

Intrepid Travel: New Zealand Southern Pioneer



Discover the natural beauty of a land made for adventurers. New Zealand's South Island has a reputation as one of the most naturally beautiful places on earth, yet it still manages to defy expectations. On this Intrepid Comfort round trip from Christchurch, you'll be met with astonishing sight after astonishing sight as a local leader shows you what they love about their country. Get your heart racing in Queenstown, the adventure capital of the world, discover the laidback delights of postcard-perfect Wanaka, stand in awe of the Franz Josef Glacier, and cross the Southern Alps on one of the world's most spectacular train journeys. Between glacial lakes and snow-capped peaks, you'll soon see what all the fuss is about.

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: Christchurch
 Length: 10days / 9nights
 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: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
- Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
- Included activity: Intrepid Travel
- Included: Greenstone pendant carving, Franz Josef
- Included: Mou Waho Island Cruise & Guided Nature Walk, Lake Wanaka
- Included: Mt John Lookout, Lake Tekapo
- Included: TranzAlpine Train journey boarding at Greymouth
- 9 breakfasts, 2 dinners

Day 1



Welcome to Aotearoa (New Zealand). Sparsely populated and spectacularly beautiful, the South Island is a paradise for lovers of nature, wildlife and the great outdoors. Your adventure begins in Christchurch with a welcome meeting at 6 pm. If you arrive early, you may like to stroll through the Christchurch Botanic Gardens to admire the native plants or stop by the Canterbury Museum to learn about the region's cultural heritage.

After the meeting, the night is yours to find the best spot for a cosy dinner.

It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance and emergency contact details at this time. If you are going to be late, please let your travel agent or hotel reception know. Ask reception or look for a note in the lobby for more information on where the meeting will take place.

Staying in:

- Hotel (1 night)
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Day 2

Christchurch is not just a pretty city – it's also remarkably resilient. After a devastating earthquake destroyed much of the downtown area in 2011, the city has begun to rebuild in innovative and creative ways. Head out with your leader this morning to see this for yourself. Stop by the Christchurch Cathedral, which stood as a symbol of the city before collapsing in the earthquake and has now been replaced with an architecturally striking and quake-proof structure made from cardboard. After a morning of exploring, say goodbye to Christchurch and drive inland to Lake Tekapo. An eye-catching combination of purple lupins, turquoise waters and snow-dusted peaks makes this one of the most photo-worthy spots in the country. The Church of the Good Shepherd sits on the shores of the lakes and attracts couples from all over the world to shoot their wedding pictures. Continue to Lake Ohau or Twizel (depending on departure) where you'll spend the night.

Activities:

- Lake Tekapo - Mt John Lookout

Staying in:

- Hotel or Motel (1 night)
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Day 3

Hit the road this morning for a journey to remember – watch out the window as you pass the sprawling grasslands of the Mackenzie Basin and showstopping peaks of the Southern Alps. Your drive will be broken up with plenty of scenic stops, including a visit to Kawarau Gorge, a popular spot for bungy jumping. If you're feeling adventurous, get involved and jump off the suspension bridge crossing the gorge, or just stand back and watch brave jumpers take the plunge. Continue on to Queenstown, known as the adventure capital of the world, and rightfully so! Aside from its high-adrenaline attractions, Queenstown has a booming culinary scene, produces some of the world's best wine and boasts unbelievable scenery at every turn.

Staying in:

- Hotel or Motel (1 night)
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Day 4

The day is all yours to discover the varied delights of Queenstown. There are loads of options to get your heartrate up, whether you fancy shooting down the river on a jet boat, river kayaking, flying above the town in a gondola or a 4WD adventure through landscapes of Lord of the Rings fame. If you'd like to take things a little slower, perhaps head to the Gibbston Valley to taste wines only topped by the inspiring scenery. A walk around the stunning Lake Wakatipu will give you a good dose of fresh air and epic views. There's no shortage of dining options to tempt your tastebuds – if you're willing to wait, a famous Fergburger is hard to beat!

Staying in:

- Hotel or Motel (1 night)
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Day 5

Take the chance this morning to cross off any Queenstown activities you didn't have time for yesterday – be sure to speak to your leader for tips on the best way to spend a morning here. In the afternoon, get back on the road for the scenic drive to Wanaka, through the Crown Range Mountains. Stop off along the way in Arrowtown – a little goldrush town popular for its heritage buildings and Autumn festival. Take a walk along the tree-lined high street and maybe pop into the old-school lolly shop. Arrive in Wanaka in the afternoon and embrace the vibe of this laidback and beautiful town. With Lake Wanaka as its glittering centrepiece and dramatic mountains as its backdrop, the town is undoubtedly one of New Zealand's best. This afternoon you may like to head out on a hike or just stretch out on the shores of the lake and take it all in.

Staying in:

- Hotel or Motel (1 night)
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Day 6

Visit Mou Waho Island today. Accessible only by boat and famous for being home to an (unnamed) island, in a lake (Arethusa Pool), on an island (Mou Waho), in a lake (Lake Wanaka), on an island (the South Island) in the ocean (the Pacific). Sounds complicated, but once you are there it will all make sense! Enjoy a walk as you learn more about this predator-free reserve with a natural glacial-formed lake at its summit.

Your afternoon is free to explore Wanaka and surrounds. No visit to Wanaka would be complete without seeing #thatwanakatree. Springing up from the waters of Lake Wanaka, this sloping willow is one of the most photographed trees in the world. There's no shortage of excellent hiking routes in the region if you'd like to get out and explore on foot, or you may prefer to hire a bike and hit the cycling trails.

Your walking time today will be approximately 2 hours. Please wear rugged-soled outdoor shoes or boots with good tread for grip. The island walk is not compulsory. You may remain on the boat, at the beach on the island or complete part of the walk.

Activities:

- Wanaka - Mou Waho Island Cruise & Guided Nature Walk

Staying in:

- Hotel or Motel (1 night)
-

Day 7

Get back on the road and make tracks for Franz Josef. This is another incredible drive, so have your camera ready! Depending on the weather, stop off at either Lake Hawea or Lake Wanaka lookout points. Along the way, your leader will pause at some off the beaten track spots to snap some pictures and stretch your legs. Arrive in Franz Josef in the early evening and perhaps head out to one of the town's cosy pubs for dinner.

Staying in:

- Hotel or Motel (1 night)
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Day 8

Rise and shine – you're in one of the most beautiful places in the world, and there's so much to discover here. Known for the dazzling Franz Josef Glacier and awe-inspiring views of Mt Cook, this is natural beauty on the biggest scale. The region also has a cultural history that's every bit as captivating as its natural wonders. Only found in the South Island of New Zealand, pounamu (greenstone) is an important part of Maori culture. Today, you'll visit a local gallery where you'll have the chance to carve your own pounamu pendant while learning about its spiritual and cultural significance. If you'd like to get up close and personal with Franz Josef Glacier in the afternoon, you can arrange for a helicopter to drop you in for a hike. You may prefer to sit back and unwind in local hot springs, or head out kayaking on an icy blue glacial lake.

Activities:

- Franz Josef - Greenstone Pendant Carving

Staying in:

- Hotel or Motel (1 night)
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Day 9

Begin the journey up the west coast – this is the rainiest part of New Zealand, resulting in greenery and lush rainforests like nowhere else in the country. If time allows, there may be the chance to check out the National Kiwi Centre – the nocturnal house here gives visitors the opportunity to see how these nocturnal birds behave. The next stretch of your journey may just be the most magnificent – hop aboard the TranzAlpine train back to Christchurch, widely believed to be one of the top train journeys in the world. Cross through the Southern Alps via Arthur's Pass and travel past the rushing blue waters of the Waimakariri River and endless native beech forest. Arrive in Christchurch in the evening.

Please note that throughout the year maintenance works can take place on the train tracks between Greymouth and Christchurch, which may result in train cancellations. In case the train doesn't run you will travel back to Christchurch by vehicle instead.

Activities:

- Greymouth - Tranz Alpine Train Journey

Staying in:

- Hotel (1 night)
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Day 10

Your adventure comes to an end after breakfast this morning. If you'd like to spend some more time in Christchurch, just get in touch with your booking agent ahead of time.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Small Group Escorted Tour
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Christchurch
Tour length: 10
Accommodation: Hotel 3 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary