

AAT Kings: New Zealand's Southern Drift - Small Group Tour

From the vibrant city of Christchurch to the serene shores of Lake Ohau. Wander through charming historic towns from Cromwell to Arrowtown. Sample world class wines and delight in gourmet cuisine amidst the beauty of native flora and fauna.

Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 9days / 8nights
 Accommodation: Hotel 4 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: Afternoon tea with 'Pavlova Queen', Angie Taylor
- Included: Church of the Good Shepherd at Tekapo
- Included: Cruise Lake Wakatipu on the TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak High Country Farm
- Included: Franz Josef Glacier
- Included: Free time in Wanaka and Arrowtown
- Included: Highlands Motorsport Museum
- Included: Milford Sound Overnight Boat Cruise
- 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners

Day 1

You don't have to arrive in Christchurch early, but we recommend you do – this South Island city has some of New Zealand's most innovative architecture, not to mention forward-thinking restaurants and bars. Tonight, it's time to meet your Travel Director and travelling companions for a tour briefing and drinks.

Staying in:

- Wyndham Garden (1 night)
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Day 2

Begin your day by exploring Christchurch's city sights before journeying to the brilliant bright blue waters of Lake Tekapo. You'll view the iconic Church of the Good Shepherd, which was built in 1935, and was the first church in the Mackenzie Basin. You are then welcomed to the stunning lakeside home of Angie and Stan Taylor for afternoon tea. Retired farmers, baker Angie is the undisputed Pavlova Queen who will give a demonstration and explanation of the great trans-Tasman pavlova controversy, while Stan will regale you with tales of a lifetime spent farming. Conclude your day at the charming Lake Ohau Lodge, nestled in the Mackenzie High Country and surrounded by breathtaking wilderness. The Main Lodge boasts a cozy open fire and expansive windows with stunning views of the lake, providing the perfect setting to unwind before a family-style dinner.

Staying in:

- Lake Ohau Lodge (1 night)
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Day 3

Travel through the Lindis Pass to Cromwell. Visit the Jones Family fruit stall for fresh produce, then explore Highlands Museum, a paradise for car enthusiasts and novices alike. Continue your journey to Arrowtown, a charming village with a rich gold rush heritage, before reaching scenic Queenstown. Enjoy lunch at your leisure at cult eatery Fergburger, famous for its mouthwatering gourmet burgers and vibrant atmosphere.

Staying in:

- Copthorne Hotel and Resort Queenstown Lakefront (1 night)
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Day 4

Take today at your own pace. Like things fast and furious? Feel the wind in your hair on the high-octane jet boat ride, perhaps. There's a reason why Queenstown is known as the adventure capital of the country. Nature lover? Discover some of New Zealand's feathered friends at Kiwi Park (both own expense).

Staying in:

- Copthorne Hotel and Resort Queenstown Lakefront (1 night)
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Day 5

Start the day with a journey along the Devil's Staircase, with its dramatic landscapes leading you to the charming town of Te Anau. Continue your adventure through the World Heritage-listed Fiordland National Park sighting glaciers, and mountain ranges en route to the amazing Mirror Lake before driving through the hand-hewn Homer Tunnel. Spend the night aboard the iconic Milford Mariner and wake up in one of the most beautiful places on earth. The cruise style is relaxed, allowing plenty of time to view the fiord's spectacular waterfalls, rainforest, mountains, and diverse wildlife such as fur seals and various seabirds. Hear from the specialist nature guide on board and explore the shoreline by kayak or tender. The Milford Mariner offers spacious viewing decks, a dining saloon with fully licensed bar, as well as an observation lounge. Dining included in your cruise are hors d'oeuvres followed by a three-course buffet meal, as well as a delicious cooked breakfast.

Staying in:

- Milford Mariner (1 night)
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Day 6

Depart the serene beauty of Fiordland National Park and journey to the picturesque country town of Wānaka, nestled amidst the majestic Southern Alps and gracing the shores of Lake Wānaka. This idyllic town offers a perfect blend of natural splendour and leisurely pursuits. Your hotel is located in the heart of the village just a short walk from the lakefront and nestled among surrounding cafes and restaurants.

Staying in:

- Wanaka Hotel (1 night)
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Day 7

Begin your journey with a scenic drive from Wānaka, passing the pristine waters of Lake Hawea and the picturesque settlement of Makarora – a hikers hub surrounded by vast alpine scenery and river valleys of lush temperate rainforest. Continue over the Haast Pass, the historic township of Fox Glacier awaits. Get some perspective on an optional scenic flight over Fox and Franz Josef Glacier/Ka Roimata o Hine Hukatere – if the weather behaves, you may even get a glacier landing (own expense).

Staying in:

- Heartland Fox Glacier, Heartland Glacier Country (1 night)
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Day 8

Today's drive north winds past lush rainforests and rugged coastlines to Hokitika, famous for its greenstone and arty, laid-back vibe. From there, the road heads inland through the Southern Alps. As you climb toward Arthur's Pass, the scenery shifts from rainforest to soaring peaks, rocky gorges, and sweeping tussock plains. Keep an eye out for cheeky kea (the world's only alpine parrot) along the way! Once over the pass, the landscape softens again, opening up to wide Canterbury plains as you roll toward the bright lights of Christchurch. Tonight, enjoy dinner with your Travel Director, a fitting end to your New Zealand adventure.

Staying in:

- Wyndham Garden (1 night)
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Day 9

It's time to say farewell and head home, sorting through snapshots of an unforgettable journey. But the best souvenirs? The lasting memories of a holiday immersed in untamed nature and cultural experiences.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Small Group Escorted Tour
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Christchurch
Tour length: 9
Accommodation: Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary