

On the Road



BRETT ATKINSON
Coordinating Author

I didn't spy any whales during my time in the Catlins, but this wind-up cetacean at the Lost Gypsy Gallery (p362) 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 at nearby Nugget Point.



SCOTT KENNEDY You can't come to Queenstown (p301), 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.



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 (p170). 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!

Destination 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. Even a concise week-long hop across the Tasman will provide plenty of opportunity to explore NZ's rugged and photogenic southern jewel.

Kick things off in Christchurch – a cultured, east-coast hub with pumping cafes, good shopping and nightlife, and around 350,000 Kiwis. 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 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. If accelerating your heart rate and overdosing on adrenalin doesn't appeal, slow right down in sleepy, scenic Glenorchy, or the heritage streets of Arrowtown.

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.

And when you come in from the wild, you'll find the table is laid: Kaikoura crayfish, Central Otago pinot noir, Motueka kiwifruit and the gloriously hoppy microbrews of Marlborough. Add a side order of artisan cheeses and gourmet chocolates, and any preconceptions of the South Island as a culinary desert are deliciously dismissed.

The country is slowly shrugging off the global economic gloom that had pushed the economy into recession and sent unemployment soaring. It's a challenge faced by the National Party, NZ's first centre-right government for several years. It was elected in late 2008 following nine years under Helen Clark's centre-left Labour Party; Clark went on to accept the third-highest job at the United Nations as Head of the UN Development Program. At the time of writing, prime minister John Keys was 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 guy doing an awkward dance with a couple of drag queens at a gay and lesbian festival in Auckland. He's the goofy guy slipping down the stairs and breaking his arm at a Chinese New Year celebration. Sure, he's a self-made millionaire after years working as a currency trader in London and New York, but his easy-going and likeable manner continues to strike a chord with Kiwis, especially after Helen Clark's sometimes severe and intellectual demeanour.

FAST FACTS

- Population: NZ 4.4 million; South Island 1 million
- Area: NZ 268,680 sq km; South Island 151,215 sq km
- NZ GDP growth: -1% (2009)
- NZ inflation: 2%
- NZ unemployment: 6.5%
- NZ life expectancy: men 78, women 82, tuatara (native lizards) 100+, kauri trees 2000+
- Number of international visitors to NZ: 2.4 million in 2009
- 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)

Interestingly, both the Maori and Greens parties increased their House of Representatives holdings in the 2008 election, gaining one and three seats respectively. Green issues are often 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 Coast, or the proposal by John Key's government to allow mining in areas of the country currently under DOC protection. Sometimes it's possible to sit in a South Island pub and hear opposing views in each ear. Tourism operators will be against any increase in mining, but for other locals the promise of steady employment is a compelling argument.

Also causing consternation is *Didymosphenia geminata*, aka didymo or 'rock snot'. First detected in 2004 in Southland's Waiarau 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. Ask at local visitor information centres – normally dubbed 'i-SITES' – about how you can do your bit to stop the spread, especially if you're travelling by campervan and staying in remote campsites.

Tourists' love affair for the wilderness of the South Island is also impacting in other ways. Campers' shampoo occasionally bubbles away in Catlins' creeks, the skies above Franz Josef Glacier drone with aeroplanes and some 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. Organic farmers markets and cafes proliferate, while the 100-mile diet and 'locavore' concepts are gaining converts.

Beyond politics and the environment, most Kiwis are also interested in the rugby. In September and October 2011, NZ will host the Rugby World Cup 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. With NZ's next general election scheduled for November 2011, the tournament finale at Auckland's Eden Park on October 23 promises to be more than just a rugby match. More than one political pundit has opined – and not entirely in jest – that an All Blacks victory or defeat could influence the decision-making of voters on election day. Watch this space.

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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 p390) 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 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.

See Climate Charts (p380) for more information.

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 (p384). Most places are packed to the gills with campervans, tourists, highly strung parents and inexhaustible children in the post-Christmas weeks. 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

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Double-checking the visa situation (see p391)
- A travel-insurance policy covering you for high-risk activities (see p384)
- Insect repellent to keep the sandflies off your ass (see p382)
- The ability to get excited over a game of rugby (p41)
- Your driver's licence – the best way to see NZ's nooks and crannies is at your own speed (p400)
- A bottomless appetite for Kiwi food and wine (p57)
- A mobile phone (p389) 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)

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) 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, 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 jumping 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 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 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 \$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 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 (p434), 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

HOW MUCH?

Cup of decent coffee \$4

Movie ticket \$14

Dorm bed \$25-35

Motel room \$100-160

Magnificent scenery \$0

See also the Lonely Planet Index, inside front cover

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; 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.

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 p44 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>Avatar</i> (2009) Director: James Cameron |
| 4 <i>An Angel at My Table</i> (1990) Director: Jane Campion | 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 p44 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 events in the South Island and further suggestions, see the Directory (p383) and the Festivals & Events sections in destination chapters.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 World Buskers Festival (www.worldbuskersfestival.com) Christchurch, January (p225) | 6 New Zealand Gold Guitar Awards (www.goldguitars.co.nz) Gore, June (p360) |
| 2 Rippon Festival (www.ripponfestival.com) Wanaka, February (p330) | 7 Queenstown Winter Festival (www.winterfestival.co.nz) Queenstown, June/July (p312) |
| 3 Marlborough Wine Festival (www.wine-marlborough-festival.co.nz) February (p138) | 8 Nelson Arts Festival (www.nelsonartsfestival.co.nz) Nelson, October (p154) |
| 4 Fringe NZ (www.fringe.org.nz) Wellington, February/March (p100) | 9 Seafest (www.seafest.co.nz) Kaikoura, October (p146) |
| 5 Wildfoods Festival (www.wildfoods.co.nz) Hokitika, March (p196) | 10 NZ Cup & Show Week (www.nzcupandshow.co.nz) Christchurch, November (p225) |

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 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.

For more tips online:

Department of Conservation (www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved) 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.

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 *Penguin History of New Zealand* (2003) by Michael King.

INTERNET RESOURCES

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

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

Destination New Zealand (www.destination-nz.com) Excellent website listings.

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

Living Landscapes (www.livinglandscapes.co.nz) Maori tourism operators across NZ.

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.

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** (p229), then assess the lay of the land on the city's juddery **tramway** (p219). Jump off at the **Arts Centre** (p219) and have a sticky-beak around the local galleries. Other 'ChCh' essentials include the **Canterbury Museum** (p219), the **Christchurch Art Gallery** (p219), punting on the Avon River in the **Botanic Gardens** (p218) and shopping on **High St** (p232). Don't miss an evening session in the kooky bars in **Lyttelton** (p234) and restaurants in **Sumner** (p228).

Beyond the city, spend a few nights on the rambling road: drive out to Francophile **Akaroa** (p236) on the Banks Peninsula, or head north for some whale-watching and crayfishing in **Kaikoura** (p143). Wander west to **Lake Tekapo** (p255) and the snowy heights of **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p260), or south to check out the zany boulders at **Moeraki** (p298); don't miss dinner at **Fleur's Place** (p298), before heading back to Christchurch.

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** (p125), then disappear into the **Marlborough Sounds** (p130) for a day. Sip yourself silly in the **Marlborough Wine Region** (p140) around Blenheim, then truck west for some paragliding, kiteboarding and hang gliding (and good coffee!) in hippie-city **Nelson** (p150). Sea kayaking through **Abel Tasman National Park** (p166) 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** (p143). Further south, manicured **Christchurch** (p213) 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** (p260). Back on the coast, the wildlife-rich **Otago Peninsula** (p279) juts abstractly away from the Victorian facades of student-filled **Dunedin** (p268). Try to catch some live music while you're in town!

Head inland to bungey-obsessed **Queenstown** (p301), then mix and match highways to Te Anau for the side road to **Milford Sound** (p347). Backtrack to Haast Pass, from where you'll wind down to **Jackson Bay** (p210) on the rain-soaked West Coast. Further north come face-to-face with the **Fox Glacier** (p206) and **Franz Josef Glacier** (p202), then check out some *pounamu* (jade or greenstone) in **Hokitika** (p194). Wet your whistle at Greymouth's **Monteith's Brewing Co** (p190), then get your camera ready for the **Punakaiki rocks** (p186). Heading east on SH7, cross Lewis Pass and head back to cathedral-hearted **Christchurch** (p213).



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** (p213) suburbs in any direction: head north along the coast and you'll soon leave the traffic behind. **Kaikoura** (p143) 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** (p158) – 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** (p130). Continue west past artsy Nelson to eco-friendly, chilled-out **Golden Bay** (p169) and gargantuan **Kahurangi National Park** (p174). End-of-the-line **Farewell Spit** (p173) is perfectly desolate.

Travel southwest on SH6 to Westport, from where a memorable road trundles north up to the caverns of **Oparara Basin** (p183). Southbound on SH6, divert inland on SH73 to the extremities of **Arthur's Pass National Park** (p246), then continue south to the mirror-surfaced **Okarito Lagoon** (p200), bypassing Queenstown for a voyage on isolated **Doubtful Sound** (p350).

Cross over to Invercargill from where you can ferry yourself out to southerly **Stewart Island** (p366), then kick back in the overgrown **Catlins** (p360) 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** (p287) and hang-glider-hung **Omarama** (p296). Trek back to the east coast via the **Waitaki Valley** (p296) on SH83, then hop south to mellow, underrated **Oamaru** (p297) before a big-city reality check back in **Christchurch** (p213).

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

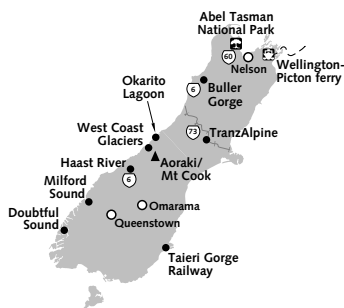
With eye-popping panoramas out every South Island window, getting from A to B is half the fun.

For a bird's-eye view of the south, take a glider trip over **Omarama** (p296), a scenic flight above **Milford Sound** (p311), a chopper ride over **Aoraki/Mt Cook** (p263) or the **West Coast glaciers** (p204 & p206), or a knee-trembling hang-glide above **Nelson** (p153) or **Queenstown** (p308).

Train-spotting romantics should book a seat on the **Taiari Gorge Railway** (p279) or the **TranzAlpine** (p193) route from Christchurch to Greymouth over 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** (p110) 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** (p168), **Doubtful Sound** (p351) or **Okarito Lagoon** (p200), a cruisy jetboat safari up the **Haast River** (p209), or a white-knuckle thrill-ride in **Queenstown** (p306) or **Buller Gorge** (p179).

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** (p196) in March, **Bluff Oyster & Southland Seafood Festival** (p359) in May, Kaikoura's **Seafest** (p146) in October, and the **Marlborough Wine Festival** (p138) around Blenheim in February. Beervana for hopheads is Nelson's **Marchfest** (p154), held in, er, April.

Organic produce floods the region. Stock up at the **Organic Greengrocer** (p157) in Nelson. Regional farmers markets across the island embrace the 100-mile diet and 'locavore' culture: try **Lytelton Farmers Market** (p236) near Christchurch, **Dunedin Farmers Market** (p276) or the weekly market at the **Founders Brewery & Cafe** (p152) in Nelson.

For a *hangi* (Maori feast) visit the **Tamaki Maori Village** (p220) in Christchurch. It's set in a re-created Maori village and includes cultural performances that bring to life interaction between Maori and early settlers.



The Authors



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Although he's lived in Auckland for four decades, Brett 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 for his latest work.



SARAH BENNETT

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.



SCOTT KENNEDY

The West Coast, Queenstown & Wanaka

Scott 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, trampers, 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.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Professor James Belich wrote the History chapter (p26). 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.

Peter Dragicevich wrote the majority of the Culture chapter (p35). As managing editor of Auckland-based *Express* newspaper he spent much of the 90s writing about the local arts, club and bar scene. He has co-authored more than 17 books for Lonely Planet.

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 (p50). 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 (p57). 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 (p85) 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 (p405). David is a travel-medicine specialist, diving doctor and lecturer in wilderness medicine.

Gareth Shute wrote the Music section of the Culture chapter (p46). 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 Conjurers, The Investigations and The Cosbys.

Nandor Tanczos wrote the Environmental Issues in Aotearoa New Zealand boxed text (p66). 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 (p64). 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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