

South Island Highlights – 9 Days – Christchurch/Christchurch From \$1,599pp*

A wonderful introduction to the natural wonders of the South Island.

Included in this journey:

8 nights' accommodation

Rental car with full insurance coverage - medium size car (Toyota Corolla sedan or similar)

Unlimited kilometres, GPS navigation, airport/ ferry fee

TranzAlpine train ticket – Greymouth to Christchurch – standard class

Day 1 – Arrive in Christchurch

Collect your rental car from the airport and drive to the city centre. Check-in at the hotel (after 3:00pm). Christchurch, known for its English heritage, is located on the east coast of New Zealand's South Island. Flat-bottomed punts glide on the Avon River, which meanders through the city centre. On its banks are cycling paths, the green expanse of Hagley Park and Christchurch Botanic Gardens. In Christchurch you will find historic buildings, epic street art murals, award-winning restaurants and of course an array of cafes, bars and restaurants.

Overnight: Christchurch

See & Do: Christchurch Botanic Gardens and Punting | Cardboard Cathedral | Port Hills | Local markets | The Canterbury Museum | Sumner Beach

Day 2 – Christchurch – Mt. Cook National Park

Make an early start today and drive through the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury plains. Have a pit stop in Geraldine before continuing through Fairlie. Ascending Burkes pass you'll come to the picturesque lakeside town of Tekapo. Continue on 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 color. Drive along the lake to your final destination Mt Cook Village. Please note there are no food or shops at Mount Cook you will need to stock up prior to arriving in Mount Cook if you wish to self-cater.

Approximate distance and time: 350 kms – 4 hours

Overnight: Mount Cook Village

See & Do: The Hooker Valley Track | Sir Edmund Hillary Visitor Center | Take A Scenic Flight | Go Boating On The Tasman Lake | Stargaze In An International Dark Sky Reserve | Glacier Kayaking in Tasman Lake or Mueller Lake



Day 3 – Mt. Cook National Park – Dunedin

With another day of approximately a 4 hour drive, we suggest an early start to make most of the day. Leave Mt Cook National Park and travel past Twizel (one of the locations for the Lord of the Rings films). You will soon be going through Omarama. Have a pit stop here and maybe checkout The Wrinkly Ram (a great cafe that also offers sheep shearing demonstrations). Head towards the east coast driving through the Waitaki Valley. A stop in Oamaru is recommended so you have some time enjoy the white stone buildings that Oamaru is well known for! Continue south down the coast to Moeraki, and take a detour towards the beach to see the Moeraki Boulders – a unique geological feature well worth a 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.

Approximate distance and time: 318 kms – 4 hours

Overnight: Dunedin

See & Do: Museums and Galleries | World's steepest street | Botanic Garden | Lovers Leap | Dunedin Railway Station | Larnach Castle | Wildlife Cruise

Day 4 – Dunedin – Te Anau

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. Continue through Invercargill to Riverton and Colac Bay, and then head north to Manapouri. From here you can go on a day or overnight cruise to the remote Doubtful Sound – renowned for its natural beauty. A short drive will bring you to the lakeside destination of Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound.

Approximate distance and time: 400 kms – 5 hours

Overnight: Te Anau

See & Do: Te Anau Glowworm Caves | Milford Sound | Te Anau Bird Sanctuary | A Day Trip To Doubtful Sound | Hike | Lake Te Anau

Day 5 – Te Anau – Milford Sound – Te Anau

A real treat in store for you today! The road to Milford Sound is simply outstanding! From crystal clear lakes and high mountains to lush glacier formed meadows, this area is dramatic and unyielding. Stop and stretch your legs on the Chasm Walk, a short stroll through native beech forest to see several powerful waterfalls. Enjoy the drive through the Homer Tunnel (1219 metres long) and head into the village of Milford. We highly recommend that you take a day cruise into the heart of the sound and learn about how this magnificent area was formed and experience the wonder of the falls that line the Fiord before back-tracking the way you came.

Approximate distance and time: 400 kms – 5 hours

Overnight: Te Anau

See & Do: Chasm walk | Milford Sound Cruise



Day 6 – Te Anau – Queenstown

Today you'll cross vast tussock lands on your way to New Zealand's adventure capital – Queenstown. Drive through Mosburn (the deer capital of the Nation) and continue on through the Southland countryside. The drive along the lake with the Remarkables mountain range towering over you as you approach Queenstown is simply breath-taking.

Approximate distance and time: 165 kms – 2 hours

Overnight: Queenstown

See & Do: Lake Wakatipu | Skippers Canyon | Jet Boating on the Shotover River | Skyline Gondola | Bungy Jump Queenstown Gardens

Day 7 – Queenstown – Franz Josef Glacier

Today you'll cross the Crown Range and arrive in the Alpine town of Wanaka – gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park. Drive along the shores of Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea and get to the small town of Makarora. Stop at Blue Pools for a 1 hour return walk through native beech forest to a glacier-fed swimming hole. Continue driving pass the remote seaside settlement of Haast before heading up the wild West Coast – a 600 km stretch of bush and native rainforest. You will soon be welcomed by Fox Glacier before your destination for the night – Franz Josef township.

Approximate distance and time: 350 kms – 5 hours

Overnight: Franz Josef

See & Do: Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight | Glacier Hot Pools | West Coast Wildlife Center | Franz Josef Valley Glacier Walk

Day 8 – Franz Josef Glacier – Greymouth Train Station – Tranz Alpine train to Christchurch

You will be driving north today through the historic gold mining region of Hokitika. This seaside town has a rich history that dates back to the 1860's and is well known for its Greenstone (Pounamu). Have a stroll and pick up a souvenir or two at one of the many craft shops. When you are ready, continue on to Greymouth. Greymouth is the largest town on the West Coast and at Greymouth train station is where you end this part of the journey. Drop off your car here and get on the Tranz Alpine Scenic Train to Christchurch (approximately four hours and leaves Greymouth at 2pm). Once you are in Christchurch, make your own way to your overnight accommodation.

Approximate distance and time: 170 kms – 2.5 hours

Overnight: Christchurch

Day 9 – Depart Christchurch

Make your own way to Christchurch Airport in time for your departing flight.

General notes & conditions:

*All prices from, twin share on a room only basis with itinerary starting on a Monday & subject to availability. All activities at own expense. All distances and times are approximate.