

South Island 12 Day Luxury Adventure

The ultimate combination of luxury and adventure, this 10 day tour travels from Christchurch to the Wilderness Lodge in Arthurs Pass, the West Coast Glaciers and the alpine resort town of Wanaka. Further south to Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula, then Te Anau gateway to Fiordland National Park, before Queenstown where your journey concludes. This itinerary offers a great balance of relaxation and adventure with plenty of time to enjoy other activities as you wish.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Queenstown
Length: 12days / 11nights
Accommodation: Luxury Lodges
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

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner

Included activity: Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Included activity: Fiordland Lodge

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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

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

Included activity: Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise from Manapouri with RealNZ

Included activity: Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

Included activity: Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

: 11 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 5 dinners, 3 special dinners

Day 1



Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch 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!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Gondola

In the Heathcote Valley, just a 20-minute drive from the heart of Christchurch City, ride the Christchurch Gondola for nearly a kilometer to the collapsed rim of an extinct volcano, which exploded six million years ago. Take in the spectacular panoramic views of the central city, Lyttleton Harbour, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury Plains, and the distant peaks of the Southern Alps. Wander the summit complex, enjoy a coffee or lunch in the cafe, and choose one of many nature walks to explore or visit the Christchurch Discovery Rice, a dramatic reconstruction of the history of the Port Hills and Christchurch.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - International Antarctic Centre General Admission

The International Antarctic Centre aims to recreate the atmosphere and environment of Antarctica, providing visitors with an interactive, fun, and educational experience. Feel the full Four Seasons of Antarctica, where you'll experience a custom-built snow and ice experience, then warm up in the Scott Base interior exhibit, a replica Antarctic field camp, or other informative displays in the gallery. You'll also learn about life in modern-day Antarctica, view real little blue penguins, and experience a thrilling ride in a Hagglund all-terrain vehicle.

Your accommodation: Hotel Montreal

A true original, Hotel Montreal is a unique, luxury escape in the heart of Christchurch city. Hotel Montreal is often recognised for the five-star comfort and convenience it affords those passing through the Garden City.



Day 2



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.

Christchurch to Arthur's Pass

Crossing the Canterbury Plains, the rich farmland that attracted and helped settlers prosper becomes apparent as you head out of the city and towards the mountains.

The drive through the Waimakariri offers some spectacular views of the braided river valleys. Castle Hill Scenic Reserve sits in limestone country and the area is dotted with remarkable rock outcrops. Today it's a popular location for climbers to practice but in the past it was also an important place for Maori in past years as they provided shelter on their seasonal journeys between the coasts. There is a network of walking paths allowing you to explore. The high country lakes and mountain landscape is unique. Arthur's Pass National Park covers 114,500 ha right in the heart of the Southern Alps.

Walking tracks in Arthurs Pass National Park

Within Arthur's Pass there are many short walks to suit all ages and abilities. Located in the Arthur's Pass Village is a Department of Conservation information centre where you can get updates on track conditions and track suitability as well as learn about the natural history of the area and its people.

Listed below is a selection of short walks.

1. Millennium Walk - Time: 10 minutes return
2. Devils Punchbowl Waterfall Walk - Time: One hour return
3. Arthur's Pass Walking Track - Time: One hour 20 minutes (one way)
4. Dobson Nature Walk - Time: 30 minutes return
5. Old Coach Road Walk - Time: 30 minutes return
6. Cockayne Nature Walk - Time: 30 minutes return

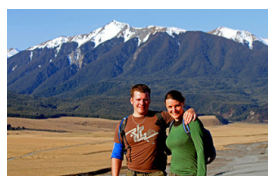
Your accommodation: Wilderness Lodge, Arthurs Pass

Wilderness Lodge sits on it's own 3,000-hectare nature reserve and merino sheep farm and is surrounded by the mountains of Arthur's Pass National Park. Join nature guides to walk, canoe and discover kea parrots, giant buttercups, pygmy forests, alpine flower gardens and waterfalls.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 3



Explore Wilderness Lodge, Arthur's Pass

Nestled in mountain beech forest, midway between Christchurch and the West Coast, Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass offers stylish accommodation, great food, and warm hospitality in a spectacular mountain setting.

Set on a 4000 acre working sheep farm and nature reserve in the heart of the Southern Alps, a daily program of guided activities will be the highlight of your visit. Join naturalist and farmer guides to hike alpine trails, kayak wildlife refuge lakes, and experience life on a working farm.

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Day 4



Arthur's Pass to Franz Josef Glacier

Travel through the Otira Gorge towards the wild West Coast. 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 50 minute detour. Turquoise waters flow through a narrow gorge. A great short walk will deliver you to this piece of paradise. Heading south Ross is the next town this is the site of an old gold mining town and still to this day a working gold mine and there is an option to pan for your own. 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 world's 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 Franz Josef township is a lively place with a great atmosphere, restaurants including Blue Ice and Snakebite are worth a meal. This small town is packed with walks, adventure, and scenic activities, something for everyone.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

A spectacular scenic flight soaring over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers, Fox and Franz Josef. Landing at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys. It is important to read and understand the risks associated with this activity. A full risk disclosure can be found [here](#).

Your accommodation: Legacy Te Waonui Hotel Franz Josef

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 5



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: Lime Tree Lodge

Set on a ten acre estate just outside Lake Wanaka, Lime Tree Lodge offers luxury boutique accommodation with stunning 360-degree uninterrupted mountain views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



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.

Your accommodation: Lime Tree Lodge

Set on a ten acre estate just outside Lake Wanaka, Lime Tree Lodge offers luxury boutique accommodation with stunning 360-degree uninterrupted mountain views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Wanaka to Dunedin

Onto Cromwell via Lake Dunstan which was created when the valley was flooded in 1992 as part of the hydro electric scheme. As a result much of the original town is now submerged but a few historic building were relocated to "Old Cromwell Town". Roxburgh, Cromwell and Alexandra also have the ideal climate for stone fruit, along the main highway near Roxburgh there are plenty of places where you can buy local produce direct from the grower. Continuing on this drive takes you through the Otago Goldfields of yesteryear. The townships of Alexandra, Lawrence and Roxburgh once had populations 3 times their current, at the height of late 1800's gold rush. Many of the old settlements and some buildings remain as do the original shafts and workings. Time permitting there are plenty of opportunities to explore life as it was in particular Gabriel's Gully in the township of Lawrence.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

Your accommodation: Camp Estate at Larnach Castle

A luxurious country house built from blue stone and features a spectacular marble staircase. The modern rooms are all double glazed and the reception rooms are all heated by open fires and underfloor heating. Staying at Camp Estate includes entry to Larnach Castle and the grounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 8



Explore Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula

Known as the Edinburgh of the South, Dunedin City has a heavy Scottish influence. Surrounded by rugged coastal plains and windswept beaches it's home to an eclectic mix of historical and modern architecture as well as industrial technology. Renowned for its Flemish Baroque-inspired 'gingerbread house' Railway Station, this university town is bustling with life. Head to the Saturday farmers market held in the aforementioned railway grounds for a taste of organic produce, handmade crepes and local honey. Explore the many cafes and wine bars in The Octagon, then continue on a self-guided walking tour of the internationally acclaimed Street Art dotted around the city. Drive to the coast and watch the freighters passing in the distance while you sunbathe, or hire a mountain bike and test your legs on one of the many trails available in the area. For a more immersive historical experience, follow the coast to New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle. On your way back be sure to head to the Otago Peninsula to see the largest mainland Albatross colony in the world.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Tour and Wildlife Cruise with Monarch

Join a small-group bus tour led by a local guide across the Otago Peninsula, featuring stunning harbour views, rural landscapes, and unique wildlife. Visit a remote beach to spot sea lions, take a Monarch Wildlife Cruise to see albatross, seals, and rare seabirds, and explore a Yellow-eyed Penguin conservation reserve with hidden viewing hides. This unforgettable journey blends breathtaking scenery with intimate wildlife encounters before a relaxed return to Dunedin.

Your accommodation: Camp Estate at Larnach Castle

A luxurious country house built from blue stone and features a spectacular marble staircase. The modern rooms are all double glazed and the reception rooms are all heated by open fires and underfloor heating. Staying at Camp Estate includes entry to Larnach Castle and the grounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 9



Dunedin to Te Anau (via Invercargill)

The drive to Te Anau takes you through classic Southland farming scenery. Head off-the-beaten-track today and follow the coastline instead of the inland route. Go through The Catlins area and be sure to take a detour to Kaka Point to view its majestic cliffs and pounding surf. If time permits, keep driving towards Nugget Point, iconic for its steep headland with a lighthouse perched atop. Continue through Invercargill to Riverton and Colac Bay, and then head north to Manapouri. From here you can embark on a day or overnight cruise to the remote Doubtful Sound, renowned for its natural beauty. Just a short way further will bring you to your lakeside destination of Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound.

Fiordland Lodge

Set on a superb site with commanding views out across Lake Te Anau this is a rural setting with rolling grass lands surrounding the Lodge, Lake Te Anau being a mere ten-minute walk away. Across the lake to the west lie the mountains of Fiordland National Park, an area of over three million acres of untouched wilderness and part of the much larger South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. The enjoyment of food and wine is integral to the experience on offer at Fiordland Lodge and the use of quality ingredients being seasonal and regional and largely organic are fundamental to their cuisine philosophy. Food is a focal point and you'll be hard pressed to find something on the menu that isn't homemade or locally grown. Fresh organic vegetables, greens, herbs and eggs are harvested daily from the huge onsite vegetable garden, so each season nature offers a new palette for the kitchen team to create dishes. A changing evening menu also means that you get to experience as much of New Zealand's wonderful food as possible. There are numerous activities available from Fiordland Lodge such as guided fly fishing and nature walks also the conservation gold sponsor experience where you will join a local volunteer to work on a conservation project for the day.

Your accommodation: Fiordland Lodge

Set in a World Heritage area Fiordland Lodge offers the discerning traveller comfort and privacy. The elegance and splendour of the Lodge is mirrored in the breathtaking views of Lake Te Anau and Fiordland. Private and serene, the Lodge is perfect for relaxation, or as a base for your Fiordland experience.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 10



Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise from Manapouri

From Pearl Harbour, Manapouri, you cruise across picturesque Lake Manapouri to West Arm and then travel by coach over Wilmot Pass through dense rainforest. There are opportunities along the way to examine plant life and view the spectacular scenery. Once at Doubtful Sound you board the catamaran, Commander Peak, for a 3 hour cruise of beautiful Doubtful Sound to the Tasman Sea. On board, there is excellent viewing of waterfalls, rainforest and mountains. Of particular interest, if sighted, are fur seals basking on the rocks, or a resident pod of bottlenose dolphins. Rare Fiordland crested penguins are sometimes encountered in the right season. An interesting onboard commentary keeps you informed and on the return journey, the vessel's engines are turned off and visitors are treated to the 'Sound of Silence'. Includes picnic boxed lunch.

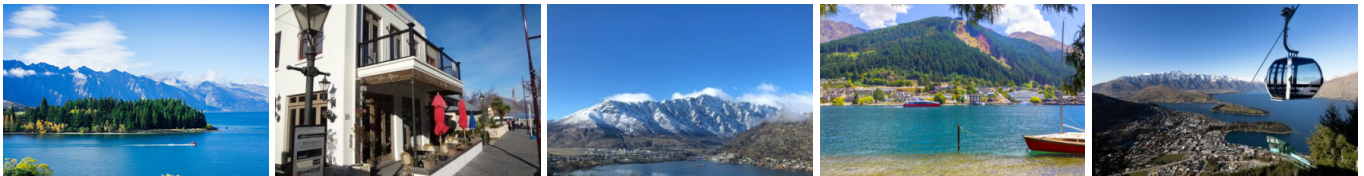
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Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 11



Te Anau to Queenstown

Journey across expansive tussock lands en route to Queenstown. Pass through Mossburn, renowned as the deer capital of New Zealand, and continue through the picturesque Southland countryside. As the road begins to trace the edge of Lake Wakatipu, marvel at the breathtaking views from the Devil's Staircase. Finally, approach Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand, with the Remarkables mountain range standing majestically in the backdrop.

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.

Your accommodation: Sofitel Queenstown

The stunning five-star Sofitel Queenstown is located in the heart of New Zealand's premier four season lake and alpine resort. New Zealand's very first Sofitel, this luxury boutique hotel occupies one of the best locations to get the most from the vibrant town.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 12



Return your vehicle to Queenstown Airport

Explore more of Queenstown before dropping your rental car at the airport depot and continuing your onward journey.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	12
Accommodation:	Luxury Lodges
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	All dinners
Includes	All breakfasts
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	TSS Earnslaw cruise and dinner at Walter Peak high country farm, Queenstown
Includes	Tiger Moth Freedom of Romance flight and picnic, Wanaka
Includes	Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Hotel Montreal
Day 2	Wilderness Lodge, Arthurs Pass
Day 3	Wilderness Lodge, Arthurs Pass
Day 4	Legacy Te Waonui Hotel Franz Josef
Day 5	Lime Tree Lodge
Day 6	Lime Tree Lodge
Day 7	Camp Estate at Larnach Castle
Day 8	Camp Estate at Larnach Castle
Day 9	Fiordland Lodge
Day 10	Fiordland Lodge
Day 11	Sofitel Queenstown