



Pen-y-bryn

L O D G E

*The Pen-y-bryn Guide*  
to Ōamaru and  
the Waitaki District





# The Pen-y-bryn Guide to Ōamaru and the Waitaki District

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## THE PEN-Y-BRYN GUIDE TO ŌAMARU AND THE WAITAKI DISTRICT

Ōamaru and the surrounding Waitaki District have been growing in popularity over the past decade or so, with more and more visitors coming to experience our little section of the South Island from all over New Zealand and from around the world. To help visitors (and new inhabitants) find their way around and make the most of their time here, we thought we'd put together this guide that reflects some of our favourite spots, tells you how to enjoy them to maximum effect, and offers tips to help you get around. Of course, this is a 100% subjective guide, and our opinions will almost certainly differ from other people's, and possibly from your own, so do feel free to let us know if your experience is markedly different or if you have found something that we have omitted!

This guide is broken down as follows: first, we have divided things into the district's three main sub-regions: Ōamaru and the surrounding area, Coastal Waitaki, and the Waitaki Valley. Within these, we have organised our recommendations into several categories: Food and Drink, Shopping, and Things to Do.

### ŌAMARU AND SURROUNDING AREA



Ōamaru is the main town of the Waitaki District, and home to approximately 13,000 people (and growing!). Located three hours south of Christchurch, and approximately 75 minutes north of Dunedin, it is very much at the crossroads of the middle part of the South Island. The town received its charter in 1863 and grew rapidly in the late 1800s, becoming the most heavily mortgaged town in the Southern Hemisphere, with the most banks of anywhere in the hemisphere, along with the tallest building and the most brothels. It was here that New Zealand's meat exporting industry was born, and the tremendous wealth and importance of the town nearly saw it designated the capital of the colony. Unfortunately, the limitations of the port and the expense of keeping it dredged from the silt of the Waitaki River led to the removal of the port to Dunedin and the decision to locate the capital in Wellington, leading to the decline of the town's economy.

### FOOD AND DRINK

Ōamaru's soils are famously rich and productive, and cooks around New Zealand seek out Ōamaru-raised produce, especially the famed Jersey Benne potatoes. For a small town we have more than our fair share of excellent restaurants, perhaps because of the quality of our produce.

#### RESTAURANTS AND PUBS

**BANGKOK RECIPE**, 220 Thames Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 6245. Open 11:30am to 2:30pm and 5pm to 9pm daily. [www.bangkokrecipe.co.nz](http://www.bangkokrecipe.co.nz) You might not expect authentic Thai cuisine in a small South Island town, but you can find it here, along with cocktails and local beers and wines.

**CUCINA**, 1 Tees Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 5696. Open 5pm to 9pm Tuesday to Saturday. [www.cucinaoamaru.co.nz](http://www.cucinaoamaru.co.nz) Located in a prime location in Ōamaru's historic precinct, the beauty of the location is matched by Chef-Owner Pablo Tacchini's exquisite cuisine. A multiple award-winning chef, Pablo takes his Argentine-Italian culinary skills and blends them with exquisite Kiwi produce to present a taste sensation.

**THE CRITERION**, 3 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 6247. Opening hours 11am to 9pm daily. [www.facebook.com/thecriterionhotel](https://www.facebook.com/thecriterionhotel) One of Ōamaru's most distinctive landmarks, the Cri' (as locals call it) a menu focused on traditional English-style pub dishes, along with local wines, beers and spirits.



**DEL MAR**, 2 Waterfront Road, Oamaru (03) 434 0455. Hours 11am to late Thursday through Monday. [www.delmar.nz](http://www.delmar.nz) Opening in December 2020, this will be the second restaurant owned by the owners of Cucina (who also own Tees Street Café). Aimed to be a family-friendly restaurant featuring fish and seafood (along with other non-fishy dishes), this is sure to be another very popular option when it opens.

**FAT SALLY'S PUB**, 84 Thames Street, Oamaru (03) 434 8368. Open Tuesday to Sunday 11:30am to late, Monday 5pm to late. [www.fatsallys.co.nz](http://www.fatsallys.co.nz) Located in a former bank building, the pub is a popular spot in the evenings, especially on quiz night (normally a Wednesday).

**FORT ENFIELD TAVERN**, 625 Weston-Ngapara Road, Weston (03) 432 4118. Open 10am to late Wednesday to Sunday, 4pm to 10pm Monday. Country pub offering lunch and dinners.

**INDIAN AND NEPALESE KITCHEN**, 360a Thames Highway, Oamaru (03) 437 1414. Open for lunch and dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Very popular Indian restaurant in Oamaru's North End, serving traditional North Indian dishes.

**THE LAST POST**, 12 Thames Street, Oamaru (03) 434 8080. Housed in the town's original post office building (built in 1864), this has been a popular restaurant since 1992, offering a varied menu of traditional pub-style dishes in a very friendly atmosphere.

**RIVERSTONE KITCHEN**, 1431 Glenavy-Hildertorpe Road (SH1), (03) 431-3505. Open for breakfast and lunch Monday through Sunday, 9am to 5pm; open for dinner Friday and Saturday, 6pm until late. [www.riverstonekitchen.co.nz](http://www.riverstonekitchen.co.nz) Easily one of our favourite restaurants in New Zealand, Riverstone Kitchen is located about 15 minutes' drive north of Oamaru, just south of the Waitaki River. Led by Chef-Owner Bevan Smith, Riverstone has won many awards for its innovative cuisine, reflecting Bevan's extensive travels and his experience working overseas.

**SCOTT'S BREWING COMPANY**, 1 Wansbeck Street, Oamaru (03) 434 2244. [www.scottsbrewing.co.nz](http://www.scottsbrewing.co.nz) The first brewery to open in Oamaru since the town went dry in 1905, Scott's has become a true local landmark in the short time it has been open (since 2014), producing an exceptional range of craft beers (including NZ's first gluten-free beers) that they supplement with "guest" beers from around the country. Food options include very good pizzas, and, in good weather, barbecued ribs.

**STAR AND GARTER**, 9 Iichen Street, Oamaru (03) 434 5246. Open 11am to 8pm Sunday to Thursday, to 8:30pm Friday and Saturday. Oamaru Popular with Oamaruvians for decades, and the site of many a local's wedding celebrations, as evidenced by the walls covered in photographs from the countless wedding meals served here, the Star and Garter is one of NZ's oldest restaurants in continuous operation, serving a range of traditional Kiwi delights, from fish and chips to lamb's fry and the famed "Colonial goose".

**STATION WOK**, 43a Humber Street, Oamaru (03) 434 7010. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Located in Oamaru's historic railway station, Station Wok offers a buffet that is fairly standard fare, but their à la carte menu offers a surprisingly authentic taste of China with a focus on dishes from the chef's home province of Sichuan.



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## CAFÉS

**BADGER AND MACKEREL**, 175 Thames Street, Ōamaru (027) 521 3939. Open 7am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 3pm Saturday. Café with a good range of food options, including gluten-free and vegan options.

**THE GALLEY**, 1 Esplanade, Ōamaru (03) 434 0475. Open 9am to 4pm daily. Ōamaru Prime location right next to Friendly Bay at the bottom of Wansbeck Street in Ōamaru, adjacent to the Steampunk playground (which inspired the décor), The Galley serves breakfast and lunch items with a beautiful view of the water.

**HARBOUR STREET COLLECTIVE**, 8 Harbour Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 3246. Open Monday to Wednesday 7am to 4pm, Thursday 7am to 6pm, Friday 7am to 8:30pm Saturday 8:30am to 8:30pm and Sunday 8:30am to 6pm. Located on Ōamaru's historic Harbour Street, in the heart of the Victorian Precinct, the Harbour Street Collective is a café that serves a range of traditional café foods, along with excellent coffee, but they are also home to Midori Sushi Bar and Restaurant, serving lunch 11am to 2:30pm and dinner 5pm to 8:30pm.

**ŌAMARU OPERA HOUSE CAFÉ & BAR**, 90 Thames Street, Ōamaru (027) 468 2462. Open 8:30am to 2:30pm Monday to Friday, and for one hour before each show on the main stage. The range of delectable treats, light meals and coffee have made it one of Ōamaru's favourite places to meet. The Café & Bar also features a great selection of New Zealand wines and boutique beers.

**STEAM CAFÉ**, 7 Thames Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 3344. Open Monday to Saturday 7am to 4pm, Sunday 8am to 3pm. Steam has an enviable location on Thames Street opposite the Waitaki District Council and is notable for roasting their own beans and making their own croissants. Friendly welcome and excellent coffee make it a very popular spot with locals and visitors alike.

**TASTE CAFE**, 19 Thames Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 8827. Open 7am to 4pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 3pm Saturday. A cosy café in the heart of Ōamaru with good coffee, breakfast and lunch items, and sweet treats.

**TEES STREET CAFÉ**, 3 Tees Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 5696. [www.teesstcafe.com](http://www.teesstcafe.com) Open Monday to Friday 7am to 3pm, Saturday and Sunday 8:30am to 3pm. Kitchen closes 2pm. Co-located with Cucina, Tees Street Café offers a delightful range of breakfast and lunch items that run the gamut from the usual (muesli, eggs and baked goods) to the unexpected (huevos rancheros, sticky pork bao buns and house-made chorizo), all prepared under the guidance of Chef Pablo.

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## OTHER

**CRAFTWORK**, Harbour Street, Ōamaru (0210) 226 3007. Open 2pm to 7pm Friday to Sunday. [www.craftworkbrewery.co.nz](http://www.craftworkbrewery.co.nz) The second craft brewery to open in Ōamaru in 2014, Craftwork specialises in Belgian-style beers, all with clever names that reflect the sense of humour of brewer-owners Michael and Lee-Ann. While the beers can be found in many spots around Ōamaru and around the country, there is no better place to enjoy them than at their Belgian style tap room in the Historic Precinct, where you can drink your beer alongside a platter of New Zealand cheeses.

**DÉJÀ MOO**, 4 Harbour Street, Ōamaru. Open 10am to 4pm Tuesday to Saturday. Ice cream parlour selling a range of homemade ice creams in an ever-changing range of flavours.

**HARBOUR STREET BAKERY**, 4 Harbour Street, Ōamaru. Open TBD. Traditional European and New Zealand handcrafted baked goods. Their pies are excellent.



**RIVERSTONE LARDER**, 2 Harbour Street, Oamaru, (03) 434 5949. Open 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and 11am to 1pm Saturday. [www.facebook.com/riverstonelarder](https://www.facebook.com/riverstonelarder) The popularity of Riverstone Kitchen, combined with its distance from the main population centre of Ōamaru, led them to open this outpost of the restaurant in the Ōamaru Victorian Precinct where you can pick up the lunch of the day (announced daily through their Facebook page), along with a wealth of cooking supplies and ingredients, and a sampling of baked and other treats from Riverstone Kitchen.

**WHITESTONE CHEESE**, 3 Torridge Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 0182. Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Weekends 10am to 4pm. [www.whitestonecheese.com](http://www.whitestonecheese.com) Perhaps the most famous food-related business in Ōamaru, Whitestone Cheese has been in business for more than 25 years making European-style cheeses that have won more international prizes than any New Zealand cheese maker. With a range of cheeses named for local landmarks, their Windsor Blue and Lindis Pass Brie-style cheese are among our favourites, but there are many others to choose from, too, in their delightful tasting room. Tours of the factory are offered at 10am and 11:45am, Monday to Friday.

## SHOPPING

**ARCANUM** 9 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (027) 424 6998. Open 10am to 6pm Tuesday to Sunday. Arcanum is a new shop in the Historic Precinct focusing on the nice market of Victorian/Edwardian paranormal, occult and magical curiosities.

**ART ON TYNE**, 8 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (027) 644 5462. Open 10am to 4pm daily. A funky wee Art Gallery & Exhibition Space right in the Heart of Ōamaru's beautiful Victorian Precinct. Proudly Stocking only New Zealand Made & Created.

**ARTHUR'S ANTIQUES** 360 Thames Highway, Ōamaru (03) 437 0053. Open daily from 10am. Large selection of antiques, collectables, architectural hardware and other interesting items. Restoration services also available.

**CRAFTED**, 3 Harbour Street, Ōamaru (027) 465 5149. Open 10am to 4pm daily. [www.craftedoamaru.nz](http://www.craftedoamaru.nz) A Waitaki Artisan Gallery, featuring works by local artisans who create quality wares using traditional skills and contemporary style and design.

**DESIGN FEDERATION**, 34 Thames Street, Ōamaru (021) 801 847. Open 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday. [www.designfederation.co.nz](http://www.designfederation.co.nz) Award winning interior design studio based in Ōamaru, North Otago specialising in residential and commercial interior design, including range of homewares, furniture and furnishings, drapes, blinds, lighting and decor.

**DONNA DEMENTE'S GRAINSTORE GALLERY**, 5 Harbour Street, Ōamaru (027) 366 6201. Hours vary. The Grain store Gallery is quite unlike any other you will find anywhere, a simply astonishing array of original artworks amidst an extraordinarily magnificent ambience, best experienced live and consumed fresh!

**THE FLYING PENGUIN**, 2 Itchen Street, Ōamaru. An eclectic shop selling a range of old-style toys and games in the historic precinct of Ōamaru.

**HOUSEKEEPER'S DESIGN**, 18 Harbour Street, Oamaru (03) 434 2550. Open 9:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday; 10am to 4pm Saturday; 10am to 3pm Sunday. [www.housekeepersdesign.nz](http://www.housekeepersdesign.nz) Dedicated to supplying exciting products and design brands to warm the heart of your home.

**IAN ANDERSEN SCULPTOR**, 15 Tyne Street, Oamaru. Internationally renowned limestone sculptor, producing a range of sculptures made with the iconic Ōamaru whitestone. Shipping is available.

**MICHAEL O'BRIEN BOOKBINDER**, 7 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 9277. Opening hours vary. [www.bookbinder.co.nz](http://www.bookbinder.co.nz) Book restoration, blank books, prepared by hand and of impeccable quality. Michael is also one of the owners of Craftwork Brewery.



**MISS PURPLE'S STUDIO REALM**, 9 Harbour Street, Ōamaru. Studio on site with handcrafted art, both wearable and not, by NZ artisans.

**NANNA BANGLES**, 4b Harbour Street, Ōamaru. Hours vary. A retail store that caters for locals and tourists. A mash-up of old and new, each item has been selected individually.

**THE ŌAMARU TEXTILE EXCHANGE (TOTE)**, 13 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 2219. Open 10am to 4pm Thursday through Sunday. Textile products made by local artisans, housed in the Historic Precinct of Ōamaru.

**ŌAMARU FARMER'S MARKET**, Corner of Wansbeck Street and Tyne Street, Ōamaru. Sundays 9:30am to 1pm. Weekly market for local food producers, including fresh produce, breads, jams, and more. Buskers perform regularly.

**OASIS**, 8-12 Tees Street, Ōamaru (029) 283 7882. Open 10:30am to 4:30pm daily. [www.oasisnz.com](http://www.oasisnz.com) Ever-changing stock of international antique furniture and ephemera with a substantial stock of New Zealand vintage photography and books.

**PRESENCE ON HARBOUR**, 1 Harbour Street, Ōamaru (0274) 395 170. Open daily 10am to 4pm. [www.presenceonharbour.co.nz](http://www.presenceonharbour.co.nz) The place to go for NZ-made and NZ-designed gifts and souvenirs, including high-quality merino possum knitwear, kiwiana and Ōamaru-centric memorabilia.

**RAINBOW CONFECTIONERY** 459 Thames Highway, Ōamaru. (03) 437 1847. Open 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday. 9am to 4pm Saturday. Established in 1884, this is the largest confectionery manufacturer in New Zealand, and the originator of the famed Pineapple Chunks. Factory store sells the complete assortment of iconic confectionery.

**REGALIA'S TIMEPIECES**, 9 Harbour Street, Ōamaru. Hours vary. Garments and jewellery that stand the test of time, with a Steampunk or Neo-Victorian theme.

**ROSE'S GENERAL STORE AND INFORMATION**, 5 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (021) 515 205. Open 9:30am to 5:30pm daily (10am to 4pm during winter). [www.rosesoamaru.co.nz](http://www.rosesoamaru.co.nz) Rose's General Store and Information is one of those quirky little stores where you never know what you will find. An old-fashioned store filled with products from NZ, some from further afield and local information. Rawleigh's independent distributor, stockist of haberdashery, confectionery, local preserves and regional honey and peanut butter, eco-friendly items and penny farthing and cycle supplies.

**SILICA GALLERY**, 12 Harbour Street, Ōamaru (022) 633 5002. Art gallery for local artists specialising in glass, ceramic and beadwork art.

**SLIGHTLY FOXED SECONDHAND BOOKS**, 11 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 2155. Open 10am to 4pm daily. Ōamaru institution selling second-hand books in all categories.

**TAYLOR MADE**, 9 Tyne Street, Ōamaru (027) 246 1456. Locally made Ōamaru limestone sculptures made by Sandy Taylor. Also stocks waistcoats, and Steampunk hats and accessories.

**WILLIAM BEE GENERAL MERCHANTS**, 1 Itchen Street, Ōamaru (03) 434 9924. Open 9:30am to 5pm daily. [www.williambee.co.nz](http://www.williambee.co.nz) A modern store in an historic storefront, selling a range of NZ giftware and brands, fashion, and Moke Apparel outerwear.



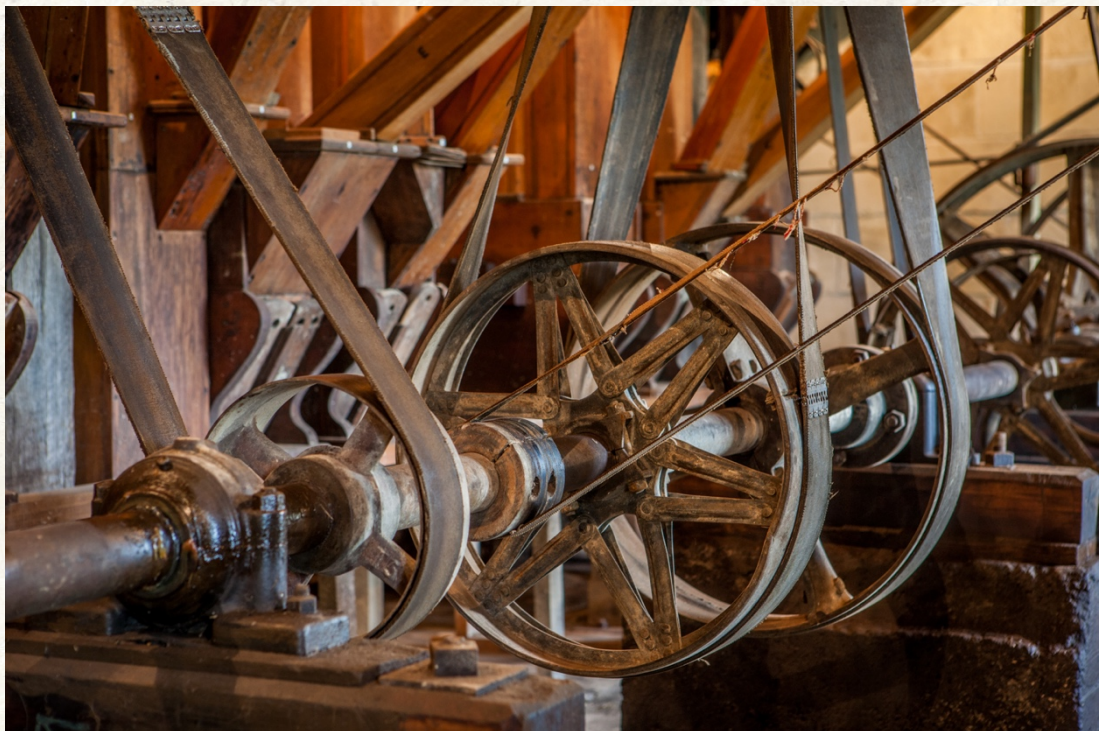
## THINGS TO DO

### BEACHES

Though the ocean water can be chilly at this latitude, there are some beautiful beaches in the Ōamaru area. In Ōamaru itself there is Friendly Bay, located just in front of the Galley Café. Here the water is shallower (and thus warmer) and perfect for visiting with children, who would also enjoy the nearby Steampunk Playground. A bit south, between Ōamaru and Kakanui, is the stunning “14s” Beach, named after the nearby 14<sup>th</sup> hole of the North Otago Golf Course. Ideal for a walk or for a swim, you’ll also see surfers plying the waves. Kakanui itself is home to several beaches, which are very popular in the summer.



### CLARKS MILL



An important part of the local industrial history, Clarks Mill is the only surviving working water-powered flour mill in NZ, with its original machinery largely intact. The machinery is maintained by local volunteers who regularly get it all grinding into action.



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## FORRESTER GALLERY

The Forrester Gallery is an art and exhibition gallery housed in a former bank building on Ōamaru's main street. The exhibits rotate regularly and usually include temporary exhibitions by a wide range of artists from far and wide. It's worth a visit just to gape at the incredible architecture in this beautiful Victorian building. <http://www.culturewaitaki.org.nz/forrester-gallery>

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## GOLF

There are several golf courses in the Ōamaru area, so if you're keen to get out on the links you're sure to find a spot with an available tee time. The [North Otago Golf Club](#) is just outside of town on the Pacific Coast, while the [Lower Waitaki Golf Club](#) is north of town. There are several other clubs dotted around the area, as well.

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## JANET FRAME HOUSE

The former Ōamaru home of one of New Zealand's most famed writers at 56 Eden Street is open for visitors seasonally.

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## ŌAMARU BLUE PENGUIN COLONY



For many people, Ōamaru is synonymous with penguins. The blue penguins that nest all along the coast in this part of New Zealand are the world's smallest penguin species, standing just about 250 centimetres tall. While they spend most of the time out to sea, many of them return to their land-based nests in the evenings, with as many as 300 coming in at the Ōamaru Blue Penguin

Colony after dusk. Viewing time changes throughout the year, ranging from 5:30pm in the winter to 9:30pm in the summer. Visit [www.penguins.co.nz](http://www.penguins.co.nz) for timings, and to book tickets.

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## ŌAMARU HISTORIC PRECINCT WALKING TOUR

Join a knowledgeable local guide for a 60-90-minute tour of Ōamaru's Victorian centre, one of the best-preserved historic streetscapes in New Zealand. Learn the fascinating history of how Ōamaru became the birthplace of New Zealand's meat-exporting industry and nearly became the "New York of the South Seas".

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## ŌAMARU OBSERVATORY

A volunteer group of amateur astronomers maintains the Ōamaru observatory, which is open during favourable conditions for visitors to take in a view through the telescopes of the stars, planets and other celestial objects. Gold coin donation.



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## ŌAMARU OPERA HOUSE

Ōamaru's opera house was built in 1905 and is one of seven opera houses in New Zealand. Fully renovated in the early 2000s, the opera house is now a true jewel, hosting regular performances from around NZ and around the world, as well as having a popular café in the main foyer.

[www.oamaruoperahouse.co.nz](http://www.oamaruoperahouse.co.nz)

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## ŌAMARU PUBLIC GARDENS

Considered one of New Zealand's finest public gardens, the Ōamaru Public Gardens were established in the late 1800s and feature numerous planting areas, aviaries, ponds and other features that make for a beautiful space to stroll through or to enjoy a picnic. <https://www.gardens.org.nz/waitaki-gardens/Ōamaru-public-gardens/>

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## ŌAMARU STEAM AND RAIL

The Ōamaru Steam and Rail Society restore and maintain a number of historic railroad engines and passenger cars that regularly ply the rails between the Harbourside Station in the centre of town and the penguin colony. <http://www.Ōamaru-steam.org.nz>

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## ŌAMARU VICTORIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS



Each November Ōamaru hosts a celebration of the town's Victorian past, with an ever-changing theme, culminating in a Victorian-era street festival. [www.vhc.co.nz](http://www.vhc.co.nz)

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## WHITESTONE CITY

Whitestone City is a re-creation of old Ōamaru in one of the historic precinct's warehouse buildings. Beautifully restored and filled with artifacts from Ōamaru's heyday in the late 19th Century, Whitestone City offers a glimpse into what made Ōamaru one of the boomtowns of the late Victorian era.

[www.whitestonecity.co.nz](http://www.whitestonecity.co.nz)



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## PENGUIN ENTERTAINERS CLUB

The Penguin Entertainers Club is a small venue in an alley between Harbour Street and the Esplanade in the Historic Precinct of Ōamaru that hosts musical acts, both local and from around the country (and around the world). Jam nights are held at 8pm on every 2<sup>nd</sup> and last Friday of the month.

<https://www.facebook.com/thepenguinclub/>

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## ROD TEMPERO MOTOR BODY BUILDER



It might be a surprise to find out that there is a car factory just outside of Ōamaru, but it's true. Rod Tempero is a fourth-generation motor car builder, who restores and replicates classic racing cars of the 1950s and 1960s in a repurposed chicken shed south of town. If you don't have the cash to take one home, you are still welcome to come and see the process, which is done all by hand. [www.rodtempero.com](http://www.rodtempero.com)

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## SKYLINE WALK

A 4.5km (one way) walk in Ōamaru that starts at Fenwick Park and proceeds uphill through the pine trees and native forest to see countless birds and take in a bird's eye view of Ōamaru and the sea beyond.

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## SOUTH HILL WALK

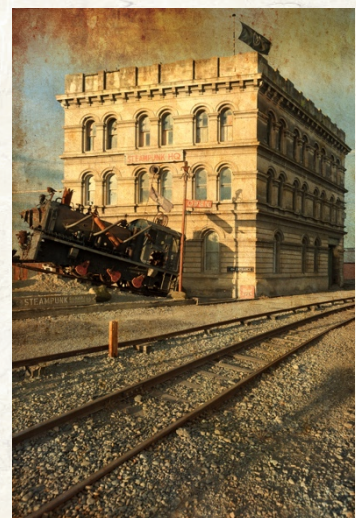
This walking track takes in Ōamaru's historic precinct with an optional detour out to Cape Wanbrow overlooking the blue penguin colony. The views from Lookout Point over the town and out to the Kakanui Ranges are spectacular.

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## STEAMPUNK HQ

Ōamaru's Victorian heritage made it the perfect base for a nascent Steampunk movement—which is best described as “Victorian retro-futurism”. Steampunk HQ is housed in the former Meek's Elevator building, which at one time was the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere. Today it is filled with artworks created by local and national artists, often made with reclaimed machinery and other repurposed items. Don't miss the Infinity Portal.

[www.steampunkoamaru.co.nz](http://www.steampunkoamaru.co.nz)





## STEAMPUNK NZ FESTIVAL

On Queen's Birthday weekend (before the first Monday in June) Ōamaru is transformed by the arrival of hundreds of costumed Steampunks celebrating this quirky genre of sci-fi and heritage. Come and watch such events as teapot racing, tea duelling, and the ever-popular street parade and fashion show.

[www.steampunknz.co.nz](http://www.steampunknz.co.nz)



## TOTARA ESTATE

This large historic farm is the birthplace of New Zealand's billion-dollar a year frozen meat industry. Today it is an ideal spot for a look into what farm life was like back in the 1800s, with guides on hand to show you around and explain the history of this critical part of NZ's past. Several heritage breeds of sheep are on site to be hand-fed (and to have their back scratched), and regular teas are held, offering a traditional taste of old-time life, complete with stories from the "swaggers" who pass through.

## WAITAKI AQUATIC CENTRE

Go for a swim at the Waitaki Aquatic Centre in the centre of Ōamaru, where you can enjoy a 25m lap pool, a learner's pool, and a spa hot pool. <https://www.waitaki.govt.nz/our-facilities/aquatic-centre/Pages/default.aspx>

## WAITAKI MUSEUM

The Waitaki Museum is *the* place to learn more about this most interesting and historic of South Island regions. With displays that range from Māori artifacts, to fossils, to relics of the area's Victorian past, the museum is a wonderful place to spend some time during your visit to Ōamaru.

<https://culturewaitaki.org.nz/waitaki-museum>



## WAITAKI WHITESTONE ASPIRING UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK



The Waitaki was formed under an ancient sea and is built on the remains of prehistoric creatures from a vanished world. In this Geopark, find an abundance of unique geological and geomorphological features including the Moeraki Boulders, karsted limestone at Elephant Rocks, as well as “badlands” and faults at Clay Cliffs. Straddling the 45th

parallel South, on the east coast of the South Island, the geopark is bounded by mountains and sea, the remnants of fire and ice, and the powerful Waitaki River. The park covers just over 7,200km<sup>2</sup>. At the heart of it all are spectacular areas of karst. Karst landscapes are underlain by limestone which has been eroded by dissolution, producing ridges, towers, fissures, sinkholes and other characteristic landforms.

[www.whitestonegeopark.co.nz](http://www.whitestonegeopark.co.nz)

## WHITESTONE CHEESE FACTORY TOUR

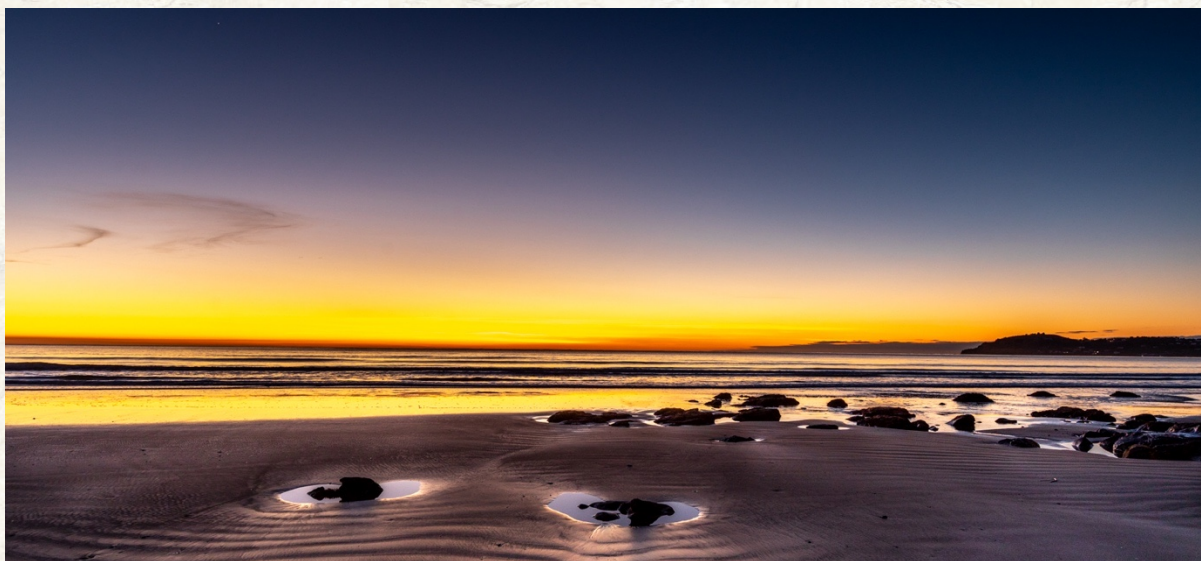
Whitestone Cheese is a true Ōamaru success story, making top-quality European-style cheeses with top-quality New Zealand milk. You can join a tour to see the cheesemaking process in action daily at 10am and 11:45am, after which you will get to taste the delicious range that is exported around the world—including to Europe and North America. And of course, you’re welcome to take some home from their adjacent shop and café. <https://www.whitestonecheese.com/collections/guided-tours>

## WHITESTONE MODEL RAIL

Located above The Ōamaru Textile Exchange at 13 Tyne Street in the Ōamaru Historic Precinct, the Whitestone Model Rail society has five scale layouts, one of which is based on Ōamaru and features numerous local landmarks.



## COASTAL WAITAKI



The Waitaki District extends along the East Coast of the South Island from the south shore of the Waitaki River to the north of Ōamaru, all the way south to Palmerston, approximately 45 minutes south of Ōamaru. There is a lot of history in this part of Waitaki, and tremendous scenic beauty, including the world-famous Moeraki Boulders. This is a fantastic region to delve into and explore.

## FOOD AND DRINK

### RESTAURANTS AND PUBS

**THE FISH WIFE**, *Haven Street, Moeraki (027) 201 5171*. Open weekends for lunch while supplies last. The Fish Wife is a Kiwi classic-style fish and chip shop on the waterfront in Moeraki serving fresh-as fish, along with crayfish, all locally caught and surpassingly good.

**FLEUR'S PLACE**, *169 Haven Street, Moeraki (03) 439 4480*. Open from 11am for lunch and dinner Thursday through Sunday. [www.fleursplace.com](http://www.fleursplace.com) For many people, Fleur's Place is the reason to come to this area of New Zealand. The eponymous restaurant of famed New Zealand chef Fleur Sullivan, Fleur's Place is **the** place for fish and seafood, served in an unpretentious waterside location.

**HAMPDEN TAKEAWAYS**, *30 London Street, Hampden (03) 439 4744*. Open 11am to 7pm daily. Famed fish and chips shop in the beach town of Hampden. Take your lunch to the nearby beach for an iconic Kiwiana experience.

**MOERAKI TAVERN**, *144 Haven Street, Moeraki (03) 439 4705*. The only pub located in the beautiful fishing town of Moeraki. Serving a range of beers, wines and a wide variety of restaurant meals.

### CAFÉS

**MOERAKI BOULDERS CAFÉ**, *7 Moeraki Boulders Road, Moeraki (03) 439 4827*. Open 9am to 3pm daily. Café offering food and drinks overlooking the Moeraki Boulders.

**VANESSA'S COTTAGE CAFÉ**, *24 London Street, Hampden (03) 439 4839*. Open 5:30am to 4:30pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; 8am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday. Closed Wednesday. Popular café on the main road in Hampden offering good coffees, breakfast and lunch items.



## OTHER

**HAMPDEN FOUR SQUARE**, 31 London Street, Hampden (03) 439 4706. Open 7:30am to 9pm daily. Small grocery store famed throughout NZ for the generous portions of ice cream they serve for takeaways.

## SHOPPING

**BOULDERS GIFT SHOP**, 5 Moeraki Boulders Road, Moeraki (021) 909 980. Open 9am to 5pm daily. The Moeraki Boulders Gift Shop has a range of beautiful souvenirs, clothing and jewellery from New Zealand artists and crafts people. Whether you're visiting from around the corner, or the other side of the world, there is friendly service, a relaxed atmosphere and a magnificent ocean view all waiting for you.

**HAMPDEN STORES**, 1 Liverpool Street, Hampden (03) 439 4802. Open 10am to 5pm Friday through Monday. Antique and collectables shop with a huge range of vintage tools and practical everyday items.

## THINGS TO DO

### HAMPDEN BEACH

This sandy beach is regarded as a safe bathing beach and when the tide is out it offers a great walk to the Moeraki Boulders and back. The Kuri Stream which joins the sea at Hampden Beach is a good place for children to play, as is the adjacent playground with its artificial boulders which children love climbing on. Tennis courts, a skateboard park and public toilets are also located at the beach. Nearby, behind the holiday park, the Hampden Cemetery offers a chance to get a flavour of local history as does the World War One Memorial Grove on the left as you drive or walk towards the cemetery.

### HERBERT FOREST

Herbert Forest near the village of Herbert south of Ōamaru comprises several tracks of varying lengths and strenuousness. Some include waterfall views, large podocarp trees and native forests. All are well signposted. (See map at end of guide.)

### HORSEBACK RIDING

Sanctum Grove Equine offers relaxing adventure trekking along the Waianakarua River, where you can see the “Moeraki Boulder nursery”, numerous rivers and streams, and countless tuis, kereru and bell birds. A truly unique way to take in the sights of the beautiful Waitaki coast.



### KAKANUI SUNFLOWER FIELDS



Topflite, a large seed company based in Ōamaru, plants sunflowers around the area each year that become a tourist attraction when the stunning flowers are in full bloom each January and February. The fields are rotated each year, so part of the fun is exploring the area to find out where they're located!

### KATIKI POINT WALK

Just south of Moeraki is the Katiki peninsula, anchored by the historic lighthouse. A short track from the lighthouse heads out to the peninsula, where a large colony of NZ fur seals and a small colony of the critically endangered Yellow-Eyed Penguin can be found. Stunning views.

### MACRAES TOWN CENTRE AND GOLD TRAIL

The Macraes area was settled in the 1850s by farmers, and later by miners after the discovery of gold here in the 1860s. In this area you can still see New Zealand's largest operational gold mine (producing 50% of the country's gold), as well as elements of Otago's Gold Rush past at the Golden Point Historic Reserve. Located 5km from Macraes, access via Golden Point Road.

### MOERAKI BOULDERS

These massive spherical concretions, commonly known to locals as boulders, were formed from around 60 million years ago and can be seen scattered along Koekohe Beach north of Moeraki. Each boulder started life as a pebble or fossil on an ancient seafloor. Over time, these 'grew' by mud accretion and calcification. They were buried in muds and the sea continues to erode these from the seashore. One of the most famous landmarks in the Waitaki, the Moeraki Boulders really are a must-visit location and are conveniently located just off SH1 south of Hampden.





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### PALMERSTON HISTORIC WALK

This walk through the historic town of Palmerston starts in the 1876-vintage Athenaeum and takes in the numerous historic spots that dot this proud coastal town that today is the base for many people who work at the nearby Macraes Goldmine. <http://waitakinz.com/palmerston-historic-walk>

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### SHAG POINT

The Shag Point/Matakaea Reserve is a great spot for viewing wildlife south of Moeraki. There are usually fur seals here, as well as numerous varieties of seabird (including occasional penguins), viewable from two short walks.

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### TAVORA RESERVE

This reserve near Palmerston is home to a small colony of critically endangered yellow-eyed penguins. Because of this, visitors are requested not to visit the beach after 3pm, in order to avoid disturbing the birds' return to their nests from their time at sea. Closed to the public during penguin breeding season (November to February).

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### TROTTER'S GORGE

With three walks of varying lengths to choose from, this is a beautiful reserve to visit for those who want to experience native forests, streams and more. Located just south of Moeraki.

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### WAITAKI WHITESTONE ASPIRING UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

Numerous sites of the Whitestone UNESCO Geopark are located around Coastal Waitaki. For more information, see the listing in the Ōamaru section of this guide, or visit [www.whitestonegeopark.co.nz](http://www.whitestonegeopark.co.nz)



## WAITAKI VALLEY



The Waitaki Valley is defined by the mighty braided Waitaki River, which cuts through the landscape from its source high in the Southern Alps. The area has long been a popular getaway for locals who enjoy the man-made lakes for summertime activities, but with the advent of the Alps 2 Ocean cycle trail, the area has really begun to boom as more and more people discover the many charms of the valley.

## FOOD AND DRINK

### RESTAURANTS AND PUBS

**RIVER-T ESTATE**, 5292/1 Kurow-Duntroon Road, Kurow. (021) 190 8875. Open 10am to 6pm daily during summer. Enjoy a platter of local specialities while sipping the wines of the Waitaki—New Zealand’s newest wine region, and regarded as “the Burgundy of the South”, all while enjoying the view of the vineyards and the stunning countryside of the Waitaki Valley. [www.rivertestate.co.nz](http://www.rivertestate.co.nz)

**WAITAKI BRAIDS CAFÉ**, 61 Bledisloe Street, Kurow (0274) 333 913. Charming café serving breakfast and lunch on the main street in Kurow.

**WILD SAGE**, 16 Bledisloe Street, Kurow (027) 750 4222. Open 9:30am to 3pm Wednesday to Sunday.

**THE WRINKLY RAMS**, 24-30 Omarama Avenue, Omarama (03) 438 9751. Open 7 am to 4pm daily. Quirky eatery and gallery with a wine bar, local food and a live sheep-shearing demonstration.



## SHOPPING

**BIG ROOSTER ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES**, 16 *Chain Hills Highway*, Omarama (03) 438 9757. Open 10am to 4pm daily. An eclectic mix of antiques, rare books, gifts, collectables and more, along with an ever-changing range of fun and fine gift items.

**GLEN CRAIG'S CLOTHING**, 6 Chain Hills Highway, Omarama (03) 438 9816. Open 8am to 6pm daily. A source for well-known NZ and international clothing brands, including NZ-made merino and knitwear.

**MERINO COUNTRY CAFÉ AND GIFTS**, 7 *Chain Hills Highway*, Omarama (03) 438 9844. Open 8:30am to 5pm daily (to 4pm in winter). A wide-ranging selection is on offer in this well-established shop in Omarama, where you can stock up on souvenirs, clothing and gifts, including clothing made with locally raised Merino wool.

## THINGS TO DO

### ALPS 2 OCEAN CYCLE TRAIL



The longest cycle trail in New Zealand at more than 310km, the A2O, as it's known locally, winds its way from Mt Cook through the Waitaki Valley to its culmination in Ōamaru Harbour. The vast range of scenery that the trail takes in makes it one of the most popular of NZ's 22 Great Rides. (See map at end of guide.)



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### ANATINI FOSSIL SITE

A beautiful gorge that features the fossils of a prehistoric baleen whale as well as several fascinating stone formations. Please note that, like Elephant Rocks, this is part of a working farm, so please be respectful of the land.

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### BENMORE PENINSULA TRACK

A 90-minute (4km) circuit that passes through forest and around a peninsula jutting into Lake Benmore. The views are truly impressive, especially in the morning when the weather is usually calm.

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### BRAIDED RIVER JETBOATING

Enjoy a private jetboating experience on the braided Waitaki River with your professional guide as you take in the sites of this beautiful river. Since it's a private tour, you can dictate what you see, whether you're interested in exploring the upper reaches near the Waitaki Dam, or the lower reaches near the ocean mouth. [www.braidedriverjetboating.co.nz](http://www.braidedriverjetboating.co.nz)

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### CLAY CLIFFS



Just outside of Omarama, the Clay Cliffs make for an interesting walk among a true geological wonder. The pinnacles and ridges make for a “bad lands” landscape, formed out of silt and gravel deposited by glaciers more than 20 million years ago. These were then compressed and uplifted by geological activity, after which the wind eroded them into their current forms. During early summer, the sight of the blooming lupines in the Ahuriri River makes for a particularly photogenic visit. On private land, so please respect the honesty box (\$5 requested donation).

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### DEEP STREAM TRACK

This is a walk near Lake Aviemore within a flooded canyon to the river delta where a shady picnic or fishing spot can be found. It is a great spot for a walk surrounded by Nature that offers spectacular views (and photo opportunities!) with a colourful vegetation, deep dark water and perfect reflections.



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## EARTHQUAKES

An intriguing name, especially in a country known for seismic activity! But this area was given its name when explorers thought the house-sized rocks that dot the landscape were dislodged by earthquakes. In actual fact, they were exposed when the land slumped away millennia ago. Access via Earthquakes Road near Duntroon.

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## ELEPHANT ROCKS



The large formations of limestone in this privately-owned farm were formed 23-25 million years ago and can be likened to elephants (sort of) and make for an intriguing spot to visit. Be sure to watch out for the sheep “patties”.

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## FISHING & HUNTING

The Waitaki and Hakataramea Rivers are phenomenal sites for people eager to ply the waters to drop a line in search of trout and salmon. The waters here are fantastically clear, so you can often see the fish you’re aiming for as you cast your line. Numerous guides are available to take you to just the right spots. The same is true for hunting, whether you’re after deer, boar or wild ducks.

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## GLIDING

The Omarama area is one of the world’s premier gliding centres, where the rivers, lakes and mountains create ample thermal currents to allow for lengthy flights and offer stunning vistas to admire from the air. Kahu Gliding offers private gliding lessons both for novices and those with experience offering a great way to experience the magic of powerless flight.

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## GOLF

There are several golf courses in the Waitaki Valley area, including Tokarahi, Kurow and Otematata, so if you are keen to get on the green, you will be spoiled for choice.



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## HIKING

Local guides take guests on personalised walks in the expansive Waitaki High Country. Whether it be a walk to increase the heart rate, slow the mind, tap the creativity or just enjoy the amazing scenery, they can design a walk that will leave you feeling stronger, healthier and happier.

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## HOT TUBS OMARAMA

Soak in your private tub filled with heated high-country water while soaking in the views of the surrounding mountains. A spot like no other! Ten private spas are available, two with their own saunas. Open 10am to 10pm year-round.

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## KUROW HILL

Take in the beautiful sight of the braided Waitaki River and the Hakataramea Valley from atop Kurow Hill, a 45 minute to 2-hour climb (steep in spots) that is in a working farm outside of Kurow.

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## LAKE OHAU

In the far reaches of the Waitaki District abutting the Mackenzie District and Mt Cook, this area features numerous hikes and walks, as well as hunting and bike trails. In winter, there are ski fields, and in summer there's boating, kayaking and fishing.

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## MĀORI ROCK ART

There are two significant Māori rock art sites in the Waitaki Valley area near Duntroon. Takiroa is a significant landmark in the traditions of Ngāi Tahu, while Maerewhenua is one of the best-known Māori rock art sites in New Zealand.

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## NICOL'S BLACKSMITH



Restored by local volunteers in 2015, this is a working historic blacksmith's shop in Duntroon where local amateur smiths can be seen operating the hearth and making a variety of items that are available for sale. On Saturdays during the season visitors can try their hand (and arms) at forging pokers to take home. The "Brewery Hole" behind the smithy is a sunken limestone cavern created by an underground stream that was a source of pure water.  
[www.blacksmith.net.nz](http://www.blacksmith.net.nz)

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## QUAILBURN TRACK

The track here starts uphill from the historic area of Quailburn near Omarama and takes in a mountain beech forest with several crossings of the Quailburn stream, culminating in a viewpoint above the bushline.



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## VANISHED WORLD

The Vanished World Centre at Duntroon is the heart of the Vanished World Trail with displays that help explain and interpret the fossils, rocks, localities, and landforms along the Trail, forming the centre of the aspiring Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark. (See map at end of guide.)

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## WAITAKI HYDROLAKES

The damming of the Waitaki River, begun in the 1930s, has resulted in there being several man-made lakes along the river that today are popular recreational and scenic sites for locals and visitors alike. Starting with Lake Waitaki near Kurow, the oldest and smallest of the lakes, there then follow Lake Aviemore and Lake Benmore as you head upriver toward the Southern Alps.

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## WETLANDS

The wetlands in Duntroon, Kurow and Otematata are beautiful natural sites that are maintained by local volunteers eager to preserve the local flora and fauna that make the region so interesting and beautiful. Along the shores of Lake Aviemore, the Otematata Wetlands offer a network of small tracks, trails, picnic areas and swimming spots, as well, making it an ideal spot for a break while visiting the region.

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## WINE TASTING



There are now around 15 wineries in the Waitaki Valley, the newest of New Zealand's wine appellations, planted in the early 2000s. The soil conditions, latitude and climate are quite distinct from nearby Central Otago, resulting in vastly different styles of wine, which have earned the region the sobriquet "Burgundy of the South". Most of the vineyards here are small, so the wines often do not make it far beyond the borders of New Zealand, and sometimes even not to the North Island, so the best way to sample them is to do so on-site. Two vineyards have cellar

doors that are regularly open to visitors, River T Estate (which also offers delicious platters of food to go with a glass or two of wine), and Ostler Vineyard. Both of these are in the vicinity of Kurow.

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## WAITAKI WHITESTONE ASPIRING UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

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## ANNUAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Throughout the year, Ōamaru and the Waitaki host a number of events, some of which take place regularly throughout the year, while others are annual celebrations. This is a rough sketch of some of the main events; it is always wise to check in advance to ensure that schedules have not changed.

January: **Kurow Festival Market** (Kurow, New Year's Day)

March: **Harbour Street Jazz Festival** (Ōamaru, during Otago Anniversary weekend)

May: **Fire & Steam** (Ōamaru, the Friday of Queen's Birthday weekend); **Steampunk NZ Festival** (Ōamaru, Wednesday through Sunday of Queen's Birthday weekend)

November: **Victorian Heritage Celebrations** (Ōamaru, five days from Wednesday to the third Sunday of the month); **Victorian Fête** (Ōamaru, third Sunday of the month)

December: **Ōamaru Farmer's Market Christmas Market** (Ōamaru, Friday before Christmas)



WAITAKI DISTRICT MAP





## HERBERT FOREST MAP





## ALPS 2 OCEAN CYCLE TRAIL MAP





## OTEMATATA WETLANDS TRAIL MAP





