



PRESS RELEASE



SPRING HAS SPRUNG IN NEW ZEALAND

Spring in New Zealand is one of the best times to visit the “land of the long white cloud”



For further information and images please contact Paul Charles / Ollie Druttman / Sarah Rigler / Frankie Matthews at Perowne Charles Communications

Flowers in blossom, newborn lambs frolicking in the fields, longer days, fewer crowds and all the kiwifruit imaginable. These are just some of the highlights visitors can expect when visiting in September, October and November.

Spring in New Zealand is known as ‘waterfall season’, which is the best time to tour the iconic Milford Sound or take on the challenge of white water rafting as the melting spring snow swells river levels. For the less hard-core, visitors can hike one of New Zealand’s nine Great Walks showcasing colourful tree buds and Alpine flowers. Spot baby seals and penguin chicks, which only come out to play at this time of year.

For those looking to up their Instagram bragging rights, spring displays the very best of New Zealand’s flora and forests – wild, landscaped and brightly coloured. From the yellow swathe of kowhai trees and the surreal green of unfurling fern fronds to masses of spring bulbs and brilliant rhododendrons, new life is evident everywhere.

Here, Tourism New Zealand has rounded up the very best New Zealand has to offer during spring season; from dazzling destinations to action-packed activities, eclectic events and fabulous food.

BEST SPRING DESTINATIONS...

Okarito - On the West Coast of the South Island, Okarito is a remote region with shallow, open lagoons and tidal flats, waiting to be explored. The region is surrounded by native

+44 (0) 20 7792 8884
newzealand@verypcc.com

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rainforests and overlooks the snow-capped peaks of the Southern Alps. In spring, guests can enjoy a quiet kayak ride in the secluded lagoons. It is also the best time to spot one of the 70 bird species in the region including the Kotuku, a bird sacred to Maori people.

Hamilton - Nestled in the banks of the Waikato River, Hamilton is known for scenic diversity. The region offers many options for those keen on walking, hiking, cycling and casual strolls – best to enjoy in the warm, light breezes of spring. Don't miss The Hamilton Gardens, with the internationally acclaimed nine themed-gardens. For Hobbit fans, head to the live film set of Hobbiton where queues are a quarter of the size compared to the busy summer season. While trying to spot Bilbo Baggins and Gollum, Hobbiton offers visitors the chance to stroll around the lush fields of New Zealand's most famous garden.

Golden Bay - The journey to Golden Bay is just as picturesque as the destination itself. Visitors can enjoy driving up the quiet roads of Takaka Hill, known as 'Marble Mountain' before hitting the sand dune formations and Te Waikoropupu Springs of Golden Bay.

BEST SPRING ACTIVITIES...

Whale watching in Kaikoura - Kaikoura is the whale watching capital of New Zealand offering guests the chance to get up close and personal with sea life. As well as whales, guests will encounter fur seals, pods of dusky dolphins and the endangered wandering albatross. At the beginning of Spring when the air is cooler, humpback whales, pilot whales, blue whales and southern right whales are frequent visitors. For those travelling towards the end of Spring, October is the best time to spot the orca, the world's largest dolphin.

Tour of Milford Road - Driving through New Zealand is one of the best ways to see the country and for those travelling in spring, they have the extra perk of quiet and peaceful roads. The road journey from Te Anau to Milford Sound is one of the most scenic experiences in the country hitting the heart of Fiordland National Park and the Te Wahipounamu World Heritage area.

Hiking - With plenty of sunshine and cool breezes, Spring is the best time for visitors to enjoy New Zealand's nine Great walks. The days are longer, the flowers are in bloom and it is the best time of year for wildlife spotting. Choose from the thousands of kilometres of walking trails including Stewart Island's lesser-known Rakiura Track or the famous day walk, Tongariro Alpine Crossing.

Spring Skiing - Spring is one of the most popular times for skiing in New Zealand with mild temperatures, un-crowded

slopes and fresh powder right up until the end of October. Head to one of New Zealand's 13 snow sure ski fields for off-piste skiing, snowboarding, heli-skiing, dramatic scenery and diverse runs.

BEST SPRING FOODS...

Scallops - The recreational scallop season starts in September, the first month of spring. Head to the Coromandel Peninsula for the best scallops in the country. As well as scallops, visitors can also enjoying the white sand beaches and rainforests in the region.

Mt Cook King Salmon - New Zealand accounts for over half of the world's production of King Salmon, with salmon season starting in October. New Zealand is home to the Mt Cook Alpine Salmon Tekapo Site, the highest salmon farm in the world. Head to Lake Pukaki for the freshest salmon in the country, with Mt Cook itself as a backdrop.

West Coast Whitebait - Being one of the most sought after seafood delicacies in the country, New Zealand's West Coast Whitebait is only in season from September to November. For the best of the best, visitors shouldn't miss the West Coast Whitebait Season Festival in September. For something different, try a whitebait pattie, the most popular way of cooking the fish.

BEST SPRING EVENTS...

Whitianga Scallop Festival - 19th September 2015

One of New Zealand's most popular seafood events is the Whitianga Scallop Festival. The event has over 60 food and wine stands, seafood cooking demonstrations from iconic New Zealand chefs, a weekend of Kiwi bands and even a scallop shucking competition. In a spectacular location overlooking the Whitianga Harbour on the North Island's Coromandel Peninsula, the region is renowned for its sweet, succulent scallops and is one of the country's most popular holiday destinations. This is thanks to its white sand beaches, native rainforest, pristine coastal walking trails and laid back artistic atmosphere.

www.scallopfestival.co.nz

F.A.W.C! - Food and Wine Classic! - 6th - 15th November 2015

Food and Wine Classic! is a series of "out of the box" food and wine experiences set in stunning locations throughout Hawke's Bay. It's the chance to get up close and personal with chefs and food producers, wine makers and all the other clever people that make up the New Zealand food and wine scene. The Summer Series kicks off 6th November with a spectacular

launch party in the vines of Craggy Range Winery and finishes on 15th November. 70 events are scheduled across the ten days throughout various locations in Hawke's Bay including vintage vertical tastings, masterclasses, degustation dinners, private chefs in homes and NZ celebrity chefs to name a few. www.fawc.co.nz

Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge - 28th November 2015

Thousands of cyclists, both locals and internationals, will pedal their way around the shores of the beautiful Lake Taupo, taking part in one of the world's premier cycle events. This event is recognised as a UCI Golden Bike Event, with its trails recently awarded Silver Ride Centre status by the International Mountain Bike Association. The clear blue waters of Lake Taupo provides the idyllic setting for cyclists with other highlights such as Huka Falls and Tongariro National Park, making it hard to realise that Taupo is actually a volcano without a top. www.cyclechallenge.com

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