

Central Otago Gold Tour

Your adventure begins in Queenstown, nestled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. Here, you'll be captivated by the stunning alpine scenery and endless opportunities for outdoor pursuits. Next, travel back in time to the historic gold mining town of Clyde, where the charming streets are lined with beautifully preserved heritage buildings. Continue your exploration to Wanaka, a hidden gem nestled beside the tranquil waters of Lake Wanaka. Immerse yourself in the serenity of the surrounding mountains, or indulge in world-class wine tasting. Finally, journey to Arrowtown, where the rich history of the gold rush era comes to life. This tour promises an unforgettable experience that will leave you enchanted by the magic of New Zealand's South Island.

Starts in: Queenstown
 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: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)
- Includes: Unlimited kms
- Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
- Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App
- Included activity: Gondola and Buffet Dinner with Skyline Queenstown
- Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course
- Included activity: TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner
- Included activity: Lake Dunstan & Carrick Winery Experience on E-bike with Kiwi Journeys - Lunch Included
- Included activity: Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka
- Included activity: Guided Scenic Walk with Aspiring Guides - Lunch Included
- 7 breakfasts, 1 special dinner



Day 1



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, bungy 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.

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 Emmett'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!

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.

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.

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.



Day 2



Walking tracks in and around Queenstown

Queenstown is well known for its adventure sports and activities but it also a great network of walking tracks and trails to suit all abilities and time frames. The department of conservation office located on Shotover Street can offer local advice on the conditions of walking tracks. Some of the more popular walks are listed below.

Queenstown Hill - around 3 hours return (4 kilometres). Gravel path and then trail. A 500 metre climb through pine forest to the summit of Te Tapu-nui (mountain of intense sacredness). The climb is well rewarded with 360 degree views of Remarkables Mountain Range, the Kawarau River, Cecil Peak, and of course Lake Wakatipu. The track starts on Belfast Terrace which is just 1 km from the city centre.

Ben Lomond - around 2 hours (4 1/2 kms return). Take the Skyline Gondola ride to the terminal and the track is signposted from here. This is quite a steep climb and not recommended for children. Also take note of weather forecasts as the summit sits at 1748 metres. The effort is rewarded with spectacular views and on clear days you can see Mt Earnslaw and Mt Aspiring.

Bobs Cove - 20 minutes of easy lakeshore walks. Bobs Cove is 14 kilometres from Queenstown along the Glenorchy Road. Take the drive along the road and Bobs Cove is signposted.

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Appellation Boutique Wine Tour

Experience a tasting journey through three of Central Otago's incredibly scenic and varying wine sub-regions; Gibbston, Bannockburn and Cromwell. Visit three boutique vineyards, tasting their unique cool climate wines and discover why the Central Otago region has become world-renowned in its own right. Indulge at a fourth vineyard restaurant for a platter-style lunch, savouring the finest and freshest produce, accompanied with a wine flight.

There will also be an opportunity to retrace history when you stroll through the charming historical settlement of Old Cromwell.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - The Original Onsen Daytime Session

Onsen Hot Pools is located high on a cliffside overlooking the magnificent Shotover River canyon, providing views over the breathtaking alpine scenery and the perfect vantage point to watch the Shotover Jet boats on the river below. 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 surrender to the deep penetrating warmth and gentle massage of the private pools. At the touch of a button, you can have complete privacy. 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: Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel

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Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 3



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.

Queenstown to Clyde

Leaving Queenstown you'll pass through wonderful Gibbston and its many wineries. Make sure you time your trip for a spot of lunch and a tasting. You will also pass by two famous bungee jump sites (The Nevis and the Kawarau Bridge Bungee). Next, the Kawarau Gorge takes you to Cromwell, famous for its stone fruit orchards and in the right season you can purchase this fresh fruit from the many roadside stalls. Pass through Cromwell and over Deadman's Point Bridge which crosses Lake Dunstan. This lake was formed on the Clutha River as a result of the construction of the Clyde Dam. Between Cromwell and the Clyde Dam, the lake passes through the beautiful Cromwell Gorge. Arriving into the small historic gold mining town of Clyde you will notice many of the original buildings that have become iconic to the town.

Clyde

This historic Central Otago town, with its beautifully preserved stone buildings and tree-lined streets, is a living tribute to the region's gold-rush era. Located on the banks of the mighty Clutha River and overshadowed by the impressive Clyde Dam, it offers a fascinating blend of old-world charm and modern engineering.

Today, Clyde's fame is equally tied to its status as a premier cycling hub. It is the start (or end) of the iconic Otago Central Rail Trail, and a key junction for two other spectacular trails: the Roxburgh Gorge and the stunning Lake Dunstan Trail. Whether you're a serious cyclist or a casual rider, these trails offer breathtaking scenery and a unique way to experience the landscape.

Beyond its history and trails, Clyde is a treat for the senses. It's a stone's throw from some of Central Otago's finest boutique wineries, famous for their elegant Pinot Noir. The town itself boasts a delicious food scene, from cosy cafes to excellent restaurants, making it the perfect place to refuel after a day of exploration.

Your accommodation: Olivers Central Otago Accommodation

Eleven rooms, divided into Stables and Lodge accommodation, superbly blend the old with the new creating a contemporary ambience integrally linked with bygone days. Schist walls, stone floors, rough sawn timber beams and stable doors enhance the 1860s theme while the six Lodge rooms showcase elegant contemporary interiors.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Lake Dunstan & Carrick Winery Experience on E-bike with Kiwi Journeys - Lunch Included

You'll get things underway with a boat trip on The Lake Dunstan Explorer, which will immerse you in the sheer scenic beauty of the lake and its surroundings, as well as providing a view of the trail ahead. You'll be set down in Clyde to commence your e-bike ride along the Lake Dunstan Trail. This trail guides you through the utterly unique and captivating scenery of Central Otago, following the shores of Lake Dunstan, the course of the Kawarau River, and the flow of the mighty Clutha River, connecting the towns of Clyde and Cromwell in an awesome one-day experience. Enjoy a wine tasting and pizza at Carrick Winery, along the Lake Dunstan Trail, before pedalling the final 10km to your destination. Ready for the challenge? This 43km ride is rated for intermediate cyclists. Please watch this safety briefing and verify your fitness level before booking.

Monte Christo Winery - suggested activity

In the heart of New Zealand's Central Otago region, a long-forgotten tale of vinous history dating back to 1864 has been unearthed - a story interwoven with gold, ambition, and a passionate legacy that thrives today in the distinguished wines of Monte Christo Winery. Unwind at the cellar door, taste the sense of place, and savor premium wines that reveal the secrets of the land, its past, and its future. Enjoy the wines made with 100% estate-grown fruit, yielding a depth of flavor evocative of their origin. You can relax in the outdoor garden, and explore culinary delights or platters to share.

Your accommodation: Olivers Central Otago Accommodation

Eleven rooms, divided into Stables and Lodge accommodation, superbly blend the old with the new creating a contemporary ambience integrally linked with bygone days. Schist walls, stone floors, rough sawn timber beams and stable doors enhance the 1860s theme while the six Lodge rooms showcase elegant contemporary interiors.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Clyde to Wanaka

A short journey along the Clutha River and you arrive into Cromwell. The giant fruit sculptures pay homage to the town's reputation for producing stone fruit. A detour to 'Old Cromwell Town' (well signposted) is worthwhile. Then follow the shores of Lake Dunstan north to Queensberry and the small township of Luggate before rising onto the terraces of the Clutha River. It's here where you pass Wanaka Airport. The airport offers a superb variety of scenic flight options such as Harvard Fighter planes and Tiger Moth vintage aircraft. The Warbirds and Wheels museum and cafe make this an aviation enthusiast's delight. Next door is the Transport and Toy museum, another hidden gem displaying a vast private collection of toys from all eras, cars, firetrucks, planes, motorbikes and much more. From here it's just a few minutes further to the alpine lakeside township of Wanaka.

Wānaka

Nestled on the shores of one of New Zealand's largest lakes and framed by the stunning Southern Alps. Wānaka is an alpine village that perfectly blends adventure, breathtaking scenery, and a laid-back vibe. In winter, Wānaka transforms into a bustling hub as snow sports enthusiasts flock to its renowned ski fields, Treble Cone and Cardrona, as well as cross-country at Snow Farm. As the gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park, it offers endless opportunities for hikers, with trails winding through remote wilderness, majestic peaks, and serene river valleys. Closer to town, you'll find a network of scenic walking tracks, such as the popular Mount Iron Track, and from the lakefront, it is a short walk to "That Wanaka Tree". For thrill-seekers, Wānaka is an adrenaline playground, offering skydiving, paragliding, downhill biking, rock climbing, and jet boating.

Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

Lying close to the centre of Lake Wanaka is Mou Waho Island Nature Reserve. A unique glacial remnant of the last ice age, the island is also the historic site of early shipbuilding and used to be a stopping place for the steamers and log rafts that once plied the lake. Accessible from Wanaka by a 35-minute boat cruise, the landing is on the eastern side of the island where the remnants of the early settlement remain; a stone wharf and a hut. A well-formed track leads from the landing and climbs steadily through native bush to near the top of Tyrwhitt Peak. Just before the top, we see Arethusa Pool, a small lake on the island with small islands in it - very intriguing! From the top, we have a sweeping 360-degree view of Lake Wanaka, its surrounding mountains and valleys, and below Arethusa Pool. The perfect spot to stop for tea or coffee. Going back down the track gives us more time to take in our surroundings, listening to and watching the lively bird-life, and just enjoying this unique wildlife reserve. You will feel well rewarded as you re-join the boat for the cruise back to Wanaka. Total cruise time is 1.5 hours. The trip runs subject to weather and lake conditions. Depending on the planting season, you can help The Reforestation of Mou Waho by planting a tree.

Walking tracks in and around Wanaka

There are some excellent walks in and around Wanaka. The information below is provided by the Department of Conservation. Located in Wanaka is a Department of Conservation information centre and you can get updates on track conditions and suitability plus you can learn about the area, its natural history and its people. Listed below are a selection of short walks but check with the Department of Conservation information centre for weather conditions, track suitability and conditions first. Outlet Track

This is a local favourite as it is an easy walk suitable for all ages and abilities. It begins from Wanaka town centre and takes you around picturesque Lake Wanaka to the outlet to the Clutha River and on to Albert Town. This track can also be explored by bike.

Distance: 3 km one way. Completion Time: 1 hour one way.

Mount Iron Track

This very popular, close-to-Wanaka-town loop walk suits all ages and abilities and offers great views from the summit.

Distance: 4.5 km. Completion Time: 1.5 hour.

Diamond Lake and Rocky Mountain walks

These two excellent walks in the Diamond Lake Conservation Area give wonderful views of the surrounding alps and Lake Wanaka.

Distance: 2km - 7 km depending on trail. Completion Time: 45 minutes - 3 hours depending on trail.

Rob Roy Glacier Track

Rob Roy Valley is a good entry point to an area of spectacular alpine scenery, snowfields, glaciers, sheer rock cliffs and waterfalls. The road to this track is unsealed and unsuitable for rental cars, but transportation to the beginning of the walk can be arranged.

Distance: 10 km. Completion Time: 3 - 4 hours return. There is avalanche danger during winter and spring (June-November) on the Rob Roy Track.

Roy's Peak Track

The most famous walk in the Wanaka area, this steep walk climbs 1,500m on a well-formed track with the most spectacular views of Lake Wanaka, its islands, bays, and the mighty snow-capped mountains of the Southern Alps, including Mount Aspiring.

Distance: 16 km return via the same track. Completion Time: 5 - 6 hour return. This track is closed from the 1st of October - 10th November each year. In winter alpine equipment (such as crampons) are required.

Isthmus Peak Track

A long, steady climb that rewards walkers with spectacular, panoramic views of Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea as well as the mountains of the Southern Alps.

Distance: 16 km return via the same track. Completion Time: 5 - 6 hour return. This track is closed from the 20th of November - 20th December each year. This track is not recommended in winter due to snow and ice build up on the track.

Your accommodation: Edgewater Wanaka

Edgewater is Wanaka's leading hotel located right on the edge of Lake Wanaka. A short stroll to the town centres shops, cafes and restaurants and close to many walking trails the resort is ideal to explore this wonderful Alpine setting.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Guided Scenic Walk with Aspiring Guides - Lunch Included

Wander through Wanaka's breathtaking rugged landscapes and enjoy being surrounded by stunning scenery, mountain tops, and glaciers in Mount Aspiring National Park with an expert guide beside you. This day hike will be tailored to your abilities and will include a packed lunch to be consumed somewhere off the beaten track. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Edgewater Wanaka

Edgewater is Wanaka's leading hotel located right on the edge of Lake Wanaka. A short stroll to the town centres shops, cafes and restaurants and close to many walking trails the resort is ideal to explore this wonderful Alpine setting.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Wanaka to Arrowtown

Leaving Wanaka you head over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road before dropping down to the Gibbston Highway. Leaving the main road you follow Centennial Ave towards the historic goldmining village of Arrowtown. Arrowtown has many charms, including the idyllic walking track on the Arrow River, the large number of quaint historic buildings and a fantastic range of excellent cafes and restaurants. For those interested in the history the Chinese settlement and the Lakes District Museum are a must.

Explore Arrowtown

One of the most picturesque settlements in New Zealand, Arrowtown sits alongside the gold-bearing Arrow River. Established in 1862 during the height of the Otago gold rush, the settlement grew quickly as pioneers constructed cottages, shops, hotels and churches, more than 60 of which can still be seen today. A special highlight is the Chinese settlement at the edge of the river. Built by Chinese miners from 1868, this area of restored shelters and buildings paints a picture of earlier times. It is a living historic settlement with many stories to tell. Wander the tree-lined streets of restored cottages and explore gold mining sites. In April and May Arrowtown ignites with colour as deciduous trees prepare for winter and a festival held in the last week of April celebrates the town's seasonal beauty and glittering history.

Your accommodation: Arrowtown House Boutique Hotel

Arrowtown House Boutique Hotel offers stylish accommodation in the heart of the historic village of Arrowtown. You're just a short walk from award winning restaurants, spectacular river walks and the charms of Arrowtown village.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Arrowtown to Queenstown

From Arrowtown its just a short drive to Queenstown, along the way passing Lakes Hayes before you catch your first glimpse of Lake Wakatipu and the bustling tourist mecca of Queenstown.

Return your rental car

Return your rental vehicle to your designated depot before your next adventure.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Queenstown
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	8
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel
Day 2	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel
Day 3	Olivers Central Otago Accommodation
Day 4	Olivers Central Otago Accommodation
Day 5	Edgewater Wanaka
Day 6	Edgewater Wanaka
Day 7	Arrowtown House Boutique Hotel