



A Taste of Christchurch: The Gateway to New Zealand's South Island

Christchurch is not just the starting point for adventures into New Zealand's breathtaking South Island; it is also home to an evolving and dynamic food scene. Rooted in a farm-to-table ethos, the city celebrates fresh, local produce, with a culinary landscape that effortlessly blends fine dining with relaxed, approachable fare. Expect a strong emphasis on **seafood, meats, and seasonal vegetables**, as well as ample options for **plant-based and health-conscious** travelers. Whether you're indulging in a high-end tasting menu or grabbing a casual bite before a hike, Christchurch has something to satisfy every palate.

Must-Try Culinary Experiences in Christchurch

THE LOTUS-HEART SINCE 1997

1. The Lotus Heart – Nourishing Meals with Healing Properties 363 St Asaph Street | CBD

For weary travelers, The Lotus Heart is a sanctuary serving up nourishing, health-focused meals in a **tranquil, welcoming setting**. Specializing in plant-based and Ayurvedic-inspired dishes, it's the perfect introduction to Kiwi hospitality.

- **Must-try dishes:**

- **Golden Milk Latte** – A warm, spiced turmeric drink with healing benefits
- **Bengali Bowl** – A hearty mix of Indian-inspired flavors
- **Peace Bowl** – A balanced, nutrient-packed dish perfect for a mindful meal
- **Polenta Fries** – Crispy, golden perfection
- **Pancakes** – Fluffy and indulgent, ideal for breakfast experimentation
- **Dark Chocolate Cake** – Baked fresh daily, this rich dessert is pure decadence

Best for: Jet-lagged travelers looking for wholesome, rejuvenating meals.

<https://thelotusheart.co.nz/>



2. Dune Café – A Perfect Pre-Hike Brunch 51 Bridge St | New Brighton, Christchurch

Just a 15 minute walk, **Dune Café** is a fantastic cafe for a **satisfying, protein-packed brunch** before a day of hiking or exploring the coast.

- **Must-try dish: Scrambled Egg Brunch Platter** – served with falafel, greens, and hearty sides.
- **Great for:** Packing up a picnic to enjoy at the beach or fuelling up before a scenic adventure.

Suggested hikes nearby:

1. **Godley Head Track** – Stunning coastal views and historic World War II sites.
2. **Rapaki Track** – A moderately challenging climb with rewarding vistas.
3. **Bridle Path** – A short, steep hike with panoramic city and harbour views.



Seaglass Beach House

3. Dining In – A Seaglass Beach House Experience

One of the best ways to enjoy **Christchurch's farm-fresh ingredients** is right in the comfort of **Seaglass Beach House**. With a fully equipped kitchen and breathtaking ocean views, it's the perfect setting for an intimate **couples' dinner or small gathering**. Consider hiring a local **private chef** to craft a meal suited to your dietary preferences, making the most of the fresh seafood and produce available.

- **Perfect for:** A stress-free, unforgettable dining experience overlooking the ocean.



4. Inati – A Culinary Masterpiece 48 Hereford Street | Christchurch Central

One of Christchurch's most acclaimed fine-dining spots, **Inati** is an absolute must for food lovers. The best way to experience it? Opt for the **4-course chef's tasting menu**, paired with local wines or one of their **elaborate cocktails**.

- **Must-try dishes:**
 - **Confit Potato, Cultured Cream & Caviar** – A sophisticated, buttery bite
 - **Oyster Mushrooms, Caramelized Whey & Cultured Cream** – Smoky, umami-packed goodness
 - **Duck Trumpets & Rhubarb Jam** – Served in a delicate waffle cone
 - **Butternut Squash, Yoghurt & Rhubarb Mallowpuffs** – A nostalgic yet elevated dessert

Great for: A luxurious, intimate evening out, celebrating local flavors with an inventive twist.

<https://inati.nz/>



5. Otaihuna Lodge – A Once-in-a-Lifetime Culinary Experience

224 Rhodes Road, Tai Tapu

For a truly **unparalleled dining experience**, **Otaihuna Lodge** is a must-visit. Nestled within a historic mansion, the **90% estate-grown menu** elevates every dish with **hyper-local ingredients**. The meal is not just food—it's a **sensory journey**, enhanced by impeccable **White Lotus-style service** and a setting steeped in **Māori heritage**.

- **Must-try dish: Kombu Brined Big Glory Bay Salmon** – A revelation in fresh seafood, with citrus and umami perfection.
- **Extra tip:** Arrive early to **tour the enchanting gardens** with a glass of **Kiwi wine** in hand.

Wine tip: New Zealand's **pét-nats** (natural sparkling wines) offer low-alcohol, crisp flavors—ideal for pairing. If you're indulging, consider arranging a **car service**.

<https://www.otaihuna.co.nz/Cuisine>



6. Tussock Hill Vineyard – A Hidden Gem for Wine & Rustic Cuisine

210 Huntsbury Avenue | Cashmere

Perched on a hillside, **Tussock Hill Vineyard** offers a **blend of Sonoma charm and Kiwi terroir**. While you might come for the **wine tasting**, be prepared for a surprisingly **hearty** meal.

- **Must-try dishes:**
 - **Sourdough with Pickled Vegetables & Olives** – A simple but irresistible starter
 - **Lemon-Chili Potatoes** – Perfectly crispy, tangy, and spiced
 - **BBQ-Spiced Eggplant with Wild Black Rice** – Smoky, deep flavors
 - **Flatbreads with Rich Textures** – A rotating selection of seasonal toppings

Best for: A long, slow lunch with wine pairings, surrounded by rolling vineyards.

<https://tussockhill.co.nz/tussock-hill-cellar-door/>



7. Twenty Seven Steps – A Modern Take on European Cuisine **16 New Regent St | CBD**

Nestled in the heart of Christchurch, **Twenty Seven Steps** is an **elevated yet unpretentious spot** where classic European flavors get a **modern Kiwi twist**.

- **Must-try dishes:**
 - **Jerusalem Artichoke Salsa Verde** – A fresh, earthy delight
 - **Sticky Date Pudding** – A rich, comforting classic
 - **Organic Salads** – Unique ingredients that change seasonally

Great for: A **cozy, refined dining experience** that showcases Christchurch's sophisticated yet laid-back food culture.

<https://twentysevensteps.co.nz/>

Whether you're **sipping on biodynamic wines, indulging in a multi-course tasting menu, or savoring a homemade meal at Seaglass Beach House**, Christchurch offers a **culinary experience like no other**. From innovative fine dining to relaxed beachfront cafes, every meal tells the story of **New Zealand's rich agricultural heritage, coastal bounty, and passionate chefs**. Share and add your experience.

By **Scott Solomon** (past guest)