



The Top of the South Adventure Trail

Begin your journey with the famous Cook Strait crossing, leading directly into the stunning waterways of the Marlborough Sounds and home to the iconic Queen Charlotte Track. Experience the seclusion of the Sounds with an unforgettable stay at a premier location, accessible only by boat, before following the scenic route to Nelson, New Zealand's sunniest region. Here, you'll enjoy a bespoke cycling experience, pedalling the Great Taste Trail to Mapua, tasting local treats along the way. The adventure elevates in Abel Tasman National Park, where you'll sea kayak through crystal-clear waters and walk a pristine section of one of New Zealand's Great Walks. Venture out to the remote and dramatic coastal landscapes of Golden Bay, before returning to Picton and Wellington.

Starts in: Wellington
Finishes in: Wellington
Length: 10days / 9nights
Accommodation:
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 Wellington

Wellington City is New Zealand's capital. It sits on a wonderful deep natural harbour and is surrounded by bush clad hills. The city centre itself is quite compact (only around 1 square kilometre) and so exploring on foot is relatively easy. From your city centre accommodation you can easily stroll the cafes and restaurants around Courtenay Place and if you arrive early enough New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa, is also close by.

Private Transfer Wellington Airport to your Accommodation with In Style Executive

You will be met on arrival at Wellington airport and transferred to your accommodation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Entry to Te Papa The Museum of New Zealand

Te Papa Tongarewa, meaning "Container of Treasures," is New Zealand's national museum, located on Wellington's stunning waterfront. Renowned for its bold and innovative approach, Te Papa seamlessly blends science, art, history, and Māori culture into interactive and thought-provoking exhibitions. Visitors can explore everything from colossal squid and geological wonders to contemporary art and powerful stories of Aotearoa's people. A visit to Te Papa is more than a museum experience, it's an inspiring journey through the heart of New Zealand's identity.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wellington Cable Car

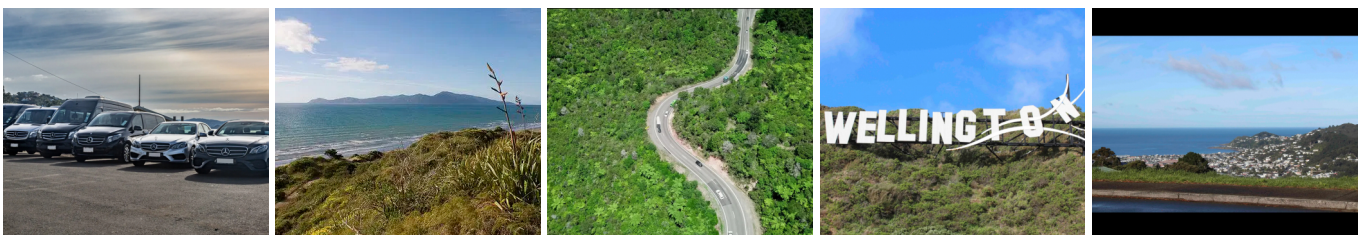
Take a ride on the historic Wellington Cable Car and enjoy stunning views of the city and harbour, Te Whanganui-a-Tara, as you ascend Kelburn Hill in just five minutes. At the top, visit the Cable Car Museum to see the original machinery and watch a short film about its history, or browse the gift shop. Just a short walk away, Space Place at Carter Observatory offers interactive exhibits and a digital planetarium exploring the Southern skies. If you have time, stroll back down through the scenic Wellington Botanic Garden.

Your accommodation: Booklovers B&B

Located just 10 minutes walk from Te Papa - The National Museum, dozens of cafes and restaurants, theatres and cinemas, and of course bookshops - Booklovers B&B offers the most comfort with the least fuss. A perfect place to relax after a busy day exploring the culture of Wellington, especially if you love a good book.



Day 2



Private transfer from Wellington Hotel to Interislander Ferry with In Style Executive

You will be collected from your hotel and transferred to the Interislander ferry terminal in time for your ferry check in.

Interislander Ferry Wellington to Picton

The 92 km journey between Wellington and Picton takes around 3 hours and has been described as 'one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world'. Leaving Wellington Harbour the ferry passes many interesting points such as Pencarrow Head on top of which is New Zealand's oldest lighthouse (1859). Red Rocks is home to a seal colony and Oterangi Bay is the site which recorded the country's highest ever wind speed of 268 kph (167 mph).

From the Cook Strait spectacular views of the Kaikōura Ranges on the South Island can be enjoyed and dolphins and many sea birds are often seen. Around one hour of the cruise takes you through the Marlborough Sounds and this region of bush covered mountains, small islands, crystal clear waters and secluded bays offer remarkable photographic opportunities. The final leg of the cruise travels through Queen Charlotte Sound before coming to an end in the picturesque town of Picton.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Premium Lounge with Interislander

Escape to Interislander's Premium Lounge for sensational views, child-free serenity, and locally sourced food and drink. Interislander's Premium Lounge has enhanced its offering to bring you an elevated travel experience across Cook Strait. Enjoy delicious food and drink, attentive service, and prime positions for appreciating the spectacular views. Whether you're looking to relax or chat with your travel companions, the Premium Lounge provides the ideal space. With varied seating options, you can choose a cosy spot to watch the stunning scenery and taste a selection of seasonal snacks included in your ticket.

Picton Ferry Terminal to your Picton accommodation

You will be met at the Picton Ferry Terminal and transferred to your Picton accommodation.

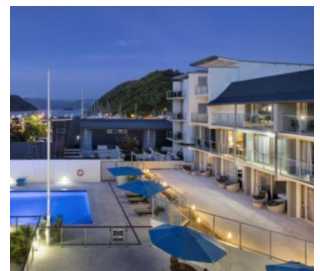
Picton

Picton is a picturesque portside town at the top of the South Island. Gateway to the forest, marine and island attractions of the Marlborough Sounds, Picton is built around a sheltered harbour. Home to cafes, restaurants and galleries it also has a floating maritime museum and aquarium. Picton is also the starting point for Queen Charlotte Track, one of New Zealand's leading hiking trails.

Your accommodation: Edit Picton

Located in the heart of Picton, only a short walk to the marina, shopping & dining precinct and the ferry terminal. Being in the Marlborough region, it is the gateway to the top of the picturesque South Island and Queen Charlotte Sound.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Kaipupu Wildlife Sanctuary Visit

Cruise to Kaipupu Wildlife Sanctuary near Picton – part of the mainland but only accessible by water.

Take a short unguided walk to the lookout or do the longer 2.7km loop track, keeping eyes and ears out for the plentiful birdlife. You will have approximately 2.5 hours to explore the sanctuary.

Kaipupu's bush clad hills are home to many of New Zealand's unique native wildlife including tui, korimako (bellbird), piwakawaka (fantail), kereru (NZ woodpigeon), korora (little penguin), tree weta, raukawa gecko and waiharakeke grass skink.

Water Taxi Picton to Lochmara Lodge

Board your water taxi from Picton to Lochmara Lodge in the Marlborough Sounds.

2-course dinner at Lochmara Lodge

Enjoy a spectacular two-course dinner at the Lochmara Restaurant, located on-site at the Lodge. The dining experience is reserved for your chosen evening during your stay and is just a short stroll from your room. Dinner includes two courses (entrée and main, or main and dessert).

Your accommodation: Lochmara Lodge

Set on the tranquil shore of Lochmara Bay in Queen Charlotte Sound in the heart of the Marlborough Sounds is Lochmara Lodge Marlborough Sounds Wildlife Recovery and Arts Centre. Relax amongst magical surroundings while learning about New Zealand's native flora, fauna and art.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 4



Explore Lochmara Lodge and surroundings

This day is free to explore the Lodge grounds at your own pace. You have complimentary access to 11 acres of scenic art and nature trails winding through native bush, as well as the chance to join popular daily animal education and feeding tours to meet the native Kākariki parakeets, Kunekune pigs, and eels. Feel free to grab a paddle and use the free kayaks and stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) in the sheltered bay, or simply relax on the beach. Should you wish to enhance your day, you have several exciting optional activities available at Lochmara: book a private relaxation session in the secluded Bathhouse, or purchase a Queen Charlotte Track Pass (required for access to the longer hiking and biking sections, such as the Onahau Lookout). Please reach out to your travel specialist prior to arrival to secure your booking. Delicious meals and snacks are available throughout the day at the licensed waterfront café;

2-course dinner at Lochmara Lodge

Enjoy a spectacular two-course dinner at the Lochmara Restaurant, located on-site at the Lodge. The dining experience is reserved for your chosen evening during your stay and is just a short stroll from your room. Dinner includes two courses (entrée and main, or main and dessert).

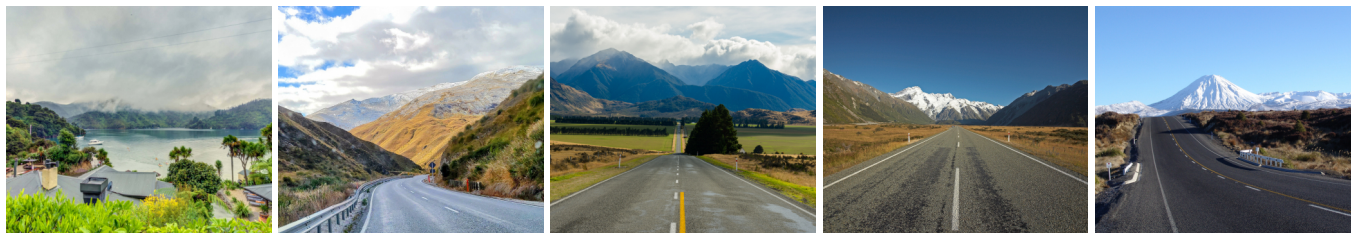
Your accommodation: Lochmara Lodge

Set on the tranquil shore of Lochmara Bay in Queen Charlotte Sound in the heart of the Marlborough Sounds is Lochmara Lodge Marlborough Sounds Wildlife Recovery and Arts Centre. Relax amongst magical surroundings while learning about New Zealand's native flora, fauna and art.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 5



Water Taxi Lochmara Lodge to Picton

Depart Lochmara Lodge, in the Marlborough Sounds and head back to Picton by water taxi.

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.

Picton to Nelson via Blenheim

Heading south from Picton you soon arrive into the grape growing areas around Blenheim. Famous for their sauvignon grape variety the region is the largest in New Zealand. Many of the wineries welcome visitors to their cellar doors. Heading south west you pass the airport and here you will also find the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre, which is well worth a visit. 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 Nelson City

The vibrant Nelson city centre offers an abundance of cafes, restaurants, bars and shops and along the waterfront, you will find many fine restaurants specialising in seafood to enjoy. Founded in 1841 by the New Zealand Company the region today still boasts many remarkable buildings from these early days, however it is its close proximity to Abel Tasman National Park that is one of Nelson's greatest advantages to visitors with its pristine waters, beautiful native bush and golden beaches making this an adventure seeker's paradise. Nelson is also famous for its art and crafts and you will find many local offerings - including the world-famous Hoglund Glassworks.

Your accommodation: Ah House Nelson City Bed & Breakfast

Garden views in the heart of Nelson City Centre is the Ah house- an award-winning B&B. Soak up the sun on the patio or explore the garden and surroundings.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



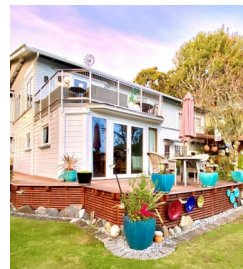
Nelson to Mapua Adventure on the Great Taste Trail by eBike with Kiwi Journeys - Lunch Included

Cycle the best of the Tasman Great Taste Trail on a premium e-bike! This day-long adventure covers 32km of spectacular scenery, moving from Nelson's historic rail route onto the picturesque Coastal Route toward Mapua. The Grade One (easy) trail is perfect for riders with a moderate fitness level. Along the way, you'll find plenty of fun stops, including award-winning wineries, craft breweries, and even Pic's Peanut Butter World. The experience culminates with a short, charming ride on the Mapua Ferry to the relaxed atmosphere of the Mapua Wharf, where you can celebrate a great ride with pizza and a local wine tasting. This self-guided tour handles all the logistics for a perfect day out. Perfect for beginner cyclists, this 32km journey does require a baseline level of comfort on a bike.

Your accommodation: Ah House Nelson City Bed & Breakfast

Garden views in the heart of Nelson City Centre is the Ah house- an award-winning B&B. Soak up the sun on the patio or explore the garden and surroundings.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 7



Nelson to Abel Tasman National Park

From Nelson, follow the coastline through several small seaside towns including the popular holiday destination of Kaiteriteri with its magnificent sandy beaches and calm blue waters. Continuing on you'll come to the tiny settlement of Marahau, gateway to the Abel Tasman National Park.

Abel Tasman National Park

Experience the golden beauty of Abel Tasman National Park, a coastal paradise renowned for its spectacular hiking track, pristine golden beaches, secluded inlets, and private lagoons. With its mild climate and stunning natural environment, it's a cherished destination for New Zealanders nationwide. Why not enjoy a scenic cruise through the Sounds or take a kayaking tour around its many sheltered bays? Relax to the melodious birdsong and get up close to some of the park's many animal residents, including native bats, geckos, birds, marine mammals, fur seals, and dolphins.

Sail and Cruise Transfer with Abel Tasman Sailing Adventures

Escape the crowds and sail deep into the heart of the Abel Tasman National Park. This unforgettable one-way journey combines the relaxation of a morning skippered sail with the excitement of a high-speed water taxi cruise, making it the perfect scenic transfer to the remote Awaroa Lodge. You'll glide past golden beaches, visit the famous Split Apple Rock, cruise via the Tonga Marine Reserve to spot native fur seals, and enjoy a delicious packed lunch all in one seamless adventure. Travel the Abel Tasman coast in style and arrive refreshed at your destination!

Harakeke Restaurant at Awaroa Lodge

Indulge in an exquisite 3-course dining experience at the remote and stunning Awaroa Lodge, nestled in the heart of Abel Tasman National Park. The Harakeke Restaurant delivers a regionally-influenced menu using the freshest local produce, much of it grown on-site in their organic garden. Dine inside the glass-walled Conservatory overlooking the wetlands or by the cozy log fire for a truly unique New Zealand culinary experience.

Your accommodation: Awaroa Lodge

Surrounded by pristine waterways and native forest, the Lodge has been constructed to make the most of its secluded location. Enjoy a range of activities like a guided walk or kayak, relax on the famous Awaroa beach or take a walk through the lodge's grounds and surrounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 8



Half Day Guided Sea Kayak Trip

Awaroa is the perfect base to start a half day sea kayak adventure with immediate access to the Tonga Island Marine Reserve and the Awaroa Lagoon, both offering top class sea kayaking with a remote feel. The marine reserve trip explores the bays south of Awaroa with views of stunning granite sea cliffs, marine life thriving in a pristine marine ecosystem and sea birds diving and foraging for food. The lagoon offers sheltered paddling conditions with stunning scenery, secluded beaches, the chance to see eagle rays feeding on the sea floor and a range of sea birds feeding on the sandy banks. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#)

Harakeke Restaurant at Awaroa Lodge

Indulge in an exquisite 3-course dining experience at the remote and stunning Awaroa Lodge, nestled in the heart of Abel Tasman National Park. The Harakeke Restaurant delivers a regionally-influenced menu using the freshest local produce, much of it grown on-site in their organic garden. Dine inside the glass-walled Conservatory overlooking the wetlands or by the cozy log fire for a truly unique New Zealand culinary experience.

Your accommodation: Awaroa Lodge

Surrounded by pristine waterways and native forest, the Lodge has been constructed to make the most of its secluded location. Enjoy a range of activities like a guided walk or kayak, relax on the famous Awaroa beach or take a walk through the lodge's grounds and surrounds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 9



Abel Tasman Sea Shuttle

Today you will board a comfortable catamaran vessel to cruise the National Park. Abel Tasman Sea Shuttles have plenty of room to move around on board for photo opportunities and to make the most of your Abel Tasman experience. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

Marahau to Picton

The drive from Abel Tasman National Park (Mārahau) to Picton is a stunning journey transitioning from the golden-sand beaches of the Tasman region to the spectacular waterways of the Marlborough Sounds. After leaving Mārahau and heading through the orchards of the Motueka Valley, you can make your first stop in Motueka itself for a coffee or to check out the local art scene. The drive takes you through the city of Nelson and along the coast of Tasman Bay towards the Bryant Range. The highway between Nelson and Picton also crosses the Pelorus River and just at this junction is the famous and historic Pelorus Bridge. From here there are a number of forest walks with the most popular the 30 minute loop through beech, rimu and totara forest to the swing-bridge. Starting in the town of Havelock the Queen Charlotte Drive travels the Marlborough Sounds coastline towards the port town of Picton. Magnificent views of the sounds can be had from many vantage points so allow plenty of time to enjoy the scenery. If you can spare the time take the narrow windy road to Portage along Mahau Sound and Kenepuru Sound with their bush clad hillsides and secluded sandy coves. Arrive in the busy port town of Picton, and it's here that the Interislander ferries arrive and depart. The small town centre has plenty of shops and cafes and the waterfront area is a very pleasant place to spend a few hours watching the activity of the ships. The Edwin Fox Maritime Centre on the wharf is worth a visit with the star attraction being the vessel the Edwin Fox, reputedly the 9th oldest ship in the world.

Return vehicle to Picton Wharf

Before departing Picton drop your rental car at the wharf and continue your onward journey.

Interislander Ferry Picton to Wellington

The 92 km journey between Picton and Wellington takes around 3 hours and has been described as 'one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world'. Around one hour of the cruise takes you through the Marlborough Sounds. This region of bush covered mountains, small islands, crystal clear waters and secluded bays offer remarkable photographic opportunities.

From the Cook Strait, spectacular views of the Kaikoura Ranges on the South Island can be enjoyed and often dolphins and sea birds are seen. After crossing the strait you approach Wellington Harbour and pass many interesting points such as Pencarrow Head on top of which is New Zealand's oldest lighthouse (1859). Red Rocks is home to a seal colony and Oterangi Bay is the site which recorded the country's highest ever wind speed of 268 kph (167 mph).

Taxi Transfer from Wellington Ferry Terminal to Accommodation

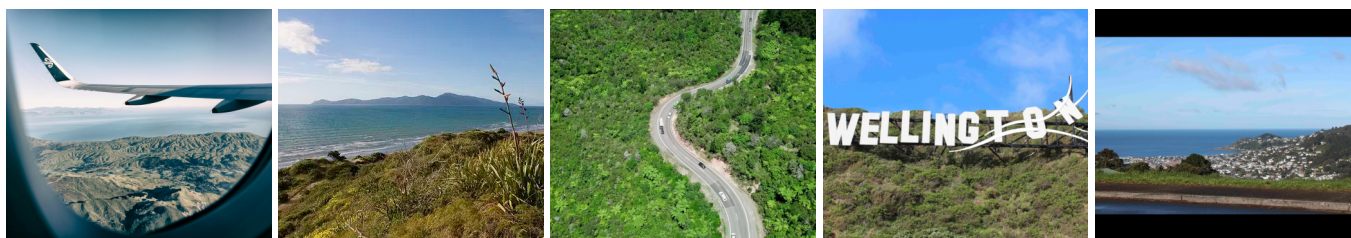
Your accommodation: Booklovers B&B

Located just 10 minutes walk from Te Papa - The National Museum, dozens of cafes and restaurants, theatres and cinemas, and of course bookshops - Booklovers B&B offers the most comfort with the least fuss. A perfect place to relax after a busy day exploring the culture of Wellington, especially if you love a good book.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



Private Transfer Wellington Hotel to Airport with In Style Executive

You will be collected from your Wellington hotel and transferred to the airport.

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:	Wellington
Finishes:	Wellington
Tour length:	10
Accommodation:	
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Booklovers B&B
Day 2	Edit Picton
Day 3	Lochmara Lodge
Day 4	Lochmara Lodge
Day 5	Ah House Nelson City Bed & Breakfast
Day 6	Ah House Nelson City Bed & Breakfast
Day 7	Awaroa Lodge
Day 8	Awaroa Lodge
Day 9	Booklovers B&B