



South Island Grand Tour

Start your adventure in Christchurch, the Garden City, with a tour of its revitalized streets before heading inland to the alpine majesty of Aoraki/Mt Cook. Then it's on to Dunedin for a wildlife cruise on the Otago Peninsula, where you'll see penguins, seals and albatross in their natural habitat. Travel to Queenstown via the historic Taieri Gorge train, giving you time to explore the adventure capital at your own pace before a delicious BBQ dinner and cruise on the vintage TSS Earnslaw steamship. Your journey continues up the West Coast, passing stunning Wanaka and the rugged coastline to the glaciers of Franz Josef, before a final unforgettable ride on the world-renowned TranzAlpine train back to Christchurch.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 12days / 11nights
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
plus much more...

Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations

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.

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

Christchurch known in Māori as Ōtautahi, is the largest metro area in the South Island. Commonly referred to as New Zealand's "Garden City", Christchurch is home to one of the biggest public parks in the country, and beautiful botanic gardens. The city was hit with devastating earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, now the city crosses the line between its English heritage and a new modern architecture. To take in some arts and culture, pay a visit to the Canterbury Museum or the Christchurch Art Gallery. Take a step back in time with a tram around the city or punt along the Avon River. If tasting your way around the city is your means of travel, try out a cultural eating tour. A short drive from the CBD will lead you to the outskirts of the Banks Peninsula beachside suburb of Sumner or through the tunnel to Lyttleton Harbour which hosts fantastic markets on Saturday mornings.

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'.

Hidden Gems City Sights with Amiki Cultural Food Tours

This cultural walking tour celebrates the diversity of modern-day Ōtautahi Christchurch, offering visitors a local's perspective of the central city on foot. Following in the footsteps of ancestors (tipuna), the tour meanders along the river and through city laneways, sharing Māori and settler stories and demonstrating how the community acts as guardians (kaitiaki) for the future. The tour begins with a welcome (mihi whakatau) and prayer (karakia) to ensure visitors' safety on their journey. Guests will learn about the creation story of Ranganui (sky father) and Papatūānuku (earth mother) and hear the ancestral story of how the hongi brought Hineahuone to life.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



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

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.

The Alpine Restaurant Buffet Dinner

The Alpine Restaurant located at The Hermitage Hotel offers sumptuous buffets for breakfast, lunch and dinner, accompanied by spectacular views of Aoraki Mount Cook from every seat. Enjoy a vast buffet including a wide range of foods such as soup, salads, seafood, hot and cold meats and desserts with tea and coffee to follow.

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium

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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 4



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.

The Panorama Room 3-course Dinner with The Hermitage Hotel

Since first opening its doors in 1969, The Panorama Room has gained a reputation as being one of the best restaurants in New Zealand. This reputation is reflected in the numerous awards the restaurant has received over the years. A simple philosophy of using just the freshest, local ingredients, in particular from New Zealand's South Island, is still the secret to its success today. The menu has a strong international influence and reflects both the establishment's taste and the fact that most of the chefs have travelled and worked widely throughout the world.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Big Sky Stargazing

Mt Cook is far from the city lights and therefore has some of the darkest skies in New Zealand, perfect for viewing the night sky! Their fully trained guides are delighted to show you the beautiful southern night sky using the naked eye, state-of-the-art astronomy telescopes, and binoculars at the outdoor viewing platform. If the weather is not favourable, then there will be an indoor alternative featuring New Zealand's first full-dome digital Planetarium, high-definition video images on a suspended 9m wide x 4.5m high full dome. Unleash your imagination as you discover the night sky, including the Southern Cross, seasonal ecliptic objects, planets, star clusters, moons, distant galaxies, and even our very own galaxy, the spectacular Milky Way!

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium

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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 5



Mt Cook to Dunedin with Iconic

In the afternoon you will be picked up from your accommodation in Mt Cook Village for the journey through to Dunedin. Along the way you stop for a short break in Omarama, then onto Oamaru for a scenic tour of the historic Whitestone Precinct. You will then enjoy a guided walk along Koekohe Beach at Moeraki Boulders before reaching Dunedin, where you will be dropped off at your accommodation.

Dunedin

Dunedin, known in Māori as Ōtepoti, is referred to as the "Edinburgh of the Southern Hemisphere". The city has a rightly deserved reputation as one of the best-preserved Victorian and Edwardian cities in the Southern Hemisphere. Of particular note is Dunedin Railway Station, built 1904 - 1906, and St Paul's Cathedral in the Octagon. The Otago Museum is renowned for its Māori and Pacific Island collections and natural history displays. A visit to the Speights, New Zealand's oldest brewery, is also considered a must while in Dunedin. The Botanic Gardens is a great spot and at the right time of year, you can witness the Rhododendron Dell in bloom. The Otago Peninsula is the only home in the world to the Northern Royal Albatross. The Peninsula can be visited for the day from Dunedin and the stunning harbor landscape and wildlife are worth exploring. High among the rolling hills of the Peninsula is Larnach Castle, the grand home of an early politician. Construction of the castle began in 1871 and was completed 12 years later. From here, views out to sea and back towards the city emphasize the singular beauty of Dunedin and its jewel-like harbor.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Dunedin City

Just two blocks from the Octagon in the heart of the city, Scenic Hotel Dunedin City is close to shops, parks and the best city attractions and services. The hotel provides excellent 4-star accommodation to Dunedin's visitors.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Explore Otago Peninsula

The Otago Peninsula extends from the southern side of Otago Harbour, just minutes from the city center. A short drive takes you past scenic bays and picturesque farmland. Renowned as one of New Zealand's premier eco-tourism destinations, the peninsula is home to the iconic Royal Albatross, with Taiaroa Head at its tip hosting the world's only mainland breeding colony of these majestic birds. In addition to the albatross, the area is rich in wildlife, including New Zealand fur seals, sea lions, and rare yellow-eyed penguins.. You can explore a variety of walking tracks, enjoy breathtaking views, and stunning beaches, and visit the magnificent Larnach Castle, a cultural highlight of the region.

Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Tour and Wildlife Cruise with Monarch

Join a small-group bus tour led by a local guide across the Otago Peninsula, featuring stunning harbour views, rural landscapes, and unique wildlife. Visit a remote beach to spot sea lions, take a Monarch Wildlife Cruise to see albatross, seals, and rare seabirds, and explore a Yellow-eyed Penguin conservation reserve with hidden viewing hides. This unforgettable journey blends breathtaking scenery with intimate wildlife encounters before a relaxed return to Dunedin.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Dunedin City

Just two blocks from the Octagon in the heart of the city, Scenic Hotel Dunedin City is close to shops, parks and the best city attractions and services. The hotel provides excellent 4-star accommodation to Dunedin's visitors.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Dunedin Accommodation to Coach Stop Transfer with Iconic

You will be collected from your accommodation and transferred to the coach stop in time for your departure.

Dunedin to Queenstown including Taieri Gorge Train with Cheeky Kiwi Travel

Start your adventure at the magnificent Dunedin Railway Station, a famous example of Edwardian architecture in New Zealand. You'll then board the renowned Taieri Gorge Railway for an unforgettable trip. As the train travels through dramatic viaducts and remote gorges, prepare to see some of the South Island's most stunning natural landscapes. Your guide will welcome you at Pukerangi, where a comfortable vehicle awaits to take you further west.

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 8



Premium Milford Sound Small Group Tour, Cruise, Return Flight & Picnic Lunch from Queenstown with Cheeky Kiwi

Experience the breathtaking beauty of Milford Sound on this fully guided, small-group day tour from Queenstown. Travel through some of New Zealand's most spectacular landscapes, with scenic stops at Lake Wakatipu, Devil's Staircase, Mirror Lake, Lake Gunn, and the dramatic Homer Tunnel. Keep an eye out for the playful Kea, the world's largest alpine parrot. Upon arrival, embark on an intimate cruise with Cruise Milford, the top-rated operator on Tripadvisor. Glide past towering cliffs, cascading waterfalls, and New Zealand fur seals basking on the rocks, all while enjoying a more personal and informative experience aboard a smaller, less crowded vessel. Cap off your adventure with a breathtaking scenic flight back to Queenstown, offering unmatched aerial views of Fiordland's rugged peaks, deep valleys, and glacial rivers an unforgettable finale to a day of pure natural wonder.

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 9



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 - Shotover Jet Canyon Jet Boat Ride

Shotover Jet is the only company permitted to operate in the Shotover River Canyons. It's a thrilling ride! Skim past rocky outcrops at close range in your Shotover Jet 'Big Red', as you twist and turn through the narrow canyons at breathtaking speeds. And a major highlight - hold tight for the world-famous Shotover Jet full 360-degree spins! It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

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.

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



Queenstown to Franz Josef via Wānaka Small Group Tour with Cheeky Kiwi - Lunch Included

Departing from Queenstown, this journey takes you to the historic Cardrona Hotel, renowned for its rustic charm and spectacular mountain setting. In Wānaka, you'll capture the iconic photo of the Wānaka Tree with Mt Aspiring and the Southern Alps in the background. Continuing past the Clutha River, you'll enjoy scenic stops at Lake Hāwea, Thunder Creek Falls, and Ship Creek, where the rainforest meets the ocean. The tour concludes at Franz Josef, after passing glacial rivers and the picturesque Lake Matheson, a photographer's paradise.

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, Lunch



Day 11



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

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TranzAlpine Scenic Plus Addon - KiwiRail

Feel like luxurious service, exclusive meals, inclusive drinks and priority check-in and boarding? The Scenic Plus add-on option is for you. Enjoy personal service with panoramic windows, spacious carriages and comfortable seating. The exclusive open-air viewing carriage is available if you feel like capturing the ultimate photo or simply wish to experience the great outdoors whilst travelling through the Southern Alps. Your food is prepared exclusively in a kitchen carriage, with paired drinks and a paddock-to-plate regionally inspired food menu all your senses will be fully engaged on this journey.

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.

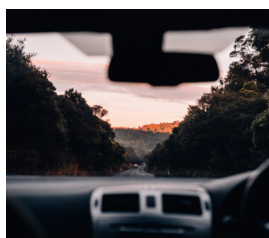
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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



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:	Independant Bus & Coach
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	12
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Sudima Christchurch City
Day 2	Sudima Christchurch City
Day 3	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium
Day 4	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium
Day 5	Scenic Hotel Dunedin City
Day 6	Scenic Hotel Dunedin City
Day 7	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 8	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 9	Millennium Hotel Queenstown
Day 10	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier
Day 11	Sudima Christchurch City