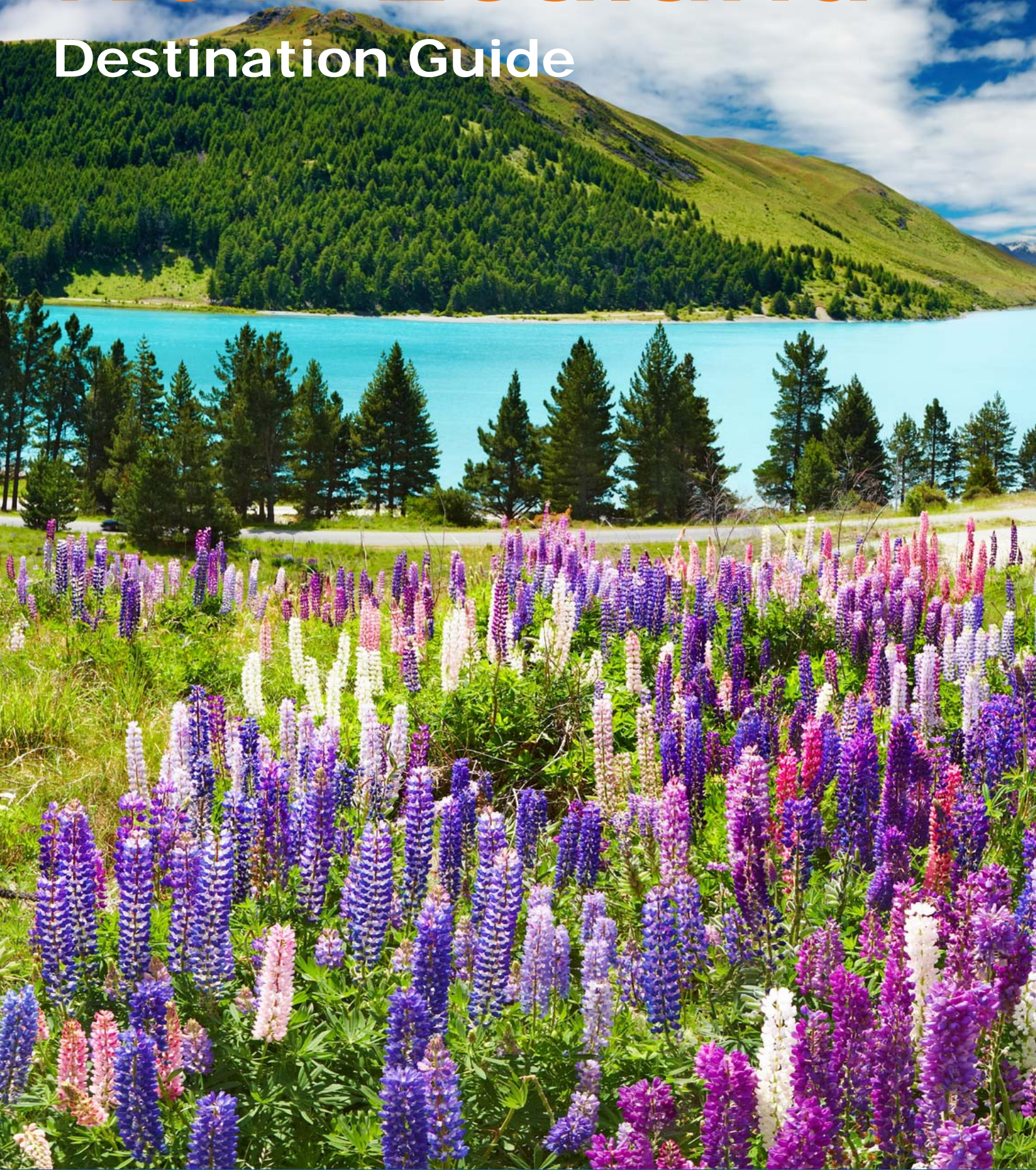


New Zealand

Destination Guide




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New Zealand, *The Land of the Long White Cloud*, has to be one of the best countries in which to take a self drive holiday. Its scenery is truly breathtaking, the locals are amazingly hospitable and the roads are easy to navigate. Split into two islands, the country's North Island offers miles of unspoilt beaches, art deco townships and a strong Maori culture. In the South Island, discover the magnificent Southern Alps, vast azure lakes and a winter playground for all. This guide includes information about hiring a car or motorhome, as well as potential routes and destination information to help you plan your self drive holiday. Get off the beaten track and start planning today!

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Renting a Car in New Zealand

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain	Examples: ECMN: E = Economy C = 2 or 4 door M = Manual N = No Aircon FDAR: F = Full Size D = 4 Door A = Automatic R = Aircon	E = Electric Air
		R = Recreational		C = Electric No Air
		F = 4 Wheel Drive		
		X = Special		
		K = Commercial Van/Truck		
		P = Ute		
		X = Special		
		E = Executive		

When selecting a rental vehicle, take into consideration where you will be travelling, how many people will be travelling in the vehicle, luggage size and the kind of driving you intend to do. Auto Europe offers a vast range of vehicles from small economy sizes to larger full-sized cars, 4WDs, convertibles and luxury vehicles. The ACRISS system above will help you find a car that suits your needs. This is internationally recognised code which will ensure you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

Automatic and Manual Transmissions

Both manual and automatic rentals are available in New Zealand.

Collecting at an airport in New Zealand

At most airports rental companies will have a desk in the arrivals hall and vehicles will be located within walking distance. However, at smaller airports you may be required to collect your vehicle from a downtown depot. In this case, a courtesy transfer will usually be provided from the airport to the depot. Auto Europe offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location/airport fees and charges that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at time of booking to ensure your rental will include all airport fees.

Motorhome Rental

Auto Europe Australia also provide motorhome rental for the convenience of transport and accommodation combined. Hire with one of Australia's leading campervan and motorhome specialists. Contact Auto Europe Australia for more information.

Do I need a credit card?

Yes. A credit card will be needed when collecting your vehicle, and will be used for a security bond. The deposit is generally the insurance excess of the rental car which can vary between NZ\$385 and NZ\$3,500 (+tax) and depends on the category of vehicle you have booked and the rate type.

What are Premium Location Fees?

Premium location fees apply when a vehicle is collected from an airport, railway or select downtown locations. Auto Europe's car rental prices usually include airport or premium location fees for car rental collections in New Zealand. Check on your prepaid voucher to ensure that this included.



What about fees for collecting my Hire Car from Downtown Depots?

In general, there should be no fees for collecting a rental car from a downtown office, though there may be special circumstances for remote depots. Be sure to check this if you are collecting from a location outside of a major town or city.

Can I take my rental car or 4WD off-roading in New Zealand?

Car rental suppliers will not permit travel on un-sealed roads or off-road unless it's reasonably unavoidable. This will also include driving in rivers or through streams or beaches, and in some cases above the snow line in the New Zealand ski fields. You will not be covered by insurance if you do drive in these conditions, so check with Auto Europe Australia when you book to ensure exactly where you can drive.

Can I collect my car in one city and drop it off in another?

One way rentals are possible in New Zealand. Minimum duration requirements are applicable, though one-ways between major cities are often free. There will usually be a fee for inter-island one ways and one ways to and from remote locations. Many of these can be waived for extended rental durations.

Can I take my car between the North and South Islands?

You can travel between the North and South Islands, however your car rental is generally not covered by insurance while on the ferry. As a result, most suppliers will not permit the cross over and you will have to pick up and drop off at Picton or Wellington. In this case, please provide the date and time of pick up/drop off, and not that minimum stay requirements may be in place. Check with Auto Europe Australia for details when making your reservation.

Should I hire a GPS for driving in New Zealand?

GPS hire is available from Auto Europe Australia. Our rates include the GPS, travel guides and entertainer. The GPS is delivered direct to your home before you depart. GPS units can also be requested directly through certain suppliers, however this will be at their own rates. If time is short, or you would simply prefer to collect your GPS unit together with your rental, then this may be an option for you.

Can I extend my rental after I have picked up my car?

Once the car rental has commenced, you will need to call the depot where you initially collected the vehicle for assistance with extensions. If the car is available to be extended, you will be offered additional days at the local rate.



Rental Vehicle Insurance

All rental providers are required to have their cars covered by insurance. In the case of an accident, it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately. In this case an excess will be due. To reduce the amount of excess for which you are liable, check with your rental supplier to arrange extra cover.

Car rental companies in New Zealand will normally include:

- **Third Party Insurance and Compulsory Insurance:** Both will be included in your car hire rate. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle and is normally included in prepaid car hire rates. Rentals are subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time of collection.
- **Theft Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Fire and Liability:** This limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death and is normally included in prepaid car hire rates.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rates. It is considered as an optional extra that you can take out upon collection of the car.

Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance

When renting a vehicle, the rental rates include basic insurance. However, in the event that the vehicle is stolen or accidentally damaged, there is usually an insurance excess amount which the driver is liable to pay to the rental company. To avoid any unexpected costs opt for Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance which will offer a reimbursement for the supplier's damage and theft excess to a maximum for AU\$5,000. Simply add this onto your car rental booking prior to departure and you could save thousands of dollars in case of an accident. To find out more, simply call Auto Europe on 1300 656 601 or visit the [Auto Europe website](#).

The Auto Europe Hire Car Excess Refund Insurance is managed by Accident & Health International Underwriting Pty Limited, ABN 26 053 335 952, AFSL 238261 and underwritten by CGU Insurance Limited, ABN 27 004 478 371, AFSL 238291.

Driving in New Zealand



New Zealand is a wonderfully unique country full of immense landscapes, stunning scenery, rich in indigenous heritage and buzzing cities. New Zealand is recognised as *Aotearoa* in Maori, which means *The Land of the Long White Cloud*. This is a country of world class food and wine, fabulous festivals and celebrated Maori culture and traditions. You'll be able to enjoy a plethora of outdoor activities from the laid-back to highly adventurous, all in the most magnificent natural environments.

New Zealand is primarily made up of two islands, known as the North and South Islands, as well as a scattering of smaller islands. The North Island is the more populated of the two islands, with major cities surrounded by rolling plains, black sanded beaches, gurgling volcanic pools, stunning harbours and beautiful mountain ranges. The South Island is less populated, but enjoys a thriving art scene, fantastic marine life, soaring mountains and glaciers, ski resorts and pristine wilderness. You can do as little or as much as you please in New Zealand, the hardest decision you'll have to make is where to start!

New Zealand has a fantastic road and highway network, with motorways that connect between all the major cities and towns quickly and efficiently. A self drive holiday in New Zealand allows you to enjoy all the famous sites, with the freedom to uncover some undiscovered treasures as well.

Driving Laws In New Zealand

- Driving in New Zealand is regarded as safe and orderly. Signs are clear and easy to follow. Laws are strictly enforced so it's best to know the rules before you get behind the wheel. Cars drive on the **left** hand side in New Zealand and the driver sits on the right. All occupants of the car are required to wear seat belts, and children under the age of five will need an approved child seat or restraint.
- New Zealand has a law with which many foreign drivers are unfamiliar. It is the "give way to the right" rule, in which virtually every intersection is treated like a roundabout. As trick to follow this rule: if you were to get in an accident and the other car hit the driver's side door, you are at fault.
- Talking on the phone, driving under the influence of alcohol and speeding are all illegal and heavily policed.
- Speed limits in New Zealand are generally 50km/h in cities, and 100km/h on the open road. There are variations, so always keep an eye on the sign-posted limits.
- In the unfortunate case of an accident in New Zealand, it is essential to exchange details with the driver or owner of the other car(s) involved. If the accident involves a parked car etc., and the owner cannot be found, the accident must be reported to police within 60 hours. In the event that someone is injured, the accident must be reported to police within 24 hours.



Age Requirements

The minimum age to rent a car in New Zealand is usually 21, however some companies will allow drivers aged 20 to rent their cars. Most companies do have a surcharge for drivers aged 24 or under. Please check these details at the time of booking.

Licence Requirements

To drive a rental car in New Zealand, the driver will need to have held a full licence for a minimum of one year. An International Drivers Permit is required for those who hold licences in countries other than Australia and New Zealand.

Parking Laws

Both free and paid parking exist in New Zealand. Certain areas have time limits, so it is wise to check for signage when parking. It's quite common for New Zealand drivers to mount the curb when parking, to keep the road as clear as possible. As long as you aren't damaging property, lawns, gardens etc., it is recommended to follow this method of parking in some areas.

Important Road Signs

Stop: Red with white writing

Give Way: A triangle with red border and white centre

Speed Limits: Usually a red circle with the speed limit in km/h in the centre.

Warning/Caution Signs: Usually yellow signs showing the path of the road, conditions or hazard ahead.

Information Signs: Green with white writing

Road Tolls and eTags

While almost all roads in New Zealand are free, some do feature tolls, which are usually paid in cash at toll booths. The Northern Gateway Toll Road, located to the north of Auckland is the first to have an electronic tolling system, where sensors and cameras record your car's licence plate. The toll can be paid over the phone, online, or in person at self serve kiosks located along the way.

New Zealand Regions

Regions

North Island Regions:

- Northland and Auckland region.
- Bay of Plenty, Eastland and Hawke's Bay
- Manawatu-Wanganui, Taranaki and
- Wellington

Key Locations on the North Island:

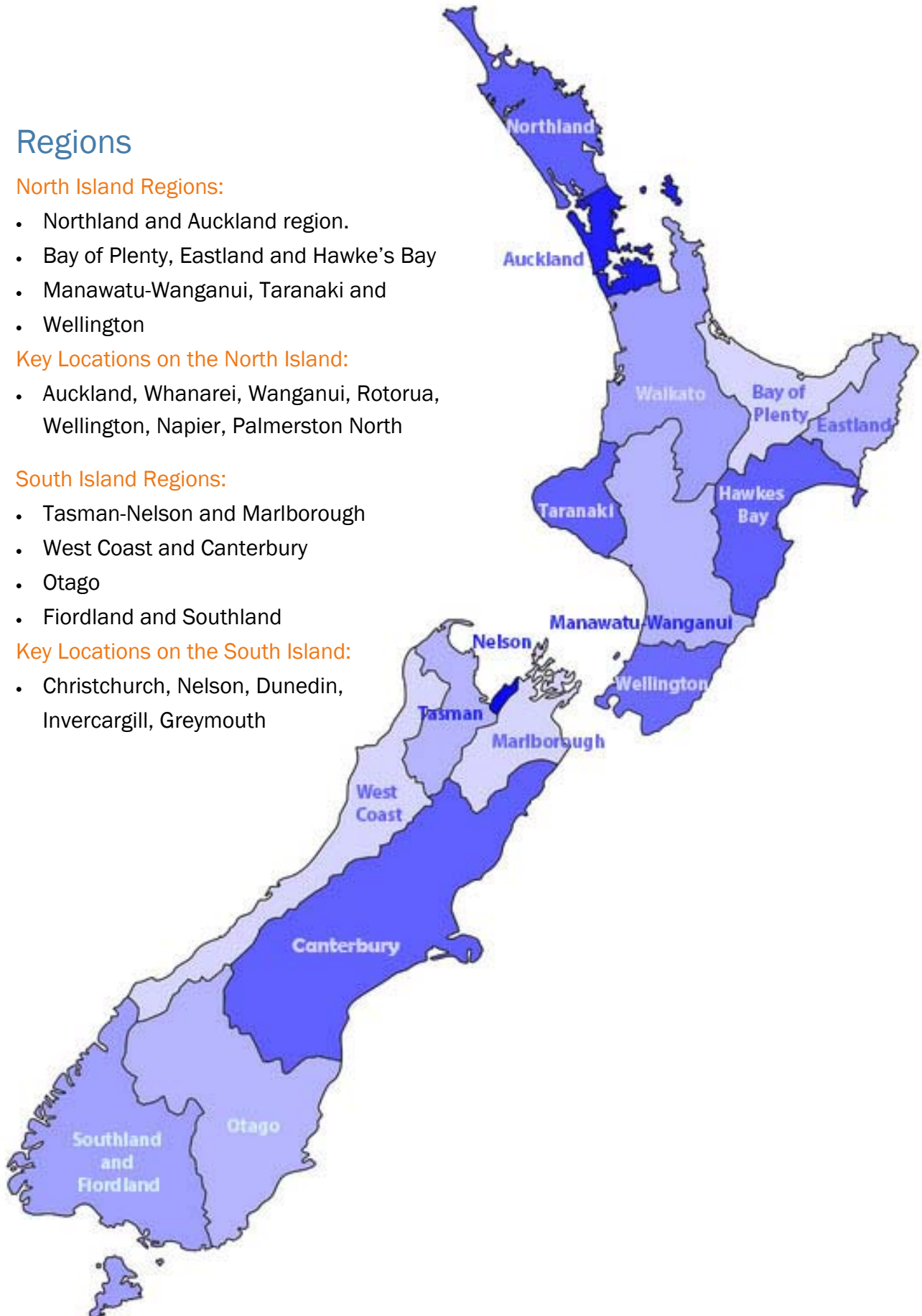
- Auckland, Whanareai, Wanganui, Rotorua, Wellington, Napier, Palmerston North

South Island Regions:

- Tasman-Nelson and Marlborough
- West Coast and Canterbury
- Otago
- Fiordland and Southland

Key Locations on the South Island:

- Christchurch, Nelson, Dunedin, Invercargill, Greymouth



Auckland



The largest city in New Zealand, Auckland covers an area over twice the size of London with roughly a sixth of the population, making it a spacious city without any overcrowding. Auckland has a strong connection with life on the water, and one of the world's highest ratios of yachts to people, giving it the nickname "City of Sails". The city is located in the north of New Zealand, in an area home to roughly 50 extinct volcanoes, and features two large harbours, making Auckland a city with satisfying views in every direction.

Attractions

Sky Tower – One of the tallest buildings in the southern hemisphere

Auckland Museum – A great place to learn about the history and people of New Zealand

Mount Eden – The tallest peak in the area, offering amazing views

Snow Planet – An indoor ski field open every day of the year

Cruise Auckland Harbour – Take a charter yacht or sea kayak to explore the harbour

Auckland War Memorial – See the finest collection of Maori treasures in the world

Take the family to Rainbows End – Incredible adventure park with log fume, roller coasters and the Fear Fall

Climb Mangere Mountain – Enjoy the view of Manukau Harbour from this extinct volcano

Visit the Otara Market – Get a taste of true local culture at the worlds largest Maori and Polynesian markets

Wonder through Auckland Botanical Gardens – Located in Manurewa and home to over 10,000 different plants from New Zealand and across the globe

Visit West Auckland, Waitakere – Head to Piha or Muriwai black sand beaches and the stunning Waitakere Ranges

Events

January

Heineken Open – A world class tennis tournament

Quicksilver World Junior Championships – Top junior surfing pros compete over a week

Auckland Seafood Festival – Summer food festival

April

Auckland Wine and Food Festival – Celebrate local produce

Auckland Rally – Annual car racing event

July

Midwinter Swim – Brave the icy temps in this popular spectacle with music and entertainment

November

Taste: Food and Feasting in Art – Food and art festival held November to February

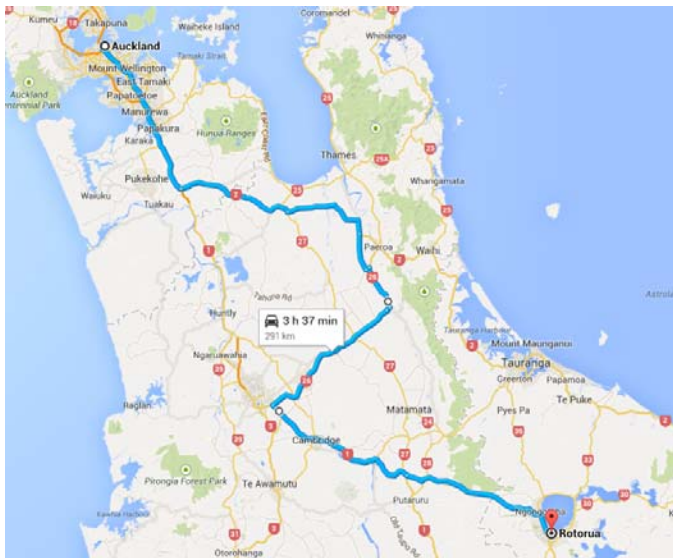
The Ellerslie Flower Show – Floral event with festival and music

Auckland Marathon – Annual full and half marathon

December

Christmas in the Park – The largest free music event in New Zealand

Self Drive Tours: Auckland

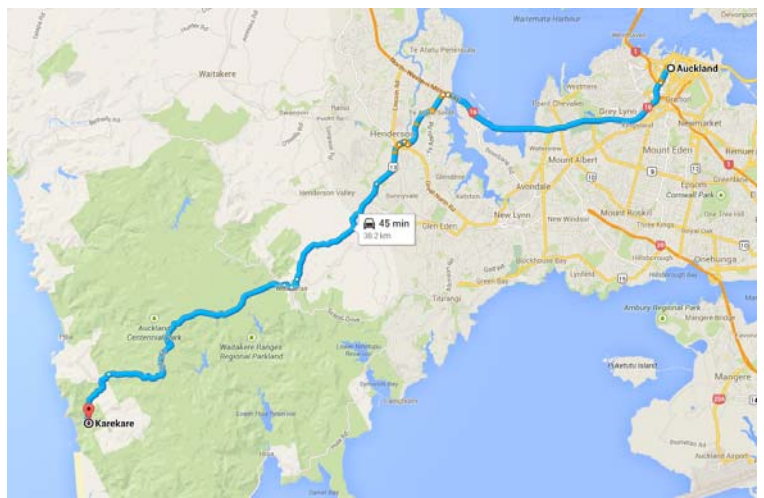


Rotorua

Head south east from Auckland with your rental car, and visit the town of Rotorua, one of the most popular destinations in New Zealand. Rotorua is famous for geysers and thermal mud pools, with constantly active hot spots producing steam and heat. There are a few different ways you can get to Rotorua, with a number of great options such as Hamilton Central, Huntly, Pukekohe and Te Aroha, among many others to visit on this route.

Waitakere Ranges

Drive your rental car west of Auckland, where you'll find the Waitakere Ranges, a stunning area of hills, mountains and forests just a short distance away. Drive out to the Arataki Centre near the village of Titirangi, where you will find great information on the area and recommended routes to follow. If you keep driving west to Karekare, there are a number of great beaches along the coastline, as well as numerous opportunities to fish, bushwalk and camp.



Northland and Auckland



Just as the name suggests, Northland is the most northerly region of New Zealand, and is famous for rolling green hills, pleasant sub-tropical weather and endless beaches. It is also the birthplace of New Zealand for both Maori and European settlers. Northland is a great place to holiday, offering loads to see and do, as well as several one of a kind attractions unlike anything else in New Zealand.

Attractions

Auckland region

Explore the black sand beaches – The wild west coast is home to rugged Bethels, Piha and Karekare beaches

Tour the countryside – Drive to the charming Clevedon Valley with boutique wineries and quaint villages

Feed the fish – Go snorkelling at Goat Island Marine reserve and feed friendly fish

Get back to nature – Visit the beautiful Great Barrier Island with unspoilt beaches and native forests. Climb Hiakimata (Mt Hobson) for sensational views of the region

Relax and unwind – Soak in the hot pools of the Waiwera Thermal Resort

Northland

Bay of Islands – An area of 150 islands, where you can enjoy great fishing and diving. Keep an eye out for the local dolphins and penguins

Ninety Mile Beach – Take a 4WD tour along the beach, climb the Cape Reinga Lighthouse at the junction of the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean

Rokiroki – One of the largest caves in the world, located in the Poor Knights Islands

Hit the Beach – Doubtless Bay is a great spot for surfing, swimming, fishing and diving

Koutu Boulders – See the huge spherical boulders found along the coastline of Hokianga Harbour and the giant Kauri trees in the Waipoua Forest

Whangarei – The northernmost city in New Zealand, with lots of tours and activities for visitors

Events

January

Paihia Summer Festival – A free event held over 10 days in the town of Paihia

July

Russell Birdman Festival – Celebrations galore in the town of Russell, including birdman flying contests, spaghetti eating races and more

December

Whangarei Jazz & Blues Festival – A weekend of concerts by musicians from around the world

Key Locations

Northland: Whangarei, Kaipara, Bay of Islands, Whangaroa, Poor Knights Island, Hokianga

Auckland: Auckland city, North Shore, Waitakere, Pihe Beach, Manukau

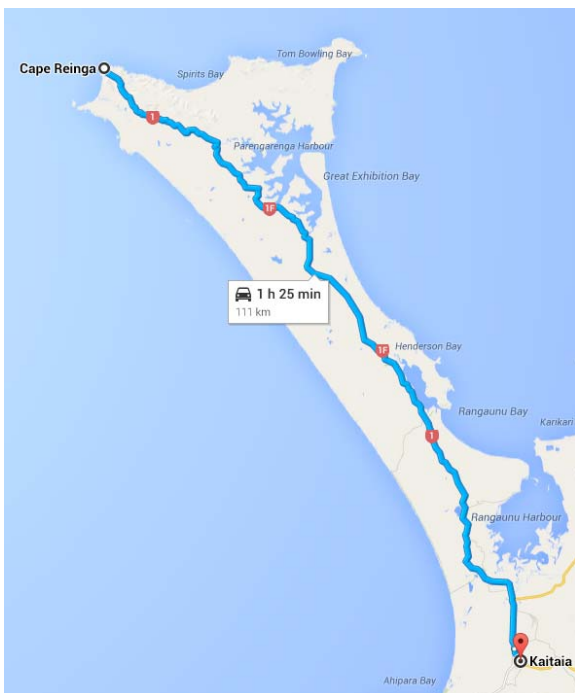
Self Drive Tours: Northland



Cape Reinga to Kaitiāia

Start this journey in one of the most northern points in New Zealand and a perfect base for exploring the far north of the country: Kaitiāia. This is the point where the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean clash and you can view the tidal race from the lighthouse. According to Maori legend, this is the place where the spirits of the dead enter the underworld.

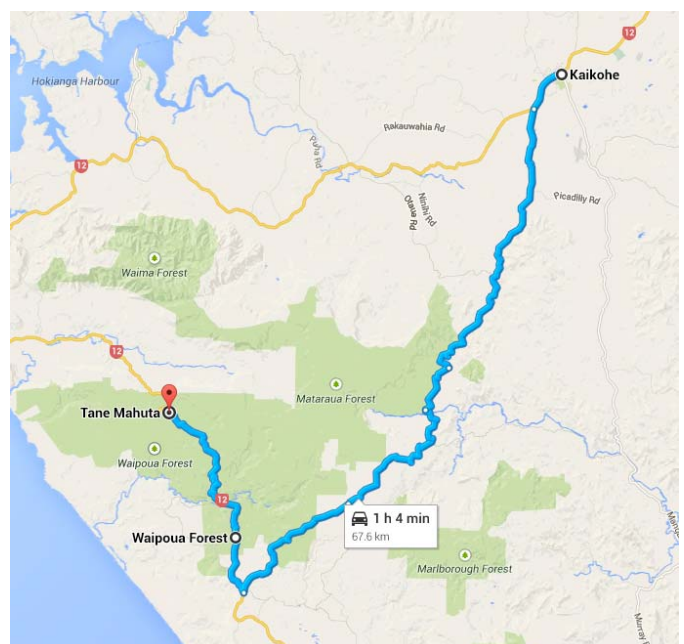
Travel south east on Highway 1 along vast, rolling plains. Then follow this road through Houhora Heads, past Lake Waoparera and onto Kaitiāia. This is a great base to begin exploring Ninety Mile Beach. Stretching further than the eye can see, this beach features several amazing sites to explore, including secluded bays, shipwrecks and impressive sand dunes. The area is especially perfect for cooling off in summer.



Kaikohe to Waipoua Forest

Begin your trip in the town of Kaikohe, located near the centre of Northland. Head south west from here along Mangakahia Road, which will lead you towards the forest. On the way you'll see several tiny, charming villages amid rolling green hills, with New Zealand's glorious mountain ranges in the backdrop.

Waipoua Forest features some of the most ancient remaining sections of forest in New Zealand, as well as the largest tree in the country, known as Tane Mahuta. A visit here will have you feeling almost as though you have stepped back in time.



Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay & Eastland



Located on the North Island of New Zealand, these areas are considered the most easterly part of the mainland. This region is one of the most popular holiday destinations for Kiwis. Hawkes Bay is well known for its 80 wineries, 35 of which are open to visitors. The Bay of Plenty holds New Zealand's only active marine volcano. In this region you can enjoy hundreds of kilometres of bike trails, walking tracks and beautiful white sandy beaches. It is definitely a part of New Zealand that you will not want to miss.

Attractions

Bay of Plenty

Have fun on the water – At Tauranga, swim with dolphins, whale watch or relax at Mt Maunganui Hot Salt Water Pools

Rotorua – See the hot springs, geysers and bubbling mud pools

Spectacular White Island – Visit this active island volcano

Explore Mt Monganui - Great beaches, blue waters, top views

Te Puke – Visit the Kiwi fruit capital of New Zealand

Eastland

Bungy Jumping – Plenty of opportunities to take a dive

Walk the Tolaga Bay Wharf – One of the longest wharfs in the world, stretching out into the beautiful Tolgaga Bay

Gisborne – See where Captain Cook first stepped onto New Zealand

Visit Te Poho O Rawiri Marae – Witness the beautiful whare rununga (meeting house) covered in ancestral carvings and tukutuku (Maori art)

Soak up the natural beauty – Raft on the Motu River, explore Te Urewera National Park, stroll through Mahia peninsular or walk behind Rere Falls

Hawke's Bay

Greet the gannets – Visit Cape Kidnappers, home to gannet colony with great views of the bay

Taste the fine wine and great food – Hawke's Bay is famous around the world for fabulous wines and seafood

Learn Maori history and culture – Visit the Hawke's Bay Museum, tour Te Urewera National Park and Te Mata Peak with an experienced Maori guide.

Events

January

Tauranga Boutique Seafood Festival – Enjoy the splendidly fresh seafood of this region

March

Havelock Mussel Festival– Get dressed up and enjoy fresh mussels, drinks and beautiful scenery in Havelock

Sundaise Festival– A festival in Waihi focusing on music, art and sustainability

May

Cateye Moonride – A mountain bike race in the Whakarewarewa Forest

June

Matariki– Celebrate the Maori New Year in Napier

December

Let's Go Rotorua Air Show – A display of aircraft, stunts and shows, held at Rotorua Airport

Key Locations

Bay of Plenty: Waihi Beach, Katikati, Tauranga, Mount Maunganui, Whakatane, Te Puke, White Island (Whakaari)

Eastland: Gisborne, East Cape, Poverty Bay

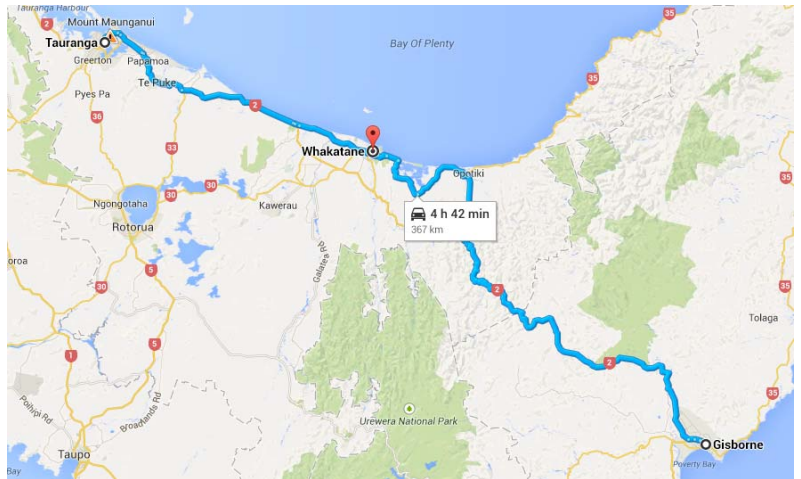
Hawke's Bay: Hastings, Havelock North, Napier

Self Drive Tours: Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay and Eastland

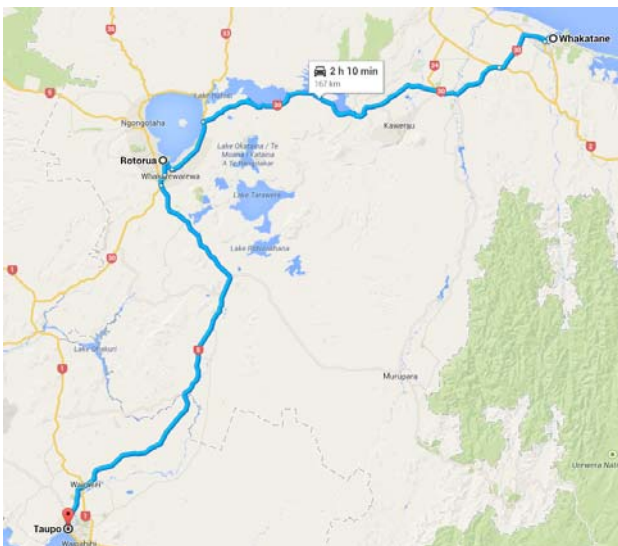


Gisborne to Tauranga

This drive will take you through many different landscapes, from farmland to dense forests, and along the region's stunning coastline. Heading north from Gisborne on Matawai Road, you'll cross scenic hills and fields interrupted only by a few charming farmhouses. The road will then lead you through mountainous regions as you near the coast, approaching the towns of Oпитiki and Whakatane. Finally, you'll get to cruise along the coastline, where sand dunes and forests create a relaxing seaside setting.



Whakatane to Rotorua and Taupo



Beginning in the seaside town of Whakatane, this drive will take you through areas with lush rivers and streams, weaving through rolling green hills and forests, arriving at two of New Zealand's most famous natural attractions. Once at Rotorua you will be able to see a landscape of steaming geysers and hot springs which have been attracting visitors for centuries.

Continue further south towards the town of Taupo, which is another hotspot for geothermal activity. Just outside Taupo is an area known as the "Craters of the Moon". A landscape of steam vents, craters and geysers create a scene that resembles another planet. This is a truly remarkable place.

Manawatu-Wanganui, Taranaki & Wellington



Covering the central area of New Zealand's North Island, this is a region made up mainly of mountains, rolling green hills and fields, and some of the country's largest river systems. An important area since the early days of Maori settlement, there are many amazing natural spaces, as well as towns and cities which share a close connection with the land. If travelling by ferry from the South to North Islands, you'll arrive in Wellington- the perfect place to begin exploring this area.

Attractions

Taranaki

Visit some of the many mountains and national parks - Perfect for hiking during warmer months, and skiing during winter

Visit the volcanic mountain of Taranaki - Filming location for The Last Samurai

Wellington

Visit the Te Papa Museum of New Zealand - A great way to learn about the artistic, cultural and natural history of the nation

Explore Zealandia - A wildlife conservation area just a short drive from Wellington

Oriental Parade - Walk along Wellington's most beautiful street

Manawatu-Wanganui

Head to Whanganui National Park - See the famous Bridge to Nowhere

Enjoy the water - Take in some swimming, diving, boating or fishing in the pristine rivers or seas in the area

Events

January

Wellington Cup - The biggest race day in New Zealand

February

New Zealand International Sevens - Rugby tournament and Wellington's largest sporting event

March

Festival of Cultures - Experience countries from all over the world at this festival hosted in Palmerston North

May

The Food Show - The largest food expo in New Zealand with locations in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch

July

New Zealand International Film Festival, Wellington - Showcasing the country's best films of the past year

December

Kapiti Food Fair - Enjoy regional flavours and holiday shopping

Key Locations

Manawatu-Wanganui: Palmerston North, Vinegar Hill, Manawatu River, Wanganui city

Taranaki: New Plymouth, Egmont National Park, Eltham

Wellington: Wellington City, Upper & Lower Hutt, Wairarapa, Kapiti Coast

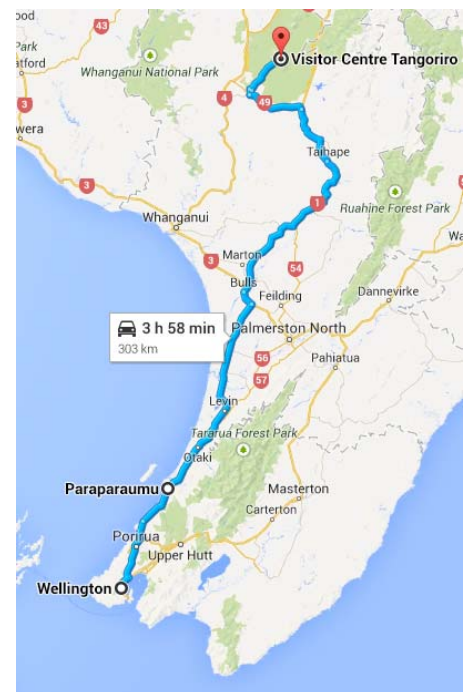
Self Drive Tours: Manawatu-Wanganui, Taranaki & Wellington



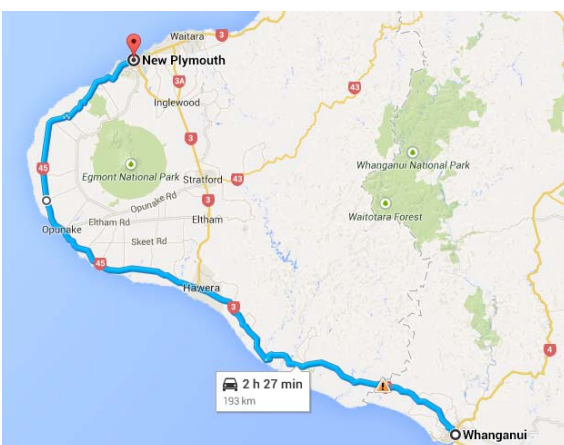
Wellington to Tongariro National Park

Beginning in Wellington, head north and begin by passing the towns of Porirua, Paraparaumu and Otaki. Here you have the choice of continuing via the cities of Palmerston North or Wanganui, or both! You can visit these cities on your return drive as well.

The landscape will become more and more mountainous as you continue north. After following this gorgeous route for an hour or two, you'll reach Tongariro National Park. The park is well known for its natural beauty and sacred Maori sites. It is also the first National Park in New Zealand and one of the oldest in the world. The park is popular for hiking and horse riding in summer, as well as skiing during winter. Rafting and fishing can be done in the rivers throughout the park. Lord of the Rings fans may recognise some of the scenery, as many scenes of the land of Mordor were filmed around the national park. For fans of the films, you can book guided tours to visit the locations of specific scenes.



Wanganui to New Plymouth



Heading west from Wanganui, drive along the stunning south west coast of New Zealand's North Island. You'll pass through grassy farmlands and lush green hills, as well as the region's rugged coastline. Along the way, you can stop in many charming towns such as Waverley, Patea, Hawera, Opunake and Oakura, before arriving at the seaside city of New Plymouth. Take in the striking views of Mt Taranaki along the way. This mountain, standing at 2,500m, can be seen for most of the drive. It is an impressive site, particularly in winter when it gleams with a thick covering of snow.

Nelson Tasman and Marlborough



The beautiful regions of Nelson Tasman and Marlborough are located in New Zealand's upper South Island. The Nelson region is full of stunning natural beauty, including national parks with lush forests, pristine beaches and aquamarine waterways, along with an energetic, artistic and creative city. Some of New Zealand's finest wines and seafood are produced in the Marlborough region, where you'll also find magnificent sounds and

Attractions

Nelson Tasman

Enjoy the local art scene – Renowned for its local art and alternative lifestyles, learn a new craft in Nelson.

Abel Tasman National Park – One of the most pristine reserves in New Zealand, this park has soaring peaks, magnificent beaches and wondrous bushland to explore

Kahurangi National Park – Walk the Heaphy Track and see the locations of scenes from the Lord of the Rings films

Visit the Nelson wineries – 23 vineyards cover the landscape

Get airborne – See Nelson from a different perspective by paragliding, skydiving and hang-gliding

Visit Golden Bay – Enjoy the exquisite bird sanctuary, the Waikoropupu Springs or explore the wild Wharaiki Beach

Marlborough

Marlborough Sounds – Go sea kayaking, check out shipwreck dives, charter a sailing boat or go dolphin spotting in the magnificent waterways; alternatively, walk through beautiful native forests with great views of Queen Charlotte Sound

Enjoy Picton – Savour the local cuisine in a waterfront café, learn Maori legends or explore the arts and crafts galleries

Get a taste of Blenheim – The centre of the famous Marlborough wine region; from here you can explore the wineries, breweries and distilleries

Whale watching – Kaikoura is the best spot to view passing sperm whales, dolphins and fur seals

Get into Havelock – Sample green lip mussels, explore the Pelorus and Kenepeu Sounds or follow the many walking trails

Events

January

Summer Movies Al Fresco, Pack a picnic and enjoy outdoor movies in Nelson

February

Marlborough Wine Festival – Celebrating the regions specialties with wine tasting, tutorials and festivals

Buller Fest – White-water paddling festival in Nelson

March

Forrest GrapeRide – 101km road cycling event in Marlborough

October

Kaikoura Seafest – Taste the best local seafood, famous for crayfish, paua and fish

November

Garden Marlborough – Showcasing the best of Marlborough's gardens

Key Locations

Nelson: Nelson city, Golden Bay, Abel Tasman National Park, Nelson Lakes National Park

Marlborough: Blenheim, Picton, Havelock, Kaikoura

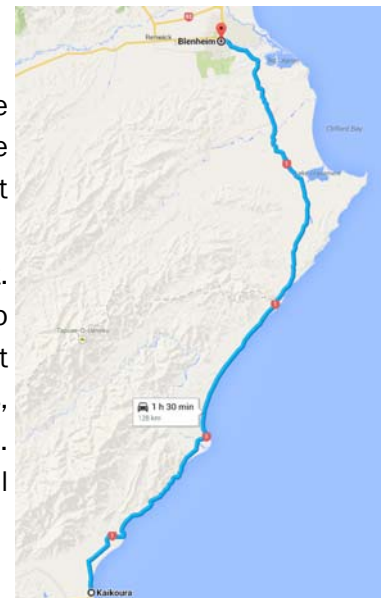
Self Drive Tours: Nelson Tasman & Marlborough



Blenheim to Kaikoura

This route follows State Highway 1 from the wine country of Blenheim, along the coast to the seaside town of Kaikoura. You can join the Classic New Zealand Wine Trail around Blenheim and visit any one of the 50 Marlborough vineyards that produce world-class Sauvignon Blanc.

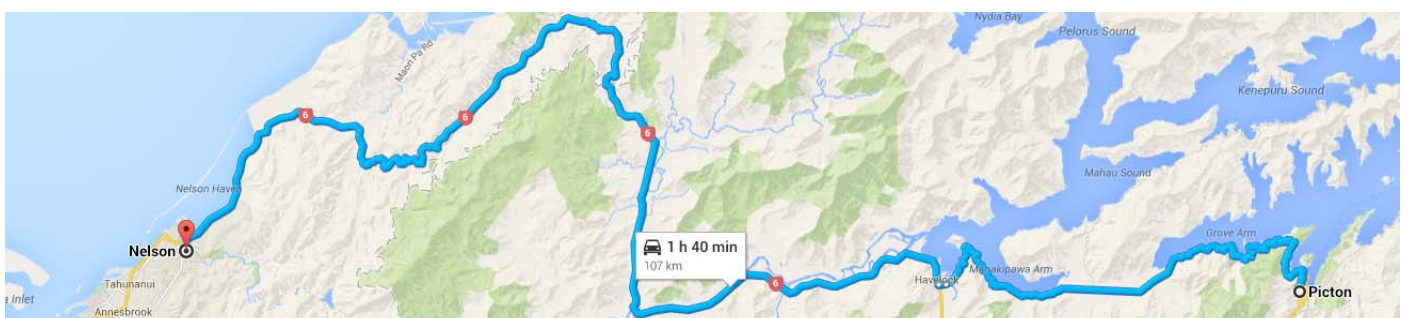
Drive south to Lake Grassmere, used predominately for the production of salt. Here you'll see the shallow lagoon and where the lake has been divided into separate ponds for evaporation. After visiting Lake Grassmere, head to the coast and follow the highway to Kaikoura. Soak up the rugged, untamed beaches, undulating sand dunes, seal colonies and magnificent coastal mountain ranges. You may even spot a whale or two along the way. Once you reach Kaikoura, spoil yourself with New Zealand's best seafood.



Queen Charlotte Drive

This picturesque drive runs from Picton to Nelson and through the town of Havelock. The road itself has ample signage and is easy to follow. The narrow, winding road heads west from Picton along deep forests of Birch trees and Punga ferns. Along the way you'll catch glimpses of the surrounding waterways. Momorani and Ngakuta Bays are great places to stop for a picnic or swim on the way to Havelock.

Explore the historic town Havelock, sail the Pelorus or Kenepuru Sounds, or taste fantastic seafood at the marina, including the world famous green lip mussels and crayfish. From Havelock, follow SH6 through forested ranges and the Rai Valley to the city of Nelson.



Christchurch



Image Courtesy [Phillip Capper](#). Flickr

New Zealand's second largest city has all the benefits of city life without the hassles of large crowds. Christchurch is going through a revitalisation after the devastating earthquakes of 2011. The new energy and inventiveness has given Christchurch a funky rebirth, with new locations like pop-up shopping mall constructed from bright coloured shipping containers. Artwork now fills demolished sites and the locals are as warm as ever in this fascinating city.

Attractions

Willowbank Wildlife Reserve – A great place to get familiar with New Zealand's wildlife

Christchurch Botanic Gardens – Featuring award winning gardens, as well as playgrounds for the kids

International Antarctic Centre – Simulating polar environment with penguins, rides and arctic themes

Take a punt on the Avon – Have some leisure time soaking up the sights from the Avon River

Get the best view of Christchurch – Take the Christchurch Gondola to the top of Port Hills, enjoy the views and explore the Heritage Time Tunnel

Events

January

World Buskers Festival – The streets of Christchurch come alive with street performers

February

Te Matatini – Festival of Maori culture and arts

Aoraki Early Bird Dragon Boat Regatta – Fun day of water races

March

Chinese New Year Lantern Festival – Welcome in the Chinese New Year with great festival in Victoria Square

Waipara Valley Wine and Food Festival – Over 20 local wineries and food producers come together to enjoy regional cuisine

May

Mt Isobel Challenge – Duathlon with mountain run and bike ride in Hanmer Springs (130km north west of Christchurch)

August:

New Zealand Bachata Festival – Dance festival complete with competitions and street parties

November

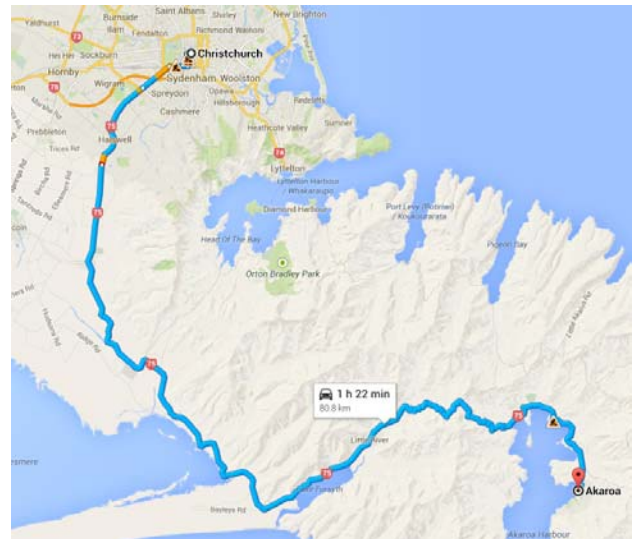
The Canterbury A&P Show – Four day event focusing on industries that service agriculture for people in rural and urban communities; includes wine competition, food, animals and entertainment

Self Drive Tours: Christchurch



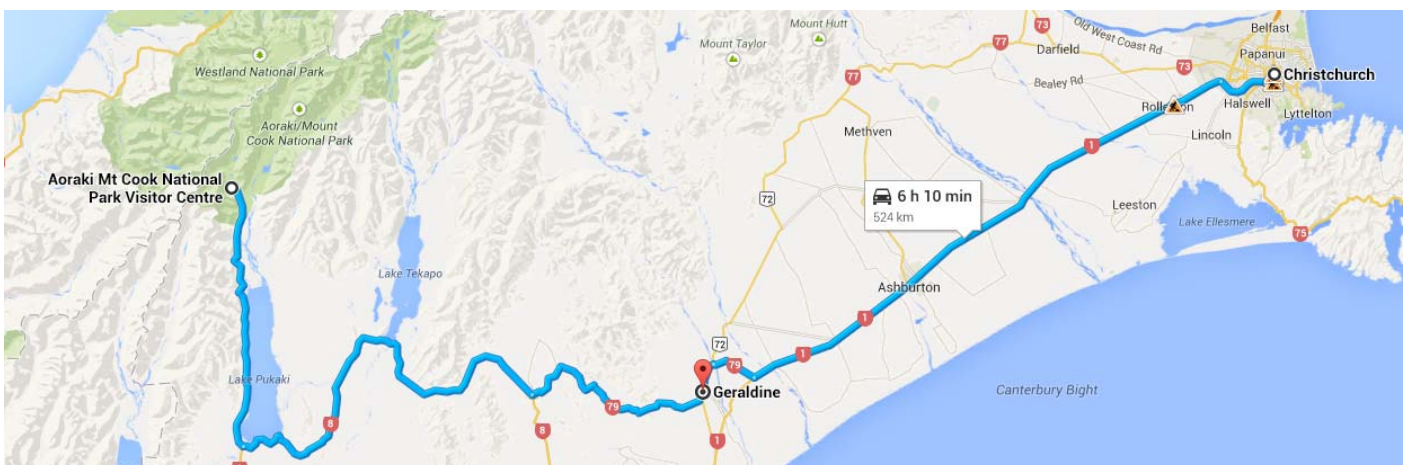
Akaroa

Drive south west of Christchurch along Tai Tapu Rd/Highway 75, which will lead you through a beautiful rugged area formed by volcanoes many centuries ago. At the end of the highway you will reach Akaroa, a place popular with travellers throughout the year, particularly during summer. The main attraction here is the sheltered and peaceful bay that serves as a home to many dolphins. Opportunities to swim with dolphins are quite common, and the beautiful forest covered hills and mountains create an impressive backdrop.



Mount Cook

Drive your rental car west of Christchurch, towards the other side of the South Island, where you will find Mount Cook National Park. The park contains over 140 mountain peaks, as well as over 70 glaciers, not to mention Mount Cook, the tallest mountain in New Zealand. On the drive here you'll have opportunities to stop at some wonderful places, including the glacier-blue Pukaki and Tekapo lakes, and the towns of Ashburton, Geraldine, and Fairlie.



West Coast & Canterbury

The west coast region of New Zealand is one of the most rugged, wild and untamed areas in the world, taking up one half of the middle of the South Island. The perfect destination for nature enthusiasts, with ancient glaciers, inspiring mountains, forested parks and a memorable coast. The other half of the South Island's middle is Canterbury; home of Christchurch, rolling plains, spectacular mountains and sweeping beaches.

Attractions

West Coast

Glaciers - Marvel at their beauty, join a tour, or take a scenic flight over the glaciers and Westlands National Park

Whataroa - See the White Heron sanctuary

Karamea - Visit limestone caverns in the Oparara Basin

Okarito Lagoon - Kayak over the lagoon, a safe haven for birdlife

Pancake Rocks, Punakaiki - See the famous blowholes that erupt through the limestone rock formations

Relax at the Maruia Springs - Fantastic thermal springs

Hokitika - The wild west town famous for green stone and local craft galleries

Haast Bay and Jackson's Bay - Spectacular scenery

Canterbury

Explore Aoraki/Mount Cook - Explore the alpine wilderness with a hike or mountain walk, or visit the Church of the Good Shepherd on Lake Tekapo and witness the best view of the Southern Alps from its altar

Kaikora - Go whale watching, visit a seabird or fur seal colony, or see the native dolphins and penguins

Timaru - Explore Victorian and Edwardian architecture

Water Sports - Have an adventure white water rafting on the Rangitata River or jet boating on the Waiau or Waimakariri Gorge

Indulge - Visit Hanmer Springs and the Waipara Valley to enjoy thermal springs or take a wine tasting tour

Go fishing - Partake in river fishing for trout and salmon in Ashburton

Arthur's Pass National Park - Take a hike!

Skiing - New Zealand has one of the world's longest ski seasons and remarkable mountain ranges

Events

January

Lazy Sundays—Locally grown musicians celebrate Christchurch's Botanic Gardens

February

Speight's Coast to Coast—Athletes compete running, cycling and kayaking over 243km from the Tasman Sea to the Pacific Ocean

Lyttelton Summer Festival - 10 day festival including art, performances, food and music

March

International Flower Show—Annual floral display and festival in Christchurch

Rainbow Rage—Mountain bike race over 106km from St Arnaud to Hanmer domain

May

Hanmer Springs Half Marathon - Half marathon and 10km run

October

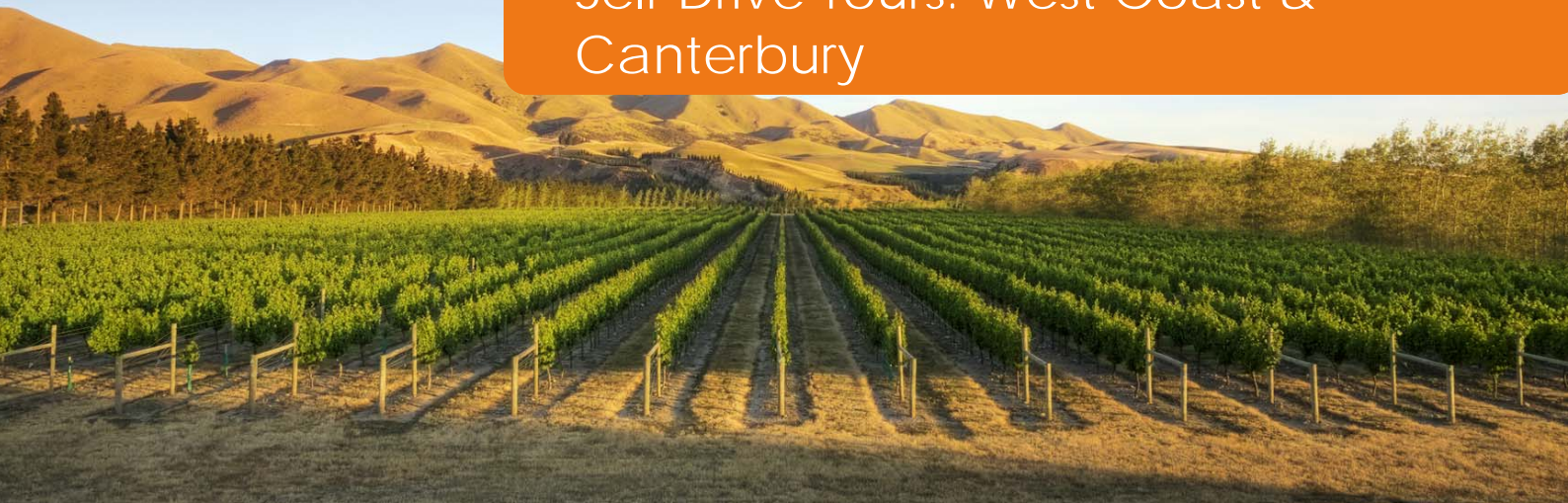
Waipara Valley Farmers' Market - Home grown produce every Saturday October to April

Key Locations

West Coast: Greymouth, Westport, Hokitika, Fox Glacier, Franz Joseph Glacier and Haast

Canterbury: Christchurch, Timaru, Kaikora, Mount Cook, Arthur's Pass, Akaroa, Waipara Valley, Hanmer Springs

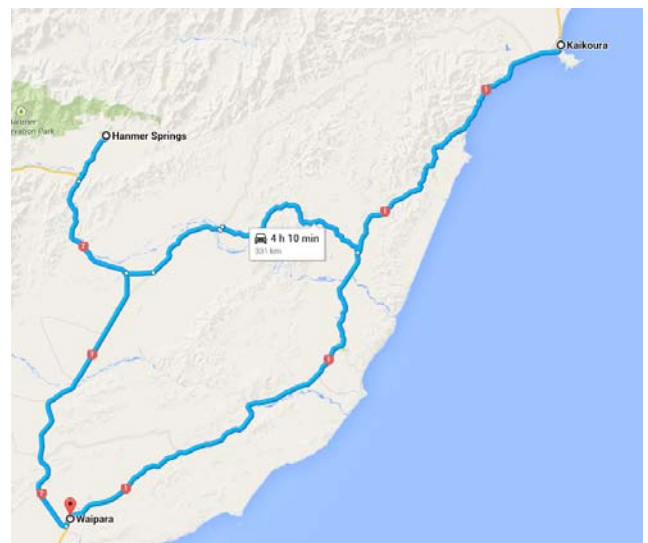
Self Drive Tours: West Coast & Canterbury



Alpine Pacific Triangle

This drive takes in all the magic and charm of the east coast and hinterland of the Canterbury region. Begin in the Waipara Valley, famous across the globe for wonderful wines. Head north west into Weka Pass where you'll be able to see fascinating Maori rock paintings. The beautiful resort town of Hanmer Springs is the next stop. Relax in thermal spas, walk in enchanted forests or, for the more adventurous, try bungy jumping, skiing or jet boating.

From Hanmer, drive north east toward the coast to the town of Kaikoura, where you'll be able to see whales, dolphins, fur seals and seabirds. Taste some of the world's freshest seafood at the town's waterfront eateries. Once you've had your fill, follow the coast road south along State Highway 7 to Waipara for some of New Zealand's best beaches and coves. This area offers surfing, swimming and boating. If you like, you can spend a few hours or several days exploring the coast further. Otherwise, complete the Alpine Triangle and head back to Waipara.

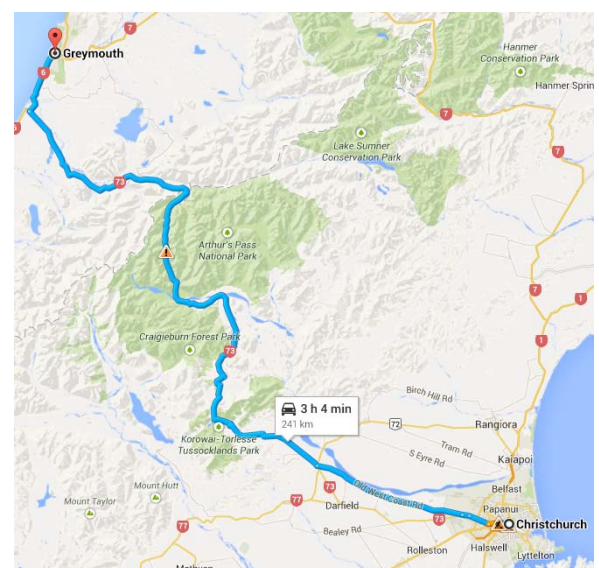


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Arthur's Pass

Travel from the city of Christchurch on the east coast to the town of Greymouth on the west coast in just over three hours, though you may want to take your time on this noteworthy journey. There are no major towns along the way, however you will be able to take in the magnificent and varied scenery of rural New Zealand.

Drive west along West Coast Road from Christchurch along the plains that follow the Waimakariri River. You'll travel through the Korowai Torlesse Tussocklands Park and on through to Arthur's Pass. This is a truly magnificent area — home to famous walks and hikes, unique flora and fauna, ski fields, rock climbing, mountain biking and fishing. Continue on the Otira Highway through valleys and past wondrous mountains, from the Kapitea and Kumara reservoirs to the coast. Then, follow the Kumera Junction Highway to the town of Hokitika.



Otago



Found in the lower part of New Zealand's South Island, Otago is the second largest region in the country. Covering a grand area which includes everything from huge mountains to pristine white sand beaches, and rural farmlands to charming modern cities. Regarded as a safe, friendly, laid-back area, Otago is perfect for travelling with the whole family. With seasonal attractions to suit both summer and winter travellers, a holiday here is sure to be enjoyable, regardless of which time of year you visit.

Attractions

Head into central Otago - Famous for wineries and dairy farms

Dunedin

Visit New Zealand's only castle - Larnach Castle near Dunedin holds 46 rooms and took over four years to construct

Queenstown

Take the plunge - Kawarau Bungy Bridge, the first commercial bungy sites in the world. At 43 metres high, this is a drop guaranteed to get your heart racing

Fun in the Snow - Head up to one of the four ski resorts in the area, with a variety of runs to suit different skill levels, everyone can enjoy the snow here

Luge - A fun ride for all ages, enjoy soaring views from the top before racing down the tracks

Wanaka

Puzzled? - Experience illusions at Puzzling World, for an eccentric fun-filled day, and test out your navigational skills in the Great Maze

Get Outdoors - Wanaka is a mecca for hiking, lake cruising, jet boating, fishing, mountain biking, horse riding

Events

January

Wanaka Rodeo - An exciting rodeo held on the first weekend of January

March

Dunedin Fringe Festival - The city of Dunedin celebrates art, comedy and music

Warbirds Over Wanaka - A spectacular show of both old and new fighter planes held over two days

April

Otago Rally - One of the major car rallies in New Zealand

June

Winter Festival - Nine days of concerts, art, comedy and street parties in Queenstown

July

Cadbury Chocolate Carnival - Appease your tastebuds at this jollification of chocolate

New Zealand Mountain Film Festival - Annual film festival hosted in Wanaka and Queenstown

Key Locations

Dunedin, Queenstown, Wanaka

Self Drive Tours: Otago



Queenstown to Wanaka

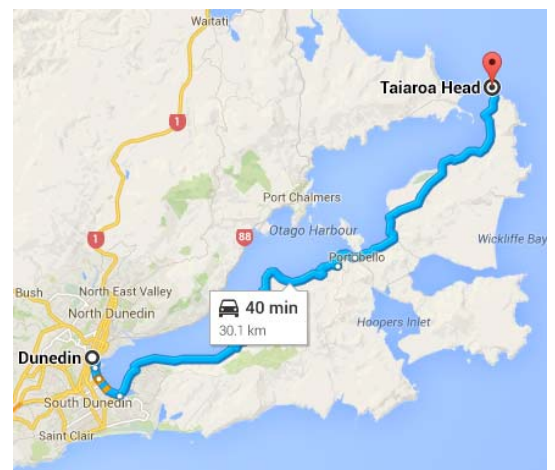
This drive is well-known in the area, as it will take you through areas of unbelievable beauty as you drive along the highest sealed road in New Zealand. From Queenstown, head east along Frankton Road, past Lake Hayes and Arrow Junction, shortly after which you'll see the turn off for Crown Range Road. Follow the winding road uphill until you reach Crown Terrace, and stop to take in the amazing landscape from high above.

The road will continue further uphill from here, taking you to a height of 1120 metres, and granting spectacular views of the surrounding land. This was the site of the Central Otago Gold Rush in the 1860s, and there is an abundance of historic sites and memorabilia in this area. At the end of the road, the town of Wanaka is a great destination throughout the year; perfect for activities such as skiing in winter and fishing in summer.



Otago Peninsula

Located to the east of Dunedin, the Otago Peninsula forms one side of Dunedin Harbour and stretches for roughly 30km. With a small population of locals, stunning scenery and loads of wildlife, the peninsula is a favourite destination for travellers. The area features steep hills, giant cliffs, beaches and inlets, all waiting to be explored. Heading east of Dunedin, Portobello Road will become Harrington Point Road, leading to the very northern tip of the peninsula. Heading south east at any point along the way will lead you away further into the spectacular natural parts of the island. This region provides opportunities to observe wildlife in this area, including colonies of albatross, penguins, and seals. Keep an eye out for whales and dolphins, which also frequent these waters.



Fiordland & Southland



The southernmost region of New Zealand, Southland covers an area of amazing natural beauty, wide open space and no large cities. One of the most visited parts of the country by tourists, the key attraction here is Fiordland National Park, the largest national park in the country. Fiordland National Park features some of the most miraculous landscape in the world. Southland boasts attractions galore, from tours and activities for travellers and thrill seekers, to isolated areas ready to be explored.

Attractions

Southland

Visit Bluff - Catch the ferry to Stewart Island from the southernmost town in New Zealand

Invercargill - Wander the Southland Museum and Art Gallery

Visit Lake Te Anau - Discover the wondrous Te Anau caves

Fiordland

Milford Sound – Walk one of the world’s best and most spectacular routes, the Milford Track located over 53.5kms from Lake Te Anau to Milford Sound

Cruise the Fiordland – Travel by sea kayak or take a guided tour to see the magnificent splendour of the mountains plunging into pristine waterways

Milford, Dusky, Breaksea or Doubtful Sounds– Cruise these magnificent waterways for extraordinary surroundings

Head to Curio Bay - See the 170 million year old fossilised forest, thought to be one of the best preserved prehistoric forests in the world

Enjoy some angling - Head to one of the many lakes, rivers and streams in the area for a spot of fishing

Events

February

Hokonui Moonshiners Festival – New Zealand’s original whisky festival in Gore

March

Craft Beer & Food Experience – Relish the flavors of Invercargill

May

Routeburn Classic – 32km race on foot across a high alpine track

October

Te Anau Fishing Tournament – Grand fishing tournament and boat show

December

Te Anau Rodeo – Day of horsemanship and stock handling shows and competitions

Key Locations

Fiordland: Milford Sound, Te Anau, Manapouri, Doubtful Sound

Southland: The Caitlins, Invercargill, Bluff, Gore

Self Drive Tours: Fiordland & Southland

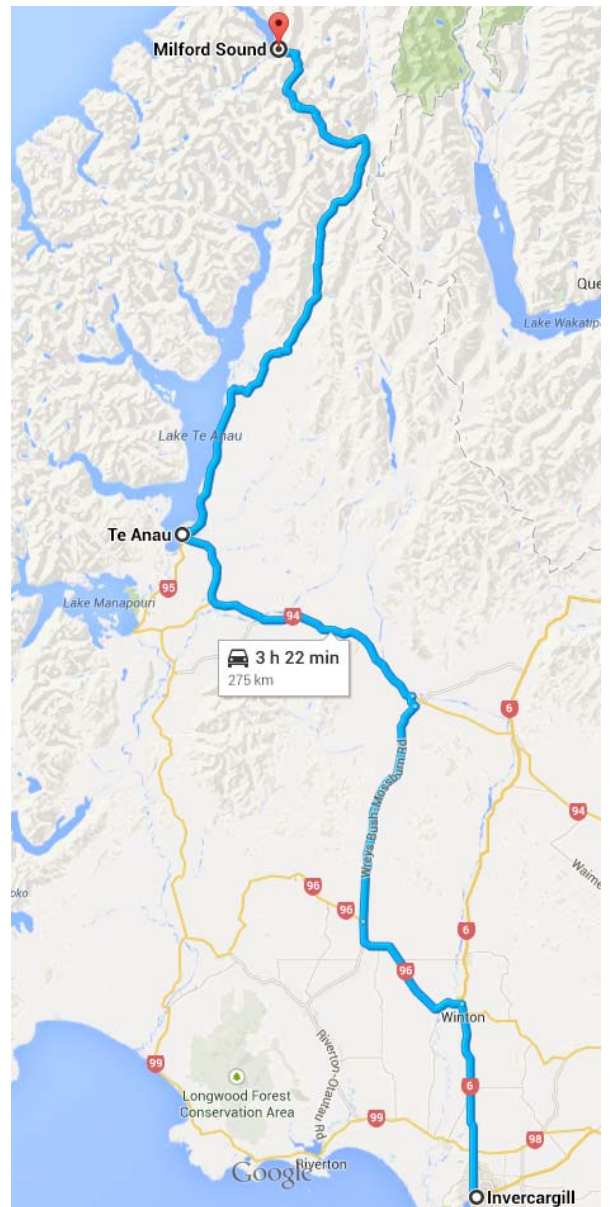


Invercargill to Te Anau

Heading north from Invercargill you'll have a number of options for routes to take on this drive, each leading through a beautiful part of the country. One of the most common routes taken is to turn left on the Wallacetown Lorneville Highway, following along the coast through the towns of Riverton and Colac Bay before the road veers north and heads to Te Anau. Built on the shores of New Zealand's second largest lake, Te Anau is a charming town which welcomes visitors to Fiordland, and is a great base for exploring the Fiordland National Park.

Te Anau to Milford Sound

As you set off from Te Anau past the stunning lake, you will soon realise that this is a drive to remember! Along the way you'll pass through everything from lush rainforests to vast planes, and great valleys surrounded by majestic mountains. This is the only road to and from Milford Sound and opened as recently as the 1950s, when Homer Tunnel was complete. The tunnel itself is an exciting section of the journey as you pass under a mountain often covered in thick snow, for roughly 1.2kms. When you emerge from this tunnel you will reach the Milford Sound. This is where the mountains meet the sea, with rock faces rising over a kilometre on either side of the water to create an imposing and impressive landmark.





Money Matters

Currency

The local currency in New Zealand is the New Zealand Dollar (NZD).

One Dollar (\$) = 100 cents.

Notes come in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10 and \$5.

Coins come in denominations of \$2, \$1 and 50, 20 and 10 cents.

Banking Hours

Banks in New Zealand are generally open from Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:00am and 4:30pm. Some may trade for an hour or so longer on Thursdays or Fridays, while some may also open for a short while on Saturday mornings.

Currency Exchange

Foreign currency can be exchanged for New Zealand Dollars in a number of places. Most banks will have the latest currency exchange rates, and visitors can also exchange money at many hotels and Bureau de Change kiosks.

ATMs

ATMs can be found throughout New Zealand and accept most kinds of cards. Fees may apply for withdrawing money from an ATM not belonging to your home bank, in addition to currency conversion fees.

Credit & Debit Cards

As with most western countries, credit cards are widely accepted in New Zealand. Most hotels, supermarkets and department stores, restaurants and travel agencies will accept payment by credit card.

In case of lost or stolen credit cards:

Visa: +1 303 967 1090 or 0508 600300

ANZ: +61 3 9683 7043

Commonwealth: +61 2 9999 3283

Tax

Apart from a few products that are exempt, all goods and services in New Zealand attract 15% GST (Goods and Services Tax). This tax is included in the total price of items, and can in some cases be claimed back through duty free policies when leaving the country.

Tipping

Tipping is in general not expected in New Zealand, however it is appreciated. If someone has given great service, a tip of 10% is acceptable.

Stay Healthy & Stay Safe



Stay Healthy

New Zealand has high living standards that make staying healthy quite easy. Tap water is safe to drink and hygiene levels in food preparation and other such activities are high. The sun in New Zealand has a very high UV radiation index, so be sure to wear sunscreen if you plan to spend time outdoors. Sunglasses and hats are also advisable when in the sun.

Stay Safe

Crime

New Zealand is overall regarded as a safe country, with low violence and great emergency services. However, it is always recommended to utilise the same precautions abroad that you employ at home.

Beaches

With over 15,000km of coastline, swimming at the beaches in New Zealand is a popular activity for both locals and tourists. Care should be taken when entering the water, and keep an eye out for rips. Although they are very rare, shark attacks can occur. Stay between the flags in the areas monitored by lifeguards.

Wildlife

Unlike Australia, New Zealand has very little in the way of poisonous or dangerous wildlife. There are no crocodiles or other predators that pose a threat to humans. There are no snakes (except occasional sea snakes), and only one kind of poisonous spider. Most poisonous animals in this area are found in the sea, such as jelly-fish.

Mountains

Walking, hiking, trekking and climbing are well suited for the spectacular mountains in New Zealand. Before setting out, ensure that you have the necessary equipment for your adventure, including a first aid kit and plenty of water. Pack wet weather gear as well as warmer clothes or thermals, as the weather can change drastically from one hour to the next. If you are not with a tour group, make sure to advise responsible people and/or the local ranger's station of where you intend to go and when you should be back. Most importantly, don't forget the camera!

Emergency Numbers

- 111 Police, Fire, Ambulance
- 555 Traffic incident/Police number for NON-emergencies
- 112 From Mobile Phones

Useful Information

Geography

New Zealand is located in the Pacific Ocean to the east of Australia and is made up of two main islands surrounded by hundreds of smaller ones. The islands were formed by seismic as well as volcanic activity, which also led to the rugged landscape of mountains, fjords and valleys that make up much of the country. Both the North and South Islands feature a ridge of mountains which run the length of the land, perfect for skiing in winter and hiking in the summer. Areas of natural beauty are found throughout New Zealand, with everything from glaciers to rainforests, beaches to rolling green hills, and fjords to geysers. New Zealand truly is a nature lover's paradise.

Time Zone

There are two time zones in New Zealand, one for the main islands and another for Chatham Islands which are roughly 800km from the mainland. New Zealand Standard Time (NZST) is 2 hours ahead of Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST). The Chatham Islands are 45 minutes ahead of the mainland.

Climate and Weather

As New Zealand is stretched over 1,600km north to south, the climate is varied. The North Island has a subtropical climate, and the South Island has a slightly more temperate climate. Average temperatures on the North Island are around 23-24°C in summer and 14-15°C in winter, with averages on the South Island a few degrees less. Maximum temperatures in summer top 30°C on occasion, though the mountains reach sub zero temperatures during winter. Temperatures throughout most of the country remain at pleasant levels.

Where To Get Help

Auckland

Australian Consulate-General
Level 7, Price Waterhouse Coopers
Tower, 186-194 Quay St,
Auckland 92023
Ph: +64 (0)9 921 8800
Fax: +64 (0)9 921 8820

Wellington

Australian High Commission,
72-76 Hobson Street
Thorndon
Wellington 50450
Ph: +64 (0)4 473 6411
Fax: +64 (0)4 498 7135

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We look forward to hearing from you!

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