



Southern South Island Highlights

Your adventure starts in the alpine setting of Tāhuna Queenstown before you head inland to Central Otago's wine country for an exclusive cabana dining experience. Feel the thrill of a supercar dash and explore the history of hydro power at the mighty Clyde Dam, followed by a taste of rural life at a local orchard. The journey continues to the heritage city of Ōtepoti Dunedin where you will enjoy a castle and wildlife cruise to view rare yellow-eyed penguins. You will then explore the transport wonders of Invercargill before venturing to Te Anau to join a spectacular, serene cruise through the remote wilderness of Doubtful Sound. This premium self-drive holiday is a true celebration of the South Island's finest moments, offering the perfect blend of relaxation and exhilaration.

Starts in: Queenstown
Finishes in: Queenstown
Length: 11days / 10nights
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

plus much more...

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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while
touring

Day 1



Welcome to Queenstown

Renowned for its adrenaline inducing activities Queenstown is synonymous with adventure. Parked on the shores of Lake Wakatipu this small alpine town is nestled below soaring vistas of The Remarkables Mountain Range. While arguably the brightest gem in New Zealand's crown, Queenstown offers far more than an action-packed getaway. Spend time on the Gibbston wine trail and end with a meal at Michelin star chef Josh Emett's restaurant, Rata. Take a trip down memory lane on a 100 year old steamship the TSS Earnslaw. Soak in the scenery on your walk around the lake, or venture further afield into Fiordland National Park. Head over the hill to resort town Wanaka, or re-live scenes from Lord Of The Rings by four wheel drive. But - if you really do want that rush - head out on the Shotover Jet, dive off the Nevis Bungy, freefall on the Canyon swing or Zip line the Gondola. Just be sure it's done on an empty stomach & don't say we didn't warn you!

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.

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.

Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel Queenstown

Right in the heart of the action, the Millennium Hotel is just minutes from Queenstown's central shopping and entertainment district. Outdoor activities such as bungy jumping, white water rafting and jet boating are just some of the easily accessible activities nearby in New Zealand's adventure capital.



Day 2



Queenstown to Cromwell

Leaving Queenstown you'll pass through wonderful Gibbston and its many wineries. Make sure you time your trip for a spot of lunch and a tasting. You will also pass by two famous bungy jump sites (The Nevis and the Kawarau Bridge Bungy). Next the Kawarau Gorge takes you to Cromwell, famous for its stone fruit orchards and in the right season you can purchase this fresh fruit from the many roadside stalls.

Cromwell

With a fascinating history and a dynamic present, Cromwell is a vibrant town located at the junction of the Clutha and Kawarau Rivers. Originally known as "The Junction," the area boomed during the 1800s gold rush, and today, the surrounding hills are dotted with relics of this era. Visitors can explore the remnants of stone cottages, mining equipment, and sluicing boxes—tangible reminders of the town's pioneering past. A significant chapter in Cromwell's history occurred in the 1990s when the valley was flooded to create Lake Dunstan as part of a major hydroelectric project. This event led to the relocation of the town's center, though parts of the original town have been preserved and can be visited today.

Cromwell is now a thriving hub, celebrated for its robust fruit-growing industry, farming, and tourism. The town and nearby Bannockburn are also a cornerstone of Central Otago's world-renowned wine region, particularly for its award-winning Pinot Noir.

All-Inclusive Wine & Dine Cabana Retreat at Carrick Winery

Indulge in a two-hour escape like no other at Carrick Winery & Restaurant, where luxury, our award-winning menu and organic wines converge in the heart of Carrick Garden. Perfect for groups of 2-8 seeking a private setting, this exclusive experience beckons those who appreciate the finer things in life.

Your accommodation: Marsden Lake Resort

Marsden Lake Resort offers guests elegant villa accommodation set on the shores of Lake Dunstan, Central Otago. The boatshed themed accommodation has one and three bedroom villas with decks and access to the waterway.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 3



Supercar Fast Dash with Highlands

It's fast, it's furious and one helluva a ride! Your Supercar Fast Dash means you will have the ride of your life, in a top-of-the-line machine, in the best of hands. Subject to availability, ride in either a Lamborghini Huracán or Porsche.

Jacksons Orchard Tour

Take a tour through this 35ha orchard on an electric tour bus and learn the fascinating story of how the orchard began, its history, machinery, pollination, pruning, thinning, pest & frost protection, irrigation, markets, picking & packing. You will get the opportunity to pick some fruit from the trees in season - everything from cherries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, green apples or pears to eat and take home with you! You can handpick your own fruit ready for harvest late November to April or if you're visiting during the off season (May to mid November) your tour will be completed with box of produce from the Fruitstall.

Your accommodation: Marsden Lake Resort

Marsden Lake Resort offers guests elegant villa accommodation set on the shores of Lake Dunstan, Central Otago. The boatshed themed accommodation has one and three bedroom villas with decks and access to the waterway.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Cromwell to Clyde

From Cromwell, follow the Clutha River through Cromwell Gorge to Clyde. It is a scenic 20-minute drive. Clyde is a small historic town famous for its gold mining history and Lake Dunstan biking trail. It is located at the foot of the Clutha River, close to farms, orchards, and vineyards, and surrounded by hills.

Clyde

This historic Central Otago town, with its beautifully preserved stone buildings and tree-lined streets, is a living tribute to the region's gold-rush era. Located on the banks of the mighty Clutha River and overshadowed by the impressive Clyde Dam, it offers a fascinating blend of old-world charm and modern engineering.

Today, Clyde's fame is equally tied to its status as a premier cycling hub. It is the start (or end) of the iconic Otago Central Rail Trail, and a key junction for two other spectacular trails: the Roxburgh Gorge and the stunning Lake Dunstan Trail. Whether you're a serious cyclist or a casual rider, these trails offer breathtaking scenery and a unique way to experience the landscape.

Beyond its history and trails, Clyde is a treat for the senses. It's a stone's throw from some of Central Otago's finest boutique wineries, famous for their elegant Pinot Noir. The town itself boasts a delicious food scene, from cosy cafés to excellent restaurants, making it the perfect place to refuel after a day of exploration.

The Complete Clyde Dam Tour with Clyde Dams

Experience the Dam Tour: From the top of the wall to the control room, inside the wall and powerhouse, see the main structures, slip joint, and stand on/in a working turbine. Expert guides share insights throughout. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

Your accommodation: The Lord Clyde

Located within the historical district and overlooking the Clutha/Mata au River, The Lord Clyde is graciously decorated to provide an exceptional accommodation experience.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Clyde to Naseby

The journey from Clyde to Naseby takes you through the heart of the Central Otago dramatic high country. Starting near the Lake Dunstan area, the route typically follows or runs parallel to sections of the Otago Central Rail Trail and State Highway 85, traversing the wide, tussock-covered plains of the Maniototo. Along the way, you pass through historic gold-mining towns like Alexandra, Omakau, and Ranfurly before making the short detour off the main highway to reach the forest-fringed, historic township of Naseby.

Naseby

Naseby is a charming, historic former gold mining town in Central Otago, known as the "Jewel of the Maniototo." It is famous as New Zealand's "Ice Capital," offering year-round indoor curling and ice skating and a unique luge track that runs on weekends. Surrounded by the Naseby Forest, it's a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, with over 50km of excellent mountain biking and walking trails.

Naseby to Dunedin

The journey from Naseby to Dunedin leaves the high-country environment of the Maniototo, traveling south towards the coast. The route typically follows State Highway 85, passing through rural settlements like Ranfurly before transitioning to the greener, more rolling farmlands of the Strath Taieri area. It then descends from the inland hills to the sea, arriving at the historic, coastal city of Dunedin.

Dunedin

Dunedin, known in Māori as Ōtepoti, is referred to as the "Edinburgh of the Southern Hemisphere". The city has a rightly deserved reputation as one of the best-preserved Victorian and Edwardian cities in the Southern Hemisphere. Of particular note is Dunedin Railway Station, built 1904 - 1906, and St Paul's Cathedral in the Octagon. The Otago Museum is renowned for its Māori and Pacific Island collections and natural history displays. A visit to the Speights, New Zealand's oldest brewery, is also considered a must while in Dunedin. The Botanic Gardens is a great spot and at the right time of year, you can witness the Rhododendron Dell in bloom. The Otago Peninsula is the only home in the world to the Northern Royal Albatross. The Peninsula can be visited for the day from Dunedin and the stunning harbor landscape and wildlife are worth exploring. High among the rolling hills of the Peninsula is Larnach Castle, the grand home of an early politician. Construction of the castle began in 1871 and was completed 12 years later. From here, views out to sea and back towards the city emphasize the singular beauty of Dunedin and its jewel-like harbor.

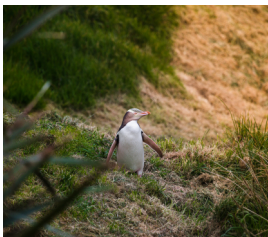
Your accommodation: Distinction Dunedin Hotel

Distinction Dunedin Hotel occupies the grand Chief Post Office built in the 1930's. This art deco inspired building has recently been transformed into a 4 star hotel with elegant décor, set in the heart of the city.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



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.

Your accommodation: Distinction Dunedin Hotel

Distinction Dunedin Hotel occupies the grand Chief Post Office built in the 1930's. This art deco inspired building has recently been transformed into a 4 star hotel with elegant décor, set in the heart of the city.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Dunedin to Invercargill via the Southern Scenic Route

The scenic route from Dunedin to Invercargill takes you via the Southern Scenic Route. Well signposted from Dunedin the route takes you along the rugged Otago coastline and its many secluded beaches and bays and many are great places to spot New Zealand fur seals and sea lions. At Nugget Point, penguins and elephant seals can also be spotted. Curio Bay is home to a 160 million year old fossilised forest. Get an early start for this drive as you can easily pass the whole day exploring the many attractions along the Southern Scenic Route.

Invercargill

Invercargill is the southernmost city in New Zealand and one of the most southern in the world. On the southern scenic route, Invercargill is the gateway to Southland, the Catlins district, and Stewart Island. Early pioneers settled here to establish a flax industry however it was the rich plains that brought prosperity to the city as the settlers turned to farming. There are some impressive buildings including the city's water tower. The Southland Museum is worth a visit, which houses a state-of-the-art tuatara house. These creatures are unique to New Zealand and date back to the age of dinosaurs.

Invercargill is a lively city with plenty of restaurants, shops, galleries, and attractions. It seems like the town is obsessed with anything that has wheels. You can visit Transport World, celebrate the town's motorcycle history at Classic Motorcycle Mecca, and learn about the legend of speed - Burt Munro at E-Hayes Motorworks. Alternatively, you can try making chocolate at the Seriously Good Chocolate Company.

Classic Motorcycle Mecca General Admission and Guided Tour

Discover the largest and most diverse display of classic motorcycles in New Zealand, with more than 300 motorbikes that hail as far back as 1902. Classic Motorcycle Mecca is a two-wheeled paradise for motorcycle fans. From John Britten to Brough Superior to Burt Munro, Classic Motorcycle Mecca has it all. You won't find stuffy display cases here: just 360-degree views of some of the finest vintage and veteran motorbikes from around the world. If you are feeling like a bite to eat the thrilling Meccaspresso cafe is right on site to satisfy any of your food needs. With a menu ranging from lunch options and waffles to a big Bikers Breakfast there truly is something for everyone.

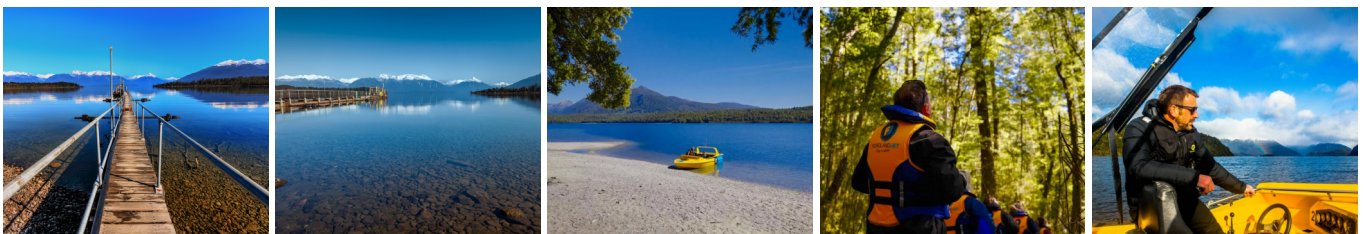
Your accommodation: The Langlands

The Langlands Hotel is Invercargill's newest accommodation experience. This seven-storey, 4.5 star hotel brings contemporary style to the inner city. The interior is a subtle representation of Murihiku and boasts five eateries and bars, all with bespoke furniture, crafted menus and modern surroundings.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Bill Richardson Transport World - General Admission

Bill Richardson Transport World is the largest private collection of its type in the world. Designed to have something for everyone - not just for vehicle enthusiasts! Outside of the extensive vehicle range you can also enjoy a growing wearable arts collection, movie theatre, children's play zones and themed bathrooms - fast becoming as famous as the vehicles. The scale of the collection is sure to impress so allow plenty of time. If tasting the flavours of the south is more your thing, head to the onsite cafe; The Grille to experience famous Southern delicacies like Stewart Island Salmon, Blue Cod, seasonal Bluff Oysters and Southland lamb. A truly delicious stop popular with locals and visitors alike.

Invercargill to Te Anau via Southern Scenic Route

Taking the Southern Scenic Route the drive from Invercargill to Te Anau passes through some wonderful and often overlooked regions of Southland. Riverton is Southland's oldest community established by whalers in the 1830's and many of the original cottages have survived throughout the town. The Riverton Early Settlers Museum tells the story well. Orepuki on the coast was once 'almost' a gold town but the fine dust proved too hard to extract commercially. You can still sometimes see gold dust in the beach sand at Monkey Bay. The early sawmilling settlement of Tautapere is next. Known as the 'hole in the bush' the town features an attractive domain. A little further north is the Clifden suspension bridge which dates back to 1899. The Blackmount Road offers some great side trips if you have the time and one in particular is the 50 kilometre round trip to Lake Haruoko, New Zealand's deepest lake. The Blackmount Road continues to the small township of Manapouri, the departure point for cruises to Doubtful Sound. Te Anau the gateway to Milford Sound is just a further 20 kilometres north.

Te Anau

It is the gateway to Fiordland National Park and a perfect base to visit Piopiotahi-Milford Sound. The Milford Road originates here, and this is arguably one of the most scenic stretches of highway in the country. Te Anau sits on the shores of spectacular Lake Te Anau, which reaches depths of 417 meters. Te Anau Township is the starting point for many walking tracks, including two of New Zealand's Great Walks, the Milford track and the Kepler track. Apart from hiking, you could go kayaking, lake cruising, fishing, or exploring Te Anau Glowworm Caves. You could go for a bike ride alongside the lake towards Lake Manapouri, on a popular Lake to Lake biking route. Along the way, you will pass a bird sanctuary specialising in Takahe, and other native birds.

Pure Wilderness Jet Boat with Fiordland Jet

Jet boat down the Waiau river, across Lake Manapouri, to the ancient forest of the Fiordland National Park. Enjoy the thrill of jet boating down the majestic trout-filled Waiau River, to the serene Lake Manapouri. Step foot into the Fiordland National Park and go for a short walk while learning about the ancient beech forest and ferns. Your jet boat ride includes a number of stops at the exact locations of the filming the "Fellowship of the Ring" on the Waiau or "Anduin River". The driver will tell you the inside story of the filming the Lord of the Rings on this river. The trip will also include some thrilling 360 degree turns and spins as well as interesting interpretation about the flora and fauna and the local European and Māori history.

Your accommodation: Distinction Luxmore Hotel

The perfect base for all your Fiordland travel, Distinction Luxmore Hotel provides comfortable accommodation right in the heart of Te Anau.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise from Manapouri

From Pearl Harbour, Manapouri, you cruise across picturesque Lake Manapouri to West Arm and then travel by coach over Wilmot Pass through dense rainforest. There are opportunities along the way to examine plant life and view the spectacular scenery. Once at Doubtful Sound you board the catamaran, Commander Peak, for a 3 hour cruise of beautiful Doubtful Sound to the Tasman Sea. On board, there is excellent viewing of waterfalls, rainforest and mountains. Of particular interest, if sighted, are fur seals basking on the rocks, or a resident pod of bottlenose dolphins. Rare Fiordland crested penguins are sometimes encountered in the right season. An interesting onboard commentary keeps you informed and on the return journey, the vessel's engines are turned off and visitors are treated to the 'Sound of Silence'. Includes picnic boxed lunch.

Your accommodation: Distinction Luxmore Hotel

The perfect base for all your Fiordland travel, Distinction Luxmore Hotel provides comfortable accommodation right in the heart of Te Anau.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 10



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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Optional - TSS Earnslaw Cruise & Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner

For a dining experience like no other, cruise across Lake Wakatipu on the iconic 1912 vintage steamship, the TSS Earnslaw. This steamship is one of the last remaining fully functional coal-fired passenger ships in the southern hemisphere. After enjoying the steamship journey and lake views, disembark at Walter Peak High Country Station, one of the first farms set up in the region and still a working farm. In the ambience of the Colonel's Homestead, enjoy a delicious gourmet BBQ dinner which the chefs will prepare in front of you. After dinner, enjoy a quintessential Kiwi farm experience including a sheep shearing demonstration. On the night-time cruise home, enjoy a sing-a-long with the ship's pianist or breathe in the fresh night air on the deck as you watch the lights of Queenstown draw nearer.

Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel Queenstown

Right in the heart of the action, the Millennium Hotel is just minutes from Queenstown's central shopping and entertainment district. Outdoor activities such as bungy jumping, white water rafting and jet boating are just some of the easily accessible activities nearby in New Zealand's adventure capital.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



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:	11
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 2	Marsden Lake Resort
Day 3	Marsden Lake Resort
Day 4	The Lord Clyde
Day 5	Distinction Dunedin Hotel
Day 6	Distinction Dunedin Hotel
Day 7	The Langlands
Day 8	Distinction Luxmore Hotel
Day 9	Distinction Luxmore Hotel
Day 10	Millennium Hotel Queenstown