

NEW ZEALAND'S WINE HIGHWAY



Duration
9 Days



Distance
1205 km

Soak up Ōtautahi Christchurch's fresh new vibe, while soaking in spectacular South Island scenery and New Zealand's most famous thermal waters. This is a roadie you'll remember.

NAU MAI, HAERE MAI

WELCOME TO THE SOUTH



DAY 1

ARRIVE IN CHRISTCHURCH

Arrive in Ōtautahi Christchurch and you'll notice its new, cool confidence. The South Island's largest city has developed in leaps and bounds over the past decade and it's better than ever.

You'll still find all the hallmarks of a pretty English city with the Avon River winding its way through the CBD, the **Botanic Gardens** and the historic **Arts Centre** but there's a whole new world of cool to explore – including some outstanding street art.

Park yourself along **The Terrace** and you'll be in the right spot to people-watch (best done with one of **Amazonita's** famous cocktails) while you plan the rest of your trip.

DAY 2

EXPLORE THE CITY

The word for today is choice. You have lots of choices to make and whatever you choose your day will be, as New Zealanders say, 'choice as' (that's super good!).

Fuel up with brunch at **Unknown Chapter**, **South Town Club**, **Little Poms** or **Miro**. Whip up to **Christchurch Adventure Park** for some eye-opening vistas and the rush of New Zealand's longest and highest zipline.

Explore the city by e-bike, gondola, tram or float down the Avon in a punt or **waka**. **Riverside Market** must be done (see why Cantabrians rave about **Dimitris** and you'll love the NZ-made products at **Shopology**).

When you're ready for some chill time – meander along the walkway hugging the Avon River. You could walk right to the coast or simply marvel at the newly built Te Pae Convention Centre and stop for a play with the kids at the famous **Margaret Mahy Playground**.

Other spots worth a stop are the insta-worthy **New Regent St**, Cathedral Square where you can watch the city's iconic cathedral being brought back to life, Victoria Square (with New Zealand's oldest cast iron bridge – the Hamish Hay Bridge) and city mall with

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TOP TIP

Stop at one of 7 safe stopping areas along the Kaikōura coastline and explore the rich coastal history through art.



Christchurch's answer to Harrods – **Ballantynes** department store.

Come tiddle time, sip the obvious at **Gin Gin** (ask for Curiosity Gin if you want a taste of Christchurch) or see what's been crafted in the on-site microbrewery at **Kaiser Brew Garden**.

For dinner, **The Terrace** offers everything from teppanyaki to modern Mexican fare and if you fancy something sweet to finish your day, visit the delightful patisserie **Sweet Soul** (the brainchild of two Brazilian sisters) or another local favourite, **Rollickin' Gelato**.

DAY 3

CHRISTCHURCH TO KAIKŌURA (180KM)

Start the day with a light breakfast because you'll want to save yourself for lunch.

Head north out of the city on State Highway One...forty minutes later you'll find yourself in Amberley. Don't just drive through...this country town has a few boutiques you won't want to miss – including **Ruby Six**, **Out of the Bleu** and **Me, Now You Clothing** (for those after new or near new designer garb).

Past Amberley, and it won't be long before grapevines are whipping past your window – an obvious sign you've arrived in the **North Canterbury Wine Region** (aka the coolest little wine region in the country).

With limestone soils and a unique microclimate, the 90+ wineries in

this area are famed for their award-winning Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling.

The menu at organic **Greystone** winery is sensational (you must try their Pétillant Natural) while family-owned **Pegasus Bay** and **Black Estate** are also great. If you ask nicely, the staff at Peg Bay may show you where you can feed their friendly eels.

Spot the seals as you drive north along the coastline and into Kaikōura – there are plenty to see.

You'll arrive at the quaint seaside village later in the day but, if there's time, do stretch your legs along a section of the **Kaikōura Peninsula Walkway** for some unforgettable views.

This may be a good night to sample many Kiwis' favourite takeaway – good ol' fish 'n chips served humbly in newsprint paper. You're certainly in the right place to do so.

DAY 4

KAIKŌURA TO BLENHEIM (101KM)

Start the day by getting up close and personal with the sealife that's made Kaikōura an eco-tourism hotspot. It's world-famous for whales (which you can see by **boat**, **plane**, or **helicopter**) but there's more to this moana (sea) than those giant marine mammals.

Dolphin Encounter will take you to watch or swim with acrobatic dusky dolphins. You can also kayak with NZ fur seals with **Kaikōura Kayaks**. Fans of our feathered friends should

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grab an **Albatross Encounter** and meet nature's most extraordinary giant seabirds.

Come lunchtime, there are plenty of eateries in the township – local favourites include the character-filled **Beach House Café** (the avo toast is 10/10) and **The Slam Club**.

Kaikōura literally means 'eat (kai) crayfish (kōura)' and those who are keen to do so should head to food caravans **Nin's Bin** or **Kaikoura seafood BBQ**.

As you head out of town towards Marlborough, you might like to stop at **Ohau Point Lookout** or grab a coffee at **The Store** in Kekerengu (the halfway point between Kaikōura and Blenheim). Enjoy a dinner out in Blenheim – the much-awarded **Arbour** is great with **Gramado's Brazilian** fare also a winner.

DAY 5

BLENHHEIM TO NELSON (175KM)

Make the most of waking in the heart of New Zealand's largest wine region with a visit to a world-acclaimed Marlborough winery or two.

You can self-drive or take a guided tour around the 30 cellar doors or, if biking's your jam, then consider an e-bike.

Those short on time should simply head to **Fidelio Cafe & Wine Bar** featuring small Marlborough wine producers and their gourmet platters complete the experience.

The road to Nelson will take you to the charming village of **Havelock** – the departure point for many boat

tours into the **Marlborough Sounds** including **Mills Bay Mussels** – it's a must do! It's where you can indulge in freshly steamed mussels and the region's famous Sauvignon Blanc.

There's plenty of options for dinner in Nelson but the five-course tasting menu at **Hopgoods** would be a great way to round out the day. Take a stroll up The Cawthron Steps to the Cathedral afterwards and enjoy a view of the lights over this seaside city.

Another great option is **The Boat Shed Café** which straddles with sea with breathtaking views.

DAY 6

NELSON TO MĀPUA (25KM)

A morning spent strolling around Nelson's shops is a morning well-spent.

If it's the weekend, head to the legendary **Nelson Market** – from food to local designer clothing to art and homewares, it's all ripe for the picking with a relaxed and enjoyable vibe.

Nature lovers should head to 690-hectare **The Brook Waimārama Sanctuary**. This very special part of New Zealand is the largest fenced sanctuary for endangered plants and creatures in the South Island.

As you head out of the city towards Māpua, you'll head past some local berry farms – pop in for a Real Fruit Icecream.

Make a stop at **Māpua Wharf** – this is a picturesque spot in a tidal estuary. If conditions are calm (which they mostly are) you can jump off the wharf and climb back up for seconds.



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TOP TIP

Stop at Rimu Wine Bar in Māpua to sample the amazing Nelson Tasman Wines.



The wharf has a number of boutiques (with some incredible New Zealand art) and a famous hat shop.

Ready for dinner? Indulge in fine fare at **The Apple Shed** or **Jellyfish** or dine casually at craft brewery

The Golden Bear (top tip: the nachos are fantastic) or grab what are undoubtedly some of the best fish 'n chips in New Zealand at **The Smokehouse**.

DAY 7

MĀPUA TO PUNAKAIKI (262KM) OR HANMER SPRINGS (297KM)

Early birds can make the most of the day by hitting the road and heading into **Abel Tasman National Park**, there are fantastic walking, kayaking and **boat tours** on offer from either Marahau or Kaiteriteri. The golden beaches and aquamarine seas are well worth it.

Lunch in **Kaiteriteri** or if you're in **Marahau** hit up **The Fat Tui** for a burger you'll crave in the future.

Afterwards, head back through **Motueka** and **Moutere** – do stop and grab some of the fresh fruit that's grown here from one of the roadside stalls where you pay with an honesty box.

If you are a sweet tooth, the donuts from **The Smoking Barrel** are a must. With flavours like Ferrero Rocher, Caramilk deluxe and raspberry double chocolate, you won't be able to leave with just one.

The berries at **Tapawera** are worth loading up on and if you fancy a dip, Murchison's best-kept secret is

The Eel Hole – a majestic swimming spot. To get there, park at the Riverview Holiday Park.

From Murchison head to Springs Junction where you'll head west to Punakaiki.

DAY 8

PUNAKAIKI TO HANMER SPRINGS (293 KM)

Wake up on the glorious West Coast – one of the South Island's best-kept secrets. Time your stroll through the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and Blowholes for high tide so you can see them at their most powerful.

If you have time to kill, check out the Truman Track – it's a short but impressive stroll.

Beer lovers will want to stop and enjoy the 45-minute tour of the **Monteiths Brewery Company** in Greymouth – it's a great spot for lunch too. Or you can bypass Greymouth and head to the tiny village of Blackball.

Breathe deep when you get there, this is coal mining country and you can smell it in the air. The **Formerly the Blackball Hilton** is a historic pub in near original condition – it serves lunches and is a great place to yarn with the locals.

Further along in Reefton, don't miss a tour of the **Reefton Distilling Company** (there's a reason Little Biddy gin is so popular) and if you do decide to stay here, definitely look at **Reef Cottage Bed and Breakfast**.

From here, it's straight through Springs Junction to Hanmer Springs.

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DAY 9

HANMER SPRINGS TO CHRISTCHURCH (133 KM)

Breathe in the crisp air of Hanmer Springs as soon as you wake up. This is an alpine paradise, and it feels good just being here.

After a couple of long days in the car, you might enjoy a walk – if so you can head up Conical Hill for 360-degree panoramic views of the village or head to Hanmer Heritage Forest for the **Forest Amble Walk** among sculptures – including a friendly giant.

You can't go past **The Powerhouse Café** for breakfast or brunch and take some time to browse in the boutiques in the village's centre.

Unwind in Hanmer Springs' famous mineral-filled thermal waters – every drop naturally warmed by heat from the earth's core.

You can sit and soak in **Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa** 22 pools or burn off some energy on the waterslides. And if you really want to indulge, book into The Spa right beside the pools.

Christchurch is just a 90-minute drive away and if you do have any time to spare before you depart, a stroll around the Botanic Gardens and Arts Centre is a fantastic way to end the holiday.

Stop at **The Cellar Door** for a tasting flight of wines and some delicious food and you'll have put the icing on the cake of a spectacular holiday.

