

Southern Coast and Stewart Island Nature Tour



This loop of the lower South Island follows much of the spectacular coastline where wildlife abounds. In Dunedin you'll enjoy a full day encounter with the unique marine life that inhabits the Otago Peninsula before heading south along the wild Catlins coastline to the deep south. A real highlight of this tour is exploring the remote Stewart Island. As well as the iconic Milford Sound, you'll also venture into Mt Aspiring National Park on a Dart River Jetboat Safari from Queenstown. On the beautiful West Coast you'll marvel at the glaciers during your on-ice adventure, before crossing the Southern Alps on board the world famous Tranz Alpine Scenic Train back to Christchurch.



Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 16days / 15nights
 Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
 Can be customised: Yes



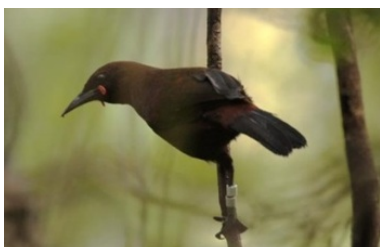
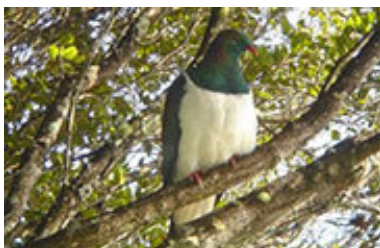
This itinerary can be customised to suit you perfectly. We can add more days, remove days, change accommodations, mix it up, add activities to suit your interests or simply design and create something from scratch. Call us today to get your custom New Zealand itinerary underway.



Inclusions:

- Includes: Late model rental cars
- Includes: Unlimited kms
- Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees
- Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)
- Included activity: Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation
- Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and picnic lunch with RealNZ
- Included activity: Dart River Wilderness Jet
- Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch
- Included activity: Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport
- Included activity: Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle
- Included activity: Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle
- Included activity: Ulva Island Explorer

- Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)
- Includes: GPS navigation
- Includes: Additional drivers
- Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand
- Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App
- Included activity: TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dining
- Included activity: Franz Josef Glacier Helihike with The Helicopter Line
- Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch Train Station to your accommodation
- Included activity: Akaroa Harbour Nature cruise
- Included activity: Castle to Cruise Tour and Penguin Place
- Included activity: Invercargill to Stewart Island with Stewart Island flights
- Included activity: Stewart Island to Invercargill with Stewart Island flights



plus much more...

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: Orari Apartments

Orari Bed and Breakfast offers elegant and inviting accommodation in the heart of Christchurch city. This heritage building has all the charm of a grand Victorian home, but with modern comforts providing for an enjoyable stay.



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.

Akaroa and The Banks Peninsula

Akaroa and the Banks Peninsula offers a great contrast to the South Island's largest city. An easy 1 1/2 hours drive from the city centre are rolling green hills, streams, golden sand beaches and small settlements that offer a unique insight into New Zealand's history and development plus, wineries, great cafes and restaurants and abundant wildlife.

Just on the other side of the Port Hills is Lyttelton, a busy port town that was crucial to the development of Christchurch and the Canterbury Plains. Following the road around the beautiful natural harbour the names, such as Magazine Bay, Battery Point, Corsair Point and Governors Bay, remind of the importance the navy placed on this harbour.

The Banks Peninsula is actually the remains of a long extinct volcano, the rim of which collapsed some time ago allowing the sea to flood into and create what is now the Akaroa Harbour. In 1840 French colonists settled in Akaroa in a bid to stake a claim for the South Island.

Unbeknown the British had already declared sovereignty and a long drawn out dispute ensued with the British eventually being given government. However the French stayed and made this stunning part of the South Pacific their home and still to this day the town boasts French street names and every year a French Festival is held.

The Harbour itself is teeming with wildlife and a nature cruise is a must do activity. One of the world's smallest and rarest dolphins, hectors dolphin, are often seen and cruises also offer excursions with the chance to swim amongst them.

Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise

Experience majestic scenery and stunning wildlife daily on a Black Cat Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise. You'll see the rare, native dolphin & the Hector's or New Zealand Dolphin. There's also the chance to spot the world's smallest penguin, the White Flipped Little Blue Penguin, Fur Seals and other sea birds.

Other cruise highlights are some majestic volcanic cliffs (including the impressive Cathedral Cave) and signs of Akaroa's fascinating past including early Maori, French and British settlements.

Your accommodation: Orari Apartments

Orari Bed and Breakfast offers elegant and inviting accommodation in the heart of Christchurch city. This heritage building has all the charm of a grand Victorian home, but with modern comforts providing for an enjoyable stay.

Meals included: Breakfast



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: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium

The Hermitage Hotel ringed by magnificent snow-capped peaks of the Southern Alps, is a world-renowned tourist destination and has been an icon of superior accommodation and dining since 1884.

Meals included: Breakfast



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 Omarama, 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.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

Your accommodation: Camp Estate at Larnach Castle

A luxurious country house built from blue stone and features a spectacular marble staircase. The modern rooms are all double glazed and the reception rooms are all heated by open fires and underfloor heating. Staying at Camp Estate includes entry to Larnach Castle and the grounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



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.

Castle to Cruise Tour and Penguin Place

Today you'll explore the wildlife and history of the Otago Peninsula. You'll be welcomed to the MV Monarch for a wildlife cruise around Taiaroa Head, home to the world's only mainland nesting site for royal albatross. Scattered along the rocks you'll also see New Zealand fur seals basking in the sun and possibly New Zealand sea lions on the beach. In the water you may also see penguins, dolphins and other marine birds. Back on land you'll take a guided tour of New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle built in 1871. Learn of the scandals and history of the castle and explore the beautiful garden of international significance. Your final stop of the day is to The Otago Peninsula Eco Restoration Alliance (formally Penguin Place), a natural nesting site for the rarest penguin in the world, the Yellow Eyed Penguin.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

Your accommodation: Camp Estate at Larnach Castle

A luxurious country house built from blue stone and features a spectacular marble staircase. The modern rooms are all double glazed and the reception rooms are all heated by open fires and underfloor heating. Staying at Camp Estate includes entry to Larnach Castle and the grounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 6



Dunedin to Invercargill via the Southern Scenic Route

The scenic route from Dunedin to Invercargill takes you via the Southern Scenic Route. Well signposted from Dunedin the route takes you along the rugged Otago coastline and its many secluded beaches and bays and many are great places to spot New Zealand fur seals and sea lions. At Nugget Point, penguins and elephant seals can also be spotted. Curio Bay is home to a 160 million year old fossilised forest. Get an early start for this drive as you can easily pass the whole day exploring the many attractions along the Southern Scenic Route.

Your accommodation: The Langlands

The Langlands Hotel is Invercargill's newest accommodation experience. This seven-storey, 4.5 star hotel brings contemporary style to the inner city. The interior is a subtle representation of Murihiku and boasts five eateries and bars, all with bespoke furniture, crafted menus and modern surroundings.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Invercargill to Stewart Island with Stewart Island flights

The first air transport to connect Stewart Island and the mainland was Stewart Island Air Service, operating an amphibian aircraft. The plane landed in the harbour and taxied up the beach to the local hotel. Twenty years ago this was succeeded by Southern Air Ltd with the establishment of an airstrip at Ryan's Creek. Today, Stewart Island Flights is a locally owned and operated business who maintain scheduled flights linking Stewart Island and Invercargill as well as a number of exciting alternatives providing access to the more remote reaches of the island. They operate two Britten Norman Islanders, two Piper Cherokee Six and one Cessna 185. As well as offering scheduled flights between Invercargill and Stewart Island scenic flights can also be arranged on demand to suit your schedule.

Stewart Island (Rakiura National Park)

Stewart Island is New Zealand's third largest island, approximately 75 kms long and 45 kms wide and separated from the South Island by the Foveaux Strait. The Island is relatively low lying and undulating with the highest point, Mt Anglem/Hananui just 981 metres high. The island is largely uninhabited and unmodified which led to 85% of the island being declared a national park in 2002, named Rakiura National Park. The name "Rakiura" is the Maori name for the island which means "Glowing Sky", apt as Stewart Island enjoys spectacular sunrises, sunsets and aurora. The island is mainly covered in native bush, with wetlands, sand dunes and a varied coastline from sandy beaches to sheer cliffs. The coastline is fringed with vegetation and bordered by crystal clear waters hosting an abundance of marine life, fantastic for fishing and wildlife watching.

Stewart Island is New Zealand's southernmost populated area, but has less than 400 residents who mostly live around Halfmoon Bay. With just 28km of roads and 280km of walking tracks, the island is all about appreciating the natural wilderness. Nearby Ulva Island is an idyllic, predator-free bird sanctuary for rare and endangered bird and plant species, a paradise for birds and bird lovers. The highlight for any visit to Stewart Island and Rakiura National Park is the isolation and the untouched, unspoilt wildlife and native bush.

Your accommodation: Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant

Fully hosted boutique lodge has three spacious, stand alone suites with full glass frontages and private decks maximising views of spectacular Halfmoon Bay where you can relax, unwind and soak up the panoramic views. Ideally located within easy walking distance of all amenities or if a retreat is what you are after all your needs can be met without leaving the lodge.



Day 8



Ulva Island Explorer

A leisurely cruise of beautiful Paterson Inlet and a guided walk in the renowned bird sanctuary of Ulva Island. The cruise showcases some stunning scenery including the hidden coves and unspoilt beaches of Paterson Inlet. The local guides are passionate about this area and provide informative commentary during the scenic cruise. While on board look out for fur seals and penguins – there are a lot of them around. At Ulva Island there's a 45 minute, easy guided walk. The island is a renowned wildlife sanctuary where many rare and endangered native species of birdlife and plants flourish in a predator free environment. Home to weka (native woodhen), bush robins, rare saddlebacks and yellowheads among other species. The tracks are well-formed and suitable for most ages and fitness levels and small group sizes make it highly personalised.

Includes Picnic Lunch.

Your accommodation: Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant

Fully hosted boutique lodge has three spacious, stand alone suites with full glass frontages and private decks maximising views of spectacular Halfmoon Bay where you can relax, unwind and soak up the panoramic views. Ideally located within easy walking distance of all amenities or if a retreat is what you are after all your needs can be met without leaving the lodge.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Stewart Island to Invercargill with Stewart Island flights

The first air transport to connect Stewart Island and the mainland was Stewart Island Air Service, operating an amphibian aircraft. The plane landed in the harbour and taxied up the beach to the local hotel. Twenty years ago this was succeeded by Southern Air Ltd with the establishment of an airstrip at Ryan's Creek. Today, Stewart Island Flights is a locally owned and operated business who maintain scheduled flights linking Stewart Island and Invercargill as well as a number of exciting alternatives providing access to the more remote reaches of the island. They operate two Britten Norman Islanders, two Piper Cherokee Six and one Cessna 185.

As well as offering scheduled flights between Invercargill and Stewart Island scenic flights can also be arranged on demand to suit your schedule.

Invercargill to Te Anau via Southern Scenic Route

Taking the Southern Scenic Route the drive from Invercargill to Te Anau passes through some wonderful and often overlooked regions of Southland. Riverton is Southland's oldest community established by whalers in the 1830's and many of the original cottages have survived throughout the town. The Riverton Early Settlers Museum tells the story well. Orepuki on the coast was once 'almost' a gold town but the fine dust proved too hard to extract commercially. You can still sometimes see gold dust in the beach sand at Monkey Bay. The early sawmilling settlement of Tautapere is next. Known as the 'hole in the bush' the town features an attractive domain. A little further north is the Clifden suspension bridge which dates back to 1899. The Blackmount Road offers some great side trips if you have the time and one in particular is the 50 kilometre round trip to Lake Haruoko, New Zealand's deepest lake. The Blackmount Road continues to the small township of Manapouri, the departure point for cruises to Doubtful Sound. Te Anau the gateway to Milford Sound is just a further 20 kilometres north.

Your accommodation: Te Anau Lodge

Te Anau Lodge began its existence as a Catholic convent in 1936 before being converted into a wonderful lodge. A beautiful Rimu wood interior awaits you and each of the 7 rooms house furniture made from stunning native woods.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



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: Te Anau Lodge

Te Anau Lodge began its existence as a Catholic convent in 1936 before being converted into a wonderful lodge. A beautiful Rimu wood interior awaits you and each of the 7 rooms house furniture made from stunning native woods.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 11



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.

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.

Your accommodation: The Dairy Private Hotel by Naumi

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



Dart River Wilderness Jet

Journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mt Aspiring National Park, where myth, heritage and fantasy come to life. As one of Queenstown's most exhilarating activities, the Wilderness Jet adventures on a spectacular journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mount Aspiring National Park.

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.

Your accommodation: The Dairy Private Hotel by Naumi

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 13



Queenstown to Franz Josef Glacier via Wanaka

From Queenstown you'll cross the Crown Range, the highest sealed road in New Zealand to arrive in the Alpine town of Wanaka, gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park. Skirting the shores of both Lake Wanaka and Hawea, you will enter the small town of Makarora. Stop at Blue Pools for a 1-hour return walk through the native beech forest to a glacier-fed swimming hole. Continue on through the remote seaside settlement of Haast before heading up the wild West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beaches occasionally. Paringa Salmon Farm is worth a stop to stretch your legs, feed the fish, and stop for lunch and refreshments. Keep heading North and be sure to enjoy the view of the ever-changing towering snowcapped Southern Alps Mountain Range. Fox Glacier welcomes you first, then comes your destination for the night Franz Josef township.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 14



Explore Franz Josef

Franz Josef is a small but lively town in the heart of the West Coast, known for its 12 km long glacier. Surrounded by lush rainforest-clad mountains the township has a vibrant and bustling atmosphere. To see the ice from a viewpoint you can walk along the valley floor to the viewpoint below the terminal face. However, to go on the glacier itself you must take a licensed helicopter tour.

Franz Josef Glacier Helihike with The Helicopter Line

Take a scenic flight over all three Franz Josef glacier icefalls. Landing high on the glacier take a two hour guided trip through some of the most beautiful terrain in the country. Your guide will choose the route as you go through a wonderland of blue ice and frozen pinnacles. You'll have endless views of the surrounding mountains and rainforest as well as plenty of opportunities to take photographs. Sure to be one of the most memorable experiences you have while you are in New Zealand. Should weather not be suitable to take this flight you are able to transfer your booking onto a similar tour on any of the Helicopter Line operations in Queenstown or Mt Cook.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 15



Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station

Today head north along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beach occasionally. Whataroa is the next town where you can see one of the world's rarest birds, the New Zealand white heron or Kotuku nest at the Waitangi Roto Nature Reserve, and guided tours from October to March will take you there.

Ross is the site of an old gold mining town and some of the old buildings and workings remain. In fact, Ross is still home to one of the few working gold mines left in New Zealand and the local information center offers you the chance to pan for gold.

Hokitika is a great place to explore craft and gift stores and head to the coast and take in the endless sea views. The Jade or Greenstone on offer in Hokitika is probably some of the best you will see in the country. The Hokitika Gorge is located 45 minutes inland and offers turquoise waters flowing through a narrow gorge. A great short walk will deliver you to this piece of paradise.

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. Drop your rental car at the Greymouth Train Station depot located at the train station building before boarding your train to Christchurch.

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. You'll 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.

Private Transfer Christchurch Train Station to your accommodation

On arrival at the Christchurch train station, you will be met by a private driver and transferred to your accommodation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TranzAlpine Scenic Plus Addon - KiwiRail

Feel like luxurious service, exclusive meals, inclusive drinks and priority check in and boarding? The Scenic Plus add-on option is for you. Enjoy personal service with panoramic windows, spacious carriages and comfortable seating. The exclusive open-air viewing carriage is available if you feel like capturing the ultimate photo or simply wish to experience the great outdoors whilst travelling through the Southern Alps. Your food is prepared exclusively in a kitchen carriage, with paired drinks and a paddock to plate regionally inspired food menu all your senses will be fully engaged on this journey.

Your accommodation: Orari Apartments

Orari Bed and Breakfast offers elegant and inviting accommodation in the heart of Christchurch city. This heritage building has all the charm of a grand Victorian home, but with modern comforts providing for an enjoyable stay.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 16



Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport

A private transfer will collect you from your accommodation and transfer you to Christchurch Airport in time for your departing flight.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	16
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	All breakfasts
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
Includes	Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise
Includes	Otago Peninsula Wildlife Premier tour including Larnach Castle
Includes	Dart River Wilderness Safari, Glenorchy
Includes	Real Journeys Milford Sound Cruise
Includes	Franz Josef Glacier Helihike
Includes	Return Stewart Island flights

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Orari Apartments
Day 2	Orari Apartments
Day 3	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium
Day 4	Camp Estate at Larnach Castle
Day 5	Camp Estate at Larnach Castle
Day 6	The Langlands
Day 7	Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant
Day 8	Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant
Day 9	Te Anau Lodge
Day 10	Te Anau Lodge
Day 11	The Dairy Private Hotel by Naumi
Day 12	The Dairy Private Hotel by Naumi
Day 13	Westwood Lodge
Day 14	Westwood Lodge
Day 15	Orari Apartments