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DESTINATIONS

Preparing For A Trip To New Zealand? Bring

Your Dragon

By Chris Owen [@OrlandoChris](#) · On March 5, 2016



Australia and New Zealand are becoming more popular cruise destinations all the time with many travelers planning a visit this year. In advance of that lifetime quality travel experience, they study up on both, getting prepared in a way similar to a first time trip to Europe or some other interesting destinations around the world. That preparation might mean a trip to the travel agency for some colorful brochures and the advice of someone who has been there and done that, a stop by the local library to tap bound resources they can bring home to peruse at their leisure and more. Films too come into play, with travelers often looking beyond the actors to catch a glimpse of places they will see once there. That's the topic of today's post, highlighted by a new Disney film set in the land of the long white cloud.



Hunua Falls, Hunua Ranges, Auckland, New Zealand

New Zealand is also the magical backdrop of Disney's family film *Pete's Dragon*, set to open in U.S. theaters on August 12, 2016. Depicting an adventure of orphaned boy Pete and his best friend Elliott (who just happens to be a dragon), three exciting New Zealand locations provided stunning backdrops for the film

Wellington, Lower North Island: Wellington, which is often described as the “coolest capital in the world” is the national center of the arts, coffee and craft beer. The production of *Pete’s Dragon* began at Wellington’s Stone Street Studios and Weta Digital, where visitors can enjoy behind the scenes tour of the visual effects company that brought the dragon, *Elliott*, to life.

Rotorua, Central North Island: Redwood Forest in Rotorua, a popular destination for hikers, has been the forest scene for *Pete’s Dragon*. With its Californian Redwoods and magnificent lake views, Redwood Forest scenery is an ideal double for America. In Rotorua visitors can enjoy the newly opened eco-experience, The Redwoods Treewalk, consisting of a series of 23 suspension bridges crossing the gaps between 22 ancient redwood trees that are 12-meters above the ground.

Tapanui, Lower South Island: Located in the Otago region in the lower South Island, Tapanui was transformed into the main street of the American town of Millhaven. Tapanui, a popular fishermen location, is the home to the Clutha Gold Trail- one of the “Great Rides” of the Nga Haerenga, New Zealand Cycle Trail. Further, visitors can enjoy a variety of native wildlife in nearby Nugget Point, including Yellow Eyed Penguins and fur seals near the Otago coastline.

Dreaming of visiting someday? See this recently-released trailer that gives a good idea of what the story is all about:



The film is directed by David Lowery and stars Bryce Dallas Howard and Robert Redford among others. Disney's *Pete's Dragon* will open in U.S. theaters on August 12, 2016 and will feature three exciting New Zealand locations: Wellington, Rotorua and Tapanui.