



South Island Highlights

Picton, Kaikoura, Hanmer Springs, Christchurch, Arthurs Pass, Greymouth, Franz Josef, Haast, Wanaka, Arrowtown, Queenstown, Cromwell, Central Otago, Dunedin, Moeraki Boulders, Oamaru, Mt Cook, MacKenzie Country, & more...

This is the crème de la crème of our tours – 10 nights in the stunning South Island. Join this small group tour for an enchanting trip around the best sights of the south. With overnight stays in Wellington, Hanmer Springs, Christchurch, Franz Josef, Queenstown, Central Otago, Dunedin, Mt Cook and back to Christchurch, this tour will provide a fantastic array of wonderful sights and experiences.

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After pick up at the door (all part of the Hinterland service) we head south – enjoying a day of each others company on the road to Wellington. After leaving the Bay of Plenty behind, we pass Taupo and then the stunning volcanoes of the Central Plateau. Further south, past the farmland of the Manawatu we reach Wellington for a good night's sleep at a top hotel before the South Island awaits in the morning.

After breakfast we are at the ferry terminal in time to catch the Interislander to Picton. This 3.5 hour journey cruises the Marlborough Sounds for the later parts – keep your eyes peeled for seals sunning themselves on the rocks. Upon arrival into Picton we board the recently refurbished Tranz Coastal train for a memorable ride down the coast to Kaikoura. Past the wineries of Marlborough and the salt works at Lake Grassmere, we follow the rocky coast down to Kaikoura for our first night on the South Island.

This morning we have a treat in store – a flight out off the coast of Kaikoura viewing the resident sperm whales. Kaikoura has a natural trench close to shore which is full of food for a wide variety of marine mammals – whales, dolphins and seals abound in this part of the world. Your flight is a once in a lifetime chance to see these massive creatures from a whole new perspective.

After the excitement of spotting the whales, we cruise a short distance inland to Hanmer Springs. The drive through the Inland Kaikoura Mountains is stunning. We will explore this charming town for the afternoon - perhaps tonight you fancy a dip in the hot pools the town is famous for. Then we head south through the sheep farming country and braided rivers of North Canterbury towards Christchurch – the South Island's largest city – where we will spend the next couple of nights.

Whats Included:

- 11 days of touring
- 10 nights quality accommodation
- Door to door service [home pickups]
- Quality Air-conditioned vehicle
- Fully guided with commentary
- All breakfasts and dinners
- Cook Strait crossing by ferry to Picton
- Trans Coastal train to Kaikoura
- Whale watch flight over Kaikoura
- Christchurch City tour
- Tranz Alpine train to Greymouth
- Gold panning on the west coast
- Guided tour of Queenstown
- Cruise on the historic TSS Earnslaw
- Tour at Walter Peak Station
- The Queenstown Gondola
- Dunedin City Tour
- AIR NZ flight back from Christchurch
- Plenty of stops along the way



Today is all about exploring 'The Garden City'. This morning we will head into the city to meet a local guide who will show us around the ever-changing CBD and surrounds. After the devastating earthquakes of 2010/11, Christchurch is getting back on its feet and there is plenty of interesting sights to see. In the afternoon we will explore out of the city centre. See scenic suburbs such as Lyttelton and Sumner. Enjoy panoramic views of the city and plains, with the Southern Alps standing tall in the distance. On the way back to our accommodation we will visit historic Mona Vale homestead with its picturesque gardens and streams. Tonight we enjoy a good rest before another exciting day tomorrow.

Next morning's highlight is one of the world's best train rides – the TranzAlpine. The scenery from the large panoramic windows will take your breath away. From plains and rivers, to forests and the peaks of the Southern Alps. After reaching Arthurs Pass the train descends through lush West Coast rainforest to finish at Greymouth where the van is waiting for you. This is a trip that will provide long-lasting memories.

From Greymouth there is more amazing scenery in store as we hit State Highway 6 and head south down the West Coast. What a special part of New Zealand. Our final destination today is Franz Josef, but before we get there we stop at historic Hokitika and then on to Ross to try our luck at gold panning. This is where New Zealand's largest nugget was found in 1909! More rainforest and dramatic scenery await as we roll into Franz Josef – a long but memorable day. Tonight we stay in the village, and will enjoy a lovely dinner out together.

More amazing scenery awaits for our next day as we head further south. Following the Westland National Park with the Alps as our backdrop, we have breakfast at Lake Matheson – famous as the 'Mirror Lake'. We then enjoy more scenery as we continue towards Haast, making plenty of photo stops along the way, a photographers dream with innumerable lakes, rivers, forests and mountains. After reaching Haast we leave the coast behind and head up towards Aspiring National Park and over the Haast Pass. On the other side we see Lakes Hawea and Wanaka, and stop in Wanaka to enjoy this popular holiday resort. We take the back road towards Queenstown, over the Crown Range Road, and head down the Gibbston Valley towards New Zealand's adventure playground. We will be ready to get a good nights sleep in our central city hotel.

After a couple of days travelling it's time to relax in Queenstown, and enjoy this popular lakeside resort. Following a late start and hearty breakfast, we will have time to explore the town before boarding Queenstown's most iconic attraction – the TSS Earnslaw. Cruising across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak Station, this 107 year old steamship provides a taste of yesteryear. You can even view the engine room as she chugs across the lake. A farmyard tour on the station is included in the trip. On return to Queenstown we then look forward to a delicious dinner with the best view in town at Skyline gondola. Travelling 450 metres above Queenstown, this must do attraction affords stunning views over Queenstown, The Remarkables and Lake Wakatipu. The colours change at dusk as we enjoy a sumptuous dinner – what a night to remember.

Sadly we have to leave Queenstown behind as we make our way east towards Dunedin. First stop is the historic mining town of Arrowtown, here you can see the Chinese Village and other interesting sights. Further on we visit Cromwell and its historic quarter (moved to higher ground when the area was flooded to make Lake Dunstan). Then we follow the Clutha River to Alexandra and into the heart of Central Otago. We will detour to visit the old mining town of St Bathans with its haunted hotel, and pass through the Maniototo. We continue on through Middelmarsh to Dunedin and here we stay the night in this historic city.

After a delicious breakfast this morning, we are met by a local guide who will show us around 'The Edinburgh of the South'. Dunedin is a fascinating city full of history and character, and we will get to see some of its iconic sights including the ornate Railway Station. Of course we will also visit Baldwin Street – the world's steepest. Heading north we follow the Otago coastline to Moeraki – home of the famous boulders. These prehistoric rocks are almost to round to be true! Further on is Oamaru with its lovely Victorian limestone buildings.

We then head inland up the Waitaki Valley. We will visit some of the hydro-electric lakes that power much of the country. Continuing on, the mountains get closer as we head further inland, along Lake Pukaki, to our overnight stay at Mt Cook village. With New Zealand's highest mountain looking down on us, we will enjoy a stay at the Hermitage – one of New Zealand's most iconic hotels, before our flight from Christchurch the following day.

You will see:

- SH1 scenery all the way to Wellington
- Taupo and the central plateau
- Cook Strait & the Marlborough Sounds
- Kaikora coastline
- Hanmer Springs
- Christchurch & the Canterbury plains
- Arthurs Pass & Southern Alps
- Greymouth and the West Coast
- Hokitika and Franz Joseph
- Aspiring National Park and Haast
- Lakes Hawea and Wanaka
- Queenstown and Arrowtown
- Lake Wakatipu & Walter Peak Station
- Central Otago and Dunedin
- The Waitaki Valley and hydro lakes
- Lake Pukaki and Mount Cook
- Mackenzie Country
- Lake Tekapo
- Church of the Good Shepherd
- Geraldine

Not included:

- Any lunches unless specified*
- Morning/afternoon tea stops*
- Any alcoholic beverages with meals

* Please note, that unless specified in the itinerary we do not usually include the cost of lunches or morning and afternoon tea stops in the tour cost, but we always make stops where there are a range of options available so you can choose what you want, and have flexibility to do things on your own if you wish.

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