

# On the Road



## CHARLES RAWLINGS-WAY

### Coordinating Author

New Zealand is so flush with swoon-worthy vistas, empty swathes of coastline and rampant, snowcapped mountain ranges that the locals are often blasé about the smaller stuff. This isn't to say that it's any less beautiful, it's just less big! Wairere Falls (p351), a picture-perfect little waterfall tumbling down a cliff behind Whakatane's main street, goes almost unheralded.

**SCOTT KENNEDY** You can't come to Queenstown (p607), the Adventure Capital of the World, and not scare yourself – *right?* In a town where all things *fear* and *beer* intermingle, I found myself hanging over the edge of a cliff wondering what the hell I was doing. No turning back, all there was to do was lean back and enjoy the ride.



**BRETT ATKINSON** I didn't spy any whales during my time in the Catlins, but this wind-up cetacean at the Lost Gypsy Gallery (p668) was definitely the next best thing. It's bigger than most of Blair Sommerville's other kinetic sculptures, and loads of fun. Later, I did increase my marine mammal tally, and spied a sea lion chilling on the beach near nearby Nugget Point.

**SARAH BENNETT** Tipped off by members of the local mountain-bike club, I needed little encouragement to check out the new Canaan Downs loop track (p476). Despite a few tricky bits and the odd sheep hazard, I managed to stay in the saddle most of the time. I also got a little air – woo hoo!

**PETER DRAGICEVICH** Matakana (p148), north of Auckland, may be well and truly gentrified (would you believe that these hard-nosed giantesses adorn the new public toilets), but if you're a lover of wine, food and beaches – and I'm guilty on all counts – it's a great stop. Just beware the terminal *hongi* (traditional Maori greeting).



# Destination New Zealand

You probably know all about the scenic side of New Zealand – the NZ of tourist ads, *Lord of the Rings* and nature documentaries. You may also know about its reputation as an action-adventure destination. This is, after all, a nation that is so dedicated to doing odd things with bits of rubber and plastic that it invented bungy jumping, black-water rafting and zorbing. Some of you may even know about NZ's anti-nuclear stand, its passion for rugby, its fondness for sheep. Maybe you've tucked into some NZ lamb, spread NZ butter on your toast or downed a particularly zingy bottle of Marlborough sauvignon blanc.

Despite the country's growing profile on the international stage, there's one dimension of a trip to NZ that you probably haven't counted on: the extent to which the average Kiwi will genuinely want you to have a really, really good time. The more cynical might call it insecurity, but whatever the motivation, it's in the interactions with everyday, eager-to-please Kiwis that lasting memories are made. In the words of an enduring Maori proverb: *He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!* (What is the most important thing in the world? It is people! It is people! It is people!).

Which is not to say that everyone wanders around with Prozac grins, hugging trees. A short drive on Auckland's motorways will quickly dispel that notion. New Zealanders, like the rest of the world, are still struggling to shrug off the gloom of the global economic crisis, which pushed the economy into recession and sent unemployment soaring.

What a difference a couple of years makes! In the last edition of this book we wrote of the strength of the economy, low unemployment, high export returns from the farming sector and large budget surpluses. Back then the severe-seeming but highly respected Helen Clark was prime minister. In 2008, just as the US was trading in George Bush for Barack Obama, NZ displayed its typically contrary attitude to world trends by shifting from a centre-left government to a centre-right one. Clark was ousted after nine years in power and went on to accept the third-highest job at the UN – Head of the UN Development Programme.

Enter John Key. NZ's new prime minister is surfing a wave of popularity due in large part to his image as a thoroughly likeable Kiwi bloke. He's the guy pictured, beer in hand, hosting a barbecue for NZ's future king, Prince William. He's the goofy guy slipping down the stairs and breaking his arm at a Chinese New Year celebration. His laid-back manner says as much about the NZ way of life as the former PM's penchant for wilderness hikes and mountain climbing.

But enough politics: most Kiwis are more interested in the rugby. In 2011, NZ will play host to the Rugby World Cup (RWC) and chances are, whether you travel before, during or after the tournament, you'll be thoroughly sick of hearing about rugby by the end of your stay.

Rugby plays a special part in the nation's consciousness, partly because it was one of the first things in which NZ truly excelled. The All Blacks are the most successful rugby team in history (with a 74% winning record), but they've only snagged the Cup once. After yet another dazzling failure in France in 2007, the All Blacks are determined to redeem themselves on home soil. The fragile national psyche took a beating then, with distraught Kiwis turning to each other, saying, 'We suck at the only thing we're good at!'

Actually, that's not quite true. NZ is the current world champion in rugby league (yes, it is a different game) and women's rugby, and the runner-up in

## FAST FACTS

Population: 4.4 million

Area: 268,680 sq km  
(similar to Colorado,  
bigger than the UK)

GDP growth: -1% (2009)

Inflation: 2%

Unemployment: 6.5%

Life expectancy: tuatara  
(native lizards) 100+,  
kauri trees 2000+

International visitors: 2.4  
million in 2009

Total number of snakes: 0

Species of native  
mammals: 2 (both bats)

Distance between North  
and South Islands: 23km  
(14 miles)

**'the average  
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netball. And by the time you read this, the national soccer (football) team will have played in its second-ever FIFA World Cup. Who knows, it may even have won its first-ever Cup match.

But all of those achievements will pale into insignificance if NZ dips out of the RWC in the finals rounds for the *fifth* consecutive time. If you're travelling in spring 2011, come armed with enough tissues to console a nation, but expect mass hysteria in the event of a victory.

Counterbalancing the hard-man rugby image, the country's other icon is soft, fluffy...and delicious. If NZ built its national pride on rugby, it built its economy on sheep. In 1982, sheep numbers peaked at 70.3 million, or 22 sheep per person. Since then the removal of government subsidies and the lure of the profitable dairy industry have seen flocks fall drastically, leaving each New Zealander with less than eight sheep to keep them company.

Not only are cows not as cuddly as sheep, they have a much bigger carbon footprint. Farming them requires more intensive methods, including more fertiliser, feed and water. On top of that, the methane produced by the nation's seven-million-strong herd makes up a large proportion of NZ's harmful greenhouse gas emissions – leading the former government to consider a 'fart tax'.

For now, however, farts are free and whatever the economic or rugby prognosis, you can be guaranteed of a warm welcome by the majority of people you encounter in NZ. Kiwis love sharing their spectacular country with visitors and in turn seeing it anew through foreign eyes. They never tire of being reminded of the rugged beauty of their beaches, mountains, fiords, glaciers, native forests and thermal regions. And once you experience these natural highlights, you won't tire of reminding them.

# Getting Started

By world standards, New Zealand is an easy, accessible place to visit. Amiable locals, a moderate climate, good personal security, brilliant roads, well-organised activities and the fantastic i-SITE visitor information centre network (see p697) make travelling here a breeze! There's also a network of around 30 Department of Conservation (DOC) visitor centres around NZ – a handy resource for planning activities in parks, and for natural and cultural features. There are eating and accommodation options for all budgets, from a felaful and a dorm bunk to a crayfish dinner and a spa suite.

If you're scuttling between cities pursuing urban virtues, you won't need to do much forward planning, but if you're tramping into the wilderness or devising a cycling epic, do some research on equipment, accommodation, track and hut passes, and weather, and book what you need to well in advance.

## WHEN TO GO

The warmer high-season months (November to April) are ripe for outdoor exploration. Summer (December to February) is also when Kiwis crank up the food and wine festivals, concerts and sports events. December in the far north can be rainy, however. If you're a snow bunny, visit when the powder is thickest – June to August is skiing high season. Remember, though, that in winter, warm-weather beach towns might be half asleep.

If you want a *real* holiday, staying and eating in your venues of choice, avoid school holidays (particularly late December to early February) and public holidays (p691). In the less touristed 'shoulder' period from late February to April, the weather is at its best (less chance of rain), the kids are back at school, and the ocean is still warm(ish) – a much better time to travel.

NZ is smack-bang in the middle of the Roaring Forties; these prevailing west-to-east winds buffet the country year-round, ranging from gentle breezes to tempestuous gales. On both islands it's drier in the east than in the west, where mountain ranges snare moisture-laden winds from the Tasman Sea. It's usually a few degrees cooler on the South Island than the North Island. Wherever you are, remember that NZ has a maritime climate – the weather changes rapidly. Anyone tramping at any time of year needs to be well prepared for all weather conditions. The **New Zealand Mountain Safety Council** (☎ 04-385 7162; [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz)) has the information you need – available from DOC visitor centres nationwide.

See Climate Charts (p687) for more information.

### DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Double-checking the visa situation (see p698)
- A travel-insurance policy covering you for high-risk activities (see p691)
- Insect repellent to keep the sandflies at bay (see p688)
- The ability to get excited over a game of rugby (p44)
- Your driver's licence – the best way to see NZ's nooks and crannies is at your own speed (p709)
- A bottomless appetite for Kiwi food and wine (p60)
- A mobile phone (p697) for booking restaurants and accommodation on the hop
- An open ear and a notepad to jot down the NZ bands you're going to download when you get home (see [www.amplifier.co.nz](http://www.amplifier.co.nz))

## COSTS & MONEY

In recent years burgeoning tourism in NZ has seen prices rise with demand. However, if you're visiting from Europe or North America, it's still a fairly economical destination, unless you're throwing yourself out of a plane or jetboating every day. Activities like these generally top expense lists – think carefully about what you'll spend your money on.

Gastronomes will find food to be surprisingly pricey – cooked breakfasts at snazzy cafes average around \$16, while main courses at top-end restaurants cost \$30 and beyond. Food in remote areas also costs more, without necessarily being of better quality.

If you do some sightseeing, eat out once or twice a day and stay in cheap motels or B&Bs, budget on at least \$150 per day (per person, travelling as a pair), not including car hire or activities. Packing kids into your suitcases obviously means greater expense, but museums, cinemas, and tour and activity organisers usually offer discounts for youngsters, and there are plenty of open-air attractions available for free!

At the low-cost end, if you camp or stay in hostels, cook your own meals, repress the urge to drink beer, tackle attractions independently and travel on a bus pass, you could probably eke out an existence on \$80 per day. But if you want to enjoy the occasional restaurant meal and glass of wine, then \$100 per day is more realistic.

## TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Since our inception in 1973, Lonely Planet has encouraged readers to tread lightly, travel responsibly and enjoy the magic that independent travel affords. International travel is growing at a jaw-dropping rate, and we still firmly believe in the benefits it can bring – but, as always, we encourage you to consider the impact your visit will have on both the global environment and the local economies, cultures and ecosystems.

It's not hard to make your NZ trip ecosavvy. For starters, check out our GreenDex (p745), which lists ecofriendly operators. Volunteer some of your time to a local environmental program. Consider carbon-offsetting your flights. If you're taking a tour, ask about the company's environmental policies: are they NZ-owned? Sensitive to indigenous culture? How do they dispose of rubbish? Support NZ businesses rather than multinational chains and eat at local restaurants and buy from farmers markets that sell locally sourced produce. Instead of car hire, consider car-pooling to travel from town to town; check hostel noticeboards to find a ride. Stay at hotels and hostels that actively engage in recycling and waste reduction. If you're tramping into the forests or along the coast, carry out your rubbish, travel in small groups, camp on durable surfaces, and don't wash in or near water sources.

### HOW MUCH?

Cup of decent coffee \$4

Movie ticket \$14

Dorm bed \$25-35

Motel room \$100-160

Magnificent scenery \$0

### DIY NZ

At Lonely Planet we love travel (no kidding...), and we reckon part of the adventure is to fly by the seat of your pants. We're dedicated to bringing you comprehensive in-depth destination coverage, but we also encourage you to ditch your guidebook. Really! Go AWOL for a day or a week and explore NZ beyond the pages of a book.

Low population density = empty spaces – it's easy to get off the beaten track. Buy a detailed road map, pick a little town down a little road and go for it – you can't really lose when the scenery is so great. Scan the bulletin boards at local cafes for performances that night or swap a yarn or two with locals at a country pub. Kiwis are famously friendly – ask them about their favourite places to eat, hang out or blow off steam.

After your trip, drop us a line and tell us what you discovered: [www.lonelyplanet.com/contact](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/contact).

# TOP 10



## MANDATORY MOVIES

Spending an evening or three watching classic NZ movies makes a great intro to the country's much-publicised scenery, and will help you get under the national skin. Captured on celluloid, wry humour and an often-bleak mysticism await. See p47 for reviews of these and other locally produced films.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <i>Once Were Warriors</i> (1994) Director: Lee Tamahori                | 6 <i>In My Father's Den</i> (2004) Director: Brad McGann      |
| 2 <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> trilogy (2001–03) Director: Peter Jackson | 7 <i>Kaikohe Demolition</i> (2004) Director: Florian Harbicht |
| 3 <i>Whale Rider</i> (2002) Director: Niki Caro                          | 8 <i>Boy</i> (2010) Director: Taika Waititi                   |
| 4 <i>Rain</i> (2001) Director: Christine Jeffs                           | 9 <i>Out of the Blue</i> (2006) Director: Robert Sarkies      |
| 5 <i>The Piano</i> (1993) Director: Jane Campion                         | 10 <i>Sione's Wedding</i> (2006) Director: Chris Graham       |

## BRILLIANT BOOKS

Escapist plots, multilayered fiction, reinvented realities and character-driven social commentary: Kiwi literature presents an opportunity to learn much about the country, drawing on NZ's unsettled history, burgeoning cultural awareness and the physical power of the landscape. See p47 for more on NZ literature.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <i>The Bone People</i> (1988) Keri Hulme                   | 6 <i>Live Bodies</i> (1998) Maurice Gee           |
| 2 <i>Mister Pip</i> (2007) Lloyd Jones                       | 7 <i>The 10pm Question</i> (2009) Kate de Goldi   |
| 3 <i>The Carpathians</i> (1988) Janet Frame                  | 8 <i>The Vintner's Luck</i> (2000) Elizabeth Knox |
| 4 <i>Potiki</i> (1986) Patricia Grace                        | 9 <i>Opportunity</i> (2007) Charlotte Grimshaw    |
| 5 <i>Bulibasha: King of the Gypsies</i> (1994) Witi Ihimaera | 10 <i>Hibiscus Coast</i> (2005) Paula Morris      |

## FESTIVAL FRENZY

Kiwis love to party, and many travellers plan their journeys around food, wine and arts fiestas. Following are some of our favourite excuses to get festive. For nationwide events and further suggestions, see the Directory (p689) and the Festivals & Events sections in destination chapters.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <b>World Buskers Festival</b> ( <a href="http://www.worldbuskersfestival.com">www.worldbuskersfestival.com</a> ) Christchurch, January (p531)                              | 6 <b>New Zealand Gold Guitar Awards</b> ( <a href="http://www.goldguitars.co.nz">www.goldguitars.co.nz</a> ) Gore, June (p666)              |
| 2 <b>Parihaka</b> ( <a href="http://www.parihaka.com">www.parihaka.com</a> ) Taranaki, January (see boxed text, p266)  | 7 <b>Queenstown Winter Festival</b> ( <a href="http://www.winterfestival.co.nz">www.winterfestival.co.nz</a> ) Queenstown, June/July (p618) |
| 3 <b>Rippon Festival</b> ( <a href="http://www.ripponfestival.co.nz">www.ripponfestival.co.nz</a> ) Wanaka, February (p636)  | 8 <b>Nelson Arts Festival</b> ( <a href="http://www.nelsonartsfestival.co.nz">www.nelsonartsfestival.co.nz</a> ) Nelson, October (p460)     |
| 4 <b>Fringe NZ</b> ( <a href="http://www.fringe.org.nz">www.fringe.org.nz</a> ) Wellington, February/March (p406)  | 9 <b>Seafest</b> ( <a href="http://www.seafest.co.nz">www.seafest.co.nz</a> ) Kaikoura, October (p452)                                      |
| 5 <b>Pasifika Festival</b> ( <a href="http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/whatson/events/pasifika">www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/whatson/events/pasifika</a> ) Auckland, March (p113) | 10 <b>Opotiki Rodeo</b> ( <a href="http://www.rodeonz.co.nz">www.rodeonz.co.nz</a> ) Opotiki, December (p357)                               |

For more tips online:

**Department of Conservation** (DOC; [www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved](http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved)) Conservation events and programs that visitors can engage with.

**Leave No Trace** ([www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)) Low-impact camping and tramping tips.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com/responsibletravel](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/responsibletravel)) Tips on sustainable travel.

**Organic Explorer** ([www.organicexplorer.co.nz](http://www.organicexplorer.co.nz)) Comprehensive guide to ecofriendly places to eat, stay and explore throughout NZ.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

Given NZ's starring role on the world tourism stage, the current bloom in dedicated NZ travel literature isn't surprising.

Bob Moore, a Wellington-based Englishman, traversed every kilometre of State Hwy 1 (NZ's national drag) then wrote *The 1 Thing: A Small Epic Journey Down New Zealand's Mother Road* (2006). Lyttelton-based Joe Bennett, another Englishman-in-NZ, wrote *A Land of Two Halves* (2004), a tale of hitchhiking around the country.

If you're into cycling, pick up *Long Cloud Ride* by Josie Dew (2007). Dew – a roaming Brit cyclist – chronicles her nine-month, 10,000km NZ journey. Through wind and rain, she gets close to the Kiwi psyche.

Liberal-minded travellers who don't mind the odd tree-hug will love *Slipping into Paradise: Why I Live in New Zealand* by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (2004), a gushing sonnet to NZ from a relative newcomer to the country.

*How to Watch a Game of Rugby* by Spiro Zavos (2004) is a brilliant insight into the national preoccupation by a respected sports journalist, and will ensure you don't ask stupid questions when you're watching the All Blacks at the pub. In the same series, astronomer Richard Hall helps you find the Southern Cross in *How to Gaze at the Southern Stars* (2005).

They're not technically travel lit, but fans of Kiwi films will enjoy Hamish McDouall's *100 Essential New Zealand Films* (2009), and history buffs will be engrossed by the comprehensive *Penguin History of New Zealand* (2003) by Michael King.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**100% Pure New Zealand** ([www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com)) NZ's official tourism site, with comprehensive visitor info.

**Department of Conservation** (DOC; [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)) Indispensable DOC parks, recreation and conservation info across NZ.

**Destination New Zealand** ([www.destination-nz.com](http://www.destination-nz.com)) Travel guide with excellent website listings.

**DineOut** ([www.dineout.co.nz](http://www.dineout.co.nz)) Restaurant reviews and info across the nation.

**Living Landscapes** ([www.livinglandscapes.co.nz](http://www.livinglandscapes.co.nz)) Maori tourism operators across NZ.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Get started with NZ summaries and travellers trading info on the Thorn Tree.

**Muzic.net** ([www.muzic.net.nz](http://www.muzic.net.nz)) Gigs, reviews, bios, charts – Wellington rock to Dunedin dub.

**New Zealand Tourism Online** ([www.tourism.net.nz](http://www.tourism.net.nz)) Commercial site with 10,000-plus listings and plenty of useful info.

**Stuff** ([www.stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz), [www.stuff.co.nz/blogs](http://www.stuff.co.nz/blogs)) NZ news (sourced from Fairfax New Zealand publications) and an array of blogs.

**Te Ara** ([www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz)) An online encyclopaedia of NZ.



# Itineraries

## SHORT BREAKS

### AUCKLAND ENCOUNTER Four to Seven Days / Auckland to Auckland

Bounce around Auckland's stellar bars and restaurants, museums, islands and beaches – multicultural NZ at its most engaging.

Check out the Maori gallery at the **Auckland Museum** (p98), then cross the Domain to **K Rd** (p119) for lunch. Take our architectural **walking tour** (p111), stopping at **Auckland Art Gallery** (p103) and the impossible-to-miss **Sky Tower** (p103). **Ponsonby** (p120) awaits for dinner and drinks.

Ferry over to **Rangitoto Island** (p129), then to **Devonport** (p121) for a meal. Check out **Cheltenham Beach** (p105), then dine at the **Engine Room** (p121). Explore the **Waitakere Ranges Regional Park** (p141), **Karekare** (p142) and **Piha** (p142), then hit the **Kingsland** (p120) restaurants. Have breakfast in **Mt Eden** (p120), climb **Maungawhau** (p99) then ferry-hop to **Waiheke Island** (p131) for some wineries and beaches.

Not far from Auckland, you can snorkel at **Goat Island Marine Reserve** (p150), explore the legendary **Bay of Islands** (p161), ocean-gaze at **Cape Reinga** (p180), ogle the giant trees at **Waipoua Kauri Forest** (p187), explore the **Waitomo Caves** (p242), surf at **Raglan** (p230) or beach yourself at **Whitianga** (p202).



Some say Auckland is just Sydney for beginners. We think not. Sydney doesn't have access to two oceans, nor does it have the amazing melange of Polynesian culture on offer in the 'City of Sails'. Enjoy the big smoke, then explore some local highlights with this 450–900km itinerary.



## CHRISTCHURCH EXPLORER

Four to Seven Days /  
Christchurch to Christchurch

Winging in to Christchurch with a week or so up your sleeve, there'll be plenty to keep you entertained, both urban and wild.

Hit the city running with a kick-ass coffee at a **High St cafe** (p535), then a juddery circuit on the city's **tramway** (p525) to assess the lay of the land. Jump off at the **Arts Centre** (p525) and have a sticky-beak around the galleries in the area. Other essentials to check off your list include the **Canterbury Museum** (p525) and the **Christchurch Art Gallery** (p525), and don't miss an evening session in the kooky bars in **Lyttelton** (p542) and restaurants in **Sumner** (p534).

The Avon River cuts a lazy, inoffensive ribbon through town – check the flow in the **Botanic Gardens** (p524) or push off into the stream on a **punt** (p527). Close down the day with some boozy wanderings around **Poplar St** and **SOL Sq** (p536).

Swarm into the **shops** on High St (p538), before chilling your bones at the **International Antarctic Centre** (p526), or paddling a Maori canoe and tucking into a traditional Maori feast at **Willowbank Wildlife Reserve** (p527).

Enough city already? Take a trip out of town for a ride on the **gondola** (p527), then cruise out to the formerly volcanic **Banks Peninsula** – explore Francophile **Akaroa** (p542) with its wildlife-rich harbour, and the peninsula's photogenic outer bays.

Spend a few nights on the rambling road: head a couple of hours north for some whale-watching and crayfishing in **Kaikoura** (p449), wander west to **Lake Tekapo** (p561) and the snowy heights of **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p566), or south to check out the zany boulders at **Moeraki** (p604); don't miss dinner at **Fleur's Place** (p604).

Christchurch has that unusual mix of urban civility and wild abandon just beyond the doorstep. Spend a few days pinballing between downtown bars, shops, museums and galleries, then hit the road (Jack) and chase down some mountains, whales, lakes and forests on this 650–750km trail.



## KIWI CLASSICS

12 Days / Auckland to Auckland

With just 12 days, you're gonna have to move fast to squeeze in all the good bits, north and south!

The City of Sails, **Auckland** (p94) is a South Pacific melting pot – spend a few days here shopping, eating, drinking and savouring NZ at its most cosmopolitan and worldly. Truck north to the **Bay of Islands** (p161) for a dose of aquatic adventure, then scoot back to check out the forests and beaches on the **Coromandel Peninsula** (p191). Further south in **Rotorua** (p319), get a nose full of egg-gas, giggle at volcanic mud-bubbles and experience some Maori culture. Get your skates on and cruise down to **Napier** (p378), NZ's archetypal art-deco sun-city. While you're here, don't miss the bottled offerings of the **Hawke's Bay Wine Country** (p388). Down in **Wellington** (p395), the coffee's hot, the beer's cold and wind from the politicians generates its own low-pressure system.

Swan over to the South Island for a few days to experience the best the south has to offer. Start with a tour through the **Marlborough Wine Region** (p446), then jump on a boat/plane/helicopter for a close encounter with a massive marine mammal in **Kaikoura** (p449). Refined, manicured **Christchurch** (p519) is next, followed by the coast road south to the wildlife-rich **Otago Peninsula** (p585), which juts abstractly away from the Victorian facades of student-filled **Dunedin** (p574). Try to catch some live music while you're in town!

Head inland via SH8 to bungy-obsessed **Queenstown** (p607). If you have time, you'll never forget an encounter with **Franz Josef Glacier** (p508) and **Fox Glacier** (p512) on the West Coast. Play aeroplane hopscotch from **Hokitika** (p500) to Christchurch and back to Auckland.



Classy cities, geothermal eruptions, fantastic wine, Maori culture, glaciers, extreme activities, isolated beaches and forests: these are a few of NZ's favourite things, and what you'll want to see if you're a first-time, short-trip visitor. Sample the best of both islands on this 3000km trip.

## TRAVEL FURTHER

### ICONS & BEYOND

#### Four to Six Weeks / Auckland to Christchurch

Virgin visitors to the country will want to check out NZ's tourist icons, and maybe throw in some active wilderness experiences for good measure.

Cruise the sail-filled harbours of hip inner-city **Auckland** (p94), then take SH1 north to the glorious, winterless **Bay of Islands** (p161): surfboards, kayaks, scuba gear – take your pick. South of Auckland, hold your nose through the sulphurous sweats of **Rotorua** (p319), then hook further south for idyllic **Taupo** (p289) and go tramping around the triple-peaked wilderness of **Tongariro National Park** (p304). Take SH43 west to New Plymouth and an eyeful of photogenic **Mt Taranaki** (p251), then shuffle southeast to Whanganui, detouring along gorgeous **Whanganui River Road** (p276). Stay up late in caffeinated **Wellington** (p395) and watch the nocturnal freak show pass onwards to oblivion.

Across Cook Strait, head west for some kayaking in **Abel Tasman National Park** (p472), or disappear into the **Marlborough Sounds** (p436) for a day.

Heading further west, track down the rain-swept West Coast with its iconic **glaciers** (p508 & p512), all the way to long-lost **Jackson Bay** (p516), then head over Haast Pass to adrenaline-addicted **Queenstown** (p607). Mix and match highways to Te Anau for the beguiling side-road to **Milford Sound** (p617), then backtrack to SH6 and head north, swapping over to SH8 for an eyeful of cloud-piercing **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p566), before veering east back to cathedral-centred **Christchurch** (p519). Take an afternoon to explore the amazing **Banks Peninsula** (p542), south of town.

Check some big-ticket attractions off your list, with kayaking, tramping and wildlife-watching breaking up the road trip. Take your time on this well-travelled 3300km route – switch into holiday mode, embrace nature and savour the flavours of dual-island travel.



## OFF THE BEATEN TRAIL **Four to Six Weeks / Auckland to Christchurch**

Journey to the ends of NZ and experience places far removed from urban clash and humdrum.

Beat a hasty retreat from hypertensive **Auckland** (p94) to tiny **Tutukaka** (p159) and visit the fish-rich waters and underwater labyrinths of the **Poor Knights Islands** (p159). Beyond the Bay of Islands is rugged Aupouri Peninsula, the tip of which is **Cape Reinga** (p180), shrouded in solitude and Maori lore.

Venture back south through Rotorua to the lush leaf-scapes of **Te Urewera National Park** (p374) and the craggy ranges of **East Cape** (p361). Follow SH2 south into the sheepy **Wairarapa** (p422) before soaring over the otherworldly, cloud-wrapped Rimutaka Range and along wiggly Akatarawa Rd to the deserted beaches of the **Kapiti Coast** (p419). If you have time, float offshore to mystical **Kapiti Island** (p421). Chug across Cook Strait to Picton, then lose your way in the waterways of the **Marlborough Sounds** (p436).

Detour west past artsy Nelson to ecofriendly, chilled-out **Golden Bay** (p475; more paintbrushes than people) and enormous **Kahurangi National Park** (p480). Travel southwest, where a memorable road north of Westport trundles up to the caverns of **Oparara Basin** (p489). Southbound, divert to the inland extremities of **Arthur's Pass National Park** (p552), and don't miss a voyage on desolate **Doubtful Sound** (p656). Ferry yourself to end-of-the-world **Stewart Island** (p672), then kick back in the overgrown **Catlins** (p666) for a couple of days.

Detour north on SH8 through Central Otago, passing tiny towns en route to mountain-biking **Alexandra** (p592) and hang-glider-hung **Omarama** (p602). Trek back to the east coast via the **Waitaki Valley** (p602) on SH83, then hop south to mellow **Oamaru** (p597) before a big-city reality check back in **Christchurch** (p519).



It's hard to find paths-less-travelled in NZ these days, but this epic 5400km route from NZ's northermost fingernail to its detached southern toe takes in plenty of vacant landscapes. If your timing's good, you may feel like you've carved off a slice of heaven all for yourself.

## TAILORED TRIPS

### PLANES, TRAINS & AUTOMOBILES

With camera-conductive panoramas out every NZ window, getting from A to B is half the fun.

For a bird's-eye view of NZ, take a glider trip over **Omarama** (p602), a scenic flight above **Milford Sound** (p617), a chopper ride over **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p569) and the **West Coast glaciers** (p508 & p512), or a knee-trembling hang-glide above **Nelson** (p459) or **Queenstown** (p614).

Trainspotting romantics should try the **Taiari Gorge Railway** (p585), the **Overlander** (p127) from Auckland to Wellington via the Raurimu Spiral and Tongariro National Park, or the **TranzAlpine** (p499) epic from Christchurch to Greymouth over snowbound Arthur's Pass.

The best stretches of Kiwi tarmac include State Highway 6 (**SH6**) down the West Coast (especially around Punakaiki and from Haast to Queenstown); **SH73** from Christchurch to Greymouth across Arthur's Pass; lonesome **SH35** around East Cape; the rainy **Whanganui River Road** (p280); bleak **SH2** from Wellington to Featherston over the Rimutaka Range; and **SH60** over Takaka Hill west of Motueka.

Bobbing around in a boat, the **Wellington-Picton ferry** (p416) is a perfect Marlborough Sounds snapshot. Take a kayak trip around **Abel Tasman National Park** (p474), **Doubtful Sound** (p657) or **Okarito Lagoon** (p506), a safari up the **Haast River** (p515), a jetboat thrill-ride in **Queenstown** (p612) or paddleboat cruise on the **Whanganui River** (p273).

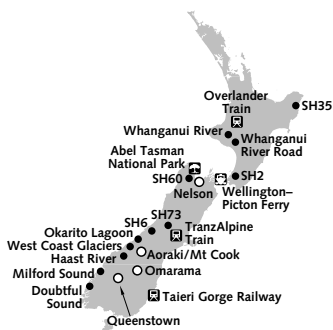
### FOODIE NZ

Forget porridge and meat-and-two-veg: contemporary Kiwi cuisine is a gourmet delight, highlighted by fab food festivals, boutique wineries, locally sourced produce and traditional Maori fare.

Look for these foodie fiestas: **Harvest Hawke's Bay** (p387), **Gisborne Food & Wine Festival** (p370), **Whitianga Scallop Festival** (p203), **Hokitika Wild Foods Festival** (p502), **Kawhia Kai Festival** (p240), **Bluff Oyster & Southland Seafood Festival** (p665), **Seafest** (p452) in Kaikoura, the **Marlborough Wine Festival** (p444) and **Toast Martinborough** (p424).

For local produce, hit the organic green-grocers or **Hawke's Bay Farmers Market** (p390), **Lyttelton Farmers Market** (p542) near Christchurch, **Dunedin Farmers Market** (p582) or the **Nelson Market** (p458).

For a *hangi* (Maori feast), try Tikitiki's **Eastender Backpackers** (p364), or **Mitai Maori Village** and **Tamaki Maori Village** (p323) in Rotorua.



# The Authors



## CHARLES RAWLINGS-WAY

**Coordinating Author,  
Waikato & the King Country, Taranaki,  
Whanganui & Palmerston North, Rotorua & the Bay of Plenty**

English by birth, Australian by chance, All Blacks fan by choice: Charles considers himself a worldly lad, but his early understanding of Aotearoa was less than comprehensive. He realised there was more to NZ when a wandering uncle returned with a faux-jade *tiki* in 1981. He wore it with pride until he saw the NZ cricket team's beige uniforms in 1982... Mt Taranaki's summit, Raglan's breaks and Whanganui's charm have helped him forgive: he's once again smitten with the country's landscapes, locals, and determination to sculpt its own political and indigenous destiny. Roll on Rugby World Cup 2011!



## BRETT ATKINSON

**Christchurch & Canterbury, Dunedin & Otago,  
Fiordland & Southland, Stewart Island**

Although he's lived in Auckland for four decades, Brett Atkinson never misses a chance to explore the rugged mountains, lakes, and coastline of New Zealand's South Island. On his second extended research trip to the 'Mainland', he kayaked Doubtful Sound, shared the audacious scenery of Banks Peninsula and the Catlins with his family, and unearthed more than a few places to drink NZ's excellent microbrewed beers. Brett has contributed to guidebooks covering four of the planet's continents, and covered more than 40 countries as a freelance travel writer. See [www.brett-atkinson.net](http://www.brett-atkinson.net) for his latest work.



## SARAH BENNETT

**The East Coast, Wellington Region,  
Marlborough & Nelson**

Raised among the cherry trees of Marlborough, Sarah migrated to Wellington at 16 and has lived there ever since, except for various travels and a stint in London working in Lonely Planet's UK office. An arguably flawed guidebook writer due to eternal optimism and irrepressible nationalism ('New Zealand... what's not to like?'), she has done her best to find fault wherever she can, especially in regard to ill-chosen garnish and inadequate beer selection. Sarah's other books are *The Best of Wellington*, *Let's Go Camping* and *The New Zealand Trampers' Handbook*, all of which she co-authored with her husband, Lee Slater.

### LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

Why is our travel information the best in the world? It's simple: our authors are passionate, dedicated travellers. They don't take freebies in exchange for positive coverage so you can be sure the advice you're given is impartial. They travel widely to all the popular spots, and off the beaten track. They don't research using just the internet or phone. They discover new places not included in any other guidebook. They personally visit thousands of hotels, restaurants, palaces, trails, galleries, temples and more. They speak with dozens of locals every day to make sure you get the kind of insider knowledge only a local could tell you. They take pride in getting all the details right, and in telling it how it is. Think you can do it? Find out how at [lonelyplanet.com](http://lonelyplanet.com).



## PETER DRAGICEVICH

**Auckland Region,  
Northland & the Bay of Islands,  
Coromandel Region, Taupo & the Central Plateau**

After nearly a decade working for off-shore publishing companies, Peter's life has come full circle, returning to West Auckland where he was raised. As managing editor of Auckland-based *Express* newspaper he spent much of the nineties writing about the local arts, club and bar scene. This is the second edition of the New Zealand guide he's worked on and, after co-authoring 17 books for Lonely Planet, it remains his favourite gig.



## SCOTT KENNEDY

**The West Coast, Queenstown & Wanaka**

Scott Kennedy grew up in the mountains of Western Canada and has always been drawn to wild places. When he first set foot in New Zealand a decade ago he knew he'd found the place he was looking for. For the last eight years he's called Queenstown home and jumped at the chance to pass on the inside story to Lonely Planet readers. A passionate fan of the outdoors, Scott is an avid skier, mountain biker, rock climber, trumper, runner and surfer. When Scott isn't travelling the world penning guidebooks for Lonely Planet he works as a freelance writer, photographer and filmmaker – with a focus on adventure of course. Visit Scott's website at [www.adventureskope.com](http://www.adventureskope.com).

## CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

**Professor James Belich** wrote the History chapter (p29). James is one of NZ's pre-eminent historians and the award-winning author of *The New Zealand Wars*, *Making Peoples* and *Paradise Reforged*. He has also worked in TV – *New Zealand Wars* was screened in NZ in 1998.

**Tony Horwitz** wrote the Captain James Cook boxed text (p33) in the History chapter. Tony is a Pulitzer-winning reporter and nonfiction author. His fascination with James Cook, and with travel, took him around NZ, Australia and the Pacific while researching *Blue Latitudes* (alternatively titled *Into the Blue*), part biography of Cook and part travelogue.

**John Huria** (Ngai Tahu, Muaupoko) wrote the Maori Culture chapter (p53). John has an editorial, research and writing background with a focus on Maori culture. He was senior editor for Maori publishing company Huia (NZ) and now runs an editorial and publishing services company, Ahi Text Solutions Ltd ([www.ahitextsolutions.co.nz](http://www.ahitextsolutions.co.nz)).

**Lauraine Jacobs** wrote the Food & Drink chapter (p60). Lauraine is an award-winning food writer, and food editor of *Cuisine* magazine. Passionate about NZ's wine and food, she travels the country extensively in her quest to seek out the best culinary experiences.

**Josh Kronfeld** wrote the Surfing in New Zealand boxed text (p92) in the Active New Zealand chapter. Josh is an ex-All Black flanker, whose passion for surfing NZ's beaches is legendary and who found travelling for rugby a way to surf other great breaks around the world.

**Dr David Millar** wrote the Health chapter (p715). David is a travel-medicine specialist, diving doctor and lecturer in wilderness medicine.

**Gareth Shute** wrote the Music section of the Culture chapter (p49). Gareth is the author of four books, including *Hip Hop Music in Aotearoa* and *NZ Rock 1987-2007*. He is also a musician and has toured



