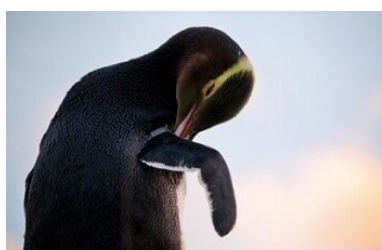




## 15 day South Island Natural Discovery

Beginning with an Akaroa Harbour Nature cruise which takes you out to see the world's smallest and rarest dolphin this tour has something for everyone. From there head further south to Dunedin enjoy the unique flora and fauna of New Zealand all the way. Experience the 'Sound of Silence' with an overnight cruise in the remote untouched wilderness of Doubtful Sound. And of course, no South Island trip is complete without time spent in the alpine playground of Queenstown. Finally, marvel at the west coast then board the world-famous [TranzAlpine Scenic Train](#) back to Christchurch.



Starts in: Christchurch  
Finishes in: Christchurch  
Length: 15days / 14nights  
Accommodation: Motels  
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: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Franz Josef Glacier Helihike with Franz Josef Glacier Guides

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Plus Addon - KiwiRail

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

Included activity: Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Tour and Wildlife Cruise with Monarch  
: Meals included: 3 breakfasts, 3 dinners

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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

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

Included activity: Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre Museum and Theatre Explorer Pass with Hermitage

Included activity: Doubtful Sound Fiordland Navigator Overnight Cruise

## Day 1



### Welcome to Christchurch City

Christchurch 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.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Discover Christchurch Afternoon Tour

A half-day sightseeing tour of Christchurch highlighting both the damage to the city inflicted by several large earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and the rebuild which is currently in progress, together with the surviving beauty of the city and the historical landmarks. Experience the grand architecture, beautiful gardens, and scenic viewpoints on a half-day city tour of Christchurch.

### Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping centre and to the Botanic Gardens.



## Day 2



### Collect Rental Car

Choose a car to best suit your needs from our fantastic rental car range. From compact economy, hatchbacks to prestige SUVs.

### Christchurch to Akaroa

The Banks Peninsula offers a great contrast to the South Island's largest city. Just around a 1 1/2 hours drive from the city centre are rolling green hills, streams, golden sand beaches and small settlements that offer a unique insight into New Zealand's history and development. Just on the other side of the Port Hills is Lyttelton, a busy port town that was crucial to the development of Christchurch and the Canterbury Plains. Following the road around the beautiful natural harbour the names, such as Magazine Bay, Battery Point, Corsair Point and Governors Bay, remind of the importance the navy placed on this harbour.

The Banks Peninsula itself is actually the remains of a long extinct volcano, the rim of which collapsed some time ago allowing the sea to flood into and create what is now the Akaroa Harbour. In 1840 French colonists settled in Akaroa in a bid to stake a claim for the South Island. Unbeknown the British had already declared sovereignty and a long drawn out dispute ensued with the British eventually being given government. However the French stayed and made this stunning part of the South Pacific their home and still to this day the town boasts French street names and every year a French Festival is held.

The Harbour itself is teeming with wildlife and a nature cruise is a must do activity. One of the world's smallest and rarest dolphins, hectors dolphin, are often seen and cruises also offer excursions with the chance to swim amongst them.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise with Black Cat

Experience majestic scenery and stunning wildlife daily on a Black Cat Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise. You'll see the rare, native dolphin – the Hector's or New Zealand Dolphin. There's also the chance to spot the world's smallest penguin, the White Flipped Little Blue Penguin, Fur Seals and other sea birds.

Other cruise highlights are some majestic volcanic cliffs (including the impressive Cathedral Cave) and signs of Akaroa's fascinating past including early Maori, French and British settlements.



## Akaroa to Christchurch (via Lyttelton)

Head to Christchurch today crossing the hills with spectacular views of the harbour. We recommend taking the slightly longer but much more scenic route around Lyttelton Harbour. Just turn at Gebbies Pass Road and follow the road as it passes by the bays named after the areas naval past such as Corsair and Governors Bay. Take the tunnel into the city.

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### Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping centre and to the Botanic Gardens.



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## Day 3



### Christchurch to Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Drive through the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury plains. Catch your breath in Geraldine before continuing through Fairlie. Ascending Burkes pass you'll come to the picturesque town of Lake Tekapo. Follow the road and take in the view of Aoraki-Mt Cook (New Zealand's tallest mountain) from the shores of Lake Pukaki, known for its glacier fed turquoise blue colour. Continue along the lake to your final destination Aoraki-Mt Cook Village.

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### Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre Museum and Theatre Explorer Pass with Hermitage

A tribute to New Zealand's Sir Edmund Hillary, a humanitarian, ambassador, and one of the world's greatest explorers. The centre showcases the Aoraki Mount Cook region, the history of climbing, and early transport used throughout the region. This comprehensive museum details the life of Sir Edmund Hillary, the Hermitage, and provides access to the 126-seat custom-designed theatre. Check out the daily film schedule which includes 3D Movies, documentaries, and 360-degree digital dome features.

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### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

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### Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel, nestled in the heart of Mt. Cook Village, offers spacious self-contained units that provide comfort and convenience. Each unit is surrounded by breathtaking alpine mountain views, making it the perfect retreat for nature lovers and adventurers alike.



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## Day 4



## Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Twizel

A short drive south along the spectacular Mt Cook Highway to join the main road south and onto Twizel. Twizel occupies a central location in the Aoraki Mt Cook and Mackenzie region, with the Southern Alps as a backdrop, the town is close to five picturesque lakes, including a world-standard rowing course and Formula One class boating area at Lake Ruataniwha. It's a fishing mecca so if catching salmon, brown or rainbow trout is what you dream of then don't go past any of Twizel's rivers, lakes or canals. For the adventurous Twizel's terrain is ideal for skydiving, rock and mountain climbing and close by is Ohau Ski Field and in Tekapo, Round Hill ski field is ideal for families. Twizel has a rich but brief history linked to the development of the massive Waitaki Valley hydroelectric scheme. The town started life as a temporary place for the workers on the scheme and when completed the land and buildings were sold off in government lotteries. Now it's a holiday home paradise.

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## Twizel to Dunedin

The next town south is Omarama and the Wrinkly Rams cafe makes an interesting coffee stop. Heading down the Waitaki valley, from Omarama, you follow the hydro power generating system towards the east coast. The town of Oamaru is most famous for its white stone buildings, constructed with the local 'Oamaru Stone'. From the harbour, you can see blue penguins come ashore at dusk as they return from their day at sea. Further south the Moeraki Boulders are a unique geological feature and worth the short detour to the beach to view. Arriving into Dunedin, you can appreciate the city's Edwardian and Scottish heritage through its fine buildings particularly around the Octagon.

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## Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



## Day 5



## 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.

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## Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



## Day 6



## Dunedin to Te Anau (via Invercargill)

The drive to Te Anau takes you through classic Southland farming scenery. Head off-the-beaten-track today and follow the coastline instead of the inland route. Go through The Catlins area and be sure to take a detour to Kaka Point to view its majestic cliffs and pounding surf. If time permits, keep driving towards Nugget Point, iconic for its steep headland with a lighthouse perched atop. Continue through Invercargill to Riverton and Colac Bay, and then head north to Manapouri. From here you can embark on a day or overnight cruise to the remote Doubtful Sound, renowned for its natural beauty. Just a short way further will bring you to your lakeside destination of Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound.

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### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Te Anau Glowworm Caves with RealNZ

Begin your Te Anau Glowworm experience with a scenic cruise across Lake Te Anau on board the luxury catamaran, Luminosa, to the western side of the lake. On arrival, you'll enter the caves through Cavern House, where informative displays detail the history of this 12,000 year old underground network. You'll then explore by limestone pathway while your guide points out hidden whirlpools, sculpted rock formations, and a rushing underground waterfall. See a magical display of thousands of glowworms as you glide through the darkness in a small boat.

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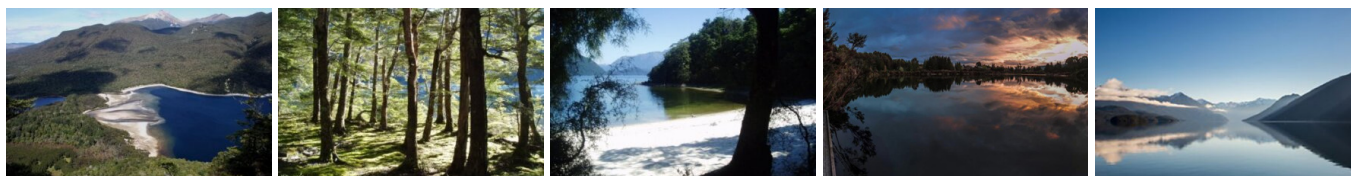
### Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self-contained motel units less than a minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Enjoy a close walk to shops, cafes and restaurants.



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## Day 7



### Te Anau to Manapouri

This short drive takes you along the lake edge of Te Anau and across lush southern farmlands to the small township of Lake Manapouri, gateway to Doubtful Sound.

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### Doubtful Sound Fiordland Navigator Overnight Cruise

Take in the tranquillity of remote Doubtful Sound on this unique overnight wilderness cruise. Beginning in Manapouri with a short boat ride across the lake, you'll be taken by coach over the Wilmot Pass to Deep Cove, Doubtful Sound. Board the Fiordland Navigator, a purpose-built vessel designed like a traditional coastal trading scow. Be accommodated in a private cabin with an ensuite bathroom or a quad-share bunk room with shared bathroom facilities. The Navigator has a large spacious deck for viewing the scenery and wildlife as well as a dining saloon, bar and observation lounge. As you take in the stunning scenery of the Fiord, you'll be provided with a running commentary of the area and its history, points of interest and wildlife. You'll have the opportunity to see dolphins, fur seals and, if you're lucky rare Fiordland penguins. After anchoring in a sheltered cove, choose to explore the shoreline by kayak or stabi-craft, or if you're really brave take a dip in the water. In the evening enjoy a three-course buffet dinner prepared on board and served in the dining saloon. Enjoy beer and fine wines from the licensed bar, and spend time star gazing on the upper deck. Following hearty cooked breakfast the next morning you will spend your remaining time exploring other parts of the fiord before returning to Deep Cove for the trip back to Manapouri.

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### Your accommodation: Fiordland Navigator Overnight Boat in Doubtful Sound

The Fiordland Navigator is purpose built for cruising in the fiords. The vessel offers spacious viewing decks, a comfortable dining saloon and observation lounge.

Meals included: Dinner





## Day 8



### Manapouri to Queenstown

Your Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise returns to Manapouri at midday.

Crossing the rolling tussock lands, pass through Mossburn, the deer capital of New Zealand. Continue north through lush Southland countryside towards Lake Wakatipu. The road now hugs the lake edge and the Remarkable mountain range towers over your approach to Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand.

### Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.

Meals included: Breakfast



## Day 9



### 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.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wilderness Jet Experience with Dart River Safaris

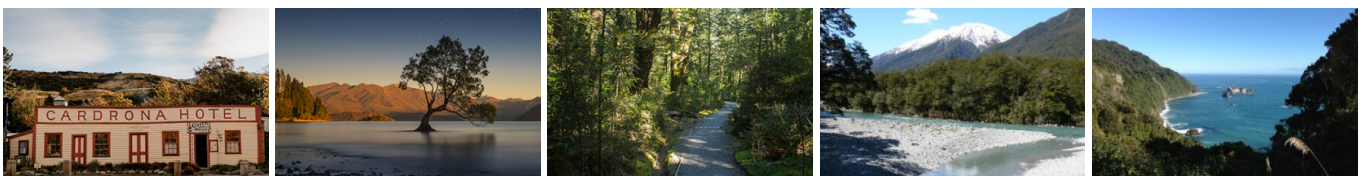
Journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mt Aspiring National Park, where myth, heritage, and fantasy come to life. As one of Queenstown's most exhilarating activities, the Wilderness Jet adventures on a spectacular journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mount Aspiring National Park.

### Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



## Day 10



## Queenstown to Lake Moeraki

Crossing the Crown Range, the highest sealed road in the country, you arrive into the alpine town of Wanaka. The route follows the shores of Lakes Wanaka and Hawea before you enter the township of Makarora, the gateway to Mt. Aspiring National Park and the Blue Pools here are a wonderful 30 minute walk through pristine native beech forest. Descending into Mt. Aspiring National Park and towards the Haast Pass, crashing rivers and waterfalls are around every corner. Crossing the Haast River you are now truly on the wild West Coast, a 600 kilometre stretch of bush, rainforest and podocarp forest. The tranquil bush surroundings of Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki are just a few extra kilometres.

### Your accommodation: Wilderness Lodge, Lake Moeraki

Few places on earth can match the unique natural setting of the Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki, in the heart of the 2.7 million hectares South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Spectacular beaches that are home to fur seals and crested penguins, untouched lowland rainforests spread between pristine lakes and rivers which drain the snow-capped Southern Alps.

Meals included: Dinner



## Day 11



### Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki

Twice daily complimentary activities are led by expert naturalists and introduce guests to the area's remarkable natural history (approx. 1-hour duration each). If you'd prefer to a guide to explore further afield, there are other, charged experiences available. These trips are generally 3 to 4 hours in length and are a great way to learn about wild New Zealand. There are also great self-guided options available, including a 10km network of walking trails, kayaking on the calm waters of Lake Moeraki, and of course, relaxing and soaking up the views.

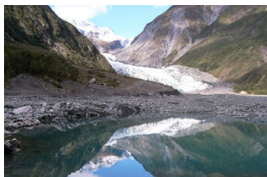
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Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



## Day 12



### Lake Moeraki to Franz Josef Glacier

Heading North along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beach occasionally. Paringa Salmon Farm is worth a stop to stretch your legs, feed the fish, and stop for a refreshment. Keep heading North and be sure to enjoy the view of the everchanging towering snowcapped Southern Alps Mountain Range.

If you are wanting to view Fox Glacier on foot, the start of the track is 2kms before Fox Glacier Township the walk is an easy grade and will take two hours to return. Fox Glacier welcomes you to the glacier region, take a short 5-minute drive west to see the impressive Lake Matheson famous for its reflections of snow-capped mountains. From Fox, you have a 45-minute drive over the Fox Hills to Franz Josef Township.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

A spectacular scenic flight soaring over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers, Fox and Franz Josef. Landing at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys.



## Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.

Meals included: Breakfast



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## Day 13



### Franz Josef Glacier Helihike with Franz Josef Glacier Guides

After a thrilling scenic flight, high above the rugged terrain, you will land on the glacier, ready to undertake a 2.15 hour guided glacier hike. Your friendly guide will lead you through some of the most pristine and awe-inspiring glacial scenery in the world. Your guide will choose your route carefully as you go and, with an eye for the most spectacular ice formations, you'll soon be making your way through an extraordinary landscape of towering peaks and glistening blue ice. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity prior to travel. For more information please see [here](#).

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### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Lake Mapourika Scenic Cruise

Take a cruise on Lake Mapourika, the largest lake in Westland Tai Poutini National Park. The Hannah-K is purpose built for the West Coast with a covered cabin area as well as outdoor viewing platforms. The viewing platforms allow us to get up close with some of Westland's native birdlife and lush ancient rainforest. Enjoy a tour through the beautiful mirrored estuaries of the stunning Okatarito Kiwi Sanctuary, home to NZ's rarest Kiwi Bird!

Enjoy commentary throughout the trip, from an experienced local guide. Learn about the unique environment that gives the region it's World Heritage Status. The tour follows in the footsteps of the first pioneers to visit the glacier region in the early 1900's. Tourists were transported by horse-drawn carriage to the lake, for wooden boat tours across the stunning venue.

Sit in silence, and listen to the Native Birds, and enjoy the same unbeatable scenery in it's pristine state! It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

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### SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Okarito Lagoon Guided Kayak Trip (2 hours) with Okarito Kayaks

Kayaking is by far the best way to enjoy the flora, fauna, and scenic grandeur of New Zealand's largest unmodified coastal wetland. Previous experience is not necessary. Okarito Lagoon covers more than 3240 hectares of shallow open water and is well known for its outstanding bird life, including white heron and royal spoonbill. Exploring the open water and river channels that lead you deep into the heart of the rainforest is like stepping back in time to pre-European conditions and on a clear day you enjoy fantastic views of Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps. Your guide will take you to their favorite spots where you'll discover the flora, fauna, and history of the lagoon.

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## Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



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## Day 14





## Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station

Head north along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beach occasionally. Whataroa is the next town where you can see one of the world's rarest birds, the Kōtuku - White Heron. The Kōtuku nest at the Waitangi Roto Nature Reserve, only accessible with a guided tour from October to March. The next town is Ross which is the site of an old gold mining settlement where the local information centre offers you the chance to pan for gold. Hokitika is a great place to explore craft and gift stores and head to the coast and take in the endless sea views. The Pounamu-Greenstone on offer in Hokitika is probably some of the best you will see in the country. 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. Drop your rental car at the Greymouth Train Station depot located at the train station building before boarding your train to Christchurch.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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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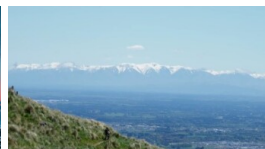
### Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

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## Day 15



## Private Transfer from Christchurch Accommodation to Christchurch Airport with Christchurch Touring Company

A private transfer will collect you from your accommodation and transfer you to Christchurch Airport in time for your departing flight.

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## Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	15
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

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## Included activities

Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
Includes	Akaroa Harbour Nature Cruise
Includes	Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre explorer pass, Mt. Cook
Includes	Wildlife cruise and Yellow eyed penguin colony, Dunedin
Includes	Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise
Includes	Franz Josef Glacier Helihike

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## Accommodation summary

Day 1	Quest on Cambridge
Day 2	Quest on Cambridge
Day 3	Mt Cook Motel
Day 4	Motel on York
Day 5	Motel on York
Day 6	Lakefront Lodge
Day 7	Fiordland Navigator Overnight Boat in Doubtful Sound
Day 8	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 9	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 10	Wilderness Lodge, Lake Moeraki
Day 11	Wilderness Lodge, Lake Moeraki
Day 12	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 13	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 14	Quest on Cambridge