

The Centre of the South Tour

An unforgettable South Island adventure, soaring above some of New Zealand's most breathtaking landscapes. Start your journey in Christchurch's vibrant CBD, before heading to the adventure capital, Queenstown. Along the way, you'll have the chance to visit the spectacular West Coast glaciers on a scenic helicopter flight from Lake Tekapo. Whether you're a thrill-seeker or prefer a peaceful escape, each destination offers something special - from exhilarating hikes to serene spots perfect for unwinding with a good book. While based in Queenstown, make the most of your time with a scenic flight back from Milford Sound, topped off by a meal overlooking stunning Queenstown.



Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Queenstown
 Length: 8days / 7nights
 Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
 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

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

Included activity: Christchurch Trams

Included activity: Private Transfer from Accommodation to Airport with Christchurch Touring Company

Included activity: Mackenzie & Lakes Alpine Excursion with Mackenzie Helicopters

Included activity: The Alpine Restaurant Buffet Dinner

Included activity: The Panorama Room 3-course Dinner with The Hermitage Hotel

Included activity: Milford Sound Coach, Cruise, Fly small group tour from Queenstown

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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Lake Tekapo Private Stargazing Tour with Alpha Crux

Included activity: Glacier Explorers

Included activity: The Adventurer: Tasman Glacier Heli Hike with Mount Cook Glacier Guiding

Included activity: TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner

Included activity: Gondola and Buffet Dinner with Skyline Queenstown

Day 1



Welcome to Christchurch City

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.

Christchurch Trams

Trams played an important role in transporting the people of Christchurch until 1954 when they were phased out. In 1995 the city council and Tramway Historical Society brought the beautiful trams back to the city centre for the public to enjoy. Take the delightful journey throughout the central city, including sights such as Riverside Market, the Avon River, the Arts Precinct including the Christchurch Art Gallery and Arts Centre, the Botanic Gardens, and New Regent Street with its Spanish-style buildings and sunny cafes. A commentary is given by the tram driver and you can hop on and off at the various stops as you please throughout the day. It's a great way to see and explore the main city centre attractions.

Christchurch Botanic Gardens - suggested activity

Located just 15 minutes from the city center, Christchurch's 75-acre Botanic Gardens boast the finest collection of exotic and indigenous plants in New Zealand. This impressive collection creates a tranquil oasis, with spring daffodils, stunning summer roses and herbaceous borders, vibrant autumn foliage, and cozy conservatories to warm up in during winter. There's something to enjoy in every season. The New Zealand Garden also offers a unique glimpse into the country's wilderness, providing a peaceful escape throughout the year.

Your accommodation: The George Hotel

The George is the essence of supreme comfort. The award-winning 5 star hotel is opposite Hagley Park and just a few minutes stroll from the Botanic Gardens. It also has an award-winning restaurant, 50 Bistro onsite.



Day 2



Private Transfer from Accommodation to Airport with Christchurch Touring Company

Enjoy a seamless, private transfer from your Christchurch city accommodation directly to the Christchurch Airport in time for your departing flight.

Collect Rental Car

This tour's from price includes an intermediate-sized vehicle, setting you up for comfortable travels. Yet, we understand every adventure is unique! Feel free to select the perfect wheels from our incredible collection of rental cars, spanning from economy hatchbacks to premium SUVs.

Christchurch to Lake Tekapo

Today you head into the heart of the South Island. After crossing the vast Canterbury Plains, you will reach the township of Geraldine, which offers an ideal refreshment stop before you head into Mackenzie Country.

Passing through places such as Beautiful Valley it's not hard to understand where the names originate. Ascending Burkes Pass and onto the high country plateau and the picturesque town of Lake Tekapo, the first of the large Southern Lakes. It's a great place to take a scenic flight, enjoy a guided horse trek, a boat trip on the pristine lake or just enjoy the magnificent views.

Lake Tekapo

Tekapo is New Zealand's highest lake, and it is renowned for its astonishing turquoise waters. This vibrant hue is due to fine rock particles suspended in the glacier-fed lake, reflecting light. A highlight for visitors is the iconic Church of the Good Shepherd, a stone building dedicated in 1935, which incorporates timber from the old Tekapo bridge. Nearby, a bronze sheepdog statue honors the vital role of these animals in the local farming community. For breathtaking panoramic views, drive up or walk up Mt John to the Canterbury University Observatory. A short distance away, Lake Alexandrina offers a peaceful retreat as a wildlife reserve with no motorized crafts allowed. For an unforgettable perspective, consider a scenic flight over Mt Cook National Park and Tasman Glacier.

Lake Tekapo Private Stargazing Tour with Alpha Crux

The Mackenzie Region is home to some of the clearest night skies in the world, and its Dark Sky Reserve was only the third of its kind in the world when it was created in 2012. The Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve was also the first to be given a gold tier status and is the largest at 4,367 square kilometers. This tour will allow you to marvel at fascinating stars and deep sky objects in the southern night sky, getting up close to star clusters, nebulae, and the Milky Way under some of the world's purest night skies - without having to leave your own property. You will also be given the opportunity to pose for an Astro-portrait of yourself underneath the starry sky as a keepsake and reminder of this spectacular experience.

Your accommodation: Galaxy Boutique Hotel

The Galaxy Boutique Hotel is a gem in the Mackenzie Region! Enjoy a unique, high-quality stay just 500 meters from Tekapo Village Center and the stunning shores of Lake Tekapo. Only an hour from the majestic Mount Cook National Park and three hours from Christchurch and Queenstown. Your unforgettable getaway starts here!

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Mackenzie & Lakes Alpine Excursion - Mackenzie Helicopters

This short scenic flight will take you over spectacular lakes, mountains and glacial valleys. You will see stunning turquoise gem - Lake Tekapo, snowcapped mountains of the Southern Alps, golden tussock, rolling hills and deeply glaciated valleys. You will fly over this iconic high country, dramatic landscape of the Mackenzie, the rugged wilderness, landing at a private spot in the mountains for panoramic views of alpine lakes and valleys carved out by ancient glaciers.

Your accommodation: Galaxy Boutique Hotel

The Galaxy Boutique Hotel is a gem in the Mackenzie Region! Enjoy a unique, high-quality stay just 500 meters from Tekapo Village Center and the stunning shores of Lake Tekapo. Only an hour from the majestic Mount Cook National Park and three hours from Christchurch and Queenstown. Your unforgettable getaway starts here!

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Lake Tekapo to Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Lake Pukaki is just another 30 minutes from Lake Tekapo and its from here you can be rewarded with spectacular views of the full length of the lake and into Aoraki Mt Cook National Park. In Mt Cook Village a myriad of activities are available from glacier landings by ski plane or helicopter, kayaking on a glacial lake and a host of walks to suit all abilities and time frames. At The Hermitage Hotel, the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre is a must-see.

Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

At 3754m Aoraki-Mt Cook is Aotearoa-New Zealand's highest mountain, located deep in the heart of the Southern Alps. As well as its impressive beauty, Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park is also home to a huge range of awe-inspiring sights and activities. Take to the air with Mt Cook Ski Planes for a scenic flight that includes a glacier landing. At around 27 kilometres long the Tasman Glacier is New Zealand's longest and a Glacier Explorers tour allows you to see its unique features up close.

There are many short hikes in and around the park and these are well signposted around the village. Those with an interest in the night sky should take a Big Sky Stargazing tour with the Hermitage Hotel. The region is considered to have one of the clearest night skies in the world and is one of the few gold-rated dark sky reserves worldwide.

Visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre for insight into this region's mountain climbing history. You'll also learn of Sir Ed's incredible achievements and his dedication to helping others around the world.

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.

The Alpine Restaurant Buffet Dinner

The Alpine Restaurant located at The Hermitage Hotel offers sumptuous buffets for breakfast, lunch and dinner, accompanied by spectacular views of Aoraki Mount Cook from every seat. Enjoy a vast buffet including a wide range of foods such as soup, salads, seafood, hot and cold meats and desserts with tea and coffee to follow.

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus

Experience the best views in the park from the spacious top floor rooms of the magnificent Hermitage Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 5



The Adventurer: Tasman Glacier Heli Hike with Mount Cook Glacier Guiding

The adventure begins with a breathtaking scenic flight, experience the thrill of the helicopter as you look out over Mt Cook and the spectacular views of the Alps surrounding the glaciers. Landing on a remote part of the glacier, your guide will equip you with all the gear ready to explore ice formations in this ever-changing environment at the heart and birthplace of New Zealand mountaineering. Walking through the untouched formations and specially cut steps - You'll return home with incredible memories of your Tasman Glacier hike in this vast mountain landscape. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here

The Panorama Room 3-course Dinner with The Hermitage Hotel

Since first opening its doors in 1969, The Panorama Room has gained a reputation as being one of the best restaurants in New Zealand. This reputation is reflected in the numerous awards the restaurant has received over the years. A simple philosophy of using just the freshest, local ingredients, in particular from New Zealand's South Island, is still the secret to its success today. The menu has a strong international influence and reflects both the establishment's taste and the fact that most of the chefs have travelled and worked widely throughout the world.

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus

Experience the best views in the park from the spacious top floor rooms of the magnificent Hermitage Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 6



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Queenstown

Leaving the alpine region of Aoraki Mt Cook, you'll travel through the lakeside town of Twizel, then a little further to Omarama the gliding capital of New Zealand. Continue on over the Lindis Pass, one of New Zealand's highest roads with a summit of 971 metres. Arrive in the quaint village of Tarras, then continue on a short way to the historic Bendigo Reserve, one of Otago's original gold mining settlements. Follow the road to Cromwell, and keep going through the sheer cliffs of the Kawarau Gorge towards Gibbston, one of New Zealand's premier wine growing regions. See the historic Kawarau Bridge where you can bungee jump or relax and watch others take the plunge. Approaching Queenstown, the Remarkables mountain range comes into view as you arrive into the adventure capital of New Zealand.

Queenstown

Queenstown known in Māori as Tāhuna, is home to many adrenaline-inducing activities. Nestled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, this alpine town has very distinct seasons, and most adrenaline-filled activities can be accessed year-round. Queenstown is home to jet boating, bungee jumping, rafting, skydiving, paragliding, and even indoor thrills. If you want that rush - head out on the Shotover Jet, dive off the Nevis Bungy, freefall on the Canyon Swing, or Zip line the Gondola. While arguably the brightest gem in New Zealand's crown, Queenstown offers far more than an action-packed getaway. If you're looking for a slightly slower pace, there are plenty of recreational activities, including hiking and biking trails to explore, guided tours, boat cruises, scenic flights, or spa and wellness options to help you get away. Head to the lakefront, eat at one of the al fresco eateries, and soak up the local vibes; catch a ride on the iconic 100-year-old steamship the TSS Earnslaw; or take the Skyline Gondola and enjoy bird's-eye views of the Remarkables mountain ranges and Lake Wakatipu. Pack a picnic and go for a hike, only 20 minutes from Central Queenstown, Coronet Peak opens for summer sightseeing. You can ride the Peak Gondola to the top for panoramic views and hike the trails, or go for a bike ride on many excellent biking trails. In winter, Queenstown becomes a world-class winter resort, with four ski areas and a range of activities, bars, restaurants, and ways to relax and unwind.

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 ambiance 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, or New Zealand cheeses. 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: Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel

Queenstown Park Hotel is a boutique hotel with a modern romantic style in the heart of New Zealand's adventure capital. Set in peaceful parkland, savour views of Queenstown's majestic mountains. Enjoy easy access to the vibrant town centre where shopping, cafes and nightlife nestled on the shores of spectacular Lake Wakatipu.

Meals included: Dinner



Day 7



Milford Sound Coach, Cruise, Fly small group tour from Queenstown

Experience Milford Sound from the road, sea and air on this full day journey. Ride in a premium Mercedes van with panoramic windows to fully enjoy the stunning scenery, then head to the water on a cruise of the fiord before taking to the air for the journey back to Queenstown over the breathtaking Southern Alps.

Gondola and Buffet Dinner with Skyline Queenstown

With breathtaking views across Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu, the Skyline Complex is a must-do. Catch the fully enclosed gondola to the summit for a remarkable panorama of the city's surroundings. Wander the outdoor viewing decks then enjoy a gourmet buffet meal in the Stratosphere Restaurant.

Your accommodation: Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel

Queenstown Park Hotel is a boutique hotel with a modern romantic style in the heart of New Zealand's adventure capital. Set in peaceful parkland, savour views of Queenstown's majestic mountains. Enjoy easy access to the vibrant town centre where shopping, cafes and nightlife nestled on the shores of spectacular Lake Wakatipu.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 8



Depart Queenstown today

Drop your rental car at the Queenstown airport today.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Self Drive Tour (FTNZ ONLY)
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	8
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	The George Hotel
Day 2	Galaxy Boutique Hotel
Day 3	Galaxy Boutique Hotel
Day 4	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus
Day 5	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus
Day 6	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel
Day 7	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel