

Hamilton/Waikato Region – 3 Day Itinerary

The riverside city of [Hamilton](#) lies in the heart of the Waikato region. Best known for nature-based tourism and off-the-beaten track experiences, the city and surrounding area offers something for everyone.

Superb gardens, riverside walks and vibrant nightlife can be found in Hamilton, while the wider region is home to world-renowned attractions including the Waitomo Glowworm Caves, Raglan surf beach and Hobbiton Movie Set.

Day one

Explore Hamilton and its surrounds

Enjoy a meal at a central city restaurant or café, or go shopping at one of the city's many boutique stores or modern malls. Hamilton's rich cultural mix and vibrant centre makes it a perfect place to experience the friendly Kiwi lifestyle.

Another great option is a flight over the city and surrounding area on a hot air balloon. On a fine day, an early morning flight will allow you to enjoy the spectacular sunrise.

A visit to Hamilton wouldn't be complete without a walk through [Hamilton Gardens](#) to see the many fantastic display gardens inspired by cultures from around the world. Located on the banks of the mighty Waikato River, the gardens are an ideal place to enjoy a picnic or leisurely stroll.

For a more refined experience, travel to [Zealong Tea Estate](#) on the outskirts of Hamilton to enjoy a delicious high tea amongst a plantation of a million tea plants. Or if wine is your thing, try wine tasting at [Mystery Creek Wines](#) followed by a delicious meal at the neighbouring [Woodbox Winery Restaurant & Bar](#) overlooking the Waikato River.

Day two

Relax in bohemian Raglan

Pack your bags and head out west to Raglan. With its black sand beaches, great surf, tranquil harbour and laidback vibe, Raglan is a slice of Kiwi heaven.

Bridal Veil Falls, 7km from Raglan, is an excellent place to stop for a picnic on your way. An easy 10 minute walk through native bush will take you to the top of the falls, where you'll enjoy spectacular views of the falls and surrounding countryside.

On arriving in this idyllic coastal town, hire a kayak or take a cruise on the harbour, or saddle up for a horse trek in the nearby hills. If you've always wanted to learn to surf, take lessons at Raglan Surfing School then test yourself at Manu Bay - the longest left hand break in the world.

The coastal township is packed full of boutique shops, funky cafes and arts and crafts stores. Don't miss the chance to enjoy a glass of wine while listening to a live music at a bar on the main street.

Day three

Underground wonders and movie sets

Travel south to the [Waitomo Glowworm Caves](#). This subterranean labyrinth is full of ancient stalagmites, stalactites, and luminescent glowworms. You can discover the caves on a guided walking and boat tour. For something a little more daring, try black water rafting - abseil into the depths of Waitomo's lost world and explore the underground rivers that flow through the cave system by inflatable rubber inner tube.

After your underground adventure, head to nearby Woodlyn Park to be entertained by Billy Black's Kiwi Culture Show or enjoy a meal at the Huhu Café.

Nestled in the heart of the Waikato, amongst the lush rolling hills of the Alexander's family farm visitors can experience the excitement and enchantment that is 'Hobbiton' with Hobbiton Movie Set Tours. This location was featured in the world-wide phenomenon that was *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Visitors are escorted through the ten acre site including hobbit holes and a working farm while hearing the fascinating story of how the movie set was created, what went on during filming and what is yet to come with *The Hobbit*.

While you're in the area stop in at the [Kaimai Cheese Company's café](#) and store north of Matamata. Learn about the cheese making process and sample fine cheeses, from bocconcini to Havarti. Burn off the excess calories with a hike on the nearby Wairere Falls walk for views of the 153-metre-high falls