



Southern Splendor & Sights Tour

Explore Christchurch, the largest city in the Canterbury region and adventure to Akaroa on the Banks Peninsula where you will enjoy a Harbour Cruise. Akaroa is home to the Hector's dolphin, one of the world's smallest and rarest species, as well as lots of birdlife. Travelling to Aoraki Mt Cook, pass farmlands and fields, and watch the Southern Alps get closer. Drive through the township of Lake Tekapo, and compare its brilliant turquoise waters with that of Lake Pukaki at the Mackenzie Basin. Approaching Mt Cook Village, view the magnificent 3,724-metre-high Aoraki/Mt Cook. Enjoy a boat ride on Tasman Lake where you can touch large icebergs which have broken off the Tasman Glacier, the longest Glacier in New Zealand. Continue your journey to Queenstown, the 'Adventure Capital of New Zealand' and simmer down in an onsen hot pool before your free day to explore. On your way through Wanaka to Franz Josef on the West Coast, stop in Cardrona and indulge your senses with a tour through the picturesque Cardrona Distillery. Explore lush rainforests, glaciers and mountains in Franz before completing your holiday with an epic train journey on the TranzAlpine back to Christchurch.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 9days / 8nights
Accommodation: Hotel 4 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: 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: Akaroa Day Tour and Harbour Nature Cruise with Leisure Tours

Included activity: Outdoor Onsen Evening Session with Onsen Hot Pools

Included activity: Māwhera Pā with Pounamu Pathway

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch Train Station to your accommodation

: 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch

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: Glacier Explorers

Included activity: Cardrona Distillery Classic Tour

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Included activity: Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Airport

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 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 Mayfair Christchurch

Offering a fresh take on modern luxury, The Mayfair is a premier boutique hotel experience unlike any other in Christchurch. The Mayfair blends thoughtful design and attentive service to create a relaxed, modern environment that taps into the regenerative spirit of the central city.



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 Day Tour and Harbour Nature Cruise with Leisure Tours

Enjoy a full day tour to Akaroa with Canterbury Leisure Tours. You will travel the scenic route to Akaroa via Governors Bay, Gebbies Pass, Lake Forsyth and Little River. Stop for spectacular views over the Akaroa Harbour. You'll then take a two hour cruise through Akaroa Harbour for a chance to see this quaint french settlement from the sea as well as dolphins, penguins and seals. On the return journey to Christchurch you will visit the cheese factory at Barry's Bay and sample some of New Zealand's finest cheese.

Lunch at the popular waterfront restaurant 'Bully Hayes' is included offering a wide choice of New Zealand cuisine.

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Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



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.

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 Queenstown

Leaving the alpine region of Aoraki Mt Cook, you'll travel through the lakeside town of Twizel, then a little further to Omarama the gliding capital of New Zealand. Continue on over the Lindis Pass, one of New Zealand's highest roads with a summit of 971 metres. Arrive in the quaint village of Tarras, then continue on a short way to the historic Bendigo Reserve, one of Otago's original gold mining settlements.

Follow the road to Cromwell, and keep going through the sheer cliffs of the Kawarau Gorge towards Gibbston, one of New Zealand's premier wine growing regions. See the historic Kawarau Bridge where you can bungy jump or relax and watch others take the plunge. Approaching Queenstown, the Remarkables mountain range comes into view as you arrive into the adventure capital of New Zealand.

Outdoor Onsen Evening Session with Onsen Hot Pools

Enjoy the most memorable experience in Queenstown and surround yourself with a sky of stars and 14 Japanese lanterns as you soak up the warm waters of the Onsen Hot Pools. Nestled high on a cliffside overlooking the magnificent Shotover River canyon, providing views over the breathtaking alpine scenery and the perfect vantage point to watch the Shotover Jet boats on the river below. The idyllic cedar-lined hot tubs have long been a highlight for Queenstown visitors and locals alike. A unique kiwi twist on a Japanese tradition, these exclusive use pools are filled with pure water from the surrounding mountains which is heated to approx. 38.3 degrees. Ideal for individuals or groups of up to 4 people, all guests receive towels plus a complimentary drink and snack to enjoy during your rejuvenating soak.

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.

Your accommodation: Heritage Queenstown

At the Heritage Hotel Queenstown, you could be forgiven for thinking you were in a postcard. Soak in the amazing view of the towering Remarkables mountain range rising from Lake Wakatipu from the comfort of the hotel. Crafted from centuries-old schist stone and cedar, this sophisticated Queenstown hotel is the perfect base to explore the adventure capital.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



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 - Dart River Safaris Funyaks

The best way to see, touch and feel the breathtaking Dart River valley. Jet boat for 1½ hours to the upper reaches of the Dart River, where visitors disembark and inflate their own canoe. After a full safety and paddling instruction, your Funyak journey begins. Paddle downstream on a glacier-fed river amidst rocky peaks and dense rainforests. Enjoy a sumptuous lunch and explore the Rock Burn Chasm and ancient beech forests. Paddle to Paradise then transfer to an awaiting back road coach for the return trip through Paradise. Funyaks is suitable for most ages with average fitness and no previous experience is required.

Your accommodation: Heritage Queenstown

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



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.

Cardrona Distillery Classic Tour

The tour includes a journey through the working distillery and barrelhouse and finishes with a tutored tasting of Cardrona Distillery's artisan spirits.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier

Only a breath away from the Franz Josef Glacier, Scenic Hotel is located in the heart of Franz Josef Village. Here you will find all of the amenities you would expect, as well as being close to the shops, restaurants and activities on offer in the beautiful Westland region.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Flying Fox - Fox Glacier Helihike with Fox Glacier Guiding

The fly-in, fly-out Helihike combines the excitement of walking on the Fox Glacier with the thrill of helicopter flights. By flying in you are able to access and explore a part of the glacier that is otherwise very difficult to get to. It is here, shunted between two ice falls, that the awesome glacier forces work hardest and often create spectacular ice caves and arches. Equipped with sturdy leather boots, you board the helicopter for your first flight over the awe-inspiring pillars of the lower icefall. Here, the steep ice is in constant motion. You then circle the marvellous upper icefall and the Victoria Falls before landing. Your remote landing site on the ice is an exceptionally beautiful part of the glacier. At this stage, you are outfitted with instep crampons, specially designed by Alpine Guides for these ice conditions and you follow the ice steps cut by the guides as you explore the beautiful formations and ice caves which are seen only here. This trip offers wonderful photographic opportunities. Each departure is a true voyage of exploration; there are so many changing features that the guides always find something new. Ice time, weather permitting, is about 2.5 hours. Please note that ice features change all the time and no guarantee of specific features can be made.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Okarito Lagoon Guided Kayak Trip

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.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier

Only a breath away from the Franz Josef Glacier, Scenic Hotel is located in the heart of Franz Josef Village. Here you will find all of the amenities you would expect, as well as being close to the shops, restaurants and activities on offer in the beautiful Westland region.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



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. Whararoa 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.

Return your rental car

Return your rental vehicle to your designated depot before your next adventure.

Māwhera Pā with Pounamu Pathway

Māwhera Pā in Greymouth is the first location along the Pounamu Pathway touring route to open. This self-guided experience is a historical and creative exploration of the Poutini Ngāi Tahu and the Māwhera Pā settlement people, retold by their ancestors. The exhibition will lead you through six different narratives, each tale including a large-scale masterpiece, artistically crafted by Weta Workshop to cultivate an immersive journey of visuals and sound.

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: The Mayfair Christchurch

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



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:	9
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	All breakfasts
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch

Accommodation summary

Day 1	The Mayfair Christchurch
Day 2	The Mayfair Christchurch
Day 3	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium
Day 4	Heritage Queenstown
Day 5	Heritage Queenstown
Day 6	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier
Day 7	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier
Day 8	The Mayfair Christchurch