

Destination New Zealand's South Island

Locked in an age-old struggle with the North Island for travellers' hearts and minds, New Zealand's South Island wins hands down when it comes to the great outdoors. Remote, rainy and thinly populated – maybe so – but *Te Wai Pounamu* ('The Waters of Greenstone' – the Maori name for the South Island) delivers more than its fair share of eye-popping panoramas and heart-pumping outdoor activities, not to mention festivals, Maori culture and stellar food and wine. With just a couple of weeks up your sleeve, you'll be able to soak it all up.

There are some stellar cities down south. Kick things off in Christchurch – a cultured east-coast hub of around 345,000 Kiwis, with pumping cafés, shopping and nightlife. Further south, Dunedin is smaller but has almost as many coffeeshops and bars as University of Otago students. Equal parts Edinburgh and Seattle, 'Dunners' has no problem at all with the 'second city' tag and revels in its gourmet status. Under the eternal sunshine of the island's spotless north coast, Nelson is a hip, hippie city brimming with bookshops, classy eateries and gorgeous Victorian architecture. Way down south, Queenstown is a hotspot for skiing, white-water rafting, skydiving and bungy jumping. Everyone here seems to be exploiting gravity in one way or another, but this is a town on the rise, with booming real estate and a hectic party scene.

But what many travellers come to the South Island for lies beyond the city limits. With less than a quarter of NZ's population spread over 56% of its land mass, this is a place where the phrase 'Get lost!' regularly assumes literal connotations. Truly wild places are rare in today's world, but the South Island delivers them in droves: fiords, sounds, glaciers, cloud-topping mountain ranges, remote islands, raggedy peninsulas and wide river plains. You might meet other travellers seeking the same solitude, but there's plenty of wilderness to go round.

And when you come in from the wild, you'll find the table is laid: Kaikoura crayfish, Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Motueka kiwifruit, Oamaru kumara and Greymouth ale, plus Wagyu steaks, artisan cheeses and gourmet chocolates – happy eating!

Of course, you won't visit NZ anytime soon without hearing about the 2008 election, which delivered a new national government. After nine years under Helen Clark's left-wing Labour Party, New Zealanders opted for the right-wing National Party and ebullient new prime minister John Key. Under Clark's no-nonsense guidance, NZ continued its pacifist, anti-nuclear policy, whilst retaining troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Unemployment plummeted, the arts bloomed and the domestic economy was kicking goals, though the world's economic crisis cast a shadow over the Labour government's final year. The challenge for John Key will be to maintain NZ's prosperity during a period where the country is being impacted by an economic recession.

Interestingly, both the Maori and Greens parties increased their House of Representatives holdings in the '08 election, gaining one and three seats respectively. Green issues are front-page news across NZ, and when they're not talking politics, South Islanders love to talk environment. Lean into a local conversation and you'll likely hear about the Department of Conservation (DOC) using 1080 poison to control possums, rats and stoats on the West

NZ FAST FACTS

Population: 4.2 million
(South Island 1 million)

Area: 268,680 sq km
(South Island 151,215 sq km)

GDP growth: 2.6%

Inflation: 3.2%

Unemployment: 3.5%

Life expectancy: 80 for humans, 100 for tuatara (lizards), 2000 for kauri trees

Number of international visitors: 2.05 million in 2008

Number of South Island glaciers over 100m long: 3155

Number of South Island microbreweries: 26, give or take a couple

Height of Aoraki/Mt

Cook: 3754m (12,316ft)

Coast. Furry ferals are a problem – particularly around Fox Glacier and Kahurangi National Park – but cheeky keas (native parrots) keep taking the bait and shuffling off this mortal coil (cue Monty Python's 'ex-parrot' sketch).

Also causing consternation is *Didymosphenia geminata*, aka didymo or 'rock snot'. First detected in 2004 in Southland's Waiau River (the River Anduin in the *Lord of the Rings* movies), didymo is a fast-spreading algae that is ravaging freshwater ecosystems. The entire South Island has been branded a 'Controlled Area' – if you knowingly spread rock snot you'll get five years in the clink or a NZ\$100,000 hole in your wallet. Other touchpaper issues include fixed-net fishing endangering dolphins, global warming melting the glaciers, and drought reaching into Fiordland.

Tourism is also raising the ire of eco-aware New Zealanders. International visitor numbers were down in 2008 (7% fewer visitors than in 2007 – did somebody say 'global financial crisis?'), but the two million visitors who did arrive spent 5% more than the previous year. The tourism juggernaut rolls on, but at what cost? All this wilderness frenzy is having an impact: campers shampoo in Catlins' creeks, the skies above Franz Josef Glacier drone with aeroplanes, and locals simply avoid entire chunks of the South Island because of the tourist hordes.

Feeling the pinch, the tourism industry is embracing all things 'eco', while the DOC has implemented a booking system for its nine Great Walks (six of which are on the South Island) to combat overcrowding and environmental damage. Down south in particular, organic farmers markets and cafés proliferate, while the 100-mile diet and 'locavore' concepts are gaining converts. Despite these efforts, hardcore environmentalists claim the industry, the government and the locals aren't doing enough.

No overview of Aotearoa, north or south, would be complete without mentioning the national obsession – rugby. After yet another spectacular failure at the 2007 Rugby World Cup in France, the beloved All Blacks – under the noble captaincy of North Otago's favourite son Richie McCaw – are desperate to redeem themselves on home soil in 2011. The most successful rugby team in history (a 74% winning record!), the ABs were red-hot favourites in France, but lost their quarter-final against the home team 20–18. The dumbfounded nation wept in the streets and looked around for someone to blame. Distraught Kiwis turned to each other and said, 'We suck at the only thing we're good at!' Until 2011, fans will have to be satisfied with routine demolitions of Australia, South Africa, England, Wales, Ireland, Tonga, Fiji...

So that's the South Island in summary – saddle-up for a wild ride! And if you emerge unscathed from all those downhill runs, Grade IV rapids and 134m bungies, you'll take home a cache of memories overflowing with natural splendour. There are wild few places on this not-so-lonely planet as pristine, diverse and staggeringly good-looking.

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 p398) make travelling here a breeze! There's also a network of 26 Department of Conservation visitor centres around NZ – a handy resource for planning activities in parks, and for natural and cultural features. There are accommodation and eating options for all budgets, from a felafel 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.

There's a multitude of things to see and do here; consider your priorities and allow enough time to achieve them. Don't forget to factor some time into your itinerary for those random, serendipitous moments to happen – they can really make your trip.

WHEN TO GO

See Climate Charts (p388) for more information.

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 mid-December to early February) and public holidays (p391-2). Most places are packed to the gills with campervans, tourists, highly strung parents and inexhaustible children in the post-Christmas weeks. The cooler, less touristed 'shoulder' periods (October/November and April/May) are a much better idea.

NZ is smack-bang in the middle of the Roaring Forties – 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.

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 cafés for performances that night; 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.

Travel advice, hints and inspiration work both ways: after your trip, drop us a line and tell us what you got up to. The place to 'skite' (Kiwi for 'brag') or tell us how we can lift our game is www.lonelyplanet.com/contact.

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 NZ Mountain Safety Council has the information you need – available from DOC visitor centres nationwide.

COSTS & MONEY

In recent years the NZ dollar has gained ground against international currencies like the greenback, and burgeoning tourism 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. Action-addicts should consider cheaper accommodation to help finance their exertions, while sedentary types who'd rather dangle a fork in some pasta than themselves at the end of a bungy should curtail the activities.

Gastronomes will find food to be surprisingly pricey – cooked breakfasts at snazzy cafés 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 \$130 to \$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 young'uns, 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 \$75 per day. But if you want to enjoy the occasional restaurant meal and glass of wine, then \$90 per day is more realistic. Staying in places for longer periods and/or travelling in a group will lower your costs.

TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Since our inception in 1973, Lonely Planet has encouraged readers to tread lightly, travel responsibly and enjoy the magic 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.

HOW MUCH?

Cup of decent coffee
\$3.50

Movie ticket \$13

Dorm bed \$20-28

Motel room \$90-140

Magnificent scenery \$0

See also the Lonely Planet Index, inside front cover

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Double-checking the visa situation (see p399)
- A travel-insurance policy covering you for high-risk activities (see p392)
- Insect repellent to keep the sandflies off your ass (see p389)
- The ability to get excited over a game of rugby (p43)
- A hat and a long-sleeve shirt for summer (the sun kicks like a mule; p388)
- A bottomless appetite for Kiwi food and wine (p59)
- A mobile phone (p397) 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)

It's not hard to make your NZ trip ecosavvy. For starters, check out our GreenDex (at end of book), which lists ecofriendly operators. Volunteer some of your time to a local environmental program. Consider carbon-offsetting your flights to/from NZ. 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: 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 notice boards 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.

For more tips online:

Department of Conservation (www.doc.govt.nz) Conservation events and programs that visitors can engage with.

Leave No Trace (www.lnt.org) Low-impact camping and tramping tips.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com/responsibletravel) Tips on sustainable travel.

Organic Explorer (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. The country's ability to inspire its explorers (at home and overseas – RIP Sir Edmund Hillary) is obvious in most published accounts of NZ wanderings.

'Don't leave home until you've seen the country' is something most Kiwis hear when planning their big 'OE' (Overseas Experience). Taking this advice, 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).

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. Photographs and well-observed line drawings complement the gentle narrative humour.

Lyttelton-based Joe Bennett, another Englishman-in-NZ, pens a popular column syndicated to newspapers throughout NZ. *Love, Death, Washing up, etc* (2007) is a collection of his best efforts over the last five years. *A Land of Two Halves* (2004) is Joe's tale of hitchhiking around the country – a fabulous travelogue, full of pithy descriptions, perceptive observations and witty anecdotes.

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. Even if you don't know a 'halfback' from 'half-time', this concise tome will ensure you don't ask stupid questions when you're watching the All Blacks at the pub.

INTERNET RESOURCES

100% Pure New Zealand (www.newzealand.com) NZ's official tourism site, with comprehensive visitor info.

TOP 10

NEW ZEALAND • Wellington

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 p45 for reviews of these and other locally produced films.

- 1 *Once Were Warriors* (1994) Director: Lee Tamahori
- 2 *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–03) Director: Peter Jackson
- 3 *Whale Rider* (2002) Director: Niki Caro
- 4 *An Angel at My Table* (1990) Director: Jane Campion
- 5 *The Piano* (1993) Director: Jane Campion
- 6 *In My Father's Den* (2004) Director: Brad McGann
- 7 *Eagle vs Shark* (2007) Director: Taika Cohen
- 8 *Rain* (2001) Director: Christine Jeffs
- 9 *Out of the Blue* (2006) Director: Robert Sarkies
- 10 *Black Sheep* (2006) Director: Jonathan King

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 p48 for more on NZ literature.

- 1 *The Bone People* (1988) Keri Hulme
- 2 *Mister Pip* (2007) Lloyd Jones
- 3 *The Carpathians* (1988) Janet Frame
- 4 *Potiki* (1986) Patricia Grace
- 5 *Bulibasha: King of the Gypsies* (1994) Witi Ihimaera
- 6 *Loving Ways* (1996) Maurice Gee
- 7 *Hibiscus Coast* (2005) Paula Morris
- 8 *The Vintner's Luck* (2000) Elizabeth Knox
- 9 *In a Fishbone Church* (1998) Catherine Chidgey
- 10 *Mansfield* (2004) CK Stead

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 events in the South Island and further suggestions, see the Directory (p697) and the Festivals & Events sections in destination chapters.

- 1 **World Buskers Festival** (www.worldbuskersfestival.com) Christchurch, January (p390)
- 2 **Rippon Festival** (www.ripponfestival.co.nz) Wanaka, February (p333)
- 3 **Marlborough Wine Festival** (www.wine-marlborough-festival.co.nz) February (p390)
- 4 **Fringe NZ** (www.fringe.org.nz) Wellington, February/March (p105)
- 5 **Wildfoods Festival** (www.wildfoods.co.nz) Hokitika, March (p390)
- 6 **New Zealand Gold Guitar Awards** (www.goldguitars.co.nz) Gore, June (p362)
- 7 **Queenstown Winter Festival** (www.winterfestival.co.nz) Queenstown, July (p315)
- 8 **Nelson Arts Festival** (www.nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz/artsfestival) Nelson, October (p157)
- 9 **Seafest** (www.seafest.co.nz) Kaikoura, October (p145)
- 10 **NZ Cup & Show Week** (www.nzcupandshow.co.nz) Christchurch, November (p390)

Department of Conservation (www.doc.govt.nz) Indispensable DOC parks, recreation and conservation info across NZ.

Destination New Zealand (www.destination-nz.com) Resourceful site with excellent website listings.

DineOut (www.dineout.co.nz) Restaurant reviews and info across the nation.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Get started with NZ summaries and travellers trading info on the Thorn Tree.

Muzic.net (www.muzic.net.nz) Gigs, reviews, bios, charts – Wellington rock to Dunedin dub.

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

Public Address (www.publicaddress.net) One-stop shop for opinionated Kiwi blogs.

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

Te Ara (www.teara.govt.nz) An online encyclopaedia of NZ.

Itineraries

SHORT BREAK

CHRISTCHURCH EXPLORER

Four to Seven Days/ Christchurch to Christchurch

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

Hit the city running with a kick-arse coffee on **High St** (p234), then assess the lay of the land on the city's juddery **tramway** (p224). Jump off at the **Arts Centre** (p220) and have a sticky-beak around the local galleries. Other 'ChCh' essentials include the **Canterbury Museum** (p225), the **Christchurch Art Gallery** (p225), punting on the Avon River in the **Botanic Gardens** (p220) and shopping on **High St** (p237). Don't miss an evening session in the kooky bars in **Lyttelton** (p239) and restaurants in **Sumner** (p233).

Beyond the city, spend a few nights on the rambling road: drive out to Francophile **Akaroa** (p241) on the Banks Peninsula, or head north for some whale-watching and crayfishing in **Kaikoura** (p146). Wander west to **Lake Tekapo** (p260) and the snowy heights of **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p265), or south to check out the zany boulders at **Moeraki** (p302; don't miss dinner at **Fleur's Place**, p302).



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.

TRAVEL FURTHER

CLASSIC SOUTH ISLAND

10 to 14 Days/Picton to Christchurch

You'll have to move fast to experience the best of the south in two weeks! Kick things off in picturesque port-town **Picton** (p127), then disappear into the **Marlborough Sounds** (p133) for a day. Sip yourself silly in the **Marlborough Wine Region** (p142) around Blenheim, then truck west for some paragliding, kiteboarding and hang gliding (and good coffee!) in hippie-city **Nelson** (p153). Sea kayaking through **Abel Tasman National Park** (p169) is an unforgettable experience.

Backtrack through Blenheim and jump on a boat/plane/helicopter for a close encounter with a massive marine mammal in **Kaikoura** (p146). Further south, manicured **Christchurch** (p217) awaits – shop, drink, eat and soak up the arts. Further south the coast road rolls into Timaru, from where SH8 veers inland to cloud-piercing **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p265). Back on the coast, the wildlife-rich **Otago Peninsula** (p285) juts abstractly away from the Victorian facades of student-filled **Dunedin** (p272). Try to catch some live music while you're in town!

Head inland to bungee-obsessed **Queenstown** (p304), then mix and match highways to Te Anau for the beguiling side road to **Milford Sound** (p349). Backtrack to Haast Pass, from where you'll wind down to **Jackson Bay** (p214) on the rain-soaked West Coast. Further north come face-to-face with the iconic **Fox Glacier** (p210) and **Franz Josef Glacier** (p206), then check out some *pounamu* (jade or greenstone) in **Hokitika** (p198). Wet your whistle at Greymouth's **Monteith's Brewing Co** (p194), then get your camera ready for the **Punakaiki Rocks** (p184). Heading east on SH7, cross Lewis Pass and meander back to cathedral-hearted **Christchurch** (p241).

On good roads with little traffic (well, mostly...), this 3500km South Island lap taking in the classic sights, cities and scenery is a glorious drive. Prepare yourself for urban virtues, magnificent mountains and the world's best Sauvignon Blanc – and if you've never seen a glacier before, now's your chance!



ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

Two Weeks/Christchurch to Christchurch

Journey to the ends of the South Island and experience places far removed from civilisation's clash and humdrum.

It doesn't take long to clear the **Christchurch** (p241) suburbs in any direction: head north along the coast and you'll soon leave the traffic behind. **Kaikoura** (p146) is pretty touristy these days, but it's a low-key place to chill for a day or two. Continue north to Blenheim then detour inland on SH65 to alpine **Nelson Lakes National Park** (p162) – a little slice of Fiordland sans the crowds.

From Picton, it's easy to lose your way for a day in the watery embrace of the **Marlborough Sounds** (p133). Continue west past artsy Nelson to eco-friendly, chilled-out **Golden Bay** (p173) and gargantuan **Kahurangi National Park** (p178). End-of-the-line **Farewell Spit** (p177) is perfectly desolate.

Travel southwest on SH6 to Westport, from where a memorable road trundles north up to the caverns of **Oparara Basin** (p187). Southbound on SH6, divert inland on SH73 to the extremities of **Arthur's Pass National Park** (p251), then continue south to the mirror-surfaced **Okarito Lagoon** (p204), bypassing Queenstown for a voyage on isolated **Doubtful Sound** (p354).

Cross over to Invercargill from where you can ferry yourself out to southerly **Stewart Island** (p370), then kick back in the overgrown **Catlins** (p363) for a couple of days.

Heading north on SH8 through Central Otago, you'll pass through goldrush-era towns en route to mountain-biking **Alexandra** (p291) and hang-glider-hung **Omarama** (p300). Trek back to the east coast via the **Waitaki Valley** (p300) on SH83, then hop south to mellow, underrated **Oamaru** (p295) before a big-city reality check back in **Christchurch** (p241).



If there's anywhere in NZ you can still find paths less travelled, the South Island is it! You'll be flat out covering 3200 far-flung kilometres over two weeks, but 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 eye-popping panoramas out every South Island window, getting from A to B is half the fun.

For a bird's-eye view of the south, take a glider trip over **Omarama** (p300), a scenic flight above **Milford Sound** (p314), a chopper ride over **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p268) or the **West Coast glaciers** (p206 & p210), or a knee-trembling hang-glide above **Nelson** (p155) or **Queenstown** (p311).

Train-spotting romantics should book a seat on the **Taiari Gorge Railway** (p284) or the epic **TranzAlpine** (p198) route from Christchurch to Greymouth over snowbound Arthur's Pass. Spend a few days in Greymouth, or chug back over the pass an hour later.

If you're arriving in Picton from the north island by boat, bobbing around on the **Wellington–Picton ferry** (p114) is a perfect Marlborough Sounds snapshot (keep an eye out for dolphins!). Other waterborne southern highlights include a kayak trip through the bays and inlets of **Abel Tasman National Park** (p172), **Doubtful Sound** (p354) or **Okarito Lagoon** (p204), a cruise jetboat safari up the **Haast River** (p213), or a white-knuckle thrill-ride in **Queenstown** (p310) or **Buller Gorge** (p183).

The best stretches of windy South Island 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, and **SH60** over Takaka Hill west of Motueka. Enjoy the ride!

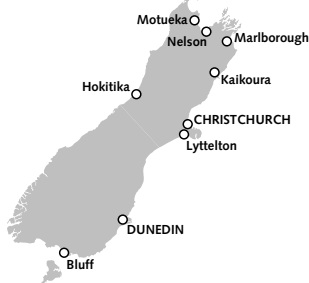
FOODIE SOUTH ISLAND

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

Highlights of the South Island food festival calendar include the **Hokitika Wildfoods Festival** (p200) in March, **Bluff Oyster & Southland Seafood Festival** (p362) in April/May, Kaikoura's **Seafest** (p149) in October, and the **Marlborough Wine Festival** (p139) around Blenheim in February. For organic produce, the **Nelson Ecofest** (p157) in August is also worth a look.

For local produce, hit the local organic green-grocers – **Toad Hall** (p167) in Motueka and the **Organic Greengrocer** (p160) in Nelson are two of our faves. Regional farmers markets across the island embrace the 100-mile diet and 'locavore' culture: try **Lytelton Farmers Market** (p240) near Christchurch, **Otago Farmers Market** (p281) in Dunedin or **Farmers @ Founders** (p155) in Nelson.

For a *hangi* (traditional Maori feast), swing by **Tamaki Maori Village** (p227) in Christchurch or **Kiwi Haka** (p320) a short hop from Queenstown. Both operations feature cultural performances in recreated Maori villages, concluding with *hangi* feasts cooked in earthen ovens.



The Authors



CHARLES RAWLINGS-WAY

**Coordinating Author,
Wellington Region, Marlborough & Nelson**

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 (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... Marlborough's Sauvignon Blanc and Nelson's sunshine 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.



BRETT ATKINSON

**The West Coast, Christchurch & Canterbury,
Queenstown & Wanaka, Stewart Island & Outer Islands**

Born in Rotorua and raised in Auckland, proud North Islander Brett jumped at the chance to explore the 'Mainland' of New Zealand. He still proudly supports the Auckland Blues rugby team, but needs no encouragement at all to regale friends and family with stories of wild West Coast scenery, hang gliding above Queenstown, and taste-testing South Island micro-breweries. Six weeks on the road impressed him so much that in his retirement Brett plans to build scale-model matchstick replicas of all of the one-way bridges on the West Coast. Home is currently a cosy apartment in Auckland with Carol. It may not be big enough for all those bridges.



ERROL HUNT

Dunedin & Otago, Fiordland & Southland

Errol is a Kiwi of Maori (Ngapuhi) and Scots (MacKiven) heritage, hailing from Whakatane in the Bay of Plenty. Errol's precious careers involved messing around with electricity and molten aluminium, but he's had a lot more fun lately in the LP Melbourne office working on guidebooks. He's been intimately involved with LP's NZ guidebook for the last five editions.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Professor James Belich wrote the History chapter (p27). 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 – *NZ Wars* was screened in NZ in 1998.

Tony Horwitz wrote the Captain James Cook boxed text (p29) 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 (p52). 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).

Lauraine Jacobs wrote the Food & Drink chapter (p59). 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 (p89) 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 (p413). David is a travel-medicine specialist, diving doctor and lecturer in wilderness medicine. He is currently a medical director with the Travel Doctor in Auckland.

Gareth Shute wrote the Music section of the Culture chapter (p48). 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 the UK, Europe, and Australia as a member of The Ruby Suns. He now plays in The Conjurors, Dictaphone Blues and The Cosbys.

Nandor Tanczos wrote the Environmental Issues in Aotearoa New Zealand boxed text (p70-1). NZ's first Rastafarian Member of Parliament (NZ Greens Party), and the first to enter parliament in dreadlocks and a hemp suit, he was also the Greens' spokesperson on constitutional issues and the environment from 1999 to 2008.

Vaughan Yarwood wrote the Environment chapter (p68). Vaughan is an Auckland-based writer whose most recent book is *The History Makers: Adventures in New Zealand Biography*. Earlier work includes *The Best of New Zealand*, a *Collection of Essays on NZ Life and Culture by Prominent Kiwis*, which he edited, and the regional history *Between Coasts: from Kaipara to Kawau*. He has written widely for NZ and international publications and is the former associate editor of *New Zealand Geographic*, for which he continues to write.

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