

A Guide to New Zealand Waterfalls

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Mangawhero Falls gained international attention as Gollum's fishing hole in the Oscar winning movie *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Tourism is a major industry in New Zealand, and the notoriety from Peter Jackson's film series has certainly done its part to attract visitors.

New Zealand's Maori name, Aotearoa, translates to "Land of the Long White Cloud." It covers a land area about the size of the state of Colorado, with just four million residents (and forty million sheep). *A Guide to New Zealand Waterfalls* offers insight into more than 100 of the nation's waterfalls.

The country of New Zealand is divided between two islands, the North and South Islands. The author has separated them into six different geographical regions. Each chapter covers a different waterfall with vibrant photographs and detailed maps and illustrations to help the reader get there. There is a simple rating system (1-5) for each waterfall system—based on scenic value, hiking difficulty, and driving difficulty.

Marokopa Falls offers a fifteen-minute walk and views of one of the most picturesque waterfalls, often featured on calendars and postcards. The Falls are an easy thirty to forty-five minute drive from Waitomo—home of the popular glow-worm caves.

The most famous tramp (hike) in New Zealand, the Milford Track, offers numerous waterfall-watching opportunities, although plans for this tramp should be made months in advance. Sutherland Falls is one of the most spectacular falls on the tramp, with a 1,903 foot drop in three tiers.

Cheng did most of the photography for this book. A travel writer and nature enthusiast, he has visited hundreds of waterfalls all over the world. This title is the first in a series of waterfall-themed guidebooks from Story Nature Press.

Along with its detailed coverage of the region's waterfalls, this guide also offers other attractions in the area and interesting historical or local facts. The book will fit easily into a backpack and the photography is high quality on glossy text stock. A picture of Matai falls gives a translucent feel to the water cascading down, surrounded by lush green bush.

Much of the scenic beauty of the country has been seen worldwide in movies (*The Piano*), and TV shows (*Xena: Warrior Princess*), but visitors to New Zealand's waterfalls will reflect on them long after their excursion is over.

BRYCE KENNEDY (February 8, 2007)

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