

Vistas and Vines South Island tour



Two of the best things to accompany great wines are good company and great scenery. This tour has those ingredients in abundance.

Visit 4 of the South Island's wine regions (Waipara, Marlborough, Wanaka and Queenstown) while touring through spectacular alpine scenery, coastal highways, glaciers, rainforests and much more. We have included some fine dining experiences as well as some 'must do' activities. So come along and enjoy the Vistas and Vines.

Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Queenstown
 Length: 13days / 12nights
 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: Unlimited kms

Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees

Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)

Included activity: Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation

Included activity: Guided Scenic Walk with Aspiring Guides - Lunch Included

Included activity: Appellation Boutique Wine Tour

Included activity: Franz Josef Glacier Helihike

Included activity: Wanaka Boutique Wine Tour with Wanaka Wine Tour

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)

Includes: GPS navigation

Includes: Additional drivers

Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand

Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Dart River Wilderness Jet

Included activity: Waipara Valley Wine Trail and lunch with Leisure Tours

Included activity: Milford Sound Glacier Flight and Cruise with Southern Alps Air

: 12 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners

Day 1



Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation

On arrival, you will be met by a private driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

Welcome to Christchurch City

Christchurch 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!

Your accommodation: The George Hotel

The George is the essence of supreme comfort. The award-winning 5 star hotel is opposite Hagley Park and just a few minutes stroll from the Botanic Gardens. It also has an award-winning restaurant, 50 Bistro onsite.



Day 2



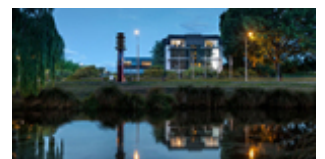
Waipara Valley Wine Trail and lunch with Leisure Tours

This tour explores 4 of North Canterbury's boutique vineyards. Travel 45 minutes north of Christchurch through the New Zealand countryside to the Waipara Valley, well known for its warm, dry climate and rich alluvial soils, ideal for superior wine production. Over 40 vineyards and wineries pepper the landscape of the valley, with Pinot Noir, Riesling, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc dominating local plantings. You will stop for tastings at Pegasus Bay, Waipara Springs, Greystone Winery and Waipara Hills Winery. If for any reason one of these wineries is closed on the day or your tour an alternative winery in the Waipara Valley will be included. This activity also includes lunch at Waipara Springs Winery. The platter lunch includes tastes of both a regional and New Zealand flavour and is the perfect accompaniment to some of these wineries fine wines.

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Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 3



Collect your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Christchurch to Blenheim

The drive north from Christchurch to Kaikoura takes you through some fine rolling farmland and North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley. A great detour to take is to head inland and visit Hanmer Springs for a dip in the natural hot pools. Crossing the Hawkswood Range you descend towards the spectacular Kaikoura coastline and the road hugs the ocean as it winds its way the remaining 15 kilometres to the township.

Kaikoura Township is a bustling little place with many cafes, restaurants and shops but the main reason for visiting here is the wildlife. Continuing The road hugs the shore for around 50 kilometres and offers many chances to view the native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. To the east is the turquoise of the South Pacific Ocean and to the west the towering Kaikoura Ranges. Crossing the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges you head towards one of the most spectacular coastlines of the South Island, the Kaikoura Coast. Blenheim sits right at the heart of the New Zealand's largest wine producing region, Marlborough, and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

Your accommodation: The Peppertree

The Peppertree is situated in the midst of an extensive country garden a boutique vineyard and an olive grove. Choose from one of the five spacious suites, each of which reflects a different character. Days at The Peppertree begin with a delicious breakfast, served in the Dining Room or on the verandah.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Marlborough and the Sounds

The Marlborough region is one of the most diverse in New Zealand. Comprised of many sunken river valleys known as 'Sounds'; it offers countless adventure and relaxation opportunities. Surrounded by bush-clad mountains and clear waters, Marlborough is home to an abundance of marine life and seabirds including dolphins, seals, penguins, the fantail, bellbird and wood pigeon. Spread across 4,000 km²; it lies at the South Island's north-easternmost point, between Tasman Bay and Cloudy Bay. Sparsely populated, many of the isolated houses and resorts are only accessible by boats making this an ideal getaway destination. The main sounds are Queen Charlotte, Pelorus, Kenepuru and Tory Channel - a major arm of Queen Charlotte Sound. Between them they isolate the hills of Arapawa Island from the mainland.

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Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 5



Blenheim to Punakaiki

The drive today takes you along the Buller Gorge and offers some wonderful scenery as you follow this magnificent river. The town of Murchison is a quiet place and a great lunch stop. Underneath its sleepy farming facade is an adventurers paradise with white water rafting, kayaking, 4WD trips and some great trout fishing.

The first major town (by this regions standard) is Inangahua and a small museum tells of the earthquake that hit the region in 1968 leaving 70% of the buildings damaged or inhabitable. Further along the river one of the must stop places is Whites Creek and New Zealand's longest swing bridge. Crossing the river you get magnificent views of the gorge and once on the other side there are short bush walks, jet boat rides and some of the historic gold mining remnants.

The port town of Westport is the largest on the Northern West Coast. A history of gold mining, logging, fishing coal mining gives the town a hard working feeling. And to reward the hard workers the town has an extraordinary amount of pubs.

There are plenty of activities here such as caving, bush walks and surfing but one of the most popular is to take a trip to Tauranga bay and the seal colony. Just 15 kilometres south at Cape Foulwind (named by Captain Cook for the difficult sailing conditions and not the smell of the seals!), you will find a breeding colony of New Zealand fur seals. A well marked and easy 10 minute walking track takes you to colony where you can see the creatures lazing around or swimming in the ocean.

Continuing along the spectacular West Coast Road towards Punakaiki you are rewarded with dramatic scenery of sheer cliffs, bush clad hillsides, and windswept beaches.

Punakaiki is most famous for the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes. Visitors are often less aware of the great many other experiences available. Located in the heart of the Paparoa National Park, the area offers guided beach, forest and mountain walks, canoeing, wildlife, horse trekking, surfing, gemstone hunting, caving and climbing, heritage sites. There are taverns, cafes and restaurants, and a great range of accommodation. The area also boasts a vibrant arts and crafts community and a cooperative gallery. Exploring the famous pancake rocks is best at high tide with the incoming ocean waves sending sea water up the blow holes to create spectacular plumes.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki

Scenic Hotel Punakaiki is a modern, award-winning hotel complex, architecturally designed to harmonious with the local environment. Nestled in the foothills of Paparoa National Park the resort has spectacular views of the Wild West Coast beaches while all rooms have rainforest and/or ocean views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Punakaiki to Franz Josef Glacier

The drive South on State Highway 6 takes you through many West Coast towns. The first is Greymouth, the commercial centre for the West Coast. Just south of the town is Shantytown a replica gold rush town with lots of great displays from yesteryear.

The next town is Hokitika and this is a great place to explore the craft and gift stores. The Jade or Greenstone on offer in Hokitika is probably some of the best you will see in the country. The Hokitika Gorge, off the beaten track and inland a little is a spectacular detour. Turquoise waters flowing through a narrow gorge. A great short walk will deliver you to this piece of paradise.

Ross is the site of an old gold mining town and some of the old buildings and workings remain. In fact Ross is still home to one of the few working gold mines left in New Zealand and the local information centre offers you the chance to pan for gold.

Continuing south Hari Hari is the township that Guy Menzies decided to land in (or rather crash land) as he became the first person to fly solo across the Tasman.

Whataroa, a small township on the main road is where you would head off to see one of the worlds rarest birds. The entire population (somewhere between 150 and 200 birds) of the New Zealand white heron or kotuku nest at the Waitangi Roto Nature Reserve and guided tours from October to March will take you there.

Arriving in to the Glacier region you catch your first glimpse of Franz Josef Glacier from a few kilometres out as it flows from the Southern Alps. Franz Josef township is a lively place with a great atmosphere, plenty of choice to dine out and some wonderful activities to enjoy.

Your accommodation: Te Waonui Forest Retreat

Nestled amongst native West Coast rainforest at Franz Josef is a very special five-star retreat. Designed with utmost care of its precious environment, guests at Te Waonui Forest Retreat will find themselves encircled by rainforest and accommodated in natural and sustainable luxury.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 7



Franz Josef Glacier Helihike

After a thrilling scenic flight, high above the rugged terrain, you will land on the glacier, ready to undertake a 2.15 hour guided glacier hike. Your friendly guide will lead you through some of the most pristine and awe-inspiring glacial scenery in the world. Your guide will choose your route carefully as you go and, with an eye for the most spectacular ice formations, you'll soon be making your way through an extraordinary landscape of towering peaks and glistening blue ice. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity prior to travel. For more information please see here.

Your accommodation: Te Waonui Forest Retreat

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Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 8



Franz Josef to Wanaka

Heading south you will climb over the Fox hills before arriving at the small town of Fox Glacier. If it's a nice day enjoy spectacular reflections of snowcapped mountains in Lake Matheson, located just 5 minutes west of Fox. Heading south from fox enjoy the amazing scenery of the Southern Alps, and sneak peeks of the rugged beaches while winding through ancient temperate rainforests. Paringa Salmon Farm is worth a stop to stretch your legs, feed the fish, and stop for lunch and refreshments. At Knights Point Lookout, elephant seals can often be seen basking on the sandy beaches at the far end of the point. Crossing the Haast River you'll turn inland and through the mountainous valley littered with waterfalls. A great suggested stop along this route is the Blue Pools. Continue on past lakes Hawea and Wanaka into the alpine township of Wanaka.

Your accommodation: Tin Tub Luxury Lodge

Experience the Tin Tub Luxury Lodge in Wanaka, an alpine hideaway you won't want to leave. Enjoy the magnificent views while you relax in the heated swimming pool or from your personal balcony.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Milford Sound Glacier Flight and Cruise

Fly to Milford Sound through two of New Zealand's most picturesque national parks. View alpine lakes nestled amongst soaring snowcapped mountain peaks and pristine glaciers, with vast rainforest and cascading waterfalls visible from every seat!

Wanaka Wine Tours Boutique Central Otago Wine Trail

This small group wine tour (maximum 8) offers a relaxed and personal introduction to the wines and scenery of the Central Otago region. This tour is a great way to explore award-winning vineyards hidden amongst the rugged landscape of Central Otago. Visit and enjoy tastings at 4 Central Otago vineyards including a delicious mid-afternoon platter to enjoy with your tastings. You'll also discover the history of the region with a visit to Old Cromwell Town, a charming heritage precinct that has been revitalised into a boutique arts and crafts village.

Your accommodation: Tin Tub Luxury Lodge

Experience the Tin Tub Luxury Lodge in Wanaka, an alpine hideaway you won't want to leave. Enjoy the magnificent views while you relax in the heated swimming pool or from your personal balcony.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



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.

Wanaka to Queenstown

Leaving Wanaka, you head over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road, before dropping into Queenstown. This drive only takes about an hour, but you should allow more time to enjoy the magnificent scenery and explore the walks and many stops en route, including the Cardrona Distillery, wonderful views from Crown Range's highest point over Queenstown, the picturesque town of Arrowtown, and if time allows, even the wineries in Gibbston.

Your accommodation: Azur Lodge

It's hard to imagine a more perfect view than the one from Azur Lodge, this luxury accommodation offers amazing vistas of Lake Wakatipu & the surrounding mountains. As well as the luxury guest villas, there is a main lodge for guest use, breakfast dining room & stunning guest lounge.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



Dart River Wilderness Jet

Journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mt Aspiring National Park, where myth, heritage and fantasy come to life. As one of Queenstown's most exhilarating activities, the Wilderness Jet adventures on a spectacular journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mount Aspiring National Park.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



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.

Your accommodation: Azur Lodge

It's hard to imagine a more perfect view than the one from Azur Lodge, this luxury accommodation offers amazing vistas of Lake Wakatipu & the surrounding mountains. As well as the luxury guest villas, there is a main lodge for guest use, breakfast dining room & stunning guest lounge.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 13



Your final morning in Queenstown before driving to the airport and catching your next flight

Depending on when your flight departs you might have time for one last Queenstown adventure before dropping your car off at the airport and catching your flight.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	13
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	All breakfasts
Includes	2 dinners
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Marlborough gourmet wine tour
Includes	Waipara Valley Wine Trail with lunch
Includes	Queenstown Boutique half day wine tour
Includes	Dart River Wilderness Safari, Glenorchy
Includes	Boutique Half Day Wanaka Wine Tour
Includes	Milford Sound scenic helicopter flight
Includes	Franz Josef Glacier Helihike
Includes	Entry to Glacier Hot Pools

Accommodation summary

Day 1	The George Hotel
Day 2	The George Hotel
Day 3	The Peppertree
Day 4	The Peppertree
Day 5	Scenic Hotel Punakaiki
Day 6	Te Waonui Forest Retreat
Day 7	Te Waonui Forest Retreat
Day 8	Tin Tub Luxury Lodge
Day 9	Tin Tub Luxury Lodge
Day 10	Azur Lodge
Day 11	Azur Lodge
Day 12	Azur Lodge