



# Christchurch & Canterbury

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## Why Go?

Nowhere in New Zealand is changing and developing as fast as post-earthquake Christchurch, and visiting the country's second largest city as it's being rebuilt and reborn is both interesting and inspiring.

A short drive from Christchurch's dynamic re-emergence, Banks Peninsula conceals hidden bays and beaches – a backdrop for kayaking and wildlife cruises with a sunset return to the attractions of Akaroa. To the north are the vineyards of the Waipara Valley and the family-holiday ambience of Hanmer Springs. Westwards, the well-ordered farms of the Canterbury Plains morph quickly into the rough-and-tumble wilderness of the Southern Alps.

Canterbury summertime attractions include tramping along the braided rivers and alpine valleys around Arthur's Pass and mountain biking around the turquoise lakes of the Mackenzie Country. During winter, the attention switches to the mountains, with skiing at Mt Hutt. Throughout the seasons, Aoraki/Mt Cook, the country's tallest peak, stands sentinel over this diverse region.

## Best Places to Eat

- » Bodhi Tree (p149)
- » Simo's Deli (p151)
- » Christchurch Farmers Market (p152)
- » Almeida's Tapas Bar (p150)
- » The Little Bistro (p163)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Orari B&B (p146)
- » Le Petit Hotel (p150)
- » Coombe Farm (p162)
- » Okuti Garden (p162)

## When to Go

Overall Canterbury is one of NZ's driest regions because moisture-laden westerlies from the Tasman Sea dump their rainfall on the West Coast before hitting the eastern South Island. Head to Christchurch and Canterbury from January to March for settled summer weather and plenty of opportunities to get active amid the region's spectacular landscapes. It's also festival time in Christchurch with January's World Buskers Festival and the Ellerslie International Flower Show in March. Hit the winter slopes from July to October at Mt Hutt or on Canterbury's smaller club ski fields.



## Christchurch & Canterbury Highlights

- 1 Supporting the exciting rebuilding and re-emergence of **Christchurch** (p136)
- 2 Meandering along Christchurch's **Avon River** (p141) by punt or bicycle
- 3 Marvelling at the views of the Mackenzie Country from atop **Mt John** (p178)
- 4 Taking a soothing soak at Lake Tekapo's **Alpine Springs & Spa** (p178)
- 5 Negotiating the outer reaches of **Banks Peninsula** (p157) by bike, kayak or boat
- 6 Tramping in the shadow of NZ's highest peak in **Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park** (p182)
- 7 Being surprised by the size of the Canterbury Plains on a balloon flight from **Methven** (p170)