

AAT Kings: Southern Spectacular 26/27

Southern calling? This trip to New Zealand unites some of the country's most fabled playgrounds – think adventure-filled Queenstown tours, a World Heritage listed Milford Sound/Piopiotahti tour and possible gem-like Franz Josef/Waiiau tours – with some of its must off-the-radar pockets. Have you heard of the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks, or glimpsed the turquoise lakes outside Twizel?

Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 10days / 9nights
 Accommodation: Hotel 3 star
 Can be customised: Yes

This itinerary can be customised to suit you perfectly. We can add more days, remove days, change accommodations, mix it up, add activities to suit your interests or simply design and create something from scratch. Call us today to get your custom New Zealand itinerary underway.



Inclusions:

- Includes: All coach transport
- Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
- Includes: Christchurch City Tour
- Includes: Free time in Franz Josef
- Includes: Milford Sound Cruise
- Includes: Pounamu Pathway Self-Guided Journey
- Includes: TranzAlpine Train
- Includes: Visit a local fruit orchard
- Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
- Includes: Afternoon tea with 'Pavlova Queen', Angie Taylor
- Includes: Church of the Good Shepherd at Tekapo
- Includes: Jet boat ride down Waiiau River to Lake Manapouri
- Includes: Monteith's Brewery experience
- Includes: Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk
- Includes: TSS Earnslaw cruise & BBQ dinner at Walter Peak High Country Farm
- : 9 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 7 dinners

Day 1

At once forward-thinking and fun, Christchurch is the kind of city you could lose yourself in for a week – or more. You have this afternoon, so make the most of it. Freshen up because it's time to meet your fellow adventure-seekers over a couple of wines and canapés.

Staying in:

- Distinction Christchurch Hotel (1 night)
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Day 2

If you didn't get your bearings yesterday, you certainly will on today's Christchurch tour, taking in the city's record-breaking Cardboard Cathedral – who knew you could build a church from cardboard and not much else? – as well as past the gilded library, gleaming like an architectural beacon. The buildings of the city fade into a patchwork of farms as you ease across the Canterbury Plains towards Lake Tekapo. Here, retired farmers Angie and Stan Taylor welcome you to their home with a slap-up Be My Guest afternoon tea and tales about life on the land. And this land is truly dramatic, backdropped by powdery mountains and cut with turquoise lakes, none quite as pretty as Lake Tekapo, on its banks the stone-hewn Church of the Good Shepherd. It's like someone has taken the glasses off your nose and cleaned them for the first time.

Staying in:

- Distinction Mackenzie Country Hotel Twizel (1 night)
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Day 3

Oamaru has a rich history and proud heritage, enriched by passionate and perhaps quirky locals. Explore the shops, galleries and traditional crafts within some of the Southern Hemisphere's most complete Victorian streetscapes. You're en route to Dunedin, replete with rolling green meadows and a grand stone castle. It kind of feels like you've been transported to Scotland – small wonder it's known as the 'Edinburgh of the South'. Afternoon at your leisure, you could visit a sustainable gin distillery, or tour Larnach Castle, A NZ holiday must.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Southern Cross (1 night)
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Day 4

Leave Dunedin's pastoral sheep-farming countryside behind as you venture into World Heritage listed Fiordland National Park, a place of yawning gorges and gem-like glaciers, and azure lakes so large they have their own islands. Case in point Pomona Island, where a charitable trust of passionate volunteers works to restore flora and fauna on this MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience. With your help. You'll take a thrilling jet boat ride down the Waiau River to Lake Manapouri and if that's not enough water for one day, you may choose to cruise to the iconic Glowworm Caves (own expense). Can we tempt you?

Staying in:

- Distinction Te Anau Hotel and Villas (1 night)
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Day 5

Nature rules again today, from the moment you depart Te Anau and begin your journey deep into the heart of Fiordland National Park. Think native rainforests, beech forests, alluvial flats and meadows; Mirror Lakes perfectly reflecting mountain scenery; and precipitous lookouts holding guard over alpine rivers. And this is just the entrée. The main course is your Milford Sound/Piopiotahti tour, where you cruise in the company of fur seals that bask on the rocks, and gaze at misty escarpments so sheer they appear to cleave off the edge of the Earth. You're in the company of a naturalist who knows every nook and cranny of this mighty cavern and will point out flora and fauna you would have never spotted on your own.

Staying in:

- Millennium Hotel, Queenstown (1 night)
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Day 6

Take today at your own pace. Like things fast and furious? Feel the wind in your hair on a high-octane jet boat ride, perhaps. Prefer wine to get your heart started? See why Central Otago makes some of the world's most raved about cool-climate pinots on a cellar door tour (both own expense). Wherever your Queenstown New Zealand tour wanderings take you, you'll reunite with your companions come dusk to glide across Lake Wakatipu aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw, your barbecue Highlight Dinner served on the grounds of Walter Peak High Country Farm. Trips to New Zealand don't get much tastier than this.

Staying in:

- Millennium Hotel, Queenstown (1 night)
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Day 7

In the shadow of the Remarkables, Queenstown is pretty spectacular. But it has some stiff good-looks competition from neighbouring Arrowtown, with its movie-set tree-lined avenues and 19th-century buildings that once housed gold-rush fortune-seekers. Things grow well in this verdant countryside, from cherries to pinot grapes and all manner of stone fruit at a roadside stall run by the interminable Mrs Jones, a local institution. Prepare for a flavour explosion. The next explosion is a visual one as you arrive in the town of Franz Josef/Waiau, home to Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere. Get some perspective of this immense ice fall on a scenic helicopter flight – you may even get to land on it (own expense).

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier (1 night)
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Day 8

Wandering Hokitika's windswept shore on the West Coast feels a bit like you've discovered the end of the Earth. Then soak in the natural surroundings as you head to Punakaiki to view the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes, where waves thunder through cracks in the Earth. This is the soundtrack that lulls you to sleep at tonight's eco-resort.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Punakaiki (1 night)
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Day 9

Join us at Ponaumu Pathway. Delve into the history and culture of the local Maori (Poutini Ngai Tahu) and the Mawhera Pa settlement. Embark on a unique self-guided journey, as you make your way through this extraordinary storytelling experience born from a collaboration with the Weta Workshop. An inspiring and unforgettable cultural experience. We've got you sorted for lunch at legendary Monteith's Brewery. You only live once, right? The best is yet to come – all aboard for the scenic TranzAlpine train from Arthur's Pass back to Christchurch. Travel through tunnels and over viaducts, with panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, icy rivers, beech forests, gorges and river valleys. Your NZ tour arrives in Christchurch just in time for dinner.

Staying in:

- Distinction Christchurch Hotel (1 night)
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Day 10

The last 10 days of your NZ holiday flew by. Return home with new friends, a full SD card on your camera – and even more memories.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Guided Coach Tour
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Christchurch
Tour length: 10
Accommodation: Hotel 3 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary