



AAT Kings: Southern Spirit 25/26

It's hard to do the South Island of New Zealand justice in just two weeks. But we've been exploring this part of the country for years, and know which azure lakes, yawning gorges, gem-like glaciers and unpeopled beaches will set your heart racing. From Milford Sound tours to Franz Josef Glacier tours, Christchurch tours to Queenstown tours, get set for 14 days of eye-opening attractions glimpsed from planes, trains, automobiles and boats. This trip to New Zealand is hard to beat.



Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Wellington
 Length: 13days / 12nights
 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: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
 Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
 Included: Christchurch City Tour
 Included: Church of the Good Shepherd at Tekapo
 Included: Cruise on the Interislander Ferry
 Included: Day trip to Stewart Island
 Included: Franz Josef Glacier
 Included: Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk
 Included: Farm experience at Real Country
 Included: Tekapo Dark Sky Experience
 12 breakfasts, 5 dinners



Day 1

You don't have to arrive in Christchurch early, but we recommend you do – this South Island city has some of New Zealand's most innovative architecture, not to mention forward-thinking restaurants and bars. Tonight, it's time to meet your Travel Director and travelling companions for drinks and a tour briefing.

Staying in:

- Ibis Hotel Christchurch (1 night)

Day 2

Day two of your tour of the South Island of New Zealand sees you step out with your guide for a deeper dive into 'The City of Gardens' before traversing the colourful Canterbury Plains: the turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo, snow-capped mountains and wildflower-strewn meadows. It's quite the backdrop for the stone-hewn Church of the Good Shepherd. Your Indoor Dark Sky Astronomy Experience at Tekapo, hosted by passionate guides, will forever change the way you see the night sky. You'll see for yourself it may be one of the quietest spots on the planet, yet it has one of the busiest skies in the universe.

Staying in:

- Distinction Heritage Gateway Hotel (1 night)

Day 3

Easing through the Waitaki Valley, you're en route toward the pretty town of Oamaru, known for its stately tree-lined streets and limestone buildings. Architectural drama of a different kind awaits in Dunedin. While away the afternoon in atmospheric art-lined alleys or sipping a lager or two in Speight's Brewery (a national institution). Or venture further afield to discover Larnach Castle, which nods to Dunedin's Scottish link – it's known as 'Little Edinburgh' for a reason.

Staying in:

- Dunedin Leisure Lodge (1 night)

Day 4

Travel through rolling farmlands and lush pastures to Invercargill, a city obsessed with motor vehicles. Tributes to speed legends colour the city so it's only fitting that you visit Transport World for a guided tour and dinner. Explore classic vehicles as you are transported on a nostalgic walk back in time. Bill Richardson began collecting old trucks in 1967 and in his words sometimes "bought a truck more with our hearts than with our heads." The collection now comprises of many rare and unusual vehicles, along with popular classic vehicles.

Staying in:

- Kelvin Hotel (1 night)

Day 5

Invercargill is the gateway to the southernmost community in the country. Welcome to Stewart Island, a wild and wonderful drop of land that is 97% national parkland. Naturally, it's a magnet for endemic flora and fauna, as you'll discover on your guided Village and Bays tour. Later you have the option to join a leisurely cruise around Paterson Inlet, around Paterson Inlet that will take you past unique places including Acker's Cottage before docking at Ulva Island to admire the bird life and native flora.

Staying in:

- Kelvin Hotel (1 night)

Day 6

Today get a taste of country life combined with good old fashioned southern hospitality as you meet a 'Southern Girl' local farmer. The Real Country Farm Show, a MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience, offers an authentic taste of what rural New Zealand is like. For every guest, we donate funds to The Fairlight Foundation, Advancing Women in Agriculture. Continue to Queenstown and take the afternoon at your own pace.

Staying in:

- Copthorne Hotel and Resort Queenstown (1 night)

Day 7

We wouldn't blame you for using today to linger by the banks of Lake Wakatipu, marvelling at sky-scraping Remarkables. But if you want to venture further afield, we have a few ideas. Top of our list today is an epic journey through Fiordland National Park to Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, carved by waterfalls and a playground for dolphins and seals as you'll discover on a Milford Sound cruise (own expense). There's a reason why this part of the island has World Heritage status.

Staying in:

- Copthorne Hotel and Resort Queenstown (1 night)

Day 8

Atmospheric Arrowtown was born from gold, and its movie-set-like streets still shimmer today. It's hard to tear yourself away, but the Alpine country of the Southern Lakes is calling, from Lake Dunstan – pause for juicy stone fruit picked fresh from the tree – oh-so-blue Lake Hawea with its shoreline of poplars and willows. Over the Haast Pass, the pretty town of Franz Josef/Waiau at the edge of the Westland World Heritage Park, awaits. Get some perspective on an optional Franz Josef Glacier/Ka Roimata o Hine Hukatere flight tour – if the weather behaves, you may even get to land on it. New Zealand tours don't get much cooler than this.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier (1 night)

Day 9

On the wild West Coast, Hokitika may be small in size, but boy is it big in personality, not to mention natural attractions. Wander the windswept coast before discovering the town's other beauty: pounamu (native greenstone or jade). Steel yourself for Punakaiki's Pancake Rocks and blowholes; they owe their existence to the thundering surf that will lull you to sleep.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Punakaiki (1 night)

Day 10

After action-packed days, all you need to do today is sit back and enjoy the drama of the Heritage Highway en route to Nelson. Gaze over Buller Gorge and Kahurangi National Park, a place of wild rivers, high plateaus, alpine herbfields and coastal forests.

Staying in:

- The Rutherford Hotel (1 night)

Day 11

The South Island's oldest city, Nelson is also one of the sunniest. Explore nearby Tahunanui Beach, or you may choose to head further afield to the world-famous Abel Tasman National Park. This pocket in the top of the island is a beautiful union of golden beaches framed by sculpted granite cliffs.

Staying in:

- The Rutherford Hotel (1 night)

Day 12

All aboard for a cruise through Queen Charlotte Sound, up the Tory Channel and across Cook Strait, from the South Island to the North, navigating a maze of arms and inlets into New Zealand's cool little capital of Wellington. End your tour on a high note at dinner with your Travel Director and travel companions.

Staying in:

- Travelodge Wellington (1 night)

Day 13

Wellington also knows a thing or two about good coffee, and you'll need a strong one to get you through this morning's sightseeing. You may wish to linger in town, discovering Māori culture at Te Papa, the Museum of New Zealand (entrance fee applies). It's hard to say goodbye to your tour of the South Island of New Zealand. If you can't bear to leave, we have a few ideas up our sleeves to extend your holiday.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Guided Coach Tour
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Wellington
Tour length: 13
Accommodation: Hotel 3 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary