

10 THINGS TO DO BEYOND THE SLOPES



Lake Tekapo/Takapō, Canterbury

Who said winter must-dos have to be all about skiing and snowboarding? From indulgent hot pool soaks and nights spent under the stars to memorable wildlife encounters, there are plenty of winter activities in Aotearoa New Zealand beyond the slopes.

BENEATH THE STARS

Due to the presence of two International Dark Sky Reserves – Aoraki Mackenzie and Wairarapa – New Zealand is one of the best places on earth to look up at the glittering southern skies. Along with spotting celestial objects, many **stargazing experiences** aim to connect manuhiri (visitors) to Aotearoa’s night skies through storytelling and tātai aroraki (Māori astronomy).

CLIMB A GLACIER

Along the South Island’s dramatic West Coast are two of the world’s most accessible glaciers: Fox Glacier (Te Moeka o Tauwe) and Franz Josef Glacier (Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere). Fully guided **heli hikes** offer the chance to experience the sheer size and brilliant blue beauty of these ice-cold natural wonders while sliding through narrow crevasses or squeezing through ice caves.

HOT TUBS AND HOT SPRINGS

Is there anything more indulgent than sinking into thermal waters while the air around is cool and crisp? Discover a hub of geothermal activity in Rotorua including **Hell’s Gate**, famed for the healing properties of its mud baths. And at **Onsen Hot Pools** just outside of Queenstown, enjoy the tranquillity of relaxing in a cedar-lined hot pool while taking in views of the Shotover River.

WILDLIFE WATCHING

Seeing the country’s unique wildlife is often considered a highlight of travelling to New Zealand. Spot the critically endangered Bryde’s whale on an **eco-tour** in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. Spy the rare hoiho (yellow-eyed penguin) from a public viewing hide in Southland’s Nugget Point Reserve. Or join **Ruggedy Range’s** eco-watch experience on Rakiura Stewart Island to seek kiwi in the wild.



Franz Josef Glacier, West Coast



Onsen Hot Pools, Queenstown



Whale watching, Auckland



Altitude Heli-Gin Tour, Queenstown

RIDE THE RAILS

Travelling aboard one of New Zealand's three great scenic rail journeys – the Northern Explorer, the Coastal Pacific and the TranzAlpine – allows for deeper exploration of Aotearoa's stunning landscapes, from mountain ranges to volcanic plateaus. **Great Journeys New Zealand** offer self-guided short break packages and hosted multi-day tours with accommodation, transfers and experiences included.

GLITTERING GLOW-WORM CAVES

Descend into darkness to a subterranean world inhabited by bioluminescent glow-worms. In rural Waikato you will come across the famed **Waitomo Glow-worm Caves**. This 130-year-old tourist attraction is made up of three different caves, accessible by foot, by boat and by wheelchair. In **Te Anau** combine a cruise across the lake with exploration of a 12,000-year-old limestone cave network.

TAKE TIME OUT ON A CRUISE

Jump on board a cruise through New Zealand's awe-inspiring fjords and be left speechless by the tranquillity of **Patea Doubtful Sound** and **Piopirotahi Milford Sound**, marvelling at cascading waterfalls and looking out for bottlenose dolphins. Or get up close to the 14-metre high Ngātoroirangi Mine Bay Māori Rock Carvings on the western bays of Lake Taupō during an **eco-friendly tour** on an electric powered yacht.

SAMPLE NEW ZEALAND WINE AND BEER

Sip your way around Aotearoa's breweries and wineries. Craft beer aficionados should head straight to Wellington, considered the craft beer capital of New Zealand with more than 15 **breweries** in the region. One of the best ways to sample some of the country's best wines is to follow the **Classic New Zealand Wine Trail**. This travels through three major wine regions: the Hawke's Bay, the Wairarapa and Marlborough.

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKING

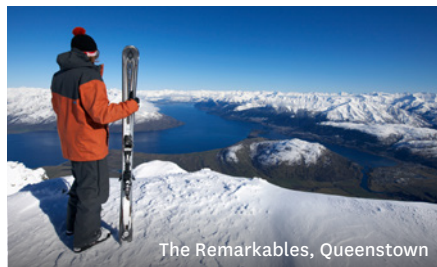
Many of Aotearoa's most popular hikes are more enjoyable without the summer crowds. The **Abel Tasman Coast Track's** golden beaches, crystal clear waters and lush forests are stunning year-round. Or hike through the otherworldly landscapes of **Tongariro National Park**. Remember to check track alerts on the Department of Conservation's (DOC) **website** or stop in at a local DOC Visitor Centre beforehand.

HELI EXPERIENCES – FROM SKIING TO GIN TASTING

What could make the thrill of skiing or the deliciousness of gin tasting even better? How about a scenic helicopter ride! Several operators throughout the South Island offer exclusive heli experiences including **heli-skiing** across the dramatic backcountry terrain of the Southern Alps. Or embark on a unique imbibing experience with a **heli-gin tour**, where you can enjoy a tipples (or two) while taking in panoramic mountain views.



TranzAlpine Crossing, Canterbury



The Remarkables, Queenstown



Milford Sound, Fiordland



Fortune Favours, Wellington



Waitomo Caves, Waikato



Abel Tasman National Park, Nelson Tasman