New Zealand (Aotearoa)

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SPECIAL FEATURES

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Itineraries

From the top of the north to halfway down the south, here's a quick-fire taste of New Zealand's best.

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

Set your bearings southwards to Rotorua, a unique geothermal hot spot: geysers, mud pools, volcanic vents and Māori culture make for an engaging experience. Further south, progressive Taupo has the staggeringly beautiful Tongariro National Park nearby. Get into some tramping, mountain biking or skydiving, then boot it down to Wellington, a hip little city with an irrepressible arts scene.

Across Cook Strait, see what all the fuss is about in the Marlborough Wine Region. If you're not a wine fan, the hypnotically hushed inlets, ranges and waterways of the Marlborough Sounds are nearby. Swinging further south, cruise into Christchurch for some southern culture and hospitality.
Classy cities, geothermal eruptions, fantastic wine, Māori culture, glaciers, extreme activities, isolated beaches and forests: just a few of our favourite NZ things.

Aka the ‘City of Sails’, Auckland is a South Pacific melting pot. Spend a few days shopping, eating and drinking: this is NZ at its most cosmopolitan. Make sure you get out onto the harbour on a ferry or a yacht, and find 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 southeast to check out the forests and holiday beaches on the Coromandel Peninsula. Further south in Rotorua, get a nose full of egg gas, confront a 30ft geyser, giggle at volcanic mud bubbles and experience a Māori cultural performance (work your haka into shape).

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, some buskers, a gallery opening or some theatre.

Swan over to the South Island for a couple of weeks to experience the best the south has to offer. Start with a tour through the sauvignon blanc heartland of the Marlborough Wine Region, then chill for a few days between the mountains and the whales offshore in laid-back Kaikoura. Next stop is the southern capital Christchurch, rapidly finding its feet again after the earthquakes. Follow the coast road south to the wildlife-rich Otago Peninsula, jutting abstractly away from the Victorian facades of Scottish-flavoured and student-filled Dunedin. Catch some live music while you’re in town.

Head inland via SH8 to bungy- and ski-obsessed Queenstown. If you have time, detour over to Fiordland for an unforgettable encounter with Milford Sound, before returning to Queenstown for your flight back to Auckland.
Top: Hikers, Fox Glacier (p451)
Bottom: Kaikoura (p398) and the snowcapped Seaward Kaikoura Range
Auckland Encounter

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

**Auckland** also offers stellar bars and restaurants, museums, islands and beaches. Check out the Māori 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 and the iconic Sky Tower, then Ponsonby for dinner and drinks.

Ferry over to **Rangitoto Island**, then chug into Devonport for a meal. Have a look at the tall timber in **Waitakere Ranges Regional Park**, or check out the wild surf at **Karekare** and **Piha**, then hit the Britomart restaurants. Have breakfast in Mt Eden, climb Maungawhau, then ferry-hop to **Waiteke Island** for wineries and beaches.

Take your pick of activities within easy reach of the big smoke: snorkelling at **Goat Island Marine Reserve**, sailing the **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**.

Northern Exposure

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

Begin in **Auckland**, NZ’s biggest city. Eat streets abound: try 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 the Auckland Art Gallery and Auckland Museum.

Venture south through geothermal **Rotorua** – home to some truly amazing volcanic sights – then cruise over to the sunny **East Coast**. By the seaside and encircled by the chardonnay vines of **Hawke’s Bay Wine Country**, art-deco **Napier** is a hit with architecture buffs. Heading south, follow SH2 into the sheepy/winey region of **Wairarapa**, before driving over the Rimutaka Range into hip, art-obsessed **Wellington**.

Looping back northwest to Auckland, pick and choose your pit stops: the New Zealand Rugby Museum in **Palmerston North**, some crafty glass in **Whanganui**, or the epic **Mt Taranaki**, rising like Olympus behind New Plymouth. Go underground at **Waitomo Caves**, or surf the point breaks near **Raglan**.
**Southern Circuit**

Winging into Christchurch to launch this three-week escapade, you’ll find a vibrant city rebuilding post-earthquakes. Grab a coffee at a cafe (try Addington Coffee Co-op or Supreme Supreme), then check out the excellent Canterbury Museum and the Avon River, cutting lazily through the Botanic Gardens.

City saturated? Visit the geologically/culturally eccentric Banks Peninsula, then head north for a wildlife encounter in Kaikoura. Continue through to the famous Marlborough Wine Region, and lose a day on the whisper-still waterways of the Marlborough Sounds.

Detour west through artsy Nelson to Abel Tasman National Park and eco-friendly Golden Bay. Southbound, dawdle down the dramatic West Coast with its wilderness and eye-popping Franz Josef Glacier and Fox Glacier. From here, track inland through to hip/hippie Wanaka and ski-central Queenstown. From here, desolate Doubtful Sound is mesmerising, while the overgrown deep-south Catlins are perfectly chilled out.

Back up the east coast, wheel through Dunedin to surprisingly hip Oamaru, before rolling back into Christchurch.

**Winter Wanderer**

Fly into Christchurch for a day or two to acclimatise, day-trip to the Banks Peninsula, then drive south to see snowy Aoraki/Mt Cook. Continuing south, internationalist Queenstown offers world-class skiing, great restaurants and a kickin’ nocturnal scene. Coronet Peak is the area’s oldest ski field, with treeless slopes, consistent gradients and excellent skiing for all levels (great for snowboarders, too). The visually remarkable Remarkables are more family-friendly.

Had enough snowy slopes? Take a drive around Lake Wakatipu to gorgeous Glenorchy; or lose an afternoon in the fab wineries of the Gibbston Valley. Alternatively, Queenstown’s extreme activities keep the winter chills at bay.

As an alternative to Queenstown, head to Wanaka (Queenstown’s little brother – all the benefits but none of the hype). Ski fields near here include Treble Cone, Cardrona and Snow Farm New Zealand, NZ’s only commercial Nordic (cross-country) ski area.

From Wanaka, take an overnight trip to Westland Tai Poutini National Park on the West Coast to check out Franz Josef Glacier and Fox Glacier. Backtrack to Queenstown for your next flight.
Map Legend

Sights
- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours
- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping
- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating
- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife
- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment
- Entertainment

Shopping
- Shopping

Information
- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic
- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population
- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport
- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes
- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries
- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography
- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas
- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book
Peter Dragicevich
Auckland, Dunedin & Otago, Queenstown & Wanaka, Fiordland & Southland After
early a decade working for off-shore publishing companies, Peter’s life has come
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Tony Horwitz wrote the Captain James Cook boxed text in the History chapter. Tony is a Pulitzer-
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Read more about Peter at:
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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 Dublin, Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, 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
Taranaki & Whanganui, East Coast (North Island), Wellington  English by birth, Australian by chance, All Blacks fan by choice: Charles’s 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. He wore it with pride until he saw the NZ cricket team’s beige uniforms in 1982... Mt Taranaki’s snowy summit, Napier’s art deco deliverance and Whanganui’s raffish charm have helped him forgive: he’s once again smitten with the country’s phantasmal landscapes, disarming locals, and determination to sculpt its own political and indigenous destiny. Charles also wrote the Planning, Understand and Survival Guide chapters.

Brett Atkinson
Bay of Islands & Northland, Waikato & Coromandel Peninsula, Taupo & the Central Plateau, Rotorua & the Bay of Plenty  Born in Rotorua, but now a proud resident of Auckland, Brett explored the top half of New Zealand’s North Island for this edition. Excursions to Northland, the Coromandel Peninsula and Tongariro National Park echoed family holidays from an earlier century, and rediscovering his home town also evoked great memories. Brett’s contributed to Lonely Planet guidebooks spanning Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and covered around 50 countries as a food and travel writer. See www.brett-atkinson.net for his latest adventures.

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