

## 14 DAY FULL SOUTH ISLAND CHRISTCHURCH – CHRISTCHURCH

**Duration:** 14 days / 13 nights

**Departs:** Saturdays

**Start Location:** Christchurch

**Finish Location:** Christchurch

**First Departure:** 05/10/19

**Last Departure:** 02/05/20

### DAY 1: Christchurch to Hanmer Springs

Nau mai, haere mai (welcome)! This morning's activity is determined by the weather and what the group wishes to do. The options are to spend the morning taking in the city sights and walking through the Garden City's renowned Botanic Gardens or drive out to the Banks Peninsula to discover the delights of Akaroa, New Zealand's only historic French settlement. Next, we head to the peaceful alpine town of Hanmer Springs, where you can spend the evening surrounded by mountains and forest as you relax in the thermal hot pools. Tonight is a group dinner. (D)

**Accommodation included:** Cozy alpine chalets

**Activities included:** Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa

### DAY 2: Hanmer Springs to Kaikoura

We start today with an invigorating walk up Conical Hill for the best views in Hanmer Springs. Then, we'll make our way east to the coastal village of Kaikoura, famous for a huge array of natural wonders from land to sea. We arrive in Kaikoura with plenty of free time to experience all this location has to offer. Why not go out on the water on one of Kaikoura's famous dolphin and whale spotting tours (own expense), see seals sitting right beside the road at Goose Bay or wander around the peninsula and check out the breathtaking views from the lookout. (B)

**Accommodation included:** Warm modern hostel

**Activities included:** Conical Hill walk, peninsula walk and seal colony visit

**Optional activities:** Whale watching, swim with dolphins

### DAY 3: Kaikoura to Picton

Today we'll travel north on a scenic drive along rugged coastal roads to the seaside port town of Picton. You have the entire afternoon and evening free to go for a walk to get your bearings in this charming town, stroll along the waterfront or relax in the spa pool at your accommodation.

**Accommodation included:** Cosy villa

### DAY 4: Picton to Abel Tasman

Spend the morning soaking up the views of the stunning Marlborough Sounds by foot or bicycle on one of the nearby tracks. You'll meet your group at midday to drive through the famous Marlborough wine region. We visit a local vineyard's cellar door to sample New Zealand's world-famous Sauvignon Blanc, before heading to the spectacular Abel Tasman National Park. Tonight we enjoy some delicious seafood and a BBQ dinner at our exclusive campsite accommodation. (B,D)

**Accommodation included:** Accommodation on the edge of the national park

**Activities included:** Winery cellar door visit

**DAY 5: Full day in Abel Tasman**

Today is a free day to experience the incredible Abel Tasman National Park. Explore this stunning coastal area famous for being one of the sunniest spots in New Zealand. Walk the coastal track and discover some of New Zealand's best natural golden sand beaches or choose an optional activity like sailing or sea kayaking (own expense). Tonight, you can self-cater using the BBQ and kitchen facilities at our accommodation. (B)

**Accommodation included:** Accommodation on the edge of the national park

**Activities included:** Walk on the Abel Tasman Track and Aqua Taxi ride

**DAY 6: Abel Tasman to Franz Josef**

We start early to head south along the 'wild' West Coast, travelling on the rugged rocky coastline that makes this stretch of road one of the country's top drives. We'll stop along the way to visit the spectacular limestone Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and blowholes, as well as call in at the historic mining town of Hokitika, one of the best spots to find a greenstone souvenir. From there, we carry on to our next overnight stop in the quaint little West Coast town of Franz Josef, home to the mighty Franz Josef Glacier. (B,D)

**Accommodation included:** Hostel close to all attractions

**Activities included:** Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk

**DAY 7: Full day in Franz Josef**

Enjoy a free day to get out and explore the mighty Franz Josef Glacier. Navigate the maze of ice and explore the incredible landscape on a Franz Josef Glacier guided tour which we highly recommend (own expense). There are also many excellent bush hikes available in the region. Tonight, you can self-cater in the communal kitchen at our accommodation or take the opportunity to dine at one of the local cafes or restaurants in town. (B)

**Accommodation included:** Hostel close to all attractions

**Optional activities:** Glacier heli-hike, scenic helicopter flight

**DAY 8: Franz Josef to Makarora**

Today we head further down the West Coast towards Mount Aspiring National Park, stopping to take in the breathtaking scenery at the amazing mirror-like Lake Matheson, NZ's most photographed lake. See waterfalls as we travel through the mountainous Haast Pass towards Makarora then visit the stunning Blue Pools. On arrival in Mount Aspiring National Park we go jet boating to experience the best in shallow water boating, skimming just inches from the riverbed, viewing pristine waterways, snow-capped peaks and native bush. (B,D)

**Accommodation included:** Unique mountain chalets

**Activities included:** Walk around Lake Matheson, walk through beech forest to the Blue Pools, jet boat Mt Aspiring National Park

**DAY 9: Makarora to Doubtful Sound**

Fiordland National Park is one of New Zealand's most beautiful locations, with stunning ice-carved fiords, valleys, lakes and mountain scenery; and it is our first port of call today. Within Fiordland we visit Doubtful Sound, the deepest of all the fiords, surrounded by towering peaks and huge waterfalls. We will board a purpose-built boat and enjoy complimentary afternoon tea while cruising past fur seals, penguins and dolphins. There are also sea kayaks available to explore the fiord. (B,D)

**Accommodation included:** Overnight on the boat, anchored within a secluded bay in a UNESCO World Heritage Site

**Activities included:** Doubtful Sound overnight cruise, sea kayaking, wildlife spotting

**DAY 10: Doubtful Sound to Queenstown**

We depart Doubtful Sound around midday, leaving behind stunning Fiordland to head for the 'adventure capital of the world', Queenstown. Queenstown offers an optional big (make that huge!) night out with a wide variety of excellent restaurants, pubs and live music around town. (B)

**Accommodation included:** Lodge located close to town with awesome views

**DAY 11: Full Day 1 in Queenstown**

You have two free days in Queenstown to fully explore everything on offer. With so many fantastic activity options, it's a great place to spend a couple days, no matter what your past-time of choice is. Why not start your first free day with the heart pounding adrenaline rush of one of Queenstown's adventure activities? Options include: bungy jumping, zipline tours, canyoning, Shotover River jet boating, skiing and skydiving. Optional activities and meals not indicated are at your own expense. (B)

**Accommodation included:** Lodge located close to town with awesome views

**Optional activities:** Any adventure activity you can imagine!

**DAY 12: Full Day 2 in Queenstown**

Make the most of your final free day doing any of the incredible activities still on your bucket list or simply spend the day further exploring this spectacularly scenic little town. If you haven't already, we recommend riding the gondola or walking to the top of the hill for the best views of the town, lake and surrounding mountains. Optional activities and meals not indicated are at your own expense. (B)

**Accommodation included:** Lodge located close to town with awesome views

**Optional activities:** Any adventure activity you can imagine!

**DAY 13: Queenstown to Mt Cook**

We'll jump back on the bus for a short drive to Wanaka, where we'll spend the morning cycling along some of the world's most beautiful lakeside bike paths. After lunch, we head over the Lindis Pass through the picturesque Mackenzie region to the base of the country's highest mountain, Aoraki/Mt Cook. There is time for a hike through the Tasman Valley for breathtaking views of the dramatic mountain landscape or opt to take an alpine scenic flight (own expense). This is also one of the best places in New Zealand to join an evening stargazing tour. (B,D)

**Accommodation included:** Alpine lodge

**Activities included:** Mountain biking in Wanaka, scenic walk in Tasman Valley

**Optional activities:** Big Sky Stargazing or scenic heli-flight

**DAY 14: Mt Cook to Christchurch**

Today we make our way through a landscape made famous in the 'Lord of the Rings' films. We'll take a break for a stroll around Lake Tekapo, iconic for its historic church and turquoise waters. Between Tekapo and Christchurch there is an option for thrill seekers to hop-off and join a top-notch Grade 5 white water adventure on the Rangitata River (own expense). Those not rafting will continue on to Christchurch, where your driver guide will point out the highlights of the South Island's largest city. The rafters will rejoin the group at the accommodation in Christchurch this evening. This is where your tour ends - we hope you had a blast on your New Zealand journey! (B)

**Optional activities:** Rangitata white water rafting

**Notes:**

- Standard accommodation is **quad share** in hostels, cabins and lodges
- Upgrades to twin/double and private rooms are available subject to availability
- Room upgrades do not apply on the Doubtful Sound overnight boat cruise
- Luggage is limited one backpack, bag or suitcase per person with a maximum weight of 15kg plus a day pack
- Trips are not suited to children aged 6 years or under. 7 – 17-year-olds may travel if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian
- A basic level of fitness is required for medium length walks

This itinerary is a guide. Given the spontaneous nature of our trips and lack of control over New Zealand's weather(!), what we do each day might occasionally vary.