

Doing Number 8 or Ring around NZ part 2.

The journey past the outskirts of Christchurch heads up highway 1 turnoff to the Lewis Pass onto the West Coast road.

Heading North up the Canterbury Plains plains at the 30kms mark place for a good side of the roader el cheapo stop is "Pukeko Junction'..... try the savoury scone at \$4.50 and good wine selection. A bit further on is another great café the Nor' Wester in Amberley which has World Series bread made by some Sheila (buggar forgotten her name but its good...ask)

<http://www.norwestercafe.co.nz/>

Vine yards near Waipara are a good stop but best and fairest is to turn off highway at sign to Pegasus Bay Winery (5 kms up side road) touted as brilliant food but the best NZ Riesling....got a touch 5% to 7% botrytis in it to sweeten up the epiglottis.

<http://www.pegasusbay.com/>

Just after the West Coast turnoff is Waipara Springs Winery which has a good pinot gris plus a less floral Sav Blanc worth noting But this can be visited either way....has good Blue borage honey which is collected once a year from the Hurunui valley.

The plains are just that until you get to the Hanmer Springs turnoff and take a side trip to this semi Alpine village about 15 kms up the river....The hot mineral springs are the go here plus the golf course is a good country track.

Back up the road through to the Lewis Pass which can sometimes have snow on it and down to Springs Junction....the hot pools looking out over a snowy river are one memory in an ordinary 'resort' that was a poor replacement for the burnt down original.

Go on the route to Reeftonwhich has a history of being the first town in the Sth hemisphere to be fully electrified....you may ask why..... but the pub lunch is OK.

Ever onwards towards Punakaiki where there is a pub to get a good coldie. Take a walk to the Pancake Rocks but go on a high tide only as this is when it goes off.....bigger and badder the weather the better. Tide times are as follows so you can organise arriving or get an early optic nerve.

<http://ofu.co.nz/graph/tides.php?TideGraphPort=Westport>

Also another good walk to the edge of the cliffs at a sign posted some kilometres north of the Rocks... called Truman track. This site sets it out.

<http://www.punakaiki.co.nz/walks.htm>



Go from here heading into Westport "the home of lace curtains and interbreeding"... Not bad to divert to Cape Foulwind (nothing to do with smells). A sensational café is at Carters Beach not far from here and have dined on a blustery day with good Sav-Bonks.

North up the Coast is Karamea (this is an out and back trip) to the head of the Heaphy Track to The Nelson Province.....also access to the Wangapeka track.

Westport to Nelson 300kms via the Inangahua Junction into the Buller gorgelongest swing to bridge here gets the sway syndrome out of the to do list.

www.bullergorge.co.nz/Pages/activities.html

go via Murchison to head up Waimea Plains area into Nelson province. Nelson...

Good seafood at Guyton's right at the Nelson Wharf (this is where I get my smoked mussels from.....visit friends Viv and Tom Fox who own Saltwater Bar and Cafe on the Main wharf front next door. Suter art gallery has good exhibits & Café plus a visit to the Wearable arts museum is a world one off.

Best coffee is at the Morrison Cafe in Hardy St (opens 7.30 weekdays ..8.30 Sat/Sun) bloody Kiwis still bonking in bed & further down is Lambrettas which is next best. All do great NZ style café food plus Nelson is the home to alternative food.

Do this at Lunch Boathouse private club around the Port Road (travellers definitely OK) only opens on Wed/Thurs/Friday Lunches and Friday night (make sure it is not the Boat shed shown in distance in photo)tucker is the cheapest and best in town.... My mate Rob McKegney is the Chef and will look after you.



"Keg"



The Nelson Saturday Morning Market in the inner carpark (just ask anyone) has fantastic local produce and hip hop good time artefacts.

A point to remember is in a town of 30,000 ingrates there are 8 Breweries and the best one may be the Vic Rose at the Cathedral end of Trafalgar St the main drag..... Roger the dodger the lodger the sod one of the owners lived in Noosa and My Dads wake was held here.

<http://www.nelsoninformation.net.nz/aboutnelson>

Nelson has many camping grounds the largest in NZ is Tahuna at the main beach....Maitai Valley up thru the town past the Centre of New Zealand plus Brook Valley are perky little numbers.

Areas to see in Nelson are out to Kaiteriteri beach near Motueka and a must go area is over the Marble Mountain to Takaka/Collingwood a full day there and back..... or better still camp at Pohara Beach.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/Explore/003~Huts-Cabins-and-Campsites/Conservation-Campsites/index.asp>

Able Tasman National park is the most walked of all the tracks n traps and to even suggest a route is 10 pages so hit these sites and then go on Trip advisor to check the stops.

My preference is the Totoranui end as one can stop off at the Wainui falls prior to kicking off the journey. If wanting kayaking and a quick trip go the Kaiteriteri end or go from Nelson wharf.

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/national-parks/abel-tasman/>
<http://www.abeltasman.co.nz/>

Puipui Springs on the Collingwood Road, the largest fresh water spring in the world, is not a bad purve plus a good bush ramble..... also the Mussel Inn is quaint (about 6 kms on left before heading into Collingwood) on par with best in making its organic beer.

The Courthouse café is in the centre of Collingwood and is OK coffee plus free museum and info centre in main drag



Head up to Farewell Spit but the must see is the Naked Possum Café (look for sign) up the Bainham/Aorere Valley about 15kms from Collingwood. Famous for its totally wild Venison ,goat ,boar ,rabbit ,Thar plus the furry products etc in the two shops are good. www.nakedpossum.com

Go to the observatory at the Farewell spit (this is a memorial to Eve's cousin Wayne Pomeroy who was killed in an air crash and farmed the area) On a road near here is a dirt track to Wharariki Beach that has a good 15 min walk to the rugged West Coast beach and caves.



Good side trip or overnighter is to go to Westhaven Inlet off F/ Spit road... see West Coast but from Nelson Province....good cheap accommodation at this site.

<http://www.kahurangioutpost.co.nz>

Head toward Picton passing thru Havelock.... Not a bad pub here...and was the home of mussels..... but a pleasant stop

... go over the Wairau Bridge & head down Rapara Road to Springlands toward Picton....This has Stoneleigh / Mudhouse and many other Wineries along the road....at start there is Wairau Wines which has good food...across road is Nautilus.

An alternative route from Havelock to Picton is via the Queen Charlotte drive which is very slow & tight passing through bays and inlets.

Picton is at the head of the Sounds try & take in a boat ride to the Ship of Coves (Captain Cook thought it was so good he anchored 5 times here during his Pacific discoveries) & maybe a 5 day walk on the Queen Charlotte track or a one day trip which is an easy 5 hour stroll with good catering stops on the way..... cheapest operator is

<http://www.queencharlottetrack.co.nz/daytrips/>

Ever onward into the town of Blenheim surrounded by vineyards and a rural mentalitymost have been drinking the area dry so hard to luv em....or maybe not so after you get into the cold Sauvignon-Blanc of such notable Alabama Road Vineyards such as Wither Hills or Allan Scott at Renwick? World series venison and gourmet sausages at Meaters of Marlborough at 133 Maxwell road (on the way to Alabama Road).

Marlborough Wineries etc <http://www.marlborough.co.nz/>

Blenheim is an ordinary township with a river boat cruise being a major local sport & the locals get so bored shitless that they even take the bicycle tours of the vineyards.... and so on as one passes Montana vineyards on the way from Blenheim out of the Marlborough Province.

Spent many a rum soaked night passing thru here (My brother Craig farms up the Awatere Valley near a small town called Seddon on Longhill Station up the road beside the Seddon School)

On the highway into the mountains of the moon, or its replica as the barren hills toss you out onto the rugged beautiful Kaikoura coast. Savage gray blustery coastline with fur seals stuck to the rocks but powerful scenery.....

-----Stop for a meal at the place called Kekerengu Store 20 kms up the coast before Kaikoura...good chowder look at the sea views ,drink a Hunters Wine or walk on the crushed grey wacky beach.

<http://www.greenwoodguides.com/new-zealand/activities-restaurants/listing.aspx?search=province&province=Marlborough>



Kaikoura <http://www.kaikoura.co.nz/>

The birth place of one called Eve (my wife) has a combined IQ in the town of 70 but the scenic quotient is far higher.... all sorts of views. Go around the bay to go past the Pier Hotel (nice coldies here...tried to drink Eve beautiful here when I was 18) or up on the top of the hill to the lookout.

Never was a Maori in the whole town until the New Zealand Govt granted the peninsular and whale watching rights over as treaty of Waitangi reparations and voila whites turned brown. Epic drinkathons at the Irish Pub on a Farm and the Mongamau surf beach has 2 km green break into the bay 5 kms north.

All seafood here is good ...look out for the hot smoked mussels or any crayfish on the side of the road at little caravans going north.... 'Nins Bin' has been there since I was at Canterbury Uni and hitch hiked past here on my way north.

Onward over the Hunderlies hills to the Northern Canterbury area through the town of Cheviot the ancestral grounds of the now Australian Wallabies Rugby Union Coach 'Ozzie Robbie Deans'.

The loop is now over so try the wineries missed on the way up.