

## National Parks

### Travel into the heart of the amazing Kiwi national parks

The Department of Conservation maintains and protects New Zealand's ecosystem which is fragile with endangered animal and plant species. In your motorhome you can easily explore a maximum of secrets and wonders hidden in the country. New Zealand is a true ecological paradise dominated by glaciers and fjords, lakes, rivers, beaches and volcanoes (active and dormant). Wherever you go in New Zealand, beautiful scenery is guaranteed.

New Zealand's 14 national parks cover 12% of the country. There are 19 forest parks and 3 marine parks protected by the Department of Conservation. It is important to respect this sometimes very fragile endemic nature. On the North Island following the national parks will leave you with a life time of wonderful memories: **Te Urewera**, **Egmont**, **Tongariro** and **Whanganui**. In the middle **Urewera Forest** don't miss the two exceptional lakes, **Waikareiti** and **Waikaremoana**. At **Egmont** you can see a snowy volcanic cone, Mount Fuji's lookalike! At the heart of the country's first national park, **Tongariro**, (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), you can hike or just a stop to admire the three volcanic peaks, Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro, and some sacred Maori sites. On the **Whanganui River**, the longest in the country, kayak or canoe through the canyons.

While travelling the South Island in your motorhome, stop on the deserted sandy beaches along the turquoise waters in the **Abel Tasman Park**. The **Mount Cook Park** is home to the highest peak in New Zealand, of the same name. Caving enthusiasts can visit the limestone caves in **Paparoa Park**. Pass through the famous ski resort in **Arthur's Pass Park**. Treat yourself to a fishing trip at Mapourika and Wahapo in **Westland Park**. Finally, do not miss one of the 3 unique marine parks in the **Bay of Islands**, **Hauraki Gulf** and **Marlborough Sounds** for exceptional scuba diving.

In the midst of these wild landscapes certain activities are available in the parks, such as hiking, skiing and natural geothermal activities. when hiking it is important to be properly prepared and equipped (clothing and basic equipment). Know the route you are going to take and make sure you have enough time to reach your destination. Finally, check the weather and volcanic activity in the region with the [Department of Conservation](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or the tourist office.