

Bon Voyage Itinerary

New Zealand, the Kermadecs and the blue whales

From The Untouched Atlas, Episode One: The Falling Song · Vociver

Every episode invites you on a noteworthy future adventure. This Bon Voyage page is just a glimpse into what awaits you there. Tellumin is here to guide you more fully should you want to focus on natural beauty, sports adventure, music, art, animals, activities just for families or just for couples. Tellumin will help you find the way. No fees, no subscriptions, just exceptional activities, curated especially for you.

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TO GO AND SEE

Raoul Island, the Kermadecs

The top of a live volcano, 1,100 km north-east of Auckland, so far into the subtropics that it holds New Zealand's warmest night on record. It last erupted in 2006. More than six million seabirds breed across the Kermadecs, and since the rats and cats were cleared, red-crowned parakeets have flown back on their own after some 150 years away. You cannot simply go: landing needs a Department of Conservation permit, applied for at least 30 working days ahead, for two single-day visits at Fishing Rock, with no overnight stay. The sea around it is a marine reserve where nothing may be taken.

doc.govt.nz

Queen Charlotte Sound, by boat from Picton

Out on the water among dusky, bottlenose, common and the rare Hector's dolphins, and at times orca, fur seals on the rocks, and gannets, shearwaters and penguins. The boats leave from Picton, close to Tory Channel, where New Zealand's last whale was caught in 1964.

book.marlboroughnz.com

Kaikōura

The name means a meal of crayfish. The seabed drops to around 2,000 metres barely a kilometre from shore, and male sperm whales are seen in every month of the year. Whale Watch Kaikōura was founded in 1989 by Ngāti Kuri, the people of this coast.

kaikoura.co.nz

To swim with a whale, go to Tonga

Tonga is one of the few places in the world where you can swim with whales, and feel their song reverberate right through you, as Vail did. Humpback season is July through October, and this life-changing event will exceed all expectations.

www.handbook.iwc.int

Taiaroa Head, Dunedin

Northern royal albatrosses have nested here since 1919, the only such colony on an inhabited mainland. Below, at Pilots Beach, live kororā, the little blue penguins: the smallest penguins in the world, about 25 cm tall and a kilogram in weight, who come ashore only under cover of darkness.

albatross.org.nz

Nugget Point lighthouse, the Catlins

South of Dunedin, a lighthouse on a headland above a line of sea-worn rocks, ten minutes' walk from the car park on an easy track. Fur seals, royal spoonbills, shags and penguins below, and a sunrise said to rival any in New Zealand.

doc.govt.nz

The South Taranaki Bight

Antarctic blue whales pass through here, north in winter and south again in spring. Pygmy blue whales gather especially from March to May. There were once as many as 200,000 Antarctic blues. About 3,000 are left.

auckland.ac.nz

TO EAT

Bluff oysters, Foveaux Strait

From March to August, you can enjoy some of the best oysters in the whole world, from some of the most pristine waters. These oysters live free, and this is an opportunity not to be missed.

thespinoff.co.nz

50-50, Paraparaumu Beach

A chef's own table by the sea on the Kāpiti Coast. Helen Turnbull writes a menu that never stays still, six or nine courses from New Zealand growers, wild plants foraged nearby among them. In the Michelin Guide selection.

50-50.co.nz

Indian Alley, Wellington

The biryani arrives sealed under its own baked bread lid, broken open at the table so the steam rises to meet you.

indianalley.co.nz

Kai Waho, Tamau Pā

Unlike any other table in the country. A Māori food and wilderness experience on Ngāti Tūwharetoa land, 700 metres up on the rim of the Taupō basin, reached only by air or four-wheel drive. Tom Loughlin is chef, gatherer and kaitiaki at once, cooking traditional kai, hāngī among it, for a few guests at a time.

kaiwaho.co.nz

Nin's Bin, Kaikōura

A roadside caravan where the same family has sold crayfish since 1977. You eat with the sea a few steps away and the mountains behind you.

neatplaces.co.nz

Kaikōura Seafood BBQ

A barbecue by the beach, nothing more and nothing less: whitebait fritters and scallop sandwiches, eaten in the wind.

kaikoura.co.nz

The Pier, Kaikōura

In a hotel that has fed people seafood on this shore since 1885, with the sun going down over the bay.

neatplaces.co.nz

Moiety, Dunedin

The table Dunedin's own food writers keep pointing to.

cuisine.co.nz