

Amy Wilson kayaking to Split Apple Rock in Abel Tasman National Park.



Travel insider

Kayaking Abel Tasman National Park

It's one of New Zealand's most popular Great Walks in summer, but Abel Tasman National Park can also be accessed via boat and kayak, with options for multi-day trips on foot and by paddle. Wilsons Abel Tasman has been connected to the park for nine generations. The latest in the family to join the company, Amy Wilson, shares some inside info on how to enjoy an all-inclusive, multi-day trip in the park.

Which are the best beaches in the Abel Tasman National Park?

Every beach has its own particular charm. I have a particular love of Torrent Bay (it's where I got married and we've had memorable family holidays there) and Awaroa Beach, the beach that was the subject of a crowdfunding campaign that many New Zealanders contributed to. Both places feature on our multi-day trip in the park as that's where we have our lodges. These are the only beachfront lodges within the confines of the park, so that's something really special. Tasman and Nelson are known for their golden sand beaches and clear water. There are so many amazing places to swim, kayak and cruise.

What do people need to kayak?

When the sea and weather are calm, sea kayaking is easy and very little skill or strength is required. We use double kayaks because they're stable. Two people sharing the paddling effort adds to the enjoyment (and occasionally to a bit of healthy competition). If you're kayaking, you'll need a spray jacket, buoyancy aid and dry bags to keep your spare clothing and camera gear dry. We provide these items on our kayak trips.

What to wear while kayaking

Bring a warm layer to keep you warm when you stop for a break. A spare set of clothing can be stored in a dry bag in your kayak, so you can change into dry gear if necessary. Even though you can kayak with bare feet, it's good to bring walking shoes for when you land and want to walk around. Thermal, quick-dry fabrics are best, such as polypropylene or polar fleece. Cotton or denim clothing gets very heavy and cold if it gets wet and takes a long time to dry.

Getting close to nature

Sea conditions in the park can change rapidly and tidal conditions along the coast require expert local knowledge. A trained kayak guide can make sure you get the most out of each day and experience some unique features that can only be seen on certain tides. We are very mindful of respecting marine life and the natural habitat that our marine mammals call home. If you encounter marine mammals while kayaking or cruising in the park, it's important to keep your distance and make sure you're not disturbing them. Encounters like these can create really special memories – you may see seals, dolphins, stingrays and perhaps even an orca.

ASK AN EXPERT: How to choose a cabin

Q I want to go on a cruise, but I'm unsure what cabin to choose. What do you recommend for someone who wants privacy?

A Balcony rooms are the way to go. The privacy of a balcony room means you can simply step outside your own room to enjoy

the sea breeze and also catch peaceful moments between all the fun. Although, if you are the type to only need your room for a nap, I would recommend opting for an interior cabin room and spend the rest of your time exploring the ship.

– Dr Eversen Bevelle, cruise director for MSC World America



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Puzzler

1

Which Indonesian island is world-famous for diving with manta rays and for vibrant coral reefs?

- A. Lombok
- B. Nusa Penida
- C. Sumatra

2

Which European country is home to the mystical Giant's Causeway, formed by hexagonal basalt columns?

- A. Scotland
- B. Iceland
- C. Northern Ireland

3

Where can you visit the world's largest salt flat, Salar de Uyuni?

- A. Chile
- B. Argentina
- C. Bolivia

4

Known for its vivid turquoise colour, Moraine Lake is located in which Canadian national park?

- A. Banff National Park
- B. Jasper National Park
- C. Yoho National Park

5

The Danube River flows through how many countries?

- A. 6
- B. 10
- C. 14

Answers: 1: B, 2: C, 3: C, 4: A, 5: B