

South Island 21 Day Self Drive Tour



This comprehensive tour carves a figure eight through spectacular South Island scenery. From Christchurch travel through the Mackenzie Country to Mt Cook, then on to Otago and Dunedin. An exploration of the remote Doubtful Sound in Fiordland National Park follows, before heading north to Queenstown and then to the West Coast Glaciers. Crossing the Southern Alps enjoy a night in Arthur's Pass National Park before heading to the east coast and Kaikoura. Enjoy the Marlborough wine region and the golden sands of Abel Tasman National Park before turning south along the wild west coast. You return to Christchurch on board the Tranz Alpine Scenic Train.



Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 21days / 20nights
 Accommodation: Motels
 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: Late model rental cars

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)

Includes: Unlimited kms

Includes: GPS navigation

Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees

Includes: Additional drivers

Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)

Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand

Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Included activity: Shared Transfer from Christchurch Train Station to Christchurch CBD Accommodation with Christchurch Touring Company



Included activity: Private Transfer from Christchurch Accommodation to Christchurch Airport with Christchurch Touring Company
 : 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Included activity: Doubtful Sound Fiordland Navigator Overnight Cruise



Day 1



Welcome to Christchurch City

Christchurch New Zealand's garden city is steadily being transformed into a vibrant urban destination. Encompassing a large green belt, it is known for its wide tree lined avenues and lush gardens. A great way to explore the city or easy way to see the sights or ride the historic trams across town to the renowned botanic gardens and the unique cardboard Transitional Cathedral, that's right it is built of cardboard!

Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

On arrival, you will be met by a private driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Christchurch

Bella Vista Motel Christchurch offers a great range of comfortable modern units with excellent facilities. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the Christchurch CBD, shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 2



Collect Rental Car

Choose a car to best suit your needs from our fantastic rental car range. From compact economy, hatchbacks to prestige SUVs.

Explore Christchurch

Following earthquakes that razed its centre and much of the outlying suburbs, Ōtautahi-Christchurch is well into a billion-dollar makeover. In the middle of the Canterbury Plains, bordering the Pacific Ocean, New Zealand's newest city is an ideal gateway to exploring the middle of the South. Go punting on the Avon River, take a historic tram ride, catch the gondola to the rim of an extinct volcano or do all three! See the world's only Cardboard Cathedral and for nature enthusiasts - wander the renowned Christchurch Botanic Gardens, or head to Oxford Terrace in the city to find a great spot to eat or drink. Drive an hour in any direction to ski, mountain bike, wine taste, whale-watch, bungee jump or play golf. Take the winding Port Hills road to the French settlement of Akaroa & Banks Peninsula and tour the vines in Waipara for an authentic New Zealand wine-tasting experience.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Triple Pass - Tram, Punting and Gondola

Experience three of Christchurch's iconic attractions in one day: the Christchurch Tram, Christchurch Gondola, and Punting on the Avon River. The historic tram is a delightful way to explore the evolving inner city, taking in the various sights with the hop-on hop-off pass and learning about the city from the live commentary. You'll also enjoy a bird's eye view of Christchurch and the Canterbury region including the distant peaks of the Southern Alps when you ride the gondola cableway to the top of the Port Hills in Heathcote Valley. Punting on the Avon River takes you through the city's green belt: a relaxing way to explore what is affectionately known as the 'Garden City'.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Discover Christchurch Afternoon Tour

A half-day sightseeing tour of Christchurch highlighting both the damage to the city inflicted by several large earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and the rebuild which is currently in progress, together with the surviving beauty of the city and the historical landmarks. Experience the grand architecture, beautiful gardens, and scenic viewpoints on a half-day city tour of Christchurch.

The tour commences in the central city of Christchurch and covers the area that was completely devastated by the Christchurch earthquakes in February 2011. The guide will explain both the history of the city and the effects of the earthquake. On leaving the inner city, the tour travels to Mona Vale a historic homestead and gardens. Then you will travel to the Sign of the Takahe, a historic building with a lookout providing spectacular views over the city, Canterbury Plains, and the Southern Alps. The tour then travels via the Port Hills and Lyttelton Harbour by way of the Sign of the Kiwi and Governors Bay to the Port of Lyttelton. The tour proceeds through the Lyttelton harbor tunnel to the seaside suburb of Sumner and Cave Rock before returning to the central city where the tour will conclude.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Dinner onboard the Christchurch Restaurant Tram

A truly unique dining experience in the heart of Christchurch. You'll board New Zealand's only dining tram for an unforgettable moving four-course restaurant experience. Enjoy a curated fine dining-style menu while taking in the city sights on your journey through the streets of central Christchurch. This experience includes a meal with multiple courses as the tramway route passes New Regent Street, the Avon River, High Street, and Victoria Square.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Christchurch

Bella Vista Motel Christchurch offers a great range of comfortable modern units with excellent facilities. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the Christchurch CBD, shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 3



Christchurch to Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Drive through the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury plains. Catch your breath in Geraldine before continuing through Fairlie. Ascending Burkes pass you'll come to the picturesque town of Lake Tekapo. Follow the road and take in the view of Aoraki-Mt Cook (New Zealand's tallest mountain) from the shores of Lake Pukaki, known for its glacier fed turquoise blue colour. Continue along the lake to your final destination Aoraki-Mt Cook Village.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glacier Explorers

Experience 500-year-old icebergs up close on the Aoraki-Mt Cook terminal lake. The Glacier Explorers tour is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and one of only three in the world! Very few glaciers terminate into lakes and even fewer of them are accessible. See towering ice cliffs and floating icebergs from the safety of a specially designed boat. These boats provide a safe way to view unseen and inaccessible areas of New Zealand's largest glacier The Tasman.

Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel, nestled in the heart of Mt. Cook Village, offers spacious self-contained units that provide comfort and convenience. Each unit is surrounded by breathtaking alpine mountain views, making it the perfect retreat for nature lovers and adventurers alike.



Day 4



Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park to Dunedin

Leave Aoraki Mt Cook National Park and travel past Twizel, one of the locations for the Lord of the Rings films. Go through Omarama, the gliding capital of New Zealand. Continue down the Waitaki Valley follow the hydro power generating system towards the east coast. Stretch your legs in Oamaru, known for its white stone buildings constructed with the local Oamaru Stone and Steampunk influence. If you were a little late off the mark this morning you may get the chance to see the blue penguins come ashore at dusk.

Continue south down the coast to Moeraki, and take a detour towards the beach to see the Moeraki Boulders, a unique geological feature well worth a look. As you arrive in Dunedin, take in the city's Edwardian and Scottish heritage reflected in the buildings around the city centre The Octagon.

Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 5



Explore Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula

Known as the Edinburgh of the South, Dunedin City has a heavy Scottish influence. Surrounded by rugged coastal plains and windswept beaches it's home to an eclectic mix of historical and modern architecture as well as industrial technology. Renowned for its Flemish Baroque-inspired 'gingerbread house', Railway Station, this university town is bustling with life. Head to the Saturday farmers market held in the aforementioned railway grounds for a taste of organic produce, handmade crepes and local honey. Explore the many cafes and wine bars in The Octagon, then continue on a self-guided walking tour of the internationally acclaimed Street Art dotted around the city. Drive to the coast and watch the freighters passing in the distance while you sunbathe, or hire a mountain bike and test your legs on one of the many trails available in the area. For a more immersive historical experience, follow the coast to New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle. On your way back be sure to head to the Otago Peninsula to see the largest mainland Albatross colony in the world.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Tour Including Wildlife Cruise with Monarch

A small-group bus tour from Dunedin. Join a local guide for a journey across the Otago Peninsula. Travel over the high road with postcard views of the harbour and coast. You'll travel past quaint communities and rural farms. Spot wading birds as your mini-bus explores around the inlets and the wetland eco-systems. Your tour will visit a remote Otago Peninsula beach. A short walk from the mini-bus will provide dramatic views of rugged coastal cliffs, offshore islands and perhaps some huge sea lions. The trip continues to Wellers Rock Wharf, for a Monarch Wildlife Cruise. You'll travel out of the harbour, around Taiaroa Head, and out to sea. Watch royal albatross glide across the water and return to their breeding colony. Beneath a historic lighthouse is a colony of playful fur seals. You'll spot other rare seabirds and maybe blue penguins or other marine mammals. You are also welcome to bring a pre-packed meal on tour with you. Snacks and drinks can be purchased whilst aboard the MV Monarch. We recommend having a good-sized lunch before the tour departs Dunedin. The final stop is at a Yellow-eyed Penguin conservation reserve. Visit the on-site rehab centre before a tour of the reserve. You'll take trails through native bushland, walking through tunnels and trenches to different viewing hides scattered around the reserve. Watch as the world's rarest penguin returns ashore and interacts around their nesting sites. The tour ends with a relaxed drive, following the harbour, back to Dunedin.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Speights Brewery Tour

Founded in 1876, the Speights Brewery still occupies its original Dunedin site - with several of its buildings dating back to the late 1800's. One of the only remaining 'gravity breweries' in the world, this 60-minute tour explains its inner workings. There is an opportunity to taste six different beers as well as bottle, cap and brew your own personal Speights Gold Medal Ale - the brewery's flagship beer.

Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 6



Dunedin to Te Anau

The drive to Te Anau takes you through classic Southland farming scenery. Head off-the-beaten-track today and follow the coastline instead of the inland route. Go through The Catlins area and be sure to take a detour to Kaka Point to view its majestic cliffs and pounding surf. Continue through Invercargill to Riverton and Colac Bay, and then head north to Manapouri. From here you can embark on a day or overnight cruise to the remote Doubtful Sound, renowned for its natural beauty. Just a short way further will bring you to your lakeside destination of Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Te Anau Glowworm Caves with RealNZ

Begin your Te Anau Glowworm experience with a scenic cruise across Lake Te Anau on board the luxury catamaran, Luminosa, to the western side of the lake. On arrival, you'll enter the caves through Cavern House, where informative displays detail the history of this 12,000 year old underground network. You'll then explore by limestone pathway while your guide points out hidden whirlpools, sculpted rock formations, and a rushing underground waterfall. See a magical display of thousands of glowworms as you glide through the darkness in a small boat.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self-contained motel units less than a minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Enjoy a close walk to shops, cafes and restaurants.



Day 7



Te Anau to Manapouri

This short drive takes you along the lake edge of Te Anau and across lush southern farmlands to the small township of Lake Manapouri, gateway to Doubtful Sound.

Doubtful Sound Fiordland Navigator Overnight Cruise

Take in the tranquility of remote Doubtful Sound on this unique overnight wilderness cruise. Beginning in Manapouri with a short boat ride across the lake, you'll be taken by coach over the Wilmot Pass to Deep Cove, Doubtful Sound. Board the Fiordland Navigator, a purpose-built vessel designed like a traditional coastal trading scow. Be accommodated in a private cabin with an ensuite bathroom or a quad-share bunk room with shared bathroom facilities. The Navigator has a large spacious deck for viewing the scenery and wildlife as well as a dining saloon, bar and observation lounge. As you take in the stunning scenery of the Fiord, you'll be provided with a running commentary of the area and its history, points of interest and wildlife. You'll have the opportunity to see dolphins, fur seals and, if you're lucky rare Fiordland penguins. After anchoring in a sheltered cove, choose to explore the shoreline by kayak or stabcraft, or if you're really brave take a dip in the water. In the evening enjoy a three-course buffet dinner prepared on board and served in the dining saloon. Enjoy beer and fine wines from the licensed bar, and spend time star gazing on the upper deck. Following hearty cooked breakfast the next morning you will spend your remaining time exploring other parts of the fiord before returning to Deep Cove for the trip back to Manapouri.

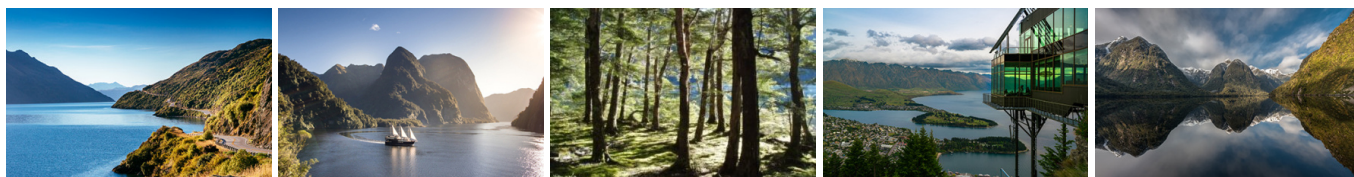
Your accommodation: Fiordland Navigator Overnight Boat in Doubtful Sound

The Fiordland Navigator is purpose built for cruising in the fiords. The vessel offers spacious viewing decks, a comfortable dining saloon and observation lounge.

Meals included: Dinner



Day 8



Manapouri to Queenstown

Your Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise returns to Manapouri at midday.

Crossing the rolling tussock lands, pass through Mossburn, the deer capital of New Zealand. Continue north through lush Southland countryside towards Lake Wakatipu. The road now hugs the lake edge and the Remarkable mountain range towers over your approach to Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner

Enjoy a quintessential Kiwi experience, a delicious gourmet BBQ buffet meal and a farm demonstration in a stunning lakeside setting. Take in the stunning views of Lake Wakatipu and its surroundings as you cruise across the lake to the historic Walter Peak high country farm aboard the TSS Earnslaw Steamship. Enjoy the ambience of the heart of the stately homestead while your Colonel's Homestead Restaurant chef prepares a gourmet BBQ dinner. Your seasonal menu includes an extensive selection of local New Zealand produce, including succulent meats and a selection of delicious vegetables and salads. Complete your meal with your choice of delicious desserts, New Zealand cheeses, tea, and coffee. After dinner, watch the farm dogs in action with a sheep-herding demonstration and say hello to the other farm animals. Finally, cruise home under the southern stars and enjoy the fresh night air as the lights of Queenstown draw ever closer.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Explore Queenstown

Well-known as New Zealand's 'adventure capital', Queenstown is home to a range of adventures, from the world's first and most famous bungee jumps to jet boat thrills, white-water rafting, and skydiving. However, Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of beautiful Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by many historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Take a stroll through the beautiful lakefront parks and gardens, browse through market stalls on weekends, dine in wonderful al-fresco restaurants, or ride on the 100-year-old historic Steamship - TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Take the Queenstown Gondola up to Bob's Peak and soak up the panoramic views of the magnificent lake and mountain ranges. Steamer Wharf is full of delicious eateries and the O'Connells Pavillion is great for a spot of shopping. And after all of that, if you do want the adrenaline rush, Queenstown is known for taking your pick from the Shotover Jet, Canyon Swing, Zipline, Luge, or Heli-hike.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shotover Jet Canyon Jet Boat Ride

Shotover Jet is the only company permitted to operate in the Shotover River Canyons. It's a thrilling ride! Skim past rocky outcrops at close range in your Shotover Jet 'Big Red', as you twist and turn through the narrow canyons at breathtaking speeds. And a major highlight - hold tight for the world-famous Shotover Jet full 360-degree spins!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Appellation Boutique Wine Tour

Experience a tasting journey through three of Central Otago's incredibly scenic and varying wine sub-regions; Gibbston, Bannockburn and Cromwell. Visit three boutique vineyards, tasting their unique cool climate wines and discover why the Central Otago region has become world-renowned in its own right. Indulge at a fourth vineyard restaurant for a platter-style lunch, savouring the finest and freshest produce, accompanied with a wine flight.

There will also be an opportunity to retrace history when you stroll through the charming historical settlement of Old Cromwell.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 10



Queenstown to Franz Josef Glacier via Wanaka

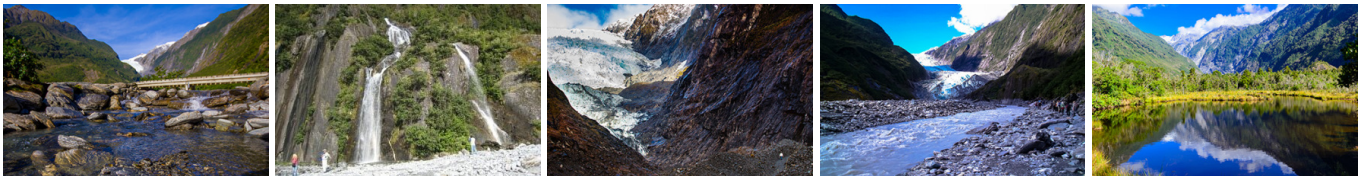
From Queenstown you'll cross the Crown Range, the highest sealed road in New Zealand to arrive in the Alpine town of Wanaka, gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park. Skirting the shores of both Lake Wanaka and Hawea, you will enter the small town of Makarora. Stop at Blue Pools for a 1-hour return walk through the native beech forest to a glacier-fed swimming hole. Continue on through the remote seaside settlement of Haast before heading up the wild West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beaches occasionally. Paringa Salmon Farm is worth a stop to stretch your legs, feed the fish, and stop for lunch and refreshments. Keep heading North and be sure to enjoy the view of the ever-changing towering snowcapped Southern Alps Mountain Range. Fox Glacier welcomes you first, then comes your destination for the night Franz Josef township.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 11



Explore Franz Josef

Franz Josef is a small but lively town in the heart of the West Coast, known for its 12km long glacier. Surrounded by lush rainforest-clad mountains the township has a vibrant and bustling atmosphere. To see the ice from a viewpoint you can walk along the valley floor to the viewpoint below the terminal face. However, to go on the glacier itself you must take a licensed helicopter tour. If walking is not your thing you can explore the township full of souvenir and gift shops, some great spots for a bite to eat are SnakeBite Brewery or King Tiger.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Franz Josef Nature Tour with Glacier Valley Eco Tours

Nestled in thick historic West Coast forest and a stone's throw from wild black sand beaches, this is one of the world's most unusual glaciers. Beautiful blue skies or magical misty rain, whatever the weather - you will feel like you are in Narnia or LOTR.

With easy walking at your pace, information on glaciology, geology, geomorphology, flora and fauna, local legends, history, and small guided groups with fantastic guides, you will experience this glacier in style and in the best hands with the only local company. Wander past glacier rivers and streams and through beautiful podocarp forest; discover hidden natural treasures such as native snails, wild native mushrooms, and dozens of species of native orchids; listen to native bird song and waterfalls; see if you can spot a Chamois or a Tahr on the huge snow-capped mountains above while drinking a cup of tea and talking one-on-one with your guide.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

A spectacular scenic flight soaring over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers, Fox and Franz Josef. Landing at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 12



Franz Josef to Punakaiki

Driving north on State Highway 6 you pass through many small West Coast towns. Hari Hari is the township that Guy Menzies decided to land in (or rather crash land) as he became the first person to fly solo across the Tasman. Ross is the site of an old gold mining town and some of the old buildings remain. You can even pan for gold. The craft and gift stores in Hokitika are excellent with a great range of locally made items and if you want to explore further here then the Hokitika Gorge is worthy of a detour.

Just south of Greymouth is Shantytown a replica gold rush town with lots of great displays from yesteryear. Be sure to stop at the supermarket in Greymouth as there is none in Punakaiki. Punakaiki is a highlight of this drive so allow plenty of time to walk the paths and explore the Pancake Rocks.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glowworm Cave Tour with Underworld Adventures

Delve into an ancient wonderland of stalactites, stalagmites and glowworms in the enormous Nile River Caves. At the Charleston Base you'll be equipped with caving helmets, coats and boots and be taken to the Nile River Rainforest Train where you'll travel through the forest before exploring the dry upper levels of the Aranui Entrance series. Recently discovered, the Metro cave is one of only several caves in the world left in a natural unspoilt state. Exploring the lower level of the cave system, in the dark you will find galaxies of glow worms spanning over you. Your guides will enrich your journey with captivating illustrations, explanations and stories connecting you with this special place. After emerging back to the daylight a short stroll leads back to the train. It is important you understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Underworld Rafting and Glowworm Experience with Underworld Adventures

A superb four hour Black Water Rafting adventure in the Paparoa National Park. You meander through a paradise of stalactites and stalagmites in the upper dry levels of the cave. You then enter a slow moving underground river on which you float in your tube using only the natural light of an awe inspiring display of glow worms for navigation. Emerge from the cave into a remote and untouched world before leaving its tranquility for the rushing bubbling waters of the low grade Nile River Rapids. It is important you understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Havenz Punakaiki (Self check in required)

Havenz Punakaiki offers a selection of traditional Kiwi hideaways: luxury homes, holiday apartments and baches. These holiday retreats are situated in tranquil native forest and offer easy access to beaches, the Paparoa National Park and the famous Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and Blowholes.



Day 13



Punakaiki to Arthur's Pass National Park

Today you'll head south towards Greymouth, before turning onto State Highway 73 as you make your way to Arthur's Pass. Winding your way up and over the Southern Alps, this route takes you through some of the most spectacular scenery in the country, even in the rain when hundreds of waterfalls cascade down the bush clad hillsides.

Originally the road was used as a pass by the Maori as they made their seasonal passage to collect Greenstone in the West Coast mountains. Following the 1800's gold rush a road and railway was developed through the area. Today, the railway is used predominantly for the world renowned TranzAlpine Scenic Train, transporting several hundred tourists per day from Christchurch to Greymouth or the other way round. Continue on through the Otira Gorge, before arriving at your destination for the night, Arthur's Pass.

Note: If you're feeling like a more leisurely drive, there is the option to take a more scenic route around Lake Brunner. Well signposted, this road begins just before the town of Kumara.

Walking tracks in Arthurs Pass National Park

Within Arthur's Pass there are many short walks to suit all ages and abilities. Located in the Arthur's Pass Village is a Department of Conservation information centre where you can get updates on track conditions and track suitability as well as learn about the natural history of the area and its people.

Listed below is a selection of short walks.

1. Millennium Walk - Time: 10 minutes return
2. Devils Punchbowl Waterfall Walk - Time: One hour return
3. Arthur's Pass Walking Track - Time: One hour 20 minutes (one way)
4. Dobson Nature Walk - Time: 30 minutes return
5. Old Coach Road Walk - Time: 30 minutes return
6. Cockayne Nature Walk - Time: 30 minutes return

Your accommodation: Arthurs Pass Alpine Motel

Located right in the village this is the ideal location to enjoy and explore Arthur's Pass National Park. Close to cafes and the visitor centre your accommodation is in comfortable self contained units.



Day 14



Arthur's Pass to Kaikoura

Travelling from the Southern Alps to the Coast, this drive offers spectacular views of braided river valleys. You'll travel through Castle Hill Scenic Reserve, dotted with remarkable rocky outcrops, popular for hiking.

Descending onto the Canterbury Plains, you'll travel through the rich farmland surrounding Christchurch before turning North through the small towns of Rangiora and Oxford. You'll then travel on State Highway 1 through the Waipara Valley. If you have plenty of time be sure to stop at Hanmer Springs for a soak in the hot mineral pools.

The road hugs the coast for the final stretch of this drive, before arriving at your destination, Kaikoura. Keep a lookout for dolphins as they are often seen swimming just off the coastline as well as New Zealand fur seals basking by the roadside.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura

Experience New Zealand's only marine based whale watching company. Whale Watch Kaikōura offer a once-in-a-lifetime, up close encounter with the giant Sperm Whale. You are also likely to encounter New Zealand fur seals, dolphins and albatross. Depending on the season you may also see Pilot, Blue and Southern Right whales as well as migrating humpbacks. Often orcas can be spotted here and the world's smallest dolphin, the Hector's, occasionally make an appearance. Cruise in style on modern catamarans, specifically designed for whale watching. The VIP Captain's Cabin is situated in the wheelhouse alongside the captain. This cabin provides guests with exclusive access to the captain as well as a dedicated tour host for the duration of the tour.

Your accommodation: The White Morph, Kaikoura

Set on the Esplanade in Kaikōura, The White Morph enjoys commanding views of the ocean and mountains. Just a 10-minute walk into town, The White Morph has been beautifully placed so that you can take in the spectacular scenery of Kaikoura while enjoying the variety of attractions on offer.



Day 15



Kaikoura to Blenheim

Heading north from Kaikoura, the road hugs the shore for approximately 50 kilometres and offers many opportunities to view the native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. One of the best seal watching locations is Ohau Point (25km north of Kaikoura), where you can observe the adults on the shoreline and the pups frolicking in the waterfall, just a short walk from the road (signposted). As you drive you will have turquoise waters of the South Pacific Ocean to your east and to the west the towering Kaikoura Ranges. Crossing the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges you head towards Marlborough, New Zealand's largest wine producing region. Blenheim sits right at the heart of Marlborough and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Half Day Marlborough Wine Tour with Sounds Connection

An afternoon among the vines! Be immersed in the Marlborough wine country with the Sounds Connection half day wine tour. Get collected from your accommodation and taken through three or four hand-picked wineries to taste the award-winning produce this region is known for. Hear about the history of winemaking in Marlborough as well as learning the unique processes each winery goes through.

Your accommodation: Blenheim Palms Motel

Located 100 m from the central shops and eateries, the Blenheim Palms Motel offers tasteful individually designed apartment-styled rooms.



Day 16



Blenheim to Abel Tasman National Park via Queen Charlotte Drive

Take a short drive to the small port of Picton where the Interislander ferry connects with Wellington. A bustling seaside destination, Picton is well equipped with shops, cafes and is also the starting point for the famous Queen Charlotte Walk. You'll travel along Queen Charlotte Drive, traversing the length of the Marlborough Sounds coastline. Magnificent views are abundant so be sure to make time to stop and enjoy the scenery as you go.

Continue through the small port town of Havelock, home to a variety of cafes and restaurants. The highway between Nelson and Picton crosses the pelorus river, and at this junction you'll find the famous pelorus bridge. From here there are a number of forest walks, the most popular a 30 minute loop through beech, rimu, and totara forest. Traverse Tasman Bay passing through Motueka to arrive on the outskirts of Abel Tasman National Park.

Your accommodation: Ocean View Chalets

The Ocean View Chalets are situated on a 50-acre farmlet, slightly elevated and nestled along the bush line with panoramic sea views. Great access the National Park and close to the friendly Marahau village.



Day 17



Abel Tasman National Park

Abel Tasman National Park, known for its coastal hiking track has an abundance of golden beaches, inlets, and private lagoons. The park has a mild climate and is a special place to visit at any time of the year. Why not enjoy a scenic cruise through the Sounds or take a kayaking tour around its many sheltered bays? Relax to the melodious birdsong and get up close to some of the park's many animal residents, including native bats, geckos, birds, marine mammals fur seals, and dolphins.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Beaches, Bays and Seals Guided Sea Kayaking Trip Including Picnic Lunch

Combining the best of the Abel Tasman, this trip showcases incredible beaches, coastal walks and native wildlife. First you'll meet your guide and join the 9.30 am Vista Cruise along the magnificent coastline to Torrent Bay. You'll then arrive at Torrent Bay Lodge and complete a full training session and safety briefing before moving on to the water in kayaks to discover beautiful beaches, tidal estuaries and rivers.

Stop for a picnic lunch in a sheltered cove and take some time to swim, explore or sunbathe on the sand. On your return trip, if the winds are favourable, sails will be hoisted and you'll sail back via Pinnacle Island to view the seal colony there - if you're lucky, you may even see some resident blue penguins at the same time. Arriving back at Torrent Bay Lodge, freshen up with a hot shower and re-join the vista cruise back to Kaiteriteri, arriving at 4.10 pm.

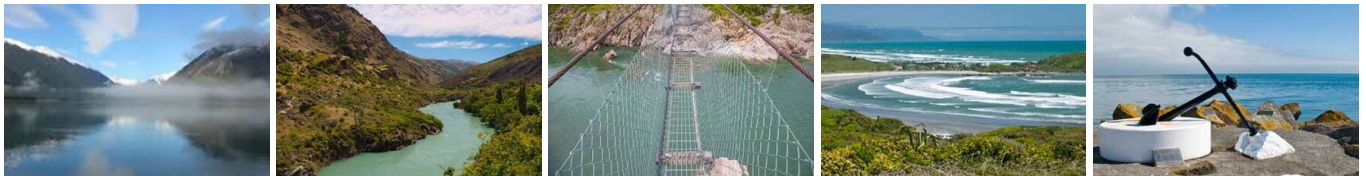
During the summer there is the option to enjoy an unguided two hour coastal bush walk after the kayaking trip. Walk around the picturesque Torrent Bay Lagoon via Cleopatra's Pool to the anchorage where you will re-join the boat back to Kaiteriteri. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Ocean View Chalets

The Ocean View Chalets are situated on a 50-acre farmlet, slightly elevated and nestled along the bush line with panoramic sea views. Great access the National Park and close to the friendly Marahau village.



Day 18



Marahau to Westport

Today travel along the Buller Gorge home to spectacular scenery. Head through the sleepy town of Murchison, a great place to stop for lunch then continue on to Inangahua, the first major town in the region. You'll then come to Whites Creek - where New Zealand's longest swing bridge is located. As you cross the river take in the magnificent views of the gorge before drive a short way further to arrive in Westport, the largest town the Northern West Coast.

Your accommodation: Buller Bridge Motel

Ideally located in Westport this well equipped motel is adjacent to the Buller River and Millennium Walkway but also just a few minutes walk from the town centre



Day 19



Westport to Greymouth

Cape Foulwind just south of Westport is home to a seal colony and the short walk provides some spectacular scenery. The spectacular West Coast coastline guides you to Paparoa National Park and to Punakaiki. A stop at the pancake rocks is a highlight of this drive so allow plenty of time to walk the paths and explore the formations.

Greymouth sits on the Grey River almost at the western end of State Highway 73. It's the largest town on the coast and as such is the commercial centre. A fine small town centre with some interesting buildings makes it a pleasant place to stroll or if you are feeling a little more adventurous then there is almost every activity you can think of available here. In the centre of town you will also find the Monteith's brewery and a tour is highly worthwhile. Greymouth is also where the TranzAlpine train arrives and departs. Just south of Greymouth is Shantytown a replica gold rush town with lots of great displays from yesteryear.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shantytown Heritage Park Experience

Shantytown is a faithfully restored replica of an 1860's West Coast gold mining town. It is a living monument to the hardy pioneers who forded the wildly exotic rivers and streams and scrambled through the rugged subtropical rainforest in search of their fortunes. A 20 minute ride on one of the original bush steam trains takes you deep into gold country. Among the collection of pioneer relics and Kiwiana that has come to comprise Shantytown's unique and valuable collection are some true gems. This vast and significant collection is housed in over 30 historic buildings, enabling you to wander your way through the town as interlopers into a bygone era. You'll also get to try your hand at gold-panning under the helpful tuition of the highly experienced gold claim staff.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Greymouth

Experience true West Coast hospitality at Bella Vista Greymouth. A great base for all your West Coast adventures. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the town centre for shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 20



TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Considered one of the world's great train journeys, the TranzAlpine Scenic Train takes you from Greymouth to Christchurch. Travel across the South Island from the west to the east coast through Arthur's Pass National Park. From the comfort of your carriage see lush beech forest, deep river valleys and the spectacular peaks of the Southern Alps. Descend to the windswept Canterbury Plains before arriving in the city of Christchurch.

Shared Transfer from Christchurch Train Station to Christchurch CBD Accommodation with Christchurch Touring Company

On arrival at the Christchurch railway station, you will be met by a driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Christchurch

Bella Vista Motel Christchurch offers a great range of comfortable modern units with excellent facilities. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the Christchurch CBD, shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 21



Private Transfer from Christchurch Accommodation to Christchurch Airport with Christchurch Touring Company

A private transfer will collect you from your accommodation and transfer you to Christchurch Airport in time for your departing flight.

Farewell from Aotearoa-New Zealand

Bid farewell to New Zealand, taking with you unforgettable memories of its breathtaking landscapes and incredible adventures. In Maori, it is said mā te wā, which is not goodbye, it is see you soon!

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	21
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
Includes	Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Bella Vista Christchurch
Day 2	Bella Vista Christchurch
Day 3	Mt Cook Motel
Day 4	Motel on York
Day 5	Motel on York
Day 6	Lakefront Lodge
Day 7	Fiordland Navigator Overnight Boat in Doubtful Sound
Day 8	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 9	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 10	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 11	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 12	Havenz Punakaiki (Self check in required)
Day 13	Arthurs Pass Alpine Motel
Day 14	The White Morph, Kaikoura
Day 15	Blenheim Palms Motel
Day 16	Ocean View Chalets
Day 17	Ocean View Chalets
Day 18	Buller Bridge Motel
Day 19	Bella Vista Greymouth
Day 20	Bella Vista Christchurch