



South Island 23 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. A detailed exploration of 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 TransAlpine Scenic Train.



Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 23days / 22nights
 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: Unlimited kms

Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees

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

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

Included activity: Gondola Ride with Skyline Queenstown

Included activity: TransAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Included activity: Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport

Included activity: Te Anau Glowworm Caves with RealNZ

: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

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

Includes: GPS navigation

Includes: Additional drivers

Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand

Included activity: Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation

Included activity: Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikoura

Included activity: Shared Transfer from the Railway Station to a City Hotel with Christchurch Touring Company

Included activity: Doubtful Sound Fiordland Navigator Overnight Cruise

Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and picnic lunch with RealNZ



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 your 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 your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Explore Christchurch City

Following the 2011 earthquake that razed its centre and much of the outlying suburbs, 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 and tour the vines in Waipara for an authentic New Zealand wine-tasting experience.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Gondola

In the Heathcote Valley, just fifteen minutes from the heart of Christchurch City, ride the Christchurch Gondola for nearly a kilometer to the collapsed rim of an extinct volcano, which exploded six million years ago. Take in the spectacular panoramic views of the central city, Lyttelton Harbour, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury Plains, and the distant peaks of the Southern Alps. Wander the summit complex, enjoy a coffee or lunch in the cafe, and choose one of many nature walks to explore or visit the Christchurch Discovery Place, a dramatic reconstruction of the history of the Port Hills and Christchurch.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - International Antarctic Centre General Admission

The International Antarctic Centre aims to recreate the atmosphere and environment of Antarctica, providing visitors with an interactive, fun and educational experience. Feel the full Four Seasons of Antarctica, where you'll experience a custom-built snow and ice experience, then warm up in the Scott Base interior exhibit, a replica Antarctic field camp or other informative displays in the gallery. You'll also learn about life in modern day Antarctica, view real little blue penguins and experience a thrilling ride in a Hagglund all terrain vehicle.

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

Today you'll 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 lakeside town of 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 Mt Cook Village.

Please note: There are no food shops at Mt Cook, and dinner options are limited to one restaurant. If you wish to self-cater, you must stock up before arriving in Mt Cook, or make dinner reservations in advance.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glacier Highlights - Scenic Flight with Glacier Landing

Take in the spectacular Southern Alps, including New Zealand's highest peak Aoraki Mount Cook and the constantly changing glacial landscape. See the Hochstetter Icefall as you fly beneath the face of Mount Cook then along the length of the Tasman glacier before landing on the glacier itself. Experience the silence of the mountains, broken only by the rumbling of an avalanche and creaking of the snow and ice beneath your feet. You'll take off again for another incredible flight over peaks, ice falls, alpine lakes and climbing huts. This flight offers fantastic close up views of Aoraki Mount Cook, Mt Tasman and the Southern Alps from Aoraki Mount Cook National Park.

Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel is located in the centre of Mt. Cook village. The self-contained units are spacious and all are surrounded by alpine mountain views.



Day 4



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Dunedin

Today you'll 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, be sure to stop at The Wrinkly Ram, a quirky local cafe and souvenir store. Driving through 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. 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 - Elm Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Standard Tour

Join a local guide for a journey across the Otago Peninsula on this small-group tour of Dunedin. 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 Taiaoroa Head, home to the Royal Albatross Centre. Time is allowed to go inside and check out the displays. Take a walk down to Pilots Beach and see fur seals hauled out on the rocks, or walk out to the clifftop viewpoint, you might spot a royal albatross gliding past. Food & drink can be purchased here from the Albatross Cafe. Guests are also welcome to bring a pre-packed meal on tour with them. 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.

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.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.



Day 7



Doubtful Sound Fiordland Navigator Overnight Cruise

Take in the tranquillity 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 stabicraft, 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 Te Anau

Your Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise returns to Manapouri at midday. The short drive takes you along the lakeside and across Southern farmland to Te Anau, the gateway to the Fiordland National Park. Te Anau sits on the shores of the 345 square kilometre Lake Te Anau which reaches depths of 417 metres. Te Anau Township is the starting point for many walking tracks including the Milford track and the Kepler track. The Milford road originates here and this is arguably one of the most scenic stretches of highway in New Zealand.

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 one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Te Anau to Milford Sound and return to Te Anau

The road to Milford Sound offers some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery in the country. From crystal clear lakes and towering mountains to lush glacier formed meadows, this area is dramatic and unyielding. Stretch your legs on the Chasm Walk, a short stroll through native beech forest to see several powerful waterfalls. Continue on through the Homer Tunnel, an engineering marvel at 1219 metres long. Arriving into the village of Milford, you will be greeted with an amazing view of Mitre Peak. A day cruise into the heart of the sound is not to be missed. You'll learn about how this magnificent area was formed and experience the wonder of the falls that line the Fiord before back-tracking the way you came.

Please note: Make sure to allow 2.5hrs to Milford Sound, this takes into account the current road works on the Milford Road.

Milford Sound Cruise with RealNZ

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. Informative, participative and relaxed, this is the perfect way to experience Milford Sound to the fullest.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Milford Premium Cruise with RealNZ

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord aboard the M.V Sinbad, an exclusive vessel for a premium experience. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. With a glass of bubbles on arrival and canapes provided throughout the journey, this is the perfect way to explore Milford Sound. At a capped capacity of 40 people and a roaming nature guide providing informative commentary throughout the extended cruise, this experience allows guests to enjoy the Fiord at a relaxing pace.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 10



Te Anau to Queenstown

Today you'll cross vast tussock lands on your way to Queenstown. Pass through Mossburn, the deer capital of the nation. Continue on through the Southland countryside where the road begins to hug the lake edge and the Remarkables mountain range towers over your approach into the adventure capital of New Zealand.

Queenstown Skyline Gondola Ride

Hop aboard the Skyline Gondola - the steepest cable car lift in the Southern Hemisphere! From which you can take in the awe-inspiring views of this spectacular landscape. Sit back and relax as you enjoy panoramic views of The Remarkables, Walter Peak, Cecil Peak, Coronet Peak and the magnificent Lake Wakatipu.

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 four star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 11



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 bungy 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 a plethora of 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. 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-ski.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shotover Canyon River Jet Boat Adventure

Riding the iconic 'Big Red' Jet Boat through the narrow Shotover Canyon is an exhilarating experience not to be missed. Your skilled jet boat driver pushes the boat to 85 kph, skimming across shallow water and past towering canyon walls. This 25 minute white water ride includes 360 degree spins and maximum thrills.

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 four star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 12



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 and offers affordable and stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 13



Explore Franz Josef

Franz Josef is a small but lively town in the heart of the West Coast, known for its 12 km 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.

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. This tour will be a highlight of your travels in New Zealand.

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

Take a spectacular scenic flight over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers. Land at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys. Should weather not be suitable to take this flight you are able to transfer your booking onto a similar tour on any of the Helicopter Line's operations in Queenstown or Mt Cook.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Okarito Lagoon Guided Kayak Trip

Kayaking is by far the best way to enjoy the flora, fauna and scenic grandeur of New Zealand's largest unmodified coastal wetland. Previous experience is not necessary. Okarito Lagoon covers more than 3240 hectares of shallow open water and is well known for its outstanding bird life, including white heron and royal spoonbill. Exploring the open water and river channels that lead you deep into the heart of the rainforest is like stepping back in time to pre-European conditions and on a clear day you enjoy fantastic views of Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps. Your guide will take you to their favourite spots where you'll discover the flora, fauna and history of the lagoon.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

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



Day 14



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 formations.

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 15



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.

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 16



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.

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 17



Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikoura

Experience New Zealand's only marine based whale watching company. Whale Watch Kaikoura offer a once-in-a-lifetime, up close encounter with the giant Sperm Whale. You are also likely to encounter New Zealand fur seals, dusky 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, featuring large passenger cabins and outside viewing decks. Passenger numbers for each tour are kept below the vessel carrying capacity to ensure your tour experience remains a personal one.

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.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Blenheim

In a quiet location and close to town, Bella Vista Motel is in the heart of Blenheim. Surrounded by the world-famous Marlborough wine growing area and just a few minutes walk from a wide variety of restaurants and bars.



Day 18



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 19



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 parks many animal residents, including native bats, geckos, birds and marine mammals fur seals and dolphins.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Seals, Beach Cruise and Walk

Experience the best of Abel Tasman on this combined beach cruise and walk tour. Cruise into the Tonga Island Marine Reserve and pause to watch the antics of the Resident Fur Seal Colony. After landing at the historic Tonga Quarry Beach, take a two hour, fifteen minute walk over forested land and around the spectacular Bark Bay Estuary, renowned for its cascading waterfalls. Rejoin the cruise at the sheltered golden cove on Medlands Beach.

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 20



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 21



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.

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 22



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. You'll 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 the Railway Station to a City Hotel with Christchurch Touring

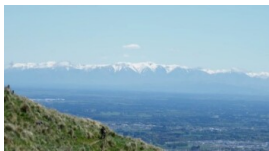
On arrival at the Christchurch railway station, you will be met by a driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

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 23



Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport

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

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	23
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
Includes	Real Journeys Milford Sound Cruise
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	Lakefront Lodge
Day 9	Lakefront Lodge
Day 10	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 11	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 12	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 13	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 14	Havenz Punakaiki (Self check in required)
Day 15	Arthurs Pass Alpine Motel
Day 16	The White Morph, Kaikoura
Day 17	Bella Vista Blenheim
Day 18	Ocean View Chalets
Day 19	Ocean View Chalets
Day 20	Buller Bridge Motel
Day 21	Bella Vista Greymouth
Day 22	Bella Vista Christchurch