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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

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UNDERSTAND NEW ZEALAND

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you
can make sense of what you see

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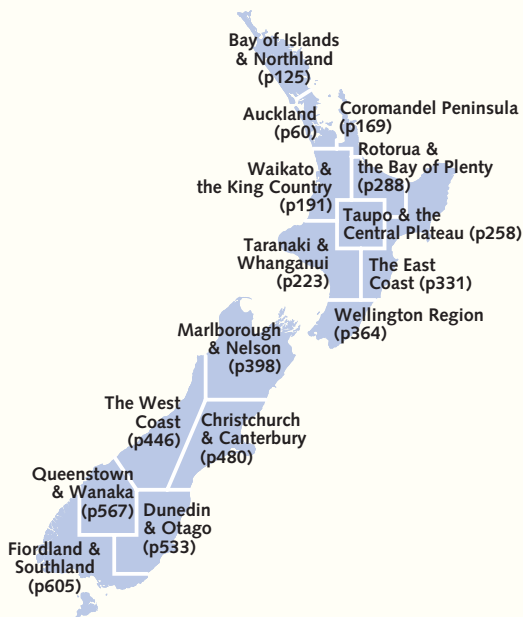
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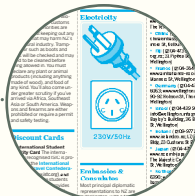
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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Charles Rawlings-Way
Brett Atkinson, Sarah Bennett,
Peter Dragicevich, Lee Slater

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Charles Rawlings-Way

Coordinating author; Plan Your Trip, Waikato & the King Country, Taranaki & Whanganui, Rotorua & the Bay of Plenty, Survival Guide English by birth, Australian by chance, All Blacks fan by choice: Charles' early understanding of Aotearoa was less than comprehensive (sheep, mountains, sheep on mountains...). He realised there was more to it when a wandering uncle returned with a faux-jade tiki in 1981. Mt Taranaki's snowy summit, Raglan's point breaks and Whanganui's raffish charm have enthralled. He's once again smitten with NZ's phantasmal landscapes, disarming locals and determination to sculpt its own political and indigenous destiny.



Brett Atkinson

Christchurch & Canterbury, Dunedin & Otago, Queenstown & Wanaka, Fiordland & Southland On his third research trip to the 'mainland', Brett explored Maori rock art, stayed in a historic cottage in the Gibbstown Valley, and negotiated a penny-farthing bicycle around Oamaru. Two weeks researching earthquake-damaged Christchurch left him even more impressed with the resilience and determination of the people of Canterbury. Brett has covered ten countries for Lonely Planet, and more than 40 countries as a freelance travel and food writer. See also www.brett-atkinson.net.



Sarah Bennett & Lee Slater

The East Coast, Wellington Region, Marlborough & Nelson, The West Coast Raised at the top of the South, Sarah migrated to Wellington at 16 and has lived there ever since, except for various travels and a stint in London working at Lonely Planet's UK office. During research, she strives to find fault, particularly in relation to baked goods and beer selection. Sarah is joined in this endless quest by her husband and co-writer, Lee. English by birth and now a naturalised New Zealander, Lee's first career as an engineer has seen him travel extensively around Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and the Caucasus. Sarah and Lee are co-authors of *Let's Go Camping* and *The New Zealand Trampers' Handbook*. They are also freelance feature writers for newspapers and magazines, including the *Dominion Post* and *Wilderness*.



Peter Dragicevich

Auckland, Bay of Islands & Northland, Coromandel Peninsula, Taupo & the Central Plateau, New Zealand Today, The Kiwi Psyche, Arts & Music 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 '90s writing about the local arts, club and bar scenes. This is the third edition of the *New Zealand* guide he's worked on and, after dozens of Lonely Planet assignments, it remains his favourite gig.

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

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Contributing Authors

Professor James Belich wrote the History chapter (p640). 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 (p643) 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.

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Thanks to Dr David Millar for his help with the Health content, Grace Hoet for her contribution to the Maori Culture chapter, and all the NZ regional tourism organisations for their help with pre-research briefings.

itineraries

Whether you've got 13 days or 30, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



Two Weeks North & South

From top to bottom (almost), this tour gives you a taste of the best of New Zealand.

Kick off your holiday in **Auckland**: it's NZ's biggest city, with awesome restaurants and bars, galleries and boutiques, beaches and bays. Not an urbanite? Head north to the salt-licked **Bay of Islands** for a couple of days R&R.

Tracking south, **Rotorua** is a unique geothermal hot spot: geysers, mud pools, steaming volcanic vents and accessible Maori culture make for an otherworldly experience. Further south, progressive **Taupo** has the staggeringly beautiful **Lake Taupo** and **Tongariro National Park** on its doorstep. Try some tramping, mountain biking or skydiving, then hoof it down to **Wellington**, a hip little city with an irrepressible arts scene.

Cross Cook Strait on the ferry (an adventure in itself) and see what all the fuss is about in the **Marlborough Wine Region**. The hypnotically hushed inlets, ranges and waterways of the **Marlborough Sounds** are nearby. Swinging southeast, spend a day in **Kaikoura**, a whale-watching paradise, then cruise into **Christchurch** for some southern culture and hospitality.



One Month Kiwi Classics

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 visitor to Aotearoa.

Aka the 'City of Sails', **Auckland** is a South Pacific melting pot. Spend a few days shopping, eating, drinking and ping-pong between cafes: this is NZ at its most cosmopolitan. Make sure you get out onto the harbour on a ferry or a yacht, and find half a day to explore the beaches and wineries on **Waiheke Island**. Truck north to the **Bay of Islands** for a dose of aquatic adventure (dolphins, sailing, sunning yourself on deck), then scoot back south-east to check out the forests and beaches on the **Coromandel Peninsula**. Further south in **Rotorua**, get a nose full of egg gas, ogle a 30ft geyser, giggle at volcanic mud bubbles and experience a Maori cultural performance (work your *haka* into shape). Get your skates on and cruise down to **Napier** on the East Coast, NZ's archetypal art-deco sun city. While you're here, don't miss the bottled offerings of the **Hawke's Bay Wine Country** (...ohh, the chardonnay). Down in **Wellington**, the coffee's hot, the beer's cold and wind from the politicians generates its own low-pressure system. This is NZ's arts capital: catch a live band, a poetry slam, a gallery opening or some theatre.

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** (sauvignon blanc heartland), then jump on a boat/plane/helicopter for a close encounter with a massive marine mammal in **Kaikoura**. Next stop is **Christchurch** – the southern capital is finding its feet again after the earthquakes – followed by the coast road south to the wildlife-rich **Otago Peninsula**, jutting abstractly away from the Victorian facades of student-soaked **Dunedin**. Try to catch some live music while you're in town.

Head inland via SH8 to bungy-obsessed **Queenstown**. If you have time, detour over to the West Coast for an unforgettable encounter with **Franz Josef Glacier** and **Fox Glacier**. From here you can keep driving back north or play airport hopscotch from Hokitika to Christchurch then back to Auckland.



DUTHEASTHAM & MAX ROLOU / LONELY PLANET IMAGES ©



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» (above) Mt Taranaki (Egmont National Park; p234), Taranaki.

» (left) Bridge to Nowhere (p248), Whanganui National Park.



Three Weeks Northern Exposure

Three-quarters of New Zealanders live on the North Island – find out why!

Begin in **Auckland**, NZ's biggest city. Eat streets abound: our faves are **Ponsonby Rd** in Ponsonby, **K Rd** in Newton, and **New North Rd** in Kingsland. Hike up **One Tree Hill (Maungakiekie)** to burn off resultant calories, and don't miss **Auckland Art Gallery** and **Auckland Museum**.

Heading north, the amazing **Waipoua Kauri Forest** is home to some seriously tall (and wide) timber. The rugged tip of the far north is **Cape Reinga**, shrouded in solitude and Maori lore.

Venture back south through geothermal **Rotorua** then around the **Bay of Plenty** to the sunny beaches of the **East Coast**. Art-deco **Napier** is surrounded by the chardonnay vines of **Hawke's Bay Wine Country**. Follow SH2 south into the sheepy/winey **Wairarapa** before soaring over the cloud-wrapped Rimutaka Range into hip **Wellington**.

The northwesterly route back to Auckland passes through **Whanganui** (detour up the joyously scenic **Whanganui River Road**), and beyond to epic **Mt Taranaki**. Hit the point breaks near **Raglan** if you're into surfing, or go underground at **Waitomo Caves** for glorious glowworms.

Two Weeks Auckland Encounter

Is there another 1.4-million-strong city with access to *two* oceans and such vibrant Polynesian culture?

Auckland – one of the world's great nautical cities – also offers stellar bars and restaurants, museums, islands and beaches.

Don't-miss list: check out the Maori and South Pacific Islander exhibits at **Auckland Museum**, then wander across the **Domain** to **K Rd** for lunch. Pay a visit to the grand **Auckland Art Gallery** (with the new extension) and the iconic **Sky Tower**. **Ponsonby** is the ideal enclave for dinner and drinks.

Take the ferry over to **Rangitoto Island**, then chug into **Devonport** for a meal. Have a look at the **Waitakere Ranges Regional Park**, **Karekare** and **Piha**, then hit the **Kingsland** restaurants. Have breakfast in **Mt Eden**, climb **Maungawhau** then ferry-hop to **Waiheke Island** for some wineries and beaches.

Take your pick from activities within easy reach of the big smoke: snorkelling at **Goat Island Marine Reserve**, sailing the much-photographed **Bay of Islands**, ocean-gazing at **Cape Reinga**, ogling giant trees at **Waipoua Kauri Forest**, delving into **Waitomo Caves**, surfing at **Raglan** or beaching yourself at **Whitianga**.



Four to Six Weeks Icons & Beyond

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

Cruise sail-dappled **Auckland** harbour, then take SH1 north to the winterless **Bay of Islands**: surfboards, kayaks, scuba gear – your choice. Heading south, hold your nose through the sulphurous sweats of **Rotorua**, then hook into idyllic **Taupo** and some tramping in the volcanic wilderness of **Tongariro National Park**. Take SH43 west to New Plymouth for photogenic **Mt Taranaki**, then stay up late in caffeinated **Wellington** and watch the nocturnal freak show pass on-wards to oblivion.

Across Cook Strait, launch into some sea-kayaking in **Abel Tasman National Park** or disappear into the **Marlborough Sounds**. Track down the rain-swept West Coast with its iconic **glaciers**, then head over to adrenaline-addicted **Queenstown**. Mix and match highways to Te Anau for the side road to **Milford Sound**, then backtrack to SH6 and head north, swapping over to SH8 for cloud-piercing **Aoraki/Mt Cook**, before veering east back to **Christchurch**, a city on the mend. Don't miss an afternoon exploring the **Banks Peninsula**, southeast of town.

Three Weeks Southern Circuit

Winging into **Christchurch** with three weeks at your disposal, there'll be plenty to keep you entertained, both urban and wild.

'ChCh' continues to rebuild post-earthquakes. Grab a kick-ass coffee at a **cafe** (try Addington Coffee Co-op), then visit the excellent **Canterbury Museum** or **International Antarctic Centre**. The **Avon River** cuts lazily through town – check its flow in the **Botanic Gardens**.

City saturated? Drive out to see eccentric **Banks Peninsula** and its wildlife-rich harbour, then head north for some whale-watching in **Kaikoura**. Continue through the famous **Marlborough Wine Region** and pretty harbour town **Picton**, and lose a day in the **Marlborough Sounds** waterways.

Detour west past artsy **Nelson** to eco-friendly **Golden Bay** (more paintbrushes than people). Southbound, check out the **West Coast glaciers** and continue through ski central **Queenstown**. Desolate **Doubtful Sound** is mesmerising, while the overgrown **Catlins** are perfectly chilled out.

Back up the east coast, check out Scottish-flavoured **Dunedin** then detour to the snowy heights of **Aoraki/Mt Cook** and **Lake Tekapo**, before rolling back into Christchurch.

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