



# 11 Day TAKAHE Tour

## New Zealand South Island Select Tour

**STARTS / FINISHES:** Christchurch

**DURATION:** 11 days & 10 nights

**DEPARTS:** Thursday

**MIN/MAX NUMBERS:** 6 / 24 passengers



## START INFORMATION

**CHRISTCHURCH INTERCITY BUS DEPARTURE INFO:** 7:30AM, outside Bus Interchange on Lichfield Street, near Colombo Street

*\*Subject to change. Please be ready at the pickup 15 minutes prior to the departure.*

**Please Note:** Your first leg unguided public bus journey ends in Blenheim at approx. 12:40PM. You will meet your Stray Guide outside Blenheim i-SITE Information Centre (The Railway Station). In the

event the pickup will significantly delay due to the ferry arrival, we will notify you by email in advance.

**WELLINGTON DEPARTURE INFO:** Meet your Stray Guide & Group up outside Naumi Hotel Wellington (at the Dunlop Terrace side) at 6:30AM before heading to check in the Bluebridge Cook Strait Ferry together.

*\*Subject to change. Please arrive at the Hotel 5 minutes prior to the departure time.*

**PICTON DEPARTURE INFO:** 11:45AM – 12:15PM, The bus stop on Auckland Street outside i-SITE Information Centre (opposite to Picton Railway Station)

*\*Subject to change depending on ferry arrival time. Please be ready at the pickup 15 minutes prior to the departure.*

## DAY 1: Christchurch to Marahau (Abel Tasman)

Kia Ora (hello) and welcome to Christchurch, where you'll begin and end your tour. Depart early this morning aboard a public bus service (unguided) to Blenheim where you'll meet your Stray Guide and group. We'll depart from Picton i-SITE or Blenheim i-SITE (The Railway Station), and set off through the picturesque Marlborough region. We'll continue through to Marahau, situated right on the edge of the spectacular Abel Tasman National Park where we'll spend our evening relaxing around the campfire and looking at the stars.

**Accommodation:** The Barn or similar

**Optional paid activities:** Wine tasting (\$15pp)

**Meal options:** We'll stop at a supermarket to stock up on supplies - Self-cater or join the optional group dinner

**Free activities:** Stargazing

## DAY 2: Marahau (Abel Tasman)

Today is a full free day to explore New Zealand's most popular national park. From our accommodation we can hike straight into the park (no water taxi required) and then it's a cool 12 kms to Anchorage. The walk is absolutely beautiful with the park's natural golden sand beaches and brilliant blue waters visible throughout. The walk is approx. 4 hours each way but there's enough photo stops en-route to spend an entire day exploring, checking out Cleopatra's Pools (yes there's a natural water slide there), enjoying a picnic on the beach, relaxing in the sunshine - the world is our oyster.

**Accommodation:** The Barn or similar

**Meals included:** Continental breakfast

**Optional paid activities:** Kayaking, water taxi, canyoning

**Meal options:** Pack a picnic lunch and lots of snacks for the hike, self-cater in the kitchen or use the BBQs

**Free activities:** Hike in the national park, relax on the golden sand beaches, see Cleopatra's Pools

## DAY 3: Marahau (Abel Tasman) to Hokitika

We're buckling up for an awesome day driving down the incredibly scenic 'wild' West Coast, an area known for its untamed beaches and masses of lush rainforest. Through Buller Gorge and down a stretch of road named one of the top drives in the world by Lonely Planet, there's not much cell phone reception but we're not going to need it. This road offers views for days and we won't want to stop looking out the window for a second. We'll stop at the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and blowholes to explore this unique part of coastline before continuing on to the vibrant, artistic township of Hokitika. Our accommodation tonight is absolute beachfront, located on the shores of the Tasman Sea. Treat yourself to some dinner in their Ocean View restaurant or go for a walk and explore Hokitika.

**Accommodation:** Hokitika Beachfront Hotel or similar

**Meals included:** Continental breakfast

**Meal options:** Local eateries

**Free activities:** Head down to Hokitika Beach for sunset

## DAY 4: Hokitika to Franz Josef Glacier

It's a short drive today towards the charming little village of Franz Josef. The landscape will change from coastline to dramatic, lush rainforest so basically another day of incredible views and stunning scenery (have your phone charged for pics). We'll get to Franz Josef around lunchtime, and we'll have the rest of the day to explore the town or relax at our accommodation.

**Accommodation:** Franz Josef Motels or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Meal options:** Local restaurants

**Free activities:** Relax in Franz Josef

## DAY 5: Franz Josef Glacier

Ice, ice baby! Today is about experiencing Franz Josef Glacier, an iconic highlight of the West Coast and New Zealand in general. We can get a shuttle to the beginning of the track and then hike through native bush and across glacial streams to the terminal face of the glacier for spectacular photos or just relax in the township and enjoy the views. If you'd like to see the glacier up close (before that pesky climate change melts it for good) you can go for an incredible heli-hike and actually stand on the glacier!

**Accommodation:** Franz Josef Motels or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Optional paid activities:** Shuttle to the track, heli-hike to the glacier

**Meal options:** Local restaurants

**Free activities:** Glacier Valley hike, bush tracks

## DAY 6: Franz Josef Glacier to Queenstown

This morning we'll go for a scenic walk around Lake Matheson, known for its stunning views and mirror-like quality on particularly still days, and then we'll make our way to Queenstown. Known in New Zealand as the 'Adventure Capital of the World' and the spiritual home of bungee jumping,

Queenstown is a crazy combination of adventure and entertainment. We'll stop at Kawarau Bridge on our way into town a.k.a. the first commercial bungy jumping site in the world and watch people jumping off with only a rope tied to their ankles. We highly recommend ticking this off your list if you're feeling brave but otherwise, we'll just cheer on our mates from the viewing platform! When we get to Queenstown we'll head straight to our accommodation. Stay at the Mercure Resort will provide a touch of luxury to your Queenstown adventure, with a swimming pool, fitness centre and sauna, it's the best way to relax and ease yourself into life in this truly stunning resort town.

**Accommodation:** Mercure Queenstown or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Optional paid activities:** Puzzling World

**Meal options:** Local restaurants and cafes

**Free activities:** Lake Matheson scenic walk, watch people jumping off a bridge!

## DAY 7: Queenstown

Today we'll hop aboard a Coach which will take us to the iconic Milford Sound. We'll drive along one of the most scenic alpine roads in the world and then cruise across the Sound (fun fact: it's not actually a sound, it's a fjord!) to see towering Mitre Peak plus rainforests and waterfalls, as well as spotting some amazing wildlife like Fur Seals, Penguins and Dolphins. Once we've snapped as many pics as we possibly can, it's back to Queenstown. This evening, we recommend checking out the buzzy nightlife and sampling a famous Fergburger or just checking out one of the many restaurants Queenstown has to offer.

**Accommodation:** Mercure Queenstown or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Included activity:** Milford Sound Day Trip including Scenic Cruise

**Meal options:** Local restaurants

## DAY 8: Queenstown

Yaaaasssss Queen(stown)! We've got a full day in the adventure capital today. With beautiful mountain scenery and plenty of outdoor activities, it's easy to understand why so many backpackers refuse to leave this place. We'll have brekkie at the hotel and then the rest of the day is freeeee.

**Accommodation:** Mercure Queenstown or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Optional paid activities:** Any adventure activity that we wild Kiwis can dream up (bungy, swing, jet boating, skydiving, mountain biking, zipline, horse riding...)

**Meal options:** Local restaurants

**Free activities:** Hike Ben Lomond, the Queenstown Hill, or Bob's Peak

## DAY 9: Queenstown to Mount Cook

We'll depart Queenstown early to drive over the Lindis Pass and through the Mackenzie Country, past the vivid blue waters of Lake Pukaki on the way to our amazing stop at the base of New Zealand's highest mountain, Aoraki/Mt Cook. We've made this drive sound great but honestly - we reckon it's one of the most stunning days you'll have in the whole of NZ.

We arrive in the early afternoon with time to do an optional experience like a boat tour on a glacial lake surrounded by snow-capped alps (sounds epic? It is.) Alternatively, we can check out the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre or do one of the many great short walks in the park. We would be remiss if we didn't recommend the Hooker Valley track (weather dependent) which in our opinion is in the top 3-day walks in NZ. If it's a clear night, head outside to experience one of the best stargazing spots in the country.

**Accommodation:** Stunning alpine lodge

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Optional paid activities:** Visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, Glacier Explorer boat tour

**Free activities:** Take photos of awe-inspiring scenery, do one of the many great short walks to the Hooker glacial lake (weather dependent), stargazing

## DAY 10: Mount Cook to Christchurch

Leaving Mount Cook we make our way through a landscape made famous by the 'Lord of the Rings' films. We'll stop to check out the turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo and the Church of the Good Shepherd (an iconic photo stop) and if you like you can go and relax in the Tekapo hot pools, do some snow tubing or ice skating (winter only) or hike up to the Mt John Observatory for incredible views of the lake from above. After lunch, we'll continue to our overnight stop in Christchurch where we'll spend the afternoon wandering the city streets and laneways to discover creative street art intended to bring cheer and colour to a city once buried in rubble.

**Accommodation:** Scenic Cotswold or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Free activities:** Hike to Tekapo Mt John Summit, check out the historic Church of Good Shepherd, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park

## DAY 11: Depart Christchurch

Today our adventure comes to an end, we'll say goodbye (or see you soon) to our mates and go our separate ways for now. We hope everyone had a blast and remains Stray Mates for 4ever!

**Meals included:** Breakfast

*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.*

## What's Included:

- Experienced tour guide
- Private coach transport
- 10 nights' accommodation
- 10 Breakfasts
- Meals as specified

- Public transport from Christchurch to Blenheim (Christchurch start only)
- Inter-island ferry (Wellington start only)
- Milford Sound Day Cruise

## **What to Bring:**

- Camera, Sturdy walking shoes/boots, Warm clothing, Waterproof jacket, Hat & Sunscreen, Bathers/towel, Water bottle, Toiletries, Motion sickness tablets, Insect repellent

## **Please Note:**

- Luggage is limited to one piece per person with a maximum weight of 23kg plus a day pack
- A basic level of fitness is required for medium length walks
- Accommodation at Marahau (Abel Tasman) is specialist. All cabins are private, but facilities are shared.