

IF YOU SEEK AN ENCOUNTER WITH NATURE

 Kaikōura
Canterbury

Discover your wild side.

At the bottom of the world is a place that has evolved into an extraordinary land, filled to the brim with unique flora and fauna. From geothermal geysers and a 180-million-year-old petrified forest to playful marine life in coastal waters and unique flightless birds, Aotearoa New Zealand is a literal land of plenty.

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Cruise through mysterious fiords

Take a day or overnight cruise, coach tour or scenic flight and get up close and personal with the iconic Piopiotahi Milford Sound. Drive past the region's broad grassy flats, glacial lakes, and alpine herb fields, or soar over the dramatic, ice-capped mountains of Fiordland National Park. Marvel at the contrast between the inky blackness of the water and the frosty, white alpine peaks and experience the refreshing spray of a waterfall as your guided boat tour edges in close to sheer rock faces.

Patea Doubtful Sound offers a smaller, more intimate experience. Cruise across Lake Manapouri and take a coach over a sub-alpine road through rich rainforest to reach Deep Cove where you will embark on your cruise. Experience the tranquillity of an overnight cruise and understand the reason Patea (meaning place of silence) got its name. If you are feeling brave, jump overboard and take a dip in the brisk waters. Keep an eye out for bottlenose dolphins, New Zealand fur seals, and Fiordland crested penguins too.

Dolphins, whales, and penguins

Aotearoa is home to many animals who play, eat, and live in its waters. View mischievous dolphins year-round in the Bay of Islands, Marlborough Sounds, Kaikōura, and Akaroa on the Banks Peninsula. If you seek a closer encounter, try swimming with the gentle dusky dolphin in Kaikōura. Go whale watching by boat or take to the skies and experience these giants from above.

Out of eighteen species of penguins worldwide, thirteen of these are found in New Zealand. Visit the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony on the South Island's east coast, and watch these wee birds navigate their way home over rocks and through an underpass tunnel to their nests on the edge of town. Or visit Pohatu, an Australasian little penguin colony in Akaroa. Take part in their monitoring program and learn about the conservation efforts going on in the area. Gain insight into the life of a penguin and have the chance to see them up close, socialising on the water.

Geothermal wonders

Discover the story of the famed Pink and White Terraces and paddle into the geothermal marvels of Waimangu Volcanic Valley. Step through this geothermal wonderland, past spectacular volcanic craters, and hot water springs, and join a guided kayak tour that takes you on to the waters of Lake Rotomahana. Uncover the secrets of the steaming cliffs and witness nature's power in the form of geysers and fumaroles (gaseous and vaporous vents in the surface of the Earth).

Recovering kiwis

The kiwi is a shy and often elusive bird, which makes seeing one in the wild a rare and exciting experience. The best chance of spotting one in its natural habitat is by visiting Rakiura Stewart Island, where local guides will show you their secret spots. In the north, Zealandia in Wellington offers a night-time sanctuary tour where you will hear and often see kiwi ambling their way around the forest. Discover more about these precious birds and learn about the on-going battle to save them at conservation and recovery centres across the motu (islands).



Milford Sound, Fiordland



Little Blue Penguins, Oamaru



Lake Rotomahana, Rotorua



Te Puia, Rotorua