Uniquely Kaikōura

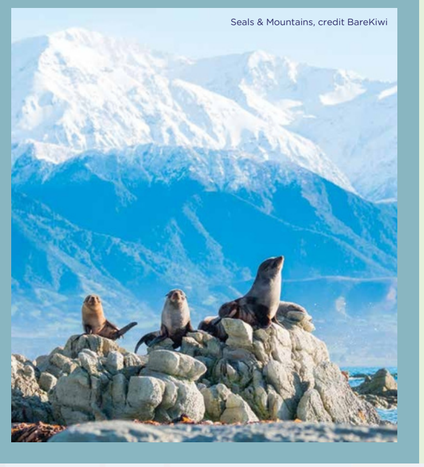
Kaikōura is known for its unique location, on the East Coast of New Zealand. Well positioned between Ōtautahi Christchurch and Picton.

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 Kekeno (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.



Seals & Mountains, credit BareKiwi



Cycling, credit ReadyNZ

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.

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 4.5-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.

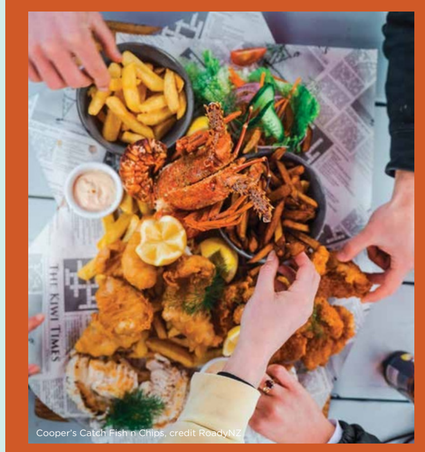
Events

Kaikōura's location and great weather lends itself to events orientated around the outdoors, fun and the wonderful landscape. The mountains to sea landscape make it the perfect adventure playground and a stunning backdrop for events year-round.

We have several annual events such as Kegkoura (Annual Craft Beer Festival), The Kaikōura Hop (a premier car show), The Kaikōura Whale Run (1/2 marathon, 12km, 5km & Marafun), 48 Hour photography event, The Kaikōura Adventure Race (24, 12, 6 & 3 hour course lengths on offer), The A&P Show, The Kaikōura Races, Kaikō ura Mountains to Sea Marathon and Crayfest (A festival that celebrates Kaikōura's most famous kaimoana, the Crayfish) + more. Be sure to put Kaikōura on your event schedule this season.



The Hop, credit Andrew Spencer



Cooper's Catch Fish n Chips, credit ReadyNZ

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.



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.

TAHI - ONE

RANGI - SKY

Experience Kaikōura from above, a beauty that will capture your heart.

Discover Kaikōura from above with scenic flights either by helicopter or plane over the Kaikōura ranges, spectacular 360-degree views that will take your breath away.

Local tour operators also offer the chance for alpine landings & picnics, flights showcasing our unique geology, heli rafting & to watch whales, dolphins, seabirds and many other species of marine life on a daily basis.

NGĀ POU E TORU

THE THREE PILLARS

RUA - TWO

WHENUA - LAND

A destination for all seasons, Kaikōura offers something for everyone.

If you prefer to explore on the land, there is quad biking on a working beef and sheep farm that offers up exhilarating views, the Lavender Farm, Llama trekking, a local brewery, mountain bike & walking tracks, movies at the Mayfair or the opportunity to learn about Kaikōura's history at Fyffe House and the Museum, to name just a few options.

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.

TORU - THREE

MOANA - SEA

Kaikōura is the perfect place to connect with our natural environment.

The region's coastal waters are home to an amazing array of marine mammals and birdlife making it the perfect destination for marine experiences all year round.

Perhaps the most famous residents are the sperm whales who share this part of the ocean with dusky dolphins, fur seals and albatross amongst others. Species such as the rare Hector's dolphins, humpback whales and orca visit throughout the year. View marine life from a boat, or get even closer by swimming with seals or dolphins. Go fishing and catch your own dinner. Try out some of the excellent diving sites and surf breaks or explore the coast by kayak.

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:

Destination Kaikōura
West End, Kaikōura 7300
New Zealand

info@kaikoura.co.nz
www.kaikoura.co.nz

Uniquely Kaikōura – In our nature

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VISITOR GUIDE MAP



KAIKŌURA AND SURROUNDING AREA

KAIKŌURA TOWNSHIP



MAP KEY

- Public Toilets
- Dump Station
- Recycling
- Medical Centre
- Car Parks
- Swimming Pool
- Walking Tracks
- Biking Tracks
- Unsealed Roads
- Liquor ban area
- Rocks
- Railway Line
- Supermarket
- Marina
- Museum
- Airport
- Cinema & Arts Centre
- Train Station
- Swimming
- No Swimming
- Kayaking
- Surfing
- Ski Area
- Eco Zip
- DOC Campsite
- Seal Colony
- Golf Course
- Lookout

tiaki — CARE FOR NEW ZEALAND

TIAKI MEANS TO CARE FOR PEOPLE AND PLACE. THE TIAKI PROMISE IS A COMMITMENT TO CARE FOR NEW ZEALAND, FOR NOW AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

HOW TO CARE FOR NZ:

BE PREPARED · DRIVE CAREFULLY · KEEP NZ CLEAN · PROTECT NATURE · SHOW RESPECT

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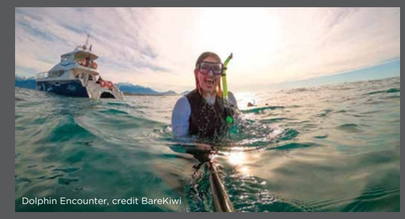
FIND OUT MORE

See & Do · Eat & Drink · Accommodation · Kaikōura Cycling · Kaikōura Dark Skies · Responsible Camping in Kaikōura

Paparoa Point, credit ReadyNZ

CULTURAL ARTWORK TRAIL LOCATIONS


Dolphin Encounter, credit BareKiwi



Harmans Motor Museum, credit BareKiwi


Kaikōura Coast Road, credit BareKiwi


Surfing in Kaikōura, credit BareKiwi


Puhi Puhi Valley, credit Dan Kerins


Sunrise in Kaikōura, credit Dan Kerins


Hapuku Kitchen


Whale Watch Kaikōura, credit BareKiwi

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 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 the new 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 hinau trees.

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

Accommodation & 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 Puhi Puhi Valley.

Our website offers a wide range of accommodation options 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 whakataukī (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.