

Highlights of the South Island Tour

Your tour begins in the Adventure Capital of the World, [Queenstown](#). From here, you will depart for [Milford Sound](#), known famously for its towering peaks, lush rainforest, numerous waterfalls, and playful wildlife. You'll arrive by coach, then board a modern and spacious vessel for your cruise along the fiord, before being transported back to your accommodation in Queenstown. The following morning, depart Queenstown again, this time northbound toward the untamed beauty of the [West Coast](#), arriving in [Franz Josef](#). Here, you'll have time to explore the small town and the famous Franz Josef Glacier at your leisure, consider booking a scenic flight (at additional expense). After a restful night sleep, depart Franz Josef and continue north along the West Coast toward [Greymouth](#), eventually arriving at the train station. From here, embark on one of the world's great train journeys, [The TranzAlpine Train](#). This journey will take you across [Arthurs Pass](#), before arriving in the largest city in the South Island, [Christchurch](#). After a transfer to your accommodation, the night is yours to enjoy. The next morning, depart Christchurch for [Aoraki Mt Cook](#), home to the tallest mountain in New Zealand. Here, you'll have time to explore, again, consider booking a scenic flight (at additional expense). After your night in Mt Cook, you'll awake on the final day of your tour and board your coach transport back to Queenstown, where the journey draws to an end.

Starts in: Queenstown
 Finishes in: Queenstown
 Length: 5days / 4nights
 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: All coach transport
 - Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
 - Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
 - Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included
 - Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course
 - Included activity: Queenstown to Franz Josef with Gray Line / GreatSights
 - Included activity: Glacier Valley Shuttle
 - Included activity: Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station with Gray Line / GreatSights
 - 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: Christchurch to Aoraki / Mt Cook via Lake Tekapo with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included
- plus much more...



Day 1



Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included

Departing from Queenstown sit back and relax aboard a luxury glass-roofed coach to enjoy a relaxing trip along the shores of Lake Wakatipu and through the rolling countryside to Te Anau. The coach driver provides an informative commentary and plenty of photo opportunities. After a morning tea break in Te Anau, the coach continues along the spectacular Milford Road. On reaching Piopiotahi-Milford Sound, board your vessel for a leisurely cruise in the fiord. The cruise provides excellent viewing opportunities and plenty of time is available to enjoy waterfalls, rainforests, mountains and wildlife. Rain or shine, every day in Piopiotahi-Milford Sound will leave you in awe. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see here.

Your accommodation: Blue Peaks Lodge

Blue Peaks Lodge offers well equipped self contained rooms with a fantastic location overlooking Queenstown and is just an easy five minutes walk to the Queenstown lakefront.



Day 2



Queenstown to Franz Josef with Gray Line / GreatSights

Leaving Queenstown early, travel by coach through the stunning scenery of the South Island. Your driver-guide will provide entertaining commentary and point out sites of interest as you pass by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Dunstan, Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea. After a morning tea break (at own expense) in Makarora on the border of Mount Aspiring World Heritage Park, you'll travel through the Haast Pass, journeying through native beech forest and over the Southern Alps, before emerging on the West Coast. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and snow-capped mountains. Skirt the coast and see waves crashing on rocky beaches where you will stop for a comfort stop at Bruce Bay. You will arrive in the afternoon at the small village of Franz Josef. From here you can explore the world famous Franz Josef Glacier.

Glacier Valley Shuttle

You'll be transferred up the Franz Josef Valley to the road end, where you'll have the opportunity to walk to a viewing platform with views of the glacier. Alternatively, you can enjoy one of the other scenic short walks in the area.

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 3



Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station with Gray Line / GreatSights

This morning travel north through the small townships of Whataroa and stop at Harihari for a morning tea stop (at own expense). Continue through the township of Ross, which in the late 1800s was the centre of one of New Zealand's richest alluvial goldfields. In 1903 the largest gold nugget ever found in New Zealand was discovered at Jones Creek, not far from the town centre. It weighed 2807 grams. The New Zealand Government later purchased the nugget and presented it as a coronation gift to King George V. On arrival in Hokitika there is time to purchase lunch (at own expense) and explore the town centre. Hokitika is the administrative and commercial centre for this part of Westland. The major primary industry is timber milling. Dairy and sheep farming, commercial fishing, white baiting and eel processing being the other major industries. Continue onto Greymouth Railway Station from where you catch the world famous TranzAlpine train across the Southern Alps to Christchurch.

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 4



Christchurch to Aoraki-Mt Cook via Lake Tekapo Small Group Tour with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included

Departing from Christchurch, you will make your way through the vast Canterbury Plains. Enjoy a delicious stop at Fairlie Bakehouse before marvelling at the vibrant blue waters of Lake Tekapo and the iconic Church of the Good Shepherd. Travel past the stunning Lake Pukaki, framed by Aoraki-Mt Cook and the Southern Alps, and immerse yourself in the breathtaking landscapes of Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park. Capture unforgettable photos and explore New Zealand's highest peak without breaking a sweat!

Walking Tracks in Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Aoraki-Mt Cook Village offers a variety of short scenic walks suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Start your adventure at the Department of Conservation Information Centre, where you can learn about track conditions, local history, and the area's wildlife. Here are a few popular walks to explore: Bowen Bush Walk: 10-minute return Glencoe Walk: 10-minute return Red Tarns Track: 2-hour return Kea Point Walk: 2-hour return Sealy Tarns Track: 3 - 4 hours return Please be aware that at Aoraki/Mount Cook, you will need to pay for parking at the White Horse Hill car park. The cost is \$5 per hour or \$25 for the full day. A 20-minute free period is available for quick drop-offs.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre Museum and Theatre Explorer Pass with Hermitage

A tribute to New Zealand's Sir Edmund Hillary, a humanitarian, ambassador, and one of the world's greatest explorers. The centre showcases the Aoraki Mount Cook region, the history of climbing, and early transport used throughout the region. This comprehensive museum details the life of Sir Edmund Hillary, the Hermitage, and provides access to the 126-seat custom-designed theatre. Check out the daily film schedule which includes 3D Movies, documentaries, and 360-degree digital dome features.

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 5



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.

Mt Cook to Queenstown Day Tour with Gray Line / GreatSights

Leaving Mt Cook, you will head south through the tawny tussock of the Mackenzie Country. You will stop for an afternoon tea break in Omarama (at your own expense) before crossing Lindis Pass. You will head towards Cromwell region, which is famous for its fruit orchards. You will continue through the Kawarau Gorge and its famous goldmines and arrive in Queenstown in the evening.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Independant Bus & Coach
Starts: Queenstown
Finishes: Queenstown
Tour length: 5
Accommodation: Motels
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary

Day 1 Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 2 Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 3 Bella Vista Christchurch
Day 4 Mt Cook Motel