



New Zealand Grand Discovery

This journey takes you through New Zealand's must-see destinations, from the vibrant City of Sails in Auckland to the geothermal wonders and Maori culture of Rotorua, the art deco charm and vineyards of Napier, and the dynamic capital of Wellington. Cross to the South Island to discover the Marlborough Sounds, Abel Tasman's golden beaches, the rugged West Coast glaciers, and Queenstown's adventure playground, finishing in the stunning Fiordland. A classic self-drive tour designed to be customised for your perfect Kiwi adventure.



Starts in: Auckland
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 18 days / 17 nights
Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

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

Included activity: TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Lunch

Included activity: Ata Whenua - Shadowland Film at Fiordland Cinema

Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise from Te Anau including lunch

Included activity: Larnach Castle: Guided Tour & High Tea Experience

Included activity: Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Included activity: Te Pā Tū Evening Maori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

Included activity: Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland

Included activity: Zealandia By Day Wildlife Sanctuary Tour

Included activity: Interislander Ferry Wellington to Picton

Included activity: Abel Tasman Water and Walk Tour with Wine, Art & Wilderness - Lunch

Included activity: Māwhera Pounamu Pathway Immersive Experience

Included : 17 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 special dinners



Day 1



Welcome to Auckland

Welcome to Auckland, known in Māori as Tāmaki Makaurau. Auckland is New Zealand's vibrant "City of Sails," and the country's largest metropolitan area. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. Surrounded by native bush, lush rainforests, and pristine beaches, Auckland is a haven for both adventurers and urban explorers. Wander through world-class museums and galleries in the city centre or enjoy a peaceful retreat at the Auckland Gardens, where stunning landscapes showcase New Zealand's diverse flora. Stroll along the lively waterfront to savour fresh seafood and international cuisine at Viaduct restaurants. For an unforgettable perspective, ascend the iconic SkyTower, New Zealand's tallest structure, and take in panoramic views of the city and its picturesque islands.

Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

You will be met at the Auckland airport by the driver and transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wētā Workshop Unleashed

A jaw-dropping, senses-shattering, awe-inspiring adventure into the heart of movie magic! Get hands-on and immerse yourself in an extraordinary world of practical effects, props and larger-than-life sets. On this award-winning tour, you can explore three movie projects imagined by the Weta crew and uncover how they bring big screen concepts to life. Discover a mind-blowing world of robots, monsters, dinosaurs and more - step right into the action to see, play and experience movie-making up close.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - All Blacks Experience

See what it takes to make, shape and be an All Black. Experience first-hand the excitement and emotion of game day. Discover the stories behind some of world rugby's most famous players, moments, and matches.

This guided experience introduces you to the game of rugby including state-of-the-art displays combining sound, images, interactive technology, and hands-on activities. Discover New Zealand's deep passion for our national sport, experience the full force of the All Blacks haka, and tackle interactive zones where you can try out your kicking, catching, line-out, and accuracy skills against legendary All Blacks.

Your accommodation: Abstract Hotel & Residences

Abstract is Auckland's freshest new vibe, blending hotel and residences for urban adventurers. Whether for work, family vacation or romantic escape, come and relax in a comfortable and stylish room. A guest lounge, co-working spaces, library, bar, a restaurant, gym, and a luxury spa are available on site.



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.

Auckland to Rotorua

Your drive south from Auckland begins by crossing the Bombay Hills, which mark the boundary of the greater Auckland area, before leading you into the rich, sprawling farmland of the Waikato region. The drive takes approximately 2.5 hours non-stop, but we recommend allowing 3 hours for a relaxed journey. For a fantastic leg-stretching stop, you may consider a slight detour into Hamilton to visit the renowned Hamilton Gardens (known for its amazing themed garden collection). Alternatively, the quirky small town of Tirau, famous for its buildings shaped like a giant sheep and sheepdog, is right on your main route and makes a quick and fun photo stop. As you continue south, the scenery transitions, and telltale signs of steam and other geothermal activity will signal your arrival into the fascinating thermal and cultural hub of Rotorua.

Rotorua

Discover the geothermal, adventure, and cultural wonderland of Rotorua. As you explore, you may see steam rising from cracks in the road, bubbling and hissing water in pools along the lake's edge, and the unmistakable smell of Sulfur. Rotorua is rich in Māori culture and history, with many Māori inhabitants recognising the great potential of the volcanic land. For an outdoor adventure, head to The Redwoods and experience the rainforest treetops from high up. There are a few accessible trails for disabled hikers and great biking trails as well. If you're lucky, you might spot some of New Zealand's native birds, such as the Piwakawaka (Fantail) and the Tūī. Alternatively, enjoy the Lake Tikitapu Blue Lake Walk or explore Kuirau Park, where you'll find bubbling mud pools and steaming lakes. Don't miss the private thermal reserves such as Te Puia and Wai-O-Tapu, where you can walk among bubbling mud pools, spouting geysers, and Sulfur ponds. Just a few minutes from the town centre, the Agrodome and National Kiwi Hatchery offer an insight into nature. Rotorua's rich Māori culture is a must-see. Spend an evening with Te Pā Tū, complete with a traditional-style dinner or stroll along the lake edge to reach one of the country's oldest Māori villages at Ohinemutu. When hunger strikes, visit Eat Street in Rotorua CBD, a vibrant street lined with delicious eateries and restaurants to satisfy any craving. No visit to Rotorua would be complete without experiencing Rotorua's original tourist attraction - a relaxing spa treatment. This town boasts an array of wellness experiences to unwind in. Whether you are seeking adventure, culture, or relaxation, Rotorua offers an unforgettable experience.

Te Pā Tū Evening Māori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

New Zealand's Most Awarded Cultural Attraction, presenting Te Pā Tū. Feast on song, drama, tradition, and divine seasonal kai (cuisine) within the forest Pā (village) blanketed by towering Tawa trees, blazing bonfires, and a forest-formed amphitheatre. Te Pā Tū shares Māori history, traditions, and cultural aspirations across 4-hours of celebration and feasting. These events change with each season of the Maramataka, the Māori lunar calendar.

Your accommodation: Black Swan Lakeside Boutique Hotel

Black Swan Lakeside Boutique Hotel combines old world charm with a modern funky twist. Set in one acre of outstanding gardens on the edge of Lake Rotorua, the lodge is an intimate retreat just a short drive from the centre of Rotorua.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 3



Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland

Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland is a spectacular showcase of New Zealand's colourful and unique geothermal elements sculpted by thousands of years of volcanic activity. You will be introduced to a diversely different natural landscape, extending over 18-sq. km. Enjoy viewing the volcanic features as you walk at your own pace along well-defined tracks. Relax in the first-class Visitor Centre, home to the Gift Shop and Cafè facilities. Visit the Mud Pool, the largest in New Zealand, it was originally the site of a large mud volcano which was destroyed through erosion in the 1920s. See the history and beauty of the Lady Knox Geyser at 10:15 am every day where a daily eruption happens of up to 20 metres.

Your accommodation: Black Swan Lakeside Boutique Hotel

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Rotorua to Napier via Taupō

This drive will take you through the thermal region just south of Rotorua. Home to a plethora of unique geothermal attractions including boiling mud pits, natural hot springs and steaming geysers, this area is a must do before you move on to Napier. Notable attractions are Wai-O-Tapu, Waimangu and Craters of the Moon. Continue on to Taupō and marvel at the lake, a giant crater formed following a volcanic eruption in the year 180 CE. As you approach the town, be sure to stop at Huka Falls to view the spectacular sight of hundreds of cubic metres of water spilling every second down the narrow 11 metre drop. For an extra thrill take a jet-boat ride at the base of the falls. Leaving Taupō, follow the road as it climbs the rugged Ahimanawa Range before descending back down the Pacific Coast to art deco coastal township of Napier.

Napier City

Napier, a coastal gem, is famed for its 1930s Art Deco architecture, the annual Art Deco Weekend, stately Norfolk pines, nearby wineries, and fresh local produce. With a Mediterranean climate and over 2,200 hours of sunshine annually, it boasts a thriving café culture set against stunning heritage buildings. The city center has around 30 cafés within walking distance, while Ahuriri, just beyond Bluff Hill, offers more upscale dining. Marine Parade overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Cape Kidnappers, home to the world’s largest mainland gannet colony. Visitors can explore Ocean Spa, the Hawke's Bay Museum, and the National Aquarium of New Zealand. Bluff Hill, a key landmark, provides sweeping views of Napier, Perfume Point, Westshore Beach, and the busy Port of Napier, which exports timber, fruit, and meat worldwide.

In 1931, Napier was devastated by a 7.8-magnitude earthquake, New Zealand’s worst natural disaster. Fires ravaged the city. Rebuilding efforts transformed Napier and Hastings into modern cities, while the uplifted Ahuriri Lagoon created much-needed land for expansion.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Hawkes Bay Twilight Odyssey Tour with Odyssey NZ - Dinner Included

Savour a progressive culinary journey through Hawke's Bay's vineyards. Start with a boutique wine tasting, absorb the awe-inspiring views from Te Mata Peak, indulge in a gourmet main at a top winery restaurant, and finish with a luxurious dessert at Mission Estate. Fine food, exceptional wine, and stunning scenery await!

Your accommodation: Art Deco Masonic Hotel

The Art Deco Masonic Hotel occupies a significant historic building on Napier's waterfront and has been richly refurbished in keeping with the Art Deco architecture. With its central location and decadent décor, this is the best place to experience what Napier is famous for.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Napier to Wellington City via Masterton

The rolling countryside of the Hawke's Bay leads you into some of New Zealand’s richest farmland, located around the Manawatu region. Passing along the Manawatu Gorge the Wairarapa welcomes you. Masterton is home to the golden shears sheep shearing competition while just further south Greytown boasts the largest concentration of historic wooden buildings in the country.

Nearby Martinborough is home to dozens of boutique wineries. The route takes you over the Remutaka Range and along the magnificent natural harbour that the capital city of Wellington sits upon.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Pūkaha Mount Bruce Wildlife Centre General Admission - Open-Dated Voucher

Set in 940 hectares of forest, Pūkaha is on State Highway 2, half way between Napier and Wellington right at the heart of the Classic New Zealand Wine Trail. A perfect and special stop off point to learn about New Zealand’s very special environment. At Pūkaha, they are dedicated to restoring the forest and protecting and nurturing endangered birds and animals – particularly kiwi, kokako, kaka and tuatara. Pūkaha has a very successful breeding programme.

Your entry fee covers seven daily wildlife talks and feeds as well as entry to the nocturnal house where you can see North Island Brown Kiwi. Enjoy a walk through free flight aviary where you can experience the bush as it was hundreds of years ago. Enjoy the birds flying around you while viewing the Whio (Blue duck) and Pateke (Brown Teal) on the river run.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Guided Tour of Te Papa The Museum of New Zealand

Beginning over one hundred million years ago, join your guide on a journey through New Zealand's rich history and cultures. Hear stories of our adaptive wildlife, the resilience of the Māori people, and artistic interpretations of life in the South Pacific.

Whether you have limited time or here for an extended visit, this tour will give you a great opportunity to understand the vibrant landscapes and cultures you will encounter throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

Your accommodation: Ohtel Wellington

Ohtel is adjacent to Wellington's principal entertainment precinct. Major attractions such as Te Papa, Oriental Bay beach, theatres, restaurants & clubs, are a stone's throw away. Beyond, the city hub creates a picturesque night-time back-drop.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Explore Wellington

Wellington, known in Māori as Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui ("The Head of the Fish of Maui") or Te Whanganui a Tara ("The Great Harbour of Tara"), is New Zealand's vibrant capital. Often called a 'mini-Melbourne', this cosmopolitan city blends art, culture, food, and fashion with quirky laneway bars, hip eateries, and underground art shows. Stroll the waterfront to Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum, or ride the historic cable car from Lambton Quay for stunning city views. Explore Cuba Street's unique boutiques and visit the iconic 'Beehive' at Parliament. Fans of The Lord of the Rings can tour Weta Workshop, the Oscar-winning design studio behind Middle-earth. Just an hour away, Martinborough offers a culinary escape with top-notch food and wine. Nature lovers can't miss Zealandia, the world's first fully fenced eco-sanctuary. End your day sampling Wellington's renowned dining scene—search 'Metro Eats' for the city's best spots.

Zealandia By Day Wildlife Sanctuary Tour

Taking a day tour of Zealandia wildlife eco-sanctuary is an unforgettable experience and one that comes highly recommended. A conservation success and safe haven for some of New Zealand's rarest native animals, Zealandia is home to many remarkable species of birds, reptiles and insects living wild within a beautiful 225 hectare (one square mile) valley - just 10 minutes from the central city.

Walk through the gates of the Zealandia predator-exclusion fence into the sanctuary. Your guide will then lead you on a walk through the native New Zealand bush. Possible sights include Kaka, Kakariki, Takahe, Tuatara, Saddleback, Whitehead, Weta, Kereru, Hihi and the Bellbird. New Zealand has some of the most unique biodiversity and advanced conservation techniques in the world. Soak up the beautiful scenery while learning more about our unique ecological history.

Your accommodation: Ohtel Wellington

Ohtel is adjacent to Wellington's principal entertainment precinct. Major attractions such as Te Papa, Oriental Bay beach, theatres, restaurants & clubs, are a stone's throw away. Beyond, the city hub creates a picturesque night-time back-drop.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Interislander Ferry Wellington to Picton

The 92 km journey between Wellington and Picton takes around 3 hours and has been described as 'one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world'. Leaving Wellington Harbour the ferry passes many interesting points such as Pencarrow Head on top of which is New Zealand's oldest lighthouse (1859). Red Rocks is home to a seal colony and Oterangi Bay is the site which recorded the country's highest ever wind speed of 268 kph (167 mph).

From the Cook Strait spectacular views of the Kaikōura Ranges on the South Island can be enjoyed and dolphins and many sea birds are often seen. Around one hour of the cruise takes you through the Marlborough Sounds and this region of bush covered mountains, small islands, crystal clear waters and secluded bays offer remarkable photographic opportunities. The final leg of the cruise travels through Queen Charlotte Sound before coming to an end in the picturesque town of Picton.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Premium Lounge with Interislander

Escape to Interislander's Premium Lounge for sensational views, child-free serenity, and locally sourced food and drink.

Interislander's Premium Lounge has enhanced its offering to bring you an elevated travel experience across Cook Strait. Enjoy delicious food and drink, attentive service, and prime positions for appreciating the spectacular views. Whether you're looking to relax or chat with your travel companions, the Premium Lounge provides the ideal space. With varied seating options, you can choose a cosy spot to watch the stunning scenery and taste a selection of seasonal snacks included in your ticket.

Picton to Nelson via Queen Charlotte Drive

The Queen Charlotte Drive follows the Marlborough Sounds coastline between Picton and Havelock. Magnificent views of the Sounds can be had from many vantage points so allow plenty of time to enjoy the scenery. If you can spare the time take the narrow windy road to Portage along Mahau Sound and Kenepuru Sound with their bush clad hillsides and secluded sandy coves.

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. The drive also crosses the Pelorus River and just at this junction is the famous and historic Pelorus Bridge. From here there are a number of forest walks with the most popular being the Pelorus Bridge 30 minute Loop through Beech, Rimu and Totara forest to the swing-bridge.

Departing Pelorus Bridge following the windy roads with view looking over Cable Bay and the Bryant Range until you arrive onto Tasman Bay and the city of Nelson.

Explore Nelson City

The vibrant Nelson city centre offers an abundance of cafes, restaurants, bars and shops and along the waterfront, you will find many fine restaurants specialising in seafood to enjoy. Founded in 1841 by the New Zealand Company the region today still boasts many remarkable buildings from these early days, however it is its close proximity to Abel Tasman National Park that is one of Nelson's greatest advantages to visitors with its pristine waters, beautiful native bush and golden beaches making this an adventure seeker's paradise. Nelson is also famous for its art and crafts and you will find many local offerings - including the world-famous Hoglund Glassworks.

Your accommodation: Pihopa Retreat

Relax in style at this historical boutique retreat. Pihopa Retreat encompasses park-like gardens with six premium suites, creating a comfortable home away from home feel for your stay. The Pihopa property has 5.5. acres of peaceful gardens, a heated swimming pool and large spacious areas to create a truly relaxing visit.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Abel Tasman Water and Walk Tour with Wine, Art & Wilderness - Lunch Included

During this tour you will be strolling golden sand beaches, walking and exploring natural wonderland of Abel Tasman National Park. You will enjoy stunning views and experience unique interpretation of this National Park. Access is by water taxi to Medlands Beach and walking through an ever changing forest of silver fern, beech trees and Manuka & kanuka. This fully guided journey interprets the less obvious features as well as Maori history and the rich variety of vegetation, birds and aquatic life.

Your accommodation: Pihopa Retreat

Relax in style at this historical boutique retreat. Pihopa Retreat encompasses park-like gardens with six premium suites, creating a comfortable home away from home feel for your stay. The Pihopa property has 5.5. acres of peaceful gardens, a heated swimming pool and large spacious areas to create a truly relaxing visit.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 9











Nelson to Hokitika

Leaving Nelson 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, we can recommend a stop at Beechwoods Cafe. Heading South towards Westport you will drive along the Buller Gorge, enjoy some wonderful scenery as you follow this magnificent river. 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. 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. Follow the coastal road to Punakaiki where you may want to visit Pancake rocks. These are awesome natural blow holes and rock formations, the name says it all.

The next township you'll pass is Greymouth, home to a great attraction here is Shantytown, a replica gold mining village and the TranzAlpine Scenic Train.

The township of Hokitika was built on the pioneering spirit of the West Coast settlers. A busy port in its heyday it then became a centre for the West Coast gold rush and more recently has become known for its Pounamu-Greenstone carving. Here you will find many shops selling intricately carved pieces as well as other fine arts and souvenirs.

The windswept beach is often covered with driftwood making for an interesting stroll and the scenery to the mountains is quite spectacular.

Māwhera Pounamu Pathway Immersive Experience

Māwhera Pā in Greymouth is the first location along the Pounamu Pathway touring route to open. This self-guided experience is a historical and creative exploration of the Poutini Ngā Tahu and the Māwhera Pā settlement people, retold by their ancestors. The exhibition will lead you through six different narratives, each tale including a large-scale masterpiece, artistically crafted by Weta Workshop to cultivate an immersive journey of visuals and sound.

Hokitika

The township of Hokitika was built on the pioneering spirit of the West Coast settlers. A busy port in its heyday it then became a centre for the West Coast gold rush and more recently has become known for its Jade or Greenstone crafts. Here you will find many shops selling intricately carved pieces as well as other fine arts and souvenirs. The town itself has several historic buildings as well as many fine dining restaurants and cafes.

The windswept beach is often covered with driftwood and the mountain scenery is quite spectacular with Mt Cook in view. Around 15 kilometres inland you will find Lake Kaniere, an idyllic spot to take bush walks or simply relax and take in the view. Just south of the town on State Highway 6 is Lake Mahinapua Scenic Reserve where you can enjoy some short walks. The Hokitika Gorge, around 45 minutes from the centre of is a magnificent granite gorge lined with beautiful native bush. A swing bridge just 2 minutes from the car park takes you over milky blue green pools and a short walk delivers you to large moss covered boulders to explore.

Your accommodation: Rimu Lodge

Rimu Lodge is just a short drive from Hokitika, but once you arrive it feels like a world away. Set amidst New Zealand native bush each room takes advantage of the amazing West Coast views making for a relaxing retreat.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



Hokitika to Franz Josef

Leaving Hokitika pass through the old gold mining town of Ross where some of the original buildings and workings remain. Ross is also home to one of the few working mines left in New Zealand. Continuing South pass through Harihari, the township Guy Menzies crash-landed in after he became the first person to fly solo across the Tasman. The next established town is Whataroa, a small township, home to some of the world's rarest birds - White Heron known in Māori as the Kōtuku. From here it is a short drive to arrive into the glacier region, on a clear day you'll spot the Franz Josef Glacier ahead of the township.

Hokitika Gorge

The Hokitika Gorge, around 45 minutes from the centre of Hokitika is a magnificent granite gorge lined with beautiful native bush. A short walk from the car park takes you over milky blue-green pools and delivers you to large moss-covered boulders to explore. One of the suspension bridges is closed, however, it is still possible to walk and view the Gorge. The drive out here from Hokitika is also quite something taking you through rich farmland with alpine mountain views.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - West Coast Treetops Walkway

Come and enjoy a leisurely 45 minute to one hour stroll through the beautiful West Coast rainforest tree tops. Experience an exhilarating tree top adventure amongst temperate tree top giants. Experience life with the birds high in the ancient Rimu and Kamahi tree Canopy. There is easy access for all to enjoy along a steel platform 20 metres high and over 450 metres long. Following your walk, relax in their alfresco dining area, where you can enjoy the view with a wide selection of meal choices off the menu for lunch.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



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 - Franz Josef Nature Tour with Glacier Valley Eco Tours

Nestled in thick historic West Coast forest and a stone's throw from wild black sand beaches, this is one of the world's most unusual glaciers. Beautiful blue skies or magical misty rain, whatever the weather - you will feel like you are in Narnia or LOTR.

With easy walking at your pace, information on glaciology, geology, geomorphology, flora and fauna, local legends, history, and small guided groups with fantastic guides, you will experience this glacier in style and in the best hands with the only local company. Wander past glacier rivers and streams and through beautiful podocarp forest; discover hidden natural treasures such as native snails, wild native mushrooms, and dozens of species of native orchids; listen to native bird song and waterfalls; see if you can spot a Chamois or a Tahr on the huge snow-capped mountains above while drinking a cup of tea and talking one-on-one with your guide.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Franz Josef 20 Minute Heli flight with a snow landing with Heliservices

Fly over the Franz Josef Glacier up to 6000 ft. and land on the snow. Exceptional views of New Zealand's Southern Alps. A very popular quick snapshot of our beautiful landscape.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



Franz Josef to Queenstown (via Wānaka)

Heading south you pass through the second glacier town of Fox Glacier before heading along the coast and into more classic West Coast bush scenery. We can recommend a stop at Knights Point Lookout elephant seals can often be seen basking on the sandy beaches at the far end of the point. Crossing the massive Haast River you turn inland and head into the valley climbing through mountains littered with waterfalls. The Haast Valley offers a spectacular view of the river and its enormous power. Along the way there is ample opportunity to admire Aspiring National Park and a stop at Roaring Billy Falls will leave you in awe. The Blue Pools near Makarora are a great 30-minute walk. The road from Makarora leads to Lakes Wānaka and Hāwea which will guide you into the stunning lakeside township of Wānaka before heading over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road and dropping into the Wakatipu basin, home to Queenstown. .

Cardrona Hotel

If you feel like spoiling yourself and learning about the area's history we recommend taking yourself out for lunch or dinner at The Cardrona Hotel, one of New Zealand's oldest and most iconic hotels which sits between Queenstown and Wānaka on the stunning Crown Range Road. Nestled in a beautiful mountain valley, the town of Cardrona boasts a rich and vibrant history: settled in the 1860s as hundreds of hopeful prospectors flooded into the valley chasing gold, the Cardrona Hotel was one of four hotels quickly established to offer accommodation, food, livery services and a coaching-stop for miners and travellers. With the short-lived gold mining boom beginning to wind down in the late 1800s, the area quietened down, with the Cardrona Hotel eventually becoming the sole remaining hotel in the valley. In more recent times the township of Cardrona has seen a resurgence in visitors, people clamouring to get a taste of old the old town feel, stopping in for a pint or delicious meal and a few fantastic photo opportunities in the quaint village that harkens back to a time of hope, gold and good fortune.

Your accommodation: Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel

Queenstown Park Hotel is a boutique hotel with a modern romantic style in the heart of New Zealand's adventure capital. Set in peaceful parkland, savour views of Queenstown's majestic mountains. Enjoy easy access to the vibrant town centre where shopping, cafes and nightlife nestled on the shores of spectacular Lake Wakatipu.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 13



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.

TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Lunch

Enjoy a quintessential Kiwi experience a delicious barbecue lunch and a farm tour in a stunning lakeside setting. First, take a scenic cruise from Queenstown to Walter Peak High Country Farm on board the vintage steamship TSS Earnslaw, one of the last remaining fully functional coal-fired passenger ships in the southern hemisphere.

Disembark and take in the picturesque shores of the Station. Relax on the lakeside terrace at the Colonel's Homestead Restaurant and savour the aromas of the best local produce being cooked on the grill. The seasonal menu has plenty to choose from salads, vegetables and succulent meat with plenty of delicious dietary options on offer as well. Finish your meal with a scrumptious dessert before joining an entertaining farm demonstration or exploring the beautiful lakeside gardens.

Your accommodation: Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel

Queenstown Park Hotel is a boutique hotel with a modern romantic style in the heart of New Zealand's adventure capital. Set in peaceful parkland, savour views of Queenstown's majestic mountains. Enjoy easy access to the vibrant town centre where shopping, cafes and nightlife nestled on the shores of spectacular Lake Wakatipu.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 14



Queenstown to Te Anau

Passing through the bustling suburb of Frankton, follow the shores of Lake Wakatipu. The Remarkables mountain range towers over you on the stretch of road known as "The Devil's Staircase" leading you to the township of Kingston. You'll venture into Southland before crossing the rolling tussock lands of Mossburn (deer capital of New Zealand) and shortly arriving at Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Beekeeping and Honey Spinning Experience with Buzzstop

Discover the captivating realm of bees and beekeeping through this immersive introduction. Under the guidance of a knowledgeable local beekeeper, you will open and interact with a live hive, offering the chance to hold a frame teeming with hundreds of busy bees. Gain firsthand knowledge of the inner dynamics of these extraordinary colonies and their crucial significance to our global ecosystem.

Te Anau

It is the gateway to Fiordland National Park and a perfect base to visit Piopiotahi-Milford Sound. The Milford Road originates here, and this is arguably one of the most scenic stretches of highway in the country. Te Anau sits on the shores of spectacular Lake Te Anau, which reaches depths of 417 meters. Te Anau Township is the starting point for many walking tracks, including two of New Zealand's Great Walks, the Milford track and the Kepler track. Apart from hiking, you could go kayaking, lake cruising, fishing, or exploring Te Anau Glowworm Caves. You could go for a bike ride alongside the lake towards Lake Manapouri, on a popular Lake to Lake biking route. Along the way, you will pass a bird sanctuary specialising in Takahe, and other native birds.

Ata Whenua - Shadowland Film at Fiordland Cinema

Ata Whenua refers to the southwestern coast of New Zealand and translates to English as "Shadow Land". This breathtaking short film will take you on an unforgettable journey through one of the most awe-inspiring landscapes on earth, Fiordland National Park. Shot by award-winning cinematographers with outstanding musical composition, this is the next best thing to a scenic flight over this spectacular wilderness.

Your accommodation: Te Anau Lodge

Te Anau Lodge began its existence as a Catholic convent in 1936 before being converted into a wonderful lodge. A beautiful Rimu wood interior awaits you and each of the 7 rooms house furniture made from stunning native woods.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 15



Milford Sound Cruise from Te Anau including lunch

Return luxury coach transport from Te Anau to Milford Sound, with a 1 hour 40 minute cruise along the full length of the fiord. On boarding a ReaNZ luxury glass-roofed coach in Te Anau, you will enjoy a relaxing trip along the spectacular Milford Road through impressive, awe-inspiring scenery. There is time for photo stops and short walks along the way. Friendly coach drivers provide detailed commentary throughout the trip. On reaching Milford Sound, you board the modern, spacious vessel for a leisurely cruise in the fiord. The cruise provides excellent viewing opportunities and plenty of time is available to enjoy waterfalls, rainforest, mountains and the wildlife. During the cruise your friendly crew provides commentary and will point out the sights such as Mitre Peak and the Pembroke Glacier. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see here.

Your accommodation: Te Anau Lodge

Te Anau Lodge began its existence as a Catholic convent in 1936 before being converted into a wonderful lodge. A beautiful Rimu wood interior awaits you and each of the 7 rooms house furniture made from stunning native woods.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 16



Te Anau to Dunedin

The drive from Te Anau to Dunedin takes you through classic Southland farmland scenery to Gore, the official home of country music in New Zealand. Continuing onward to the East Coast you'll pass through small farming communities and then on to State Highway 1. Balclutha is the next landmark town and gateway to the seaside community of The Catlins. From here it is a short drive through to Dunedin, known in Māori as Ōtepoti and known worldwide as "Edinburgh of the South".

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.

Larnach Castle: Guided Tour & High Tea Experience

Larnach Castle, New Zealand's only castle, was built in 1871 by politician and merchant William Larnach, a visionary who played a key role in shaping the country's early history. On this guided tour, explore the castle's grand rooms, intricate architecture, and beautifully restored interiors while learning about the lives, dramas, and triumphs of its inhabitants. Wander through the award-winning gardens and enjoy stunning views of the Otago Peninsula. Perfect for history buffs, architecture lovers, and anyone seeking a glimpse into New Zealand's colonial past.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

Your accommodation: Larnach Lodge at Larnach Castle

Larnach is New Zealand's only Castle, built in 1871 and immaculately restored and maintained. Accommodation is offered in individually themed lodges set in glorious gardens.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Speciality Dinner



Day 17



Dunedin to Christchurch

Heading north from Dunedin your first stop should be Moeraki to explore the famous and unique Moeraki Boulders strewn on the beach. The town of Oamaru is most famous for its buildings constructed with the unique locally quarried white stone. Explore the old quarter or if you don't mind a late arrival into Christchurch then stay longer to see the blue penguins come ashore at dusk. The port town of Timaru is next and then the vast Canterbury Plains. Crossing New Zealand's longest bridge at Rakaia you can view some great examples of the South Island's famous braided rivers. Arriving in Christchurch City puts you close to the airport and the International Antarctic Centre, a visit is highly recommended. Here you can get as close to experiencing life on the frozen continent without actually visiting plus see New Zealand's little blue penguins and ride in a Haaglund Tracked vehicle.

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Trams

Trams played an important role in transporting the people of Christchurch until 1954 when they were phased out. In 1995 the city council and Tramway Historical Society brought the beautiful trams back to the city centre for the public to enjoy. Take the delightful journey throughout the central city, including sights such as Riverside Market, the Avon River, the Arts Precinct including the Christchurch Art Gallery and Arts Centre, the Botanic Gardens, and New Regent Street with its Spanish-style buildings and sunny cafes. A commentary is given by the tram driver and you can hop on and off at the various stops as you please throughout the day. It's a great way to see and explore the main city centre attractions.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Kai Bites Share with Amiki Cultural Food Tours

Discover cultural treasures hidden in plain sight and savor the city's diverse flavors with this two-and-a-half-hour inner-city walk featuring kai stops, the perfect way to explore Ōtautahi Christchurch. This tour includes the Ōtautahi Hikoi stops and embraces the principles of manaakitanga (hospitality) and whanaungatanga (connection), emphasising the importance of sharing kai (food) in Māori culture. The cultural food tour celebrates the diversity of modern-day Ōtautahi-Christchurch. From historic tales of gathering mahinga kai along the riverbanks to sampling some of our finest contemporary flavours, this tour offers a sensory journey like no other.

Your accommodation: Merivale Manor House

Originally built in the 1880's, Merivale Manor has been transformed into elegant motel and apartment accommodation. Less than 200 metres to central Merivale with its premier shopping, restaurants, cafes and bars.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 18



Return Your Vehicle to Christchurch Airport

It's time to return your rental car and let the South Island journey come to an end. If time allows spend the day exploring more of Christchurch, we'd suggest a leisurely drive up the Port Hills for some great sites and then over to the harbour of Lyttleton, before circling through the tunnel and back to the airport to continue your journey home.

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:	Nationwide Self Drive
Starts:	Auckland
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	18
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Abstract Hotel & Residences
Day 2	Black Swan Lakeside Boutique Hotel
Day 3	Black Swan Lakeside Boutique Hotel
Day 4	Art Deco Masonic Hotel
Day 5	Ohtel Wellington
Day 6	Ohtel Wellington
Day 7	Pihopa Retreat
Day 8	Pihopa Retreat
Day 9	Rimu Lodge
Day 10	Westwood Lodge
Day 11	Westwood Lodge
Day 12	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel
Day 13	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel
Day 14	Te Anau Lodge
Day 15	Te Anau Lodge
Day 16	Larnach Lodge at Larnach Castle
Day 17	Merivale Manor House