Fiona Donaldson - Personal Travel Manager
0403868746
www.travelmanagers.com.au/ptm/FionaDonaldson/

Top of the South Food and Wine Tour

Visit the less explored upper South Island, home to amazing wildlife, including whales in Kaikoura. In Blenheim, you'll sample the region's best known export, the Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc before heading to Nelson, famous for its craft beer and artistic vibes. You return to Christchurch via Nelson Lakes National Park, an amazing place to discover natural New Zealand.

Starts in:	Christchurch
Finishes in:	Christchurch
Length:	7days / 6nights
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: Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura
Included activity: Pelorus Mail Boat

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

Welcome to Ōtautahi / Christchurch, the South Island’s garden city, where historic heritage meets contemporary urban design. Whether you’re exploring the Avon River, wandering through expansive botanical gardens, or discovering contemporary art galleries, Christchurch offers plenty to uncover. As the gateway to the Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps, the city is also the perfect base for refined farm-to-table dining, scenic adventures, and alpine escapes

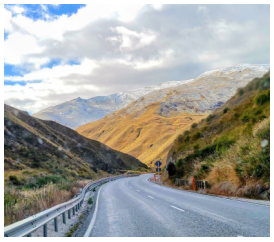
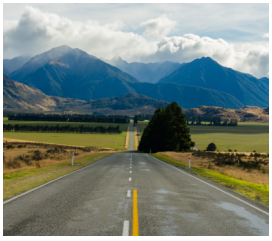
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Your accommodation: Merivale Manor

Originally built in the 1880's, Merivale Manor has been transformed into elegant motel and apartment accommodation. Less than 200 metres to central Merivale with its premier shopping, restaurants, cafes and bars.



Day 2




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.

Christchurch to Kaikoura

The drive north from Christchurch to Kaikoura takes you through the rolling hills of North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley. Allow time for a detour and visit Hanmer Springs for a dip in the mineral hot pools. Continue on and cross the Hawkswood Range before descending to the spectacular Kaikoura coastline - where the road hugs the ocean for the last leg of the drive.

Your accommodation: The White Morph, Kaikōura

Set on the Esplanade in Kaikōura, The White Morph enjoys commanding views of the ocean and mountains. Just a 10-minute walk into town, The White Morph has been beautifully placed so that you can take in the spectacular scenery of Kaikoura while enjoying the variety of attractions on offer.



Day 3




Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura

Experience New Zealand's only marine-based whale-watching company. Whale Watch Kaikōura offers a once-in-a-lifetime, up-close encounter with the giant Sperm Whale. You are also likely to encounter New Zealand fur seals, dolphins, and albatross. Depending on the season you may also see Pilot, Blue, and Southern Right whales as well as migrating humpbacks. Often orcas can be spotted here and the world's smallest dolphin, the Hectors, occasionally makes an appearance.

Kaikoura to Blenheim

Heading north from Kaikoura, the road hugs the shore for approximately 50 kilometres and offers many opportunities to view the native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. One of the best seal watching locations is Ohau Point (25km north of Kaikoura), where you can observe the adults on the shoreline and the pups frolicking in the waterfall, just a short walk from the road (signposted). As you drive you will have turquoise waters of the South Pacific Ocean to your east and to the west the towering Kaikoura Ranges. Crossing the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges you head towards Marlborough, New Zealand's largest wine producing region. Blenheim sits right at the heart of Marlborough and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Blenheim

In a quiet location and close to town, Bella Vista Motel is in the heart of Blenheim. Surrounded by the world-famous Marlborough wine growing area and just a few minutes walk from a wide variety of restaurants and bars.



Day 4







Blenheim

Surrounded by endless rows of vines, Blenheim lies at the heart of the Marlborough wine region. This charming, compact town is built around a traditional marketplace, offering a welcoming atmosphere and a taste of local life. With a fantastic selection of cafés, restaurants, and shops, it’s the perfect place to unwind for an afternoon. The town is also home to the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre, which houses Peter Jackson's Great War collection, complete with mannequins by Weta Workshop.
Of course, no visit to the region would be complete without sampling its world-class wines at the many renowned wineries.

Blenheim to Havelock

A short drive north from Blenheim to you reach Havelock. The small port town of Havelock has a great variety of cafes and restaurants to choose from so it's a great place to stop for lunch.

Pelorus Mail Boat

Join the world famous Pelorus Mail Run in the Marlborough Sounds and visit isolated homesteads nestled in quiet secluded bays, delivering crucial supplies and mail the same way it has been done for decades. View mussel farms and see why Pelorus Sound is the mussel capital of the world. Old timers row out in dinghies to meet the boat, while some receive their supplies on tiny, unspoilt beaches. Mail was first delivered to the Marlborough Sounds by Government Steamer in 1912. The Steamer put the mail ashore at various small Post Offices throughout the area and the residents had to row to these points to pick their mail up. In 1925 the Government decided to put the Service out to Private Operators and the Mail Run, as it is today, was born. In the early years most of the goods carried were farming supplies and a few tourists. These days as most of the farms have ceased operating, tourists are the only passengers as well as the mail.

Havelock to Blenheim

From Havelock you follow the valley south towards Blenheim and wine growing region of Marlborough. The town of Blenheim sits right at the heart of the New Zealand's largest wine producing region, Marlborough, and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Blenheim

In a quiet location and close to town, Bella Vista Motel is in the heart of Blenheim. Surrounded by the world-famous Marlborough wine growing area and just a few minutes walk from a wide variety of restaurants and bars.



Day 5





Blenheim to Nelson

A short drive north from Blenheim to you reach Havelock. The small port town of Havelock has a great variety of cafes and restaurants to choose from so plan your journey to arrive in time for lunch. Crossing the Bryant Range you arrive onto Tasman Bay and the city of Nelson.

Explore the Nelson and Abel Tasman region

Nelson is a great city to explore on foot. Visit the historic areas, and the famous Cathedral, or relax and enjoy the atmosphere at one of the many cafes on Trafalgar Street. Nelson is also noted for its many artists, and galleries displaying their work can be enjoyed by following one of the Art trails listed locally. Around 45 minutes drive away is Abel Tasman National Park. The region offers countless opportunities to explore for visitors of every age and capability, from enjoying the golden sand beaches and clear warm waters to guided kayaking trips viewing seals and dolphins, to exploring some of New Zealand's finest walking tracks.

Your accommodation: The Sails Motel Nelson

The Sails Nelson is located just 5 minutes walk from the Nelson City Centre and adjacent to all main routes. Each suite is tastefully and luxuriously furnished to the highest standard, providing you with the total package in comfort and style.



Day 6



Nelson to Christchurch (via Nelson Lakes National Park)

Leaving Nelson you will pass through the suburb of Richmond. Moving on you will travel through the Nelson Lakes and Kahurangi National Park regions. Trees, rivers and valleys accompany you now as you head towards the town of Murchison. Murchison is a quiet place and a great lunch stop. Underneath its sleepy farming facade is an adventurers paradise with white water rafting, jet boating, gold panning, kayaking, 4WD trips and excellent trout fishing.
From Murchison, you will head south towards Maruia Springs, which has been attracting travellers for years and the natural hot springs are now located within an authentic Japanese themed resort, a great place to stop for a soak if time allows. Head inland over the Lewis Pass where the landscape changes to a sub-alpine zone with large forests of red and silver beech. Near the summit a short walking track, the Tarn Nature Walk, is an ideal place to break your journey.
The drive south to Christchurch takes you through some fine rolling farmland and North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley.

Your accommodation: Merivale Manor

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Day 7





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:	7
Accomodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Merivale Manor
Day 2	The White Morph, Kaikōura
Day 3	Bella Vista Blenheim
Day 4	Bella Vista Blenheim
Day 5	The Sails Motel Nelson
Day 6	Merivale Manor