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Middle Earth and Southern Explorer

This 11 day tour allows you to experience the vast and stunning highlights of New Zealand. On the North Island, you'll experience unique Maori culture in Rotorua, and the magic of Middle Earth in Hobbiton. Then, fly south for an exploration of the natural wonders of the South Island including Mt Cook National Park, Milford Sound, the West Coast Glaciers, and Queenstown.

Starts in:	Auckland
Finishes in:	Christchurch
Length:	11days / 10nights
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: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

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

Included activity: Hobbiton Movie Set Day Tour from Auckland to Rotorua with Gray Line / GreatSights

Included activity: Rotorua CBD to Rotorua Airport - Private Transfer

Included activity: Private Transfer Accommodation to Intercity Stop Lichfield St with Christchurch Touring

Included activity: Mt Cook to Queenstown Day Tour with Gray Line / GreatSights

Included activity: Glacier Valley Shuttle

Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

Included activity: Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station with Gray Line / GreatSights

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

Included activity: Rotorua Intercity Depot to Rotorua Accommodation - Private Transfer

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: Own Arrangements Domestic Flight - Rotorua to Christchurch

Included activity: Christchurch to Aoraki / Mt Cook via Lake Tekapo with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included

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

Included activity: Queenstown to Franz Josef with Gray Line / GreatSights

plus much more...

Day 1

Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

You will be met at the Auckland airport by the driver and transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

Welcome to Auckland

Welcome to Auckland, known in Māori as Tāmaki Makaurau. Auckland is New Zealand's vibrant "City of Sails," and the country's largest metropolitan area. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. Surrounded by native bush, lush rainforests, and pristine beaches, Auckland is a haven for both adventurers and urban explorers. Wander through world-class museums and galleries in the city centre or enjoy a peaceful retreat at the Auckland Gardens, where stunning landscapes showcase New Zealand's diverse flora. Stroll along the lively waterfront to savour fresh seafood and international cuisine at Viaduct restaurants. For an unforgettable perspective, ascend the iconic SkyTower, New Zealand's tallest structure, and take in panoramic views of the city and its picturesque islands.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Harbour Sailing Dinner Cruise with Explore

This unique on-water sailing and dining experience is not to be missed while you're in Auckland. Enjoy smooth sailing on the Waitemata Harbour - then watch this photogenic city come alive with twinkling lights. Enjoy your meal as you sail around the beautiful Auckland Harbour taking in the view as the sun slowly sets. You'll be treated to canapes and a drink as you set off towards Westhaven Marina. To finish the evening off, savour your dessert course as you leisurely sail back to Auckland's vibrant Viaduct Harbour.

Your accommodation: Oaks Auckland Hotel

Oaks Auckland Hotel offers a comfortable self-contained apartment in downtown Auckland. Located a short walk from Britomart Transport and the Viaduct. Enjoy you stay in central Auckland surround by delicious eateries or use your in-house kitchenette to dine in!

Day 2

Hobbiton Movie Set Day Tour from Auckland to Rotorua with Gray Line / GreatSights

Take a journey into the heart of the Central North Island, and visit famous Hobbiton Movie Set. Setting off from Auckland, travel through the lush farmland of the Waikato and King Country regions. Take a guided tour of the famous Hobbiton Movie Set, located inside a picturesque 1,250 acre sheep and beef farm near Matamata. Here, the village of Hobbiton was carefully created in amazing detail as a film location for the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit movie trilogies. During your guided tour of this amazing location you’ll see sights like Hobbit holes, the Mill and the Green Dragon Inn, and learn how farmland was transformed into a living, breathing piece of Middle-earth. After exploring Hobbiton, tuck into a delicious lunch in the Party Marquee and then travel to Rotorua.

Rotorua Intercity Depot to Rotorua Accommodation

You will be collected from Rotorua Intercity Coach Depot and transferred to your accommodation.

Your accommodation: Silver Fern Suites & Spa

Silver Fern Suites & Spa is located just minutes from Rotorua's city centre and is close to popular thermal attractions, cafes, restaurants and golf courses. Suites have a private spa pool or double spa bath for you to unwind and relax.

Day 3

Explore Rotorua

Peppered with natural hot springs, boiling mud pools and steaming geysers, Rotorua sits within one of the world's most active volcanic regions. Geothermal landmarks aside, this city of sulphur has a rich indigenous history. Home to several prominent Māori tribes, a visit to one of the Māori experiences should be high on your agenda, learn about the special meaning of pounamu-Greenstone with Mountain Jade, explore the geysers and arts of Te Puia or immerse in an evening with Te Pā Tū. An excursion to one of the area's wellness spas is also a must! Try the Polynesian Spa for an invigorating soak in its natural mineral hot springs, Wai Ariki offers an indulging and unwinding restorative journey or pay a quick visit to Secret Spot for a soak and a delicious smash burger! If it is a thrill you are looking for, spike your adrenaline at Rotorua Canopy Tours, soaring above the ancient native forest below. Alternatively, head up the Skyline Rotorua Gondola for soaring lake views, and ride the luge at night for an extra thrill. Make the most of your time in Rotorua with an excursion through the Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland, one of the area’s most colourful volcanic attractions. Whatever you are after, Rotorua is almost certain to have it!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Polynesian Spa Deluxe Lake Spa

Rotorua's Polynesian Spa offers a unique thermal spa experience on the shore of Lake Rotorua. Enjoy tranquil bathing and lake views in four shallow alkaline rock pools, each with different temperatures (36˚C to 42˚C). Surrounded by revitalising native New Zealand flora, natural rocks, the sound of two waterfalls and a grotto. The pools are filled with soothing alkaline mineral water leaving your skin soft and supple. Unwind in either the indoor or outdoor relaxation area overlooking the four hot mineral pools and Lake Rotorua, here you can further decompress on the five geothermally heated recliners set in the stunning backdrop of New Zealand's lush and natural greenery. The Lake Spa is a unique thermal pool environment, where the atmosphere changes from day to night, and from winter steam to summer sparkle.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Original Ziplining Experience with Rotorua Canopy Tours

Embark on a three-hour adventure through the native New Zealand forest. Journey through the beautiful forest canopy via an incredible network of trails, tree platforms, Ziplines and swing bridges. See breathtaking views of the woodland valleys and hills as you fly through tight openings in the trees. In between the thrill of the ziplines and suspended tree bridges, your guides will share their passion and knowledge for the forest and the conservation challenges to preserve it. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see here.

Your accommodation: Silver Fern Suites & Spa

Silver Fern Suites & Spa is located just minutes from Rotorua's city centre and is close to popular thermal attractions, cafes, restaurants and golf courses. Suites have a private spa pool or double spa bath for you to unwind and relax.

Day 4

Rotorua CBD to Rotorua Airport - Private Transfer

You will be collected from your accommodation and transferred to Rotorua Airport.

Own Arrangements Domestic Flight - Rotorua to Christchurch

This flight is at an additional cost. Please contact us if you would like us to book this for you.

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 5

Private Transfer Accommodation to Intercity Stop Lichfield St with Christchurch Touring

A private transfer will collect you from your accommodation and transfer you to the coach stop.

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!

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 6

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.

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 7

Explore Queenstown

Queenstown, known in Māori as Tāhuna is celebrated as New Zealand's ‘adventure capital'. Though Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of 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. Whether you are looking for a scenic short walk or a longer one, you will find the perfect hike or bike trail in Queenstown. Explore Queenstown Gardens, or try out more challenging trails up to Ben Lomond Walkaway or Queenstown Hill Walking Track. Enjoy iconic views and take Queenstown Gondola up 450 metres to Bob's Peak, or ride on the 100-year-old Steamship - the TSS Earnslaw - to Walter Peak Station for dinner and a farm tour. Browse the waterfront cafes and al fresco restaurants, try out the famous Fergburger, or grab a dessert at Patagonia Chocolates.

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! It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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: 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 8

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.

Meals included: Lunch

Day 9

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 10

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 11

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.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Independant Bus & Coach
Starts:	Auckland
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	11
Accomodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Oaks Auckland Hotel
Day 2	Silver Fern Suites & Spa
Day 3	Silver Fern Suites & Spa
Day 4	Bella Vista Christchurch
Day 5	Mt Cook Motel
Day 6	Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 7	Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 8	Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 9	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 10	Bella Vista Christchurch