

Explore Wanaka and Cardrona Alpine Resort

This winter head for the locals favourite – the alpine village of Wanaka. Base yourself in a centrally located accommodation and from here you've got the best skiing at Cardrona. On your days off the mountain, head out for a hike around the lake, or maybe enjoy a cruise to Mou Waho, a unique island sanctuary nestled in the heart of Lake Wanaka.

Starts in: Queenstown
 Finishes in: Queenstown
 Length: 6days / 5nights
 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: Cardrona & Treble Cone - 3 Day Lift Pass and Rental Package with 5 Day Window

Day 1



Queenstown

Queenstown known in Māori as Tāhuna, is home to many adrenaline-inducing activities. Nestled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, this alpine town has very distinct seasons, and most adrenaline-filled activities can be accessed year-round. Queenstown is home to jet boating, bungee jumping, rafting, skydiving, paragliding, and even indoor thrills. If you want that rush - head out on the Shotover Jet, dive off the Nevis Bungy, freefall on the Canyon Swing, or Zip line the Gondola. While arguably the brightest gem in New Zealand's crown, Queenstown offers far more than an action-packed getaway. If you're looking for a slightly slower pace, there are plenty of recreational activities, including hiking and biking trails to explore, guided tours, boat cruises, scenic flights, or spa and wellness options to help you get away. Head to the lakefront, eat at one of the al fresco eateries, and soak up the local vibes; catch a ride on the iconic 100-year-old steamship the TSS Earnslaw; or take the Skyline Gondola and enjoy bird's-eye views of the Remarkables mountain ranges and Lake Wakatipu. Pack a picnic and go for a hike, only 20 minutes from Central Queenstown, Coronet Peak opens for summer sightseeing. You can ride the Peak Gondola to the top for panoramic views and hike the trails, or go for a bike ride on many excellent biking trails. In winter, Queenstown becomes a world-class winter resort, with four ski areas and a range of activities, bars, restaurants, and ways to relax and unwind.

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.

Queenstown to Wanaka

Leaving Queenstown you head over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road before dropping into Wanaka. During winter months the Crown Range Road experiences alpine conditions, so you need to be prepared before driving this road. As it is New Zealand's highest sealed road it can be prone to ice and snow. There are many signs advising the road conditions so take notice of these or ask locally if the road is fine to be driven that day. The alternative route via the Kawarau Gorge (State Highway 6) is just 20 minutes longer. The golden rule is check and drive to the conditions. If you have snow chains with your rental vehicle please make sure you know how to fit them.

Wānaka

Nestled on the shores of one of New Zealand's largest lakes and framed by the stunning Southern Alps. Wānaka is an alpine village that perfectly blends adventure, breathtaking scenery, and a laid-back vibe. In winter, Wānaka transforms into a bustling hub as snow sports enthusiasts flock to its renowned ski fields, Treble Cone and Cardrona, as well as cross-country at Snow Farm. As the gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park, it offers endless opportunities for hikers, with trails winding through remote wilderness, majestic peaks, and serene river valleys. Closer to town, you'll find a network of scenic walking tracks, such as the popular Mount Iron Track, and from the lakefront, it is a short walk to "That Wanaka Tree". For thrill-seekers, Wānaka is an adrenaline playground, offering skydiving, paragliding, downhill biking, rock climbing, and jet boating.

Arrive into Wanaka and collect your lift pass

Wanaka offers more than just incredible skiing – spectacular scenery, thrilling adventures, and endless activities await. Beyond the slopes, a diverse selection of cafes and restaurants provide the perfect place to unwind and recharge after each action-packed day. Pick up your pass today from the Cardrona x Treble Cone Wanaka Office and save valuable time tomorrow! Skip the morning lines and head straight to the slopes for more skiing and riding.

Your accommodation: The Moorings Wanaka

The Moorings Apartments are just 5 minutes' from Wanaka's town centre and offer lakeside accommodation with open views of the mountains and stunning Lake Wanaka. It's an easy walk to the bustling main street of Wanaka or take a stroll around the lake.



Day 2



Wanaka to Cardrona Ski Field

Make your way to the Cardrona Ski Field, passing through the beautiful Cardrona Valley. The 14km Cardrona mountain road is unsealed and offers three parking areas near the base building. For those looking for a slightly shorter drive, the Valley View car park is available before the summit, though access is only recommended for intermediate skiers. For your safety, it's essential to carry tire chains at all times when driving on mountain roads, as weather and road conditions can change rapidly.

You may like to consider riding the free mountain shuttles. Ideal for those unfamiliar with mountain roads, looking to save on fuel, or simply wanting a relaxing ride, the shuttles require no bookings. Park at the designated lot located approx. 1km from the base of the mountain road and hop on the next available shuttle.

Cardrona & Treble Cone - 3 Day Lift Pass and Rental Package with 5 Day Window

Cardrona is New Zealand's fun and family-friendly ski resort with the most reliable snow conditions in the region. Its high elevation and southerly aspect mean dry natural snow is plentiful, which is further enhanced by snowmaking facilities. Cardrona is the perfect place for beginners and intermediates, with NZ's only combined gondola chairlift, easy-to-use surface lifts, specialised beginner packages and plenty of wide open trails spread over three basins. If you're up for a challenge, you'll find it in Arcadia, with secret powder stashes, chutes and cliff drops.

This pass also allows access to Treble Cone Ski Field, the largest ski area in NZ's South Island. It is famous for its long, uncrowded groomed runs, legendary off-piste terrain and unrivalled views over Lake Wanaka and the Southern Alps. Located just a 35-minute scenic drive from Wanaka and a 90 minute drive from Queenstown via the Crown Range road.

Wanaka Self-guided Short Walks - Suggested Activity

Waterfall Creek Track

A must when you visit Wanaka, the track starts from the west end of Roys Bay and soon reaches Wānaka Station Park, a beautiful picnic area, on the left. The track then winds along the lake's western shores for superb views and a great photo opportunity at the famous 'Wānaka Tree'. The trail then passes Edgewater and Rippon Vineyard – where a cellar door and wine tastings are available – and on to Waterfall Creek with views of Ruby Island.

Distance: 2.5km Completion Time: 1 hour

Outlet Track

This is a local favourite as it is an easy walk suitable for all ages and abilities. It begins from Wanaka town centre and takes you around picturesque Lake Wanaka to the outlet to the Clutha River and on to Albert Town. This track can also be explored by bike.

Distance: 3 km one way. Completion Time: 1 hour one way.

Mount Iron Track

This very popular, close-to-Wanaka-town loop walk suits all ages and abilities and offers great views of Lake Hawea from the summit.

Distance: 4.5 km. Completion Time: 1.5 hours.

Diamond Lake and Rocky Mountain Tracks

These two excellent walks in the Diamond Lake Conservation Area give wonderful views of the surrounding alps and Lake Wanaka.

Distance: 2km - 7 km depending on the trail. Completion Time: 45 minutes - 3 hours depending on the trail.

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Day 3



Second Day at Cardrona Alpine Resort

With your legs warmed up and your bearings found, it's time to explore even more of what this fantastic resort has to offer. Perhaps you'll challenge yourself on the steeper runs off the summit, seeking out fresh lines and breathtaking views. Or if cruising is more your style, discover the long, flowing groomers that Cardrona is famous for, perfecting your technique and soaking in the stunning alpine scenery. Set over 615 hectares with 20% beginner, 25% intermediate, 30% advanced, and 25% expert terrain, there is definitely something to suit all abilities. With 5 lifts spread over 4 basins, there is plenty to explore. Cardrona also offers parks and pipes of different levels for those that enjoy jumps and freestyle fun.

Cinema Paradiso - Suggested Activity

Feel like a relaxing night, take yourself to the movies, Cinema Paradiso is not your average cinema. A classic movie theatre with comfy old sofas, an old Morris Minor car, and a cafe & bar serving delicious meals before, during, or after the movie. A great option for days when the weather is not so great up the ski field, especially for families! Paradiso provides a novel experience - they even have a half-time intermission where you can get homemade ice cream, a hot chocolate, or a freshly baked cookie! Tickets can be purchased at your own expense at the cinema prior to the session or up to a few days before the movie you wish to see. The seating is unallocated, so if you arrive early you get the pick of the couches, chairs, and cinema seating.

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Day 4



Explore the winter wonderland of Wanaka

Explore what else Wanaka has to offer, including a range of cafes, bars, and restaurants to enjoy, miles of scenic walking and biking tracks, vineyards and distilleries to visit, and if you are looking for something indoors experience Puzzling World, Transport and Toy Museum or the Base Indoor Climbing Wall. If you still want to be skiing and your legs can handle it then book heli-skiing as it's one of the most breathtaking places to do it in the world.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Puzzling World Great Maze and Illusion Rooms

Puzzling World is a world unique attraction specialising in puzzling eccentricity. For over 35 years this remarkable business has entertained and amazed visitors of all ages. Offering the world's first "modern-styled" Great Maze, incredible Illusion Rooms, a Puzzle Centre/Cafe and eccentric architecture and oddities. Each remarkable illusion room is an illusion in its own right. On entering you pass through the Hologram Hall. As there is nothing quite like this in the world we can only assure you that you will find the collection of amazing 3-D holograms fascinating! Carry on into the Ames Forced Perspective Room. The technique of this illusion was used in The Lord of the Rings film to create tall people and little people. Move on into the Hall of Following Faces illusion room where 168 giant models of famous faces seem to turn and follow you around the room. This illusion room offers visitors a world unique encounter of being followed left and right, up and down by some very illustrious company. The newest room, the Sculptillusion Room is themed around an illusionary sculpture garden, the gallery invites visitors to wander around the various larger-than-life exhibits that showcase visual trickery at its best. Featuring over 20 large sculptures, artworks and displays the building itself offers illusionary aspects within its design. From Living Walls, wave ceilings, stone carpet and hanging waterfalls the visitor is met with stunning creations from some of NZ's finest artists. All of this is located in the heart of the breathtaking Southern Lakes region of the South Island of New Zealand, set amongst 7 acres of rolling lawns, trees and gardens.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Mou Waho Cruise & Scenic Walk with Lake Wanaka Cruises

Enjoy a boat cruise on the crystal clear waters of Lake Wanaka to the remote Mou Waho Island nature reserve, home of the lake, on an island, in a lake (on an island in an ocean). Mou Waho Island is a predator-free Department of Conservation reserve and home to many native birds rarely seen on mainland NZ. Here you can see first-hand results of conservation efforts including the rare flightless Buff Weka (extinct on the mainland since 1920), the wood pigeon and the native falcon. A one hour guided bush walk will take guests up to a natural glacial formed lake right on top of the island and magnificent mountain and lake scenery in every direction.

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Day 5



Third Day at Cardrona Alpine Resort

Keep an eye out for the terrain parks and decide if today's the day to try a new trick or two. With so much to explore, your day at Cardrona promises even more fun, adventure, and unforgettable moments on the snow. Don't forget to stop for a warming hot chocolate at one of the mountain cafes and share stories of your ski adventures with fellow snow enthusiasts.

Started in the 1970s Cardrona ski field is the dream child of the Lees, a local farming family. In 1978, they installed the first tow rope on the mountain and added an access road with a suitable gradient for even a bus to travel along. The field went from strength to strength with the introduction of the fields first snow groomer in 1981 and double chair lift in 1983. By the end of the 80s snowboarders had also caught on that there was fun to be had and the county's first international halfpipe was built above the learners' area. Since then Cardrona ski field has gone from strength to strength and is opening up more terrain all the time.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

Cardrona Hotel

If you feel like spoiling yourself and learning about the area's history we recommend taking yourself out for lunch or dinner at The Cardrona Hotel, one of New Zealand's oldest and most iconic hotels which sits between Queenstown and Wānaka on the stunning Crown Range Road. Nestled in a beautiful mountain valley, the town of Cardrona boasts a rich and vibrant history: settled in the 1860s as hundreds of hopeful prospectors flooded into the valley chasing gold, the Cardrona Hotel was one of four hotels quickly established to offer accommodation, food, livery services and a coaching-stop for miners and travellers. With the short-lived gold mining boom beginning to wind down in the late 1800s, the area quietened down, with the Cardrona Hotel eventually becoming the sole remaining hotel in the valley. In more recent times the township of Cardrona has seen a resurgence in visitors, people clamouring to get a taste of old the old town feel, stopping in for a pint or delicious meal and a few fantastic photo opportunities in the quaint village that harkens back to a time of hope, gold and good fortune.

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Day 6



Wanaka to Queenstown

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Return your vehicle to Queenstown Airport

Explore more of Queenstown before dropping your rental car at the airport depot and continuing your onward journey.

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: Queenstown
Finishes: Queenstown
Tour length: 6
Accommodation: Motels
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary

Day 1 The Moorings Wanaka
Day 2 The Moorings Wanaka
Day 3 The Moorings Wanaka
Day 4 The Moorings Wanaka
Day 5 The Moorings Wanaka