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8 day Southern Alps to the Southern Lakes

This 8 day tour is great for those wanting to experience as much as they can on the journey from Christchurch to Queenstown. Begin with the renowned TranzAlpine scenic train, then there is time to explore the west coast glacier regions, the alpine towns of Wanaka and Queenstown and the breath taking Milford Sound. With plenty of family-friendly activities along they way, this tour has something for everyone!

Starts in:	Christchurch
Finishes in:	Queenstown
Length:	8days / 7nights
Accommodation:	Hotel 3 star
Can be customised:	Yes

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

Inclusions:

Includes: All coach transport

Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

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: Greymouth to Fox Glacier with Glacier Shuttles

Included activity: Fox Glacier to Wanaka with Glacier Shuttles

Included activity: Wanaka to Queenstown with Ritchies

Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included

Included activity: Private Transfer Queenstown Accommodation to Airport (LSQ)

7 breakfasts, 1 lunch

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.

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: Scenic Hotel Cotswold

The Scenic Hotel Cotswold is just a few minutes walk to boutique shopping at Merivale and Hagley Park. The distinctive architecture of the Scenic Hotel Cotswold reflects Christchurch's image as the most English of cities outside of England.

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.

Greymouth to Fox Glacier with Glacier Shuttles

You will be met at the Greymouth Train Station by a representative from Glacier Shuttles and driven to your accommodation in Fox Glacier.

Your accommodation: Heartland Hotel Glacier Country

Heartland Hotel Glacier Country is located right in the centre of Fox Glacier township, putting you in easy reach of the unique experiences available within Westland National Park.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 3

Fox Glacier

The mighty Fox Glacier is the largest and longest of the stunning West Coast glaciers. Remarkably, it ends in a temperate rainforest just 250 metres above sea level, only twelve kilometres from the sea. The valley at the glacier's head boasts more peaks than any other in New Zealand. Like all glaciers, the Fox Glacier advances and retreats, with its latest surge evident in the bulging lower ice fall. Alpine Guides offers access to the lower part of the glacier via a hidden track that winds through regenerating native forest, providing stunning views of the glacier's upper reaches. Fox Glacier Township, often described as the more "laid-back" of the twin Glacier Country townships, is celebrated for its relaxed atmosphere, excellent cafés, and a variety of accommodation options. The township also enjoys breathtaking views of New Zealand's tallest peaks, Mount Cook and Mount Tasman. For an unforgettable experience, take a helicopter ride to admire the glacier from above or opt for a heli hike to get up close to its icy formations. Nearby, Lake Matheson, renowned for its mirror-like reflections, is just a five-minute drive west of Fox Township. A short 25-minute drive further west takes you to historic Gillespie's Beach, famous for its crashing surf and views of distant snow-capped mountains.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Half Day Lake Matheson Eco Tour

Nature has combined three ingredients to create the stunning vista of Lake Matheson. Explore the crystal clear waters and learn about the flora, fauna, glaciation, geology, and natural history of this beautiful area. Enjoy the stunning Lake Matheson, where you'll walk the 3km gentle track that follows the lake edge. Along the way, you'll take in the reflective qualities of the lake and the surrounding lush rainforest, which make for fantastic photo opportunities.

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

Experience the breathtaking beauty of not one, but two spectacular glaciers—Fox Glacier and Franz Josef Glacier. Get up close to their stunning neve and intricate ice formations, with a snowfield landing that’s sure to be a highlight of your journey. Capture incredible photos, make a snowball, and create unforgettable memories during this 35-minute scenic flight with a snow landing. If weather conditions prevent your flight, your booking can be easily transferred to a similar tour with The Helicopter Line in Queenstown or Mt Cook. It is important to read and understand the risks associated with this activity. A full risk disclosure can be found here.

Your accommodation: Heartland Hotel Glacier Country

Heartland Hotel Glacier Country is located right in the centre of Fox Glacier township, putting you in easy reach of the unique experiences available within Westland National Park.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 4

Fox Glacier to Wanaka with Glacier Shuttles

Take the scenic Haast Pass through the Southern Alps, the southernmost pass between the East and West coasts of the South Island. See the clear and pristine waters of Lake Hawea as you travel east, arriving in the early afternoon in the charming lakeside town of Wanaka, a recreational paradise popular with jet boat, fishing and hiking fans as well as ski and snowboarders.

Your accommodation: Clearbrook Motel and Serviced Apartments

Clearbrook offers luxury apartment style and townhouse accommodation options and is located just metres from Wanaka's main street and its majestic lake front.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 5

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

Lying close to the centre of Lake Wanaka is Mou Waho Island Nature Reserve. A unique glacial remnant of the last ice age, the island is also the historic site of early shipbuilding and used to be a stopping place for the steamers and log rafts that once plied the lake. Accessible from Wanaka by a 35-minute boat cruise, the landing is on the eastern side of the island where the remnants of the early settlement remain; a stone wharf and a hut. A well-formed track leads from the landing and climbs steadily through native bush to near the top of Tyrwhitt Peak. Just before the top, we see Arethusa Pool, a small lake on the island with small islands in it - very intriguing! From the top, we have a sweeping 360-degree view of Lake Wanaka, its surrounding mountains and valleys, and below Arethusa Pool. The perfect spot to stop for tea or coffee. Going back down the track gives us more time to take in our surroundings, listening to and watching the lively bird-life, and just enjoying this unique wildlife reserve. You will feel well rewarded as you re-join the boat for the cruise back to Wanaka. Total cruise time is 1.5 hours. The trip runs subject to weather and lake conditions. Depending on the planting season, you can help The Reforestation of Mou Waho by planting a tree.

Wanaka to Queenstown with Ritchies

Leaving Wanaka you will travel to New Zealand's adventure capital, Queenstown.

Your accommodation: Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview

Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview is located on Frankton Road, the main arterial route into Queenstown - With the centre of town only a short 10-minute stroll away.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 6

Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included

Departing from Queenstown sit back and relax aboard a luxury glass-roofed coach to enjoy a relaxing trip along the shores of Lake Wakatipu and through the rolling countryside to Te Anau. The coach driver provides an informative commentary and plenty of photo opportunities. After a morning tea break in Te Anau, the coach continues along the spectacular Milford Road. On reaching Piopiotahi-Milford Sound, board your vessel for a leisurely cruise in the fiord. The cruise provides excellent viewing opportunities and plenty of time is available to enjoy waterfalls, rainforests, mountains and wildlife. Rain or shine, every day in Piopiotahi-Milford Sound will leave you in awe. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see here.

Your accommodation: Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview

Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview is located on Frankton Road, the main arterial route into Queenstown - With the centre of town only a short 10-minute stroll away.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 7

Explore Queenstown

Queenstown, known in Māori as Tāhuna is celebrated as New Zealand's ‘adventure capital'. Though Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of 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. Whether you are looking for a scenic short walk or a longer one, you will find the perfect hike or bike trail in Queenstown. Explore Queenstown Gardens, or try out more challenging trails up to Ben Lomond Walkaway or Queenstown Hill Walking Track. Enjoy iconic views and take Queenstown Gondola up 450 metres to Bob's Peak, or ride on the 100-year-old Steamship - the TSS Earnslaw - to Walter Peak Station for dinner and a farm tour. Browse the waterfront cafes and al fresco restaurants, try out the famous Fergburger, or grab a dessert at Patagonia Chocolates.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Appellation Boutique Wine Tour

Experience a tasting journey through three of Central Otago’s incredibly scenic and varying wine sub-regions; Gibbston, Bannockburn and Cromwell. Visit three boutique vineyards, tasting their unique cool climate wines and discover why the Central Otago region has become world-renowned in its own right. Indulge at a fourth vineyard restaurant for a platter-style lunch, savouring the finest and freshest produce, accompanied with a wine flight.
There will also be an opportunity to retrace history when you stroll through the charming historical settlement of Old Cromwell.

Your accommodation: Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview

Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview is located on Frankton Road, the main arterial route into Queenstown - With the centre of town only a short 10-minute stroll away.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 8

Private Transfer Queenstown Accommodation to Airport (LSQ)

You will be collected from your hotel and transferred to Queenstown airport to meet your flight.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Independant Bus & Coach
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	8
Accomodation:	Hotel 3 star
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Scenic Hotel Cotswold
Day 2	Heartland Hotel Glacier Country
Day 3	Heartland Hotel Glacier Country
Day 4	Clearbrook Motel and Serviced Apartments
Day 5	Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview
Day 6	Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview
Day 7	Copthorne Hotel & Apartments Queenstown Lakeview