

9 DAY BEST OF THE SOUTH CHRISTCHURCH – CHRISTCHURCH

Duration: 9 days / 8 nights

Departs: Thursdays

Start Location: Christchurch

Finish Location: Christchurch

First Departure: 26/09/19

Last Departure: 07/05/20

DAY 1: Christchurch to Franz Josef

Nau mai, haere mai (welcome)! Your adventure begins with one of the world's greatest train journeys, a ride on the TranzAlpine train. Check-in at the Christchurch Railway Station, then sit back to watch the South Island's most stunning scenery roll by just outside your window. You'll travel across the vast Canterbury Plains, cross winding ice-fed rivers and traverse the majestic Southern Alps via Arthur's Pass. Your train journey ends on the West Coast in the historic gold mining town of Greymouth, where you will meet your driver guide and coach. From there, we carry on to our overnight stop in the quaint little town of Franz Josef, home to the mighty Franz Josef Glacier. (D)

Accommodation included: Hostel close to all attractions

Activities included: TranzAlpine train journey from Christchurch to Greymouth

DAY 2: 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 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: 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: bungee 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 7: 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 8: 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 9: 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.