



Southern Grandeur

A journey through the South Island's most iconic landscapes. From the towering peaks of Aoraki/Mount Cook to the silent depths of Milford Sound, this itinerary blends rugged natural grandeur with total comfort. Retreat to heritage castles, wake up on the water in Fiordland, and traverse the Southern Alps by rail on a tour designed for those who seek to uncover New Zealand's wild heart.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 15days / 14nights
Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
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

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

plus much more...

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

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

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Day 1



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!

Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

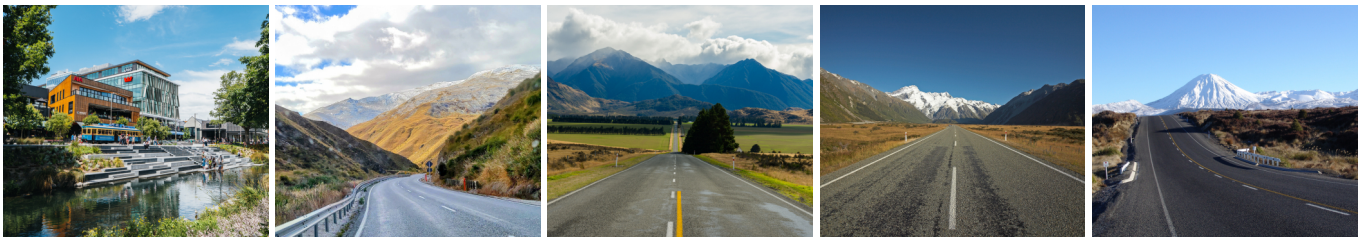
On arrival, you will be met by a private driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

Your accommodation: Merivale Manor House

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



Private transfer accommodation to airport to collect rental car

A private transfer will meet you at your accommodation and transfer you to Christchurch Airport to collect your rental car.

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.

Explore Christchurch

Following earthquakes that razed its centre and much of the outlying suburbs, Ōtautahi-Christchurch is well into a billion-dollar makeover. In the middle of the Canterbury Plains, bordering the Pacific Ocean, New Zealand's newest city is an ideal gateway to exploring the middle of the South. Go punting on the Avon River, take a historic tram ride, catch the gondola to the rim of an extinct volcano or do all three! See the world's only Cardboard Cathedral and for nature enthusiasts - wander the renowned Christchurch Botanic Gardens, or head to Oxford Terrace in the city to find a great spot to eat or drink. Drive an hour in any direction to ski, mountain bike, wine taste, whale-watch, bungee jump or play golf. Take the winding Port Hills road to the French settlement of Akaroa & Banks Peninsula and tour the vines in Waipara for an authentic New Zealand wine-tasting experience.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Willowbank Wildlife Reserve

Nowhere else in New Zealand will you find such a wide range of New Zealand wildlife so close to you. Willowbank provides you with a "Kiwi Guarantee" and is home to New Zealand's largest and most accessible Kiwi viewing area. With this unique experience, you will see New Zealand's natural splendor firsthand, and view Kiwis that are not hidden behind glass. You will explore one of the most complete selections of New Zealand native and introduced wildlife in natural bush surroundings. Much of the Willowbank wildlife wander free and can be petted and fed.

Choose to explore the reserve yourself, or for an up-close Kiwi experience, you can take a guided tour.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Gondola

In the Heathcote Valley, just a 20-minute drive from the heart of Christchurch City, ride the Christchurch Gondola for nearly a kilometer to the collapsed rim of an extinct volcano, which exploded six million years ago. Take in the spectacular panoramic views of the central city, Lyttelton Harbour, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury Plains, and the distant peaks of the Southern Alps. Wander the summit complex, enjoy a coffee or lunch in the cafe, and choose one of many nature walks to explore or visit the Christchurch Discovery Ridge, a dramatic reconstruction of the history of the Port Hills and Christchurch.

Your accommodation: Merivale Manor House

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.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Christchurch to Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

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 town of Lake 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 Aoraki-Mt Cook Village.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

The Alpine Restaurant Buffet Dinner

The Alpine Restaurant located at The Hermitage Hotel offers sumptuous buffets for breakfast, lunch and dinner, accompanied by spectacular views of Aoraki Mount Cook from every seat. Enjoy a vast buffet including a wide range of foods such as soup, salads, seafood, hot and cold meats and desserts with tea and coffee to follow.

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, Dinner



Day 4



Mt Cook National Park to Oamaru

Twizel, just south of Aoraki Mt Cook National Park was the location of many Lord of the Rings movie scenes and a little further on is Omarama, the gliding capital of New Zealand. Wrinkly Rams is a local cafe; with great coffee and fresh homemade food. Heading down the Waitaki valley you follow the hydro power generating system to the rural township of Kurow, home to Valli Wines. Stop for a sip or continue through to the east coast. The town of Oamaru is most famous for its buildings constructed with the unique locally quarried white stone. Explore the buildings around the old quarter and after dusk take a tour to see the blue penguins come ashore.

Explore Oamaru

Oamaru, a town of distinctive charm on New Zealand's South Island, is renowned for its remarkable collection of whitestone buildings. Crafted from the locally quarried 'Oamaru Stone,' these ornate structures, many of which were originally grain and wool stores, lend a unique character to the town. The preserved Harbour/Tyne Historic Precinct is a highlight, where these magnificent buildings continue to stand, some still serving their original purpose while others now house an intriguing array of curious shops, gift stores, restaurants, and a motoring museum. Beyond its architectural grandeur, Oamaru boasts a vibrant shopping scene with numerous galleries and iconic stores. Immerse yourself in the whimsical world of Steampunk, a defining element of the town's creative spirit. As dusk falls, head to the harbor front to witness the charming spectacle of a little blue penguin colony returning to their burrows, and keep an eye out along the coastline for sightings of the rare yellow-eyed penguins.

Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony - Evening Viewing

Oamaru's Blue Penguins nest close to town under the cliffs along the Historic Harbour foreshore. The Oamaru Penguins is just beyond the Victorian Heritage Precinct and you are within walking distance of the town centre, close to shops, restaurants and accommodation. When penguins are on shore and have chosen to nest in the Blue Wing it is possible to see them within a couple of feet of you. At the appropriate times of the year you may see them incubating eggs or guarding the tiny chicks. You can watch the chicks as they wait for their daily meal to return with their parents. You will be seated 2-3 metres from where the blue penguins arrive and cross into the colony. And be treated to an informative commentary by a trained guide. This Viewing is 1 and a half hours and includes the opportunity to enter the breeding colony on a boardwalk and walk among the blue penguin nesting burrows.

Your accommodation: Poshtel

This is not simply a place to sleep and eat before you move on to the next location. Designed by Carter Smith Architecture + Interiors, each room creates a distinct atmosphere all its own. Together they combine to create a myriad of interwoven stories, a collection of art and objects that provide guests with a truly unique NZ experience.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Oamaru to Dunedin

The drive from Oamaru to Dunedin takes you along the Otago Coastline and some of the earliest inhabited places in New Zealand. Just south of Oamaru is Totorā Estate and it is from here that the modern meat export industry was born. Sheep carcasses were processed here before being sent to England in 1882 by the first freezer ship, the clipper Dunedin.

One of the most intriguing places to explore is Moeraki and the Moeraki Boulders. These unique geological features are easily accessed and well signposted from the main highway. Some of the boulders actually contained dinosaur bones but according to Maori legend they were gourds washed overboard as a waka (canoe) was wrecked on a nearby reef.

Matanaka is a short detour off the main road and here you can take a short walk to see some of the oldest remaining buildings in the South Island.

Arriving into Dunedin you can appreciate the city's Edwardian and Scottish heritage through its fine buildings particularly around the Octagon and city centre and parking your car close by and exploring on foot is highly recommended. A not to be missed building is the railway station, recently listed as one of the world's top 100 buildings to see.

Moeraki Boulders

The Moeraki Boulders can be found along a short access road, signposted to the coast, around 21 kilometers north of the town of Palmerston and just north of the small and beautiful township of Moeraki. These large spherical stones are scattered along the beach and were formed over 60 million years ago. Some of the stones have been found to contain dinosaur bones and in some cases complete skeletons of extinct marine reptiles. Some stones weigh over 2 tonnes and are over 2 meters in diameter. Maori legend tells that they were the food baskets of a wrecked ancestral canoe.

Entry is just a \$2 coin donation which you pop in the donation box as you enter.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

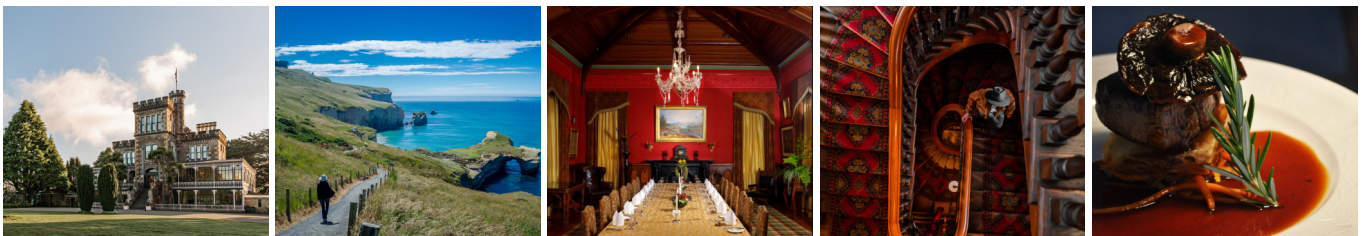
Your accommodation: Camp Estate at Larnach Castle

A luxurious country house built from blue stone and features a spectacular marble staircase. The modern rooms are all double glazed and the reception rooms are all heated by open fires and underfloor heating. Staying at Camp Estate includes entry to Larnach Castle and the grounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 6



Explore Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula

Known as the Edinburgh of the South, Dunedin City has a heavy Scottish influence. Surrounded by rugged coastal plains and windswept beaches it's home to an eclectic mix of historical and modern architecture as well as industrial technology. Renowned for its Flemish Baroque-inspired 'gingerbread house' Railway Station, this university town is bustling with life. Head to the Saturday farmers market held in the aforementioned railway grounds for a taste of organic produce, handmade crepes and local honey. Explore the many cafes and wine bars in The Octagon, then continue on a self-guided walking tour of the internationally acclaimed Street Art dotted around the city. Drive to the coast and watch the freighters passing in the distance while you sunbathe, or hire a mountain bike and test your legs on one of the many trails available in the area. For a more immersive historical experience, follow the coast to New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle. On your way back be sure to head to the Otago Peninsula to see the largest mainland Albatross colony in the world.

Walking tracks on the Otago Peninsula

There are a number of short walks to enjoy on the Peninsula. The information below is provided by the Department of Conservation. Sandfly Bay

Walking Time: 1 hr return walk from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 25 minutes from the centre of Dunedin. Tunnel Beach

Walking Time: 1 hour / 2km return walk from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 15 minutes south from the centre of Dunedin. Sandymount

Walking Time: Lovers Leap 50 min return walk from carpark or Sandymount Circuit 1 hr return walk from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 30 minutes from the centre of Dunedin. Allans Beach

Walking Time: 5 min walk to the beach from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 40 minutes from the centre of Dunedin.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Speights Brewery Tour

Founded in 1876, the Speights Brewery still occupies its original Dunedin site - with several of its buildings dating back to the late 1800's. One of the only remaining 'gravity breweries' in the world, this 60-minute tour explains its inner workings. There is an opportunity to taste six different beers as well as bottle, cap and brew your own personal Speights Gold Medal Ale - the brewery's flagship beer.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Castle to Cruise Tour and Penguin Experience with Monarch

Today you'll explore the wildlife and history of the Otago Peninsula You'll be welcomed to the MV Monarch for a wildlife cruise around Taiaroa Head, home to the world's only mainland nesting site for royal albatross. Scattered along the rocks you'll also see fur seals basking in the sun and possibly sea lions on the beach. In the water, you may also see penguins, dolphins, and other marine birds. Back on land, you'll take a guided tour of New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle built in 1871. Learn of the scandals and history of the castle and explore the beautiful garden of international significance. Your final stop of the day is to The Otago Peninsula Eco Restoration Alliance (formally Penguin Place), a natural nesting site for the rarest penguin in the world, the Yellow Eyed Penguin.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

Your accommodation: Camp Estate at Larnach Castle

A luxurious country house built from blue stone and features a spectacular marble staircase. The modern rooms are all double glazed and the reception rooms are all heated by open fires and underfloor heating. Staying at Camp Estate includes entry to Larnach Castle and the grounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 7



Dunedin to Te Anau

The drive to Te Anau takes you through classic Southland farmland scenery. Pass through the tranquil river town of Balclutha, the largest town in South Otago, which hosts a range of shops and services. Balclutha is memorable for its arched concrete bridge, under which flows the mighty Clutha River. The river is open for salmon and trout fishing all year round. As you head inland, you will pass through the small rural town of Clinton before reaching Gore, the official home of country music. It's also known for great fly fishing, with the Mataura River and many other productive streams close by. Take time to enjoy the lush farmland scenery as you journey east towards your lakeside destination of Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park and Piopiotahi-Milford Sound.

The Lost Gypsy Gallery - suggested activity

The Lost Gypsy Gallery is a fantastical museum of automata art by Blair Somerville and should not be missed by anyone traveling through Catlins on the Southern Scenic Route. Walk through the gate, wander up the path, and find a folly of fettling ready to be fiddled with. Wind handles, push buttons, and your curiosity will be rewarded. This temple of tinkering houses Blair's creations, together with automata art from around the globe. Grab a coffee, take a bite from homemade bakeries, and spill your eyes with Lost Gypsy treasures.

Kaka Point Walk - suggestion

Kaka Point is a small settlement at the northern edge of The Catlins. It is located 8 km north of the headland of Nugget Point. Kaka Point is named for the New Zealand kākā bird, whose signature call is "ka-aa."

Bush track at the top of Marine Terrace. This 30 minute loop track takes you through a good cross-section of vegetation types, including ferns and perching plants. Most podocarp species are also present.

Easy Walking - 30 minutes return

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Te Anau Glowworm Caves with RealNZ

Begin your Te Anau Glowworm experience with a scenic cruise across Lake Te Anau on board the luxury catamaran, Luminosa, to the western side of the lake. On arrival, you'll enter the caves through Cavern House, where informative displays detail the history of this 12,000 year old underground network. You'll then explore by limestone pathway while your guide points out hidden whirlpools, sculpted rock formations, and a rushing underground waterfall. See a magical display of thousands of glowworms as you glide through the darkness in a small boat.

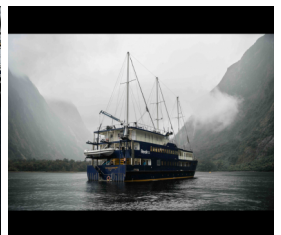
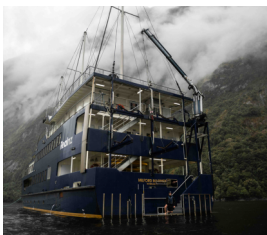
Your accommodation: Te Anau Lodge

Te Anau Lodge began its existence as a Catholic convent in 1936 before being converted into a wonderful lodge. A beautiful Rimu wood interior awaits you and each of the 7 rooms house furniture made from stunning native woods.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Milford Mariner Overnight Cruise

The Milford Mariner offers you a very special dinner, bed and breakfast experience on Milford Sound. Onboard the Milford Mariner you will cruise the full length of this spectacular fiord to the Tasman Sea before anchoring for the night in sheltered Harrison Cove. Accompanied by a nature guide you can go exploring in the tender craft and kayaks or simply relax on deck. After the day's activities, you enjoy a delicious evening buffet in the spacious saloon before retiring to your private cabin.

The vessel itself was designed along the lines of a traditional New Zealand coastal trading scow to reflect Fiordland's heritage.

Departing from Te Anau, you'll learn about the local area and travel along the famous Milford Road as you soak in the incredible scenery. Upon arrival in Milford, you'll head to the Milford Wharf, where the Milford Mariner cruises the length of Milford Sound to the Tasman Sea leisurely exploring on the way many points of interest, there is plenty of time to view the waterfalls, rainforest, mountains and wildlife and the experienced nature guide on board will be able to answer any questions you may have. After reaching the open sea, subject to weather and favourable conditions the sails are hoisted for a period. The vessel returns to the calm and shelter of Harrison Cove for your overnight stay. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Overnight Boat in Milford Sound

Onboard the Milford Mariner you will cruise the full length of this spectacular fiord to the Tasman Sea before anchoring for the night in sheltered Harrison Cove. After the day's activities, you'll enjoy a delicious evening buffet in the spacious saloon before retiring to your private cabin.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 9



Te Anau to Queenstown

Journey across expansive tussock lands en route to Queenstown. Pass through Mossburn, renowned as the deer capital of New Zealand, and continue through the picturesque Southland countryside. As the road begins to trace the edge of Lake Wakatipu, marvel at the breathtaking views from the Devil's Staircase. Finally, approach Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand, with the Remarkables mountain range standing majestically in the backdrop.

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, bungy 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.

Your accommodation: The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



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 bungee 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 many 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-hike.

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

Discover Central Otago's world class wine history and cuisine on this fun interactive small group tour. Traveling in a luxury minivan with a specialist guide you will explore three contrasting sub regions Gibbston Bannockburn and Cromwell tasting at four premium boutique vineyards. Indulge in a gourmet platter style lunch of locally sourced produce perfectly complemented by a flight of estate wines. Enjoy ample photo opportunities over the Bannockburn Inlet and Lake Dunstan complete with a historic stroll through Old Cromwell Town.

Your accommodation: The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



Discover Queenstown and its surroundings

With such an abundance of activities on offer, one day in Queenstown is never enough! For more thrills, you can choose from jet boating, lugging, bungee jumping, or a canyon swing. If golf is your game, the exceptional Millbrook Golf Course is the place for you. If you prefer wine, head down the Gibbston wine trail to sample some of the region's best Pinot, or explore a little further afield - the nearby historic gold mining township of Arrowtown is a popular destination and features many original buildings and features. At the head of Lake Wakatipu sits Glenorchy. The scenic drive here is worth the trip alone; however, upon arriving in this peaceful township, you could easily rest the day away. Nearby is the start of the Routeburn Track, one of New Zealand's Great walks. You can enjoy a section of this track as a day walk. Alternatively, head over the Crown Range to the beautiful lake town of Wanaka, famous for its iconic tree in the lake. To appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds this area, a scenic flight or skydive will take your breath away.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wilderness Jet Experience with Dart River Safaris

Journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mt Aspiring National Park, where myth, heritage, and fantasy come to life. As one of Queenstown's most exhilarating activities, the Wilderness Jet adventures on a spectacular journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mount Aspiring National Park. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Queenstown Skyline Gondola Ride

Hop aboard the Skyline Gondola - the steepest cable car lift in the Southern Hemisphere! From which you can take in the awe-inspiring views of this spectacular landscape. Sit back and relax as you enjoy panoramic views of The Remarkables, Walter Peak, Cecil Peak, Coronet Peak and the magnificent Lake Wakatipu.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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: The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



Queenstown to Franz Josef Glacier via Wānaka

From Queenstown you'll cross the Crown Range, the highest sealed road in New Zealand to arrive in the Alpine town of Wānaka, 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. 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.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 13



Explore Franz Josef

Franz Josef is a small yet lively town in the heart of New Zealand's West Coast, best known for its spectacular 12 km-long glacier. The township is surrounded by lush, rainforest-clad mountains and has a vibrant atmosphere with plenty to explore. A variety of scenic walking trails offer incredible views of the glacier, but for a truly up-close experience, a licensed helicopter tour is the only way to set foot on the ice. Beyond the glacier, unwind in the rejuvenating Hot Pools or visit the West Coast Wildlife Centre to spot rare kiwi birds. If you're in the mood for a more relaxed day, the township is home to charming souvenir and gift shops, as well as great dining spots like SnakeBite Brewery and King Tiger. Whether you're chasing adventure or relaxation, Franz Josef is a stunning blend of wild beauty and welcoming hospitality.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 14



Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station (Return Rental Car)

Head north along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beach occasionally. Whataroa is the next town where you can see one of the world's rarest birds, the Kōtuku - White Heron. The Kōtuku nest at the Waitangi Roto Nature Reserve, only accessible with a guided tour from October to March. The next town is Ross which is the site of an old gold mining settlement where the local information centre 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 Pounamu-Greenstone on offer in Hokitika is probably some of the best you will see in the country. 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.

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. 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.

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

On arrival at the Christchurch railway station, you will be met by a driver and transferred to your Christchurch 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: Merivale Manor House

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.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 15



Private Transfer from Accommodation to Airport with Christchurch Touring Company

Enjoy a seamless, private transfer from your Christchurch city accommodation directly to the Christchurch Airport in time for your departing flight.

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:	15
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Merivale Manor House
Day 2	Merivale Manor House
Day 3	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium
Day 4	Poshtel
Day 5	Camp Estate at Larnach Castle
Day 6	Camp Estate at Larnach Castle
Day 7	Te Anau Lodge
Day 8	Overnight Boat in Milford Sound
Day 9	The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter
Day 10	The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter
Day 11	The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter
Day 12	Westwood Lodge
Day 13	Westwood Lodge
Day 14	Merivale Manor House