



Dark Sky Detour

Take the day to explore Christchurch and some of the city's highlights. The next morning depart early and head for one of the worlds only Dark Sky reserves, The Mackenzie Basin. Upon arriving unwind and relax at Tekapo Springs in hot pools that overlook the beautiful mountain vista. Once the sun sets embark on your journey to the stars with Dark Sky Project and see first hand what makes this basin world famous. Rest up, and get ready to hit the road again as you depart for Queenstown. In Queenstown you will take a journey back in time before jumping aboard the KJet and experiencing what makes Queenstown the Adventure Capital. Be sure to jump aboard the Skyline Gondola to embrace in some magical views over the township!

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 6days / 5nights
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: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course
Included activity: Christchurch to Lake Tekapo with Gray Line / GreatSights
Included activity: Tekapo Springs Hot Pools
Included activity: Dark Sky Project Summit Experience
Included activity: Lake Tekapo to Queenstown by Intercity Coach
Included activity: Gondola Ride with Skyline Queenstown
Included activity: Twilight Wine & Craft Beer Tour with Altitude Tours
Included activity: Queenstown to Christchurch via Mt Cook with Gray Line / GreatSights

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!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Triple Pass - Tram, Punting and Gondola

Experience three of Christchurch's iconic attractions in one day: the Christchurch Tram, Christchurch Gondola, and Punting on the Avon River. The historic tram is a delightful way to explore the evolving inner city, taking in the various sights with the hop-on hop-off pass and learning about the city from the live commentary. You'll also enjoy a bird's eye view of Christchurch and the Canterbury region including the distant peaks of the Southern Alps when you ride the gondola cableway to the top of the Port Hills in Heathcote Valley. Punting on the Avon River takes you through the city's green belt: a relaxing way to explore what is affectionately known as the 'Garden City'.

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



Christchurch to Lake Tekapo with Gray Line / GreatSights

Today you head into the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury Plains along the inland scenic route, before heading 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. Lake Tekapo is New Zealand's highest large lake and its incredible turquoise colour astounds many visitors. The amazing colour of the water is created by the fine rock particles that are suspended in the glacier fed waters and these reflect the light. One of the most popular landmarks in this region is the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Tekapo Springs Hot Pools

Tekapo Springs offers three adjoining main Hot Pools for you to sit back, relax and enjoy yourself while looking out to the beautiful Two Thumb range and stunning Lake Tekapo. Pool temperatures range from forty degrees celsius to thirty-six degrees celsius and each pool offers something different - massage jets to assist in taking away any aches and pains and fountains to splash under.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Dark Sky Project - Crater Experience

Navigating your way through the Southern Sky using various telescopes and the naked eye, you will see amazing sights such as our own Milky Way Galaxy, the Southern Cross, Alpha-Centauri - our closest neighbouring star at only 4.3 light-years away, and Sirius - the brightest star in our sky. Behold and learn about our closest neighbouring galaxies, the Magellanic Clouds, which grace our night sky along with constellations such as Orion the Hunter and Scorpius. You may also have the opportunity to see star clusters like the beautiful Jewel Box; awe-inspiring planets; nebulae, immense clouds of gas and dust; and distant galaxies which test the limits of human imagination.

Your accommodation: Lake Tekapo Village Motel

Lake Tekapo Village Motel is conveniently located in the Lake Tekapo Village Centre, with dining, shopping and services all within easy walking distance. The closeness to amenities and superb views will make your stay very special.



Day 3



SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - The Grand Traverse Scenic Flight with Air Safaris

The flight of a lifetime, the "Grand Traverse" is a spectacular scenic flight seeing experience allowing you to explore the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks. This magnificent flight encompasses two World Heritage National Parks and 200 km of New Zealand's most memorable and spectacular scenery. The contrast of colours is beautiful with the turquoise glacial lake against the tussock covered sheep stations. Your journey will bring you over Aoraki Mt Cook National park where you view New Zealand's longest glacier, The Tasman. From there you cross the main divide into the Westland National Park encompassing the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers which spill down to the rainforests of the west coast. Their large and varied fleet especially selected for New Zealand air tour sightseeing ensures that every passenger has a window seat and all aircraft have wings-above to ensure optimum viewing below. Pilots provide a full and informative commentary with multi language commentary brochures supplied.

Dark Sky Project Summit Experience

Experience the cosmos like never before with the Summit Experience at Lake Tekapo (Tekapo), one of the best places on Earth for stargazing. Located on the summit of Mount John within the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve, this is your exclusive opportunity to explore the night sky from New Zealand's only professional research observatory. Guided by passionate astronomy experts, you'll delve deep into the universe using powerful telescopes, including a 16" telescope within a private dome. Discover distant galaxies, constellations, planets, and star clusters while gaining a richer understanding of both Māori and Western knowledge systems. You'll leave with a new perspective on the stars, all while surrounded by the stunning landscape and the clearest, darkest skies in the Southern Hemisphere.

Your accommodation: Lake Tekapo Village Motel

Lake Tekapo Village Motel is conveniently located in the Lake Tekapo Village Centre, with dining, shopping and services all within easy walking distance. The closeness to amenities and superb views will make your stay very special.



Day 4



Lake Tekapo to Queenstown by Intercity Coach

Leaving Lake Tekapo and the Mackenzie high country you descend through Burkes Pass and into rich farmland. Twizel, just south of Mt. Cook National Park was the location of many Lord of the Rings movie scenes and a little further on is Omarama. Crossing the Lindis Pass this is one of New Zealand's highest roads with the summit reaching 971 metres, you pass from the Mackenzie Basin and into Central Otago. The next major town is Cromwell, a major fruit growing region, which sits at the head of the Kawarau Gorge. Follow the sheer cliffs of the Kawarau Gorge towards Queenstown and Gibbston, one of New Zealand's premier wine growing regions. Approaching Queenstown the impressive Remarkables mountain range come into view and then beautiful Lake Wakatipu as you head towards the adventure capital of New Zealand.

Welcome to Queenstown

Renowned for its adrenaline inducing activities Queenstown is synonymous with adventure. Parked on the shores of Lake Wakatipu this small alpine town is nestled below soaring vistas of The Remarkables Mountain Range. While arguably the brightest gem in New Zealand's crown, Queenstown offers far more than an action-packed getaway. Spend time on the Gibbston wine trail and end with a meal at Michelin star chef Josh Emett's restaurant, Rata. Take a trip down memory lane on a 100 year old steamship the TSS Earnslaw. Soak in the scenery on your walk around the lake, or venture further afield into Fiordland National Park. Head over the hill to resort town Wanaka, or re-live scenes from Lord Of The Rings by four wheel drive. But - if you really do want that rush - head out on the Shotover Jet, dive off the Nevis Bungy, freefall on the Canyon swing or Zip line the Gondola. Just be sure it's done on an empty stomach & don't say we didn't warn you!

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 5



Twilight Wine & Craft Beer Tour with Altitude Tours

Visit three unique locations around Queenstown and Gibbston with a minimum of 12 tastings of some of the finest drops in the region. If beer is more your thing then bounce from vines to hops and taste some local craft beers instead. Better yet, it departs at 3.45pm meaning you can still go out paddle-boarding or bungee jumping in the morning, or even fly in from out of town. Shared antipasto platters are also included at the final stop, a perfect starter for once you finish the tour and head into town for a meal (or more wine).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - The Original Onsen Evening Session

Enjoy the most memorable experience in Queenstown and surround yourself with a sky of stars and 14 Japanese lanterns as you soak up the warm waters of the Onsen Hot Pools. Nestled high into a cliff-side overlooking the magnificent Shotover River canyon, the experience is all about unwinding and soaking-up Queenstown's spectacular scenery, enjoying the pure waters and the fresh mountain air as your mind and body surrenders to the deep penetrating warmth and gentle massage of the private pools. Water temperature is set according to the day - generally between 37.8C on a hot day, to 39.8C during a snow-storm and in the summer one of the pools is kept cold for those who relish the thought of a cold plunge!

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 6



Queenstown to Christchurch via Mt Cook with Gray Line / GreatSights

Depart Queenstown in the morning passing the fruit growing area of Cromwell towards the dramatic Lindis Pass that links Mackenzie Basin with Central Otago. The pass crosses a saddle between the valleys of the Lindis and Ahuriri Rivers at an altitude of 971 metres above sea level. You will continue towards Omarama, which is a favorite place of glider pilots and sometimes known as 'place of light'. You will continue towards Aoraki/ Mount Cook National Park in the Southern Alps. Mt Cook is New Zealand's tallest mountain. You will have a free time to explore Mount Cook Village or you can take a sightseeing flight (at your own expense) enabling you experience some of the most dramatic alpine and glacier scenery. After then, you will continue towards beautiful Lake Tekapo, where you can see the iconic Church of the Good Shepherd as it stands in solitude next to the vibrant blue waters. After visiting Tekapo, you will travel through the lush farmland of the Canterbury Plains to Christchurch.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Independant Bus & Coach
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	6
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Bella Vista Christchurch
Day 2	Lake Tekapo Village Motel
Day 3	Lake Tekapo Village Motel
Day 4	Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 5	Blue Peaks Lodge