

- Be Aware - New Zealand drivers are not as used to cyclists as their European counterparts - cycle with care
- Wearing high viz clothing increases your visibility
- Share the road - be a courteous road user
- Make sure you are familiar with New Zealand road rules - read the road code

Great Southern Cycle Route WAIMATE TO KUROW TOUR

This Map, based on Topographical Map Series NZMS 262, is reproduced with the permission of Land Information New Zealand. The image has been digitally manipulated from the original LINZ sources.



This map and the accompanying narrative describe one of eleven proposed all-day cycle tours (Tour 1 through 11). Together, they take you from Christchurch to Dunedin on a route I call The Great Southern Cycle Route. Included in each tour are, when found, accommodations (including camping grounds) along the way that allow you to pick and choose in planning a day's ride. To that end you can either subdivide a tour into two days or combine into one day all or a portion of two or more succeeding tours.

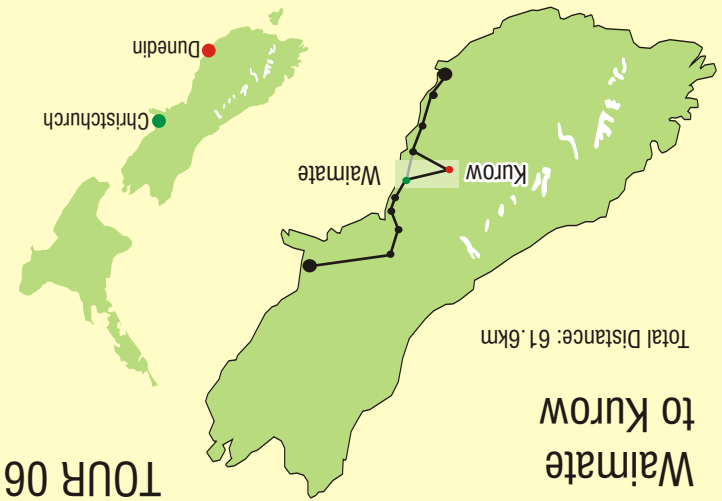
Some tours are significantly shorter than others because they are hillier and more demanding or because they are more conducive to tempting diversions on the way and/or further exploration at days end. For overseas cyclists, “Backpackers” is a lodging (sometimes with only bunk rooms) that features a communal kitchen, a “Domain” is a community park that normally provides toilets and often allows camping, and a “Holiday Park” provides sites for camper vans and tent camping and often motel units.

Most of The Great Southern Cycle Route is on quiet backcountry roads almost all of which (with 1km exception) are sealed (paved in USA lingo). The trip first traverses the fertile farmland of the level Canterbury Plains, then winds through rolling pastoral countryside with stop offs in picturesque cities and towns. Three memorable gorges and some classic coastal scenery add spice to the route. At all times the rugged Southern Alps that morph into other mountain ranges (foothills in Kiwi speak) as you proceed south, serve as a stunning backdrop.

Admittedly the route meanders a bit (at times even doubles back). But who cares so long as the scenery is soothing, the route is (mostly) untrammled and the road is sealed! Savour the solitude and enjoy! Cycle in authentic New Zealand – off the beaten path.

If you are bicycling with friends, consider leapfrogging with your vehicles so that at the end of the day you will have advanced those vehicles to where you are spending the night. I did that, and it worked quite well (though admittedly it helped that my wife was more than happy to drive most of the route, join us for lunch and bicycle to meet us as the muse moved her).

State Highways are designated SH followed by a number. The heavily trafficked SH1 is used sparingly and only when unavoidable. The Area Code for all the telephone numbers herein given (e.g., 302 8955) is 03 if



the call is made within New Zealand. If calling from overseas, the Country Code is 64 and the Area Code is 3.

The total distance of the route is about 579km (always taking the Preferred Route when given a choice). This distance assumes that you have decided to take the Waimate to Kurow Tour and then the Kurow to Oamaru Tour instead of the alternative Waimate to Oamaru Tour. If you choose the latter, the distance is about 518km. All distances are good faith estimates based on odometer readings but are not guaranteed.

All accommodations, eateries and cycle shops (if any) mentioned herein were confirmed as of April 2010. No assurances can be given that they will remain open. Nor can the author warrant the safety of the route. The recommended roads have no special provisions for cyclists. You must therefore assume the responsibilities and risks for your own safety when cycling the route. There, the mostly retired lawyer-author has spoken. Now go and have a good time.

Waimate to Kurow Tour

Waimate is a charming rural town with wide streets, parks, gardens and a smattering of Edwardian Buildings. The town has a nice array of accommodation. They include three luxurious B&B homestays – Centrewood Estate (689 6035 /www.centrewoodestate.co.nz), a 115 year old French designed homestead, Awatea Retreat (689 7288/www.awatearetreat.co.nz) that features reflexology and two heated outdoor baths for tired muscles, and Te Kiteroa Lodge (689 1088/www.tekiteroa.com), a lovely mansion nestled on a hillside next to a vineyard with sweeping views to the east of the plains below and the sea beyond. All three B&Bs are located on or off Mill Rd northwest of town and provide dinner by prior arrangement.

Other accommodations are Waimate Hotel (689 7373), Cross Roads Hotel (689 8809) and Criterion Hotel (689 8079), three motels, Victoria Park Camp & Cabins (689 8079) situated in a stunning urban park that, among other things, features caged wallabies whose cohorts roam wild in the nearby hills, and Kelceys Bush Farmyard Holiday Park (689 8057/www.kiwicamp.com) that is also on Mill Rd and features the largest wallaby enclosure in New Zealand.

If you have the time (and energy), towards the end of Mill Rd you should either walk the White Horse Walkway (3km –2.5 hour return) or drive up to Centrewood Park and a lookout with glorious views of the sea and mountains behind. As stated in a brochure, the walkway takes its name from a 60ft monument to the Clydesdale horse which helped clear the land assisting in the development of Waimate.

A great place for a meal is Café on Queen. Waimate Outdoors, also on Queen St, services cycles. For more information contact the Waimate Information Centre also located on Queen St (689 7791/www.waimate.org.nz).

Note: For those looking for a break from cycling, consider spending an extra day in Waimate. A host of walkways into Wallaby country and nearby marshlands beckon.

Summary Description

The trip to Kurow takes you all the way on SH82. Be not dismayed. This highway does not attract heavy traffic. More importantly it affords a wonderful mix of scenic landscapes and, but for two manageable climbs, is all downhill to the Waitaki River Valley and, on reaching the bottom turns into a mostly level course with an imperceptible upstream climb.

The changes in landscape appear in the following order: (1) The fertile elevated plain on which Waimate is situated, (2) a 4km gorge cut by Deep Creek, as you proceed downhill, (3) expansive lush green rolling countryside - mostly seen from a continued downhill perspective, (4) the broad mostly flat Waitaki River Valley flanked on your right (North) by soaring foothills and encircled in the distance to the west and south by even higher mountain ranges (hidden for about 2km by a hemmed in tunnel of trees lined on the left by a finely constructed stone wall built over a hundred years ago) and (5) the wide braided Waitaki River ultimately crossed on two iconic rickety bridges framed in wood.

Note: If you want to tackle the entire Great Southern Cycle Route and are pressed for time, then bag this tour and the Kurow to Oamaru Tour 07 and take instead the Waimate to Oamaru Tour 08 as an alternative route to Oamaru. You decide. I found both routes equally appealing.

Total Distance: 61.6km

Detailed Description

Kilometres	Description
K 00.0	From the intersection of Queen and High Streets head southwest on SH82(initially Queen Street and then Gorge Rd) . You will soon be descending through the Waimate Gorge shaped by Deep Creek and the rounded slopes of green bush clad hills.
K 07.3	After exiting the gorge, a turnoff on your left onto Kapua Rd appears.
Note:	If you prefer a more confined bucolic stretch with hardly any traffic (a leg of the Waimate to Oamaru Tour 09) that is followed by a 6km somewhat nondescript slog back to SH82, take Kapua Rd . In 2.5km this road becomes Waikakahi Valley Rd (where Gum Tree Flats Rd comes in from your left). Continue straight on Waikakahi Valley Rd for another 6.4km, and at the T-intersection, turn right (West) onto Pikes Point Rd . About 1.1km later, turn left (South) onto Cock and Hen Rd for a 1.8km ride to the intersection with Ikawai Middle Rd . At that point turn right (West) onto Ikawai Middle Rd for the 6.4 ride back to SH82 marked below as K 22.5. Add 3.6km to your tour.
	Otherwise continue straight on SH82 as expansive views of sloping foothills and rounded pastureland open up and the road weaves downhill.
K 11.3	On your right is Waihao Forks Hotel (689 2814/doolies@xtra.co.nz: bar and restaurant).
K 11.4	Cross Waihao River and soon afterwards climb reaching the top in about 1km and then resume the descent.
K 14.4	Climb again reaching the top in about 2km for the final descent through a more closed in landscape.
K 20.6	Arrive at the floor of the Waitaki River Valley where Pikes Rd enters on your left.
K 22.5	Ikawai Middle Rd enters on your left.
K 23.6	Cross the narrow Elephant Hill Stream Bridge. On the opposite side make a hard right (West). Picnic grounds are on your right. New vistas described above soon greet the eye.
K 30.4	The tunnel of trees and stone wall begin.
K 32.3	The foothills to your north and mountains to the west and south begin to take hold. Within the crescent of mountains that rise to 2000 metres and

	surround Kurow, the tallest is Te Kohurau – Awakino Skifield, which looms ever larger in the west as you get nearer to the town. As for the valley fed by the waters of the Waitaki River, dairy farming has taken hold in a big way where thousands of contented cows graze and swirling irrigation systems spew water over verdant pastureland.
K 44.2	On your left is an historic site – the Paterson's Cottage, a nicely restored way station believed to have been built in 1880 from Penticotico clay and tussock. Farmer James Paterson sold liquor and provided casual accommodations here.
K 51.0	On your right is the attractive stone whitewashed and red roofed Station Peak Homestead B&B farmstay (436 0797/ www.stationpeak.co.nz: dinner by prior arrangement). A stay at this charming 1860's farmhouse will expose you to all the workings of a large scale dairy farm.
K 53.2	In place of a straight road a fetching winding road commences.
K 69.6	Cross the Hakataramea River.
K 60.3	Turnoff on your right to the Hakataramea Valley Rd. (a recommended diversion: see below).
K 60.5	Begin crossing on two narrow delightfully rickety “I can't believe they are standing” wooden bridges (built in 1881) that span the multi-channeled Waitaki River.
K 61.4	Turn left (Southeast) onto SH83 and enter Kurow. Public toilets ♀ are across the street at the Hydro Place.
K 61.6	The day's trip ends at the intersection of Bledisloe (SH83) and Wynard Steets in downtown Kurow.

Kurow has a colourful funky feel to it. For a town of less than 500, it offers a nice variety of accommodations. They range from a comfortable B&B, just 2.5km southeast of town on SH83, the historic Western House (built in 1871 initially as an inn to serve gold diggers) (436 0876/ www.westernhouse.co.nz) and another B&B River Valley Cottage (436 0668 - 1km north of Kurow) to Kurow Hotel (436 0850) and Waitaki Hotel (436 0650), to Kurow Motels (436 0655) to Kurow Holiday Park (436 0725).

For a full range of accommodations at one site, chop off 14km of the next day's tour and head southeast for that distance on SH83 to Glenmac Farmstay and Backpackers (436 0200/ www.farmstaynrezealand.co.nz: dinner available) – a hill country farm with Merino sheep and beef cattle. (From SH83 you get there by turning right (Southwest) onto Gards Rd and following that road for 5km. About 3km of the road is gravel.)

While in Kurow take the Kurow Heritage Trail that mostly features the town's limestone buildings erected in the 1880s. Or, for a bit more vigorous exercise, take the 250m Hill Walk at the end of Grey St. This trail zigzags up a hill that overlooks the town and provides on top sweeping views of the Waitaki River Valley. For more information about the town contact the Kurow Museum & Information Centre at 436 0950/museum@kurow.co.nz

Note: If, after arriving in Kurow, you are still up for more cycling before bedding down (or plan to stay an extra day), you might consider one of two tempting side trips. One trip takes you along SH83 northwest from Kurow to Aviemore Dam about 15km away. At the dam you can take Akatarawa Rd along the scenic north shore of Lake Aviemore. The road dead-ends at a camping ground in about 16km.

The other trip takes you back over the Waitaki River on those two rickety bridges to the Hakataramea Valley Rd, the first turnoff to your left. This remote backcountry road is sealed for at least 15km. The scenery is somewhat stark and desolate, punctuated with a few farms and grazing sheep - with the fly-fishing Hakataramea River serving as a major allure.

About the Author and His Wife

Peter Seed and his wife, Linda, divide their time between White Bear Lake, Minnesota, Vero Beach, Florida, and Dunedin, New Zealand. Peter co-authored a cycle touring book for Minnesota/Wisconsin (Biking With The Wind) and a walking book about the South West Coast Path in England (A Coastal Affair). Linda tries to keep Peter reined in. Both love the outdoors and cycling. Peter can be reached at slinda5938@aol.com.

How To Get More Maps

You may download this or any of the other maps of the Great Southern Cycle Route free at www.southisland.org.nz/maps.asp or www.seftonhomestay.com by clicking Cycle Tourism. The maps are also available at most visitor centres and cycle shops along the route.