

How to visit small town NZ's 9 giant kiwiana monuments in one epic road trip

Dan Lake MSN News 29 March 2021



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Whoever started the trend of installing giant objects in small towns was really onto something - monuments to kiwiana like Paeroa's giant L&P bottle have become ingrained in New Zealand culture.

But how long would it take to visit all nine of New Zealand's 'big things' should you want to do so in one big road trip, and in what order would you do it?

I've worked it out, so if you have a couple of days and a lot of petrol spare any time soon, feel free to use this guide.

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Giant L&P Bottle

Departing Auckland, your first stop is 90 minutes and 119km away at Paeroa. By now you're probably thirsty so you could recharge your batteries with a regular bottle of Lemon & Paeroa next to its giant older cousin.



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The 'world-famous in New Zealand' soft drink has become an icon for Kiwis and put the Waikato town of Paeroa on the map after it was founded there in 1907.

Giant Kiwifruit

Continuing into the Bay of Plenty for a further 100km will get you to Te Puke, a town that exports 10 million trays of kiwifruit every year and is home of the giant kiwifruit.



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The sculpture has stood in Te Puke for more than 30 years. In 2010, it was repainted to better represent the region's exports and the history of the kiwifruit, with one side representing gold kiwifruit and the other the original green.

The Dog and Sheep

The next stop is Tirau in the South Waikato District, where these giant items are impossible to miss.



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The Dog and Sheep shaped buildings are made of corrugated iron and were built in the late 1990s.

Inside them you'll find an i-Site information centre and a wool and craft shop.

There are a few other corrugated iron sculptures hidden around Tirau, so if you're not in a hurry, have a look around and see what you can find.

Giant Carrot

From Tirau you'd head south for 230km to get to the Ruapehu District town of Ohakune, home of the big carrot.



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The sculpture was built in 1984, measures 7.5m tall and is known as 'The World's Largest Carrot'. It was originally built for a TV commercial for ANZ Bank, before being donated to the town.

Giant Gumboots

In many places around the world, gumboots are known or associated with the name Wellington. Not in New Zealand.



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South of Taupo in the town of Taihape, you'll find a giant, multi-coloured gumboot in Mount Stewart Reserve on State Highway 1.

In the '70s, satirist John Clarke played Fred Dagg, a fictional character from Taihape. Dagg was your stereotypical Kiwi bloke, gracing TV screens across Aotearoa in his gumboots.

Taihape has since been known as the 'Gumboot Capital of the World'.

Giant Donut

The next leg is a long one and includes a ride on a Cook Strait ferry.



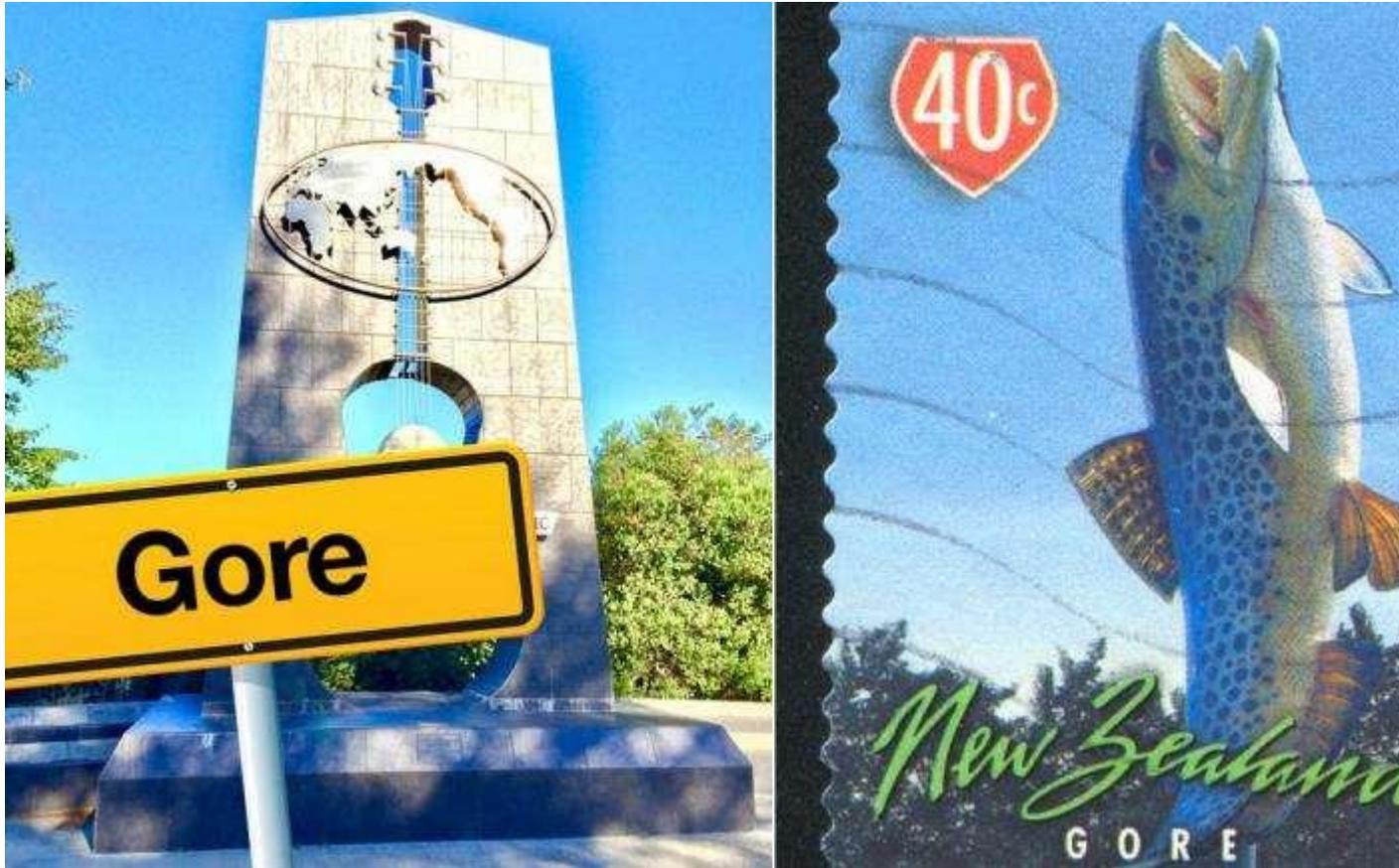
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In 2007, American movie and television studio Fox gifted a giant donut to Springfield, New Zealand. The Canterbury town has the same name as the fictional home of The Simpsons characters.

Unfortunately, the landmark was burned down in 2009, but the proud people of Springfield painted a giant truck tire and put it right back up on display.

Guitar and Trout

Six and a half hours drive south of Springfield there's a town in Southland with not one but two giant sculptures.



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Gore is home to a giant trout and a giant guitar, representing the town's marine life and musical history.

The town hosts New Zealand's gold guitar awards every year and is the "official" country music capital of Aotearoa. If music isn't your thing, Gore is also one of the best places to go trout fishing, with the surrounding rivers offering many opportunities to catch your dinner.

Giant pāua shell

Finally, this road trip will lead you to the beautiful town of Riverton and its giant pāua shell.



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The Southland region is home to some of the best shellfish in New Zealand. About 30km west of Invercargill, Riverton is best known for its pāua fisheries and crafts. A giant pāua shell stands proud in the town where travellers can pick up a piece of pāua jewellery from one of the local craftsmen.

The giant pāua is one of our lesser-known landmarks but it's definitely one of the most beautiful.

Now that you've finished the massive 1898km drive to visit all nine of Aotearoa's big things, my suggestion is to drive for another 30 minutes to Invercargill Airport where you can hop onboard a big thing - a plane to fly you back to Auckland.

The now direct service will be about 25 hours quicker than driving back.