

Wine and Waves: 5 Days of Beaches and Vineyards

Duration: 4–5 days **Start Point:** Nelson **End Point:** Blenheim

Best Time: November–April

Total Driving Time: 4 hours

Highlights: Beaches, wine tasting, seafood, easy walks

If you're dreaming of a journey filled with golden beaches, turquoise waters, and world-class vineyards, this 5-day trip from Nelson to Blenheim is for you. Imagine sipping Sauvignon Blanc after a morning kayaking in crystal-clear bays, or enjoying a seafood feast with the sand between your toes. This itinerary blends coastal adventures and culinary indulgence at a relaxed pace — perfect for soaking up the beauty of Aotearoa – New Zealand's South Island.

Days 1–2: Abel Tasman National Park

Day 1: Coastal Paradise

- **Morning:** Drive to Marahau, the gateway to Abel Tasman National Park (about 1 hour from Nelson). Book a water taxi to reach one of the picturesque bays like Anchorage or Bark Bay.
- **Afternoon:** Walk part of the coastal trail — expect golden sand beaches, lush native bush, and stunning lookout points.
- **Evening:** Dine beachside in Marahau. Fresh seafood platters or fish and chips go perfectly with a glass of local white wine. For a stay near the beach, check Booking.com.

Tip: Don't miss the golden sands of Kaiteriteri Beach — ideal for a sunset stroll.

Day 2: On the Water

- **Morning:** Take a guided kayak tour through the marine reserve. Paddle past seals basking on rocks and explore hidden inlets.
- **Afternoon:** Head to Tonga Island — with luck, you'll swim alongside playful seals. Enjoy a beach picnic before returning.
- **Evening:** Watch the sunset at Split Apple Rock — a unique natural formation and iconic photo spot.

Local Tip: Book kayak tours early in peak season — they fill up fast!

Days 3–4: Marlborough Wine Region

Day 3: Wine Country Wonders

- **Morning:** Drive to Blenheim (approx. 2.5 hrs) through scenic countryside.
- **Afternoon:** Visit renowned vineyards like Cloudy Bay or Brancott Estate. Enjoy a wine tasting and learn about the region's famous Sauvignon Blanc.
- **Evening:** Book dinner at a vineyard restaurant. Many offer farm-to-table menus and stunning views.

Must-Try: Pair your meal with a local Pinot Noir or late-harvest Riesling.

Day 4: Taste and Tour

- **Morning:** If it's Sunday, stop at the Blenheim Farmers' Market — perfect for fresh produce, cheese, and artisan goods.
- **Afternoon:** Rent a bike with Viator and follow a self-guided wine trail. Pedal between cellar doors, tasting as you go.
- **Evening:** Join a local cooking class and learn how to prepare a seasonal Kiwi feast.

Pro Tip: Ask about cellar door exclusives — many wines are only sold on-site.

Optional Extra Day

If you've got more time, here are three great add-ons:

1. **Seafood Cruise:** Take a scenic Marlborough Sounds cruise with fresh green lip mussels and wine.
 2. **Beach Day:** Visit Whites Bay — peaceful and often quiet, even in summer.
 3. **More Wineries:** Head to Renwick for boutique tastings away from the crowds.
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What to Pack

- **Sun Protection:** Sunscreen, sunglasses, wide-brim hat
 - **Light Walking Shoes:** Ideal for bush and coastal tracks
 - **Smart Casual Wear:** For winery visits and dining
 - **Swim Gear:** For kayaking, beach stops, or spontaneous swims
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Local Tips

- **Book Kayak Tours Early:** Especially in summer • **Wineries May Require Bookings:** Call ahead or check online • **Try the Green Lip Mussels:** A Marlborough specialty
 - **Ask the Locals:** Cellar staff often share the best hidden gems and reserve wines
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Final Thoughts

This blend of wine and waves offers the perfect balance of adventure and relaxation. Whether you're kayaking through secluded bays or savouring the region's finest wines, every moment is a chance to connect with the stunning landscapes and flavours of the South Island.

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