

Uniquely Kaikōura

Kaikōura is known for its unique location, on the East Coast of New Zealand. Well positioned between Ōtautahi Christchurch and Picton.

There are few places like Kaikōura, a small coastal town offering breath taking views. The towering Seaward Kaikōura mountain range provide a stunning backdrop over the town centre which extends out to the Kaikōura Peninsula, where the waves of the Pacific Ocean roll in.

The Kaikōura undersea canyon plunges to depths of over 1200m very close to shore, and attracts a wide range of wildlife, including the Sperm Whale, the Kekenō (New Zealand Fur Seal), Dusky Dolphins & a range of bird species.

There is a range of experiences to enjoy in Kaikōura, whether by land, sea or in the air.

We invite you to discover what makes Kaikōura so unique – a place that's one of a kind; unlike anywhere else.



Experience Kaikōura

Whether you prefer to stay on the land, hop aboard a scenic flight or head out on the water – Kaikōura has you covered.

Local tour operators off the chance to watch whales, dolphins, seabirds, and many other species of marine life daily, by boat, flight and from land. Kaikōura is also renowned for its great fishing grounds and for some of the best reef diving.

Discover Kaikōura from above with scenic flights either by helicopter or a fixed wing plane to experience 360-degree views, over the ocean & Kaikōura mountain ranges.

If you prefer to stay on land, there is quad biking, zip lining, a lavender farm, mountain biking, cycling and walking tracks to enjoy. Alternatively, you can explore Kaikōura's history at Fyffe House and the Kaikōura Museum or immerse yourself in cinema and arts at The Mayfair, just to name a few.

Seals & Mountains, credit BareKiwi



Small town, Big history

Culture and heritage play a very important role in day-to-day life in Kaikōura and form the backbone of our community. Kaikōura's Māori heritage is reflected in the name 'Kaikōura', meaning kai – food; kōura – crayfish. Kaikōura was an important settlement for early Māori, drawn by ocean bounty including kaimoana (seafood) and seabirds.

In the early 1840s, Scotsman Robert Fyfe arrived with four whaleboats to chase the mighty southern right whale, whaling stopped here in 1964. The undersea Kaikōura Canyon brings abyssal depths and sperm whales close to the coast, whale watching has been a major tourist attraction since the late 1980s.

On the 14th November 2016 a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck North Canterbury, causing significant damage to buildings and infrastructure in Kaikōura and surrounds. Today, Kaikōura has come out the other side of the earthquake as a strong, resilient community. To find out more head along to the Kaikōura Museum.



Kaikōura Museum, credit Andrew Spencer



Hapuku Lodge, credit BareKiwi

Unique and Luxury stays

One of the main reasons guests and locals alike love Kaikōura is because of our spectacular location. Whether you prefer staying off grid in a glass eco-cabin, waking to the sound of bird song on a remote local farm or perched centrally overlooking the township and Pacific Ocean, Kaikōura offer a range of unique accommodation options.

How does staying in a yurt, colonial wagon, train carriage or tepee sound? Or a chalet nestled in the high country where deer & native wildlife roam, a cabin on the clifftop overlooking the town or a room in Kaikōura's first 5-star hotel – The Sudima - Kaikōura has it all. Always dreamed of staying in a tree house! Hapuku Lodge and Tree Houses offer luxury contemporary accommodation perfect for couples, and family friendly.

A Sky Worth Staying Up For

Kaikōura is officially recognised as an International Dark Sky Sanctuary, one of the best places on earth to witness the wonders of the night sky. With minimal light pollution and vast open horizons, the heavens above Kaikōura reveal themselves in breathtaking clarity.

As daylight fades, constellations come into view, shooting stars trace across the darkness, and the Milky Way stretches from mountain to sea. Each night feels different, yet everyone offers the same quiet magic that reminds us how small we are beneath an infinite sky.

Whether you're an astronomy enthusiast, a night photographer, or simply someone seeking a moment of stillness, Kaikōura's dark skies invite you to pause, look up, and reconnect with the beauty above. Here, stargazing isn't just an activity, it's an experience that lingers long after the night ends.

Kaikōura by night, credit Brooke Unger



Cooper's Catch Party Chips, credit Ready4U

Foodie Frenzy

Kaikōura is a mecca for seafood lovers, with lots of fresh delicacies to try. Local specialties include groper, cod, mussels and of course the towns namesake – Crayfish (Lobster). Other delights such as oysters, scallops and whitebait are available in season. Known for its seafood, the name Kaikōura literally translates into "to eat crayfish".

For those looking for a culinary adventure, why not try your hand at our local farm to table cooking school – Hapuku Kitchen? Here you will use the very best ingredients, picked, and gathered from the region and depart with a deeper understanding of the food on your plate.

Kaikōura has quality dining choices to suit any requirement, whether you prefer to eat in or dine out. From takeaway & cafes to upmarket restaurants there's something to satisfy everyone.

UNIQUELY KAIKŌURA IN OUR NATURE



VISITOR GUIDE & MAP



www.kaikoura.co.nz

Ko te rangi te korowai o te
maunga me te whenua, ko te
awa te hononga o te rangi ki te
tai Ko te taiao te mauri o Te ahi
Kaikōura a Tama ki te Rangi.



RANGI - SKY

Experience Kaikōura from Above

Discover the breathtaking beauty of Kaikōura from a whole new perspective. Scenic flights by helicopter or plane reveal dramatic contrasts, from the rugged peaks of the Kaikōura Ranges to the Pacific Ocean below. Soaring high above, you'll experience spectacular 360-degree views that truly capture the essence of this remarkable place.

Local operators offer a range of unforgettable adventures, from alpine landings and secluded picnics surrounded by snow-capped mountains to flights that showcase Kaikōura's unique geology and natural wonders. You can even take to the skies to watch whales, dolphins, seabirds, and other marine life from above, witnessing their beauty and freedom in their natural habitat.

Whether it's a short scenic flight or a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, seeing Kaikōura from above is sure to capture your heart and stay with you long after you've touched back down.

NGĀ POU E TORU
THE THREE
PILLARS



WHENUA - LAND

A Destination for All Seasons

Kaikōura is a destination for every season and every kind of traveller. Whether you seek adventure, relaxation, or a mix of both, there's something for everyone against the stunning backdrop of ocean and mountains.

On land, a variety of experiences await. Feel the thrill of quad biking on a working farm with tracks offering panoramic coastal and mountain views. Stroll through the rows of Lavendyl Lavender Farm or meet friendly llamas on a guided countryside or coastal trek.

Sample local flavours at the brewery, explore walking and mountain bike trails through native bush and coastal tracks, or relax with a movie at the Mayfair Theatre. To discover the area's heritage, visit Fyffe House or the Kaikōura Museum for fascinating insights into stories that shaped this coastal community.

No matter the season, Kaikōura invites you to slow down, explore, and savour its natural beauty, wildlife, and local charm.

The sky is the cloak that covers
the mountains and land, the rivers
connect the sky to the ocean, the
environment is the life force of Te
ahi Kaikōura a Tama ki te Rangi.



MOANA - SEA

Connect with Our Natural Environment

Offering a remarkable marine environment for all kinds of travellers, Kaikōura's coastal waters are alive with marine life, from resident sperm whales and playful dusky dolphins to fur seals, albatross, and the rare Hector's dolphin. Throughout the year, humpback whales, orca, and other migratory species pass through, adding to the region's unique appeal.

Visitors can explore this spectacular coastline by boat, kayak, or on a diving adventure, or get even closer to wildlife by swimming with seals or dolphins. For those who love action on the water, Kaikōura offers excellent fishing, surf breaks, and scenic coastal adventures. Beyond the thrill of encounters with marine life, the dramatic landscapes and pristine waters provide the perfect setting to slow down, appreciate nature, and create unforgettable memories.

Kaikōura's marine experiences promise something extraordinary for every season and every traveller.

We invite you to discover what
makes Kaikōura so unique -
a place that's one of a kind;

UNLIKE
ANYWHERE
ELSE

Keep exploring...

Few places in the world can boast of such natural wonders as those offered by land and sea in Kaikōura.

Contact Us:

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FIND OUT MORE



See & Do



Eat & Drink



Accommodation



Kaikōura Cycling



Kaikōura Dark Skies



Responsible Camping in Kaikōura

CULTURAL ARTWORK TRAIL LOCATIONS

• Okiwi Bay
• Paparoa Point
• Ohau Point
• Te Ana Pouri
• Rākahutara

Kaikōura Township

10 km

N



Paparoa Point, credit Rosdy NZ

Getting here

Kaikōura is perfectly located on the East Coast of the South Island between Ōtautahi Christchurch (2.5 hours' drive south) and Picton (2hrs drive north). Whether you are self-driving, taking the Coastal Pacific train (runs Sep – Apr) or travelling on a bus between destinations, staying a night or two in Kaikōura will not disappoint. This journey offers stunning panoramic views of the coastline and the towering mountains are breath-taking.

Make sure to pull over at Ohau Point viewing area to watch the Fur Seal Colony just a 25-minute drive north of Kaikōura. This place captivates all who visit, you can't help but be in awe of nature's wonders as you travel this coastal corridor.

Locals Tip: Extend you road trip and experience the Alpine Pacific Touring Route, 450kms of spectacular scenery winding past wineries, alpine thermal pools, wild surf, towering mountains, and marine life.

Our values

Destination Kaikōura is proud to support the Tiaki Promise to protect and preserve New Zealand. www.tiakinewzealand.com

Kaikōura is home to a unique marine environment with a wide range of important species and ecosystems. We are well-known for our NZ fur seals, whales, dolphins, seabirds, and is home to the last two surviving Hutton's Shearwater breeding colonies along with 30 other indigenous bird species.

In Kaikōura to commit to the Tiaki Promise means that we care for our land, ocean, and mountain environment. Conservation is always a top priority; we respect and care for our wildlife and support sustainable ecotourism.

We aim to keep the Tiaki promise and guidelines on the minds of all travellers visiting Kaikōura and show them how to protect, care and preserve our land by following these commitments.

Walking and cycling in Kaikōura

Kaikōura offers a variety of spectacular cycle trails to explore the varied majestic landscapes from rugged coastlines to mountain ranges. There are tracks which are ride-able all year round, for all levels of experience ranging from casual family trails to challenging climb adventures. In winter weather can change fast and unexpectedly, be prepared.

The options for walking and tramping are seemingly endless. Set against the backdrop of the seaward Kaikōura mountains, every track has a stunning view, whether it's along the coastal pathway, over the Kaikōura Peninsula or up Mt Fyffe. Along the journey you may discover our unique sea and bird life, native trees up to 1000 years old or massive hīnau trees.

For more information on walking & cycling tracks or mountain bike/ e-bike rentals please visit www.kaikoura.co.nz

Accommodation & Responsible Camping

Thousands of visitors are drawn to Kaikōura to experience the unique culture, the unspoiled coastal environment and to interact with the abundant marine life.

Accommodation in Kaikōura is extensive, ranging from campgrounds and backpackers, hostels through to the bed and breakfasts, farm-stays, self-contained units, luxury lodges, motels, apartments, and motor-inns. If you are planning to camp in our district, please support our local businesses and minimise the risk of pollution by choosing to stay at one of the local Holiday Parks or stay at the DOC campsite in the Puihi Puihi Valley.

Our website offers a wide range of accommodation options, and our friendly team at the Kaikōura Visitor Centre are only too happy to help you find what you are looking for.

www.kaikoura.co.nz

Cultural Artwork

Along the 60km beautiful stretch of the Kaikōura coastline is stunning Cultural Artwork that invite community & visitors alike to take a break, enjoy the stunning views and reflect on our rich local history. Each of these stop off areas includes artwork with an interpretation panel providing a brief history of the area & its cultural significance. Included are intricate graphics relating to a corresponding whakatauki (proverb) in te reo Māori. The corten steel design down the side of each panel relates to that area as does the planting with locally sourced native seeds and plants.

The artwork from this important collaboration between Waka Kotahi NZ & Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura has created an incredible legacy, one that encourages more people to investigate the rich history and culture of Kaikōura. Be sure to add time to your journey and explore the story that is Kaikōura.



Dolphin Encounter, credit BareKiwi



Birds Eye View, credit Clint Trahan



Peninsula Walkway, credit Roady



Surfing in Kaikōura, credit BareKiwi



Kaikōura Cycle Trail, credit Roady



Sunrise in Kaikōura, credit Dan Kerins



Hāpuku Kitchen



Whale-Watching Kaikōura, credit BareKiwi