

Kaikoura – A Sustainable Community

On a rocky peninsula near the northeastern tip of New Zealand's South Island is the rugged and eco-friendly community of Kaikoura. With its spectacular scenery, abundant wildlife and its reputation as a leader in sustainable development, it is no surprise that this beautiful seaside town is such a popular destination for eco travelers. Towards the inland the towering mountain escarpment of the Seaward Kaikoura Range cloaks the peninsula and offers a protected habitat for a diverse range of wildlife. Off the coast, the cool waters of the Pacific Ocean provide an ideal environment for sea birds and aquatic animals, including marine mammals.

Once a colonial whaling town, the district's past is a far cry from its modern-day environmental focus.

This unique and inspired community is the only district in New Zealand and the second in the world to earn Earthcheck global tourism certification as part of the United Nations Action for climate change – a commendable achievement. Located just 2 1/2 hours north of Christchurch, the Kaikoura district is at the forefront of sustainability and with centrally located accommodation available, like the [Quality Suites Kaikoura](#), it is an easy choice for travelers in search of a coastal eco-tourism adventure.

Enter Kaikoura and you will see all around you how sustainable development is part of everyday life. From recycling and zero waste initiatives to energy efficiency and environmental products, the Kaikoura community has introduced a wide range of local programs to protect the natural environment and to ensure sustainable economic growth for future generations. The Fantastic No Plastic initiative, for example, encourages locals and visitors alike to purchase reusable shopping bags and say 'no' to plastic. As part of the annual Trash to Fashion competition locals are invited to design fashion pieces from recycled and sustainable materials. These creations are on display and listed for sale at the local museum. Why not reduce your carbon footprint and leave a lasting impression by purchasing a plant for the Trees for Travelers program? 80 per cent of the region's trees were lost after settlement, but with Tree for Travelers you can make a personal contribution to Kaikoura's sustainable future.

For nature lovers, the rich marine environment with its diverse flora and fauna is without doubt the centerpiece of the Kaikoura eco-tourism experience. Witness the giant Sperm Whales that inhabit Kaikoura's coastal waters all year round. Get up close with Humpback, Blue, Pilot and Southern Right whales as they migrate along the coast. Swim with the fur seals and watch the local dusky dolphins as they perform their acrobatic displays. Or travel by boat to deeper waters and see the immense beauty of the Great Albatross along with petrels and shearwaters. The nutrient rich coastal waters of Kaikoura are home to the most diverse range of sea birds New Zealand has to offer and are a premier destination for bird watchers and marine enthusiasts alike.

Kaikoura is a wilderness region where conservation and tourism work hand in hand to deliver a unique travel experience. Be inspired by the pristine natural beauty and sustainable community of Kaikoura.

Surry Hills Arts & Culture

The iconic inner-city suburb of Surry Hills is located on Sydney's south-eastern city fringe. With its famous mix of restaurants, cafes, bars, boutique shops, arts and culture this creative and centrally located urban precinct is a great destination to get fully immersed in the best of Sydney's cutting-edge contemporary style.

And with its striking mix of classic Victorian terraces and converted industrial buildings set against the clean lines of modern architectural design Surry Hills has a unique street appeal that sets it apart from the crowd.

Surry Hills is located within easy walking distance of the popular urban centres of Paddington, Darlinghurst, Redfern and Chippendale and is close to the Sydney CBD. Central Railway Station is located on the western side of the suburb making it a great base to explore the full range of attractions on offer across the inner city.

Surry Hills Accommodation

The heritage listed [Hotel Harry](#) provides the ideal setting to explore the cultural heart of Surry Hills and Sydney's CBD and is within an easy stroll of Circular Quay, Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Opera House, the Rocks, the Botanical Gardens and Darling Harbour.

Museums and galleries

Surry Hills is brimming with off-beat galleries and studios that showcase the work of some of Australia's leading artists. Visit the former studio and home of influential contemporary artist [Brett Whiteley](#). Or get a feel for the work of our best emerging artists at the [M2](#) gallery. This edgy establishment showcases painting, photography, illustration, sculpture and performance art. Or for a taste of contemporary, pop and underground culture don't miss [Outre Gallery](#) on Crown Street.

Performing art

See a show at the [Belvoir Street Theatre](#). Recognised as a leader of performing arts innovation, the theatre promises an annual program that is dynamic and visionary. Grab a meal in the theatre foyer before the show or enjoy a quiet drink at the in-house Hal Bar. Eat, drink and enjoy the Belvoir experience.

Restaurant and café culture

Take time to explore the Crown Street central thoroughfare. With its thriving cafe and restaurant scene this bustling foody mecca is a 'must do' for visitors. Sit, relax and enjoy a hearty breakfast at the [Bourke Street Bakery](#). Stop for lunch at [bill's at Surry Hills](#), or try one of the many local pubs like the Norfolk Hotel or Trinity Bar for a gourmet counter meal. Finish the day with best of modern South East Asian cuisine at [Longrain](#). Enjoy classic tapas at [Movida](#) or superb Italian cuisine at [Vini](#).

Fashion and shopping

Surry Hills is a designer clothing, furniture and homewares paradise with some of the best design and vintage fashion outlets in the city. Pick up an original piece at [Mushu](#) boutique clothing and accessories. Or get your cool on at [Paris Texas](#) where you will find edgy stylish clothing for the fashionista within.

For a modern luscious piece for the home don't miss the unique and colourful vintage style of the [Edit](#) interiors collection. Or for a sustainable option the [Bird](#) textiles emporium offers a beautiful range of home eco products. Or make your way to the [Surry Hills Markets](#), held at Shannon Reserve on the first Sunday of each month, where you will find a range of quality hand-made, second hand and recycled goods.

Surry Hills is at the creative heart of Sydney's inner city and with great, food, fashion and accommodation on hand, it makes the perfect destination for your next inner-city adventure.

Staying fit while you travel

Whether you are setting off on a family holiday, a romantic getaway, or a business trip, there is a good chance that your fitness routine will also 'take a break' while you are on the road. With catered luncheons, hot breakfasts, and three course restaurant meals, not to mention a smorgasbord of hotel food to lead you into temptation, there is no doubt that your health and fitness goals will be well and truly put to the test.

Even the most committed health and fitness devotee can be caught off guard by the abundance of decadent food and leisure activities on offer at most travel destinations, but with a little creativity and commitment you can ensure that your next trip away doesn't turn into a health and fitness blowout.

Let's take a look at some simple strategies to keep you on track while you travel.

Find a gym

A thirty-minute gym workout could be just what you need to kick start your mind and body for a day of sightseeing or business meetings. Try a five minute treadmill warm-up, followed by a twenty minute weights circuit. Finish with a good stretch and you will feel recharged and ready to go. Why not get an express workout program designed for you before you set off? Then you can simply find the nearest gym, follow your pre-planned workout routine and get moving!

15 minute HIIT workout!

Really short on time? Try a 15 minute HIIT workout! High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) incorporates rapid sets of jumps, squats, burpees, crunches, push ups and planks and is ideal for burning those calories in a tight timeframe. There are some great HIIT interval timers like Runtastic and Impetus to help you keep on track. Why not download an app now? Then you will be ready to go when you reach your next destination. You can do a HIIT workout at a nearby park or even in the privacy of your hotel suite, but always make sure you have enough room and check with your GP make sure this high energy routine is right for you.

Take a swim

Submerge yourself in a local saltwater beach pool, or take a refreshing dip at the nearest aquatic centre. Swimming is a great low-impact exercise that burns calories quickly while building muscle strength and increasing cardiovascular fitness. Even if you are travelling light, a swimsuit fits easily into the most compact of travel bags.

Explore the city on foot

Pack your joggers or walking shoes and explore your travel destination on foot. Ask your hotel reception for information on the best walking trails - your friendly concierge will be happy to help. A walk through the local museum or gallery, a stroll around the city park or a jog to a scenic lookout will give you a really great feel for your new environment and will probably take you above and beyond your regular number of steps per day. Why not invest in a pedometer to keep track of your movements? The Fitbit One and Yamax Digiwalker both provide information about the number of steps per day and calories used. Challenge yourself and aim for a personal best!

Find a Yoga Class

Yoga is a wonderful gentle form of exercise that has many benefits for people on the road. Not only is it a great way to loosen up those stiff muscles after a long flight or drive, but it helps to relax your mind, de-stress your body and revive your senses and that's what we all want when we are on vacation. Most yoga schools offer casual attendance and will welcome you to join a class. Remember, whether you are young or old, an experienced yogi or a first-timer, yoga is good for everyone.

Everything in moderation

Staying fit while you travel is about more than just exercise. The demands of travel will leave you with less energy for your regular fitness routine and if you want to stay on top of your game you will also need to eat and sleep well. Visit the local supermarket and stock up on healthy snacks (cherry tomatoes, porridge sachets, juicy apples and pears are easy to stash in the hotel minibar) and remember to drink plenty of water too. You will need to take on extra fluids especially if you travel by air.

At Choice Hotels such as the Hotel [Monte Pio](#) you will find excellent fitness and leisure facilities like a pool, sauna and wellness centre at an affordable rate to help you maintain your health and wellbeing while you are away.

Whether you are travelling for business or pleasure it is easy to get off track with your health and fitness goals, but with a little planning and consideration of what suits you it is possible to return home feeling refreshed and fitter than ever. Happy travels!

Murwillumbah Attractions

Nestled on the banks of the tranquil Tweed River and surrounded by five pristine world heritage listed national parks, it is no surprise that Murwillumbah is one of Australia's top travel destinations. Between the township and the coast lies the lush and fertile Tweed Valley abundant with sugar cane and banana palms. Towards the inland the ancient Tweed River volcanic crater provides a unique and visually spectacular backdrop to the town.

The region also boasts fabulous food and wine, nationally acclaimed art galleries and museums and is in close proximity to the vibrant city lights of the Gold Coast.

Murwillumbah offers a truly diverse and exhilarating travel experience - all within a forty minute radius of the town centre. And with so many great accommodation options to choose from like the [Econo Lodge Murwillumbah](#), this picturesque township is well worth a visit.

Gondwana Rainforests of Australia

The region's exquisite natural beauty is captured in five world heritage listed national parks that form part of the world renowned [Gondwana Rainforests of Australia](#). The Wollumbin Mount Warning, Border Ranges, Nightcap, Mebbin, Mooball and Mount Jerusalem national parks offer a unique opportunity for travellers to explore the rich plant and animal life of the most extensive subtropical rainforest region in the world.

Take a bushwalk through the palm forest of the famous Wollumbin Mount Warning National Park, or hike to one of the many lookouts in the Border Ranges to capture breathtaking views of the volcanic escarpment. Discover the dramatic beauty of the towering eucalypts in Mebbin National Park and enjoy the camping, mountain biking and horse riding it has to offer. Or take a break and refresh your senses beside one of the picturesque waterways of Nightcap National Park. This unique subtropical wonderland has an eco-tourism experience to suit all tastes.

Art galleries and museums

From its hilltop location at the edge of the Murwillumbah township the [Tweed River Gallery](#) and Margaret Olley Art Centre offer spectacular panoramic views of the Border Ranges, Mount Warning, and the Tweed River. The gallery is home to a superb collection of Australian portraits and an impressive collection of works by distinguished local artists. A must see for visitors to the region.

The surrounding villages of Uki, Tyalgum, Stokers Siding, Tumbulgum and Chillingham are home to more than 18 galleries and artists' studios and showcase works from across the most diverse and vibrant arts community in Australia. Why not take a day trip around the village galleries and enjoy a hearty lunch at one of the many local cafes?

The rich culture and history of Murwillumbah and its surrounds is on display at the [Tweed River Regional Museum](#). With more than 18,000 historical objects and photographs that tell the story of cane and dairy farming, Aboriginal culture, and local geology (including a collection of volcanic rock formations or 'thunder eggs') the museum is a wonderful local attraction.

Food and wine

The Murwillumbah town centre is well known for its pretty art deco architecture and vibrant cafe and restaurant scene. From delicious French pastries to modern Australian fare, Japanese bento to

vegetarian cuisine, Murwillumbah's main street is lined with an assortment of eateries to suit all tastes. As well as having the best there is to offer in food and wine, you are sure to be treated to a big serve of genuine country hospitality.

Markets

The best of the region's fresh produce, arts and crafts are made available at regular village-style markets. The [Murwillumbah Farmers' Market](#) is held every Wednesday from 7-11am at the local showground and offers an enticing range of local produce, fresh brewed coffee and tempting gourmet delights. The famous [Uki Buttery Bazaar Market](#), held on the third Sunday of each month, features live music and performances, coffee, fresh produce, books, plants, clothing and local arts and crafts. Come on down for a slice of country life!

Festivals

With its thriving arts and music scene and national status as a vibrant cultural hub and foodies' paradise, it is no surprise that the Murwillumbah region is home to a selection of quality arts, music and food festivals. The Tweed River Festival, held in October each year, celebrates the unique natural beauty of the river environment and raises awareness of its significance to the local people. The Murwillumbah [Country Roots Festival](#) hosts some of Australia's big name performers and will be held from 2-5 October 2015. Experience the region's exquisite culinary delights at the Tweed Food Festival. Held in November each year, this festival showcases the finest local produce and gourmet cuisine the region has to offer. And food and art lovers won't want to miss [Foodie Fest](#), a series of food and art trails held bi-monthly throughout the year.

With its spectacular national parks, art, culture and cuisine, it is no wonder this subtropical region is a premier tourist destination. Book now and discover the beauty of picturesque Murwillumbah.