Australian Escapes Holiday & Travel Club
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The Southern Circle Day Walks

This 14-day South Island self-drive is perfectly crafted for travellers who wish to explore New Zealand's famous landscapes at a comfortable pace. The journey focuses on rewarding day walks, including time in the magnificent Aoraki Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand. From the glacial lakes beneath Aoraki / Mount Cook to the fjords of Piopiotahi / Milford Sound, you will experience authentic Kiwi scenery without needing strenuous hiking. Designed for ease and enjoyment, it is the ideal way to build confidence and curiosity for your first trip to Aotearoa.

Starts in:	Christchurch
Finishes in:	Christchurch
Length:	14days / 13nights
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: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)

Includes: Unlimited kms

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

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

plus much more...

Day 1





Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

On arrival, you will be met by a private driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

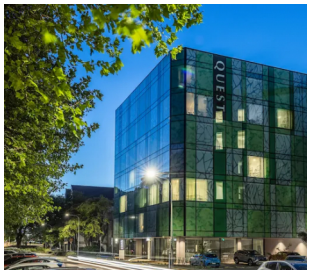
Welcome to Christchurch City

Welcome to Ōtautahi / Christchurch, the South Island’s garden city, where historic heritage meets contemporary urban design. Whether you’re exploring the Avon River, wandering through expansive botanical gardens, or discovering contemporary art galleries, Christchurch offers plenty to uncover. As the gateway to the Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps, the city is also the perfect base for refined farm-to-table dining, scenic adventures, and alpine escapes

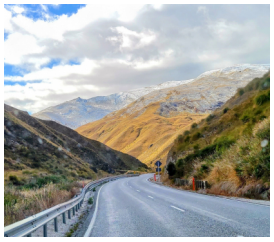
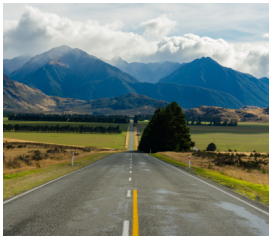
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Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

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.



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.

Christchurch to Dunedin

Crossing the vast Canterbury Plains you’ll head South on State Highway one, traversing many braided rivers that start their life as glacial melt water high in the Southern Alps. Go over New Zealand's longest bridge at Rakaia and onwards through Timaru.
Stretch your legs in Oamaru, known for its white stone buildings constructed with the local Oamaru Stone. If you were a little late off the mark this morning you may get the chance to see the local blue penguins come ashore at dusk. Continue down the coast to Moeraki, and take a detour towards the beach to see the Moeraki Boulders, a unique geological feature and well worth the look.
As you arrive in Dunedin, take in the city’s Edwardian and Scottish heritage reflected in the buildings around the city centre The Octagon.

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: 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 3





Explore Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula

Known as the Edinburgh of the South, Dunedin City has a heavy Scottish influence. Surrounded by rugged coastal plains and windswept beaches it’s home to an eclectic mix of historical and modern architecture as well as industrial technology. Renowned for its Flemish Baroque-inspired ‘gingerbread house’ Railway Station, this university town is bustling with life. Head to the Saturday farmers market held in the aforementioned railway grounds for a taste of organic produce, handmade crepes and local honey. Explore the many cafes and wine bars in The Octagon, then continue on a self-guided walking tour of the internationally acclaimed Street Art dotted around the city. Drive to the coast and watch the freighters passing in the distance while you sunbathe, or hire a mountain bike and test your legs on one of the many trails available in the area. For a more immersive historical experience, follow the coast to New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle. On your way back be sure to head to the Otago Peninsula to see the largest mainland Albatross colony in the world.

Walking tracks on the Otago Peninsula

There are a number of short walks to enjoy on the Peninsula. The information below is provided by the Department of Conservation. Sandfly Bay
Walking Time: 1 hr return walk from carpark
Getting there - drive is approximately 25 minutes from the centre of Dunedin. Tunnel Beach
Walking Time: 1 hour / 2km return walk from carpark
Getting there - drive is approximately 15 minutes south from the centre of Dunedin. Sandymount
Walking Time: Lovers Leap 50 min return walk from carpark or Sandymount Circuit 1 hr return walk from carpark
Getting there - drive is approximately 30 minutes from the centre of Dunedin. Allans Beach
Walking Time: 5 min walk to the beach from carpark
Getting there - drive is approximately 40 minutes from the centre of Dunedin.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Albatross Classic Tour with Royal Albatross Centre

This tour focuses on the Royal Albatrosses and wildlife that inhabit Pukekura (Taiaroa Head). Begin with a short film, then enjoy the informative commentary provided by your guide about albatrosses as you visit the observatory to see nesting albatrosses in their natural habitat.

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 4





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.

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.

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Pure Wilderness Jet Boat with Fiordland Jet

Jet boat down the Waiau river, across Lake Manapouri, to the ancient forest of the Fiordland National Park. Enjoy the thrill of jet boating down the majestic trout-filled Waiau River, to the serene Lake Manapouri. Step foot into the Fiordland National Park and go for a short walk while learning about the ancient beech forest and ferns. Your jet boat ride includes a number of stops at the exact locations of the filming the "Fellowship of the Ring" on the Waiau or "Anduin River". The driver will tell you the inside story of the filming the Lord of the Rings on this river. The trip will also include some thrilling 360 degree turns and spins as well as interesting interpretation about the flora and fauna and the local European and Māori history.

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.



Day 5



Routeburn Track Guided Day Walk - Lunch Included

Enjoy a guided day excursion from Te Anau to Key Summit on the renowned Routeburn Track. Begin the journey with a spectacular scenic drive along the Milford Road to the Divide Shelter which is the starting point for the guided walk to Key Summit. There are opportunities for short nature walks and photo stops along the way. Departing from the shelter, the walk ascends through lush, temperate rainforest on a well maintained track. The steady climb takes approximately 2 hours at a leisurely pace. A maximum of 12 walkers with a Trips and Tramps guide provides an excellent opportunity to learn about the natural and human heritage of Fiordland. Gaining an elevation of 400 metres, you'll emerge from the forest into the alpine environment, with panoramic views of high snowy peaks, alpine lakes, and deep bush clad valleys. On a fine day you'll enjoy lunch on the summit amidst the alpine tarns, and in unfavourable conditions in the shelter of a nearby tramping hut. After lunch steps are retraced to the Divide Shelter before returning to Te Anau by coach. Hot drinks and energy snacks are included and will be carried by the guide. A reasonable level of fitness is required to enjoy this walk.

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.



Day 6







Te Anau to Milford Sound

The road to Milford Sound has countless photo opportunities and short walks. The Mirror Lakes create perfectly clear reflections of the surrounding mountains and glacier-formed meadows. Further along, you'll pass through the Homer Tunnel, an incredible feat of engineering at 1219 metres long. Milford Sound is the only sound accessible by road, making it very popular to visit. Coming into the village, you'll be greeted with an amazing view of Mitre Peak, which rises spectacularly from the waters up to the sky. Real Journey cruises can take you out into the sound where you'll receive a wealth of information on how this magnificent area has been formed and experience first-hand the multitude of waterfalls that line the fjord.
Note: Please make sure to allow 2.5hrs to Milford Sound, this takes into account the current road works on the Milford Road."

Milford Mariner Overnight Cruise

The Milford Mariner offers you a very special dinner, bed and breakfast experience on Milford Sound. Onboard the Milford Mariner you will cruise the full length of this spectacular fiord to the Tasman Sea before anchoring for the night in sheltered Harrison Cove. Accompanied by a nature guide you can go exploring in the tender craft and kayaks or simply relax on deck. After the day's activities, you enjoy a delicious evening buffet in the spacious saloon before retiring to your private cabin.
The vessel itself was designed along the lines of a traditional New Zealand coastal trading scow to reflect Fiordland's heritage. Departing from the Milford Wharf, the Milford Mariner cruises the length of Milford Sound to the Tasman Sea leisurely exploring on the way many points of interest, there is plenty of time to view the waterfalls, rainforest, mountains and wildlife and the experienced nature guide on board will be able to answer any questions you may have. After reaching the open sea, subject to weather and favourable conditions the sails are hoisted for a period. The vessel returns to the calm and shelter of Harrison Cove for your overnight stay. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see here.

Your accommodation: Overnight Boat in Milford Sound

Onboard the Milford Mariner you will cruise the full length of this spectacular fiord to the Tasman Sea before anchoring for the night in sheltered Harrison Cove. After the day's activities, you'll enjoy a delicious evening buffet in the spacious saloon before retiring to your private cabin.

Meals included: Dinner



Day 7




Milford Sound Overnight Cruise returns then onto Queenstown

Your Milford Sound overnight cruise will return to Milford this morning between 9-10am.
On your journey to Queenstown, you'll cross rolling tussock lands and pass through Mossburn, the deer capital of New Zealand. Continue north through Southland countryside towards Lake Wakatipu. The road now hugs the edge of the lake and the Remarkable mountain range towers over you as you approach Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand.
Note: Please make sure to allow 5.5hrs from Queenstown and 2.5hrs from Te Anau, this takes into account the current road works on the Milford Road."

Queenstown

Queenstown known in Māori as Tāhuna, is home to many adrenaline-inducing activities. Nestled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, this alpine town has very distinct seasons, and most adrenaline-filled activities can be accessed year-round. Queenstown is home to jet boating, bungy jumping, rafting, skydiving, paragliding, and even indoor thrills. If you want that rush - head out on the Shotover Jet, dive off the Nevis Bungy, freefall on the Canyon Swing, or Zip line the Gondola. While arguably the brightest gem in New Zealand’s crown, Queenstown offers far more than an action-packed getaway. If you’re looking for a slightly slower pace, there are plenty of recreational activities, including hiking and biking trails to explore, guided tours, boat cruises, scenic flights, or spa and wellness options to help you get away. Head to the lakefront, eat at one of the al fresco eateries, and soak up the local vibes; catch a ride on the iconic 100-year-old steamship the TSS Earnslaw; or take the Skyline Gondola and enjoy bird's-eye views of the Remarkables mountain ranges and Lake Wakatipu. Pack a picnic and go for a hike, only 20 minutes from Central Queenstown, Coronet Peak opens for summer sightseeing. You can ride the Peak Gondola to the top for panoramic views and hike the trails, or go for a bike ride on many excellent biking trails. In winter, Queenstown becomes a world-class winter resort, with four ski areas and a range of activities, bars, restaurants, and ways to relax and unwind.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Gondola and 3 Luge Rides with Skyline Queenstown

In the heart of Queenstown, located 450 metres above town in the Ben Lomond Scenic Reserve is the Skyline Complex. A gondola ride to the summit makes for awe-inspiring views of the city surround. Arrive at the complex and wander the outside viewing decks for a picture perfect outlook. Then onto the Luge! The 800 metre luge track offers an exhilarating journey through banked corners, tunnels and dippers.

Your accommodation: Blue Peaks Lodge

Blue Peaks Lodge offers well equipped self contained rooms with a fantastic location overlooking Queenstown and is just an easy five minutes walk to the Queenstown lakefront.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



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 - Dart River Safaris Funyaks

The best way to see, touch and feel the breathtaking Dart River valley. Jet boat for 1¼ hours to the upper reaches of the Dart River, where visitors disembark and inflate their own canoe. After a full safety and paddling instruction, your Funyak journey begins. Paddle downstream on a glacier-fed river amidst rocky peaks and dense rainforests. Enjoy a sumptuous lunch and explore the Rock Burn Chasm and ancient beech forests. Paddle to Paradise then transfer to an awaiting back road coach for the return trip through Paradise. Funyaks is suitable for most ages with average fitness and no previous experience is required. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - The Original Onsen Evening Session

Enjoy the most memorable experience in Queenstown and surround yourself with a sky of stars and 14 Japanese lanterns as you soak up the warm waters of the Onsen Hot Pools. Nestled high into a cliff-side overlooking the magnificent Shotover River canyon, the experience is all about unwinding and soaking-up Queenstown's spectacular scenery, enjoying the pure waters and the fresh mountain air as your mind and body surrenders to the deep penetrating warmth and gentle massage of the private pools. Water temperature is set according to the day - generally between 37.8C on a hot day, to 39.8C during a snow-storm and in the summer one of the pools is kept cold for those who relish the thought of a cold plunge!

Your accommodation: Blue Peaks Lodge

Blue Peaks Lodge offers well equipped self contained rooms with a fantastic location overlooking Queenstown and is just an easy five minutes walk to the Queenstown lakefront.



Day 9







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: Blue Peaks Lodge

Blue Peaks Lodge offers well equipped self contained rooms with a fantastic location overlooking Queenstown and is just an easy five minutes walk to the Queenstown lakefront.

Meals included: Speciality Dinner



Day 10




Queenstown to Wanaka

Leaving Queenstown you'll drive over New Zealand's highest sealed road, the Crown Range before arriving into the resort town of Wanaka.

Walking tracks in and around Wanaka

There are some excellent walks in and around Wanaka. The information below is provided by the Department of Conservation. Located in Wanaka is a Department of Conservation information centre and you can get updates on track conditions and suitability plus you can learn about the area, its natural history and its people. Listed below are a selection of short walks but check with the Department of Conservation information centre for weather conditions, track suitability and conditions first. Outlet Track
This is a local favourite as it is an easy walk suitable for all ages and abilities. It begins from Wanaka town centre and takes you around picturesque Lake Wanaka to the outlet to the Clutha River and on to Albert Town. This track can also be explored by bike.
Distance: 3 km one way. Completion Time: 1 hour one way.
Mount Iron Track
This very popular, close-to-Wanaka-town loop walk suits all ages and abilities and offers great views from the summit.
Distance: 4.5 km. Completion Time: 1.5 hour.
Diamond Lake and Rocky Mountain walks
These two excellent walks in the Diamond Lake Conservation Area give wonderful views of the surrounding alps and Lake Wanaka.
Distance: 2km - 7 km depending on trail. Completion Time: 45 minutes - 3 hours depending on trail.
Rob Roy Glacier Track
Rob Roy Valley is a good entry point to an area of spectacular alpine scenery, snowfields, glaciers, sheer rock cliffs and waterfalls. The road to this track is unsealed and unsuitable for rental cars, but transportation to the beginning of the walk can be arranged.
Distance: 10 km. Completion Time: 3 - 4 hours return. There is avalanche danger during winter and spring (June-November) on the Rob Roy Track.
Roy's Peak Track
The most famous walk in the Wanaka area, this steep walk climbs 1,500m on a well-formed track with the most spectacular views of Lake Wanaka, its islands, bays, and the mighty snow-capped mountains of the Southern Alps, including Mount Aspiring.
Distance: 16 km return via the same track. Completion Time: 5 - 6 hour return. This track is closed from the 1st of October - 10th November each year. In winter alpine equipment (such as crampons) are required.
Isthmus Peak Track
A long, steady climb that rewards walkers with spectacular, panoramic views of Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea as well as the mountains of the Southern Alps.
Distance: 16 km return via the same track. Completion Time: 5 - 6 hour return. This track is closed from the 20th of November - 20th December each year. This track is not recommended in winter due to snow and ice build up on the track.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

Lying close to the centre of Lake Wanaka is Mou Waho Island Nature Reserve. A unique glacial remnant of the last ice age, the island is also the historic site of early shipbuilding and used to be a stopping place for the steamers and log rafts that once plied the lake. Accessible from Wanaka by a 35-minute boat cruise, the landing is on the eastern side of the island where the remnants of the early settlement remain; a stone wharf and a hut. A well-formed track leads from the landing and climbs steadily through native bush to near the top of Tyrwhitt Peak. Just before the top, we see Arethusa Pool, a small lake on the island with small islands in it - very intriguing! From the top, we have a sweeping 360-degree view of Lake Wanaka, its surrounding mountains and valleys, and below Arethusa Pool. The perfect spot to stop for tea or coffee. Going back down the track gives us more time to take in our surroundings, listening to and watching the lively bird-life, and just enjoying this unique wildlife reserve. You will feel well rewarded as you re-join the boat for the cruise back to Wanaka. Total cruise time is 1.5 hours. The trip runs subject to weather and lake conditions. Depending on the planting season, you can help The Reforestation of Mou Waho by planting a tree.

Your accommodation: Clearbrook Motel and Serviced Apartments

Clearbrook offers luxury apartment style and townhouse accommodation options and is located just metres from Wanaka's main street and its majestic lake front.



Day 11







Wanaka to Aoraki Mt Cook National Park

Passing through the Clutha River valley you arrive into the quaint village of Tarras, which has a number of boutique stores and a lovely café. You then traverse the Lindis Pass, one of New Zealand’s highest roads with the summit reaching 971 metres. The tussock covered hills offer an unusual contrast as you pass from Central Otago into the Mackenzie Basin. The towns of Omarama and Twizel are the last stops before you arrive at Lake Pukaki and take the Mt Cook Highway along the shores to the village. In Aoraki Mt Cook Village a myriad of activities are available from scenic flights with glacier landings, to kayaking on a glacial lake and a host of walks to suit all abilities. At The Hermitage Hotel the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre is a must see.

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.

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.

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.



Day 12







Walking Tracks in Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Aoraki-Mt Cook Village offers a variety of short scenic walks suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Start your adventure at the Department of Conservation Information Centre, where you can learn about track conditions, local history, and the area’s wildlife. Here are a few popular walks to explore: Hooker Valley Walk: 3-4 hours return Bowen Bush Walk: 10-minute return Glencoe Walk: 10-minute return Red Tarns Track: 2-hour return Kea Point Walk: 2-hour return Sealy Tarns Track: 3 - 4 hours return Please be aware that at Aoraki/Mount Cook, you will need to pay for parking at the White Horse Hill car park. The cost is $5 per hour or $25 for the full day. A 20-minute free period is available for quick drop-offs.

The Adventurer: Tasman Glacier Heli Hike with Mount Cook Glacier Guiding

The adventure begins with a breathtaking scenic flight, experience the thrill of the helicopter as you look out over Mt Cook and the spectacular views of the Alps surrounding the glaciers. Landing on a remote part of the glacier, your guide will equip you with all the gear ready to explore ice formations in this ever-changing environment at the heart and birthplace of New Zealand mountaineering. Walking through the untouched formations and specially cut steps - You’ll return home with incredible memories of your Tasman Glacier hike in this vast mountain landscape. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here

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.



Day 13





Aoraki / Mt Cook National Park to Christchurch

Leaving Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, travel a short distance for a stop at the visitor centre on the southern shores of Lake Pukaki. Learn about the formation of the region and take in the spectacular views of Aoraki-Mount Cook. Along the way, you'll reach Lake Tekapo which also displays the same reflective qualities as Lake Pukaki, making the waters bright turquoise. It's a great place to take a scenic flight, soak in a hot spring or just marvel at the magnificent views. From here you travel through Burkes Pass and into the rich farming valley that surrounds Geraldine. Continue across the vast Canterbury Plains to Christchurch.

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 archetecture. 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 Gondola

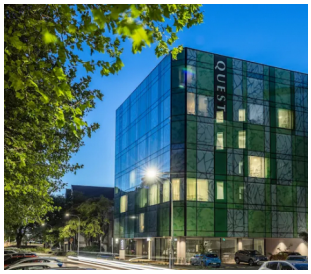
In the Heathcote Valley, just a 20-minute drive from the heart of Christchurch City, ride the Christchurch Gondola for nearly a kilometer to the collapsed rim of an extinct volcano, which exploded six million years ago. Take in the spectacular panoramic views of the central city, Lyttleton Harbour, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury Plains, and the distant peaks of the Southern Alps. Wander the summit complex, enjoy a coffee or lunch in the cafe, and choose one of many nature walks to explore or visit the Christchurch Discovery Rice, a dramatic reconstruction of the history of the Port Hills and Christchurch.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Willowbank Wildlife Reserve

Nowhere else in New Zealand will you find such a wide range of New Zealand wildlife so close to you. Willowbank provides you with a "Kiwi Guarantee" and is home to New Zealand's largest and most accessible Kiwi viewing area. With this unique experience, you will see New Zealand's natural splendor firsthand, and view Kiwis that are not hidden behind glass. You will explore one of the most complete selections of New Zealand native and introduced wildlife in natural bush surroundings. Much of the Willowbank wildlife wander free and can be petted and fed.
Choose to explore the reserve yourself, or for an up-close Kiwi experience, you can take a guided tour.

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 14





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:	South Island Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	14
Accomodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Quest on Cambridge
Day 2	Motel on York
Day 3	Motel on York
Day 4	Lakefront Lodge
Day 5	Lakefront Lodge
Day 6	Overnight Boat in Milford Sound
Day 7	Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 8	Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 9	Blue Peaks Lodge
Day 10	Clearbrook Motel and Serviced Apartments
Day 11	Mt Cook Motel
Day 12	Mt Cook Motel
Day 13	Quest on Cambridge