadamias.co.nz

HOT WATER BEACH & WHENUAKITE
Hot Water Brewing Co
1043 SH25
Whenuakite
P: 07 866 3830
www.hotwaterbrewingco.com

TAIRUA
The Old Mill
The Esplanade
Tairua
P: 07 864 9390
www.theoldmillcafetairua.com
Manaia Kitchen and Bar
228 Main Road
Tairua
P: 07 864 9050
www.manaiakitchenbar.co.nz
The Bakery
242 Main Rd
Tairua
P: 07 864 9974

PAUANUI
THE LIMEROOM Bar & Bistro
Lakes Resort
100 Augusta Drive
Pauanui
P: 07 864 8649
www.thelimeroom.co.nz
Miha Restaurant at Puka Park
48 Mount Ave
Pauanui
P: 07 864 8088
www.pukapark.co.nz
The Bakery
Shop 15, 52 Jubilee Drive
Pauanui
P: 07 864 8094

WHANGAMATA
SixFortySix | Eatery + Bar
646 Port Rd
Whangamata
P: 07 865 6117
www.sixfortysix.co.nz
Argo Restaurant and Wine Bar
328 Ocean Rd
Whangamata
0 7 865 7157
www.argorestaurant.co.nz

KARANGAHAKE GORGE
The Falls Retreat
25 Waitawheta Rd
Waikino
P: 07 863 8770
www.fallsretreat.co.nz
Start your Tour

THE MOUNTAINOUS FOREST, FERTILE TERRACES and nutrient rich waters of the Coromandel have fed generations of gardeners, gatherers, bushmen and campers since the earliest of settlement times in New Zealand. This guide will trace their footsteps to help you source the freshest delicacies on offer today.

The Coromandel was once isolated from a ready supply of hardware and supermarket goods, and our smaller communities continue to innovate, grow and share organic produce amongst each other year-round.

Food is at the heart of the Coromandel’s economy, with mussel farms, organic honey growers and artisan producers working the land and sea to export and to serve home grown food through world class chefs.

We’ve designed this guide for the visitor, bach owner or local seeking to taste the bounty of our place whilst on a tour of the Thames-Coromandel district.

View of Paku and Ocean Beach, Tairua with Pauanui beyond.
THE FORMER GOLD MINING TOWN of Thames is a pantry of artisan products, and a perfect place for stocking the picnic hamper for the bach, bush walks or your drive up the Thames Coast Road to Coromandel Town.

A 20-minute drive inland is the Kauaeranga Valley where, in the DOC visitor centre at 955c Kauaeranga Valley Rd, you’ll find the Kauaeranga Valley Café serving wholesome locally produced fare with the sound of birdsong to accompany you. This is the starting point for many campgrounds and bush walks as daytrips or overnighters. Stock up before you go.

Back in Thames, The Wharf Coffee House and Bar on the historic Shortland Wharf at Queen St is a wholesaler and retailer of locally caught fish species. Sit beside the sea to eat your fish and chips as fresh as they get. The Hauraki Rail Trail’s official starting point is right here at the wharf.

Thames has niche shops and small producers selling their cheeses and yoghurts, homemade Scottish oat cakes, locally-grown organic produce, spice blends and a surprisingly vast selection of excellent coffee houses.
Thames has proudly maintained its heritage buildings, boasting some of the finest examples in New Zealand.

On Saturday mornings, Grahamstown has a market filled with local produce. The Depot in Pollen St, Grahamstown, houses Savour & Spice which sells spices, spice blends, locally famous curry powders, vinaigrettes, mustards and gift baskets.

At Mustard Makers Artisan Mustards and Spices at The Depot you’ll also find delicatessen goods, freshly-ground spice blends, fresh fruit juices and art works.

Thames is the starting point to the Hauraki Rail Trail where you’ll find Omahu Valley Citrus, artisan makers of award winning citrus products; marmalades chutneys, and much more. Visits by appointment 07 868 1274.

At the Cheese Barn – a 10 min drive from Thames or 1-2hr cycle – sample organic blue, mozzarella, camembert and traditional Dutch gouda.

Grahamstown small gauge railway.

Humble Oatcakes.
THE COAST ROAD FROM THAMES to Coromandel hugs the pohutukawa-fringed Firth of Thames, offering magical little bays for swimming or fishing. Looking out to sea near Coromandel Town you will see the mussel farms that produce up to one quarter of New Zealand’s mussels and oysters for local consumption and for export.

Waiomu Cafe is a popular stop on the way up the coast. Across the road from a seaside park, the cafe is renowned for its ice-cream and coffee. It is also near the start of the 2-hour Waiomu kauri walk. Further up the coast, opt to turn right and enter the enchanting part-gravel Tapu-Coroglen Road winding up through the mountains to the east coast.
You will need to head back to the coast road to carry on north towards historic Coromandel Town.

Sumptuously textured New Zealand oysters take 12-20 months to reach ideal market size in farms off the Coromandel, fed predominantly from plankton. These and Greenshell mussels contribute to New Zealand’s international reputation for high quality seafood, and are never fresher than when they are eaten locally. The Coromandel Oyster Co. serves meals on-site or oysters from the farm gate in the 1/2 shell or wholeshell. Find other locally harvested seafood here too, on SH25 about 4km south of Coromandel Town along the Thames Coast.
Coromandel Town-Colville

IN THE HEART of historic Coromandel Town in Kapanga Rd is The Pepper Tree Restaurant. Build your appetite with one of the many walks in the area, and after exploring kauri forest that once dominated the land, dine in a premises built with kauri, such as The Pepper Tree Restaurant, which was built as a family home in 1928. The Pepper Tree restaurant menu focuses on fresh local produce, oysters, mussels and organic produce with locally sourced meat to provide a unique New Zealand experience in the heart of Coromandel Town.

On Wharf Rd you’ll find the Admirals Arms Hotel, an historic two-storey hotel that obtained its first liquor licence in the gold rush days of 1872.

From Coromandel Town, choose to push north to the remote bays and beaches in and between settlements like Colville, Papa Aroha, Tuateawa and Port Jackson. Many such places mushroom into large communities based in the campgrounds for a brief few weeks in summer, and camp stores pop up with basics and homegrown goods.

Fresh Coromandel mussels.
Stop at Hereford ’n’ A Pickle at 2318 Colville Rd for a real family artisan food experience, where the 194 ha rolling pasture produces meat that’s processed on site, honey is harvested from the land, and a range of homemade chutneys, jams and sauces are for sale using produce from the farm. The much loved sausages are made from an old family recipe.
RETURNING TO COROMANDEL TOWN, head over the spine of the Peninsula eastward to Te Rerenga, gateway to New Chum Beach (Wainuiototo) and Whangapoua. New Chum Beach is around the northern headland of Whangapoua and accessed only by foot, giving you the experience of a trek back in time through nikau tree forest to untouched white sand seclusion.

The Castle Rock Café on the Whangapoua Rd is the best place to fill up before visiting Whangapoua. Here you’ll find homemade breads, slices and an all-day dine-in or take home menu at a relaxed country style café. For those who like it hot, the chilli lime chutney, made from New Zealand chillis, is a favourite and like all their products, is packed with flavour and free from preservatives, chemicals and gluten. Castle Rock Café gathers the finest ingredients locally from their quiet rural community to produce chutneys and relishes, jams and jellies, sauces and vinegars too.

Continuing south toward Whitianga is Matarangi, a small community loaded with holiday houses on a
long white sand beach and estuary. There is plentiful birdlife, a golf course and a very small shopping centre.

Further to the south along the stretch of white sand coast is the village of Kuaotunu and the beaches of Otama and Opito. Gathering kai moana dates back to the first people of this area. Scallops still wash up in abundance after big swells in this part of the Coromandel coastline but for a guaranteed feed, look to the restaurants of Whitianga further south. If you prefer to eat seafood on the seashore, stock up on the delectable Blackbeard’s Smokehouse range of mussels. These are harvested, marinated and smoked here on the Coromandel and come in a range of flavours named after local beaches, like the Hot Water Beach Bum Burner and Sailor’s Grave Garlic.

Kuaotunu village on the water’s edge comes alive through the addition of an iconic Coromandel pizza restaurant and live music venue, Luke’s Kitchen. By combining tasty, fresh pizza with a relaxed surf vibe overlooking Kuaotunu’s Black Jack reef, Luke’s Kitchen has created a must-do destination on the Coromandel and is the social saviour for locals in the hibernation months at Kuaotunu.
Whitianga, Hahei and Surrounds

WHITIANGA IS AT THE HEAD OF MERCURY BAY, a picturesque town with something for all tastes. A must-do while here is to bathe while you sip a fresh cocktail in natural thermal hot springs at The Lost Spring and then dine poolside at The Lost Spring Café and Restaurant. The Café/Restaurant is open from 9am each day and the pools are open from 10.30am each day – no booking required, although you should book in advance if you want to include a Day Spa treatment before or after you dip and dine. Whitianga is spoilt for great cafes, walk around and take your pick. Restaurants include the excellent Salt Restaurant on Blacksmith Lane, which serves fresh Coromandel Green Lipped Mussels and Oysters along with Te Ika Mata (raw fish) and Tuna Ahi Poke. You can catch a short ferry from Whitianga and stretch the legs with a walk to Flaxmill Bay and Cooks Beach, both of which have eateries serving local cuisine.

South of Whitianga on SH25 you’ll find Wilderland Shop. Wilderland is a self-sufficient community of people running an organic farm on the Coromandel for over 50 years now. They are a charity whose main purpose is education – holding a space for hundreds of volunteers each year, to come from around the world and learn with them about
sustainable living. One of the ways it is sustained is by sales of their range of home-made, home-grown, certified-organic products, including honey, jams, chutneys, and a whole range of delicious cider vinegars. Taste the organic difference, from locals who have been growing it at home since before organic was a word. www.wilderland.org.nz

A little further on you’ll find the signposted turnoffs to the beachside settlements of Hahei, Cooks Beach and Hot Water Beach.

On the road toward Hahei, you can join the native kereru birds as you tour the organic orchard of Cathedral Cove Macadamias at 335 Lees Rd. With a focus on sustainability and organic production, everything from the physical working environment through to the benefits of the product range has a health and well-being focus here. Self-guided tours are also available, and you will sample the range of products including Macadamia oil, dukkah, crumb macadamia, chocolate macadamias, spread and orchard honey.

Driving north of Hahei, the Mercury Bay Estate cellar door offers local craft beer as well as wine by the bottle, glass or tasting flight (serving two or four local wines). Enjoy with a delicious platter of local food matches. You might like to walk Shakespeare Cliff’s network of walks and take the short hike to Lonely Bay to work up an appetite before arrival, but you will also happily enjoy the vista from the estate.
HOT WATER BEACH is a ‘must-do’ for most visitors to the Coromandel but be warned – it can get very busy on low tide when everyone is digging in the sand for the hot thermal water that appears from below. There are a few eatery options here at Hot Water Beach and a camp ground.

On the road to Tairua you’ll find Hot Water Brewing Co in Whenuakite, which has won international acclaim for its canned beer varieties. A holiday park is handily located next door where The Rising Can Festival is held in November, celebrating canned craft beer in New Zealand.
TAIRUA HAS NUMEROUS CAFES AND RESTAURANTS each with its own character and style. **Manaia Kitchen & Bar** has live music, theme nights and DJs on occasion throughout the year. A freshly-made cabinet range with raw food, woodfired pizza and local seafood like *ika mata*.

A walk of less than an hour around the harbour to the base of Mt Paku leads to **The Old Mill Cafe**, a charming eatery with hearty breakfasts, a changing dinner menu and live local musicians from time to time. Stroll around Tairua Marina or enjoy with a heritage trail walk around Tairua before or after relaxing in this refurbished historic building.

Pauanui is a 25 minute drive from Tairua or a 5 minute ferry ride, with the award winning **Miha Restaurant** serving ‘Pacific Rim’ with a European twist. A fine dining experience inside or on the deck amid the bush setting of Puka Park Resort.

**TheLimeRoom** is a 100 per cent gluten free restaurant located in the Lakes Resort Golf Club at 100 Augusta Drive, Pauanui. Try the NZ pork & paua balls, minced together with a blend of herbs and spices, served with watercress and plum chutney from the summer menu. TheLimeRoom is accessible from the Tairua Pauanui walk and cycle trail.

**The Bakery**, found in both Tairua and Pauanui, offers supreme coffee, T2 teas, baguettes, wildberry doughnuts and other genuine European pastries all baked fresh daily.
CONTINUING BACK TO THE STATE HIGHWAY after Pauanui, Hikuai is a rural settlement with bush treks through the backdrop of steep hills. To hike, travel approx. 7km from the unsealed section of Puketui Valley Road.

The beach town of Whangamata is your next stop. Scallops and kina are gathered from the east Coromandel coastline when sea conditions allow divers to enter. You’ll find seasonal seafood on the menu in Whangamata at Argo Restaurant which has a varied craft beer and wine menu to match the culinary selection. SixFortySix Eatery + Bar is at the heart of Whangamata; a favourite for its funky décor and a varied cabinet along with A La Carte menu from breakfast through to dinner. The Classic Coro burger features scallops with local bacon and red onion jam, as a taste of the menu.
FROM WHANGAMATA, COMPLETE YOUR CIRCUIT of the Coromandel via Waihi and the Karangahake Gorge, a popular section of the Hauraki Rail Trail. On this side of the Peninsula, the trail starts in Waihi.

No foodie tour in this area is complete without visiting the award winning The Falls Retreat (a short push up the hill from the rail trail in the gorge). Stop to admire the gushing Waitawheta Falls – especially if it’s been raining – and then enjoy slow cooked rustic food in a peaceful garden setting. The wood fired oven in the centre of the kitchen is the heart of The Falls Retreat, which focuses on seasonal eating and sustainability with produce coming out of their veggie gardens or using a barter-for-coffees-or-pizza system with locals. Owners Brad King and Emma Walters are passionate about giving back to the earth and run composting classes on a regular basis. www.fallsretreat.co.nz

From here you’ll travel towards Paeroa and back to Thames, to complete your circumnavigation of the Coromandel.
Markets

Tairua Market  Tairua Hall, Main Rd, Tairua  First Saturday morning each month
Kuaotunu Market  Kuaotunu Township  Saturday morning from Labour weekend-Easter
Matarangi Craft Market  Matarangi village shops  Sundays from December to January & holiday weekends
Whitianga Art, Craft & Farmers Market  Soldiers Memorial Park Whitianga  Saturday mornings on holiday weekends and community events
Tairua Fireman’s Market  Tairua Fire Station, Main Rd  Saturday morning of Labour Weekend
Coromandel Market  Gumtown Hall, Coromlen  Sunday morning Labour Weekend-Easter
Thames Market  Pollen Street Grahamstown Thames  Saturday mornings 8am - 12noon
Coromandel Market  31 Kapanga Rd Coromandel Town  Fridays 8am - 12noon
Whangamata Lions Market  RSA Carpark  Anniversary Weekend, Easter & Labour Wknd
Whangamata Community Market  TCDC Town Green  8am - 1pm Saturdays in summer months

www.thecoromandel.com for updated listings
PLANNING A BARBECUE? Kairaumati Polled Herefords in Colville are passionate Hereford breeders. A family operation, they run a Saw Mill, Hereford Stud, a small number of sheep and a commercial kitchen and farm shop called Hereford ‘n’ a Pickle, where you can buy their meat that’s processed on site. They also have hives and produce honey, plus a range of delectable chutneys and sauces from produce grown on the farm to go with the meat that’s served.

EXPERIMENT WITH YOUR OWN marinades for supermarket-bought local mussels, using Coromandel honey that is sought after worldwide for its therapeutic properties and taste. At The 309 Rd you can buy honey then experience the bush at nearby walks through conservation land.

The 309 Honey brand is harvested from bush clad hills with due care and attention to the bees and the environment that produces it. Stop at the Wilderland shop off SH25 20 mins south of Whitianga for honey perfected for over 40 years. Other Coromandel honey producers include Woodland Honey, Wild Honey, Hay Honey and Plan Bee (at Kuaotunu market).
Spice up your gastronomic tour of the Coromandel by combining it with one of the many iconic events throughout the year...

**JANUARY**

Tairua School Wine and Food Festival
A huge celebration of food, wine, arts and crafts. The Tairua School Wine and Food Festival is a ritual amongst holidaymakers in the Tairua and Pauanui area.
www.tairuawineandfood.co.nz

Concert in the Vines
Gather your picnic or build one from the fare on offer from the Coromandel’s favourite wine and cuisine vendors as you enjoy an all Kiwi lineup of acoustic musicians at a vineyard overlooking Mercury Bay.
www.concertinthevines.org.nz or keep an eye on the rescue chopper Facebook page for its fundraising events. www.facebook.com/rescue1chopper

**FEBRUARY**

Coromandel Mussel Festival
Mussel favourites are served all day at the Coromandel Mussel Kitchen as live music plays. Free camping on site.
www.musselkitchen.co.nz

**APRIL**

A Taste of Matarangi
Experience the delicious cuisines, taste world-class wines and craft beer, enjoy family activities, food competitions, charity auctions and great continuous live music on stage at the Matarangi Village Green by the beach.
www.atasteofmatarangi.co.nz
**MAY**

The Coromandel Seafood Fest

Become a pro at shucking oysters, marinating mussels or filleting fish at this festival, which celebrates the local harbour that is renowned for its mussel and oyster farms and fishing. The Coromandel Seafood Fest will also feature live local bands and a showcase of seafood by nearby restaurants and cafes – book your weekend!

www.coromandeltown.co.nz/seafood-fest

**SEPTEMBER**

The Whitianga Scallop Festival

New Zealand’s best seafood festival, taste the finest seafood creations and beverages, enjoy the music and fun-loving festival ambience, all set on the picturesque waterfront of Whitianga.

www.scallopfestival.co.nz

**NOVEMBER**

The Rising Can Festival

Hosted at the Hot Water Brewing Co. in Whenuakite, the Rising Can is a one-day taster of hearty canned craft beer, tasty food and funky live sounds.

www.hotwaterbrewingco.com

This is just a small selection of events taking place on the Coromandel, for more events see www.thecoromandel.com

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**Iconic Coromandel Events**

- **Leadfoot Festival** www.leadfootfestival.com
- **Beach Hop** www.beachhop.co.nz
- **150 Thames Goldfields Festival** www.thamesheritage.co.nz
- **Thames Heritage Week** www.thamesheritage.co.nz
- **Mercury Bay Art Escape** www.mercurybayartescape.co.nz
- **Echo Walking Festival** www.echowalkfest.org.nz
- **Illume: Winter Festival of Light** www.illumefest.co.nz
- **K2 Cycle Race** www.arcevents.co.nz/k2home
- **Steampunk The Thames** www.steampunkthethames.org
- **Whitianga Summer Concert** www.greenstoneentertainment.co.nz