



Fiords, Glaciers and Mountains Family Adventure - reversed

From Christchurch cross the Southern Alps on board the Tranz Alpine Scenic Train. Explore the magnificent glaciers and rainforest and enjoy a scenic helicopter flight with a snow landing. Continue south to the resort town of Queenstown for 3 nights. Enjoy a trip on the TSS Earnslaw crossing Lake Wakatipu, a Nomad Safari 4WD trip and a Shotover Jet Boat ride. A highlight is a full day trip to Doubtful Sound before you head north to Mt Cook National Park and the glacier lake. Your adventure ends with a relaxing visit to the French settlement of Akaroa, including a cruise on the beautiful Akaroa Harbour.



Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 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: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Shared Transfer from Christchurch CBD Accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring Company



Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Christchurch to Greymouth

Included activity: Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

Included activity: TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner

Included activity: Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise from Queenstown with RealNZ

Included activity: Lord of the Rings Queenstown Tour with Nomad Safaris

Included activity: Shotover Canyon Jet Boat Ride



Included activity: Glacier Explorers

Included activity: Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise with Black Cat

Day 1



Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

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

Welcome to Christchurch City

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 with Leisure Tours

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.

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 centre and to the Botanic Gardens.



Day 2



Shared Transfer from Christchurch CBD Accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring Company

You will be met by a driver at your Christchurch Accommodation and transferred to the railway station.

TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Christchurch to Greymouth

The early morning departure is rewarded with incredible scenery today onboard the TranzAlpine Scenic Train. Considered one of the world's great train journeys, it travels between the East Coast, Christchurch and the West Coast, Greymouth. From your carriage, you'll see the fields of the Canterbury Plains and farmland, followed by the spectacular gorges and river valleys of the Waimakariri River. The train then climbs into the Southern Alps passing through small settlements and Arthur's Pass National Park before descending through the lush beech rain forest to the West Coast town of Greymouth, a great base for visits to Punakaiki and the West Coast glaciers.

Collect Rental Car

This tour's from price includes an intermediate-sized vehicle, setting you up for comfortable travels. Yet, we understand every adventure is unique! Feel free to select the perfect wheels from our incredible collection of rental cars, spanning from economy hatchbacks to premium SUVs.

Greymouth to Franz Josef

Leaving Greymouth you will head south into Glacier Country. Pass through Hokitika and be sure to take a 50 minute detour to the spectacular Hokitika Gorge, the famous turquoise-coloured river surrounded by native bush-clad cliffs.

Continue on through Ross, a historic gold mining town where several buildings still remain intact and still to this day one of New Zealand's working gold mines. As you travel further down the coast you'll also go through Hari Hari, the town where Guy Menzies, the first person to fly solo over the Tasman crash landed. Heading south along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild west 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. Arriving in Franz Josef township is a lively place with a great atmosphere, restaurants including Blue Ice and Snakebite are worth a meal. This small town is packed with walks, adventure, and scenic activities, something for everyone.

Your accommodation: 58 on Cron Motel

58 on Cron is situated in the heart of Franz Josef. With snow-capped mountains as a backdrop and surrounded by some of New Zealand's most beautiful rainforests and glaciers, you can truly experience natural beauty, right from the front door of your cosy and comfortable room.



Day 3



Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

A spectacular scenic flight soaring over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers, Fox and Franz Josef. Landing at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys. It is important to read and understand the risks associated with this activity. A full risk disclosure can be found [here](#).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Okarito Lagoon Guided Kayak Trip (2 hours) with Okarito Kayaks

Kayaking is by far the best way to enjoy the flora, fauna, and scenic grandeur of New Zealand's largest unmodified coastal wetland. Previous experience is not necessary. Okarito Lagoon covers more than 3240 hectares of shallow open water and is well known for its outstanding bird life, including white heron and royal spoonbill. Exploring the open water and river channels that lead you deep into the heart of the rainforest is like stepping back in time to pre-European conditions and on a clear day you enjoy fantastic views of Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps. Your guide will take you to their favourite spots where you'll discover the flora, fauna, and history of the lagoon.

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Day 4



Franz Josef to Queenstown (via Wānaka)

Heading south you pass through the second glacier town of Fox Glacier before heading along the coast and into more classic West Coast bush scenery. We can recommend a stop at Knights Point Lookout elephant seals can often be seen basking on the sandy beaches at the far end of the point. Crossing the massive Haast River you turn inland and head into the valley climbing through mountains littered with waterfalls. The Haast Valley offers a spectacular view of the river and its enormous power. Along the way there is ample opportunity to admire Aspiring National Park and a stop at Roarig Billy Falls will leave you in awe. The Blue Pools near Makarora are a great 30-minute walk. The road from Makarora leads to Lakes Wānaka and Hāwea which will guide you into the stunning lakeside township of Wānaka before heading over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road and dropping into the Wakatipu basin, home to Queenstown. .

TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner

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 ambiance 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, or New Zealand cheeses. 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: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style and comfort, with a selection of rooms having spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 5



Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise from Queenstown with RealNZ

Journey aboard a luxury glass-roofed coach from Queenstown, travelling along Lake Wakatipu and the scenic countryside to Manapouri. From Pearl Harbour, enjoy a cruise across serene Lake Manapouri to West Arm, followed by a coach ride over the rainforest-clad Wilmot Pass with stops to admire the lush plant life and breathtaking views. At Pātea-Doubtful Sound, board the catamaran Commander Peak for a 3-hour cruise to the Tasman Sea, showcasing waterfalls, rainforests, and majestic mountains. Keep an eye out for fur seals, bottlenose dolphins, and seasonal Fiordland crested penguins. Enjoy insightful commentary and experience the tranquil 'Sound of Silence' on the return trip.

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Day 6



Lord of the Rings Queenstown Tour with Nomad Safaris

A thrilling Lord of the Rings Queenstown Safari, combining breathtaking filming locations with exhilarating 4WD action. Discover the magic of Middle-earth as expert guides bring Tolkien's world to life with fascinating facts and tales. Visit iconic sites like the Misty Mountains, the Pillars of the Kings (Argonath), and more. Travel along a historic gold mining road, try your hand at gold panning, and soak in spectacular panoramic views of Queenstown's stunning landscapes. A must for any Lord of the Rings fan and adventure seeker!

Shotover Jet Canyon Jet Boat Ride

Shotover Jet is the only company permitted to operate in the Shotover River Canyons. It's a thrilling ride! Skim past rocky outcrops at close range in your Shotover Jet 'Big Red', as you twist and turn through the narrow canyons at breathtaking speeds. And a major highlight - hold tight for the world-famous Shotover Jet full 360-degree spins! It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

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Day 7



Queenstown to Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Depart Queenstown and head through the Kawarau Gorge and over the historic Kawarau Bridge, a popular bungee jumping location. Choose to participate in this daredevil sport or watch others instead. Continue through Gibbston home to some of the best wines in the country. Follow the gorge to arrive in Cromwell, known for its many fruit orchards. Cromwell was completely submerged when the Clyde Dam was built and Lake Dunstan was established in 1992, the remnants of the old Cromwell town provide a unique snapshot into the history of this area. Head over through the Lindis Pass, one of New Zealand's highest roads, with the summit reaching 971 metres. Its tussock-covered hills are a barren but beautiful sight as you descend into the Mackenzie Basin. You'll go through the towns of Omarama and Twizel, the last stops before you arrive at Lake Pukaki and take the Aoraki-Mt Cook Highway to arrive in the small village

Glacier Explorers

Experience 500-year-old icebergs up close on the Aoraki-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: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel, nestled in the heart of Mt. Cook Village, offers spacious self-contained units that provide comfort and convenience. Each unit is surrounded by breathtaking alpine mountain views, making it the perfect retreat for nature lovers and adventurers alike.



Day 8



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Akaroa

Your first stop today should be the visitor centre on the southern shores of Lake Pukaki. As well as a great presentation detailing the formation of the region over thousands of years you are also often rewarded with uninterrupted views of over 50 kilometres to the peak of Aoraki Mt Cook. Lake Tekapo, the northern most of the large Southern Lakes also the reflective quality that Pukaki has making the waters a bright turquoise on certain days. This busy little township is home to some of the most photographed subjects in the country, the Church of the Good Shepherd and the Collie Dog statue. It's a great place to take a scenic flight, enjoy a guided horse trek, a boat trip on the pristine lake or just enjoy the magnificent views.

From here you descend from the high country through Burkes Pass and into rich farmland. Beautiful Valley guides you to the town of Geraldine before you cross the vast Canterbury Plains towards Akaroa and the Banks Peninsula.

The Banks Peninsula offers a great contrast to the South Island's largest city. Just around a 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.

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 itself 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.

Your accommodation: Criterion Motel

The Criterion Motel offers studio apartments with spectacular views over Akaroa Harbour. You're also just a short walk from the fantastic cafes and restaurants that Akaroa offers.



Day 9



Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise with Black Cat

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.

Akaroa to Christchurch (via Lyttelton)

Head to Christchurch today crossing the hills with spectacular views of the harbour. We recommend taking the slightly longer but much more scenic route around Lyttelton Harbour. Just turn at Gebbies Pass Road and follow the road as it passes by the bays named after the areas naval past such as Corsair and Governors Bay. Take the tunnel into the city.

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 centre and to the Botanic Gardens.



Day 10



Return Your Vehicle to Christchurch Airport

It's time to return your rental car and let the South Island journey come to an end. If time allows spend the day exploring more of Christchurch, we'd suggest a leisurely drive up the Port Hills for some great sites and then over to the harbour of Lyttleton, before circling through the tunnel and back to the airport to continue your journey home.

Farewell from Aotearoa / New Zealand

Bid farewell to Aotearoa / New Zealand, taking with you unforgettable memories of its breathtaking landscapes and incredible adventures. In Māori, it is said mā te wā, which is not goodbye, it is see you soon!

Tour details

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

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Quest on Cambridge
Day 2	58 on Cron Motel
Day 3	58 on Cron Motel
Day 4	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 5	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 6	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 7	Mt Cook Motel
Day 8	Criterion Motel
Day 9	Quest on Cambridge