



The Heart of Central Otago

This active experience is specifically tailored for those who appreciate comfort, history, and adventure, including an unforgettable three-day focus on the area's iconic cycle routes. From the buzz of Queenstown, we follow the mighty Clutha River and delve deep into the rugged landscapes of the former gold rush era. Spend three enriching days exploring the magnificent Clutha Gold Trail and its connected routes, tracing the river's path through gorges and farmlands. A scenic drive then leads you to the tranquillity of Kurow, where you'll enjoy an exceptional two-night glamping experience at Valley Views, soaking in the Waitaki Valley vistas before completing your loop through the magnificent alpine resort of Wānaka.

Starts in: Queenstown
Finishes in: Queenstown
Length: 10days / 9nights
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: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)
Includes: Unlimited kms
plus much more...

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.

Meals included: Breakfast



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.

Trust the Chef Long Lunch at Carrick Winery

An award-winning restaurant and terrace have expansive views of the Bannockburn Inlet and Carrick Range. Changing each season, our menu is designed to showcase seasonal local produce including New Zealand's famous game, seafood, summer fruit, and organic vegetables. The menus follow the vineyard lunch tradition of offering a variety of share plates or individual platter lunches.

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



The Gold Trails Three Day Cycling Package with Kiwi Journeys

Experience two of New Zealand's most memorable cycle trails as you follow the mighty Clutha Mata-au River. Ride through the Roxburgh Gorge Trail, where the dramatic landscapes are steeped in gold rush history and tales of a bygone era. Then take your time on the Clutha Gold Trail, a journey through rolling farmland, riverside paths, and friendly country towns, with plenty of opportunities to stop, relax, and soak up the region's warm hospitality. This grade 2-3 package offers a relaxed and adventurous experience with 3-5 hours of riding per day, totalling in approx. 109kms. Whilst most of the rides are suitable for beginners, there are sections of The Roxburgh Gorge trail that are for intermediate riders and offers a mix of flat paths and more challenging sections as you follow the Clutha River. Not sure if it's the right fit? Reach out to your travel specialist for some great alternatives!

Clyde to Roxburgh Hydro Dam

Receive a thorough trail briefing and bike fitting, followed by a shuttle from Cromwell to Clyde. Today the trail takes you through a stunning transformation from urban to remote landscapes, with breathtaking views of the rugged backdrop. As you cycle, you'll pass remnants of gold mining history before reaching Doctors Point, where a jet boat awaits for a memorable transfer. From here, continue your journey along the trail towards the impressive Roxburgh Dam, one of New Zealand's largest hydroelectric dams.

Distance: 34km

Meals provided: Packed lunch

Your accommodation: Lake Roxburgh Lodge or similar

Lake Roxburgh Lodge is an award-winning retreat in Central Otago offering comfortable accommodation, a licensed restaurant, and convenient access to the Roxburgh Gorge and Clutha Gold cycle trails.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 4



Roxburgh to Millers Flat

This scenic section takes you along the riverside, offering stunning views of hillside rock formations and pastoral farmland. Enjoy a relaxing swim or picnic at Pinder's Pond, a popular spot just off the trail. As you cycle, you'll pass by picturesque landscapes and charming small settlements, reaching the peaceful settlement of Millers Flat.

Distance: 30km

Meals provided: Breakfast

Your accommodation: Ormaglade Cabins or similar

Ormaglade Cabins offers stylish, self-contained cabins with outdoor baths, set on the Clutha Gold Trail in peaceful Millers Flat, ideal for cyclists and nature lovers.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Millers Flat to Lawrence

Cycle from Millers Flat to Lawrence, following the river through the beautiful Beaumont Gorge. Take in the stunning landscapes and visit the historic Horseshoe Bend Suspension Bridge. Along the way, enjoy glimpses of the region's gold rush history, including the arrival of Chinese prospectors. Finish your ride in Lawrence, where gold was first discovered in New Zealand, and explore this charming town rich in heritage. From there, you'll be transferred back to Cromwell.

Distance: 45km

Meals provided: Breakfast

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 6



Cromwell to Kurow

Begin your scenic journey from Cromwell to Kurow, tracking Lake Dunstan until you reach the historic Bendigo Reserve, a former gold mining settlement where you can explore the remains of old stone cottages. The drive then ascends dramatically over the Lindis Pass (971m), where the tussock-covered hills mark your transition from Central Otago into the vast MacKenzie high country and the small town of Omarama. The final leg of the route follows the massive structures of the Benmore and Aviemore dams before concluding in Kurow.

Kurow

Located in the heart of the Waitaki Valley, Kurow is a historic and friendly town that serves as the perfect base for exploring this region. It's a place of contrasts, where serene river valleys meet rugged, high-country landscapes. Kurow is perhaps best known as the childhood home of Sir Edmund Hillary, and a memorial to the famous mountaineer can be found in the town. It's a fitting tribute to a man who embodied the adventurous spirit of this area. Today, that same spirit lives on, as Kurow is a popular stop on the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail, one of New Zealand's most spectacular long-distance rides.

The town is a hidden gem for wine lovers, sitting at the heart of the Waitaki Valley wine region. The unique limestone soils and cool climate produce exceptional Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, and you can visit several local cellar doors for a tasting. The Waitaki River, which flows past the town, is also a prime spot for trout and salmon fishing.

Your accommodation: Valley Views Glamping

Valley Views Glamping takes camping to an exciting new level. Enjoy 'glamorous camping' in luxury canvas tents amongst the foothills of Mt Domett overlooking the Waitaki and Hakataramea Valleys, only eight kilometres from the Alps to Ocean cycle trail. Situated on a working beef cattle farm twelve km from Kurow.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



At Valley Views there are 2 sets of 2 outdoor baths heated by gas, both with beautiful views and screening for privacy set in the pine forest. Take advantage by checking the In Use signs at the top of the path before turning it round and making your way down to your private bathing experience.

Additional Activities on site: Horse riding lessons (booked per hour), a relaxing one-hour massage per person, and rugged 4x4 Farm Tours lasting two hours (priced for 1-2 people, with an extra charge for additional participants up to six total). Please note that these additional activities must be booked in advance to ensure availability, talk to your travel specialist.

Climb Kurow Hill - Take on the climb up Kurow Hill for unmissable views of the Hakataramea Valley—a worthwhile reward for the fairly steep 45-minute to two-hour effort. Access the well-formed track from the end of Grey Street. Important Note: As this walk is on a working farm, please remember to shut all gates securely and remain on the marked path throughout your journey. Explore Lake Waitaki - Lake Waitaki is a popular spot close to Kurow, known for water sports and fishing. It holds the distinction of being the smallest, oldest, and farthest downstream of the three man-made lakes that form the extensive Waitaki hydroelectric scheme. Situated on the Waitaki River, it lies below the larger Benmore and Aviemore lakes.

Valley Views Glamping takes camping to an exciting new level. Enjoy 'glamorous camping' in luxury canvas tents amongst the foothills of Mt Domett overlooking the Waitaki and Hakataramea Valleys, only eight kilometres from the Alps to Ocean cycle trail. Situated on a working beef cattle farm twelve km from Kurow.

Meals included: Breakfast



Your journey from Kurow to Wānaka offers a breathtaking transition from the rugged beauty of the Waitaki Valley to the majestic Southern Alps. As you depart Kurow, you'll pass through the rural town of Omarama, where you might consider a stop for a cuppa or to witness the famous Omarama Clay Cliffs – a unique geological formation. The landscape gradually transforms, giving way to more mountainous terrain as you head towards the Lindis Pass. The Lindis Pass is one of New Zealand's highest roads, with the summit reaching 971 metres. The tussock-covered hills offer an unusual contrast as you pass from the Mackenzie Basin and into Central Otago. The first Central Otago settlement you reach is the quaint village of Tarras, which has a boutique store and a lovely café. Approaching Wanaka, the wonderful alpine lake welcomes you to the town. Despite its size, Wanaka has a wide variety of activities available. In winter, it is undoubtedly New Zealand's premier ski destination, with its very close proximity to the Treble Cone and Cardrona ski fields. Mt Aspiring National Park sits to the western edge of the lake and offers wonderful walking tracks for all abilities; the Rob Roy Track is a great introduction to this spectacular park. Fishing, sailing, and water skiing are popular pastimes on the lake, and the many beach access points provide great spots for picnics and relaxing.

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

Walking tracks in and around Wanaka

There are some excellent walks in and around Wanaka. The information below is provided by the Department of Conservation. Located in Wanaka is a Department of Conservation information centre and you can get updates on track conditions and suitability plus you can learn about the area, its natural history and its people. Listed below are a selection of short walks but check with the Department of Conservation information centre for weather conditions, track suitability and conditions first. Outlet Track

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

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

Mount Iron Track

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

Distance: 4.5 km. Completion Time: 1.5 hour.

Diamond Lake and Rocky Mountain walks

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

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

Rob Roy Glacier Track

Rob Roy Valley is a good entry point to an area of spectacular alpine scenery, snowfields, glaciers, sheer rock cliffs and waterfalls. The road to this track is unsealed and unsuitable for rental cars, but transportation to the beginning of the walk can be arranged.

Distance: 10 km. Completion Time: 3 - 4 hours return. There is avalanche danger during winter and spring (June-November) on the Rob Roy Track.

Roy's Peak Track

The most famous walk in the Wanaka area, this steep walk climbs 1,500m on a well-formed track with the most spectacular views of Lake Wanaka, its islands, bays, and the mighty snow-capped mountains of the Southern Alps, including Mount Aspiring.

Distance: 16 km return via the same track. Completion Time: 5 - 6 hour return. This track is closed from the 1st of October - 10th November each year. In winter alpine equipment (such as crampons) are required.

Isthmus Peak Track

A long, steady climb that rewards walkers with spectacular, panoramic views of Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea as well as the mountains of the Southern Alps.

Distance: 16 km return via the same track. Completion Time: 5 - 6 hour return. This track is closed from the 20th of November - 20th December each year. This track is not recommended in winter due to snow and ice build up on the track.

Your accommodation: Edgewater Wanaka

Edgewater is Wanaka's leading hotel located right on the edge of Lake Wanaka. A short stroll to the town centres shops, cafes and restaurants and close to many walking trails the resort is ideal to explore this wonderful Alpine setting.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Wanaka to Queenstown via Arrowtown

Leaving Wanaka you head over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road before dropping into Arrowtown. From here it's just a short drive to Queenstown, along the way passing Lakes Hayes before you catch your first glimpse of Lake Wakatipu and the bustling tourist mecca of Queenstown. This drive should be planned as a whole day to really enjoy the scenery and to allow time to explore the walks, and many stops en route.

Explore Arrowtown

One of the most picturesque settlements in New Zealand, Arrowtown sits alongside the gold-bearing Arrow River. Established in 1862 during the height of the Otago gold rush, the settlement grew quickly as pioneers constructed cottages, shops, hotels and churches, more than 60 of which can still be seen today. A special highlight is the Chinese settlement at the edge of the river. Built by Chinese miners from 1868, this area of restored shelters and buildings paints a picture of earlier times. It is a living historic settlement with many stories to tell. Wander the tree-lined streets of restored cottages and explore gold mining sites. In April and May Arrowtown ignites with colour as deciduous trees prepare for winter and a festival held in the last week of April celebrates the town's seasonal beauty and glittering history.

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: 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 bungee 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, Speciality Dinner



Day 10



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:	10
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 2	Marsden Lake Resort
Day 3	Lake Roxburgh Lodge or similar
Day 4	Ormaglade Cabins or similar
Day 5	Marsden Lake Resort
Day 6	Valley Views Glamping
Day 7	Valley Views Glamping
Day 8	Edgewater Wanaka
Day 9	Millennium Hotel Queenstown