



Holiday hotspots just don't get better than this!

5 reasons to love THE MOUNT

The kids may be back at school, but there are plenty of weekends left in the summer and one beach holiday I can never get enough of is Tauranga's ocean jewel, Mount Maunganui.

1 Where to stay
In my wild youth, I camped here and, indeed, the Beachside Holiday Park, at the very foot of the Mount with the beach on one side, the harbour on the other and the saltwater hot pools in between, has to be one of the best spots in the country. On my last visit, though, I stayed across the road in an extremely family-friendly two-bedroom apartment at The Pacific that had views of all of the above, plus two bathrooms, a full kitchen, laundry, TV and use of the swimming pool. Throw in a two-minute walk to the beach (and good coffee at Sidetrack) and as much as I like a tent, I'm sold.

2 What to do
The Mount beach is a stunner, famous for its golden sand and surf. You could plonk yourself here for two days, no trouble, or you could walk up the Mount to the summit – the number one thing to do on TripAdvisor – or take yourself to The Little Big

Market on the first Saturday of every month or rent bikes (it's flat round these parts, so good for the whole family), or hire stand-up paddle boards at Pilot Bay, or go indoor rock climbing at The Rock House or – oh, hang on, you're on holiday, you can also do nothing!

3 Where to shop
The best surprise on my latest visit to Mount Maunganui was the shopping. I'm definitely not a shopaholic – I'd rather be at the beach – but the collection of shops, restaurants and cafés running two blocks of Maunganui Road near the Mount end were a revelation. I bought the best-ever very pretty wraparound dress from local designer Bettie Monroe (not expensive, doesn't need ironing and looks instantly glam) and also, saints be praised, had a pleasant experience buying swimming togs in the spacy, air-conditioned surroundings of Temptations lingerie shop. If you have ever had to buy togs, you will know what a rare joy that is. Also, Blakchaos is home to the fab local shoe brand Chaos & Harmony – my sisters literally live in their sandals.

4 What to eat
Testament to the quirky nature of the Mount is the family-run Pizza Library. You

can order out from a menu that includes a Hunger Games or Jungle Book pie. Alternatively, you can sit outside on the buzzy corner or in the bar on old cinema seats, while servers in Hawaiian shirts and bowler hats bring you cocktails (or mocktails for the kids, who love it here). If you're around on a Friday night, there's a Gourmet Food Market at Coronation Park with entertainment for the whole family, or a lovely grown-up spot is Phil's Place at the Tauranga Bridge Marina. Sensational food, lovely views and owned, but not run by, AC/DC's troubled drummer Phil Rudd.

5 While you're here ...
... spare a thought for Hairy Maclary, brain-puppy of Tauranga resident Lynley Dodd. After masses of fundraising, Hairy and eight of his pals have been cast in bronze by a top Weta Workshop sculptor but need a few more dollars to get them out of the dogbox and properly installed on Tauranga's waterfront, where everyone can enjoy them. You can help release the hounds by donating at hairymaclarysculptures.org.nz. I can't bear the thought of them locked up when they should be romping in perpetuity in this lovely part of our world.



Phil's Place might be famous for its owner, but there's nothing AC/DC about the fab food.



The offbeat Pizza Library really is a must-do. Feed your curiosity and enjoy a unique experience.



Far be it from me to hound anyone, but our Donaldson's Dairy doggie needs you. Pup to it, people!