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Kaikoura, New Zealand

October 24th, 2018

Mid-Semester Break: Camping in Kaikoura



Kia Ora!

After seeing the most pristine places along the west coast of the South Island, I felt eager to explore the rest of what the South Island had to offer. I was so excited to return home in Dunedin. It was the first time I realized that I could comfortably call Dunedin home, and after being on a bus with fifty other people, sleeping in tents, and jumping from hostel to hostel, I could not wait to be in my own, comfortable, warm apartment. However, my eagerness to be home did not last long and I soon began planning a trip up to the northeast of the South Island to Kaikoura. That Friday, me and a friend I met on the tramping trip started our drive to Kaikoura. The seven-hour drive was accompanied by easy New Zealand tunes, views of sheep (you would not believe how many sheep are actually in New Zealand), and talks of how much we were enjoying our time in Dunedin.

Kaikoura is a town located up north from Dunedin where the beaches are scattered with seals, surfers, and paua shells. The town of Kaikoura is a unique one in that an earthquake had caused destruction to roads and other infrastructure in the area back in 2016. The earthquake was so huge that the construction of the roads is still going on today. What's even more impressive is the seabed rose a few meters above sea level. Given this recent history, the drive there involved multiple construction stops along the way. Though, it gave us a chance to really see the effects of how this earthquake changed the landscape of this town.

Upon arrival, the sun was setting behind the clouds and our friends who we were to be meeting were gathering firewood for the night. After setting up our tent, my friend Miguel proudly showed me his bench that he had made over the past week that he had been there. In reality, it looked like a pile of rocks, but it worked as the perfect place to watch the waves and sit near the warm fire. As the sun went down, we sat around the fire cooking our meals for the evening and sharing drinks.

The next morning, I awoke to the sun shining through my tent and the sound of waves crashing along the shore. That day, my friend Mia and I did a walk along the Kaikoura coast, all while spotting seals along the way. We then decided to explore the town centre which was simply one strip of road filled with knick-knack shops, cafes, and OpShops. I took this time to search for gifts for my family back at home and even snagged a \$2 book from an OpShop.



The Kaikoura coast walk

The rest of the two days that we were there, we simply sat, lay, and relaxed along the beach reading our books and watching the boys surf. It reminded me that it's okay to not be constantly doing something when you're abroad. After talking to other people about this subject, we all seemed to share the same feeling. Because we are abroad and have a limited time in the country that we are studying at, we were constantly feeling that we had to plan trips every moment we could. While spending those relaxing couple of days in Kaikoura, I realized that it was important to take a few days off of exploring and adventuring. During that weekend, I was able to finish the book I had bought and reflect upon my semester abroad thus far.

Best,

Mehana