



Southern National Parks

Your journey begins in Ōtautahi / Christchurch before heading into the Mackenzie Basin to witness the turquoise brilliance of Lake Tekapo and the majesty of Aoraki / Mount Cook. Spend your days navigating the Tasman Glacier by boat and enjoying the vibrant energy of Tāhuna / Queenstown, where the Skyline Luge offers unparalleled views of the Remarkables. Seek true seclusion at Waitai Lodge for a Fiordland escape, accessible only by helicopter or foot, providing a rare connection to New Zealand's untouched rainforests. After finding your zen in the wilderness, the route follows the rugged West Coast, showcasing ancient glaciers and wild beaches as you complete your loop back to the Garden City. This bespoke itinerary is designed for those who appreciate refined comfort and the profound silence of our most remote landscapes.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
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: All coach transport
Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

plus much more...

Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Discover Christchurch Afternoon Tour with Leisure Tours

A half-day sightseeing tour of Christchurch highlighting both the damage to the city inflicted by several large earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and the rebuild which is currently in progress, together with the surviving beauty of the city and the historical landmarks. Experience the grand architecture, beautiful gardens, and scenic viewpoints on a half-day city tour of Christchurch.

Your accommodation: Sudima Christchurch City

Sudima Christchurch City is a brand new 5-star boutique hotel, ideally located on Victoria Street. Amidst an array of cafes, restaurants and bars, stay only a martini olive pips' throw from beautiful Hagley Park and Christchurch's CBD. Experience the garden city in comfort and style.



Day 2



Christchurch to Aoraki-Mt Cook via Lake Tekapo Small Group Tour with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included

Leave Christchurch behind for a small-group journey crossing the expansive Canterbury Plains and climbing into the high country. Relax in comfort as you head to your first stop in the charming rural township of Geraldine for a morning break. Continue into the dramatic Mackenzie Basin to capture iconic photos of the impossibly blue waters at Lake Tekapo and visit the historic, picturesque The Church of the Good Shepherd. After tracking the edge of Lake Pukaki, arrive at Aoraki / Mount Cook Village in the afternoon, where you will be treated to a complimentary picnic lunch under the shadow of New Zealand's highest peak. Key Stops: Depart Christchurch, Geraldine (comfort stop), Lake Tekapo, Church of the Good Shepherd, Lake Pukaki photo stop, Aoraki/Mount Cook Village arrival.

Meals Included: Picnic Lunch, snacks & bottled water.

Duration: Approx 6 hours

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Wakefield Wing Superior Room

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. Room type - Wakefield Wing Superior room facing Aoraki/Mt. Cook.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

At 3754m Aoraki-Mt Cook is Aotearoa-New Zealand's highest mountain, located deep in the heart of the Southern Alps. As well as its impressive beauty, Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park is also home to a huge range of awe-inspiring sights and activities. Take to the air with Mt Cook Ski Planes for a scenic flight that includes a glacier landing. At around 27 kilometres long the Tasman Glacier is New Zealand's longest and a Glacier Explorers tour allows you to see its unique features up close.

There are many short hikes in and around the park and these are well signposted around the village. Those with an interest in the night sky should take a Big Sky Stargazing tour with the Hermitage Hotel. The region is considered to have one of the clearest night skies in the world and is one of the few gold-rated dark sky reserves worldwide.

Visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre for insight into this region's mountain climbing history. You'll also learn of Sir Ed's incredible achievements and his dedication to helping others around the world.

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.

Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre Museum and Theatre Explorer Pass with Hermitage

A tribute to New Zealand's Sir Edmund Hillary, a humanitarian, ambassador, and one of the world's greatest explorers. The centre showcases the Aoraki Mount Cook region, the history of climbing, and early transport used throughout the region. This comprehensive museum details the life of Sir Edmund Hillary, the Hermitage, and provides access to the 126-seat custom-designed theatre. Check out the daily film schedule which includes 3D Movies, documentaries, and 360-degree digital dome features.

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Wakefield Wing Superior Room

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. Room type - Wakefield Wing Superior room facing Aoraki/Mt. Cook.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Aoraki-Mount Cook to Queenstown Small Group Tour with Cheeky Kiwi

Depart Mount Cook Village and journey down one of the country's most scenic roads, tracking the vibrant blue waters of Lake Pukaki with stunning backward views of the Southern Alps. Afterward, continue south to sample ultra-fresh seafood at High Country Salmon, cross the majestic Lindis Pass, and stop for local orchard treats in Cromwell before descending through the rugged Kawarau Gorge into Queenstown where your guide will drop you directly at your accommodation. Key Stops: High Country Salmon Farm, Lindis Pass lookout, Jackson's Orchard, Kawarau Gorge, Queenstown arrival.

Included: Salmon Tasting

Duration: Approx. 4 hours

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.

Gondola and 3 Luge Rides with Skyline Queenstown

In the heart of Queenstown, located 450 metres above town in the Ben Lomond Scenic Reserve is the Skyline Complex. A gondola ride to the summit makes for awe-inspiring views of the city surround. Arrive at the complex and wander the outside viewing decks for a picture perfect outlook. Then onto the Luge! The 800 metre luge track offers an exhilarating journey through banked corners, tunnels and dippers.

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 5



Explore Queenstown

Queenstown, known in Māori as Tāhuna is celebrated as New Zealand's 'adventure capital'. Though Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by a plethora of historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Whether you are looking for a scenic short walk or a longer one, you will find the perfect hike or bike trail in Queenstown. Explore Queenstown Gardens, or try out more challenging trails up to Ben Lomond Walkaway or Queenstown Hill Walking Track. Enjoy iconic views and take Queenstown Gondola up 450 metres to Bob's Peak, or ride on the 100-year-old Steamship - the TSS Earnslaw - to Walter Peak Station for dinner and a farm tour. Browse the waterfront cafes and al fresco restaurants, try out the famous Fergburger, or grab a dessert at Patagonia Chocolates.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Best of Queenstown Scenic Tour with Altitude Tours

Experience Queenstown's Ultimate Day Tour, from central Queenstown. Your adventure begins with a journey in a premium vehicle with complimentary Wi-Fi, leading you to an observation point for stunning panoramic views. Next, visit the charming township of Arrowtown, with a stop at the Shotover River for photos, and enjoy time to explore, grab a coffee, or try gold panning. Continue to Gibbston, home to the world's first commercial bungee jump and famous for its Middle-earth magic and world-class wines. Enjoy wine tasting (non-alcoholic substitutes available) and a shared cheeseboard at a local winery with breathtaking views. Conclude your tour with a picturesque 30-minute scenic boat cruise on Lake Wakatipu, ending at the wharf in the heart of Queenstown.

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.

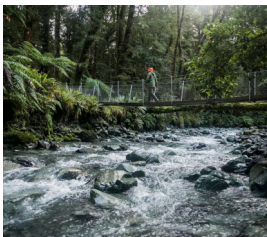
Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel Queenstown

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Helicopter from Milford Sound into Martins Bay - Lunch and Dinner Included

Sit back and enjoy the scenery as your guide drives you through the heart of the Fiordland National Park to Milford Sound. Enjoy a spectacular scenic helicopter flight from Milford Sound to Martins Bay, followed by an impressive lunch set amongst the wilderness in our private location. The afternoon is yours to enjoy. Explore the Martins Bay sand dunes by foot, taking in the rugged beauty of this isolated West Coast beach. Alternatively, choose to relax at Waitai Lodge in front of the fire with a good book and enjoy a soak in the outdoor hot tubs. The group reunites for a delicious three-course dinner accompanied by a fine selection of New Zealand beer and wine. Sit back, relax, and reflect on a great first day.

Your accommodation: Waitai Lodge Fiordland Escape

Tucked along the water's edge where rainforest meets alpine slopes, Waitai Lodge anchors refined comfort in deep wilderness solitude. Full-height glass and warm timber open toward calm lake waters and ridgelines. Surrounded by rainforest trails, the lodge serves as a self-contained base for guided backcountry journeys, boat trips, and remote restoration.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 7



Waitai Lodge to Milford Sound and return to Te Anau - Breakfast & Lunch Included

Awake to the sound of bird song. Enjoy a hearty breakfast before joining your guide on a scenic jetboat ride across Lake McKerrow. Take in the ever-adapting ecosystem as it shifts from a mountainous beech forest to a wetland and a vibrant coastal scenery. Marvel at ancient temperate rainforest with thousand-year-old giants such as native Rimu and Kahikatea. Alternatively, relax in the lodge while you appreciate your remote location. Regroup at the lodge in time for morning tea, before boarding your helicopter flight back to the dramatic Milford Sound. Marvel at Milford Sound's vertical granite walls rising from the sea while aboard the Fiordland Jewel for your luxury cruise. Your guide will then return you to Te Anau or Queenstown while you take in the impressive scenery.

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, Lunch



Day 8



Queenstown to Franz Josef with Glacier Shuttles

Leaving Queenstown, travel past picturesque scenery of massive mountain peaks and crystal-clear blue lakes. Journey across the Haast Pass to the other side of the Southern Alps, the landscape changes dramatically. Enter the wild and wonderful West Coast, a remote and unspoiled region. Wind your way past native rainforest, rocky coastlines and powerful waterfalls. Your journey concludes in the village of Franz Josef, your next base for exploration.

Franz Josef

Franz Josef, named after both the local village and the nearby glacier, holds special significance in Māori culture as "Ko Roimata o Hine Hukatere" – The Tears of the Ice Maiden. This rare glacier is one of only three in the world that descends from alpine heights into a temperate rainforest, almost reaching sea level. New Zealand is home to two of these unique glaciers, Franz Josef and Fox Glacier, both highly accessible and popular with visitors. The best ways to experience the glacier are through scenic flights or, for the adventurous, a heli-hike. You can also enjoy glacier views with a short drive from the village and walking tracks. Beyond the glacier, Franz Josef offers a wealth of adventure activities and beautiful forest and alpine walks, making it a must-visit destination.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - One Hour Private Tub with Waiho Hot Tubs

Relax and unwind in the soothing comfort of fresh, warm water and aromatic wood smoke. Enjoy your own private tubs, nestled in a lush rainforest setting on New Zealand's West Coast. These wood-fired hot tubs combine the soothing comfort of warm water with the unique atmosphere of wood smoke to give you an unforgettable experience.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier

Only a breath away from the Franz Josef Glacier, Scenic Hotel is located in the heart of Franz Josef Village. Here you will find all of the amenities you would expect, as well as being close to the shops, restaurants and activities on offer in the beautiful Westland region.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



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 - Off-Road Quad Bike Adventure Tour with Franz Josef Wilderness Tours

Experience an unforgettable off-road journey through lush rainforest, riverbeds, and breathtaking glacier landscapes, including views of the Southern Alps and Franz Josef Glacier. With expert guides providing gear, training, and fascinating Māori legends, you'll enjoy an exciting quad bike or buggy ride tailored to all skill levels. Choose from single, double, or family-friendly three-seater buggies for an adventure perfect for everyone. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier

Only a breath away from the Franz Josef Glacier, Scenic Hotel is located in the heart of Franz Josef Village. Here you will find all of the amenities you would expect, as well as being close to the shops, restaurants and activities on offer in the beautiful Westland region.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station with Hokitika Scenic Tours

Head north from Franz Josef through to the historic gold mining region of Hokitika. Known for its Pounamu (New Zealand Greenstone) this seaside town has a rich history dating back to the 1860's. 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.

TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch Scenic Plus with Great Journeys NZ

Great Journeys New Zealand's Scenic Plus carriage provides comfort and vast panoramic views, making our TranzAlpine scenic train journey the perfect way to explore coast-to-coast through the 'Great Divide' and the indomitable spine of mountains that partitions New Zealand's South Island. Scenic Plus offers an all-inclusive experience on the unique TranzAlpine scenic rail journey to invigorate all the senses! Feast your eyes on epic scenery while you savour regionally inspired cuisine paired with sumptuous wine and beer all from the comfort of your luxurious seat – a hosted dining experience like no other. Quite simply, we have done everything we can to ensure you feel at peace as you sink back in your seat and soak up the scenery.

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.

Your accommodation: Sudima Christchurch City

Sudima Christchurch City is a brand new 5-star boutique hotel, ideally located on Victoria Street. Amidst an array of cafes, restaurants and bars, stay only a martini olive pips' throw from beautiful Hagley Park and Christchurch's CBD. Experience the garden city in comfort and style.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 11



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:	Self-Guided Coach Tours
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	11
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Sudima Christchurch City
Day 2	Hermitage Hotel, Wakefield Wing Superior Room
Day 3	Hermitage Hotel, Wakefield Wing Superior Room
Day 4	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 5	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 6	Waitai Lodge Fiordland Escape
Day 7	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 8	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier
Day 9	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier
Day 10	Sudima Christchurch City