

Top of the South Island Rail Experience

Begin your journey in the 'Garden City' where you will experience the historical tram, punting and the gondola before boarding the Coastal Pacific Train and travelling to Kaikoura. Experience a scenic cruise with abundant wildlife before hopping back on the train to disembark in Picton. Spend time in Nelson and Punakaiki before enjoying the TranzAlpine train and returning to Christchurch.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 9days / 8nights
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

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Private Transfer Accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring

Included activity: Shared Transfer from Kaikoura Railway Station to Accommodation with Kaikoura Shuttles

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Included activity: Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre Combo Entry

Included activity: Shared Transfer from Christchurch Train Station to Christchurch CBD Accommodation with Christchurch Touring Company

: Meals included: 8 breakfasts

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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Christchurch Triple Pass - Tram, Punting and Gondola

Included activity: Coastal Pacific Train: Christchurch to Kaikoura

Included activity: Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikoura

Included activity: Coastal Pacific Train: Kaikoura to Picton

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Included activity: Private Transfer from Accommodation to Airport with Christchurch Touring Company

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!

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 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'.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Private Transfer Accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring

A private driver will collect you from your accommodation and transfer you to the Christchurch train station in time for your train journey.

Coastal Pacific Train: Christchurch to Kaikoura

The Coastal Pacific train journey travels between Christchurch, the South Island's largest city and the delightful port of Picton. This journey is a scenic feast of New Zealand, with the Kaikoura mountain ranges on one side of your train and the rugged Pacific Ocean coastline on the other. The Coastal Pacific travels through 22 tunnels and crosses 175 bridges - one of them being New Zealand's only road-rail bridge. The Coastal Pacific includes an open-air viewing carriage where all your senses are awakened with the clean and fresh sea air.

This leg of the journey crosses the wonderful North Canterbury countryside to the township of Kaikoura. Kaikoura offers dramatic landscape scenes of mountains meeting the sea. Kaikoura is world famous for its resident whale population and whale-watching tours. The more adventurous traveller might wish to get closer to marine life and swim with the dolphins.

Shared Transfer from Kaikoura Railway Station to Accommodation with Kaikoura Shuttles

Today you will be met at Kaikoura railway station and transferred to your accommodation.

Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura

Experience New Zealand's only marine-based whale-watching company. Whale Watch Kaikōura offers a once-in-a-lifetime, up-close encounter with the giant Sperm Whale. You are also likely to encounter New Zealand fur seals, dolphins, and albatross. Depending on the season you may also see Pilot, Blue, and Southern Right whales as well as migrating humpbacks. Often orcas can be spotted here and the world's smallest dolphin, the Hector's, occasionally makes an appearance.

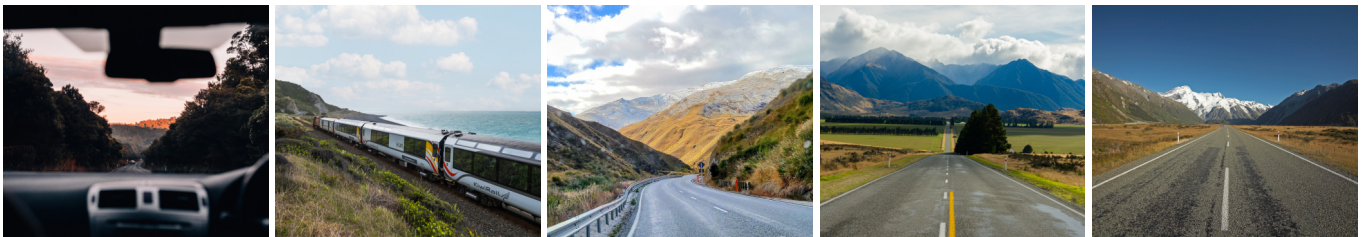
Your accommodation: Kaikoura Boutique Hotel

Kaikoura Boutique Hotel sits on the Esplanade overlooking Kaikoura's waterfront, just a short walk from tourist attractions, shops and cafes. The hotel has been lovingly refurbished with modern décor and a uniquely New Zealand design.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Shared Transfer from Kaikoura Accommodation to Railway Station with Kaikoura Shuttles

You will be met at your accommodation by a representative from Kaikoura Shuttles and transported to your point of departure.

Coastal Pacific Train: Kaikoura to Picton

The Coastal Pacific train journey travels between the delightful port of Picton and Christchurch, the South Island's largest city. This journey is a scenic feast of New Zealand, with the Kaikoura mountain ranges on one side of your train and the rugged Pacific Ocean coastline on the other. One of the world's most scenic train journeys, the Coastal Pacific travels through 22 tunnels and crosses 175 bridges, one of them being New Zealand's only road-rail bridge. As on The TranzAlpine, The Coastal Pacific includes an open air viewing carriage where all your senses are awakened with the clean, fresh, sea air.

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.

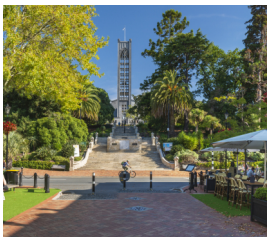
Your accommodation: Edit Picton

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 5



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.

Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre

Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre houses a display like no other and you don't have to be an aviation buff to enjoy it! Human stories from the Great War come to life in a theatrical treatment, which is innovative and visually stunning. Assisted by mannequins from Peter Jackson's Weta Workshop, captivating scenes depict the aircraft in context, some recreating actual incidents. The rare memorabilia is worthy of any national collection and ranges from beautifully crafted 'trench art' to personal items belonging to the famous Red Baron himself.

Your accommodation: Tides Hotel (was Trailways Hotel)

Centrally located within a few minutes walk of Nelson's central shopping precinct, theatres, restaurants and cafés, the information centre, and close to the scenic waterfront. Located right on the river, many of the rooms open onto the river view. Also overlooking the river is The Tides Restaurant and Bar.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Explore the Nelson and Abel Tasman region

Nelson is a great city to explore on foot. Visit the historic areas, and the famous Cathedral, or relax and enjoy the atmosphere at one of the many cafes on Trafalgar Street. Nelson is also noted for its many artists, and galleries displaying their work can be enjoyed by following one of the Art trails listed locally. Around 45 minutes drive away is Abel Tasman National Park. The region offers countless opportunities to explore for visitors of every age and capability, from enjoying the golden sand beaches and clear warm waters to guided kayaking trips viewing seals and dolphins, to exploring some of New Zealand's finest walking tracks.

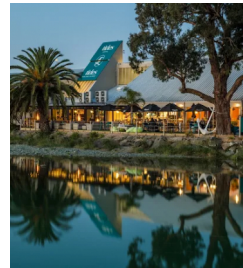
Nelson Classic Cars Museum - Suggested Activity

The car collection represents years of passionate sourcing from around the world and New Zealand. These cars are some of the most sought-after models in Classic Motoring, presented to the highest standard, with some having undergone extensive restoration. As well as being classic examples of automotive technology, these cars tell an important story about the twentieth century. They represent the spectrum of automotive history, design, and craftsmanship. This is one of Australasia's largest private collections.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Nelson to Punakaiki

Leaving Nelson City you will pass through the suburb of Richmond. Moving on, you will pass through the Nelson Lakes and Kahurangi National Park region. Trees, rivers, and valleys accompany you now as you head towards the town of Murchison. Murchison is a quiet place and a great lunch stop. Underneath its sleepy farming facade is an adventurer's paradise with white water rafting, jet boating, gold panning, kayaking, 4WD trips, and excellent trout fishing. Heading south, you will drive along the Buller Gorge, enjoying some wonderful scenery as you follow this magnificent river. Further along the river from the west coast turn off, one of the must-visit places is Whites Creek and New Zealand's longest swing bridge. Crossing the river, you get magnificent views of the gorge, and once on the other side, there are short bush walks, jet boat rides, and some of the historic gold mining remnants. Continuing on your journey, the first major town (by this region's standard) is Inangahua, and a small museum tells of the earthquake that hit the region in 1968, leaving 70% of the buildings damaged or inhabitable. Heading south, a worthwhile divert is to Cape Foulwind just south of Westport. Home to a seal colony and the short walk provides some spectacular scenery. Continuing south on the road to Punakaiki, you will pass through Paparoa National Park. On arrival at Punakaiki you may want to visit Pancake rocks. Pancake rocks are open to the public free of charge all year round. These are awesome natural blow holes and rock formations, the name says it all. The west coast is very rugged, mountains meet the sea, and the coast is covered with beautiful fauna and flora including nikau palms.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki

Scenic Hotel Punakaiki is a modern, award-winning hotel complex, architecturally designed to harmonious with the local environment. Nestled in the foothills of Paparoa National Park the resort has spectacular views of the Wild West Coast beaches while all rooms have rainforest and/or ocean views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Punakaiki to Greymouth

You have plenty of time to explore Punakaiki this morning and to enjoy the scenic drive back along the coast to Greymouth to catch the TranzAlpine Scenic Train to Christchurch. Just south of the town of Greymouth is Shantytown a replica gold rush town with lots of great displays from yesteryear and a great place to spend a few hours. Drop your rental car at the Greymouth Train Station depot located inside the train station building before checking in for your train journey.

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.

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

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



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.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	9
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Sudima Christchurch City
Day 2	Sudima Christchurch City
Day 3	Kaikoura Boutique Hotel
Day 4	Edit Picton
Day 5	Tides Hotel (was Trailways Hotel)
Day 6	Tides Hotel (was Trailways Hotel)
Day 7	Scenic Hotel Punakaiki
Day 8	Sudima Christchurch City