

Southern Highlights with Milford Sound

Explore New Zealand's South Island with this excellent independent touring itinerary. Journey from Christchurch in a loop around the South Island, visiting all the must-see destinations and enjoying a selection of exciting activities along the way. Visit the spectacular Aoraki-Mt. Cook National Park, cruise through Piopiotahi / Milford Sound, explore the West Coast glacier region and travel through the Southern Alps on the stunning TranzAlpine Scenic Train.

While this itinerary serves as a great starting point, we invite you to connect with our travel specialists, who can help tailor these experiences into a larger New Zealand journey personalised to your interests.

Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 5days / 4nights
 Accommodation: Motels
 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: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App
- Included activity: Christchurch to Queenstown via Aoraki-Mount Cook National Park & Tekapo with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included
- Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course
- Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included
- Included activity: Queenstown to Franz Josef via Wānaka Small Group Tour with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included
- Included activity: Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station with Hokitika Scenic Tours
- Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch
- 3 lunches

Day 1



Christchurch to Queenstown via Aoraki-Mount Cook National Park & Tekapo with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included

What better way to get from Christchurch to Queenstown than a small group, fully-guided day trip that combines all of the key southern highlights such as the famous Lake Tekapo, Aoraki-Mount Cook National Park and Tasman Glacier. The famously passionate tour guides, notorious for bringing your journey to life by sharing their stories and rich background knowledge and run in modern, comfortable minibuses packed with extras ensuring your comfort and safety.

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.

Your accommodation: Blue Peaks Lodge

Blue Peaks Lodge offers well equipped self contained rooms with a fantastic location overlooking Queenstown and is just an easy five minutes walk to the Queenstown lakefront.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 2



Explore Queenstown

Queenstown, known in Māori as Tāhuna is celebrated as New Zealand's 'adventure capital'. Though Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by a plethora of historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Whether you are looking for a scenic short walk or a longer one, you will find the perfect hike or bike trail in Queenstown. Explore Queenstown Gardens, or try out more challenging trails up to Ben Lomond Walkaway or Queenstown Hill Walking Track. Enjoy iconic views and take Queenstown Gondola up 450 metres to Bob's Peak, or ride on the 100-year-old Steamship - the TSS Earnslaw - to Walter Peak Station for dinner and a farm tour. Browse the waterfront cafes and al fresco restaurants, try out the famous Fergburger, or grab a dessert at Patagonia Chocolates.

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Queenstown Skyline Gondola Ride

Hop aboard the Skyline Gondola - the steepest cable car lift in the Southern Hemisphere! From which you can take in the awe-inspiring views of this spectacular landscape. Sit back and relax as you enjoy panoramic views of The Remarkables, Walter Peak, Cecil Peak, Coronet Peak and the magnificent Lake Wakatipu.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Lunch

Enjoy a quintessential Kiwi experience a delicious barbeque lunch and a farm tour in a stunning lakeside setting. First, take a scenic cruise from Queenstown to Walter Peak High Country Farm on board the vintage steamship TSS Earnslaw, one of the last remaining fully functional coal-fired passenger ships in the southern hemisphere.

Disembark and take in the picturesque shores of the Station. Relax on the lakeside terrace at the Colonel's Homestead Restaurant and savour the aromas of the best local produce being cooked on the grill. The seasonal menu has plenty to choose from salads, vegetables and succulent meat with plenty of delicious dietaries on offer as well. Finish your meal with a scrumptious dessert before joining an entertaining farm demonstration or exploring the beautiful lakeside gardens.

Your accommodation: Blue Peaks Lodge

Blue Peaks Lodge offers well equipped self contained rooms with a fantastic location overlooking Queenstown and is just an easy five minutes walk to the Queenstown lakefront.



Day 3



Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included

Departing from Queenstown sit back and relax aboard a luxury glass-roofed coach to enjoy a relaxing trip along the shores of Lake Wakatipu and through the rolling countryside to Te Anau. The coach driver provides an informative commentary and plenty of photo opportunities. After a morning tea break in Te Anau, the coach continues along the spectacular Milford Road. On reaching Piopiotahi-Milford Sound, board your vessel for a leisurely cruise in the fiord. The cruise provides excellent viewing opportunities and plenty of time is available to enjoy waterfalls, rainforests, mountains and wildlife. Rain or shine, every day in Piopiotahi-Milford Sound will leave you in awe. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Blue Peaks Lodge

Blue Peaks Lodge offers well equipped self contained rooms with a fantastic location overlooking Queenstown and is just an easy five minutes walk to the Queenstown lakefront.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 4



Queenstown to Franz Josef via Wānaka Small Group Tour with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included

Departing from Queenstown, this journey takes you to the historic Cardrona Hotel, renowned for its rustic charm and spectacular mountain setting. In Wānaka, you'll capture the iconic photo of the Wānaka Tree with Mt Aspiring and the Southern Alps in the background. Continuing past the Clutha River, you'll enjoy scenic stops at Lake Hāwea, Thunder Creek Falls, and Ship Creek, where the rainforest meets the ocean. The tour concludes at Franz Josef, after passing glacial rivers and the picturesque Lake Matheson, a photographer's paradise.

Franz Josef

Franz Josef, named after both the local village and the nearby glacier, holds special significance in Māori culture as "Ko Roimata o Hine Hukatere" – The Tears of the Ice Maiden. This rare glacier is one of only three in the world that descends from alpine heights into a temperate rainforest, almost reaching sea level. New Zealand is home to two of these unique glaciers, Franz Josef and Fox Glacier, both highly accessible and popular with visitors. The best ways to experience the glacier are through scenic flights or, for the adventurous, a heli-hike. You can also enjoy glacier views with a short drive from the village and walking tracks. Beyond the glacier, Franz Josef offers a wealth of adventure activities and beautiful forest and alpine walks, making it a must-visit destination.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 5



Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station with Hokitika Scenic Tours

Head north from Franz Josef through to the historic gold mining region of Hokitika. Known for its Pounamu (New Zealand Greenstone) this seaside town has a rich history dating back to the 1860's. Continue on to Greymouth, the largest town on the West Coast and the starting point for the next leg of your journey - the TranzAlpine Scenic Train.

TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Considered one of the world's great train journeys, the TranzAlpine Scenic Train takes you from Greymouth to Christchurch. Travel across the South Island from the west to the east coast through Arthur's Pass National Park. From the comfort of your carriage see lush beech forest, deep river valleys and the spectacular peaks of the Southern Alps. Descend to the windswept Canterbury Plains before arriving in the city of Christchurch.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Independant Bus & Coach
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Christchurch
Tour length: 5
Accommodation: Motels
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary

Day 1 Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 2 Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 3 Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 4 Punga Grove Motel & Suites