

Wine and Waves: 5 Days of Beaches and Vineyards

Quick Overview

- 🕒 **Duration:** 4–5 days
 - 🗺️ **Start Point:** Picton Ferry Terminal
 - 🚩 **End Point:** Abel Tasman
 - 🌤️ **Best Time to Go:** November – April
 - 🚗 **Total Driving Time:** 4–6 hours
 - 🌟 **Highlights:** Beaches, wine tasting, seafood, easy walks
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Intro

This itinerary is the perfect starting point for your **South Island adventure**. From Abel Tasman, you can continue **west along the wild West Coast** or circle back toward **Kaikōura and the east coast**.

If you're dreaming of **golden beaches, turquoise bays, and world-class wine**, this 5-day journey from **Picton to Abel Tasman** is for you. Picture yourself kayaking through crystal-clear waters in the morning, then sipping **Sauvignon Blanc** in the afternoon sun. Whether you're enjoying **fresh seafood with your toes in the sand** or wandering through vineyard country, this route offers a **relaxed balance of coastal adventure and culinary indulgence**.

Days 1–2: Arriving via Picton Ferry & Exploring the Sounds

Day 1: Arrive in Picton & Ease Into the Journey

Morning:


- 🚢 Arrive via the Interislander or Bluebridge ferry
- ☕ Grab a coffee and walk along the Picton Marina
- 🚶 Stroll the Tirohanga Track or explore the nearby lookout


Afternoon:

- 🛶 Optional: Join a short kayaking trip in the Marlborough Sounds
- 🦋 Visit the Edwin Fox Maritime Museum or EcoWorld Wildlife Centre

Evening:



- 🍷 Dinner at a local seafood spot like Oxley's or Cortado

-  Enjoy sunset from Victoria Domain



 **Tip:** For a peaceful night, stay at a nearby holiday park or campground with views of the harbour.

Day 2: Marlborough Wine Region



Morning:


-  Drive to Blenheim (30 mins)
-  Start the day with tastings at Cloudy Bay or Wither Hills

Afternoon:

-  Enjoy a winery lunch — many offer picnic-style dining
-  Rent bikes and explore the Renwick wine loop at your own pace



Evening:

-  Dine at a vineyard restaurant or head into town for something casual
-  Optional: Relax at your campsite under the stars



 **Local Tip:** Smaller cellar doors like Framingham and No.1 Family Estate offer something a little different — and often quieter!

Day 3: Nelson – Art, Coast & Culture

Morning:

-  Drive from Blenheim to Nelson via Queen Charlotte Drive (2–2.5 hrs)
-  Stop at scenic pullouts and viewpoints along the way

Afternoon:

-  Explore Nelson's galleries and artisan shops
-  Grab lunch at a local deli or the Saturday Market (if timing aligns)




Evening:

-  Sample a craft beer at The Free House or Sprig & Fern
-  Try dinner at East St. Vegetarian Café or Urban Oyster Bar



 **Local Tip:** Check out Founders Heritage Park for a taste of local history with quirky charm.

Days 4–5: Abel Tasman National Park



Morning:


-  Drive to Kaiteriteri (1 hr from Nelson) — gateway to the park
-  Join a water taxi or guided kayak tour into the park
-  Swim, hike, or relax at beaches like Torrent Bay or Bark Bay

Afternoon:

-  Walk a section of the Abel Tasman Coast Track
-  Enjoy a packed lunch by the water

Evening:

-  Watch the sun set from the beach
-  Grab dinner in Kaiteriteri or nearby Marahau





 **Local Tip:** Book kayak or water taxi tours in advance — they fill fast in peak season.

Optional Extra Day





Got more time? Here are some great additions:

1. **Seafood Cruise:** Take a scenic cruise in the Marlborough Sounds — complete with green-lipped mussels and wine.
 2. **Beach Day:** Head to **Whites Bay**, a quiet local beach near Blenheim.
 3. **More Wineries:** Explore **Renwick's boutique vineyards** if you missed them earlier.
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What to Pack

-  **Sun Protection:** Sunscreen, sunglasses, wide-brim hat
 -  **Light Walking Shoes:** Great for coastal and bush tracks
 -  **Smart Casual Wear:** Perfect for winery visits and dining out
 -  **Swimwear:** For kayaking, beach stops, or spontaneous dips
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Local Tips

-  Book **kayak tours early** — especially in summer
 -  Some **wineries require bookings** — call ahead or check online
 -  Try the **green-lipped mussels** — a Marlborough specialty
 -  Ask cellar door staff for local wine tips and hidden gems
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Final Thoughts

This **blend of wine and waves** offers the perfect mix of **relaxation and exploration**. Whether you're gliding across a quiet bay or toasting the day with a glass of Sauvignon Blanc, this itinerary lets you experience the **best of the South Island's coastal charm and culinary flair** — all at your own pace.

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