

## Tour Aotearoa Photo Check Points

30 photo check in points over 3000 km – to prove you've been there, and as a great photo album after the tour.



### 1. Cape Reinga

The launch point for your tour is celebrated as the northern-most point of the New Zealand mainland (although the Surville Cliffs are technically a bit further north), and is the dramatic meeting point of two great seas, the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean. It has special significance in Māori tīkanga (customs, practice) as the sacred site for wairua (spirits) making the journey to the afterlife – the small tree near the Cape's edge is where the wairua leap into the ocean to travel back to Te Pō, the world of the departed spirits, or to Hawaiki, the ancestral homeland. *In deference to this spiritual importance, we ask that you act with respect at the area and refrain from eating north of the car park.*



## 2. Ninety Mile Beach

Don't be put off by the name – the famed beach that runs southwest of Cape Reinga actually measures only about 55 miles, or 88 kilometres. The beach and the Aupouri Peninsula it is part of formed when silica-rich debris from volcanic eruptions in the North Island's central plateau region was washed by the Tasman Sea and blown northward on the prevailing southwester (yup, 'fraid so). *Take your photo anywhere along the beach.*



## 3. Tane Mahuta

Tane Mahuta translates as “lord of the forest”. It is one of the largest known living kauri in New Zealand, at 51.2 metres tall and with a girth of 13.77 metres and is thought to be over 1,800 years old. Kauri forests once dominated the northern North Island, covering 1.2 million hectares from Coromandel Peninsula northward . The gum of the tree was highly prized by Māori as a fire starter and a medicine. Also, soot from the burnt gum was commonly used in tattooing. Now, kauri face a new threat from a fungus that attacks the trees' roots. *The disease has been discovered as close as 60 metres to Tane Mahuta, so please stay on the marked trails to stop its spread.*



#### 4. Pouto Point

South of the town of Dargaville, the Pouto Peninsula forms the northern entrance to New Zealand's largest harbour – the Kaipara. At one time, the harbour entrance was bustling with ships carrying timber from the region's ancient kauri forests. It holds notoriety for having taken 150 ships who failed to navigate its treacherous shifting sandbars. In fact, a portion of the peninsula has been dubbed "The Graveyard" because of the sheer number of ships that were wrecked there.

*Take your photo at Pouto Point,, where the boat will pick you up.*



#### 5. Mt Eden, Auckland

The 196-metre-high Maungawhau, or Mount Eden, is the highest volcano in Auckland. A 10-minute ride up affords expansive views over New Zealand's largest city. Māori named this crater "Te Ipu-a-Mataaho" (the bowl of Mataaho). This is where Mataaho, God of secrets hidden within the Earth, is said to have lived. When his wife left him and took his clothes with her, the goddess Mahuika brought fires upon the Earth to keep him warm. These fires became the other volcanoes in the Auckland area.

*Take your photo from the summit.*



## 6. Waikato cows

In the past decade, the placid bovine has surpassed the sheep as the icon of New Zealand's economy. The country boasts around 11,400 dairy farms and 4.6 million cows. Waikato runs neck and neck with Southland for the honour of being the country's mecca in dairy farming. *We guarantee you'll have no problems snapping a shot of your bike next to some cows. Any cows will do.* Dairying makes up about a third of the country's exports and is an important part of the economy. However, nitrogen runoff from cow urine has polluted the country's waterways, leaving many unsafe to drink from, fish from, and swim in. In addition to nitrogen runoff, cows also produce methane and nitrous oxide, two harmful greenhouse gases.



## 7. Matamata/Hobbiton i-SITE

Long before it became The Shire, the area around the Waikato township of Matamata passed its days as quiet farmland belonging to the Alexander family. *The Lord of the Rings* director Peter Jackson first happened upon the area during an aerial search for filming locations in 1998. Construction of Hobbiton began in 1999. The movies and follow-on tourism has proved so successful that *even the i-SITE has embraced the look and must now be one of the most interesting in the country – worthy of a visit in its own right!*





## 8. Centre of North Island

The geographical centre of the North Island was first located in 1961 by John Wheeler, a land surveyor from Taupō. A cairn marks the spot with a fantastic explanation of how the point was determined. *Take your photo of the sign or the huge totara tree.*



## 9. Ongarue Spiral, Timber Trail

The Ongarue tram system is one of the least-modified bush tram systems remaining in New Zealand. Up until the late 1940s, such tramlines were the main method of transporting timber out of logging sites, a thriving industry of the day. The Ongarue spiral is an engineering marvel. The tunnel, hand hewn through pumice and ignimbrite rock, completes a fantastic circle that provided a cunning solution to developing a gradient shallow enough for trams loaded with felled trees and now, tired Tour riders! *Take a photo anywhere on, or in, the spiral.*



## 10. Bridge to Nowhere

After the First World War, the New Zealand government opened up land for returned servicemen to develop. The Mangapurua valley settlement was launched in 1916. The Bridge to Nowhere was originally built to connect the small settlement to the Whanganui River, a major transport route. However, the settlement was abandoned in 1942, six years after the opening of the bridge. Slowly, the once settled land was overtaken with native bush, leaving a bridge with nowhere to go.



## 11. Durie Hill elevator lookout, Whanganui

Durie Hill was developed as a suburb of Whanganui in 1910, but initially, the only mode of transport between the township and the hillside suburb was a long set of concrete stairs. Luckily for us, the elevator was built in 1916. A tunnel was drilled 205 metres through the hill itself. The elevator shaft was dug first from the bottom, then from the top and met in the middle, and the lining of 2500 tonnes of reinforced concrete was made off site and then lowered into position.

*The elevator runs weekdays from 7.30am-6pm and weekends from 10am-5pm. It costs \$2 per rider.*





## 12. Totara Reserve, Pohangina Valley

As the name suggests, Totara Reserve is a large forest reserve beside the Pohangina River dominated by ... huge totara. This is a lovely place to camp. It lies 1.6 kilometres off Pohangina Road, and the southern camping site has showers, toilets, BBQs and drinking water but no food for sale. *Just take a photo from the Pohangina Bridge, which is 370 metres from Pohangina Road (left down Churchill Road) if you are in a hurry or stay the night and check out the massive trees and refreshing swimming holes.*



## 13. Eketahuna kiwi

This giant brown kiwi at Eketahuna was adopted from the Mount Bruce Wildlife Sanctuary just up the road, where kiwi are bred. It's coloured white at the moment in honour of a famous white kiwi that was born at the sanctuary in 2011. During national rugby games, the Eketahuna kiwi is turned black. There are plans to move the kiwi 100 metres up the main road to opposite the Four Square supermarket around about the time the tour rolls through town, so you may have to hunt for it.



#### 14. Summit Tunnel on Rimutaka Rail Trail

The Rimutaka Railway became operational in 1877 and ran for 77 years. It used an innovative Fell engine system to carry trains through the mountainous region. The line travels gently uphill on the Upper Hutt side to the Summit Tunnel, the longest of four tunnels at just under 600 metres long.



#### 15. Cook Strait from ferry

Named after our most famous captain, Cook Strait separates the North and South Islands by only 22 kilometres, but the ferries make a 92-kilometre journey, taking 3 to 3½ hours from Wellington to Picton. One intrepid kayaker set out to cross the Strait and spent 18 hours battling tidal rips before finally making landfall – back where he had started.

Two ferries make the strait crossing, the Bluebridge and the Interislander.  
*Take a photo anywhere during your crossing, either inside the ferry or out.*





## 16. Maungatapu Saddle

Maungatapu, meaning “sacred mountain” in Māori, offers a shorter (by 10 kilometres) and quieter alternative to the busy highway between the Tasman and Marlborough regions. However, this is no route for the faint-hearted. Once the gravel road turns from the Pelorus River valley, it deteriorates and steepens, and in the final few kilometres to the saddle, you’ll pay for every metre you climb. Take your photo 735 m saddle with pride, then check your brakes as you head even more steeply down into the Maitai Valley.



## 17. Lake Rotoroa, Nelson Lakes National Park

Lake Rotoroa was formed from glacial carving during the last ice age. The lake is surprisingly warm for swimming in during Feb/March but a magnet for sandflies. You can escape them by going for a swim, but don’t dive headfirst off the jetty as the lake there is quite shallow.

Māori making the long trek to the pounamu trails on the West Coast relied on the lake to stock up on eels, freshwater mussels and waterfowl.



## 18. Maruia Saddle Road

This is one of the most scenic native forest roads in New Zealand and has very little motorised traffic. It is situated in the Matakītāki Valley, behind Murchison. This valley is home to the fabled 'lost tribe' of gold miners who set off into the bush never to return. The Murchison earthquake of 1929 caused massive landslides in the valley and severely damaged farmland. However, the quake did not affect the Horse Terrace Bridge, which is a rare example of a concrete and stone arch bridge completed in 1923. This bridge provides access between the Upper Matakītāki Valley and the picturesque Maruia Saddle Road.

*Take a photo anywhere that takes your fancy along the road.*



## 19. Waiuta Track boardwalk

In November 1905, prospectors struck gold in the Waiuta area. Three years later, the site's first operational mine shaft had been constructed and the town of Waiuta boomed. By the 1930s, Waiuta boasted a population of about 600. However, like many mining towns of its era, its prosperity did not last. In 1951, the town's main mine shaft collapsed so catastrophically that repairing it was not economically feasible. A lack of employment forced the townspeople to abandon the settlement, leaving behind the ghost town that you'll ride through.



## 20. Greymouth Bar

Greymouth, the West Coast's largest city, has one of three ports in the area, and for much of its history, fishing has been a driving economic force. The turbulent waters at the sandbar just off the mouth of the Grey River, have capsized at least 45 boats and claimed several lives. Today, a monument just a few hundred metres off the main Tour Aotearoa route stands overlooking the bar, commemorating the wrecks that it caused as well as other wrecks that have occurred at the West Coast's other two ports, Hokitika and Westport.



## 21. Hokitika Clock Tower

In 1864, Hokitika was founded as a gold mining town. Within two years, it had become the centre for the West Coast gold rush and one of New Zealand's most populated towns. The Hokitika Clock Tower was erected as a memorial to soldiers who fought in the South African War (1899–1902). The tower is renowned for drunkards trying to climb it on New Year's Eve – we suggest you don't follow their example as many have ended up with a night behind bars for disturbing the peace. Instead, try the great café on the corner.





## 22. Lake Ianthe

Lake Ianthe is another beautiful freshwater West Coast lake, hollowed out by glaciers in the last great ice age 14,000 years ago. It is a shallow lake popular for boating, brown trout fishing and swimming. In the early 1900s, a private bush tramway was established to transport logged trees from the Lake Ianthe area to the railway. Sawmilling operations ended in 1959.

There is a lovely jetty beside the road that makes a great spot for a photo.



## 23. Fox Glacier

Descending from the lofty heights of the Southern Alps and terminating at an altitude of just 300 metres above sea level, the 13-kilometer-long Fox Glacier is one of a select few that end surrounded by thick rain forest. Geologists believe that it once extended beyond New Zealand's current west shore, as several glacier walls, or moraines, can be seen between the coast and the glacier's current terminus. Fox Glacier has retreated significantly in recent years due to climate change. In fact, most of New Zealand's glaciers are retreating fast making access for mountaineers more and more difficult. *So make the most of this opportunity and take a photo from the car park, or walk up the valley to get a better view.*



## 24. Knights Point lookout

Knight's Point rose to significance in the 1950s during an era of rapid infrastructural development in New Zealand. The scenic lookout served as the meeting point for two road building crews from the Ministry of Works, one working from the east coast across Haast Pass, and another working along the West Coast. When officials from the then Ministry of Works journeyed down from Wellington hoping to name the meeting point after a high ranking ministry official, they found that it had already been christened Knight's Point after the original surveyor's dog. The final section of this highway was opened in 1965.



## 25. Haast Pass

From Haast township, you will follow part of the route taken by prospector AP Harper. In 1900, Harper rode his bicycle down the West Coast in search of gold, becoming the first person to cycle that area in the process. Hoping to shorten his trip back to Lake Wanaka, Harper carried his bike over the then roadless Haast Pass. As you plod up to the pass on the sealed highway, you might take comfort in knowing that, Harper found this feat so difficult that he later published a newspaper article urging others not to attempt it. Today, it is one of just three points where a road crosses the divide created by the Southern Alps.





## 26. Hawea River Track Bridge

Long before any humans inhabited New Zealand, the Hawea area was covered by a massive lake that stretched from the current Nevis valley to Lake Hawea, the Lindis and across to St Bathans. Later, uplift drained the lake and still later glacial work scoured out the basins for lakes Wanaka and Hawea. The Hawea River takes its name from the early inhabitants of the area – the Hawea hapu/subtribe to the Waitaha. While unconfirmed, some suggest that ‘haweā’ means ‘doubt’ or ‘disbelief’ and relates to the dilemma faced by Waitaha leader, Rakaihautu in deciding on a direction to travel – not something that you will have any problems with by this stage of the Tour. The Hawea River Track began construction in 2008. There is a lookout and seat just to the right as you approach the bridge.



## 27. Cardrona Hotel, Crown Range

In 1863, throngs of hopeful prospectors flocked to Cardrona in search of gold, increasing the population of the area by 400 percent. Today, the newly-renovated Cardrona Hotel stands as a reminder of that distant era, showing off the very same facade as it did over 150 years ago when Cardrona was occupied by several thousand prospectors. Special care has been taken to maintain the historic artefacts inside the hotel in order to preserve its status as a heritage listed building, and it is thought to be one of New Zealand’s most photographed pubs.

Go to town with this photo!





## 28. Queenstown

Sitting on the windswept shores of Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown is New Zealand's mecca for adventure tourism and receives over 2 million tourists every year. It tends to be a bit crowded during the summer season, which might make finding a bed difficult.

Take a photo of whatever you want in Queenstown – something to remind you of just how crazy the place is!



## 29. A Southland local (ie, café/pub owner)

Maori chiefs Rakaihautu and Tamatea first arrived in Murihiku – or ‘the tail end’, as they called the Southland region, around 1,000 years ago. The Takitimu Mountains are said to be the upturned hull of Tamatea's waka, which was wrecked in Te Waewae Bay. The region proved a harsh environment, but still it attracted first moa hunters, then sealers, whalers and finally farmers. It was the ‘white boom’ of first sheep and then dairy that has really consolidated the essence of this region, with other claims to fame including Burt Munro, who set world motorcycle speed records on his Indian motorcycle in the 1960s and 70s, and the famed Southland cheese rolls – go to any café and you'll find them on the menu. *Meet a random local (try in a café or pub) and ask to take a photo of them.*



### 30. Stirling Point, Bluff Signpost

Stirling Point, the final destination for this ride, was named after Captain William Stirling, an early settler who established one of the first whaling stations in the Bluff area in 1836. The point, famous for its signpost and spectacular tracks, such as the Foveaux Walkway around its perimeter, marks the southern terminus of State Highway 1 and your Tour.

*A photo of the yellow Stirling Point signs has long been mandatory for travelling cyclists.*

*Well done, you've just finished the ride of your life.*

**Please load your photos onto the Tour Aotearoa Mapprogress website, or send them to us at [info@kennett.co.nz](mailto:info@kennett.co.nz)**