Beer has been central to the local culture of the Nelson-Tasman region, dating back to the first New Zealand settlements in the 1840s. Early German settlers in Sarau found the Moutere to be an ideal location and climate to cultivate hops, and an extensive brewing tradition followed.

Craft breweries of all sizes now stretch from Nelson City to Motueka and Golden Bay. They make a perfect excuse for a half-day or full-day tour exploring the gorgeous corners of the region. Climbing from the waterfront up into the foothills, watch for historic hop kilns along the way.

Some can be reached by foot from your lodging, others along a neat cycle loop, and the rest are worth the drive or take a tour.

For six weeks in early autumn, the farms are busy, frantically harvesting the year’s crop. The bines are cut, and then the fragrant, bitter flowers removed and dried.

There are 28 grower shareholders of New Zealand Hops Limited, which is a cooperative established to manage the off-farm interests of its members. This includes converting the dried whole hop flowers into a range of high quality, unique New Zealand hop products which are sold to brewers throughout the world.

Many of these locally owned, family-run breweries and cider producers welcome visitors for tours, sampling at the bar, having a meal or takaway at their cellars. Share a pint with locals, learn about our history and experience the wide range of unique beers. Whether you prefer an icy pilsner or a cask-pulled ale, you’ll find it in Nelson.

For historic hop kilns along the way.

The early settlers from England and Germany found the Nelson region well suited to the hop plants they brought with them. In time a fledgling industry grew, and hops were grown throughout the area. New varieties were developed and over the next 150 years New Zealand became known for its disease-free, high quality products. Variety brand names like Motueka™, Riwaka™, and Nelson Sauvin™ reveal ties to the local history and geography.

The current growing region, roughly a triangle formed by Riwaka, Tapawera, and Brightwater, produces all of New Zealand’s commercial hops, a premium product making up less than 1% of the world market.

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Sprig & Fern Upper Queen Street

A: 126 Queen Street, Richmond, Nelson
T: 03 546 4800
E: info@sprigandferntaverns.co.nz
W: www.sprigandferntaverns.co.nz

Conveniently located in Upper Queen Street, just a short stroll from town centre. A popular watering hole with 20 taps of very locally brewed craft beer and cider.

Opening Hours: Please see website.

Sprig & Fern Brightwater

A: 54 Elba Street, Brightwater, Nelson
T: 03 542 2323
E: info@sprigandferntaverns.co.nz
W: www.sprigandferntaverns.co.nz

A friendly local tavern and meeting place in the centre of Brightwater village, serving 18 taps of superb craft beer and cider, plus many local wines. Please see website.

Sprig & Fern Motueka

A: Wallace Street, Motueka
T: 03 528 4684
E: info@sprigandferntaverns.co.nz
W: www.sprigandferntaverns.co.nz

A cozy place to slow down and unwind, and enjoy a pint of Nelson’s finest craft beer, plus tasty fast food. Please see website.

HOP Farm Brewery

A: 483 Main Road, Richmond, Mapua
T: 03 528 0466
E: info@hophesion.co.nz
W: www.hophesion.co.nz

Located in Motueka, our brewery is in the heart of hop country. Visit our tasting room for bottle and rigger sales all year round.

Opening Hours: Open from 11am - seven days a week

Kai Restaurant

A: 5 Kaiteriteri Sandy Bay Road, Kaiteriteri
T: 03 527 0857
E: kai@kai.co.nz
W: www.kai.co.nz

Kai Restaurant is based in the heart of the beautiful Recreation Reserve. Overlooking the famous golden sandy beach, with one of the many beers in this two-house with speciality from the HOP Federation and our very own Ocean House Lager. Tasting platters available. Opening Hours: 11am – late, 7 days

The Mussel Inn Brewery

A: 132 Golden Bay Road, Motueka
T: 03 525 9241 (after 11am)
E: haveabeer@musselinn.co.nz
W: www.musselinn.co.nz

The Mussel Inn Brewery producing a full range of guest beers or local wines. All beers and wines are available by the glass with retail sales also available. Enjoy our wood-fired pizza and platters in front of the picturesque Waiاما scenery. Open noon until late.

The League of Brewers

A: 127 Antech Road, Mapua, Nelson
T: 03 545 2553
E: peter@sprigandferntaverns.co.nz
W: www.sprigandferntaverns.co.nz

Set in a beautifully restored historic schoolhouse in the heart of picturesque village. Enjoy 18 taps of award winning craft beer and cider on our sunny deck areas.

Opening Hours: Please see website.