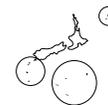


Stewart Island & Outer Islands



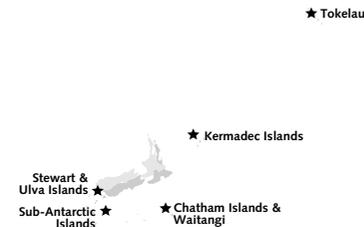
For such a small country, New Zealand's territorial boundaries stretch a long way and cover an extensive range of climates and terrain. To the north the balmy tropical atolls of Tokelau could not be more different to the barren, windswept and bird-laden Sub-Antarctic Islands to the south. The Kermadecs are still scarred by the active volcano on Raoul Island, while the islets around Stewart Island are studded with stands of primeval native forests. Lying 850km east of NZ's main islands, the increasingly accessible Chatham Islands are home to the fascinating culture of the Moriori, now enjoying a contemporary renaissance amidst a growth in ecotourism opportunities.

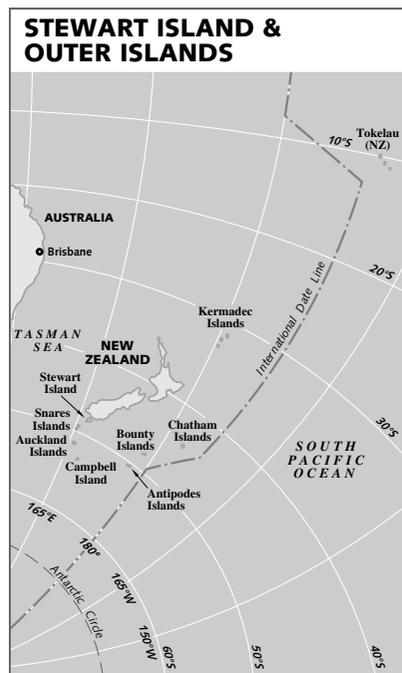
Travellers who undertake the short jaunt to Stewart Island will be rewarded by a warm welcome from both the local kiwi and the local Kiwis. NZ's largest outer island is a good place to spy the country's shy, feathered icon in the wild, and the close-knit community of Stewart Islanders are relaxed hosts. Once you've said g'day to the locals, set off on a rewarding tramp in Stewart Island's Rakiura National Park. With a worthwhile injection of effort, relative newcomers to tramping can easily complete one of NZ's Great Walks, and be surprised and entertained with an uninterrupted aria from native birds.

All this exercise is bound to make you hungry, so refuel with the freshest NZ seafood, before continuing your journey to even more of the country's remote shores.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Discovering perfect coves and secluded bays around Stewart Island's **Rakiura Track** (p679)
- Listening to the chorus of birdsong on tiny protected **Ulva Island** (p678)
- Taking in the dramatic scenery, including 200-year-old Moriori tree carvings, on the **Chatham Islands** (p683)
- Dining on fresh blue cod, mussels and crayfish on **Stewart Island** (p682)
- Venturing to the **Sub-Antarctic Islands** (p687) with a scientific expedition
- Eyeing the elusive spotted black groper in the **Kermadec Islands** (p688)
- Supporting conservation efforts to save the extremely rare **Chatham Islands** taiko (p683)
- Making it all the way to tiny **Tokelau** (p688) where tourists are rare but culture rife





Climate

Stewart Island's changeable weather can bring four seasons in one day. Frequent downpours create a misty, mysterious air and lots of mud, making boots and waterproof clothing mandatory. Nevertheless, the temperature is

TOP STEWART ISLAND & OUTER ISLANDS EXPERIENCES

Eat Fresh blue cod at Stewart Island's Kai Kart (p682).

Drink Healthy juices and smoothies at Justcafé (p682), NZ's southernmost café.

Read *A Land Apart* by Michael King and Robin Morrison.

Listen to The questions very carefully during NZ's southernmost pub quiz at the South Sea Hotel (p682).

Watch *The Feathers of Peace* (2000), a moving, brutal account of the history of the Moriori.

Swim at Remote Mason Bay on Stewart Island where the water's cold but the sand is frequented by kiwi.

Go green Explore the predator-free bird sanctuary of Ulva Island (p678).

milder than you'd expect, with winter averaging around 10°C and summer 16.5°C.

The Chatham Islands are very exposed but have a temperate climate. Average daily temperatures vary from 12°C to 18°C in February and 6°C to 10°C in July. The best time to visit is in December and January, when temperatures reach 23°C.

Tokelau has a tropical climate, with an average temperature of 28°C and heavy, but irregular, rainfall. Tropical storms are rare but occasionally wreak havoc.

Climatic conditions for the utterly remote can be summed up as tropical for the Kermadecs and wet, cold and windy for the Sub-Antarctic Islands.

STEWART ISLAND

pop 420

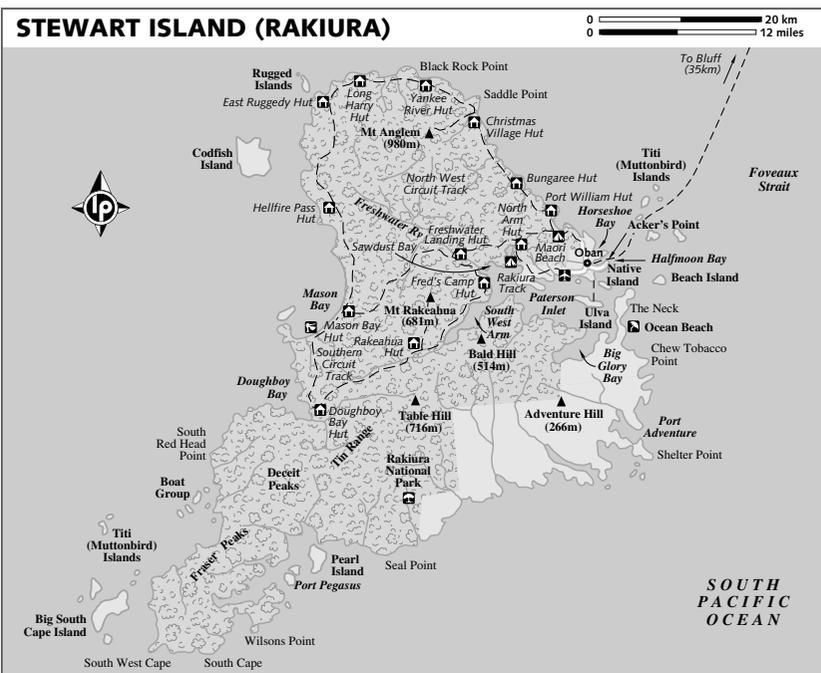
Due south of Invercargill, Stewart Island's Maori name is Rakiura (Glowing Skies) – catch a glimpse of a spectacular blood-red sunset or the *aurora australis* and you'll quickly know why. NZ's third-largest island features unspoiled wilderness and is a haven for a symphony of birdsong. Rakiura National Park protects 85% of the island, making it a mecca for trampers and birdwatchers, and there are countless sandy, isolated coves that are good for swimming if you're brave/mad enough to venture into the cool water.

Stewart Island's small, easy-going population is primarily settled in the fishing village of Oban in Halfmoon Bay and the atmosphere here is remote, rugged and friendly. Regular transport from Invercargill makes getting to Stewart Island straightforward and once there you won't regret jumping off the mainland's tourist trail for a relaxing few days.

HISTORY

According to myth, NZ was hauled up from the ocean by Maui (p56), who said, 'Let us go out of sight of land, far out in the open sea, and when we have quite lost sight of land, then let the anchor be dropped.' The North Island was the fish that Maui caught, the South Island his canoe and Rakiura was the anchor – Te Punga o te Waka o Maui.

There is evidence that parts of Rakiura were occupied by moa hunters as early as the 13th century. The *titi* (mutton bird or sooty shearwater) on adjacent islands were



an important seasonal food source for the southern Maori.

The first European visitor was Captain Cook, who sailed around the eastern, southern and western coasts in 1770 but couldn't figure out if it was an island or a peninsula. Deciding it was attached to the South Island, he called it South Cape. In 1809 the sealing vessel *Pegasus* circumnavigated Rakiura and named it after its first officer, William Stewart.

In June 1864 Stewart and the adjacent islets were bought from the Maori for £6000. Early industries were sealing, timber-milling, fish-curing and shipbuilding, with a short-lived gold rush towards the end of the 19th century. Today the island's economy is dependent on tourism and fishing, including crayfish (lobster), paua (abalone), salmon, mussels and cod.

FLORA & FAUNA

You don't even have to step off your balcony to experience the island's lush flora and fauna, but the more you explore, the more you'll encounter. Nature has cranked the birdsong

up to 11 here; you can't miss the tui, parakeets, kaka, bellbirds, fernbirds, robins and dotterels that constantly flap overhead and serenade you from gardens. You can also see kiwi (p680) and Fiordland crested, yellow-eyed and blue penguins. Ask the i-SITE about the evening parade of penguins on a small beach near the wharf. Resist the temptation to feed any of the birds; you run the risk of passing on diseases.

Two species of deer, the red and the Virginia (whitetail), were introduced in the early 20th century, as were brush-tailed possums, which are now numerous in the northern half of the island and destructive to the native bush. Stewart Island also has NZ fur seals.

Unlike NZ's North and South Islands, there is no beech forest on Stewart Island. The predominant lowland vegetation is hardwood but there are also lots of tree ferns, ground ferns and several types of orchid. Along the coast there's mutton bird scrub, grass tree, tree daisies, supplejack and leatherwood. Around the shores are clusters of bull kelp, fine red weeds, delicate green thallus and bladder ferns.

ORIENTATION

Stewart Island is 65km long and 40km at its widest point, and only has 20km of roads. The coastline is incised by numerous inlets, the largest of which is known as Paterson Inlet. The highest point is Mt Anglem (980m).

On the west coast Oban (Map679), the main settlement, is easily traversed on foot.

INFORMATION

On the ferry from Invercargill is a folder of information on the island including details of accommodation. There are no banks on Stewart Island. In a squeeze, the i-SITE can offer Eftpos, but don't count on it. Credit cards are accepted for most activities but it's wise to bring enough cash to last for the duration of your stay.

You can access the internet, including wi-fi, at Justcafé and the South Sea Hotel in Oban.

DOC Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre

(Map679; ☎ 03-219 0009; rakiuravc@doc.govt.nz; Main Rd; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) An interesting free permanent exhibition and helpful staff.

Oban visitor information centre (Map679; ☎ 0800 000 511, 03-219 1456; www.stewartislandexperience.co.nz; Main Rd) Stewart Island Experience (the ferry folk) takes bookings for activities and sightseeing tours, and rents scooters, cars, fishing rods, dive gear and golf clubs.

Post Office (Map679; Elgin Tce) At Stewart Island Flights.

Stewart Island Health Centre (Map679; ☎ 03-219 1098; Argyle St; ☎ 10.30am-12.30pm) Has 24-hour on-call service.

Stewart Island i-SITE (Map679; ☎ 03-219 1400; www.stewartisland.co.nz; 12 Elgin Tce; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat & Sun summer, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat & Sun winter) Red building near the ferry booking accommodation and activities.

Stewart Island Visitor Terminal (Map679; ☎ 03-219 0034; Main Wharf) Booking agency for local activities, the Bluff ferry and water taxis.

SIGHTS

Rakiura Museum (Map679; Ayr St Oban; adult/child \$2/\$0; ☎ 10am-noon Mon-Sat, noon-2pm Sun) has models of various ferries from over the years, a small but sobering exhibit on whaling, Maori artefacts and early European settlement. Note the brief opening hours.

The wooden **Presbyterian Church Hall** (Map679) was relocated to Oban from a whaling base in Paterson Inlet in 1937. At Harrold Bay, 2.5km southwest of town, is a **stone house** (Map679) built by Lewis Acker around 1835, one of the NZ's oldest stone buildings.

Ulva Island

Ulva Island (Map677) is a tiny paradise covering only 250 hectares. An early naturalist, Charles Traill, was honorary postmaster here. He would hoist a flag to signal that mail had arrived and hopefuls would paddle in from surrounding islands. His postal service was replaced by one at Oban in 1921, and in 1922 Ulva Island was declared a bird sanctuary.

With an absence of predators, the air is alive with the song of tui and bellbirds, and you'll also see kaka, weka, kakariki and *kereru* (NZ pigeon).

Good walking tracks in the island's north-west are detailed in *Ulva: Self-Guided Tour* (\$2), available from DOC. Popular routes include **Flagstaff Point Lookout** (20 minutes return) and **Boulder Beach** (1½ hours return). Many paths intersect amid beautiful stands of rimu, miro, totara and rata.

Water taxis can take you to Ulva independently (return \$20; p683), but you'll get more out of a walking tour with the knowledgeable guides from Ruggedly Range Wilderness Experience (p680) or Ulva's Guided Walks (p680).

ACTIVITIES

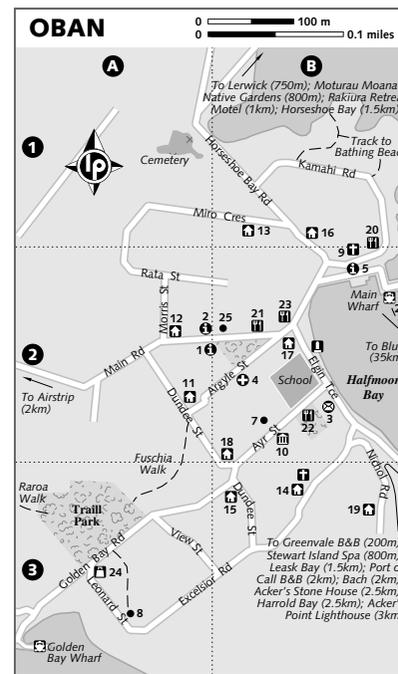
Tramping

Even if you're not a gung-ho hiker, Stewart Island is a wonderful place to stretch your legs and immerse yourself in wilderness on a short tramp. For more serious tramps, there are excellent, multiday, DOC-maintained trails. The DOC Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre (left) sells hut passes and has detailed pamphlets on local tramps. Store gear here in small/large lockers for \$3/6 per day.

In the northern part of the island, there's a good network of tracks with huts occupied on a first-come, first-served basis. Each hut has foam mattresses, wood stoves for heating, running water and toilets; you need to carry a stove, food, sleeping bags, utensils and first-aid equipment. A tent can be useful over the busy summer holidays and Easter period. The southern part of the island is undeveloped and desolate, and you shouldn't tramp on your own or go off the established tracks.

DAY TRAMPS

There are a number of short tramps, ranging from half an hour to seven hours; the majority are easily accessed from Halfmoon Bay. Pick up *Day Walks* (\$1) from the i-SITE. The



walk to **Observation Rock** (30 minutes return) has good views over Paterson Inlet. Continue past the old stone house at Harrold Bay to **Acker's Point Lighthouse** (three hours return), for good views of Foveaux Strait and the chance to see blue penguins and a colony of titi (mutton birds).

MULTIDAY TRAMPS

The 29km, three-day **Rakiura Track** is one of NZ's Great Walks (p82) and is a well-defined, easy circuit starting and ending at Oban with copious bird life, beaches and lush bush en route. Huts along this scenic, extensively boardwalked track get quite crowded, particularly those at Port William and North Arm, both of which have room for 30 trampers. There are also camping grounds at Sawdust Bay, Maori Beach and Port William. Overnight trampers need to buy from DOC either a date-stamped **Great Walks huts pass** (per night adult/child \$10/free) or **camping pass** (per night adult/child \$2.50/1.25); there's a limit of two consecutive nights in any one hut. See the DOC pamphlet *Rakiura Track* (\$1) for more info.

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Following the northern coast is the **North West Circuit Track**, a 125km trail taking 10 to 12 days that is often plagued with deep, thick mud. It's only suitable for well-equipped and experienced trampers, as is the 56km **Southern Circuit Track** that branches off it, which adds a further four days. A **North West Circuit Pass** (\$45) gives you a night in each of these tracks' huts. Alternatively, you can use **Hut tickets** (per night \$5) or a 12-month **Backcountry Hut Pass** (adult/child \$90/45) to stay in huts on either circuit track but you'll still have to buy a Great Walks huts pass for use at Port William and North Arm. See the DOC brochure *North West & Southern Circuit Tracks* (\$1).

Both the Rakiura and North West Circuit Tracks are detailed in *Lonely Planet's Tramping in New Zealand*.

SPOTTING A KIWI: A BRUSH WITH THE GODS

Considered the king of the forest by Maori, the kiwi has been around for 70 million years and is related to the now extinct moa. Brown feathers camouflage the kiwi against its bush surroundings and a nocturnal lifestyle means spying a kiwi in the wild is a challenge. They're a smart wee bird – they even build their burrows a few months before moving in so newly grown vegetation can further increase their privacy.

Stewart Island is one of the few places on earth where you can spot a kiwi in the wild. As big as a barnyard chicken and numbering 20,000, the tokoeka, or Stewart Island brown kiwi, is larger in size and population than other subspecies. They are also the only kiwi active during daylight hours. About two hours after sunrise and an hour before sunset, tokoeka forage for food in grassed areas, particularly on Mason Bay. Watch for white kiwi poo and telltale holes made by their long hunting beaks. When you spot one, keep silent, and stay still and well away. The birds' poor eyesight and single-mindedness in searching for food will often lead them to bump right into you.

Kiwi Spotting

The search for *Apteryx australis lawryi* is a highly rewarding coactivity, particularly when you know where to look. The Stewart Island kiwi is a distinct subspecies, with a larger beak and longer legs than its northern cousins. Kiwi are common over much of Stewart Island, particularly foraging around beaches for sand hoppers under washed-up kelp. Unusually, Stewart Island's kiwi are active during the day as well as at night – the birds are forced to forage for longer to attain breeding condition. Many trampers on the North West Circuit Track (p679) spot them. For a helping hand with sightings, see Tours (right). Also see the boxed text, above.

Other Activities

Paterson Inlet consists of 100 sq km of sheltered, kayak-friendly waterways, with 20 islands, DOC huts and two navigable rivers. A popular trip is a paddle to **Freshwater Landing** (7km upriver from the inlet) followed by a three- to four-hour walk to Mason Bay to see kiwis in the wild. **Rakiura Kayaks** (☎ 03-219 1160; lizcave@xtra.co.nz) rents kayaks from \$45 a day and also runs half-day guided trips around the inlet (\$55).

Ruggedy Range Wilderness Experience (☎ 03-219 1066; www.ruggedyrange.com) runs a full-day kayak trip (adult/child \$145/125) including a guided walk on Ulva Island and has guided trips from half a day to 3½ days including camping and hiking. Prices range from \$85 to \$1950.

Oban visitor information centre (p678) rents mountain bikes and motor scooters (per half day \$26/50). The island's **Community Centre** (☎ 03-219 1477; 10 Ayr St; nonmembers \$5) houses a gym,

sauna, netball and squash courts, all of which are open to visitors. There's also a **library** where visitors can borrow books for 50 cents.

Stewart Island Spa (☎ 03-219 1422; www.stewartislandspa.co.nz) is in a refurbished hilltop cottage. Options include a rainforest bath (\$85), sauna (\$65) and massage (\$75 to \$165). Premium organic beauty products are used for all treatments. Our favourite is a Thai massage in a tiny gazebo with views of Halfmoon Bay. Ask at Justcafé (p682).

TOURS

Ulva's Guided Walks (☎ 03-219 1216; www.ulva.co.nz) offers just that, with Maori history and conservation included in the excellent three-hour tours that cost \$95 (transport included).

Coast to Coast (☎ 03-218 9129; www.stewartislandflights.com; adult/child \$185/135) offers adventure-packed days with a flight from Oban and beach landing at Mason Bay, a four-hour tramp and a one-hour boat ride through Paterson Inlet to Golden Bay. Extend the trip by staying overnight the huts along the track.

Stewart Island Experience (☎ 03-219 0034; www.stewartislandexperience.co.nz; Stewart Island Visitor Terminal) run 2½-hour Paterson Inlet cruises (adult/child \$70/15, daily at 1pm Oct to April) via Ulva Island; daily 1½-hour minibus tours of Oban and the surrounding bays (adult/child \$35/15); and daily, 45-minute semisubmersible cruises (adult/child \$35/15) to see what lies beneath.

To see a kiwi in the wild, **Bravo Adventure Cruises** (☎ 03-219 1144; phillidsmith@xtra.co.nz) runs night-time tours. In order to protect the kiwi, numbers are limited so make sure you book well ahead.

Ruggedy Range Wilderness Experience (opposite) also takes small groups on guided walks, kayaking or kiwi spotting, with an eco-friendly, conservation angle. It also specialises in the viewing of pelagic seabirds. Excursions range from a half-day trip to Ulva Island (\$85) to a 3½-day wilderness experience (\$1950).

Charter companies offer fishing trips, wildlife cruises and trips up Paterson Inlet. Contact the i-SITE for a full list.

Aurora Charters (☎ 03-219 1126; www.aurora.com; aurora.com) Half-day fishing trips cost \$65.

Bravo Adventure Cruises (☎ 03-219 1144; phillidsmith@xtra.co.nz)

Rawhiti Excursions (☎ 03-219 1023, per half-/full day \$60/85) Traditional handfishing with a lunch option of 'catch and cook' your own blue cod.

Talisker Charters (☎ 03-219 1151; www.taliskercharter.co.nz) Also runs dive charters and 'live aboard' charters along in Fiordland.

SLEEPING

Despite Oban's surprisingly high number of motels, hostels, holiday homes and B&Bs, finding accommodation can be difficult, even in the off-season when many places shut down. It's wise to book ahead; otherwise, beat a path to the i-SITE pronto.

Self-contained flats or holiday homes offer good value, and basic backpacker-style accommodation is available in some homes in summer. It's often impossible to prebook these and you'll probably need your own sleeping bag.

Budget

Stewart Island Backpackers (☎ 03-219 1114; shearwater.inn@stewart-island.co.nz; cnr Dundee & Ayr Sts; dm/s/tw/d \$24/30/50/50; ☑) Rooms are basic but clean, while some are brightly painted and many open onto a courtyard. There are only three beds per dorm. and a spacious lounge and common kitchen. There's also table tennis, coin-operated internet, books and a barbecue. Tenting is \$10 per person.

our pick Jo & Andy's B&B (☎ 03-219 1230; jariksem@clear.net.nz; cnr Morris St & Main Rd; s/d/tw \$48/70/70; ☑) An excellent option for budget travellers, this cosy blue home squeezes in twin, double and single rooms. A big breakfast of muesli, fruit and homemade bread prepares you for tramping and dinner is available for \$18. After a long tramp, dissolve into the skilful hands of the on-site massage therapist. You'll have earned it.

For basic accommodation also try **Michael's** (☎ 03-219 1425; Golden Bay Rd; dm \$20).

Midrange

South Sea Hotel (☎ 03-219 1059; www.stewart-island.co.nz; 26 Elgin Tce; s \$65-95, d \$85-105, units \$145; ☑) Built in 1890, this harbourside hotel has slightly worn, floral rooms and a big sunny deck looking out on Halfmoon Bay. The downstairs pub often overpowers the ocean sounds on weekends while out the back sunny motel units manage a South Pacific look with high ceilings, kitchenettes and verandas.

Lerwick (☎ 03-219 1552; Butterfield Beach; d \$100) Located a 20-minute walk north of town, this self-contained house has two bedrooms and a sleepout. Water views and rustic wooden furnishings make it cosy and private.

Pilgrim Cottage (☎ 03-219 1144; phillidsmith@xtra.co.nz; 8 Horseshoe Bay Rd; d \$120) This quaint, weather-board cottage is in a verdant oasis near town with wooden furnishings, a potbelly stove and a well-equipped kitchen. Lots of bird life will keep you thoroughly entertained.

Rakiura Retreat Motel (☎ 03-219 1096; www.rakiuraretreat.co.nz; Horseshoe Bay Rd; d \$120-190; ☑) Surrounded by native bush, this row of motel units has comfortable and peaceful rooms. It's a pleasant 20-minute walk from town and there's a winding walking track from the motel down to secluded Bragg's Bay. Mountain bikes are complimentary, scooters can be hired and meals can be arranged for an additional cost.

Top End

Bay Motel (☎ 03-219 1119; www.baymotel.co.nz; 9 Dundee St; d \$155-170) Modern, comfortable units with lots of light and views over Oban and the harbour. One- and two-bedroom units have big spa tubs, all rooms have full kitchens and two are wheelchair-accessible. When you've quickly exhausted the island's bustling after-dark scene, Sky TV's on hand for on-tap entertainment.

Kaka Cottages (☎ 03-219 1252; www.kakacottages.co.nz; 7 & 9 Miro Cres; d \$160-216; ☑) These studio units and self-contained cottages with a rustic cabin feel have wooden interiors, wi-fi and verandas facing the bay. Most mornings you'll be greeted by kakas. Just don't feed them, OK?

Latt 47° Cottage (☎ 03-219 1330; john.barry@clear.net.nz; 12A Excelsior Rd; d \$170) Contemporary self-contained lodging with wood-beamed ceilings, nautical colours and modern furnishings. The front room opens onto a patio with harbour views. Inside, there are two double bedrooms, a big bath, TV and CD player. Kids aren't welcome.

Greenvale B&B (☎ 03-219 1357; www.greenvalestewartisland.co.nz; Elgin Tce; s/d \$200/250) Just 50m from the sea, this modern home has stunning views over Foveaux Strait. Both en-suite rooms have quality cotton bed linen and contemporary furnishings. It's a five-minute walk to Halfmoon Bay, and a two-second transition to the sunny deck.

Stewart Island Lodge (☎ 03-219 1085; www.stewartislandlodge.co.nz; Nichol Rd; per person \$240-320) This up-market retreat with six en-suite rooms features king-size beds, a shared deck, and a garden teeming with bird life. On a hill at the edge of town, the lodge commands magnificent views. Prices include just breakfast, or breakfast and a gourmet seafood dinner.

Port of Call B&B (☎ 03-219 1394; www.portofcall.co.nz; Leask Bay Rd; s/d \$290/320) It's the little things that make a difference, like a welcome fruit basket and 20 hectares of surrounding bush. Take in ocean views, get cosy before an open fire or explore an isolated beach. Nearby is a modern studio unit called the Bach (\$250). You'll find both 1.5km southwest of Oban on the way to Acker's Point. In the heart of Halfmoon Bay, the owners also offer Turner Cottage (\$165), perfect for romantic island escapes.

EATING & DRINKING

Our pick Kai Kart (☎ 03-219 1225; Ayr St; meals \$5-20; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm & 5-9pm, closed Mon-Tue May-Nov) Owned by an oyster and mussel farmer, you just know the seafood at this tiny caravan of cuisine is going to be exceptionally fresh. The sweet-as-sweet blue cod could be the best fish you'll ever have and the mussels with spicy satay sauce aren't far behind. Park yourself in an interior booth, grab an outside table or take a short stroll to eat your goodies on the beach. Don't blame us if you've finished them before you get there.

Justcafé (☎ 03-219 1422; Main Rd; meals \$10-13; ☎ 8am-8pm; ☎) This warm little place has wooden-bench tables, lots of magazines and funky crafts for sale. Fill up on soups, tasty sandwiches and baking. Nurse a good coffee or an even better smoothie or raw juice. Laptop toters can hitch up to the wi-fi network.

South Sea Hotel (☎ 03-219 1059; 26 Elgin Tce; mains \$14-28; ☎ 11am-late) With old B&W photos this café-style spot is a comfortable place to dine with the locals. Try the seafood chowder; it's listed under 'Starters' but it's a meal in itself. The attached pub is the town's main drinking hole, enlivened by occasional weekend bands

and a loads-of-fun pub quiz that kicks off at 7pm on Sunday nights. Say hi to Vicky, quiz-mistress extraordinaire for us.

Church Hill Cafe, Bar & Restaurant (☎ 03-219 1323; 36 Kamahi Rd; lunch mains \$18-25, dinner mains \$30-40; ☎ 10.30am-10pm) Look beyond the gimmicky 'Stone Grill' items on the menu to local flavours like blue cod and mutton bird (in season). In summer the sunny, spacious deck and lawn provide hilltop views, and in cooler months you'll need to beat out the friendly cat for a cosy spot by the open fire. Coffee and cake are recommended any time of the day. You should book for dinner.

Self-caterers can get groceries from Oban's general store, **Ship to Shore** (☎ 03-219 1069; Elgin Tce; ☎ 7.30am-7pm). Also available are sandwiches and baked goodies (\$3 to \$5), and they can prepare a packed lunch if you're going for a day tramp. It's also the kind of friendly place that announces locals' birthdays on a blackboard outside.

The Fishermen's Co-op on the main wharf often sells fresh fish and crayfish.

SHOPPING

You don't come to Stewart Island for the shopping, but the **Fernery** (☎ 03-219 1453; 29 Golden Bay Rd) is worth a visit. In a beautiful bush setting, it sells crafts and paintings and a very good selection of island-themed books, especially titles for kids. Pick up a CD of birdcalls so you'll know your kiwi from your kaka.

Glowing Sky (☎ 03-219 1528; www.glowingsky.co.nz; Elgin Tce) sells hand-printed T-shirts. Next door learn about their work with the **Halfmoon Bay Habitat Rehabilitation Project** which is striving to restore the native bird life around Halfmoon Bay. Ruggedy Range Wilderness Experience (p680) can set you up for tramp-ing and camping.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Stewart Island Flights (☎ 03-218 9129; www.stewartislandflights.co.nz; Elgin Tce) flies between the island and Invercargill (adult/child one way \$95/55, return \$165/95). Flights depart three times daily year-round. Phone ahead for occasional discount and standby fares. The bus trip from the island's airstrip to Oban is included in the fare.

Boat

The passenger-only **Stewart Island Experience Ferry** (☎ 03-212 7660; www.stewartislandexperience.co.nz)

YOU CAUGHT IT. NOW COOK IT.

You're (literally) surrounded by fishing opportunities on Stewart Island, but if you're not staying in self-contained accommodation, you'll need to explore other avenues to prepare your freshly caught *kai moana* (seafood).

For a small fee, the good people at the Kai Kart (opposite) will perform kitchen duties on your behalf, and if you're an alfresco kind of chef, fire up the public barbecues, (buy charcoal at Ship to Shore; see opposite) in the pleasant **Moturau Moana Native Gardens** on the eastern edge of Half Moon Bay. Head to the DOC Visitor Centre (p678) and pick up a copy of *Seafood Recipes from Stewart Island* (\$7.50), a recipe book compiled for fundraising by the local primary school.

runs between Bluff and Oban (adult/child \$55/27.50) around three times daily. Book a few days ahead in summer. The crossing takes one hour and can be a rough ride. The company also runs a shuttle between Bluff and Invercargill (adult/child \$18/9) with pick-up and drop-off in Invercargill at the i-SITE, Tuatara Backpackers and Invercargill Airport. A shuttle also runs between Bluff and Queenstown (adult/child \$60/40), and Bluff and Te Anau (adult/child \$60/40) with pick-up and drop-off at the Real Journeys Visitor Centres.

GETTING AROUND

Sea-taxis offer pick-ups and drop-offs to remote parts of the island – a handy service for trampers. The taxis also service Ulva Island (return \$20). Try **Stewart Island Water Taxi & Eco Guiding** (☎ 03-219 1394), **Seabuzz Tours** (☎ 03-219 1282) or **Kaian Water Taxi** (☎ 03-219 1013). These operators can be found at Golden Bay Wharf, a 10-minute walk from Oban. Rent a scooter (per half-day \$26/50) from Oban visitor information centre (p678) or a car (per half-/full day \$80/100) from **Crawford Rentals** (☎ 03-218 3833; crawfordrentals@ihug.co.nz).

CHATHAM ISLANDS

pop 770

Named Rekohu (Misty Sun) by the Moriuri, the Chathams are found in the South Pacific Ocean, 850km due east of Christchurch. This remote group of 10 islands lays claim to the first human habitation over the international dateline. Apart from the 50 or so people on Pitt Island, only Chatham Island is significantly populated.

The islands' geographical contrasts are striking: rugged coastlines and towering cliffs, volcanic peaks, lagoons and peat bogs, sweeping beaches, isolated farms and dense

patches of forest. The main industry besides farming and tourism (particularly ecotourism) is crayfish processing, and there are plants at Waitangi, Kaingaroa, Owenga and Port Hutt. These four towns have strong communities and a sleepy, rustic charm.

HISTORY

The Chatham Islands were formed aeons ago by volcanic upthrust and were first inhabited by the Moriuri tribe, which arrived between 500 and 1100 years ago. Its distinctive Polynesian culture was mainly peaceful but the situation changed for the worse with the arrival of Europeans in 1791 and followed by groups of mainland Maori in the mid-1800s. By the beginning of the 20th century there were just 12 full-blooded Moriuri left and, in 1933, the last full-blooded Moriuri died. See the boxed text, p686.

FAUNA

Largely due to their isolation, eighteen species of bird are endemic to the islands including local tui, pigeon and mollyhawk. Entry to sanctuaries on Pitt and Rangatira (South East) Islands is prohibited, but many species can still be seen outside; DOC staff can outline the best viewing spots. Endangered birds include the black robin, once perilously close to extinction in its last refuge, Mangere Island. The very rare Chatham Island taiko (*Pterodroma magentae*) nests in the Tuku River region of Chatham Island's south coast. The **Chatham Island Taiko Trust** (www.taiko.org.nz) is working with DOC to re-establish the species and in 2007 eight taiko chicks were successfully released into the predator-free Sweetwater Conservation Covenant.

There's a fur seal colony near Kaingaroa in the northeast of Chatham Island but access is across private land. Seek permission from the landowner.

INFORMATION

Information on the islands is available online at www.chathamshells.com and www.chathamshells.co.nz, or from **Air Chathams** (☎ 03-305 0209; www.airchathamshells.co.nz) or the local **council** (☎ 03-305 0033; www.cic.govt.nz; Tuku Rd, Waitangi).

Once you're on the Chatham Islands, the best way of getting informed is by talking to the locals. The **DOC office** (☎ 03-305 0098; amckil@doc.govt.nz; Te One) may be unattended, so call before you visit.

The book *A Land Apart*, by Michael King and Robin Morrison, has a wealth of historical background while *Discover the Chatham Islands* (published 2006) by Cherry Lawrie and Jocelyn Powell is an excellent contemporary resource with detailed maps and touring information.

Waitangi is the islands' only sizable town and has a couple of shops, a hotel and a small hospital. There's also an ANZ bank, which also doubles as a **post office** (📧 10am-2pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri) and fish and chip shop.

There are no ATMs; some businesses accept credit cards and the Waitangi General Store accepts Eftpos, but it's wise to bring cash. Time on the islands is 45 minutes ahead of mainland NZ time. Use the internet at Hotel Chatham and leave your mobile phone at home.

All visitors must have confirmed accommodation before arrival.

SIGHTS

Mysterious 200-year-old Moriori **tree carvings** can be found in **Hapupu National Historic Reserve** near the old Te Hapupu aerodrome in a signposted and fenced-off area open to the public. **Rock engravings** survive on the shores of Te Whanga Lagoon near the airstrip.

Fossilised sharks' teeth are at Blind Jim's Creek and the shores of Te Whanga Lagoon. They are about 40 million years old and an important part of local heritage; do not disturb them. Their appearance here, pushed up by the waves of the lagoon, has not been fully explained.

At Manukau Point near Owenga there's a **statue** of the 'last Moriori', Tommy Solomon; see the boxed text, p686. There's also a small **museum** (☎ 03-305 0033; admission free; 🕒 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) of Moriori artefacts in the council offices in Waitangi.

ACTIVITIES & TOURS

The islands have fine beaches where you can fish and catch crayfish (lobster). Crays are a major industry in the Chatham Islands and

are exported to North America and Japan. There are daily per-person quotas for cray and paua hauls; check with DOC. Note that catching crayfish is not permitted during March and April.

Explore shipwrecks in the clear waters around the islands with **Chatham Fish & Dive Charters** (☎ 03-305 0575; chathamadventures@tra.co.nz). Hotel Chatham (below) and Chatham Lodge (below) can also organise dive tours.

Trampers can strike out on the **walking tracks** in DOC-established reserves. Liz & Bruce Tuanui offer **guided tours** (☎ 03-305 0351; liztuanui@tra.co.nz) into the Tuku Reserve.

For tours visiting local sights, ask your accommodation.

SLEEPING & EATING

All visitors are required to have confirmed accommodation before arriving on the islands. Over summer the hotel and the lodge are often filled by tour groups, and this means other accommodation subsequently gets booked out too, sometimes for months at a time. Book as far ahead as possible in peak season.

Beach House Backpackers (☎ 03-305 0048 www.beachhousebackpackers.co.nz; Waitangi; dm \$50) This place is centrally located and newly refurbished with a kitchen, laundry, bike hire (per day \$25) and airport transfers (\$15). There's also a camping area, and you can rent the whole shebang (sleeps eight) for \$400.

Chatham Motels (☎ 03-305 0003; www.chathammc.co.nz; Waitangi; dm \$60, d \$100-120) Basic accommodation in a bunkhouse as well as self-contained units. Unit three is right in the centre of town and has two bedrooms as well as extras like a barbecue and deck with a harbour view. There's also a more remote farmhouse for rent (\$80), and lots of tours on offer.

Hotel Chatham (☎ 03-305 0048; www.hotelchatham.co.nz; Waitangi; s/d \$75/110; 📺) Waitangi's social focal point offers good rooms, most with balconies and sea views. Single rooms have shared facilities.

The same owners also have **Travellers Rest** (☎ 03-305 0492; www.travellersrest.co.nz; d \$130-140) nearby with classier, more private rooms.

Chatham Lodge (☎ 0800 424 2842, 03-305 0196; www.chathamlodge.net.nz; s/d from \$100/125) With rolling farmland out the front door and the lush Henga Scenic Reserve out the back, this is a peaceful place to bunk down. Rooms are quiet and comfortable and activities include boating and hiking through the reserve to the



coastline. Decently priced meals are available as are package tours from Wellington. There's also a good bar that sometimes serves a locally brewed beer.

Awarakau Farmstay (☎ 03-305 0176; www.awarakaufarmstays.co.nz; d \$130) With sea views and four bedrooms this farmstay-meets-B&B, built in 2005, is one of the Chathams' nicest places to stay. It's on a 1300-acre sheep and cattle farm so expect a bit of ovine and bovine company. Evening meals can also be provided. Don't ask for lamb or beef.

Most accommodation options also offer meals. Central eating options include the **Hotel Chatham** (mains \$26-55; 🕒 noon-9pm) with a restaurant specialising in seafood, and **Petre Bay Takeaways** (☎ 03-305 0132; Waitangi). There's

also a good restaurant at Chatham Lodge. Self-caterers can head to **Waitangi General Store** (☎ 03-305 0041; Wharf Rd, Waitangi; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat).

You can buy crayfish and blue cod at the packaging factory in Waitangi. Flounder and whitebait can be caught in the lagoon, and paua and kina gathered just offshore.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air Chathams (☎ 03-305 0209; www.airchathamshells.co.nz) flies directly to Chatham Island from Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland and Napier (from \$648 return). You can also book by calling **Air New Zealand** (☎ 0800 737 000, 03-363 0600). The flight takes two hours and it's wise to book well ahead as seats are limited.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE MORIORI

Some time between AD 900 and AD 1500, a group of Polynesians landed on the isolated Chatham Islands. Over time they became the Moriori, a people with a distinct culture and language. While some historians have long claimed that the Moriori were originally Maori who sailed from NZ, more recent finds strongly suggest that the Moriori arrived directly at the Chatham Islands. The Moriori lived in a society without rigid social divisions, forbade tribal warfare and settled disputes on a one-to-one basis with hand-to-hand combat. Today you can still see the fascinating symbols they carved into the trees (dendroglyphs) and rocks (petroglyphs) fringing Te Whanga Lagoon (p684).

When the HMS *Chatham* arrived in 1791 and claimed the islands for Britain, there were believed to be about 2000 Moriori on the islands. But the establishment of whaling and sealing industries, and the consequent depletion of two of the Moriori's main food sources, soon took its toll on the local population.

Hard times got worse in 1835, when groups of mainland Maori began to arrive on the Chathams. Nine hundred new residents began to occupy the land in a process known as *takahi*, killing about 300 resisting Moriori and enslaving others. By 1841 there were believed to be only 160 Moriori and over 400 Maori and it wasn't until two years later that the last of the Moriori slaves were released. In 1870 the Native Land Court Hearings recognised that the mainland tribes had sovereignty over 97% of the Chathams by right of conquest, and small reserves were created for the 90 surviving Moriori.

Over time, the Moriori intermarried and their unique culture and identity slowly faded. Their language was lost with the last great Moriori scholar, Hirawanu Tapu, in 1900. In 1933 the last full-blood Moriori, Tommy Solomon, died. At the time, his passing was seen as the extinction of the race, but it was far from that. His three sons and two daughters were identified as Moriori and there are also many other families on the island who claim Moriori ancestry.

In August 2001 the Waitangi Tribunal ruled the ancestral rights to the Chatham Islands belonged to the Moriori and concluded that Moriori should receive compensation for the lasting impact of the Crown's failure to intervene after the 1835 mainland Maori invasion. Moriori descendants negotiated their redress with the NZ government and won recognition to claim a share of the islands' fishing resources.

In 2002 two groups involved in bitter infighting over entitlement to these assets came together to form Hokotehi Moriori Trust. In 2005 the trust received \$15 million share of fisheries and by 2007 the value of these fishery quotas had grown to \$25 million.

In recent years there has been a renaissance in Moriori culture and many locals claim Moriori ancestry. Young Chatham Islanders are learning the unique dialect of the Moriori and resurrecting old songs. Once again they are being recognised as the true *tchakat henu* (people of the land) of the Chathams.

For more on the Moriori, read *Moriori: A People Rediscovered* by NZ historian Michael King.

GETTING AROUND

The airport is 21km north of Waitangi on Chatham Island and isn't serviced by any regular transport. Accommodation owners do pre-arranged airport pick-ups, usually for \$15.

Air Chathams (☎ 03-305 0209; www.airchathams.co.nz) operates a light aircraft for aerial sight-seeing (\$650 per hour) and transport to Pitt Island (\$140 return per person), 19km from Chatham Island.

Beyond Waitangi most roads are unsealed and there's no public transport. **Chatham Motors** (☎ 03-305 0093; chathammotors@xtra.co.nz; Reserve Rd, Waitangi) hires cars and 4WD vehicles,

as do Chatham Lodge and Hotel Chatham. Expect to pay from \$100 per day for a car or 4WD. Hotel Chatham also rents a quadbike (per day \$60) and can arrange a car with local driver (per day \$200).

OTHER ISLANDS

NZ fully or partially administers a number of far-flung islands: the Sub-Antarctic Islands to the south and the Kermadecs and Tokelau to the far north of the country in the Pacific Ocean.

SUB-ANTARCTIC ISLANDS

With a spectacularly unrewarding human history of sealing, shipwrecks and forlorn attempts at farming, NZ's remote and wind-swept Sub-Antarctic Islands have since discovered their true calling as a reserve. The Snares, Auckland, Bounty and Antipodes Islands, as well as Campbell Island, are all established nature reserves, protecting the lush, diverse vegetation and breeding grounds for sea birds, penguins and mammals such as the elephant seal. The remarkable wealth of bird life found here led to the archipelago's recognition by Unesco as a World Heritage Site in 1998.

The reserves are run and strictly controlled by the Invercargill office of **DOC** (☎ 03-214 4589; www.doc.govt.nz) and can be visited only with a permit. To get some idea of this wild environment, visit the Roaring 40s exhibit at Invercargill's Southland Museum & Art Gallery (p663).

You can visit the islands through expensive but well-managed ecotourism boat trips. **Fiordland Ecology Holidays** (☎ 03-249 6600; www.fiordland.gen.nz), based in Manapouri, occasionally runs tours to the Sub-Antarctic Islands aboard a small sailing vessel. The company also runs scientific trips that sometimes have room for casual explorers. Spaces are very limited; email or call them about upcoming possibilities but be prepared to be very patient as there's usually a long waiting list.

Heritage Expeditions NZ (☎ 0800 262 8873, 03-338 9944; www.heritage-expeditions.com) runs small, up-market lengthy cruises to the Subantarctic and Chatham Islands.

SNARES ISLANDS

The Snares Islands are famous for their incredible number of *titi* (mutton birds). It's been estimated that on any one evening during the breeding season (November to April) there will be five million birds in the air. Other birds found here are the Snares crested penguin, cape pigeon and Buller's mollymawks. Landings are not permitted on the islands.

AUCKLAND ISLANDS

Discovered in 1806 the Auckland Islands posed a shipwreck risk during the 19th century. Settlement was once attempted in Erebus Cove and it wasn't until 1992 that the last of the introduced cattle were destroyed.

Many species of bird including endemic shags, the flightless teal and the royal albatross make Enderby Island their temporary or permanent home. Skuas (gull-like birds) are ever-present in the skies above the Hookers sea-lion colony. On Disappointment Island there are over 60,000 white-capped mollymawks and Derrycastle Reef often attracts the turnstone and bartailed godwit waders. With the appropriate permits and guide, landings are permitted on the islands at designated locations.

CAMPBELL ISLAND

Campbell Island is the true domain of pelagic bird species. It's estimated there are over 7500 pairs of southern royal albatross based here, not to mention sizable colonies of grey-headed and blackbrowed mollymawks. Brown Norway rats found their way to Campbell Island with early explorers and had detrimental effects on smaller birds. In 2001, two hundred years after they were introduced, the rats were finally eradicated. Seabirds are now returning and the Campbell Island Teal was reintroduced in 2004 from nearby Dent Island. The world's rarest duck still only numbers 50 but the species is slowly taking hold again on its original island home. Campbell Island can only be visited with the appropriate permits and guide.

ANTIPODES ISLANDS

These islands get their name from the fact that their position at latitude 180 degrees puts them opposite latitude 0 degrees at Greenwich, England. The real treat here is the endemic Antipodes Island parakeet, which is found with (but does not breed with) the red-crowned parakeet. Wandering albatross nest in the short grass on the islands' higher ground. You cannot land on the Antipodes.

BOUNTY ISLANDS

Landing is not permitted on any of the 13 Bounty Islands – there's a good chance that you would step on wildlife, as the 135 hectares of these granite islands are soaked in mammals and birds. There are literally thousands of erect crested penguins, fulmar prions and salvins mollymawks clustered in crevices near the lower slopes. And yes, the islands were named by William Bligh after his ship just months before his infamous mutiny.

THE KERMADECS

Known in Polynesian as Rangitahua, these subtropical, volcanic islands lie 1000km northeast of NZ. Annexed to NZ in 1887, the group lies in the Pacific's 'ring of fire', where earthquakes and volcanic eruptions regularly occur. The area is home to NZ's largest marine reserve.

Raoul Island is the largest of the archipelago and was settled periodically, most notably in the early 19th century by whalers. Today it has a number of protected archaeological and historical sites as well as a tiny resident population of scientists, rangers and weather-station personnel. In March 2006 the eruption of Raoul Island's Green Lake is believed to have killed Mark Kearney from NZ's Department of Conservation (DOC). He was measuring the lake's temperature when the eruption occurred and his body has never been found. Five other DOC workers were forced to evacuate back to NZ.

Other islands include McCauley and Curtis Islands, L'Esperance Rock and a number of stony outcrops. Most have boulder-strewn beaches and steep, rocky cliffs.

The Kermadecs perch on the edge of the enormously deep Kermadec Trench, and are in the transitional zone between temperate and tropical waters. The unique marine ecosystem has made diving popular, with sighting the elusive spotted black groper the goal.

Heritage Expeditions NZ (☎ 0800 262 8873, 03-338 9944; www.heritage-expeditions.com) runs occasional cruises, with diving, hiking and bird-watching. At the time of writing, the cruises were only planned every three years.

TOKELAU

pop 1500

About halfway between NZ and Hawai'i, Tokelau is made up of a trio of tiny atolls – Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu. Each has a ribbon of tiny islets surrounding a central lagoon and together they total 12.2 sq km of dry land and measure only 5m at their highest point. Tokelau is at extreme risk from the effects of global warming, with rising sea levels, increased severity of storms and the death of coral reefs all frighteningly predicted for the

not-too-distant future. UN study teams do not expect Tokelau to be inhabitable beyond the 21st century.

While Tokelau has been governed by NZ since 1925 and in more recent times administered partially by Samoa, the islands have steadily moved towards self-government, but a referendum in February 2006 failed to result in independence. A second referendum in October 2007 again failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority. This time the shortfall was just 16 votes from the voting population of 789, and at the time of writing the leader of the overseas Tokelauan community in NZ was calling for another vote within two years. Watch this sleepy, palm-fringed place.

Not surprisingly Tokelau can't support a large population and there has been a steady stream of emigrating Tokelauans for many years – there are now many more Tokelauans living in NZ than on the atolls.

It's tough to visit Tokelau as there's no airport and only one cargo/passenger ship per month. The MV *Tokelau* departs from Samoa for the 36-hour journey to Tokelau and is usually fully booked with locals. There's no tourism to speak of and almost no established facilities for visitors, except for a couple of places to stay. Once there, you can snorkel the amazing coral reefs, fish, laze or join in a local batting game of *kilikiti*.

The **Tokelau Apia Liaison Office** (TALO; ☎ 685-20822; maka@lesamoa.net; PO Box 865, Apia), based in Samoa, deals with inquiries and issues visitors' permits (NZ\$30 for one month), stipulating that consent to visit must be given by village elders, accommodation must be arranged prior to departure and a return ticket to Samoa must be booked. On Nukunonu, you can stay at the basic **Luanaliki Hotel** (☎ 690-4116; per person \$60), with meals included. On Fakaofu and Atafu, homestays can be arranged through TALO.

Read about Tokelau online at www.tokelau.org.nz and www.fakaofu.tk and also check out Lonely Planet's *South Pacific & Micronesia* guide, which has a chapter on Tokelau. Also go to www.virtualtourist.com/travel and click through to the Tokelau page.

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