



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 outside Ibis Hotel Wellington 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

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 10: Marahau (Abel Tasman)

Today is a free day in Abel Tasman National Park. From our accommodation we can hike straight into the park (no water taxi required) and walk the Abel Tasman Coastal track up to Anchorage Bay.

The park is full of lush bush and there are plenty of opportunities to explore the golden sand beaches and swim in the brilliant blue waters throughout your journey. The walk is approximately 4 hours each way but you can get a water taxi back if you'd like extra time to soak it all in.

Accommodation: The Barn or similar

Meals included: Continental breakfast

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

Optional paid activities: Kayaking, water taxi, canyoning, sailing.

DAY 11: Marahau (Abel Tasman) to Hokitika

Today we're heading down New Zealand's wild west coast! A super scenic drive, this area is known for its untamed beaches and masses of lush rainforest. Named one of the top drives in the world by Lonely Planet, this road offers views for days! We'll stop at the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and blowholes to explore this unique part of coastline and then we'll head into Hokitika, famous for its arts scene and greenstone (pounamu).

Our accommodation tonight is 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. We highly recommend a visit to sunset point where you can explore the Tambo 'shipwreck', see amazing views of Hokitika beach with Aoraki Mt Cook in the distance and watch the sun setting over the horizon. Once it's dark, go for a walk to the glowworm dell and see the glittering lights in the cave above you before heading back to your accommodation for a peaceful night of rest.

Accommodation: Hokitika Beachfront Hotel or similar

Meals included: Continental breakfast

Meal options: Local eateries

Free activities: Head down to Hokitika Beach for sunset

DAY 12: 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 just another day of incredible NZ scenery (have your phone charged for pics).

We'll get to Franz Josef around lunchtime, giving you plenty of time to experience Franz Josef Glacier, an iconic highlight of the West Coast and New Zealand in general. 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

Meal options: Local restaurants

Free activities: Glacier Valley hike, bush tracks

Optional paid activities: Heli Hike to Franz Josef Glacier, Shuttle to Track

DAY 13: Franz Josef Glacier to Queenstown

We'll start our day with a relaxed walk around Lake Matheson, known for its stunning views of Aoraki/Mt Cook which reflects back onto the lake on still days! Next we'll visit charming Wanaka, famous for its stunning lake and breathtaking mountain scenery. We'll enjoy a late lunch and take time to soak in the views and perhaps even snap a picture of THAT Wanaka tree.

Afterwards, we'll make our way to Queenstown - the 'Adventure Capital of the World'! Queenstown is the spiritual home of bungee jumping, and offers unlimited adventure and entertainment. When we arrive we'll head straight to our accommodation which offers a swimming pool, fitness centre and sauna, so you have plenty of opportunities to relax after all that excitement!

Accommodation: Mercure Queenstown or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Local restaurants and cafes

Free activities: Lake Matheson scenic walk

DAY 14: Queenstown

Today is a free day in Queenstown. Yaaaasssss Queen(stown)! After breakfast, go and explore the beautiful mountain scenery with one of the many free hikes or join an activity of your choice! This evening, we recommend trying the famous Fergburger, checking out the nightlife, or enjoying a hot chocolate on the lakefront and listening to the live artists scattered across the shore.

Accommodation: Mercure Queenstown or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Local restaurants

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

Optional paid activities: Bungee, jet boating, skydiving, ziplining, horse riding, wine tasting, luging

DAY 15: Queenstown to Te Anau

After all that adventure it's time to depart Queenstown towards Te Anau, the gateway to the stunning Fiordland National Park. On arrival in Te Anau, we'll make our way to the Fiordland cinema to watch Ata Whenua - Shadowland, where we'll see incredible footage over the National Park, it's wondrous landscapes and unique wildlife before we see it for ourselves on our cruise along the Milford Sound tomorrow.

In the afternoon we'll take a water taxi to Brod Bay where we'll be able to walk a part of the Kepler track, one of New Zealand's Great Walks, across the Coal Creek Bridge and along the shores of Lake Te Anau back to our accommodation (summer only). We'll spend the night at our hotel by the serene lakeside.

Accommodation: Te Anau Distinction Luxmore Hotel or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Included activity: Entrance to Ata Whenua movie, Water Taxi to Brod Bay (Oct-Apr)

Free activities: Kepler Track Great Walk

Meal options: Local restaurants

Day 16: Day Trip to Milford Sound

This morning we'll depart Te Anau and head towards the iconic Milford Sound where we'll board a boat and cruise across the Sound (fun fact: it's not actually a sound, it's a fjord!) to see towering Mitre Peak plus rainforests, waterfalls, and loads of amazing wildlife like Fur Seals, Penguins and Dolphins.

In the evening you have the option to see the glowworm caves in Te Anau, go for a stroll through the town or around the lake, or relax at our lakeside accommodation.

Accommodation: Te Anau Distinction Luxmore Hotel or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Included activity: Milford Sound Day Trip including Scenic Cruise

Meal options: Local restaurants

Optional paid activities: Glow worms

DAY 17: Te Anau to Mount Cook

We'll depart Te Anau 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: Mount Cook Alpine Lodge

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Optional paid activities: Visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre (entrance included May-Sep), Glacier Explorer boat tour

Free activities: Take photos of awe-inspiring scenery, walk the incredible Hooker Valley track (weather dependent), stargazing

DAY 18: Mount Cook to Christchurch

Leaving Mount Cook we'll 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 final overnight stop in Christchurch where we

can head out for our final group dinner together to celebrate an incredible journey around Aotearoa/New Zealand (own cost).

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 19: Depart Christchurch

This morning we highly recommend exploring Christchurch. Wander the city streets and laneways to discover creative street art intended to bring cheer and colour to a city once buried in rubble, check out the incredible modern shopping district, go for a beer at one of the quirky local pubs, spend an hour punting down the avon river, explore the stunning botanical gardens or hop on the historic tourist tram and see it all!

As today is our final day, our adventure is coming to an end and we can't believe it's over! 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, 1 dinner
- Public transport from Christchurch to Blenheim (Christchurch start only)
- Inter-island ferry (Wellington start only)
- Entrance to Ata Whenua movie
- Water Taxi to Brod Bay (Oct-Apr) OR Entrance to Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre (May-Sep)
- Milford Sound Day Cruise
- Plenty of stops at lakes, lookouts, mountains, hikes, beaches, national parks, rivers, waterfalls and more...

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.

Highlights:

- Spend time relaxing or hiking in the beautiful Abel Tasman National Park
- Explore the township of Franz Josef Glacier
- Stroll by the lakeside in the peaceful alpine resort town of Wanaka
- See the stunning Ata Whenua movie at Fiordland Cinema
- Take a water taxi and complete part of the Kepler Track - one of New Zealand's great walks
- Immerse yourself in NZ 'Must Do' - Milford Sound Day Trip including a scenic road trip and cruise in Fiordland National Park
- Enjoy a touch of luxury at the Mercure hotel Queenstown complete with swimming pool
- Stay at a stunning alpine lodge at the base of NZ's highest mountain - Aoraki/Mt Cook
- Free time in Queenstown
- Plenty of stops at lakes, lookouts, mountains, hikes, beaches, national parks, rivers, waterfalls and more...