

One thing to bear in mind is that many things rely on weather conditions or tides being right to really enjoy—make sure you plan for this, and always have a plan B.

<http://www.newzealand.com/us/travel-times-and-distances-calculator/>

Tide tables at niwa.co.nz/services/...tide-forecaster

Sunrise and Sunset times <http://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/>

- Abel Tasman sea kayaking, amazing beaches, walks, swimming with seals, skydiving – close, but not sure how close, maybe 1 hr?
 - Abel Tasman North (less commercial; penguins? Rocks) - <http://nzfrenzyouth.wordpress.com/a7/>
- Cable Bay beach and Glen beach, Nelson
- Wineries
 - static.wineart.co.nz/gems/NelsonWineMap.pdf
 - Kahurangi Estates and Neudorf as having great wine and a fantastic cellar door ambiance.
- Skydive Abel Tasman (near Nelson) –
 - https://www.google.com/search?q=taieri+gorge+railway&espv=210&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=-BBXU_qaN4qtsQTyqIH4BQ&ved=0CAgQ_AUoAQ&biw=1600&bih=775#q=skydive+abel+tasman&tbm=isch&imgdii=
 - <http://www.skydive.co.nz/>
 - http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g737062-d1894076-Reviews-Skydive_Abel_Tasman-Motueka_Nelson_Tasman_Region_South_Island.html
- Abel Tasman National Park (sea kayaking, swimming with seals, skydiving) –
 - https://www.google.com/search?q=punakaiki+coast&espv=210&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=jcJVU76PF83LsQSfg4KIAg&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775#q=abel+tasman+national+park&tbm=isch
- **Scenic drives from Nelson**
 - <http://www.newzealand.com/us/article/top-steer-driving-holidays-in-the-top-of-the-south-island-1/>
 - <http://www.newzealand.com/us/article/over-the-marble-mountain-to-shangri-la-golden-bay/>
 - <http://www.newzealand.com/us/article/things-to-see-and-do-in-golden-bay/>
 - Elaine Bay/French Pass - <http://nzfrenzyouth.wordpress.com/elaine-bay-tracks-a19/>,
- Punakaiki cool beaches, pancake rocks, etc. – almost 4 hr drive from Nelson (book says only worth it at high tide & TripAdvisor peeps say even then not usually great)
 - Truman Track Beach right next to it but only at low tide
(https://www.google.com/search?q=truman+track+beach&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=m-5_U6iNPLCisATTtYCYBA&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775)
 - https://www.google.com/search?q=punakaiki+coast&espv=210&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=jcJVU76PF83LsQSfg4KIAg&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775
- Kaikoura (swimming with seals, whale watching, road to/from is supposed to be amazing on coast, etc.) – only 3-3.5 hr drive from Nelson
 - https://www.google.com/search?q=kaikoura+nz&espv=2&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=-au5U8HUBOap8QGkzoHACA&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775
 - Ohau Point, 15-min drive from Kaikoura – baby fur seals & a waterfall! Many people on TA rated as best thing of their trip –

- https://www.google.com/search?q=ohau+point+seal+pups&espv=2&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=F6y5U6P5MoSp8QHgqoCwDQ&ved=0CAYQ_AUoAQ&biw=1600&bih=775
- Cape Farewell – 3 hr drive, great scenery (<http://nzfrenzysouth.wordpress.com/a2-2/>);
- Wharariki Beach (moody, caves, giant rock things, baby seals, awesome beach <http://nzfrenzysouth.wordpress.com/a1/>)
- Paturau Beach – 3 hrs, quite obscure (https://www.google.com/search?q=paturau+beach+nz&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=uQZ8U--mAbffsAS--oClCg&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775, <http://nzfrenzysouth.wordpress.com/putarau-beach-a8/>)
- Golden Bay beautiful beaches, sea kayaking, Chetwood Forest Takaka Hill (from LOTR) – 2-3 hrs
 - https://www.google.com/search?q=punakaiki+coast&espv=210&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=jcJVU76PF83LsQSfg4KIaG&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775#q=golden+bay+new+zealand&tbm=isch&imgdii=
 - https://www.google.com/search?q=punakaiki+coast&espv=210&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=jcJVU76PF83LsQSfg4KIaG&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775#q=chetwood+forest+nz&tbm=isch&imgdii=
- Cape Foulwind Beach (3.5 hrs from Nelson, low tide only) –
 - <http://nzfrenzysouth.wordpress.com/c6/>
- Motukiekie Beach (amazing, only accessible at low tide, colorful starfish, cool rocks; a little under 4 hours from Nelson, but maybe possible to see on way up?) –
 - <http://nzfrenzysouth.wordpress.com/c11/> ; https://www.google.com/search?q=motukiekie+beach&es_sm=93&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=BU8TDHoTJsQSzuIDYcG&ved=0CAkQ_AUoAg&biw=1600&bih=775
- Hokitika Gorge (crazy turquoise water, suspension bridge; nothing else really close by though, so only if on the way? Almost 5 hrs from Nelson) - <http://nzfrenzysouth.wordpress.com/d1/>

More on Abel Tasman National Park

Abel Tasman - In summer the daylight hours are so much longer so you can do so much more. However, one of my favourites for a summer day outing is to get the water taxi to Onetahuti beach. Kayak to bark bay, via tonga islands and the seals. In winter I would suggest then walking to Torrent and boat back. For fit active people like yourselves I would suggest In Summer That you kayak all the way to Anchorage and then walking back in the evening.

I can honestly tell you that no one-day walk does all the "best bits". You have to stay overnight and do the track for that. Each bit is so different. However, the least interesting part of the track is the far southern start of the track in [Marahau](#). the further you get into the park the less populated it is. And there are way less recreational boats past Anchorage.

However, watering cove, te pukatea, little tonga, mutton cove all rate as amongst my favourite spots and they are dotted throughout the park. then again, if you are at te pukatea with the beach totally full of kayaks its not a great place to be. From Anchorage to Torrent the walk is quicker at low tide. Cross the Awaroa Estuary can only be accessed at low tide or hour or two either side of low tide.

My suggestion - check out the Abel Tasman Aquataxis boat and kayak trip if you want to go from Marahau. - <http://aquataxi.co.nz/> (need to look at reviews & options)

Some random things that may be helpful...

- McDonalds & a lot of cafes have Wifi
- Airport/flying stuff

- Carryon weight limits are much less than in US, often 7kg (15 lbs) or less. Check with carrier. I saw them weigh any carryon with wheels, even small ones.
- Clean ALL dirt off shoes and equipment before your arrival to NZ to comply with their biosecurity regulations.
- Take a stiff brush to your boots and any other footwear to ensure it is free of all dirt/mud/seeds, especially in the treads.
- Also don't bring any food into the country. Not even processed wrapped stuff (candy is ok). If you are unsure about anything declare it on your arrival card and in person. it will be checked and if not allowed it will be confiscated but you won't be fined.
- All luggage is x-rayed on arrival plus they have dogs sniffing everything. My sister had forgotten a tiny honey sachet from the hotel in her carry-on. It cost her a \$300 instant fine, and that was a number of years ago, the fines have risen since.
- **Rental Cars & Driving**
 - www.campermate.co.nz/visiting-new-zealand
 - Insurance is always included in the price but you can buy extra coverage to reduce the deductible. If you purchase your own insurance, glass coverage (for rocks and breakins) is usually extra. Also read your credit card's policies if depending on coverage through them. You usually have to reject additional coverage and some limit the length of rental.
 - An important question to ask ANY rental place car or can is- what happens in a breakdown situation? If they don't have enough offices around the country you run the risk of spending a full week of your valuable holiday
 - Differences in driving in NZ ...govt.nz/resources/whats-diff-driving-nz/wha...
 - Cars wipers, lights, turn signal radio dials are reversed too
 - Be careful of lane markings. They use white dashed lines to divide traffic going in OPPOSITE directions. In the US white dashed lines divide traffic going in the same direction. Since almost all roads on the South Island were only 2 lane, just assume any lane marking separates traffic going in opposite directions. If the road is really narrow, they just remove the lane markings altogether and you are on your own.
 - One lane bridges- the first vehicle to the bridge does not have right of way. There are signs both ends of the bridge that say who gives way. A red bordered circle with a small arrow pointed in your direction and a "Give Way" sign shows you must give way. A blue rectangle with a large arrow pointing your direction shows you have right of way. If you need to give way and you see a car approaching you sit and wait for as many cars as there are.
 - **No left on red.**
 - Fill up before leaving a large town. Many towns don't have gas or have very limited hours.
 - All the iSites will have free local maps.
- Paying for things
 - There really isn't tipping at restaurants
 - You don't usually wait for the bill, just go up to the register and pay
 - Prices marked include 15% GST most of the time (sales tax, like VAT?)
- Sun is super strong, though doesn't feel as hot, so be super careful about sunburn
- Even if you're not a drinker, it's fun to visit the pubs. We found the Kiwis (the locals) incredibly friendly and hospitable. If you're on a budget, you can get cheap meals there at lunch time or Happy Hour.