

The West Coast

The West Coast road, State Highway 6, is one of New Zealand's iconic routes; wild, unpopulated, forested, mountainous, coastal and breathtakingly beautiful. It has glaciers, world heritage rain forests and vast national parks, stunning coastlines, caves, wild mountain rivers, secluded lakes teeming with wildlife, and a sense of being far removed from a busy world. Allow time to explore enroute as there are well-marked viewpoints, walks or beach access tracks along the way. The road "starts" at Karamea and ends at Haast, but most people join it at either Westport (coming from Nelson) or just south of Greymouth (coming from Arthurs Pass). You can also catch the Tranz Alpine Train from Christchurch to Greymouth and pick up your car there. Lots of small boutique lodges along the way as well as some in spectacular wilderness settings.

Punakaiki

Famous for its coastline and "pancake rocks," but the inland rivers such as Pororari are also beautiful and offer good day hiking. The area is known for dramatic limestone cave systems - such as that at the Paparoa National Park where Underworld Adventures operates near Charleston.

Hokitika

A small art deco township with a beautiful beach. Indulge in some of the freshest fish and chips from the takeaway store on the river esplanade.

Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers

The glaciers are the jewel in the crown of this route. The landscape is increasingly forested as you head south, and the mountains get bigger, with magnificent views of Mt Cook. Enjoy a wide choice of walks and guided hikes, glacier tours and flights onto the glacier and around Mt Cook. We also recommend the Kiwi House and the tours of Okarito Lagoon at Franz Josef. Half an hour south of Franz Josef is Fox Glacier, a slightly smaller township with an equally amazing glacier and options for hiking and heli-hiking. Visit Lake Matheson and enjoy both the lakeside forest walk and spectacular views of Mt Cook from the excellent cafe there.



Highlights

Glacier Tours

Punakaiki Rocks

Coal mining history

Cycle & Hiking Trails

Eco Tours

Greymouth, Hokitika, Glaciers

WEST SOUTH ISLAND

West Coast



Contacts

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