



NEW ZEALAND & THE SOUTH PACIFIC

NEW ZEALAND

FIJI

THE COOK ISLANDS

FRENCH POLYNESIA

SAMOA

ANTARCTICA

AUDLEY

TAILOR-MADE JOURNEYS FOR THE DISCERNING TRAVELLER

Dear Traveller

You can visit many countries, experience and enjoy them, and then move on to the next destination on your list. New Zealand isn't one of these, at least for me; I keep having to return to do the things I'd found out about last time, as well as to meet up with old friends.

There are many scenic places in the world, but few, if any, surpass that of New Zealand. The New Zealanders themselves are experts at enjoying their great outdoors, be it on foot, two or four wheels, by boat, air or rail. It's not the scenery alone that keeps drawing me back, there are wonderful towns and cities, unique flora and fauna, great food and wine, and a fascinating and vibrant Maori culture.

Our New Zealand specialists, and our clients, have made many firm friends during their extensive travels. We're on first name terms with many of the guesthouse owners and guides, and Audley guests receive an especially warm welcome. To me it is this aspect of the country, the open, honest and friendly approach of the people you meet, that truly makes New Zealand such a special place to visit.

The South Pacific shares a common Polynesian past with New Zealand, but is a completely different experience. Few, quite rightly, look beyond the magnificent beaches, but we've scratched a little deeper and discovered plenty of culture, not to say a few more tropical islands that you can practically have to yourself. There's a huge range of accommodation to choose from, from super-swanky over-water bungalows to simple beach-side bures.

Our New Zealand and South Pacific specialists have spent many months researching this brochure, I hope their passion and expertise shines through and inspires you to visit this sublime corner of the globe.

Craig Burkinshaw
Managing Director



Audley Travel

Audley Travel was established by Craig Burkinshaw with the simple philosophy of offering clients the best possible travel experiences. Craig recognised that the only way of achieving this was to have specialists with detailed, in-depth knowledge of the countries we visit backed by a no-compromise attitude to quality and service. Audley now offers a comprehensive range of programmes throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America, Australasia, Antarctica, Canada and the Arctic.

Careful Planning

Our New Zealand and South Pacific specialists have all travelled extensively throughout the region and in many cases have lived there, so you can rely on their knowledge. They have boundless enthusiasm and take an honest "tell it how it is" approach to planning an itinerary, suggesting sights, selecting accommodation and discussing the practicalities of travel. We also insist that they regularly revisit the region, inspect hotels and lodges, and keep up to date with all travel-related issues. We believe this approach is unique to Audley and ultimately ensures that you will have the best possible travel experience.

A Journey to Suit You

You may wish to travel for all sorts of reasons, whether to explore the culture and history of a region, view wildlife, discover spectacular scenery or simply to relax. For many Audley clients it is a combination of all these, while others have more specialised interests such as photography, rail journeys or trekking in magnificent landscapes. Whatever you want from your trip, we can use our detailed knowledge to plan your ideal itinerary.

Tailor-made Travel

The joy of tailor-made travel is that your complete trip is designed around your own requirements, so you are not tied to the set itinerary of a group. This allows you to explore at your own pace and select accommodation that suits your needs, with our specialist knowledge at your disposal to perfect your travel plans. Throughout the brochure you will find suggested itineraries designed by our specialists to suit the needs of most travellers. Each one can be adjusted to accommodate your specific tastes and interests, or we can plan a completely new trip to match your own requirements.

How to plan your journey with Audley

We suggest that you read through the brochure to obtain a feel for this region's unique and fascinating travel possibilities. Once you have an idea of the type of trip you want to take, or want some general guidance, call one of our specialists on 01993 838 800. They will answer any questions you have and discuss your travel plans and ideas in detail, making suggestions where appropriate. We will then send you a detailed itinerary complete with maps, accommodation information, colour photographs and a price. Once you have read through the itinerary we will answer any further questions and refine the tour until you are totally satisfied. The booking process starts when we receive your deposit and booking form, at which point we can start to confirm your travel arrangements. The same Audley specialist will be handling your trip from start to finish: please feel free to call them at any time.



Financial Security

You can book with us confident in the knowledge that we are fully bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority and hold an Air Tour Operators' License (ATOL 4817). This fully covers all holiday arrangements which begin in the UK. If your arrangements do not begin in the UK, you are protected by our Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) membership. Our ABTA number is W8501.

www.audleytravel.com

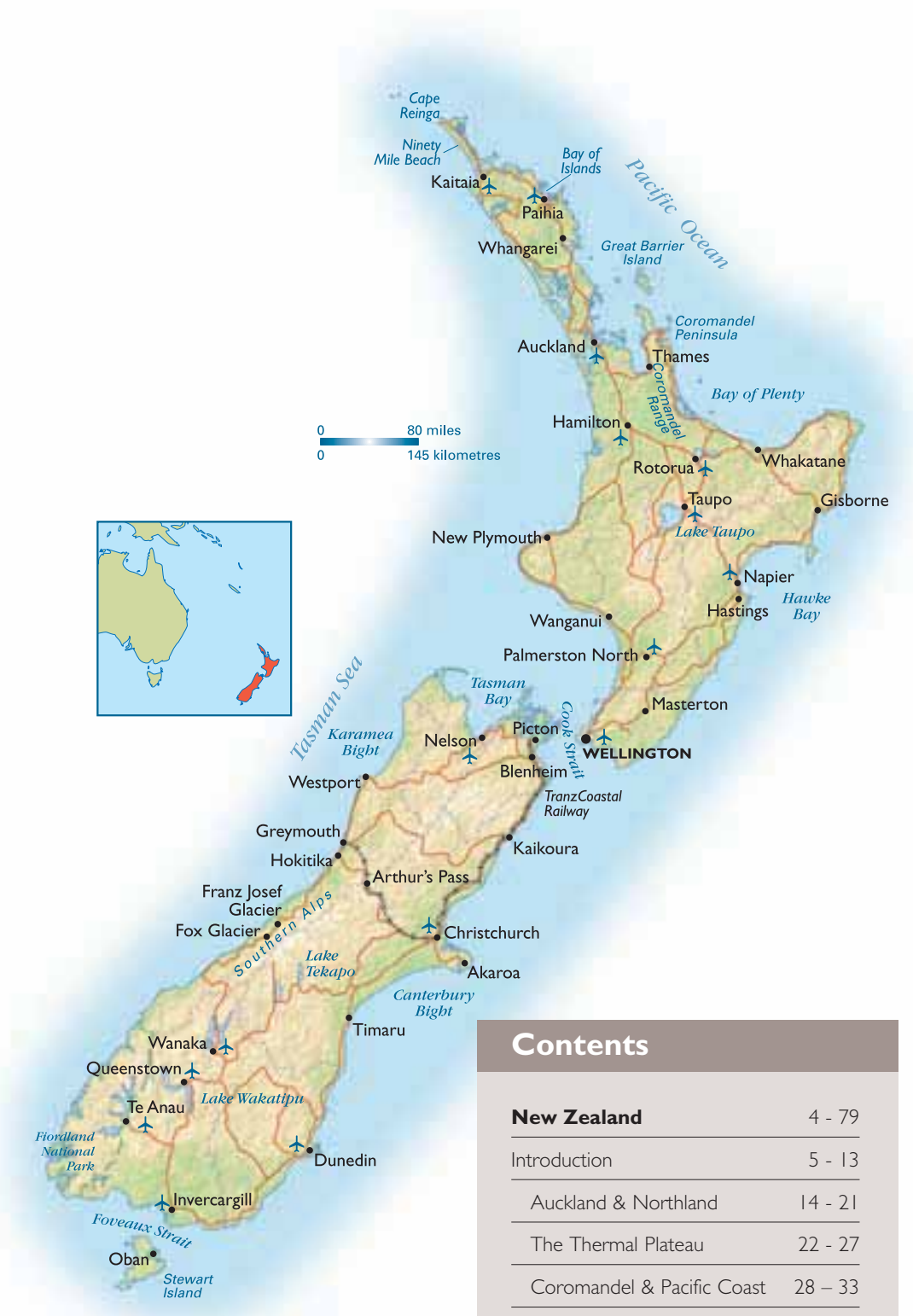
If you are looking for travel inspiration, Audley's website is full of journey ideas, month-by-month suggestions, destination guides, slideshows, articles and special features, responsible tourism details and a useful travel information section.

Group Travel

If you wish to travel with a group of friends - maybe with a special interest in common - we can make all the arrangements. For larger groups we may be able to offer a free place to the organiser. Please call us to discuss your plans.

Terms & Conditions and Travel Insurance

Your booking is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Audley Travel, which are detailed in a separate leaflet. It is vital that you have adequate travel insurance and we are able to offer a number of policies either for the duration of your trip or on an annual basis.



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Responsible Travel

We are passionate about the countries we specialise in, and have always been firmly committed to the principles of ethical travel and sustainability. Our Responsible Travel policy has been awarded Three Stars – the maximum possible – by AITO, and we have drawn up a Travellers' Code which will help you to ensure your trip does not threaten the sustainability of the places you visit. Audley supports the Friends of Conservation carbon offsetting scheme. For further details on how to offset the carbon emissions from your flight, please visit our website or talk to the country specialist arranging your trip. Throughout New Zealand we make the effort to use properties that operate in a sustainable manner. Audley supports a number of good causes through the Audley Charity Portfolio – please refer to www.audleytravel.com/rt for more details.



New Zealand

New Zealand continues to remain one of the world's most sought-after destinations. Those prepared to travel half way around the world are rewarded with the most sumptuous platter travel can offer. Here you will find excellent hotels of character, some on the doorstep of the ocean; you can sample internationally acclaimed wines and indulge in the freshest of sea food. With vibrant cities and the sincere and generous Kiwi hospitality,

you are sure to have an experience with a sweet and lasting taste. Yet all of this aside, what New Zealand is most famous for is its sublime landscapes. This is 'God's Own' as the locals know it. With the most dramatic and awe-inspiring vistas at every turn, even the finest photographers struggle to capture such significant beauty; seeing it with your own eyes is the only option. So diverse is the landscape that you can expect to start a day

dwarfed by rumbling volcanic peaks, journey through dense ancient forests, traverse rich fertile plains and skirt shimmering lakes, before ending it on a long stretch on empty golden sand. With Polynesian culture and Maori heritage weaving through the land, you can expect an holistic travel experience: innovation, scenery, culture, food and people, New Zealand has it all.



Pohutukawa tree, Coromandel Peninsula

Auckland & Northland

The world's largest Polynesian city, Auckland is home to over a quarter of New Zealand's multi-cultural population. With superb dining, world class shopping, and both immaculate and dramatic coastlines, Auckland commands attention. Best of all is the city's proximity to Northland. Once you have crossed the Brynderwyn Ranges, you are knocking on the back door of this Kiwi heaven. Renowned for its warm weather and tepid oceans, Northland is a veritable haven for sailing junkies and water sports enthusiasts. Most significant is Waitangi, the birthplace of the modern New Zealander, where in 1840 European settlers and the Maori people were brought together beneath Te Tiriti o Waitangi, The Treaty of Waitangi. For original colonial townships, pristine waters and some local culture, head north.

Bubbling mud pool, Rotorua



The Thermal Plateau

In this landscape the earth hisses and steams at your feet, grumbling mountains huff heat and ash, and the still waters of mirror-sharp lakes teem with trout. Welcome to the Thermal Plateau. Covering Rotorua, Taupo and Tongariro National Park, the Thermal Plateau is both geologically fascinating and culturally exciting. Below the earth's surface, volcanic activity manipulates this patch of malleable land to produce some of New Zealand's most inimitable scenery, everything from bubbling mud pools to erupting geysers. Interlinked with the geothermal features are Maori myths, making this region a centre for Maori culture. Looming at the far end of Lake Taupo, the world's largest freshwater volcanic lake, are Mounts Tongariro and Ruapehu, who stand sentinel over this national treasure.

Coromandel & Pacific Coast

Only a short journey from Auckland, the Coromandel Peninsula is where you can truly stretch your limbs and breathe. Extending into the Pacific Ocean with beaches on either side and a remote interior dressed in native bush, this peninsula is perhaps New Zealand's greatest retreat. Whether you are long-line fishing, deep sea diving, or enjoying a soak in the thermal springs at Hot Water Beach, every activity is geared towards the ultimate outcome: relaxation. The Pacific Coast Highway winds through a plethora of sights. Mount Maunganui is New Zealand's mini 'Surfers' Paradise' with golden beaches stretching from the base of the dormant volcano cone that defines the land. Off the coast of Whakatane is White Island, New Zealand's only active marine volcano. The wild, sparsely populated East Cape stretches out ahead of you, and finally, if you like to follow the sun, a morning spent in Gisborne will ensure you are the first to see it rise.

New Zealand

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Abel Tasman National Park

Western North Island

Known for its black sand, wide beaches and annual festivals, the most defining feature of the Western North Island is Mount Taranaki, or to give it its English name – Mount Egmont. When explorer Abel Tasman sighted the mount, he commented that it was 'the noblest hill I have ever seen.' Standing 2,518 metres in height, Mount Taranaki is more than a hill, it is a playground for hikers, skiers and climbers, and is today New Zealand's most frequently climbed mountain. The rolling pasturelands that surround it disguise an exciting underground wonderland of cave systems, sparkling with the lights of their resident glow-worms. New Plymouth is the region's major city. Small, but perfectly formed, it is the ideal retreat after hours spent trekking along the raw western coastline or in Egmont National Park.

Rugged West Coast

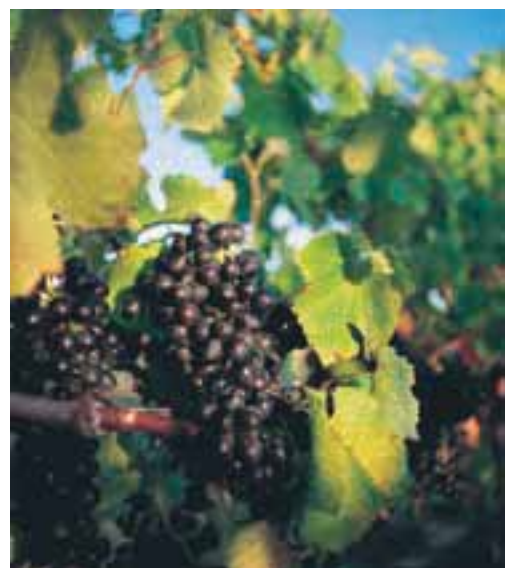


Wellington & Wairarapa

The Wairarapa region epitomises the rural life-style that forms New Zealand's international image. Rolling hillocks rise and fall as you journey south, and placed discreetly amongst them you will find the famous wineries of Martinborough. With over three million sheep in a 16 kilometre radius of Masterton, one begins to see why New Zealand is so well recognised as a leading wool and lamb exporter. Further south is the beating heart of the country and the nation's vibrant capital, Wellington. By taking the time to scratch the surface, you will soon see how the New Zealand government is so strongly shaped by the liberal setting in which it exists. Anything goes in the picture-book city, and locals pride themselves on their café culture, stylish bars and host of art galleries. Located at the most south-eastern tip of the North Island, the capital city is strategically placed, linking the two major islands.

Nelson & Marlborough

The Marlborough region, sitting at the topmost point of the South Island, is the home to fine wines, quality hikes, and a network of navigable water-ways. The Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park is a uniquely beautiful combination of small inlets, beaches and headlands accessible only by boat or on foot. The Queen Charlotte Track



Vines at Wairarapa

follows the path of the Sounds, weaving through lush forest and past clandestine coves, and – alongside the Abel Tasman Trail - is thought to be the most stunning hike in the country. Glistening with charm, the expansive flatlands of Blenheim are the entry point to New Zealand's largest wine-growing district, and one of the best places to sample those wines is in Nelson. With more sunshine hours than any other part of the country, and a thriving arts and crafts community, Nelson is the perfect place to stop and enjoy the finer things in life. Sophisticated and palatable it is a firm favourite of many Audley travellers.



Kepler track, near Te Anau

Christchurch & Canterbury

Stretching out like a patchwork quilt, the Canterbury Plains cradle the South Island's largest city, Christchurch. With names such as Gloucester Street, Hereford Street and Birmingham Avenue there is no mistaking the colonial influence here. One of the two cities in New Zealand where you can both surf and ski on the same day, Christchurch is an hour's drive from the rousing spires of the Southern Alps and sits right on the Pacific coast, with attractive harbour townships sheltered amongst ancient volcanic remains. Stretching north the Kaikoura coastline is home to an abundance of marine life and sea birds, and inland turquoise glacial lakes nestle amongst the towering peaks of Mount Cook National Park.

West Coast

On the opposite side of the South Island's mountainous spine is the West Coast, a dramatic landscape of unforgettable beauty. Rich in jade and gold, it historically attracted prospectors who settled in small coastal townships, and so the region enjoys an interesting heritage. With surreal rock formations at Punakaiki, creeping glaciers at Fox and Franz Josef and the immaculate reflection of the mountains on the crystal waters of Lake Matheson, the West Coast leaves a firm imprint on any traveller's mind.

Southern Lakes

For thrill seekers and true hedonists, the Southern Lakes are the ultimate getaway. On the shores of Lake Wakatipu and held tight by the mountainous Remarkables is New Zealand's most visually striking city, Queenstown. Better known for the AJ Hackett Bungy and jet boating adventures, you will also find a host of activities perfect for the less reckless explorer. If you need to recover from any undue surges of adrenalin, an overnight cruise on one of the majestic Sounds of Fiordland is the perfect solution. The peace here is immense as the boat meanders through the mountains in a dream-like state.



Coastline and Mount Taranaki

Coastal Otago & Southland

As you venture south, you will find that the population dwindles and the scenery grows more rugged and less tamed. With a reputation as the foremost point for wildlife observation, the Otago Peninsula is overwhelmed with penguin, albatross, seal and sea-lion. At the base of the peninsula is Dunedin, a vibrant university city named after the Celtic word for 'Edinburgh'. Where Christchurch is little England, Dunedin is little Scotland: to this day, the ever-watchful gaze of Robert Burns is spread upon the city as he stands staid, cast in iron. Away from the city, Southland is a paradise of dense native forests, stunning fiords, sleepy southern towns and the oft-forgotten Stewart Island. Here the flightless kiwis outnumber people thirty to one and day trips to the predator-free Ulva Island are a fabulous opportunity. Home to native birds and dense bush and forest of the national park, each day on Stewart Island draws to a close with dusky skies lit by the Aurora Australis (Southern Lights) between the months of May and September.

New Zealand

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Experience New Zealand

Celebrated for its rich culture and style of life, this country offers a myriad of inimitable opportunities for the discerning traveller. Nowhere else will you find such an intoxicating mix of food, wine, accommodation, wildlife and adventure; visiting New Zealand is a superb experience. While most of this brochure is organised geographically, over the following pages we have highlighted a selection of recommended experiences available to the Audley traveller.

Modern New Zealand

New Zealand has emerged as a vibrant and prosperous country with a set of strong united values. Its geographic dislocation from the rest of the world has allowed this small nation to do things its own way. Undeterred by international pressure, New Zealand has tackled many sensitive global issues head-on, and members of its colourful parliament truly represent the diversity of its population. Strong on nuclear free, GE-free, and sustainable development, the clean, green, alternative lifestyle is innate. A melting pot of cultures, New Zealand has drawn in people from around the world for investment opportunities and to fill both skilled and unskilled labour shortages. You need look only as far as the faces on the streets to see that this blend of culture is something quite unique.

Food & Drink

While the major cities are known for their gastronomic venues, a true Kiwi pie, roast or 'fush'n'chups' is never far away. For the uninitiated, New Zealand fish and chips are an entirely new experience. Wonderfully fresh, the fish is usually hoki, blue warehou or red cod, complemented by a side of kumara chips. The country has a strong organic following, with a focus on health and supporting local produce. For those seeking traditional Maori fare, experiencing the smoky flavours of a hangi (food cooked in an earth oven) is a must (see page 24). It goes without saying that the best way to accompany all of this is with a glass of local wine. This small nation has established a name for fabulous wineries, many internationally acclaimed. While most will point connoisseurs to the Marlborough region (see page 45) for the finest vintages, Hawke's Bay (see page 33) and Martinborough (see page 42) should not be ignored.





Hongi greeting



Maori carving, meeting house, near Waitangi National Reserve

Outdoors & Coastal Living

The 'outdoors' perception of New Zealanders is not something consciously cultivated; with such a plenitude of mountains, beaches, fiords, lakes and forests on their doorstep it is simply a way of life. Many New Zealanders holiday in their own backyard; the Coromandel (see page 28) and Bay of Plenty (see page 30) are perfect examples of Kiwi holiday hideaways, but while the locals get back to basics staying in a simple bach, visitors can enjoy comfort and luxury in a selection of welcoming lodges enjoying spectacular locations.

Festivals & Special Events

While most cities and towns throughout the country play host to some form of local festival, there are several worthy of note. On the North Island, music and arts are widely celebrated, and our favourites are the Wellington Fringe Festival and the World of Wearable Arts show. Wine and food are celebrated on the South Island, where you have the Marlborough Wine and Food Festival, and for the more adventurous the fabulous Hokitika Wild Foods Festival. Sport is a key feature, and every rugby match is dubbed by locals as 'a special event' - watching a game played by either the All Blacks or a local Sevens team is a rousing and energetic experience.

Maori History

Maori history tells of the demi-god Maui hauling up from the ocean Te Ika a Maui, the fish of Maui, New Zealand's North Island. His waka, or canoe, is today the South Island, and Stewart Island his anchor. Travelling by waka from their mythical homeland Hawaiki, the Maori soon established themselves as the dominant inhabitants of New Zealand, and their vast oral history is woven seamlessly into the land. The European influx introduced foreign diseases, and the Maori population dropped from 100,000 at the time of the Treaty of Waitangi to just 43,113 in 1896. Although today Maori constitute less than 10% of the population, their culture is very much alive.

Maori Culture

New Zealanders are proud of their Maori roots. The famous haka offers an intriguing sample of this Pacific island heritage, and increasingly travellers are keen to learn more. Maori song, dance and mythology are prevalent, towns are adorned with carvings and rooms are dressed in flax weavings. 'Kiwisms' are scattered through everyday conversation, a hybrid of the two national languages, Maori and English, with words such as *kia ora* (hello) commonplace in the Kiwi vernacular. Most physical locations have Maori

names with literal translations: Waimakariri River (Wai = water, Makariri = cold), Mount Maunganui (Maunga = Mountain, Nui = Large). The unmistakable Maori culture is omnipresent.

He aha te mea nui o te ao?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata!

What is the most important thing in the world?

The people, the people, the people!

This is the prevalent Maori philosophy, and to keep their culture alive they recognise that it must be made accessible. We work with a handful of carefully selected Maori operators who are particularly adept at communicating their traditional culture to travellers. The best place to start is Northland (see page 19), where the Waitangi Treaty Ground is New Zealand's paramount historical site. The dynamic Thermal Plateau (see page 22) is where myth and land are united and where Maori performance (*kapa haka*), feasts (*hangi*), and carving workshops are available. In the South Island tours focus on traditional interpretations of the natural world (see page 46) or the abundant wildlife (see page 53).

New Zealand

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Playing golf at the Kauri Cliffs, Northland

Landscapes

For a small country, New Zealand incorporates landscapes as diverse as they come. Mountains, volcanoes, beaches, lakes, fiords, valleys and caves – to the everyday traveller these remarkable sights are other-worldly; to the everyday New Zealander they are simply home. Both the North and South islands share many common features, but are also wonderfully contrasting. The North Island is rich and fertile, cloaked in dense native forest, and edged with spectacular coastlines. The South Island is less developed and more extreme, with the jagged spine of the Alps dotted with emerald lakes cutting through its heart. Finally, the tiny Stewart Island, a national park in its own right, is home to some of New Zealand most treasured and protected wildlife.



Mitre Peak, Milford Sound

National Parks

More than half of New Zealand's incredible landscape is protected in conservation parks and reserves. There are 14 in total, each encompassing something different. Some, located in the high alpine region, are peppered with lakes, glaciers and bare rock. Others cover volcanic cones, native forests, or pristine coastlines. Tongariro (see page 26) and Te Wahipounamu are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Comprehensive paths, huts and walkways make each national park easy and rewarding to explore.

Bird Life

An ornithologist's heaven, New Zealand is rife with spectacular bird life. Shy and retiring brown and spotted kiwi tend to be tucked away in the dry bush of Stewart Island (see page 74) or in the forests of Northland (see page 17), whereas in the alpine region (see page 54) cheeky kea strut around like vigilantes. On the Otago Peninsula (see page 71) the rare yellow-eyed and blue penguins can be found, along with the only mainland colony of royal albatross. Ulva Island off the coast of Stewart Island is a predator-free sanctuary for native birds and plants, and here kiwi outnumber people. Countrywide, birdlife is abundant and our specialists will be happy to recommend the best ways to find it.

Marine Life

You don't need to look far to experience New Zealand's marine mammals. On the Kaikoura coast (see page 53) lie sun-basking seals, and a trip onto the bay will often reward visitors with sightings of the giant sperm whale, orca and dusky dolphins. Akaroa Harbour (see page 52) is home to the playful Hector's dolphin which you will find leaping in bursts of energy, flanking any sea vessel. Kayakers in the Abel Tasman National Park (see page 49) are often met by fur seals gliding through the turquoise waters.



Yellow-eyed penguins, Otago Peninsula



Abel Tasman National Park

Walking & Trekking

There are so many excellent hikes - or 'tramps' as the locals call them - in New Zealand that it is sometimes difficult to know which one to select. We feature several of the country's 'great walks' (see page 76), which can easily be incorporated into any itinerary, and most can be experienced as day walks for those with limited time.

The Tongariro Crossing (see page 76) is an exceptional one day hike for those seeking a challenge, traversing an alien landscape on the flanks of an active volcano. In the South Island the Queen Charlotte Track and Abel Tasman are two of the most popular hikes, and can be sampled in one-day sections. At almost any point along your route you will find short tracks, boardwalks and nature trails just off the main highways, always well marked and complete with Department of Conservation (DOC) information boards.



Light adventure!

Golf

With some of the most scenic courses in the world, New Zealand is increasingly being appreciated as a prime golfing destination to suit all levels of ability. Of the 400 public and private courses available one is located on prime cliff top land in the Northland (see page 20), others nestle in the heart of Christchurch (see page 51) and Auckland (see page 15) while another sits between Queenstown's lake shore and craggy peaks (see page 63).

Fishing

Sport fishing is a popular Kiwi pastime and the seas around the upper North Island contain a host of full-sized game species. The Bay of Plenty (see page 30) and the eastern coast are good places to catch marlin while Nelson and the Marlborough Sounds are hot spots for snapper. Nearly every freshwater system in New Zealand offers an abundance of brown and rainbow trout, with Lake Taupo (see page 25) and the Rotorua lakes (see page 23) prime locations. Our specialists will be happy to recommend the right location to suit your interest.



Takahe and chick



Fur seal

Light Adventure

It is not necessary to throw yourself off a suspended platform in order to fully experience New Zealand. For those who prefer to shy away from the pursuits of adrenaline junkies, there are many more sedate activities that offer alternative views of the New Zealand landscape. Options include air safaris that fly close to active White Island (see page 31), heli-hiking tours of the Fox and Franz Josef glaciers (see page 60), scenic jet boats that skim the waters around Queenstown (see page 63) and wilderness cruises in Milford and Doubtful Sounds (see page 69).



Fishing, South Island

New Zealand

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Autumn colours of New Zealand



Treehouse at Hapuku Lodge, Kaikoura



Richard and Rosie, hosts at Claremont Estate

Accommodation

Where you stay is very much part of the experience in New Zealand, with friendly Kiwi hospitality likely to feature prominently in the memories you bring home. When we select a lodge, guesthouse or hotel, the welcome of the hosts and levels of service they provide are key factors that we assess. All the accommodation in this brochure has earned its place and, by the same yardstick, several others have been omitted. It must be remembered that this brochure cannot fully describe the accommodation options available and is very much the tip of the iceberg, as there are choices to suit every taste and budget. Essentially, in descending cost order, the options start with exclusive lodges, internationally regarded as some of the best in the world, boutique bed & breakfast properties, conventional hotels (members of established chains), small motels on the outskirts of towns to farm stay and homesteads where guests are treated as part of the family. We have also sought out a number of traditional kiwi bach properties. These private holiday homes give you the opportunity to relax and savour some of the hideaways discovered and enjoyed by the locals. Our New Zealand specialists have visited a huge range of properties to find those that best match your preferences and budget.

Climate

New Zealand has four seasons, broadly opposite to ours, but generally mild and temperate. There are variations: the north is usually warmer than the south, and the central mountain ranges tend to cause a 'rain shadow', with eastern areas being drier than the western coast, an effect particularly pronounced on the South Island. Summer, from December to March, is ideal for water activities, with temperatures averaging from the mid to high 20s°C. Spring, from September to November, is good for exploring, with the countryside blooming into life and temperatures from 15-20°C. Autumn, with its turning leaves and gentle sun, is in April and May, and tends to be a little warmer than the spring. Winter, from June to August, is perfect for skiing in the mountains though at sea level temperatures rarely fall below 5°C. Northland, in particular, is mild year-round while there's always snow dusting New Zealand's highest mountain peaks. New Zealand attracts a huge number of visitors during the peak months of January and February, filling the best accommodation: you'll need to book the more popular places in advance. By waiting just a little longer, you can take advantage of the lack of other visitors, enjoy the pick of the accommodation and experience New Zealand as it should be – peaceful and untouched.

Getting Around

There are many options for the traveller to explore New Zealand, and very often it is best to use a variety of transport arrangements to link the many sights. The following sections may help you make your decisions; however, the best thing to do is call one of our New Zealand specialists, who have all travelled extensively around the country using different modes of transport. They will be able to discuss the options and tailor-make an itinerary that best suits your requirements.

Self-Drive

New Zealand has wonderful roads - scenic, safe and, especially on the South Island, largely empty. They even drive on the left and some of the most scenic routes are waymarked. You may not wish to start driving immediately after an international flight, so we can arrange to have you met at the airport and taken to your hotel, where your car will be delivered. Alternatively, there are car hire stations at all of New Zealand's airports and we can ensure a car is waiting, so you can be on the road within minutes of landing. We will book all of your accommodation in advance, provide you with clear and detailed driving instructions and a road map, leaving you free to relax and enjoy the many scenic delights that you will pass on the way.



Driving through the Lindis Pass

Motorhomes

Giving you the flexibility and freedom to explore at your own pace and stop when and wherever you want, motorhomes are a popular way to see New Zealand. It is always worth remembering that you do not need to commit yourself one your entire visit: it can be a good option to book one for some time in the South Island but to choose a car for your time in the North Island. Our specialists can talk you through the options and the practicalities, but it is essential, especially in high season, to book your motorhome well in advance.

Touring

Often it is more relaxing if someone else is doing the driving, and we can arrange coach travel for those who prefer not to drive themselves. There are two main ways of using coaches to travel around New Zealand. Firstly there are itineraries designed by coach touring operators, often quite innovative journeys that explore even the most remote regions. One such company is the Great New Zealand Travel Company who offer a range of small group tours of varying durations allowing you to either tour the whole country or just a portion. There are also companies that offer a hop on/hop off network offering even more flexibility, allowing us to tailor-make your itinerary

but using their scheduled coach services to cover the longer distances. These coaches choose the most scenic routes and often stop for photo opportunities.

Guides

New Zealand is home to many natural wonders and local curiosities: a knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide can add immeasurably to your experience. We pride ourselves on using only the best guides, all highly trained and aware of ecological, environmental and cultural sensitivities. Many of our guides, particularly in local traditional areas, are Maoris and on page 24 you will find some of the highlights.

Railway Journeys

New Zealand does not have an extensive rail network, but there are tracks through some of the most beautiful mountain landscapes. For this reason we will usually try and incorporate at least one rail journey into your itinerary. The trains are comfortable, centrally heated and air-conditioned and have panoramic windows. Some have an observation lounge at the rear to take in the sweeping views. Three of our favourite journeys are on the South Island: The TranzCoastal (see page 47), TranzAlpine (see page 56) and the Taieri River Gorge Railway (see page 72).



TranzCoastal railway



Touring at Farewell Spit

Flights

Seeing New Zealand from the air is a truly stunning experience and helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft offer wonderful alternatives to travelling overland. Specific flights explore Fiordland, Mount Cook or the Bay of Islands, and air travel can be used strategically to link distant sights, or can be combined in a more substantial touring itinerary. It is a long flight to New Zealand, but there are ways of making the journey comfortable. We can help reduce your travel time by arranging regional departures. Details of this and other flight information can be found in our flights leaflet. On the international sectors you may want to consider upgrading to a premium economy or business class service, and Air New Zealand will allow you to upgrade to business class for just part of your flight. Many people choose to break the journey with a 'stopover' in the Far East, USA or South Pacific. There is a comprehensive network of domestic flights within New Zealand, ideal for covering longer distances: these are almost always less expensive when arranged along with your international flights.

New Zealand

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