



# 48 hours in CHRISTCHURCH

PERFECT FOR EXPLORING ON FOOT, ŌTAUTAHI CHRISTCHURCH IS A CHARMING COMBINATION OF HERITAGE, ART, NATURE AND HAPPENING URBAN VIBES. WHILE THE LARGEST CITY IN NEW ZEALAND'S SOUTH ISLAND STILL BEARS THE VISIBLE SCARS OF THE DEVASTATING 2011 EARTHQUAKE, **CHRISTINE ALDRED** FINDS A VIBRANT, CREATIVE PLACE BACK ON ITS FEET AND READY TO PLAY.



PHOTOGRAPHY NANCY ZHOU (NEW REGENT STREET); AARON LEE PHOTOGRAPHY (KING OF SNAKE); PETRA MINGNEAU (WATCH THIS SPACE TOUR); CELLAR DOOR); PAM CARMICHAEL (TRAM); STEPHEN GOODENOUGH PHOTOGRAPHER (THE GEORGE SUITE)

## DAY ONE

**8AM:** *Haere ma* – welcome to Ōtautahi Christchurch. Start your day with a hearty breakfast at **THE GEORGE**, a convivial boutique hotel and member of the exclusive Small Luxury Hotels group. Chug that shot of revitalising juice: there's a big day ahead.

**9AM:** Just 100 metres down the road, hop on (and off) one of the restored heritage tramcars of **CHRISTCHURCH TRAMS** for an informative zip around town. With 18 stops taking in the key features of the city accompanied by the driver's flow of insights, it's the perfect way to get a quick lay of the land and explore wherever takes your fancy. Kids ride free.

**11AM:** It may feel at first as though you've arrived in Oxford, England, but the beautiful Gothic Revival buildings that were once the university grounds of **CANTERBURY COLLEGE** now form **THE ARTS CENTRE TE MATATIKI TOI ORA**, a thriving hub encompassing an entire block. First acquired as land in 1873, it's now bursting with boutiques, galleries, museums, artisan eateries, a cinema and fabulously refurbished hotel. The museum upstairs explains the complexities of the post-quake restorations and lauds the craftsmanship involved.

**12.30PM:** Find fresh produce and international flavours to sate any appetite at the buzzing **RIVERSIDE MARKET**, an everyday enclosed farmers' market oozing with culinary delights. The choices are endless, from souvlaki to organic salads, ramen and cured salami. Pick up a travellers' cheese box with South Island specialties, sample delicious local gins or discover 24 craft beers at **CANTERBURY BREWERS COLLECTIVE**.

**2PM:** Indulge with a sumptuous chocolate lovingly created by award-winning **SHE UNIVERSE** chocolaterie in the laneway outside; all organic, Fairtrade and even gluten-free. If you have room, ingest more cacao beans in the form of molten hot chocolate or grab supplies for DIY treats at home.

**2.30PM:** Linger in the lanes for some retail therapy: design collective **SHOPOLOGY** boasts locally made fashion and merino knits; **THE COMPANY SHED** caters for gardeners; **BEEHIVE COLLECTIVE** has gifts and art; and **MIEVEL'S STORE** houses a world of hats and accessories.

**4.30PM:** Street art began to pop up in the spaces provided by downed or damaged buildings after the earthquake destroyed much of the city. And these massive canvases were the first signs of a city redefining itself. Join non-profit **WATCH THIS SPACE** for an urban art tour exploring prolific street art, murals and graffiti, learn about their creators and how Christchurch emerged as a globally recognised street art destination. Group and private tours are available by appointment.

**7PM:** In the south quad of the Arts Centre, the atmospheric **CELLAR DOOR** wine bar showcases some of New Zealand's best drops. The amusingly named wine flights, such as the *Let's Get Fizzical*, are the perfect way to navigate the tantalising selection of local and international varieties. It's not just drinks: the memorable food ranges from nibbles to hearty meals made for sharing with a focus on local Canterbury region produce, including a choice of nearly 20 cheeses.

## DAY TWO

**8AM:** Take in some fresh air with a stroll through **HAGLEY PARK**, a huge designated green space located just across from your digs. Top it off with the mature trees and ever-changing floral displays at the **CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS**, 150 years in the making, with a decided nod to English heritage. Take a peek at the Tudor-style curator's cottage and the veggie gardens behind.

**9AM:** Feel the warm *manaakitanga* (hospitality) and cultural embrace of Riwai Grace from **ĀMIKI TOURS** during an enlightening 'city meander' – a fascinating introduction into Māori culture, language and places of significance around the city, providing insights you'd otherwise miss. Food tours are also available for a guided taste test of the city. >>



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Get the lay of the land onboard a heritage tram; Taste local drops at Cellar Door wine bar; Stay at The George; And dine there too. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top): Al fresco dining on buzzy New Regent Street; Explore the city's vibrant street art with Watch This Space walking tours; Feast on modern Asian dishes at King of Snake.



**11.30AM:** Wind back time with some peaceful **PUNTING ON THE OTĀKARO/AVON RIVER** in a flat-bottomed boat and imagine you're heading for a Victorian-era picnic, your personal punter donned in classic blazer and boater guiding you down the river. Rides leave from the historic, gaily striped **ANTIGUA BOAT SHEDS** established in 1882. Combine your tickets if you're taking a tram ride as they are delivered by the same provider.

**1PM:** The string of restaurants along **The** (completely rebuilt) Terrace provides lots of eating options. **KING OF SNAKE** offers modern Asian-inspired dining. You could also take a lunchtime cocktail with delicious bites at **MONARCH BAR** on the first floor. Hit the deck for views over the mall and river.

**3PM:** It's not just on the streets where you can find the city's art. **CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ**, a striking glass-fronted building, houses an expansive collection from masters to contemporary works. Not far away at **RAVENSCAR HOUSE**, a contemporary museum gallery in a home, you can view one of New Zealand's most significant art collections, donated by an art-loving couple who wanted to share their collection in a modern domestic setting.

**5PM:** For a touch of San Francisco, head to the colourful and quirky pedestrian mall of **NEW REGENT STREET** with its string of painted Spanish Mission-style buildings. Sweeten your afternoon with one of the playful choices at **ROLLICKIN GELATO**, home of gelato, sorbet and desserts made from organic milk and fresh fruit, which come in a multitude of innovative flavours and with a dollop of humour. Take a selfie with the gorilla on the bench outside if you must.

**7.30PM:** There's no need to venture out when your hotel offers in-house fine dining. Relaxed but elegant with a choice of three dining spaces, **50 BISTRO** offers perfectly prepared classics with a modern twist. Snuggle up afterwards in a cosy corner on a velvet lounge and hook into **The George's** online reading resources to access thousands of magazines and papers, or a bedtime short story, or take a seat at the bar for a sneaky nightcap.

**10PM:** Party people can head out for drinking options. The whimsical **GIN GIN** bar decked out in lush velvets, pinks and greens boasts more than 100 varieties of this botanical tippie and playful cocktails, while up the road **THE LAST WORD** ups the ante with 320 whiskies inside, along with classic cocktails, local wines, beers and snacks. That should make for a sound night's sleep. **IT**

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** *The Arts Centre Te Matatiki Toi Ora is a bustling cultural hub; Punting on the Otākaro/Avon River; Delve into Māori culture with Amiki Tours; Pay a visit to Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Wairōbetū.*

