



5 reasons to love TAKAPUNA

I Shore discovered what a difference a day makes!

Remember those old TV ads that urged, "Don't leave town till you've seen the country"? Acting like a tourist in Takapuna on Auckland's North Shore gave me a much-needed one-day mini ay-cay and I never even felt the city.

1 The coffee
The day I embarked on my super-mini break, I was so stressed and tired, I could barely manage a smile. First stop fixed that: Zomer, a cute café tucked out of the hustle and bustle in the Strand, which leads down to the beach. Here I sat in the waxy sunshine and scooped a slice of lemon meringue cake and suddenly my blood pressure returned to normal. Owned and run by a former cake decorator and open seven days (including dinner Thursday to Saturday with BYO wine), this is neighbourhood beachside yumminess at its best.

2 The chill-out
Next stop was Golden Yogi for a one-on-one meditation session with founder Erin O'Hara. Boy, did I need that! I never thought I was the meditating type, but under Erin's guidance, I took to it like

a duck to water. In her lovely, light yoga studio upstairs on the main drag, Hurstmere Road, I breathed and stretched and even chanted, and do you know what? At the end of it, I felt like I'd had eight hours' sleep. Truly blissful. Erin takes group yoga and meditation classes every day, and is a brilliant example of what this way of living can do for a person. The more wound up you are, the more you need a bit of this. Highly recommended.

3 Main beach
It's obviously a long time since I've been to Takapuna because one of the car parks has turned into Main Beach, a little collection of restaurants tucked behind the shops but right across the road from the beach. It's bizarrely difficult to find anywhere to eat by the water in the City of Sails and this stretch of eateries, complete with outdoor tables, really hits the spot. I loved my lunch at Regatta Bar and Eatery, with its fab selection of fresh fish and totally beachy holiday vibe. A glass of rosé made sure the smile that was missing earlier stayed firmly in place.

4 The shopping
I rarely mooch around the shops at home, but after my

delicious morning, I was just in the mood for it. I wandered the retail precinct, watched the other tourists play table tennis at Hurstmere Green and meandered up the laneways. (Check out the coffee served in a combi van in Fortieth & Hurstmere.) Next I bought a funky T-shirt at boho emporium Tosca and Salome, then dropped in at the office of Karen Murrell lipsticks, a local Takapuna brand going gangbusters around the world. They're widely available - look out for the rose-inspired displays at your local pharmacy - and don't have any nasties in them.

5 The beach
This time of year, you're not likely to be tempted to swim in Takapuna's calm, family-friendly waters, but it's good for the soul to walk along the sand any time. And if you're up for a longer stroll, one of my favourite city walks in New Zealand is the "lava trail" from Takapuna to neighbouring Milford. With Rangitoto on one side of you and many a lavish waterfront house on the other, it's a feast for the eyes as well as a decent workout. And afterwards, you can go to Bliss Reflexology for a one-hour treatment, just like I did. What a perfect day - and just across the bridge!



The cakes at beachy Zomer put a smile on many a dial.



Yogi Erin took all my frazzle and meditated it away. Bliss!



Your lips will love you for choosing local lippy by Karen Murrell.