

Southern Explorer Christchurch to Queenstown

Taking you south from Christchurch, this 10 day includes the majestic scenery of the lower South Island. Beginning with the large open spaces of the McKenzie Country and Mt. Cook National Park, you then travel to the coast and the Scottish influenced city of Dunedin with its nearby wildlife havens. In Fiordland there is a full day to explore Milford Sound including a Real Journeys Nature Cruise, before you continue to the mountains and lakes of the Southern Lakes region.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Queenstown
Length: 10days / 9nights
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: Late model rental cars
Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)
Includes: Unlimited kms
Includes: GPS navigation
Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees
Includes: Additional drivers
Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)
Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand
Included activity: Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation
Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App
Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and picnic lunch with RealNZ
1 lunch



Day 1



Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your 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 - Discover Christchurch Afternoon Tour

A half day sightseeing tour of Christchurch highlighting both the damage to the city inflicted by several large earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and the rebuild which is currently in progress, together with the surviving beauty of the city and the historical landmarks. Experience the grand architecture, beautiful gardens and scenic viewpoints on a half-day city tour of Christchurch.

The tour commences in the central city of Christchurch and covers the area which was completely devastated by the Christchurch earthquakes in February 2011. The guide will explain both the history of the city and the effects of the earthquake. On leaving the inner city, the tour travels to Mona Vale a historic homestead and gardens. Then you will travel to the Sign of the Takahe, a historic building with a lookout providing spectacular views over the city, Canterbury Plains and to the Southern Alps. The tour then travels via the Port Hills and Lyttelton Harbour by way of the Sign of the Kiwi and Governors Bay to the Port of Lyttelton. The tour proceeds through the Lyttelton harbour tunnel to the seaside suburb of Sumner and cave rock before returning to the central city where the tour will conclude.

Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping center and only a short walk to the Botanic Gardens.



Day 2



Collect your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Explore Christchurch City

Following the 2011 earthquake that razed its centre and much of the outlying suburbs, Christchurch is well into a billion-dollar makeover. In the middle of the Canterbury Plains, bordering the pacific ocean, New Zealand's newest city is an ideal gateway to exploring the middle of the South.

Go punting on the Avon River, take a historic tram ride, catch the gondola to the rim of an extinct volcano or do all three! See the world's only Cardboard Cathedral and for nature enthusiasts - wander the renowned Christchurch Botanic Gardens, or head to Oxford Terrace in the city to find a great spot to eat or drink.

Drive an hour in any direction to ski, mountain bike, wine taste, whale-watch, bungee jump or play golf. Take the winding Port Hills road to the French settlement of Akaroa and tour the vines in Waipara for an authentic New Zealand wine-tasting experience.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Gondola

In the Heathcote Valley, just fifteen minutes 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, Lyttelton 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 Ridge, a dramatic reconstruction of the history of the Port Hills and Christchurch.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Willowbank Wildlife Reserve

Nowhere else in New Zealand will you find such a wide range of New Zealand wildlife so close to you. Willowbank provides you with a "Kiwi Guarantee" and is home to New Zealand's largest and most accessible kiwi viewing area. With this unique experience, you will see New Zealand's natural splendour first hand, and view Kiwis that are not hidden behind glass. You will explore one of the most complete selections of New Zealand native and introduced wildlife in natural bush surroundings. Much of the Willowbank wildlife wander free and is able to be petted and fed.

Choose to explore the reserve yourself, or for an up-close Kiwi experience, you can take a guided tour.

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Day 3



Christchurch to Aoraki Mt Cook National Park

Today you'll drive through the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury plains. Catch your breath in Geraldine before continuing through Fairlie. Ascending Burkes pass you'll come to the picturesque lakeside town of Tekapo.

Follow the road and take in the view of Aoraki Mt Cook (New Zealand's tallest mountain) from the shores of Lake Pukaki, known for its glacier fed turquoise blue colour. Continue along the lake to your final destination Mt Cook Village.

Please note: There are no food shops at Mt Cook, and dinner options are limited to one restaurant. If you wish to self-cater, you must stock up before arriving in Mt Cook, or make dinner reservations in advance.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glacier Explorers Mt. Cook

Experience 500 year old icebergs up-close on the Mt Cook terminal lake. The Glacier Explorers tour is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and one of only three in the world! Very few glaciers terminate into lakes and even fewer of them are accessible. See towering ice cliffs and floating icebergs from the safety of a specially designed boat. These boats provide a safe way to view unseen and inaccessible areas of New Zealand's largest glacier The Tasman.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Big Sky Stargazing

Mt Cook is far from the city lights and therefore has some of the darkest skies in New Zealand, perfect for viewing the night sky! Their fully trained guides are delighted to show you the beautiful southern night sky using the naked eye, state of the art astronomy telescopes and binoculars at the outdoor viewing platform. If the weather is not favourable then there will be an indoor alternative featuring New Zealand's first full dome digital Planetarium, a high-definition video images on a suspended 9m wide x 4.5m high full dome. Unleash your imagination as you discover the night sky including the Southern Cross, seasonal ecliptic objects, planets, star clusters, moons, distant galaxies and even our very own galaxy, the spectacular Milky Way!

Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel is located in the centre of Mt. Cook village. The self-contained units are spacious and all are surrounded by alpine mountain views.



Day 4



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Dunedin

Today you'll leave Aoraki Mt Cook National Park and travel past Twizel, one of the locations for the Lord of the Rings films. Go through Oamaru, the gliding capital of New Zealand, be sure to stop at The Wrinkly Ram, a quirky local cafe and souvenir store. Driving through the Waitaki Valley follow the hydro power generating system towards the east coast. Stretch your legs in Oamaru, known for its white stone buildings constructed with the local Oamaru Stone. If you were a little late off the mark this morning you may get the chance to see the blue penguins come ashore at dusk.

Continue south down the coast to Moeraki, and take a detour towards the beach to see the Moeraki Boulders, a unique geological feature well worth a look. As you arrive in Dunedin, take in the city's Edwardian and Scottish heritage reflected in the buildings around the city centre The Octagon.

Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 5



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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Monarch Wildlife Cruise from Wellers Rock

An unforgettable experience viewing rare and fascinating wildlife. Board the Monarch Boat and take in the fascinating sight of the Northern Royal Albatross as it comes into nest on the spectacular cliffs of Taiaroa, Otago Peninsula. You'll also see eight other species of birds including sooty shearwaters and petrels as well as sea lions and fur seals and if you're lucky dolphins and whales.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Speights Brewery Tour

Founded in 1876, the Speights Brewery still occupies its original Dunedin site - with several of its buildings dating back to the late 1800's. One of the only remaining 'gravity breweries' in the world, this 60-minute tour explains its inner workings. There is an opportunity to taste six different beers as well as bottle, cap and brew your own personal Speights Gold Medal Ale - the brewery's flagship beer.

Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 6



Dunedin to Te Anau

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. 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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Te Anau Glowworm Caves with RealNZ

Begin your Te Anau Glowworm experience with a scenic cruise across Lake Te Anau on board the luxury catamaran, Luminosa, to the western side of the lake. On arrival, you'll enter the caves through Cavern House, where informative displays detail the history of this 12,000 year old underground network.

You'll then explore by limestone pathway while your guide points out hidden whirlpools, sculpted rock formations and a rushing underground waterfall. See a magical display of thousands of glowworms as you glide through the darkness in a small boat.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.



Day 7



Te Anau to Milford Sound and return to Te Anau

The road to Milford Sound offers some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery in the country. From crystal clear lakes and towering mountains to lush glacier formed meadows, this area is dramatic and unyielding. Stretch your legs on the Chasm Walk, a short stroll through native beech forest to see several powerful waterfalls. Continue on through the Homer Tunnel, an engineering marvel at 1219 metres long. Arriving into the village of Milford, you will be greeted with an amazing view of Mitre Peak. A day cruise into the heart of the sound is not to be missed.

You'll learn about how this magnificent area was formed and experience the wonder of the falls that line the Fiord before back-tracking the way you came.

Please note: Make sure to allow 2.5hrs to Milford Sound, this takes into account the current road works on the Milford Road.

Milford Sound Cruise with RealNZ

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. Informative, participative and relaxed, this is the perfect way to experience Milford Sound to the fullest.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Milford Premium Cruise with RealNZ

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord aboard the M.V Sinbad, an exclusive vessel for a premium experience. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. With a glass of bubbles on arrival and canapes provided throughout the journey, this is the perfect way to explore Milford Sound. At a capped capacity of 40 people and a roaming nature guide providing informative commentary throughout the extended cruise, this experience allows guests to enjoy the Fiord at a relaxing pace.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 8



Te Anau to Queenstown

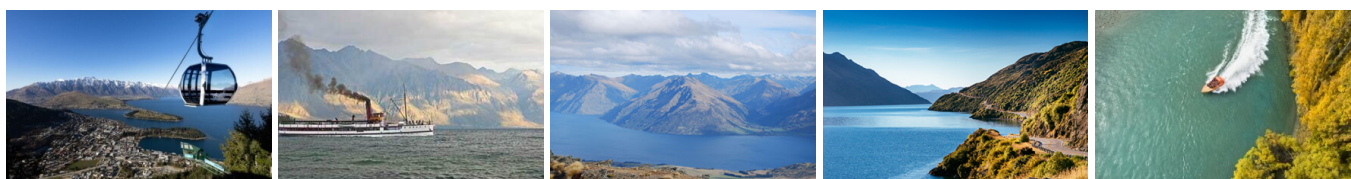
Today you'll cross vast tussock lands on your way to Queenstown. Pass through Mossburn, the deer capital of the nation. Continue on through the Southland countryside where the road begins to hug the lake edge and the Remarkables mountain range towers over your approach into the adventure capital of New Zealand.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its four star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 9



Explore Queenstown

Well-known as New Zealand's 'adventure capital', Queenstown is home to a range of adventures, from the world's first and most famous bungy jumps to jet boat thrills, white-water rafting, and skydiving. However, Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of beautiful 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. Take a stroll through the beautiful lakefront parks and gardens, browse through market stalls on weekends, dine in wonderful al-fresco restaurants, or ride on the 100-year-old historic Steamship - TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Take the Queenstown Gondola up to Bob's Peak and soak up the panoramic views of the magnificent lake and mountain ranges. And after all of that, if you do want the adrenaline rush, Queenstown is known for taking your pick from the Shotover Jet, Canyon Swing, Zipline, Luge, or Heli-ski.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shotover Canyon River Jet Boat Adventure

Riding the iconic 'Big Red' Jet Boat through the narrow Shotover Canyon is an exhilarating experience not to be missed. Your skilled jet boat driver pushes the boat to 85 kph, skimming across shallow water and past towering canyon walls. This 25 minute white water ride includes 360 degree spins and maximum thrills.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TSS Earnslaw cruise to Walter Peak including gourmet BBQ dinner and a farm tour

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 ambience 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, New Zealand cheeses, tea and coffee.

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Everything Queenstown Private Tour with Remarkable Scenic Tours

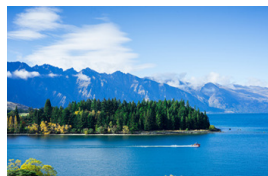
Visit Queenstown's most popular and iconic landmarks in this incredible private experience with Remarkables Scenic Tours. Take off with your guide and journey to Arrowtown to explore the Chinese Village, with time to explore the shops and relax. If you enjoy wine, get taken to a winery in the Gibbston Valley, Central Otago's premier wine region, stopping at the best photo locations along the way. Learn about history and culture, discover hidden gems and listen to captivating stories from your local and knowledgeable guide.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its four star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 10



Your final morning in Queenstown before driving to the airport and catching your next flight

Depending on when your flight departs you might have time for one last Queenstown adventure before dropping your car off at the airport and catching your flight.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	10
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Real Journeys Milford Sound Cruise

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Quest on Cambridge
Day 2	Quest on Cambridge
Day 3	Mt Cook Motel
Day 4	Motel on York
Day 5	Motel on York
Day 6	Lakefront Lodge
Day 7	Lakefront Lodge
Day 8	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 9	Scenic Suites Queenstown