



Fiords, Glaciers and Mountains self drive tour

This 10 day tour takes you to the icons of the South Island, with extra nights at The George Hotel in Christchurch, at Fiordland Lodge and Queenstown's Matakauri Lodge you'll have time to discover the charms of each destination. You begin with a journey past the mountains of the Southern Alps and turquoise waters of alpine lakes before arriving into Mt. Cook National Park. Next you venture further south to Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park. Here you'll explore the pristine wilderness on a Milford Sound nature cruise. In Queenstown, the Adventure Capital, there's time to enjoy the scenery and endless activities on offer before returning to Christchurch via the magnificent West Coast Glaciers.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 10days / 9nights
Accommodation: Luxury Lodges
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: Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport

Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and picnic lunch with RealNZ

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch Train Station to your accommodation

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: Fiordland Lodge

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

: 9 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 9 dinners

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 - Christchurch Triple Pass - Tram, Punting and Gondola

Experience three of Christchurch's iconic attractions in one day: the Christchurch Tram, Christchurch Gondola, and Punting on the Avon River. The historic tram is a delightful way to explore the evolving inner city, taking in the various sights with the hop-on hop-off pass and learning about the city from the live commentary. You'll also enjoy a bird's eye view of Christchurch and the Canterbury region including the distant peaks of the Southern Alps when you ride the gondola cableway to the top of the Port Hills in Heathcote Valley. Punting on the Avon River takes you through the city's green belt: a relaxing way to explore what is affectionately known as the 'Garden City'.

Your accommodation: The George Hotel

The George is the essence of supreme comfort. The award-winning 5 star hotel is opposite Hagley Park and just a few minutes stroll from the Botanic Gardens. It also has an award-winning restaurant, 50 Bistro onsite.

Meals included: Dinner



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 - Hot Air Balloon Ride

Escape to a world of peace and tranquillity. Hot Air Ballooning is a magical experience and a flight with Ballooning Canterbury offers panoramic views across the fertile Canterbury Plains to the Southern Alps. There is nothing quite so romantic and exciting as floating effortlessly over an ever changing landscape.

Before leaving the ground, the pilot will give you a briefing. During your flight you will experience spectacular views and have fantastic photo opportunities. Chilled champagne, orange juice and a light snack then be served. Hot air ballooning is a hands-on experience and you will be encouraged to assist with the setup and pack away of the balloon itself.

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 Lyttleton Harbour by way of the Sign of the Kiwi and Governors Bay to the Port of Lyttleton. The tour proceeds through the Lyttleton harbour tunnel to the seaside suburb of Sumner and cave rock before returning to the central city where the tour will conclude.

Your accommodation: The George Hotel

The George is the essence of supreme comfort. The award-winning 5 star hotel is opposite Hagley Park and just a few minutes stroll from the Botanic Gardens. It also has an award-winning restaurant, 50 Bistro onsite.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



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.

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus

Experience the best views in the park from the spacious top floor rooms of the magnificent Hermitage Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 4



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Te Anau

Twizel, just south of Aoraki Mt Cook was the location of many Lord of the Rings movie scenes and a little further on is Omarama, the gliding capital of New Zealand. Wrinkly Rams is a local cafe; with great coffee and fresh homemade food. The Lindis Pass is one of New Zealand's highest roads with the summit reaching 971 metres. The tussock covered hills offer an unusual contrast as you pass from the Mackenzie Basin and into Central Otago. The first Central Otago settlement you reach is the quaint village of Tarras, which has a number of boutique stores and a lovely cafe. A short drive, further along, is the historic and scenic Bendigo Reserve, which was one of Otago's original gold mining settlements. Well marked paths will guide you to the remains of stone cottages and other buildings from this bygone era. Cromwell sits at the head of the Kawarau Gorge and the historic old town is well worth the visit, the buildings are now home to quaint shops and cafes. The old town buildings were relocated from the valley that now sits deep under Lake Dunstan. Continue on through the sheer cliffs of the Kawarau Gorge as they guide you towards Gibbston, one of New Zealand's premier wine-growing regions. At the famous historic Kawarau Bridge, you can take a bungy jump or sit back and enjoy the drama as visitors hurtle off the bridge. Approaching Queenstown the impressive Remarkables mountain range comes into view and then beautiful Lake Wakatipu as you head south. The lake guides you into Southland through its rich farming pastures and into Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park.

Fiordland Lodge

Set on a superb site with commanding views out across Lake Te Anau this is a rural setting with rolling grass lands surrounding the Lodge, Lake Te Anau being a mere ten-minute walk away. Across the lake to the west lie the mountains of Fiordland National Park, an area of over three million acres of untouched wilderness and part of the much larger South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. The enjoyment of food and wine is integral to the experience on offer at Fiordland Lodge and the use of quality ingredients being seasonal and regional and largely organic are fundamental to their cuisine philosophy. Food is a focal point and you'll be hard pressed to find something on the menu that isn't homemade or locally grown. Fresh organic vegetables, greens, herbs and eggs are harvested daily from the huge onsite vegetable garden, so each season nature offers a new palette for the kitchen team to create dishes. A changing evening menu also means that you get to experience as much of New Zealand's wonderful food as possible. There are numerous activities available from Fiordland Lodge such as guided fly fishing and nature walks also the conservation gold sponsor experience where you will join a local volunteer to work on a conservation project for the day.

Your accommodation: Fiordland Lodge

Set in a World Heritage area Fiordland Lodge offers the discerning traveller comfort and privacy. The elegance and splendour of the Lodge is mirrored in the breathtaking views of Lake Te Anau and Fiordland. Private and serene, the Lodge is perfect for relaxation, or as a base for your Fiordland experience.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 5



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: Fiordland Lodge

Set in a World Heritage area Fiordland Lodge offers the discerning traveller comfort and privacy. The elegance and splendour of the Lodge is mirrored in the breathtaking views of Lake Te Anau and Fiordland. Private and serene, the Lodge is perfect for relaxation, or as a base for your Fiordland experience.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 6



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.

Matakauri Lodge

Spectacularly situated on Lake Wakatipu, Matakauri Lodge offers stunning panoramic views of the Remarkables, Cecil and Walter Peak mountain ranges. Just a short seven minute drive for the centre of Queenstown, Matakauri Lodge is a relaxing alpine retreat tucked into one of the world's most beautiful landscapes. The main lodge consists of a spacious lounge, dining and living areas complimented by large open fires. It also has a large patio, library and courtyard - all comfortable spaces to relax in. You can also take a swim in the pool or relax in the Jacuzzi, both offering spectacular views of the lake and mountainside.

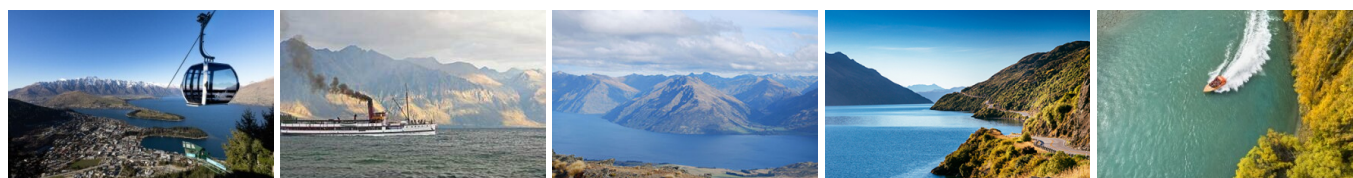
Your accommodation: Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown

Spectacularly situated on Lake Wakatipu, Matakauri Lodge offers stunning views from every angle of the Remarkable, Cecil and Walter Peak mountain ranges. Just seven minutes from Queenstown the lodge provides an alpine lakeside retreat nestled in one of the world's most serenely beautiful landscapes.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 7



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 - Ultimate Paradise Picnic Private Helicopter Flight with Heliworks

Relax and enjoy the beauty of Queenstown, as you are flown to a beautiful location on Cecil Peak for a gourmet picnic accompanied by wine or bubbles. The perfect opportunity to indulge!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Appellation Private Boutique Wine Tour

For the more discerning wine lover, or simply people who prefer the flexibility of a private tour. Join one of Appellation's senior wine guides on a wine tasting journey to some of New Zealand's most memorable vineyards, at your own pace. Your guides local knowledge and familiarity with the vineyards of Central Otago is at your disposal for an intimate half day wine experience in a thriving wine region. Packages are tailor made for you, and you are encouraged to advise of any varietal or vineyard preferences when booking.

The private boutique wine tour includes tastings at four vineyards, typically two in the Gibbston/Queenstown region and two in the Bannockburn/Cromwell region. You'll enjoy a delightful platter lunch at Carrick Winery with a glass of premium matched wine. You'll also explore the history and scenery of the region with a stroll through Old Cromwell Town and a stunning drive through the Kawarau Gorge. Tours last approximately 5 hours.

Your accommodation: Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown

Spectacularly situated on Lake Wakatipu, Matakauri Lodge offers stunning views from every angle of the Remarkable, Cecil and Walter Peak mountain ranges. Just seven minutes from Queenstown the lodge provides an alpine lakeside retreat nestled in one of the world's most serenely beautiful landscapes.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 8



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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

Take a spectacular scenic flight over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers. Land at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys. 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's operations in Queenstown or Mt Cook.

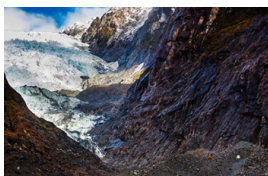
Your accommodation: Te Waonui Forest Retreat

Nestled amongst native West Coast rainforest at Franz Josef is a very special five-star retreat. Designed with utmost care of its precious environment, guests at Te Waonui Forest Retreat will find themselves encircled by rainforest and accommodated in natural and sustainable luxury.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 9



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.

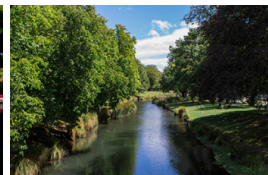
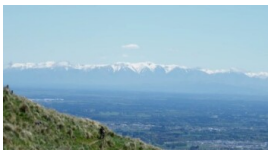
Your accommodation: The George Hotel

The George is the essence of supreme comfort. The award-winning 5 star hotel is opposite Hagley Park and just a few minutes stroll from the Botanic Gardens. It also has an award-winning restaurant, 50 Bistro onsite.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 10



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:	10
Accommodation:	Luxury Lodges
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	All dinners
Includes	All breakfasts
Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
Includes	Real Journeys Milford Sound Cruise

Accommodation summary

Day 1	The George Hotel
Day 2	The George Hotel
Day 3	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus
Day 4	Fiordland Lodge
Day 5	Fiordland Lodge
Day 6	Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown
Day 7	Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown
Day 8	Te Waonui Forest Retreat
Day 9	The George Hotel