

Intrepid Travel: Premium New Zealand South Island

Taking you from Christchurch to Queenstown via glaciers, wineries, lakes and cruise on Milford Sound, this Intrepid Premium trip showcases the natural beauty and thriving food and wine scene in the South Island of New Zealand. Forage for fresh ingredients with a local chef in Otago and come face to face with endangered species at a wildlife Centre on the West Coast, including New Zealand's rarest kiwi. With a friendly leader to guide the way you'll experience a landscape that has been shaped by the elements over thousands of years.

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: Queenstown
 Length: 10days / 9nights
 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: Afterhours emergency support while touring
- Included: Christchurch Orientation Tour
- Included: Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise
- Included: Guided walk to the Blue Pools with a local Ornithologist
- Included: Pounamu (Greenstone) Studio visit
- Included: West Coast TreeTop Walk
- Included: Visit Arrowtown

- Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
- Included activity: Intrepid Travel
- Included: Criffel Station foraging & lunch experience with local chef
- Included: Gibbston Valley Cheese & Wine Pairing
- Included: Monteith's Brewing Co. tasting
- Included: Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk
- Included: West Coast Wildlife Centre visit with ranger
- : 9 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners

Day 1



Welcome to New Zealand! When you arrive in Christchurch, you'll be met at the airport by a local representative and transferred to your hotel. Your adventure officially begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm tonight, followed by a welcome dinner at a restaurant featuring produce from the Canterbury region. Enjoy a three-course dinner celebrating local producers at a restaurant that champions sustainability. It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this time. If you're 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.

Activities:

- Christchurch - Welcome Dinner
- Complimentary Arrival Transfer

Staying in:

- The Fable Christchurch or similar (1 night)
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Day 2

Take an orientation tour with your leader around some of the landmarks of Christchurch. Then, set off for Punakaiki, driving through Arthur's Pass and Castle Hill – the spectacular mountain scenery may look familiar, as parts of The Chronicles of Narnia and Lord of the Rings movies were filmed here. After lunch in Moana, enjoy a short stop at Lake Brunner – the largest lake in the South Island. Spend the afternoon in Greymouth, stopping into a boutique studio to learn about the prized west coast jade known locally as Pounamu (Greenstone). Then, continue to Monteith's Brewery, considered the original home of New Zealand craft brewing for a tour and tasting. Arrive at Punakaiki Resort by late afternoon – in Paparoa National Park, this resort lies next to Punakaiki Beach and the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes.

Your travel time today will be approximately 5 hours.

Activities:

- Greymouth - Monteith's Brewery Tour & Tasting
- Greymouth - Pounamu (Greenstone) Studio Visit
- Christchurch - Leader-led Orientation Walk
- Lake Brunner - Nature Walk

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Punakaiki or similar (1 night)
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Day 3

After breakfast, explore the Punakaiki Rocks and Blowholes before the drive to Franz Josef. Punakaiki, is a town with less than 100 residents, but famed for its so-called Pancake Rocks. These layers of fossilised animals and plants, formed over 30 million years ago, were thrust above the surface by the moving earth and sculpted by wind and water. At high tide the sea is forced through blowholes in the limestone to burst metres into the air – it's an entertaining sight! Along the way, stop for lunch and then pay a visit to Okarito where you will take part in a hands-on restoration activity with the Okarito Plant Project, a community-led initiative focused on regenerating native forests and protecting the unique ecosystems of the West Coast.

Your travel time today will be approximately 4 hours.

Activities:

- Punakaiki - Rocks & Blowhole Visit
- Okarito - Plant Project Restoration Activity

Staying in:

- Rainforest Retreat Deluxe Tree Hut or similar (1 night)
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Day 4

Begin your day with a self-guided walk to see the icy wonderland created by the Franz Josef Glacier – one of the steepest glaciers in New Zealand. If you're feeling more adventurous, you may like to join an optional heli-hiking tour and get even closer to the glacier. Other optional activities include kayaking, a scenic cruise on Lake Mapourika or a soak in the hot tubs at Franz Josef. Ahead of your ranger-led visit tomorrow, you will also have access to the West Coast Wildlife Centre for you to explore at your own pace.

Your trip leader has a rest day today, as per NZ legal requirements. Your trip leader will ensure you're ready to enjoy your time in Franz Josef, before taking a 24-hour break. They will be available in case of emergencies. Some walking paths around Franz Josef Glacier are currently closed due to heavy rain. Your leader can provide updates, or you can visit the Westland Tai Poutini National Park website.

Activities:

- Franz Josef – West Coast Wildlife Centre

Staying in:

- Rainforest Retreat Deluxe Tree Hut or similar (1 night)
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Day 5

This morning, take a private ranger-guided tour of the West Coast Wildlife Centre – home of the official breeding program for the world's rarest kiwi bird, the rowi. Also keep an eye out for tuatara (a reptile endemic to New Zealand). During your visit, your expert ranger will share behind-the-scenes insights into the conservation efforts taking place on the West Coast including how eggs are incubated and chicks are raised before being released into the wild. Then depart Franz Josef for the resort town of Wanaka, arriving by late afternoon. Located next to the resplendent Wanaka Station Park on the shores of Lake Wanaka, and a short stroll from Wanaka township, you'll be perfectly placed to enjoy all this popular town has to offer.

Your travel time today will be approximately 4.5 hours.

Activities:

- Franz Josef - West Coast Wildlife Centre Visit with Ranger

Staying in:

- Edgewater Hotel or similar (1 night)
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Day 6

Enjoy a sleep-in this morning or start your day with a hike up Mt Iron for a view over Lake Wanaka and the surrounding peaks. Central Otago is a region well known for food and wine, and today you'll visit the spectacular deer station of Criffel Station. Here, you'll be shown around the farm by the family before doing a chef-guided foraging and tasting tour, followed by a delicious lunch.

Activities:

- Wanaka - Criffel Station Lunch Experience

Staying in:

- Edgewater Hotel or similar (1 night)
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Day 7

Say farewell to Wanaka after breakfast and begin the journey to Doubtful Sound / Patea – a lesser-known but stunning part of Fiordland National Park. Drive to Lake Manapouri where you'll hop on a ferry for a one-hour journey across the water, followed by a scenic drive to Deep Cove via Wilmot Pass – a subalpine road surrounded by dense rainforest. Here, you'll board your vessel and meet the crew for your Doubtful Sound Cruise. This Premium Exclusive Experience includes a delicious three-course dinner featuring local produce, and a resident naturalist who'll share insights about the fiord's history, flora and wildlife – including dolphins, seals and penguins. With fewer boats on the water than in Milford Sound and a more peaceful atmosphere, there's a higher chance these creatures will pop up to say hello! If weather conditions allow, you might also like to explore by kayak.

Your travel time today will be approximately 3.5 hours. Your leader will not be joining you on the overnight cruise, but they will be available by phone if you need to contact them.

Activities:

- Doubtful Sound - Cruise

Staying in:

- Doubtful Sound Cruise (Feature Stay) (1 night)
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Day 8

Start your day with a hearty cooked breakfast as the mist rolls over the cliffs, then get ready to explore some of the other nooks of the fiord this morning. After, return to Deep Cove to take the ferry back to Lake Manapouri and continue to Queenstown, arriving in the late afternoon. The rest of the evening is free to relax or explore this resort town, famed for its picturesque scenery and dramatic location on the edge of the Southern Alps.

Your travel time today will be approximately 3 hours.

Activities:

- Doubtful Sound - Cruise

Staying in:

- Millenium Queenstown or similar (1 night)
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Day 9

Soak up a free morning in Queenstown and wander at your own pace. Then, head to Arrowtown in the afternoon. This historic gold mining town is known for its heritage town centre and autumn festival – and perfect to explore on foot. Learn about the town's history on a leader-led walking tour and browse its shops and cafes. Then, head to Gibbston Valley to sample some of Central Otago's famous drops at a well-known winery.

Tonight, enjoy farewell dinner with your group and say cheers to an amazing adventure.

Activities:

- Gibbston Valley - Wine Tasting
- Arrowtown - Walking Tour

Staying in:

- Millenium Queenstown or similar (1 night)
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Day 10

Your New Zealand adventure ends this morning after breakfast. As this trip spends little time in Queenstown, it's recommended that you spend an extra day or two if you want to experience all the town has to offer. Your booking agent will be happy to book additional accommodation for you, just get in touch ahead of time.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Small Group Escorted Tour
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Queenstown
Tour length: 10
Accommodation: Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary