



TOUR COSTS
Twin/Double – per person
NZD\$3,650.00
Single Supplement
NZD\$1,250.00

SOUTH ISLAND WINTER ESCAPE

Tour Departs: 30 August 2021
Tour Length: 8 Days

Join us on this exciting tour to explore the West Coast and the Deep South! While all seasons in the South Island are magnificent, there is something special about winter. The sights of the South Island's spectacular snowy mountains will blow you away as well as providing opportunities for capturing some stunning photographs.

On this fantastic 7-night package, we incorporate the best scenery of New Zealand's southern mountains, rivers, lakes, and places off the beaten track.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ **TranzAlpine**
Rail Journey across the snowy Southern Alps
- ❖ **Shantytown**
Recreated 19th-century mining town offering steam train rides, gold panning & historic re-enactments.
- ❖ **Franz Josef Glacier**
Offers visitors a rare opportunity to experience a dynamic glacial environment, in a temperate environment.
- ❖ **Lake Wanaka**
Explore this picturesque lakeside town surrounded by snowy mountains, stroll the streets and be inspired by galleries, stylish shops and a great selection of cool cafes.
- ❖ **Milford Sound**
We enjoy a day cruise of this world-renowned natural wonder with towering peaks, cascading waterfalls and amazing wildlife.
- ❖ **Queenstown**
Surrounded by majestic mountains and set on the shores of crystal-clear Lake Wakatipu, be immersed in the natural beauty and unique energy of the region.

NEW ZEALAND

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MONDAY 30 AUGUST**CHRISTCHURCH****(D)**

Arrive Christchurch, check into the hotel and relax prior to meeting up this evening for our welcome dinner at a fabulous local restaurant.

TUESDAY 31 AUGUST**CHRISTCHURCH – TRANZALPINE****(B, D)**

This morning we are transferred to Christchurch Railway Station to embark on our rail journey. Experience the South Island's striking natural landscape by taking a train between Christchurch and Greymouth. Along this journey you'll see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traverse the Southern Alps, and see miles of native beech forest. The TranzAlpine is one of the world's great train journeys covering 223 kilometres one-way, taking just under 5 hours. You'll traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains, to the backdrop of the mighty Southern Alps - the journey of a lifetime.

Our coach will meet us on arrival into Greymouth, considered the heart of the West Coast. We are taken on a short tour of Greymouth and out to the Brunner Mine Memorial Site. When coal ruled, this was New Zealand's most important centre of industry. This historical site is also a memorial to the miners and their families of the West Coast following New Zealand's worst mining disaster of 1896 where 65 people lost their lives.

After our visit to the Brunner Mine site we head to the Monteith's Brewing Company for a tour – this brewery has been family owned since 1868 and they are still brewing with the same traditions they used back then. We enjoy an early dinner here before settling into our accommodation for the night.

This evening we stay at Sceniclands Motel Greymouth

WEDNESDAY 01 SEPTEMBER**GREYMOUTH – FOX GLACIER****(B, D)**

This morning we check out and travel by coach to Shantytown Heritage Park - a faithful recreation of an 1880's gold mining settlement, it provides an interesting insight into the lives of the old prospectors. Shantytown is one of New Zealand's premier cultural and heritage attractions. Made up of over 30 historic buildings it is a faithfully recreated 19th century pioneer town, inspired by the West Coast gold rushes of the 1860s. Highlights include riding the steam train, gold panning, the Beehive store with its range of traditional confectionery and the opportunity to have an old-time photo portrait taken as a memento of your visit.

We then continue south to Hokitika, which has recently been placed on the map by Eleanor Catton when she won the Man Booker prize in 2013 for her novel *The Luminaries*. The murder-mystery was set in the Gold Rush days in Hokitika! It is also the best place to see New Zealand Greenstone being made into ornaments and tiki. The stone was prized by the Maori, who call it pounamu and they went to great lengths to find and transport the precious stone. For many New Zealanders Pounamu, also known as NZ Jade or greenstone, is more than a souvenir - it has a treasured spiritual significance.

We have time for lunch while in Hokitika – why not try the famous whitebait pizza from the Fat Pipi Pizzas... a specialty of the region (own account).

Further down the coast, we come to Franz Josef one of our most famous glaciers, which is now retreating at an alarming rate. We drive to the carpark near Franz Josef and take a short walk to the observation point.

We arrive in Fox later this afternoon and our accommodation for the night is Distinction Fox Glacier - Te Weheka Boutique Hotel.

THURSDAY 02 SEPTEMBER**FOX GLACIER – WANAKA****(B)**

We continue south today. Today's drive crosses over the Main Divide at the Haast Pass. This is one of New Zealand's most unpopulated regions and a landscape that is worth experiencing, not just seeing.

The road first skirts the coast where fur seals often doze amongst the spectacular sea stacks and driftwood. Look for the rare and beautiful Fiordland Crested Penguins fighting the crashing waves to land on the beach. The lookout at Knights Point has wonderful views of the rugged coastline.

Next you come to the Gates of Haast, a gorge full of huge boulders and precipitous rock walls that caused major problems during the construction of the road in 1960 – up until then the Great Divide proved insurmountable to all except the Maori who used the trail for gathering greenstone. Just before the summit of the Pass itself you can stretch your legs and wander down to Fantail Falls. Heading down the eastern side there is a 20-minute easy walk to the Blue Pools. The path takes you through silver beech forest and over a swing bridge to a viewing platform from which trout can sometimes be seen in the clear and incredibly blue pools. Makarora is where the West Coast meets Central Otago at the southern end of the Alps. It has retained an element of pioneering spirit in its unhurried approach to life.

We arrive into Wanaka early afternoon and check-in to our accommodation at Edgewater Resort. We are spoilt with the best views in town at the Edgewater Resort nestled on the lakes edge - here you can enjoy freshly baked scones or pre-dinner drinks on the lawn on the lake's edge. The rest of the day is free to relax and enjoy this tranquil lakeside town.

FRIDAY 03 SEPTEMBER**WANAKA – TE ANAU****(B,D)**

After breakfast, we join our coach as we travel to Te Anau. It is hard to believe that this sleepy region was the most populous in New Zealand during the chaotic gold boom years of the late 19th century.

We travel via Cromwell - one of the warmest places in the South Island (in the summer that is), making it ideal for growing fruit trees and the region is fast becoming renowned for fine Pinot Noir wines. During our stop, we check out the Cromwell Heritage Precinct - when the Clyde dam was completed in 1990, Cromwell's main street disappeared under Lake Dunstan. Some of the historic buildings dating back to the gold rush of the 1860's were saved or lovingly rebuilt on higher ground, creating the Cromwell Heritage Precinct. Step back in time to the gold rush and explore heritage buildings, many with artisan businesses in them, located on the shore of beautiful Lake Dunstan.

This afternoon we continue on with a leisurely drive through to Te Anau, the gateway to the Fiordland National Park – it is 1,250,000 uninhabited hectares of stunning wilderness. Fiordland has a primeval rugged landscape, largely untouched by humans apart from incursions by tourists at Milford and Doubtful Sounds and a few fishermen in other fiords. It was declared a World Heritage Area on account of the outstanding geological features and exceptional beauty, the jewel in the crown being Mitre Peak in Milford Sound.

Before dinner at a lovely local restaurant we see the Ata Whenua – Shadowland movie at the Fiordland Cinema. A 30-minute film show casing the unique beauty and remote wilderness of Fiordland from the air to the screen for all to enjoy!

Our accommodation for the next two nights is at Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas.

SATURDAY 04 SEPTEMBER**TE ANAU – MILFORD SOUND****(B, L,D)**

This morning we drive into Milford Sound which is quite simply unparalleled to anything in this world.

Described by Rudyard Kipling as the 'eighth wonder of the world', Milford Sound was carved by glaciers during the ice ages.

Breath-taking in any weather, the fiord's cliffs rise vertically from the dark waters, mountain peaks scrape the sky and waterfalls cascade downwards from as high as 1,000 metres. When it rains in Milford Sound, and it often does, those waterfalls multiply with magnificent effect. Wet or fine Milford is incredibly grand.

Our day includes a sightseeing cruise on the sound as specialist nature guides introduce you to the natural wonders of Milford Sound. A picnic lunch is included and we complete our cruise with a visit to the underwater observatory.

Late afternoon we return to our hotel in Te Anau where we have some time to freshen up before dinner.

SUNDAY 05 SEPTEMBER**TE ANAU – QUEENSTOWN****(B, D)**

Today we farewell the stunning World Heritage area of Fiordland and drive back the way we came with a coffee and 'cheese roll' stop (own account) at Five Rivers, enroute to Arrowtown.

The beautiful, tree-lined town of Arrowtown is another former gold mining settlement. Two years after the first European settlers established high country farms in the Wakatipu area, gold was discovered in the Arrow River and news soon spread. Within weeks 1,500 people arrived as the news of gold spread and people in search of the alluvial treasure arrived in droves. At the height of the gold rush, Arrowtown's population grew to over 7,000. In 1865 many of the miners started to leave for other gold-mining areas and the local government invited Chinese miners to the area. Most worked in the Shotover and Arrow Gorges, although wherever Chinese stores opened communities began to develop. Wander amongst the historic cottages, visit the reconstructed Chinese Settlement - the main shopping street is a shopper's particular delight!

We return south by taking the road along the base of the hill, via Coronet and Arthur's Point. If time and conditions permit, we drive up the Coronet Ski-field Access Road for fabulous views of the Wakatipu Basin and Shotover River. Perhaps a snowball fight to really embrace the season!

Arrival time in Queenstown is mid-afternoon. Queenstown is the Adventure Capital of the World! It lies on Lake Wakatipu where you can observe the strange seiches phenomenon - this is an unusual rhythmic rise and fall of 12cm in its water level every five minutes due to variations in atmospheric pressure. A Maori myth says it is the beating of a monster's heart lying in the depths of Lake Wakatipu!

Our accommodation is at Novotel Lakeside Hotel. Tonight, we get together for our final dinner together at a local restaurant.

MONDAY 06 SEPTEMBER**QUEENSTOWN – HOME****(B)**

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. Farewell your newfound friends as you travel to Queenstown Airport to begin the journey home.

BOOKING CONDITIONS:

Deposit of NZD\$1,000.00 per person is due upon confirmation of the booking.

Final payment date: **Tuesday 06 July 2021**

COSTS INCLUDE:

Superior accommodation throughout
Meals as indicated in the itinerary
First-Class air-conditioned coach transportation for all touring
Sightseeing and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary
Baggage handling of one suitcase per person
Gratuities and tips to local guides, coach drivers and cruise staff
Fully escorted by a Maher Tours Leader (subject to minimum numbers)

COSTS EXCLUDE:

Any meals and sightseeing tours not specifically mentioned
Travel Insurance (assistance and advice will be offered)
Items of a personal nature such as laundry, room service etc

***Flights are additional – the best available airfare will be quoted at the time of reservation to combine with this land package.**

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