

AAT Kings: Southern Wonders 26/27

A little bit city, a little bit country. A whole lot of nature, and just as much culture. Oh, and plenty of opportunities to indulge in food and wine. This tour of the South Island of New Zealand delivers the perfect recipe for a taste of the country. Look forward to Franz Josef/Waiau tours, Milford Sound/Piopiotaahi cruises and glimpses into cosmopolitan life on Christchurch and Queenstown tours.

Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 9days / 8nights
 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: Church of the Good Shepherd at Tekapo
- Included: Franz Josef Glacier
- Included: Milford Sound Cruise
- Included: Tekapo Dark Sky Experience
- Included: TranzAlpine Train from Christchurch to Greymouth
- Included: TSS Earnslaw cruise & BBQ dinner at Walter Peak High Country Farm
- Included: Visit Arrowtown
- 8 breakfasts, 4 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 drinks.

Staying in:

- Ibis Hotel Christchurch (1 night)
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Day 2

Your South Island Tour starts on a literal high as you jump aboard the TranzAlpine train, crossing the Canterbury Plains towards the Southern Alps and Arthur's Pass. This is one of the world's most scenic rail experiences, through tunnels and over viaducts with panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, icy rivers, beech forests, gorges and river valleys. At the other end of the line is Hokitika, the home of pounamu (native greenstone or jade). Just when you thought your day couldn't get any better, Franz Josef town twinkles on the horizon. This afternoon, you may choose to fly over Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier (1 night)
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Day 3

Over the Haast Pass, alpine drama awaits. The Southern Lakes deserve their name: there are almost more waterways here than you can count. First up there's lovely Lake Wanaka, with its Instagrammable shoreline of poplars and willows. Followed by oh-so-blue Lake Hawea and Lake Dunstan, where you'll pause to refuel on flavour-packed stone fruit. As tempting as it is to linger in Arrowtown's movie-set-like streets, lined with trees and character-filled boutiques, Lake Wakatipu and The Remarkables await in Queenstown.

Staying in:

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

The adventure capital of New Zealand doesn't disappoint when it comes to activities that are fast and furious. Take your pick, you could explore the natural drama of Skippers Canyon. Prefer life at a more leisurely pace? Opt to step into The Lord of the Rings movie scenery or sip your way through surrounding vineyards (all own expense). Wherever you wander, make sure you're back in time to glide across Lake Wakatipu aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet barbecue dinner.

Staying in:

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

Nature rules today as you motor from the Mirror Lakes through the Cleddau Valley. But this is just a teaser of what's to come: World Heritage listed Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. A cruise across this dreamy expanse will give you goosebumps, its string of waterfalls creating a misty curtain across sheer escarpments. Look out for fur seals – they're a common sight here. The road back through Fiordland National Park is an intoxicating union of beech forests, alluvial flats, meadows and gin-clear rivers, carving up the countryside en route to Te Anau. And just when you thought things couldn't get any more magical, nestled on the edge of the South Island's largest lake, Te Anau is the perfect place to savour some peace and relaxation after the spectacle of the day.

Staying in:

- Distinction Luxmore Hotel (1 night)
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Day 6

The South Island's biggest lake is a blissful place for an invigorating morning walk. If it doesn't set your pulse racing, than your outlook of rolling

green hills dotted with doe-eyed sheep surely will. This pastoral countryside surrounds the city of Dunedin. While away the afternoon in atmospheric art-lined alleys or sipping a lager or two in Speight's Brewery (a national institution), or visit grand Larnach Castle. You could venture further afield to discover the wildlife that thrives in this pretty pocket of the country.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Dunedin City (1 night)
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Day 7

Time is on your side this morning. Sleep in or take a stroll. Make a stop en route to Omarama in Oamaru, known for its Victorian heritage buildings.

Staying in:

- Distinction Heritage Gateway Hotel (1 night)
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Day 8

If there's a lake with a more vivid turquoise colour than Tekapo, we're yet to see it. It's made even more dramatic by snow-capped mountains, the quaint Church of the Good Shepherd and atmospheric towns that surround. Your Indoor Dark Sky Astronomy Experience at Tekapo, hosted by passionate local specialists, will forever change the way you see the night sky. Back on earth, you're becoming reacquainted with Christchurch, your in-the-know Travel Director pointing out the city's miraculous transformation over the last decade. Local spirit is strong here.

Tonight, enjoy drinks to toast your adventure.

Staying in:

- Ibis Hotel Christchurch (1 night)
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Day 9

If you feel like you've only seen the tip of the South Island's iceberg, you'd be correct. This beguiling part of the country could keep travel enthusiasts entertained for eons. Thankfully, we have more itineraries – ask your Travel Director and start planning your next trip to New Zealand.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Guided Coach Tour
Starts: Christchurch
Finishes: Christchurch
Tour length: 9
Accommodation: Hotel 3 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary