



KIRRA TOURS

13 DAY SOUTH ISLAND CIRCUIT

STARTS/FINISHES: Wellington / Christchurch

DURATION: 13 Days & 12 Nights





Day 1 – Arrival Day to Wellington

Haere Mai (Welcome) to Aotearoa New Zealand. Your journey begins in Wellington, the country's compact and creative capital city. With a population of less than 220,000 people, no city in NZ combines a relaxed atmosphere and a cultured, bohemian spirit quite like Wellington. Check in to your hotel and spend the afternoon at your leisure, we recommend a visit to Te Papa, our national museum, which boasts some incredible exhibits. This evening you'll meet your Guide and your new travelling companions over a welcome dinner.

Visit: Wellington

Stay: Novotel Wellington or similar

Meals: Dinner*

**Arrival time dependent*

Day 2 – Wellington to Nelson

This morning, we'll start our journey with breakfast aboard the ferry in the brand-new Pohutukawa Lounge. Designed like a premium airport lounge, it offers a relaxing atmosphere and a delicious spread of food to enjoy as we cross the Cook Strait. If the weather is fine, head up to the deck to take in stunning views of the Marlborough Sounds and keep an eye out for local wildlife.

On arrival in Picton, we'll travel to Blenheim, stopping first at the Omaka Aviation Heritage Museum. Home to an extraordinary collection of WWI and WWII aircraft, many displayed in dioramas created by Sir Peter Jackson's Wingnut Films, this is a must for history and aviation buffs alike. Then we'll stop for a wine tasting amidst the vines at one of New Zealand's top Sauvignon Blanc producers, before continuing on to Nelson, where we'll have time to unwind, explore the area, and sample some of the region's fantastic local food and beverages.

Stay: Rutherford Nelson or similar

Visit: Picton, Omaka Aviation Heritage Museum, Blenheim, Nelson

Experience: Premium Lounge Ferry journey across the Cook Strait, Omaka Aviation Heritage Museum

Meals: Breakfast



Day 3 – Abel Tasman National Park

Today we head out to explore Abel Tasman National Park, renowned for its golden sand beaches, crystal-clear waters, and native coastal bush, Abel Tasman is best experienced from the water.

Cruise or kayak along the coastline, spot native wildlife, and stop off to walk sections of the famous Abel Tasman Coast Track. This evening, return to Nelson with the rest of the day at your leisure to explore this creative city further.

Stay: Rutherford Nelson or similar

Visit: Abel Tasman National Park, Nelson

Meals: Breakfast

Day 4 – Nelson to Hanmer Springs

This morning we'll travel inland, crossing through the Buller Gorge and Lewis Pass as we make our way to Hanmer Springs, a charming alpine village nestled in the Southern Alps. Once we arrive, the rest of the day is yours to explore. Many choose to soak in the famous Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools, a network of natural hot pools surrounded by native bush, the perfect way to unwind. This evening we'll gather for a group dinner in the village.

Stay: Heritage Hanmer Springs or similar

Visit: Hanmer Springs

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 5 – Hanmer Springs to Christchurch

After breakfast, we'll depart Hanmer Springs and make our way toward Christchurch, stopping en route in the Waipara Valley, one of Canterbury's premier wine regions. Enjoy a tasting at a local winery before continuing on to Christchurch, the Garden City, arriving in the afternoon with time to explore the city's hidden eateries and shopping district. This evening we'll enjoy a group dinner at our hotel.

Stay: Distinction Christchurch or similar

Visit: Waipara Valley, Christchurch



Experience: Waipara Valley Wine Tasting

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6 – Christchurch to Dunedin

After breakfast, we'll journey south along the scenic east coast. Our first stop is Oamaru, a charming township renowned for its beautifully preserved heritage buildings, offering a glimpse into New Zealand's Victorian past.

Next, we'll visit the mystical Moeraki Boulders, ancient geological wonders formed around 60 million years ago. These spherical stones, shaped by natural erosion, dot the beach like sentinels silently guarding the coastline, creating a truly captivating sight.

In the late afternoon, we'll arrive in Dunedin whose name is derived from the Scottish Gaelic term for Edinburgh. Steeped in Scottish heritage, the city enjoys a unique blend of history and culture from its striking European architecture to its rich Maori heritage.

Stay: Scenic Hotel Dunedin City or similar

Visit: Oamaru, Moeraki Boulders, Baldwin Street, Dunedin

Meals: Breakfast

Day 7 – Dunedin to Te Anau

This morning we'll visit the iconic Larnach Castle, a jewel of Dunedin. Built in 1871 by William Larnach, this is New Zealand's only castle. Its magnificent gardens, recently rated by the New Zealand Gardens Trust as a Garden of International Significance, are unique and beautiful and offer breathtaking views of the Otago peninsula and beyond.

Next, our journey takes us to Gore, where we'll delve into the town's colorful past at the Hokonui Moonshine Museum. Discover the daring adventures of Scottish settlers who turned Gore into a hub for illicit whisky distilling and bootlegging. You'll even have the chance to sample Old Hokonui, crafted from the original recipe that defied the law.

In the evening, we'll arrive in Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland and the spectacular Doubtful Sound. Settle in and prepare for tomorrow's awe-inspiring exploration of one of New Zealand's most pristine natural wonders.

Stay: Distinction Luxmore Te Anau or similar



Visit: Gore, Te Anau

Experience: Larnach Castle, Hokonui Moonshine Museum

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8 – Te Anau via Doubtful Sound to Queenstown

Departing Te Anau this morning, we'll travel to Manapouri for a scenic cruise across the lake to West Arm. From there, we'll take a short coach journey over Wilmot Pass, New Zealand's most expensive road, pausing to admire the dense Fiordland rainforest and stunning views of Doubtful Sound below.

At Deep Cove, we board a modern catamaran to explore Doubtful Sound, the largest and most tranquil fiord in the region. Known for its serene beauty and lack of crowds compared to Milford Sound, Doubtful Sound offers breathtaking scenery with towering mountains and pristine waters. As we sail, enjoy expert commentary on the area's rich history and keep an eye out for wildlife, including penguins, seals, and dolphins.

After the tour, we'll continue to Queenstown, where we'll check into the stunning alpine resort that will be our accommodation for the next two nights.

Stay: Heritage Queenstown or similar

Visit: Lake Manapouri, West Arm, Deep Cove, Doubtful Sound, Queenstown

Experience: Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 9 – Day at leisure in Queenstown

Today is yours to experience the best of Queenstown, a picturesque alpine resort town known for its vast array of adventure activities. If you'd like to explore the area, we recommend taking a ride on the world famous Shotover Jet Boat or taking a tour to the gold mining area of Skippers Canyon. For the best views of the town, travel to the top of Bob's Peak by gondola and have lunch at the Skyline restaurant, why not make your way to the bungy centre to watch people hurling themselves off cliffs - bungy is a NZ invention after all! Alternatively, make your way to the lakeside and enjoy a refreshing drink or stroll through Queenstown's lush park.

Stay: Heritage Queenstown or similar



Meals: Breakfast

Day 10 – Queenstown to Haast

This morning we'll embark on one of the most scenic drives in New Zealand, traveling through Arrowtown, a picturesque village steeped in the rich history of the gold mining era. Next, we'll visit Wanaka, a charming township nestled by the lake's edge surrounded by breathtaking mountain scenery. Here, we'll enjoy lunch and take time to soak in the views.

As we continue north, the journey takes us along the spectacular West Coast, renowned for its rugged beauty and dramatic landscapes. Passing through the Haast Pass, a UNESCO World Heritage site, we'll marvel at ancient rainforests, crystal-clear rivers, and towering peaks. The small town of Haast, set against this remarkable backdrop, is home to the famous Haast River and is steeped in natural heritage.

This evening we'll gather for a group dinner at our hotel, reflecting on the day's awe-inspiring journey.

Stay: Heartland Haast or similar

Visit: Arrowtown, Wanaka, Haast

Experience: Arrowtown, Wanaka, Haast

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 11 – Haast to Franz Josef

Travelling north along the coast of the Westland National Park this morning, we'll travel to Glacier Country, home of the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers. This remarkable part of the country was shaped by dynamic glaciers and boasts lush rainforest which grows beneath towering mountains. We'll make a stop at Lake Matheson, nestled amongst ancient forest and famous for mirror views of Aoraki/Mount Cook and Mount Tasman. Lake Matheson is a serene and beautiful place to enjoy a short stroll to a gorgeous lookout point. This evening, we'll spend the night in the township of Franz Josef, surrounded by rainforest and mountains, arriving in time to take an optional Helicopter Flight, with a snow landing – a tour highlight, but very dependent on weather conditions.

Stay: Scenic Franz Josef or similar

Visit: Fox Glacier, Lake Matheson, Franz Josef

Meals: Breakfast



Day 12 – Franz Josef to Christchurch

This morning, we'll depart Franz Josef and head north to the artistic town of Hokitika, renowned for its stunning Greenstone, before continuing on to the TranzAlpine train station. From there, we'll board the TranzAlpine train, regarded as one of the world's greatest one-day train journeys. Get ready to be awed by breathtaking views of forests, rolling plains, and snow-capped mountains! At the end of the journey, we'll transfer to our hotel in Christchurch, where we'll gather for a farewell meal to celebrate the final evening of our tour.

Stay: Distinction Hotel Christchurch or similar

Visit: Hokitika, Arthurs Pass, Christchurch

Experience: TranzAlpine Train Journey from Arthurs Pass

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 13 – Depart Christchurch

Today is the final day of the tour, our trip has come to an end. Enjoy breakfast before saying a fond farewell to your tour leader and all your travel companions. Whether you're travelling home today or staying in Christchurch for longer, we hope you leave this tour with happy memories and friends for life.

Meals: Breakfast



KIRRA TOURS

What's Included:

- Experienced Driver/Guide
- Small Group Tour - Max 24
- Luxury Touring Vehicle
- 12 nights' accommodation
- 19 meals (12 Breakfasts, 1 Lunch, 6 Dinners)
- Premium Lounge Ferry journey across the Cook Strait
- Omapere Aviation Heritage Museum
- Waipara Valley Wine Tasting
- TranzAlpine Train Experience
- Overnight in a World Heritage Area
- Visit Arrowtown and Wanaka
- Doubtful Sound Wilderness Cruise
- Explore the Hokonui Moonshine Museum
- Larnach Castle visit
- Moeraki Boulders