

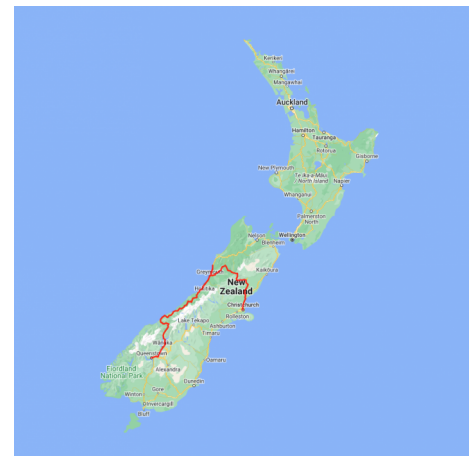
Intrepid Travel: New Zealand West Coast Adventure

On this Intrepid Original tour, explore the narrow strip of South Island land sandwiched between the mountains and the Tasman Sea that's home to some of the country's most beautiful places. Millions of years of natural history are right in front of you in wild limestone rock formations, powerful glaciers, rushing rivers and surf pounded coast, while the much more recent stories of the gold and coal rush can be found in the heritage settlements and in the resolute spirit of the coasters. Take in highlights from Christchurch to Queenstown, Pancake Rocks to craft gin, kayaking to spa soaking. This is a coastal road trip to rival any other.

This itinerary is valid for departures from 01 October 2026 to 30 September 2027. Please consult your Travel Specialist for details on itinerary variations outside these dates.

Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Queenstown
 Length: 7days / 6nights
 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: Afterhours emergency support while touring
- Included: Billy Tea experience with 'The Bearded Miners', Reefton
- Included: Experience Hokitika Gorge & the mighty ancient forest of the West Coast
- Included: Historic town visit of Reefton
- Included: Nile River Rainforest Train at Charleston
- Included: Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk

: 6 breakfasts

- Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
- Included activity: Intrepid Travel
- Included: Cape Foulwind walkway & lighthouse, Westport
- Included: Goldfields Museum, Reefton, with local storyteller
- Included: Lake Matheson walk
- Included: Okarito Lagoon walk
- Included: Seal colony viewing at Tauranga Bay, Westport

Day 1



Welcome to your Intrepid exploration of the South Island! Your adventure begins in Christchurch, where a welcome meeting will take place at 8am for you to meet up with your local leader and fellow travellers. After your meeting, it's time to hit the road, first heading to Hanmer Springs in the Lewis Pass national reserve. Check out the natural hot pools surrounded by greenery as the snow dusted peaks of the Southern Alps look on. You can even opt to take a dip. Next up, travel to Reefton, a tiny town that punches above its size. Step back in time and meet a local storyteller, learning about the town's gold mining past, the miners' families, the storekeepers, and embrace the Cornish influence. You'll even have the opportunity to see the water powered gold stamping battery working. Head into the town centre proper where you'll meet the 'bearded miners' for a cup of manuka enhanced black billy tea and to watch the technique of gold panning. Finally, drive through the spectacular Buller Gorge to the town of Westport and perhaps round off the day with a group dinner.

It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting this morning as we will be checking insurance and emergency contact details at this time. If you are going to be late, please let an Intrepid representative or your travel agent know. Find details of the meeting point in your Essential Trip Information.

Activities:

- Reefton - Historic Town Visit
- Reefton - Goldfields Museum with Local Storyteller
- Reefton - Billy Tea with 'The Bearded Miners'

Staying in:

- Motel (1 night)
-

Day 2

Start your day with a stop at the wild Cape Foulwind and admire incredible views of the mountains and rugged coastline. The headland is home to a fur seal breeding colony so keep your eyes peeled, they can easily blend in with the rocks! Continue to Charleston this morning to join a train ride in open carriages through primeval rain forest. 'The Nile River Rainforest Train' recreates a bygone era where bush trams once prevailed. Experience the spectacular wilderness of the Nile River Canyon in Paparoa National Park. Next up is Punakaiki, a town with less than 100 residents, but famed for its so-called Pancake Rocks. These layers of fossilised animals and plants, formed over 30 million years ago, were thrust above the surface by the moving earth and sculpted by wind and water. At high tide the sea is forced through blowholes in the limestone to burst metres into the air – it's an entertaining sight! Continue to Kumara, a former goldrush town with an intriguing history (this little place was the home of New Zealand's longest serving Prime Minister!). On arrival, settle into your hotel. Once the sun has gone down, be sure to look up. With very little light pollution, the stargazing in Kumara is absolutely out of this world (literally!).

Activities:

- Punakaiki - Pancake Rocks & Blowholes Walk
- Charleston - Nile River Gorge Rainforest Train Ride
- Westport - Seal Colony at Tauranga Bay
- Westport - Cape Foulwind Walkway & Lighthouse

Staying in:

- Hotel (1 night)
-

Day 3

Today begins with a visit to the Hokitika Gorge, one of the West Coast's most stunning spots. Shimmering turquoise waters wreathed with lush native bush make a sight to remember. Then it's on to the Okarito Lagoon, alive with the calls of over 70 unique species of birds. Head out on a nature walk culminating in a lookout point from which, on a clear day, you can enjoy an unbeatable view over Westland (Tai Poutini) National Park from the snow-capped Southern Alps (Ka Tiritiri o te Moana) across extensive native forest to the lagoons and beaches of the coast.

Continue your journey south to the Fox Glacier township, your gateway to the dramatic and enormous Fox Glacier and your base for the evening.

Please note that the visit to the Okarito Lagoon is weather dependent. In case of inclement weather the trip to the lagoon doesn't make much sense and an alternative activity will be suggested by the leader.

Activities:

- Hokitika - Gorge Visit
- Okarito - Okarito Lagoon Walk

Staying in:

- Hotel (1 night)
-

Day 4

Kick off the day with a gentle walk around the glittering Lake Matheson, dubbed the 'mirror lake' for its dark waters which perfectly reflect the towering Southern Alps – if you take one picture of your West Coast adventure, this should be it! The rest of the day is yours to make the most of what this amazing slice of the country has to offer. Perhaps head back to Franz Josef Glacier or you may want to visit a pounamu (greenstone) workshop and learn how to carve your own original piece. There's also no shortage of interesting walks and cosy pubs if you fancy a more low-key afternoon – have a chat to your leader about your options for the day.

Activities:

- Fox Glacier - Lake Matheson Walk

Staying in:

- Hotel (1 night)
-

Day 5

Make tracks for Wanaka, making plenty of interesting stops along the way. First up is Ship Creek, where you'll take a walk through quintessentially rugged West Coast scenery. You can either walk through shady swamp forest, or explore windswept sand dunes and coastal forest. Then it's on to Mt Aspiring National Park. Make the short walk to the incredible Thunder Creek Falls, featuring an impressive 96-metre-tall cascade. Arrive in Wanaka and enjoy an evening at leisure.

Staying in:

- Hotel (1 night)
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Day 6

With Lake Wanaka as the star of the show and surrounding mountains only complimenting its beauty, there's no doubt this is one of the most attractive towns in New Zealand. Today is completely free for you to enjoy the surroundings of Wanaka, and there's certainly no shortage of amazing things to see and do here, so be sure to chat to your leader for their top tips. You may like to take a pleasant bike ride along the shores of Lake Wanaka or get on the water and cruise to Mou Waho Island, where you'll find an island in a lake on an island in a lake! There are heaps of beautiful short walks in the area, and a visit to the famous #thatwanakatree is a must. Or simply find a cosy cafe to admire the view.

Staying in:

- Hotel (1 night)
-

Day 7

Depart Wanaka this morning and drive through the magnificent scenery of the Crown Range. Arrive in Queenstown, the adventure capital of the world, in the late morning (approximately 10:30am), at which point your West Coast adventure will come to an end.

Your trip comes to an end upon arrival in Queenstown at around 10:30am. Please take this into consideration when booking onward travel.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Small Group Escorted Tour
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Queenstown
Tour length: 7
Accommodation: Hotel 3 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary