



Fiords, Glaciers and Mountains Self Drive Tour

This 10 day tour takes you to the icons of the South Island, with extra nights at The George Hotel in Christchurch, at Fiordland Lodge and Queenstown's Matakauri Lodge you'll have time to discover the charms of each destination. You begin with a journey past the mountains of the Southern Alps and turquoise waters of alpine lakes before arriving into Mt. Cook National Park. Next you venture further south to Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park. Here you'll explore the pristine wilderness on a Milford Sound nature cruise. In Queenstown, the Adventure Capital, there's time to enjoy the scenery and endless activities on offer before returning to Christchurch via the magnificent West Coast Glaciers.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 10days / 9nights
Accommodation: Luxury Lodges
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



Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

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

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!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Triple Pass - Tram, Punting and Gondola

Experience three of Christchurch's iconic attractions in one day: the Christchurch Tram, Christchurch Gondola, and Punting on the Avon River. The historic tram is a delightful way to explore the evolving inner city, taking in the various sights with the hop-on hop-off pass and learning about the city from the live commentary. You'll also enjoy a bird's eye view of Christchurch and the Canterbury region including the distant peaks of the Southern Alps when you ride the gondola cableway to the top of the Port Hills in Heathcote Valley. Punting on the Avon River takes you through the city's green belt: a relaxing way to explore what is affectionately known as the 'Garden City'.

Your accommodation: The George Hotel

The George is the essence of supreme comfort. The award-winning 5 star hotel is opposite Hagley Park and just a few minutes stroll from the Botanic Gardens. It also has an award-winning restaurant, 50 Bistro onsite.

Meals included: Dinner



Day 2



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 - 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.

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Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



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.

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus

Experience the best views in the park from the spacious top floor rooms of the magnificent Hermitage Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 4



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Te Anau

Twizel, just south of Aoraki-Mt Cook was the location of many Lord of the Rings movie scenes and a little further on is Omarama, the gliding capital of New Zealand. The Lindis Pass is one of New Zealand's highest roads with the summit reaching 971 metres. The tussock-covered hills offer a visual 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 several boutique stores and a lovely cafe. Cromwell sits at the head of the Kawarau Gorge and the historic old town is well worth the visit, the buildings are now home to quaint shops and cafes. The old town buildings were relocated from the valley that now sits deep under Lake Dunstan. Continue through the sheer cliffs of the Kawarau Gorge as they guide you towards Gibbston, one of New Zealand's premier wine-growing regions. At the famous historic Kawarau Bridge, you can take a bungee jump or sit back and enjoy the drama as visitors hurtle off the bridge. Approaching Queenstown the impressive Remarkables mountain range comes into view and then beautiful Lake Wakatipu as you head south. The lake guides you into Southland through its rich farming pastures and into Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park.

Relax at Fiordland Lodge

Perched on a ridge with commanding views of Lake Te Anau and the Murchison Mountains, Fiordland Lodge serves as a refined sanctuary within the rugged wilderness of a World Heritage area. The lodge's grand architecture, defined by soaring log ceilings and a massive stone fireplace, creates a warm, rustic atmosphere where guests can relax in the cedar hot tub or explore the property on E-bikes. Beyond the lodge, the wonders of Fiordland National Park await, offering world-class fly fishing, access to the famous Kepler and Milford Tracks, and breathtaking excursions to the iconic Milford and Doubtful Sounds. Talk to your travel specialist to book one of these incredible experiences.

Your accommodation: Fiordland Lodge

Anchored on elevated ground in a World Heritage Area, Fiordland Lodge pairs log-and-stone architecture with views across Lake Te Anau. High ceilings and stone hearths warm open interiors, where full-height glass looks to the Kepler Mountains. On the national park threshold, it provides a restorative base for Milford Sound excursions and backcountry walking.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 5



Te Anau to Milford Sound, returning to Te Anau

The magnificent Milford Road leading to Milford Sound offers some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery in the country. Countless photo opportunities mean this drive should not be rushed. From crystal clear lakes and towering mountains to lush glacier-formed meadows, this area is abundant with picture-perfect scenes. Continue on through the Homer Tunnel, an engineering marvel at 1219 meters long. Arriving in the village of Milford, you will be greeted with an amazing view of Mitre Peak. A day cruise into the heart of the sound is not to be missed. You'll learn about how this magnificent area was formed and experience the wonder of the falls that line the Fjord before back-tracking the way you came.

Milford Premium Cruise with RealNZ

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord aboard the M.V Sinbad, an exclusive vessel for a premium experience. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. With a glass of bubbles on arrival and canapes provided throughout the journey, this is the perfect way to explore Milford Sound. At a capped capacity of 45 people and a roaming nature guide providing informative commentary throughout the extended cruise, this experience allows guests to enjoy the Fiord at a relaxing pace. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Fiordland Lodge

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Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 6



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.

Rosewood Matakauri Lodge Dining

Rosewood Matakauri Lodge in Queenstown offers a superior fine dining experience rooted in Modern New Zealand cuisine, where the daily changing menu prioritizes local, seasonal, and sustainable ingredients primarily sourced from the Central Otago region and the lodge's own garden. The main venue, The Dining Room, provides an intimate atmosphere complemented by breathtaking panoramic views of Lake Wakatipu and The Remarkables, making every meal a visual and culinary delight. Guests typically enjoy a sophisticated, multi-course dinner tasting menu, which can be perfectly paired with local Central Otago wines, especially the region's famous Pinot Noir. Beyond the main dining room, the lodge provides flexible dining options, including private meals on suite patios, casual drinks on the Remarkables Terrace, and personalised dishes accommodated by the attentive culinary team. This ensures a refined yet relaxed gastronomic journey that is a highlight of any stay.

Your accommodation: Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown

Perched along a pine-forested headland on Lake Wakatipu, Matakauri Lodge pairs modern timber and stone with wide views across alpine waters. Full-height glass frames unobstructed vistas of The Remarkables, Cecil Peak, and Walter Peak. Positioned minutes from Queenstown, the lodge provides a quiet sanctuary combining local dining with access to alpine trails.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 7



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 bungy 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 - Appellation Private Boutique Wine Tour

For the more discerning wine lover, or simply people who prefer the flexibility of a private tour. Join one of Appellation's senior wine guides on a wine tasting journey to some of New Zealand's most memorable vineyards, at your own pace. Your guides local knowledge and familiarity with the vineyards of Central Otago is at your disposal for an intimate half day wine experience in a thriving wine region. Packages are tailor made for you, and you are encouraged to advise of any varietal or vineyard preferences when booking.

The private boutique wine tour includes tastings at four vineyards, typically two in the Gibbston/Queenstown region and two in the Bannockburn/Cromwell region. You'll enjoy a delightful platter lunch at Carrick Winery with a glass of premium matched wine. You'll also explore the history and scenery of the region with a stroll through Old Cromwell Town and a stunning drive through the Kawarau Gorge. Tours last approximately 5.5 hours.

Your accommodation: Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown

Perched along a pine-forested headland on Lake Wakatipu, Matakauri Lodge pairs modern timber and stone with wide views across alpine waters. Full-height glass frames unobstructed vistas of The Remarkables, Cecil Peak, and Walter Peak. Positioned minutes from Queenstown, the lodge provides a quiet sanctuary combining local dining with access to alpine trails.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 8



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.

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](#).

Your accommodation: Legacy Te Waonui Hotel Franz Josef

Set within dense native podocarp forest at Franz Josef, Te Waonui Forest Retreat pairs low-impact timber architecture with deep wilderness immersion. Broad glass walls and private balconies open into tree-fern canopies, drawing natural light, dense greenery, and shifting West Coast weather into quiet interior spaces. Positioned on the boundary of Westland Tai Poutini National Park, the lodge provides a calm, atmospheric base for exploring glacier valleys, rainforest tracks, and regional dining at an unhurried pace.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 9



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.

Private Transfer Christchurch Train Station to Accommodation

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

Your accommodation: The George Hotel

The George is the essence of supreme comfort. The award-winning 5 star hotel is opposite Hagley Park and just a few minutes stroll from the Botanic Gardens. It also has an award-winning restaurant, 50 Bistro onsite.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 10



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:	10
Accommodation:	Luxury Lodges
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	The George Hotel
Day 2	The George Hotel
Day 3	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium Plus
Day 4	Fiordland Lodge
Day 5	Fiordland Lodge
Day 6	Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown
Day 7	Rosewood Matakauri Queenstown
Day 8	Legacy Te Waonui Hotel Franz Josef
Day 9	The George Hotel