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# Fodor's Go List 2017

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Wellington Cable Car and City by Sean Hamlin [CC BY 2.0]

## 15. WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

*More than a gateway to the South Island, New Zealand's capital is packed with museums, art galleries, and festivals.*

New Zealand's artistic side is often overlooked in favor of its dramatic landscapes and extreme sports. But if you're looking to inject some culture into a Kiwi holiday, plan to spend a few days in the capital city of [Wellington](#), which is getting plenty of buzz right now. "Welly" is the epicenter of

New Zealand's film industry thanks to the *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* franchise, earning it the nickname Wellywood. But a creative vibe permeates the entire city, from the concept store [Good as Gold](#) to single-origin bean coffee shops such as [Memphis Belle](#). Welly is home to big cultural institutions such as [Te Papa](#), the national museum of New Zealand, as well as the [State Opera](#), the [New Zealand Symphony Orchestra](#), and several theaters. But art is also happening on a smaller scale thanks to [City Gallery Wellington](#), which focuses on contemporary works, and [Enjoy](#), an artist-run public gallery. And foodies can rejoice, as Wellington is a culinary hot spot with a thriving artisanal coffee, craft brew, and cocktail scene. Do like the locals do and order a flat white and avocado on toast topped with harissa at [Flight Coffee's The Hangar](#). If beer is more your style, head to the [Garage Project](#), or catch live music at the dog-friendly [Rogue & Vagabond](#).

**Where to Stay:** Located right across from Te Papa, [The Museum Art Hotel](#) is home to more than 150 pieces of contemporary New Zealand art. The décor is dark and sexy. Enjoy a Sidecar crafted from apricot-infused brandy and maple syrup in the whimsical Hippopotamus Restaurant.

**Insider Tip:** Hang out on Cuba Street, which is packed with cafés and boutiques, as well as artists and street performers. Tuck into beer-battered fish tacos at [Fidel's](#) or catch a live show at the [Matterhorn](#). If you want a brief escape from the city, head to [Otari-Wilton's Bush](#), a wildlife sanctuary just a short drive from downtown.

**When to Go:** The warmest time to visit is December through March, but be aware that Wellington has infamously unpredictable weather. If you love festivals, time your visit to the [World of WearableArt](#), a design competition held in the autumn. Or eat your way through the city during [Visa Wellington on a Plate](#), held in June.

**Plan Your Trip:** Visit [Fodor's New Zealand Guide](#)

—*Christina Valhoulis*