

Signature | Spectacular South Tour

Wellington to Queenstown – 11 Days

Spectacular South is also offered as a Queenstown to Wellington tour.
See the end of this itinerary for details.

Day 1

Wellington

Kia Ora!

Welcome to Wellington – New Zealand’s windy capital! Wellington is known for its world-class dining, great coffee and eccentric shops.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Wellington has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to get cultured at Te Papa Museum or grab a drink at one of the many quirky bars on Cuba Street. You may even fancy a ride on the cable car!

After an exciting day on the town, your tour will officially begin as you join your fellow travellers and Tour Director at this evening’s welcome dinner.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Wellington City Introduction Tour

Group Dinner

Day 2

Wellington to Marlborough

Crossing Cook Strait

This morning you will say poroporoaki ki te motu raki (good-bye to the North Island) as you sail to the South Island, crossing the Cook Strait on the Interislander ferry. As the shores of the North Island

slowly disappear, settle down in the comfy seats in the Premium Lounge. Treat yourself to a mimosa and enjoy a hearty seafaring breakfast, but save some room for morning tea!

On your journey across Cook Strait you may spot pods of dolphins playing in the wake or, if you are very lucky, whales. Don't spend all your time inside – as you enter the stunning Queen Charlotte Sound, enjoy the views as you cruise past the remnants of whaling stations, remote working sheep farms, pristine native bush and mussel farms. Admire the beauty of this coastal paradise as you arrive into the gateway of the South Island, Picton. Step off the Interislander Ferry and join your next world-class experience aboard a Marlborough Wine Tour.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Interislander Ferry

Marlborough Wine Tour

Day 3

Marlborough to Kaikoura

The Coastal Pacific Scenic Train

Today you will be travelling into Kaikōura. But first, you will go on the Sky Omaka Aviation Museum Tour.

Relax as the train glides across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breath-taking beauty. Keep an eye out for the fur seals lazing on the rocks!

Once in Kaikōura, the evening will be yours to enjoy some iconic kai moana (seafood) at one of the quaint restaurants before enjoying your luxurious ocean-front hotel.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus
Sky Omaka Aviation Museum Tour

Day 4

Kaikōura to Christchurch

Explore Kaikōura

Today will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience of whale watching! Enjoy today's thrill of an up-close encounter with wildlife.

After this outstanding experience, we're sure you will be feeling peckish. Head to the beach to sample some iconic New Zealand food - you can't go wrong with the humble Kiwiana fish and chips. Work off the deep-fried delights by wandering through the wonderful array of local artisan stores and souvenir shops.

In the late afternoon, your highlight day will continue as you rejoin the Coastal Pacific Train en route to Christchurch. The spectacular scenery doesn't cease to amaze as you journey south through the rolling hills and extensive plains. Enjoy the relaxing journey with a glass of wine in hand as you indulge in a gourmet meal. Relax for the remainder of the evening before hitting the town the following day.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Whale Watch Experience
Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus

Day 5

Christchurch

Explore Christchurch

Christchurch, the hub for South Island exploration, is also a wonderful city that blends modern architecture and technology with the 19th-century Anglican 'gothic revival' architectural influence. Often remembered for its earthquake in 2011, the city is rebuilding

itself into a multicultural haven.

Today you are free to explore the museums, Riverside Markets, Punting on the Avon, Gondola and botanical gardens. There is also a multitude of delicious cafés tucked into quaint side streets we're sure you will love.

This evening, you will re-join your fellow travellers for a special dinner. Enjoy a wonderful meal while indulging in fantastic conversation and seasonal cuisine.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Hop on hop off tram

Day 6

Christchurch to West Coast

The TranzAlpine Scenic Train

The moment has come to experience the world-famous TranzAlpine journey through the Southern Alps, emerging in the West Coast!

On this fantastic escape, you will see epic vistas, soar on the edges of the ice fed Waimakariri River, traverse through the Great Divide, and experience ever-changing landscapes. The natural scenery isn't the only marvel, though. The TranzAlpine passes through the Otira Tunnel, a true engineering marvel of 100 years!

Once you arrive on the West Coast, a private coach will take you even further off the beaten track to Punakaiki Pancake Rocks. Here you will explore curious limestone formations and blowholes before finishing your day in the ocean-front town of Hokitika.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

TranzAlpine Scenic Plus
Punakaiki Pancake Rock Excursion

Day 7

West Coast to Franz Josef

Explore the West Coast

This morning, you'll start your West Coast adventure by visiting one of the South Island's most popular activities – the West Coast Tree Top Walk. This elevated adventure will get you acquainted with the locals – the ancient Rimu and Kamahi trees.

After your sky-high experience, continue south into Glacier Country. Franz Josef Glacier is quite special in that it survives in coastal rainforest temperatures. With a short walk to a viewpoint, you'll get a fantastic view of the vast valley, as well as a sneak peek of Franz Josef Glacier itself. If you would prefer to get up close, we recommend booking an optional helicopter flight. This will ensure you are getting the best possible view of this natural wonder. After indulging in the local activities and retail therapy in Franz Josef's souvenir shops, join your group for an impeccable highlight meal at Te Waonui Forest Retreat.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

West Coast Tree Top Walk
Short Nature Walk to Glacier Viewing Point
Degustation Dinner at Te Waonui Forest Retreat

Day 8

Explore the Southern Lakes

Today you will explore the Haast Pass. With changing landscapes around every bend, this journey of about five hours to Queenstown,

Franz Josef to Queenstown

will be one of the most scenic drives you may ever take. While aboard an exciting river boat and private coach, marvel at the beaches, crystal blue lakes and rivers, mountain peaks, lush vineyards, charming plains and majestic glaciers as your Tour Director guides you between local hidden gems. Stop in unique locations that only locals know about.

Emerging on the other side of the pass, explore the local fruit hotspot – Mrs. Jones’ Fruit Stall before exploring the cobblestone streets of Arrowtown.

After an exciting plunge into the history of this gold rush village, you will arrive in the world-famous resort town of Queenstown.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (3 nights in Queenstown)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Scenic coach journey through Haast Pass with stops along the way
Haast River Safari
Mrs Jones’ Fruit Stall and Arrowtown Visit

Day 9

Queenstown & Milford Sound

Explore Milford Sound

Make sure you charge your camera before you set off on today’s adventure. Today you’re heading to Milford Sound/ Piopiotahi to be engulfed in towering peaks and waltz through plunging valleys.

After travelling through native rainforests, meadows, and past beautiful reflective pools, you will join your cruise in Milford Sound. Enjoy one of the most stunning natural features New Zealand has to offer. Aboard the cruise, you will meander down the sound to experience the rumble of Bowen and Stirling Falls as they plummet from glacial hanging valleys. Marvel at the sheer pinnacle of Mitre Peak, rising from the deep waters of the fjord.

Or, if you'd like to soar like the Piopio (ancient bird), why not elevate your day by booking a flight into the Sound by plane?

After this adventure, you will be heading back to Queenstown for a relaxing evening.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (3 nights in Queenstown)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

Milford Sound Day Excursion

Day 10

Queenstown

Explore Queenstown

Queenstown truly has something for everyone. Personalise your day to be as active or relaxed as you'd like. Whether it's exploring Walter Peak on a horse trekking adventure, hopping on the gondola for inspiring views, or sipping wine in Gibbston Valley, there is no shortage of activities to delight your senses.

Enjoy a 'final hurrah' this evening as we board the TSS Earnslaw Steamship Cruise, dinner, and show. Reflect on your great adventure with your fellow travellers as you cruise to your dining experience at Walter peak overlooking the beautiful Table Bay. Sit back and watch a true Kiwi experience as you learn about sheep shearing and dog herding in this beautiful setting. This evening will truly encapsulate your great journey as a truly New Zealand highlight.

Not ready to call it a night? Sip cocktails and indulge in Queenstown's exciting nightlife alongside the sparkling Lake Wakatipu.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (3 nights in Queenstown)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Farewell Dinner at Walter Peak Farm
TSS Earnslaw Cruise & Farm Show

Day 11

Queenstown

Departing Queenstown

Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast with your fellow travellers.

Not ready to leave Queenstown? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Transfer to airport

Signature | Spectacular South Tour

Queenstown to Wellington – 11 Days

Spectacular South is also offered as a Wellington to Queenstown tour. See the start of this itinerary for details.

Day 1

Queenstown

Kia Ora!

Welcome to Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand! Famed for its striking mountain ranges, enchanting vineyards, diverse dining options, and the picturesque Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown offers a unique experience.

Upon settling in your hotel and acquainting yourself with the welcome letter from your Tour Director, take the opportunity to explore. The beachfront beckons, retail therapy awaits, and the beautiful rose gardens are a must-see.

The journey begins at this evening's welcome reception with your fellow travelers and Tour Director. Embark on the TSS Earnslaw Steamship Cruise for a memorable dinner and show, cruising towards Walter Peak and overlooking Table Bay. Enjoy an evening filled with iconic Kiwi experiences such as sheep shearing and dog herding, set against the stunning backdrop of the lake.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Queenstown)

Meals Included

Dinner with Welcome Drink

Activities

Welcome Dinner at Walter Peak Farm
TSS Earnslaw Cruise & Farm Show

Day 2

Queenstown & Milford Sound

Explore Milford Sound

Make sure you charge your camera before you set off on today's adventure. Today you're heading to Milford Sounds/ Piopiotahi to be engulfed in towering peaks and to waltz through plunging valleys.

After travelling through native rainforests, meadows, and past beautiful reflective pools you will join your cruise in Milford Sounds. Enjoy one of the most stunning natural features New Zealand has to offer. Aboard the cruise you will meander down the sound to experience the rumble of Bowen and Stirling Falls as they plummet from glacial hanging valleys. Marvel at the sheer pinnacle of Mitre Peak, rising from the deep waters of the fiord.

Or, if you'd like to soar like the Piopio (ancient bird), why not elevate your day by booking a flight into the Sound by plane?

After this adventure, you will be heading back to Queenstown for a relaxing evening.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Queenstown)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

Milford Sound Day Excursion

Day 3

Queenstown to Franz Josef

Explore the Southern Lakes

Today you'll be exploring the Haast Pass. With changing landscapes around every bend, this journey of about five hours to Franz Josef will be one of the most scenic drives you may ever take. Marvel at the beaches, crystal blue lakes and rivers, mountain peaks, lush vineyards, charming plains and glaciers as your Tour Director guides you between local hidden gems. Stop in unique locations only the locals tend to stop at.

Grab a warm aromatic coffee as you wander the cobblestone streets of Arrowtown. Next, explore Haast by private coach and exciting jet boat. You'll be escorted through the outstanding

scenery of Haast Pass bound for Franz Josef with amazing sights along the way. Stop in unique destinations that only locals know about.

Reaching Franz Josef, join your group for an impeccable highlight meal at Te Waonui Forest Retreat.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Arrowtown Visit

Haast River Safari

Scenic coach journey through Haast Pass with stops along the way
Degustation Dinner at Te Waonui Forest Retreat

Day 4

Franz Josef to West Coast

Explore the West Coast

Franz Josef Glacier is quite special in that it survives in coastal rainforest temperatures. Before you head off up the coast, why not set off on a nature walk? No matter which one you choose, you'll get a fantastic view of the vast valley and maybe even a sneak peak of Franz Josef Glacier itself.

Aboard the private coach, you'll journey further along the coastline, reaching the TreeTop Walkway. This elevated adventure will get you acquainted with the locals – the ancient Rimu and Kamahi trees of course.

This evening, you'll have free time to explore the beach at your leisure.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Short Nature Walk to Glacier Viewing Point
West Coast Tree Top Walk

Day 5

West Coast to Christchurch

The TranzAlpine Scenic Train

Before you escape into the Southern Alps aboard the world-famous TranzAlpine scenic train, a special excursion is beckoning - the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks. Here you will explore curious limestone formations and blowholes before joining the scenic journey to Christchurch at the Greymouth Railway Station.

Comfortably resting in plush, reclined seats, you will be surrounded by panoramic views. Start the journey by passing through the engineering marvel of the Otira Tunnel before emerging into a new landscape. Travel beneath the Great Divide before a brief photo opportunity at Arthur's Pass. As you soar on the edges of the ice fed Waimakariri River, you'll see epic vistas in all directions while breathing fresh mountain air in the open carriage.

Just a few hours later, you'll arrive into 'The Garden City'.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Punakaiki Pancake Rock Excursion
TranzAlpine Scenic Plus

Day 6

Christchurch

Explore Christchurch

Christchurch, the hub for South Island exploration is also a wonderful city that blends modern architecture and technology with the existing 19th-century Anglican influence. Often remembered for its earthquake in 2011, the city is rebuilding itself into a multi-cultural haven.

Today you are free to explore the museums, Riverside Markets, Punting on the Avon, Gondola and botanical gardens. There is also a multitude of delicious cafes tucked into quaint side streets we're sure you will love.

This evening, you will re-join your fellow travellers for a special dinner. Enjoy a wonderful meal while indulging in fantastic conversation and seasonal cuisine.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Hop on hop off tram

Day 7

Christchurch to Kaikōura

The Coastal Pacific to Kaikōura

An early departure from Christchurch, travel through vineyards, rolling hills and along the coastline to Kaikōura in the luxurious Scenic Plus service. Enjoy barista coffee and pastries, followed by a hot breakfast onboard. In a few short hours, you will step foot into marine wildlife paradise.

Enjoy today's thrill of an up-close encounter with the world's largest-toothed predator, the Giant Sperm Whale, who reside in Kaikōura's waters year-round.

Later, spend the afternoon at your leisure. Kaikōura is a beautiful small town with beaches and excellent fish and chips. We stay this evening at the luxurious Sudima Hotel Kaikōura; indulge in the views and amenities as you rest up for tomorrow's adventures.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus
Whale Watch Experience

Day 8

Kaikōura to Marlborough

The Coastal Pacific Train

After breakfast, your Tour Director will guide you back to the Kaikōura Railway Station to board the Coastal Pacific, again in Scenic Plus, for the next leg of your journey. Delight in a light lunch complemented by beverages, amidst breathtaking vistas.

Relax and let the train glide you across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breath-taking beauty. Keep an eye out for the fur seals lazing on the rocks at Ōhau Point, and the salt production works at Lake Grassmere.

This afternoon, soak up the views and enjoy the tastings as you sip delicious wine amongst the vines. Listen to passionate wine makers describe the history and processes of these flavorful grapes.

The evening is free for you to explore.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Light Lunch

Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus
Marlborough Wine Tour

Day 9

Marlborough to Wellington

Crossing Cook Strait

This morning you'll head off to the Omas Aviation Heritage Centre near Blenheim which offers a glimpse into New Zealand's role in World Wars I and II, featuring vintage aircraft and exhibits like

'Knights of the Sky' and 'Dangerous Skies,' complete with memorabilia and pilot stories.

After your insightful tour, embark on a journey from the South to North Island via the Interislander Ferry. Enjoy a lunch onboard as you cross Cook Strait, watching the South Island fade into the distance. The ferry offers stunning views through Queen Charlotte Sound and the Wellington Harbour before docking in the capital, where your North Island adventure begins.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Light Lunch

Activities

Sky Omaka Aviation Museum Tour
Interislander Ferry

Day 10

Wellington

Explore Wellington

The perfect day does exist – and it includes exploring Wellington!

Today is free for you to experience vibrant Wellington as you please. Start by joining a Te Papa Museum Introduction Tour and then head off to explore Cuba Street's cafes, bookstores, and eccentric shops. Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary is just around the corner where you can surround yourself by native birdlife and regenerating forest.

You won't get bored with the plethora of activities on offer. From coffee, culture, historic buildings botanic gardens and more, the list goes on! If you need any suggestions or recommendations, just reach out to your helpful Tour Director or our Travel Centre to pre-book an experience.

A farewell dinner awaits as you join your fellow travellers once again to tell them about the exciting places you have discovered, before you part ways.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Te Papa Introduction Tour

Farewell Dinner

Day 11

Wellington

Departing Wellington

Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast at the hotel.

Not ready to leave Wellington? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Transfer to airport