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INTRODUCTION

You never forget the first time that you clamber into a sea kayak, fasten the spraydeck over your lap and set off on your maiden voyage on the open water, sensing the implacable power beneath your narrow craft and working with it rather against it. The same is true for embarking on any new activity or adventure in the great outdoors, whether that's clipping into a climbing harness for a first lesson on scaling rock walls, or packing some provisions and pedalling away on a bicycle towards a distant horizon.

There are numerous ways of exploring our awe-inspiring planet via land, sea or air, and the *Atlas of Adventure* aims to introduce as many of them as possible in more than 150 countries around the world. We tracked down our most adventure-loving experts, wherever they happened to be, and asked them to share their tips for the best places to try all the activities listed overleaf. This book is the result: an alphabetically ordered romp around the globe, highlighting the best outdoor pursuits you can enjoy in each country. We'll take you climbing in Thailand, mountain biking in America and sailing along the south coast of Britain. We've included everywhere it's currently feasible to set your intrepid foot, exploring the less trafficked corners of popular spots and venturing to far-flung places

you may never have previously considered visiting. A few island regions – notably the Caribbean – have been tackled collectively.

The pursuits in the *Atlas of Adventure* range from hiking, biking and snorkelling to more adrenalin-charged experiences that will require some tuition before you try them – but our intention is to offer ideas for accessible activities for first-timers. However, we have also included profiles of iconic events and interviews with inspiring personalities from the outdoor sports world to show what might be possible with a bit of practice. It's easy to be intimidated by seemingly extreme feats but even the boldest biker, kayaker or mountaineer began somewhere and often the first step is simply deciding to try a new experience, one that might lie slightly outside your comfort zone, and giving it a go. Although we would urge all fledgling adventurers to seek expert tuition and equipment advice from accredited operators!

A desire for adventure is present in every traveller. And research has shown that learning a new skill or technique – whether that's how to make a clean paddle stroke in a kayak or clear a difficult descent on a mountain bike – is what helps keep our brains young and our bodies healthy. So pack your passport and your compass for a thrilling and rejuvenating journey around the world.

*Canoeing in La
Mauricie National
Park, Quebec, Canada*

GLOSSARY OF ADVENTURE TERMS

Abseiling Descending a rope using a braking device.

Bikepacking Cycle touring but on a mountain bike.

Bouldering Free solo rockclimbing (without ropes or other equipment) on large boulders rather than a vertical rock face, usually with crash pads to protect the landing.

Canyoneering The US term for canyoning (exploring a gorge or canyon, sometimes with ropes, often tracing a waterway).

Cat skiing Skiing (or boarding) in remote areas made accessible with the use of a snowcat

Coasteering Combination of scrambling, wild swimming and free solo climbing around the tidal zone of a coast.

Freediving Diving without scuba gear.

Glade skiing Off-piste alpine or backcountry skiing through trees.

Crag Rock face for climbing.

Deep-water soloing (DWS) Rockclimbing unroped above water, usually on sea cliffs, but sometimes above rivers or lakes.

Dirt-bagging Living cheap, by any means possible, in order to prolong an adventure experience.

Free soloing Climbing without ropes or other protection.

Freeride A discipline of mountain biking using stunts and obstacles on steep and technical trails. Also applies to snowboarding on off-piste, backcountry terrain, often performing tricks.

Gorge scrambling Canyoning (sometimes without ropes).

Hardtail Mountain bike with front suspension only, as opposed to a dual or full-suspension bike

Heliskiing Skiing or snowboarding after being dropped off by a helicopter.

Kloofing Canyoning in South Africa.

Long-period swells Sets of waves that have travelled great distances and offer good surf.

Long riding Big-distance horse riding.

MTB A common abbreviation for mountain biking.

Parahawking Paragliding combined with falconry.

Rappelling See abseiling.

Singletrack Tight, twisty and often technical section of running, riding or walking trail.

Skyrunning Mountain running on peaks over 2000m in height.




























Sport climbing Rock climbing using permanently fixed anchors.

SUP Stand-up paddleboarding, where people use a paddle to propel a large surfboard.

Trad Climbing When rockclimbers place their own protection (anchors) while ascending.

XC Cross-country mountain biking.

GUIDE TO SYMBOLS

 4WD (four-wheel driving)	 Adventure racing	 BASE jumping/ skydiving	 Canoeing	 Caving	 Climbing & mountaineering (including bouldering)	 Cycling (road biking/touring)	 Stand-up paddleboarding	 Wild swimming
 Diving & snorkelling	 Dune boarding/ volcano surfing	 Hiking	 Horse riding	 Ice skating	 Kayaking	 Kitesurfing	 Surfing	 Wind surfing
 Mountain biking (including bikepacking)	 Paragliding	 Rafting	 Running (trail/road)	 Sailing	 Skiing	 Snowboarding	 Trekking (overnight & harder hiking)	 Ziplining

Hiking the Routeburn track
in Fiordland National Park,
New Zealand

© Philip Lee Harvey / Lonely Planet

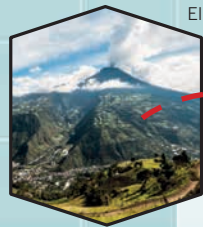
TOP 10 ADVENTURE HIGHLIGHTS



Sea kayaking around British Columbia's Haida Gwaii, 50km south of Alaska, is sensational.



Way out west, Moab in Utah attracts many mountain bikers, but don't miss the Sierra Nevada's trails.



Dive at dawn, then ascend into Ecuador's Avenue of the Volcanoes for more explosive adventures.



Chile's Torres del Paine is an adventure playground for hikers, bikers, climbers and kayakers.



Try kloofing in South Africa's incredible canyons, then explore the Drakensberg by bike or foot.



Besides its alpine offerings, France also features the world's best bouldering, at Fontainebleau.



For an urban adventure, paddle or ice-skate around Stockholm's archipelago, and camp on the islands.



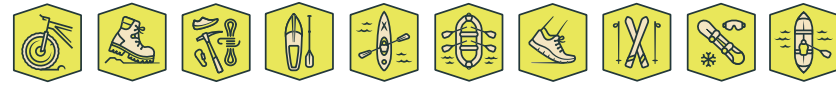
Beyond its busy cities, Japan's brilliant backcountry offering ranges from skiing to hiking and biking.



A fast-growing adventure travel hotspot, Sri Lanka has superb surfing and divine diving.



Australia's hiking and running trails traverse a rich diversity of terrain, from alpine to desert.



NEW ZEALAND

The land of the long white cloud is also a country of endless trails, boundless beaches, charging rivers and epic horizons, punctuated by imposing peaks.

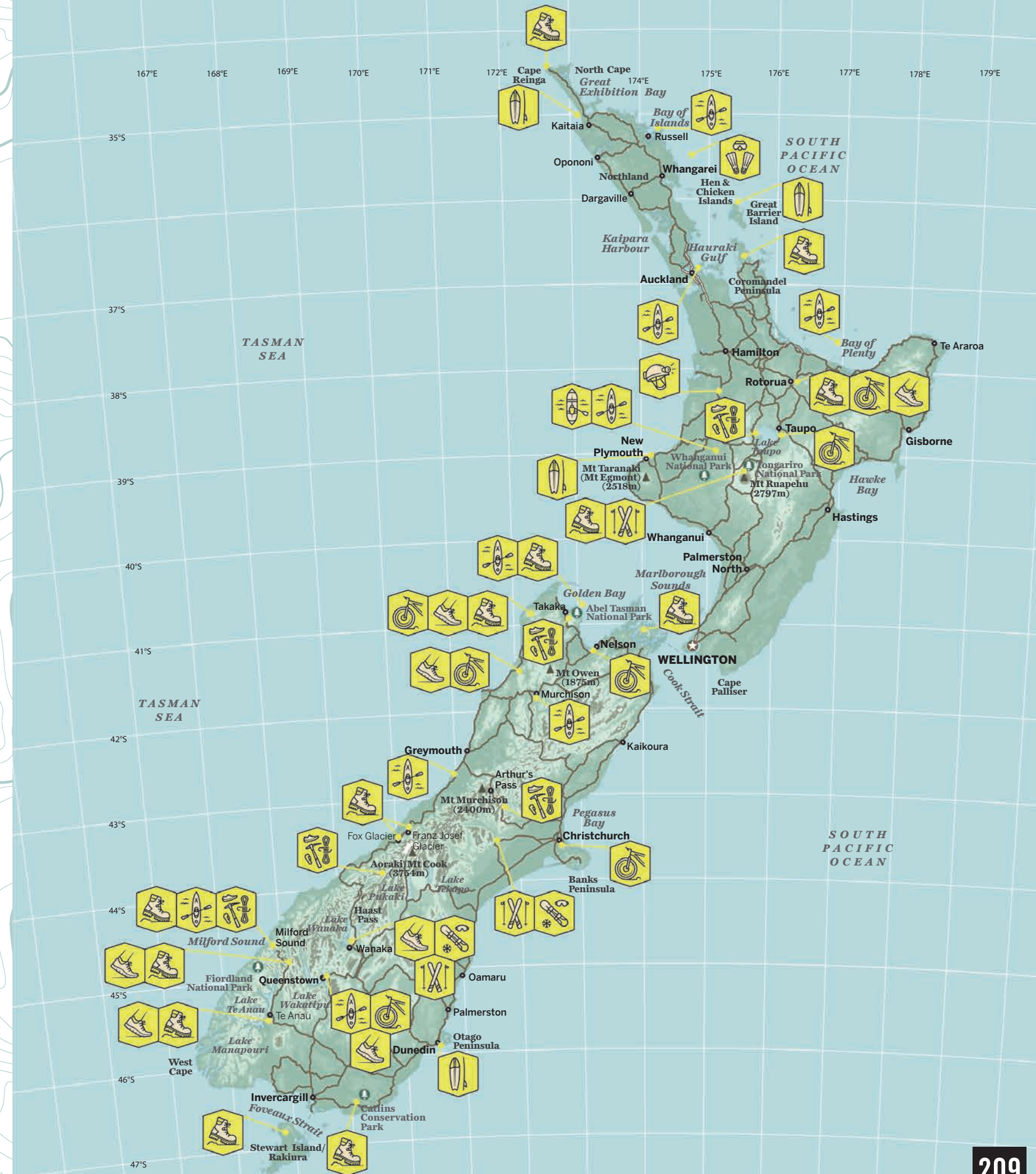
Despite tourism bodies and marketing people doing their utmost to recast this country as Middle Earth over the past decade or more, New Zealand isn't in the middle of anything. Teetering on the outer edge of the Pacific Ring of Fire, isolated at the southern extremity of the planet, whipped by weather that is utterly unforecastable, buckled by the soaring Southern Alps and sitting pretty and unpredictable atop multiple fault lines in the Earth's crust – this two-island nation is still physically fidgeting and shape shifting beneath the restless feet of its populace.

And what people this elementally powered place has produced. There are only four and a half million of them, but you'll always find a Kiwi at the very forefront of each new adventure pursuit and thrill-chasing trend, leading the way, surfing the wave and rolling the dice as they jump, run, ride, climb, spin, slide, plummet and paddle down, across or up whatever obstacle or opportunity they've decided to take on. The British did their utmost to claim him, but the first person to stand on the roof of Planet Earth, alongside Nepali Sherpa mountaineer

Tenzing Norgay, was a dyed-in-the-wool New Zealander. And Edmund Hillary had learned his trade well in his own backyard, on the frozen and unforgiving slopes of Mt Cook.

Visitors to New Zealand are often overwhelmed by the extreme arena they're suddenly flung among. You can barely go round a corner here without coming across something – a glacier, fiord, volcano, waterfall, mountain, gorge, surf-stroked bay, vividly coloured lake, thermally heated beach or bubbling puddle of mud – that will literally take your breath away. It's borderline ridiculous. And because of the country's position on the globe – a long-haul flight from absolutely everywhere else – you often get to explore the more eccentric corners of this extraordinary environment in relative solitude.

New Zealand is the place where the wildest dreams of everyday adventurers become a reality. Whether you consider yourself a tramping-camping-trailblazer, someone who gets their kicks in the saddle or with a paddle, a climber, skier or aspiring expedition zorb pilot – this is the country to come to in order to push your ability and ambition to the outer limit.





ROMANIA

Forget bloodied fangs and dictators, modern Romania offers gorgeous canyons, snow-capped peaks and a delta rippling with adventure.

Rambling through Romania you'll traverse volcanic cones in the Oaş and Harghita ranges, explore copious caves in the Apuseni Mountains, kayak 80 glacial

lakes in the Retezat Mountains and meander through meadows swaying with wildflowers on the Moldovan Plains. Heading east, the Buzău River's narrow gorge gushes whitewater, while waterways are calmer in the southern Danube Delta.

Canyoning

Nestled in the Apuseni Mountains, the **Galbenei Canyon** carves deep into a limestone massif creating a gorge with natural arches, caves and hundreds of metres of rock walls. The narrow and chilly channel is fed by an underground spring, creating a canyoner's wet dream with nine waterfalls and abseils up to 15m long. Plucky adventurers can plunge into potholes in places, while underground tunnels add to the allure. The

three via ferrata sections can be challenging if it's humid, as steel cables get slippery. Winter wading is a no-no (unless pneumonia's on your 'to-do' list); summertime splashing is the go-go.

Hiking

It would be rude to hike in the Southern Carpathians and not complete one of Europe's longest mountain traverses along the razor ridges of the **Făgăraş Mountains**. The country's highest point, Moldoveanu Peak (2544m), is here, along with more than 150 glacial lakes.

Kayaking

The huge Danube Delta is an ever-changing aquatic labyrinth where guides are essential. Paddle down side-canals, dangle a rod, scythe through swathes of reeds, camp on secluded islands amid sand dunes, and spy a wealth of wildlife, including millions of Egyptian pelicans. A twitcher's dream, the delta has Europe's highest concentration of bird colonies.



DON'T LEAVE WITHOUT...

Rafting the river Buzău (Grade II-III+ rapids), or going one better and kayaking/canoeing its pretty tributary, Basca, where experienced paddlers can tackle an extra 15km of Grade III-IV rapids in spring.

Retezat National Park in the Southern Carpathian Mountains offers idyllic hiking terrain.

© starash / Getty Images



RUSSIA

The largest country on Earth offers almost unlimited adventure potential, much of which is still relatively unexplored.

Russia's vast landmass holds everything from epic rolling plains, rugged mountains, colossal forests, endless tundra and active volcanoes. And, though years of communist rule made Russia a closed shop, international tourists, albeit in limited numbers, are slowly starting to gain access to its natural wonders. If you take the trouble to look, you can find extreme mountain bike rides, volcano hikes, challenging trail runs, unique dive locations and some of the biggest, least explored whitewater on the planet. Moscow and St Petersburg are the main entry points, but the 2014 Winter Olympics also put Sochi on the map. Siberia's Lake Baikal and wild Kamchatka are accessible but harder to reach, while the far northern wilderness is one of the world's most remote places. Crimea has huge potential, but it is currently a disputed region (see Ukraine on p291).

Hiking

Kamchatka's remote fumarole fields and bubbling geysers are a challenging, exciting destination. Most of the region is impossible to access, but Gorely and Mutnovsky volcanoes can be reached on a bumpy two-hour drive from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, while Uzon volcano is reachable by helicopter.

Lake Baikal, the world's oldest and deepest, has a growing trail network, including a three-day route from Listvyanka to Bolshoye Goloustnoye on coastal bluffs, sandy beaches and deep forest. Further east, **Altai** has routes through glacial mountains, river canyons and pristine blue lakes, particularly around Mt Belukha, though serious wilderness and poor trails make a guide essential.

Animal trekking safaris are on offer in **Siberia**, where the Sayansky Canyon leads to **Sayano-Shushensky Reserve** and the (remote) chance to spy rare snow leopards. In **Durminoskoye, Lazovsky** and **Zov Tigra** (Tigers' Call) national parks, guided treks seek Siberian tigers and Amur leopards. **Lake Kurile**, in Kamchatka, is a good bet for finding bears; there are so many around that an armed guard is essential.

Lake Baikal is a popular hiking destination, and in winter hikers can venture onto the ice.



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