



South Island Grand Discovery



Tour Length: 21 Days



Tour Departs: 12 October 2027

There is something truly special about travelling through New Zealand's South Island – where every turn reveals another breathtaking landscape, from snow-capped mountains and tranquil lakes to rugged coastlines, native forests and wild, untouched wilderness.

From the peaceful shores of Lake Wanaka to the untamed beauty of the West Coast, this is a journey filled with extraordinary landscapes, wonderful experiences and plenty of moments to simply sit back and enjoy the ride.

Come with us and discover the South Island in true Maher Tours style – comfortably, leisurely and with plenty of memorable experiences along the way.

Highlights

- Wanaka, Queenstown, Arrowtown - incl. Lake Cruise, 4WD Country Station, TSS Earnslaw
- Overnight Doubtful Sounds Cruise
- Stewart Island day tour
- Dunedin – Larnach Castle, Royal Albatross Centre
- 2-nights at the Hermitage Mt Cook.
- Lake Tekapo
- TranzAlpine scenic rail journey, Christchurch to Greymouth
- 2-nights Nelson
- Coastal Pacific scenic rail journey, Blenheim to Christchurch
- 4-nights Christchurch – incl International Antarctic Centre, Akaroa Day Tour with Dolphin cruise, and Christchurch Gondola

Tour Costs Per Person

Per Person Share Twin/Double Room

\$16,500

Per Person Single Room

\$22,000

Call us now to find out
more about this tour

0800 500 518



*Creating memories through
travel for over 40 years*

mahertours.co.nz



Tour Costs

Inclusions

- Superior hotel accommodation for city stays
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary – B= Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary
- Tips and gratuities to local guides, drivers, train staff etc.
- Superior air-conditioned coach transportation
- Baggage handling of one suitcase per person – where possible
- Services of a Maher Tours Leader – subject to minimum numbers

Exclusions

- Flights to Queenstown / return from Christchurch
- Meals and sightseeing not specifically mentioned in the itinerary
- Travel insurance (assistance and advice offered)
- Items of a personal nature such as room service, telephone calls, laundry etc.

Booking Conditions

- Initial Deposit due at time of booking: NZD \$2,000 per person
- Second Deposit due Monday 12 April 2027: NZD \$2,000 per person
- Final Payment Balance: Due Wednesday 11 August 2027

To register for this tour please contact us at 0800 500 518 or tours@mahertours.co.nz

Call us now to find out
more about this tour

0800 500 518



*Creating memories through
travel for over 40 years*

mahertours.co.nz

Tour Itinerary

19 DAYS

Day 1 | Queenstown – Wanaka

TUESDAY 12 OCTOBER (D)

This morning meet with your tour group at Queenstown Airport. Departure time from Queenstown 12.00pm.

Set off by coach via the Crown Range Road to Wanaka, enjoying the spectacular scenery en route. The road over the range is the highest main road in New Zealand, reaching an altitude of 1121 metres.

Enjoy lunch (own expense) at the iconic Cardrona Hotel; Established in 1863 it is one of the oldest, most-photographed and legendary hotels in New Zealand. It is one of only two remaining buildings from the Cardrona Valley gold rush era. Its' rustic charm, dramatic mountain setting and rich history make it a must-see while in Central Otago.

Travelling on, we stop at the nearby Cardrona Whisky Distillery located in the valley of picturesque snow-capped mountains. Every aspect of Cardrona's products is of the highest quality, from the pure Cardrona Valley alpine water, the rich malted barley, the foraged ingredients to the handpicked oak casks from Spain and America. Discover the secrets to Cardrona's artisan spirits, see where the malt is milled, mashed, fermented, distilled and matured before tasting the wares with a tutored spirit tasting!

On arrival into Wanaka this afternoon, we are transferred to the Award-Winning Edgewater Resort for the next 2-nights, Wanaka's only accommodation located directly on the shores of Lake Wanaka.

Tonight, we dine together for the first time.

Day 2 | Wanaka

WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER (B,L)

After breakfast, we are met by the Ridgeline Adventures team. From the hotel, we set off on a 4WD safari, travelling high into the Buchanan Mountains for jaw-dropping scenery of Wanaka. The private back roads of West Wanaka Station, a 30,000-acre deer farm are steeped in history and bordering the majestic snow-capped peaks and glaciers of Mt Aspiring National Park. Enjoy morning tea on the top of Lookout Hill and take a leisurely walk in the alpine meadow, before descending to Calhounes Beach for a fascinating history lesson.

We return to Wanaka around 1.00pm and enjoy lunch together at Hook Wānaka - a unique lake-to-plate adventure. Lunch is included however; for those that wish, hire a rod and all the gear you need and try your hand at catching a Chinook salmon, fishing from the pristine, spring-fed lakes.

Early evening, we meet again and enjoy a Happy Hour cruise on Lake Wanaka. Relax in comfort, enjoying a drink as Cruise down to Eely point while discovering the history of the the famous 'Wanaka Tree'. Track past Ruby Island home of the 1920's Caberet Dance Hall. We then head across to the magnificent cliffs of The Peninsula and on to take in Mount Gold and the Stevensons Arm. The perfect end to a great day.

The evening is at leisure.

Call us now to find out
more about this tour

0800 500 518



Creating memories through
travel for over 40 years

mahertours.co.nz

Day 3 | Wanaka – Arrowtown - Queenstown

THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER (B,L,D)

Following breakfast, we depart Wanaka and travel to Cromwell, situated on the shores of beautiful Lake Dunstan. Sit back and relax as you travel past well-known New Zealand vineyards such as Akarua, Pisa Range Estate Locharburn, Ata Mara, and more.

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 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.

We continue through the Gibbston Valley, also known as the 'Valley of the Vines' and of the most scenic wine growing areas you'll ever encounter, on our way to Ayrburn – an extraordinary multi-venue wonderland of eateries, bars, gardens, galleries and experiences. We enjoy lunch, before continuing on to our accommodation in central Queenstown for the next 2-nights.

Day 4 | Queenstown

FRIDAY 15 OCTOBER (B,L)

Morning at leisure, before we set off on a cruise aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw across to Walter Peak High Country Farm (approx. 45-minutes) for lunch. Once at the lakeside Colonel's Homestead Restaurant, savour the delicious aromas as the chef has the best of local produce sizzling away on the grill.

Overlooking Lake Wakatipu and Queenstown's alpine scenery, the Colonel's Homestead at Walter Peak High Country Farm is the perfect place to spend a few hours. Its colonial architecture and sweeping grounds evoke the elegance of a bygone era. An entertaining farm demonstration is also included, or you can explore the beautiful lakeside gardens.

After returning to Queenstown at the conclusion of the cruise, the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

Day 5 | Queenstown - Manapouri

SATURDAY 16 OCTOBER (B,D)

We depart Queenstown at approx. 8.30am, and head towards Lake Manapouri. Originally called Roto-au (the rainy lake) by early Maori and then Moturau (many islands), this lake is the second deepest in New Zealand with a circumference of 170kms and deepest point of 444 metres.

At midday we board the Real Journeys Doubtful Sound overnight cruise. As you cruise through some of New Zealand's most stunning scenery, knowledgeable nature guides will provide commentary ensuring you miss nothing, be it the pod of resident dolphins, fur seals or rare penguins you might encounter. An unforgettable experience.

After dropping anchor in a sheltered cove, you can choose to explore the shoreline by kayak or tender boat – or to simply relax on board. For the adventurous (or very brave), there's even a chance to go swimming.

Day 6 | Manapouri - Invercargill

SUNDAY 17 OCTOBER (B,D)

After a hearty cooked breakfast, spend the morning exploring other parts of the fiord, before returning to Manapouri and disembarking. We rejoin the coach in Manapouri and continue our drive along the Southern Scenic Route. Enjoy stops at Riverton Paua shop, Tuatapere and more.

We arrive in Invercargill mid-afternoon and are transferred to our accommodation for the next 3-nights. Tonight, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Day 7 | Invercargill

MONDAY 18 OCTOBER (B,D)

No visit to Invercargill is complete without visiting the Bill Richardson Transport World and Classic Motorcycle Mecca, a wheeled collection that has taken nearly 50 years to amass. Starting out as one man's passion and further developed by his family, it now includes two world class automotive museums which house hundreds of classic cars, vintage trucks and motorcycles.

Other highlights today include Queenspark and the Tuatarium, one of the world's best enclosures, where you can see 100+ live tuatara thriving in an environment that mimics their natural habitat (viewable from outside).

The afternoon is at leisure before dining together at a local restaurant.

Day 8 | Stewart Island

TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER (B,L)

This morning we travel approx. 30mins to Bluff, where we join the 9.45am ferry to Stewart Island – New Zealand's third largest island! Over 85% of the island is National Park and it is a prime destination for birdwatchers and those wishing to catch a glimpse of the famous Aurora Australis which often appears in these southern skies.

On arrival, we join a coach tour and gain an entertaining insight into New Zealand's southernmost community and learn about the history and environment of Stewart Island. Unspoiled, incredibly beautiful, and steeped in stories, Stewart Island (known as Rakiura – glowing skies - by Maori) is well worth this informative introduction. Our local guides enjoy sharing their knowledge of the area on this mini-bus tour of the Island. You will have plenty of time to get off the bus for photo stops and short walks. Highlights include a visit to the gateway to Rakiura National Park at Lee Bay and Observation Rock with its stunning views of Paterson Inlet.

In the afternoon, we discover Stewart Island from the water as we enjoy a leisurely cruise of beautiful Paterson Inlet viewing hidden coves and unspoilt beaches. Along the way learn about the early Maori history and European settlement including whaling. Our skipper and nature guide provide detailed commentary throughout the cruise and are happy to answer any questions. While on board, keep a lookout for fur seals, penguins and other wildlife, as sightings are common.

Then disembark at Ulva Island, a renowned wildlife sanctuary for a 45-minute guided walk with a specialist nature guide. View rare plants and rich birdlife, including the inquisitive weka, which are often seen on the beach. For the remainder of the cruise around Paterson Inlet, relax on board and enjoy the coastal scenery before heading back to base.

Mid-afternoon, we return to Invercargill via Stewart Island Flights and the rest of the evening is at leisure.

Day 9 | Bluff – Catlins - Dunedin

WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER (B,D)

We depart Invercargill this morning and travel the route through the Catlins, and onto Dunedin. See Curio Bay, Fossilised Forest, Purakaunui Falls, Owaka and more.

We arrive in Dunedin this afternoon and are transferred to our accommodation for the next 2-nights. We enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight.

Day 10 | Dunedin

THURSDAY 21 OCTOBER (B)

Today we explore Dunedin and pay visit to some of the well-known attractions including Larnach Castle and Gardens and Olveston Historic Home. We also tour the Royal Albatross Centre, the only mainland breeding colony of Northern Royal Albatross in the world. Witness the fascinating social and family life of the breeding colony, devoted parents guarding their chicks; adolescents posturing and displaying as only juveniles can, courtship proceedings, nest building and interplay. Nowhere else in the world can you enjoy the privilege of viewing these majestic seabirds in their natural environment!

Day 11 | Dunedin – Mount Cook

FRIDAY 22 OCTOBER (B,L,D)

Leaving Dunedin, we take the coach through to Naseby to enjoy a game of curling at the Naseby Indoor Curling Rink!

At the end of our game, we meet with the High Country Journeys 4WD team to continue over Danseys Pass, a classic, unsealed and stunningly beautiful alpine pass. Once well used for gold mining traffic, races dug by Chinese miners into the hillsides scar the landscape and are a reminder of the intense hard work required to source water for inland and high country prospecting. Arriving at Danseys Pass you can't help but feel a sense of achievement and freedom; it truly is, away from it all.

We rejoin our coach in Duntroon and continue on to our accommodation. Nestled in the beautiful Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park, The Hermitage Hotel is the perfect base. Recognised as part of the Te Wahipounamu UNESCO World Heritage Area, the National Park is a breath-taking environment of glaciers, terminal lakes, turbulent rivers and of course our tallest peak, the mighty Aoraki Mt Cook soaring above at 3,724 metres.

Day 12 | Mount Cook

SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER (B,D)

There is time to wander around the Hermitage grounds, before we move on to New Zealand's Tasman Glacier terminal lake for a fascinating glacial encounter. From here we cruise the rapidly growing terminal lake taking in spectacular mountain views and scenery. Icebergs of every shape and size periodically tear away from the glacier allowing you to touch and taste the 300-500 year old glacial crystals.

Note – A short walk done at a steady pace is required from the bus to the Jetty. The track is level, however there is a small hill to negotiate down towards the water & the Jetty. Guests must be fit and able to walk the 1.5km to / from the lake edge in 25 mins.

The afternoon is at leisure, until such time as we meet again for dinner.

This evening, at 10.30pm, you can opt to join the Big Sky Stargazing tour. Experienced guides will introduce you to the beautiful southern night sky using the naked eye, astro-binoculars and state of the art 14' and 11' astronomy telescopes. Unleash your imagination as you discover our neighbourhood in the universe including the southern cross, seasonal ecliptic objects, planets, stunning star clusters, moons, distant galaxies and even our very own galaxy, the spectacular Milky Way.

Day 13 | Mount Cook – Tekapo

SUNDAY 24 OCTOBER (B,D)

Departing Mount Cook, we enjoy a short drive through to Lake Tekapo. The remainder of the day is at leisure – simply wander and take in picturesque views of the milky-turquoise lake, the church of the Good Sheppard, and other local sights of interest. Or perhaps visit the famous hot pools. Dinner is at the hotel this evening.

Day 14 | Tekapo - Christchurch

MONDAY 25 OCTOBER (B,L)

Departing Tekapo today, we travel through to Christchurch via Geraldine, where we stop to enjoy lunch at the Barkers Foodstore & Eatery. On arrival in Christchurch later this afternoon, we visit the International Antarctic Centre where we gain a deeper understanding of what it's really like to live and work on the coldest, driest, windiest place on Earth. We check in to our hotel and the rest of the evening is yours to enjoy.

Day 15 | Akaroa Day Trip

TUESDAY 26 OCTOBER (B,D)

Following breakfast this morning, we take an easy drive south-east of Christchurch, to Akaroa – New Zealand's only French settlement and sitting at the heart of an ancient volcano, stacked with sparkling bays and green hills.

On arrival at Akaroa Harbour, we board a cruise to discover the mischievous Hector's dolphins. Easily identified by their rounded dorsal fins, the Hector's dolphins are only found in New Zealand waters. Sit back and relax as you enjoy the dramatic panoramic views, while playful dolphins ride the bow.

At the conclusion of the tour we return to our Christchurch accommodation. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant tonight.

Day 16 | Christchurch – Greymouth -Punakaiki

WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER (B,D)

Early this morning, we join one of New Zealand's most spectacular rail journeys as we travel from Christchurch to Greymouth aboard the iconic TranzAlpine. Crossing the Canterbury Plains and climbing into the Southern Alps, the journey unfolds through a dramatic landscape of rugged mountains, deep gorges, native forests and sparkling rivers. Along the way, we pass through the impressive Waimakariri Gorge and Arthur's Pass before descending towards the West Coast. With expansive windows offering wonderful views throughout, sit back, relax and enjoy the ever-changing scenery as we journey from the South Island's east coast to the wild and beautiful West Coast. On arrival in Greymouth early afternoon, we are met by our coach and journey through to Punakaiki (approx. 1hr), where we overnight.

Day 17 | Punakaiki - Nelson

THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER (B,D)

Continuing north from Punakaiki along one of New Zealand's most spectacular coastal routes, where rugged beaches, native rainforest and dramatic limestone formations meet the Tasman Sea. Take time to admire the famous Pancake Rocks and Blowholes before travelling through the historic West Coast settlements of Charleston and Westport, with opportunities to discover the region's goldmining and coal-mining heritage.

At Cape Foulwind, enjoy spectacular coastal views and look for New Zealand fur seals along the shoreline. From Westport, the journey turns inland through the magnificent Buller Gorge, following the Buller River through forest-clad mountains, towards Nelson.

This is a wonderful stretch of the South Island, combining wild natural beauty, fascinating history and some of the country's most memorable scenery.

Day 18 | Nelson

FRIDAY 29 OCTOBER (B,D)

This morning, we travel by coach to Kaiteriteri and join our scenic cruise to Abel Tasman National Park. Photograph the world-famous Split Apple Rock from close up, see native Fur Seals (Kekeno) in their natural habitat, marvel at the golden sands and the turquoise waters of the Astrolabe Roadstead, Anchorage, Bark Bay and Medlands beach. On our return to Kaiteriteri, we are met by our coach and transferred back to Nelson.

On arrival, there is free time for lunch, before we visit the Classic Cars Museum. The Classic Car Collection displays a stunning range of cars dating from 1908, all in immaculate condition.

The afternoon is at leisure and tonight we dine together at a local restaurant.

Day 19 | Nelson – Blenheim – Join Coastal Pacific - Christchurch

SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER (B)

After a leisurely morning, we make our way by coach to Blenheim. There is time for lunch, before we join one of New Zealand's most scenic rail journeys as we travel aboard the Coastal Pacific from Blenheim to Christchurch. Following the rugged Kaikōura coastline, the railway winds between the sparkling Pacific Ocean and the dramatic Kaikōura Ranges, with ever-changing views of rocky shores, sweeping bays and picturesque countryside. Keep an eye out for marine life along the coast as we journey south, before continuing through the fertile Canterbury Plains towards Christchurch. With panoramic views from the train, this is a wonderful and relaxing way to experience the spectacular scenery of New Zealand's South Island. We arrive Christchurch at 7.30pm – transfer to our hotel and overnight.

Day 20 | Christchurch

SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER (B,D)

Following breakfast this morning, we take a ride on the Christchurch Gondola to experience stunning 360° views of the city, Lyttelton Harbour and beyond from the summit station situated atop the Port Hills. At the conclusion of the Gondola ride, we take a short 20-minute drive east of Christchurch to Sumner Beach for lunch; an idyllic place to spend some time in the sun away from the centre of Christchurch.

You have the afternoon free to relax or to enjoy a bit of last-minute shopping.

Tonight, we come together to enjoy our final dinner as a group.

Day 21 | Christchurch - Home

MONDAY 01 NOVEMBER (B)

Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and it is time to bid your fellow tour members farewell. Travellers will be transferred to the Christchurch Airport domestic terminal, to join their return flights home.



Call us now to find out
more about this tour

0800 500 518



*Creating memories through
travel for over 40 years*

mahertours.co.nz



South Island Grand Discovery

FULLY ACCREDITED



WANAKA, NEW ZEALAND
P: 0800 500 518
E: tours@mahertours.co.nz
W: www.mahertours.co.nz

To register for this tour please contact us at
0800 500 518 or tours@mahertours.co.nz

Call us now to find out
more about this tour

0800 500 518



*Creating memories through
travel for over 40 years*

mahertours.co.nz