

# Majestic South Island

*Self Drive, Independent Coach, Private Car or Group Tour*

## 8 Days / 7 Nights

*Circumnavigate the Southern Alps, crossing at the head via the scenic Tranz Alpine Train, travelling the rugged West Coast through the southern fiords. On your journey back north travel through the Mackenzie Basin to the base of the majestic Mt Cook and back onto Canterbury Plains and then Christchurch City. With spectacular mountains, crystal clear rivers, pristine forests, and picturesque lakes, the South Island's stunning landscape and scenery is nature at its best!*



### Day 1 ARRIVE CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Welcome to New Zealand! You will be transferred from Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation. Remainder of the day at leisure to explore New Zealand's 'Garden City'.

### Day 2 CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island and one of New Zealand's most beautiful with its large public gardens, parks, river and majestic backdrop of the Port Hills. Your [morning city sightseeing tour](#) introduces you to the city's highlights and historic sites, including the Botanic Gardens, [the Avon River](#), Canterbury Museum and the Bridge of Remembrance. Learn about the effects of the devastating 2011 Christchurch Earthquakes and how the city is rebuilding. This afternoon is at your leisure.

### Day 3 CHRISTCHURCH / GREYMOUTH / FRANZ JOSEF

This morning board the Tranz Alpine train at Christchurch Railway Station. The [Tranz Alpine scenic train journey](#) travels between Christchurch and Greymouth, from one coast of New Zealand to the other. From your carriage you'll see the fields of the Canterbury Plains and farmland, followed by the spectacular gorges and river valleys of the Waimakariri River. Your train then climbs into the [majestic Southern Alps](#) before descending through lush beech rain forest to the West Coast town of Greymouth.

From Greymouth travel south through forests and farmland, with views of the Alps to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west, to the village of Franz Josef. The [huge rivers of snow and ice of the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers](#) flow from vast snowfields high in the Southern Alps almost to sea level which is unusual in a temperate climate.

### Day 4 FRANZ JOSEF / QUEENSTOWN

Driving towards the southern end of the South Island's West Coast Road, there is a strong sense of entering a primeval land, and a feeling of total isolation. Arriving at Haast, you are surrounded by a landscape of rainforest, wetlands, sand dunes and surf-pounded shingle beaches. This wilderness forms part of the [South West New Zealand World Heritage Area](#), so designated because South Westland and Fiordland have some of the most dramatic forest and mountain scenery and natural resources in the world. From here travel through the Haast River valleys and over the [Haast Pass](#) to Makarora and onto the upper reaches of Lake Wanaka.

Travel past Lake Hawea to reach the popular [Lake Wanaka](#). From Wanaka travel via Cromwell following the rugged Kawarau Gorge Road into Queenstown. Surrounded by majestic mountains and set on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, the natural beauty and the unique energy of the region create the perfect backdrop for a holiday full of adventure, exploration or relaxation.

### Day 5 MILFORD SOUND DAY EXCURSION

Depart Queenstown for an [unforgettable full day journey from Queenstown into Milford Sound](#). Located within the World Heritage Fiordland National Park, this region is rich with dense rainforest, lakes and waterfalls cascading from rugged mountain peaks. Journey through the Southern Alps via the [Homer Tunnel](#), a 1.2km tunnel drilled through a solid mountain of rock. Upon arrival at [Milford Sound](#), board a comfortable vessel for a [spectacular cruise where you will see the wonders of Mitre Peak](#), glacier scarred rock walls that rise 1,200m vertically from the sea, and waterfalls that tumble from hanging valleys and crash into the sound far below. Following your cruise, retrace your journey back to Queenstown.

### Day 6 QUEENSTOWN

Today is at leisure. Queenstown offers a host of holiday attractions for the visitor from helicopter flights and trips on jet-boats, to walks and tramps, wine tours to premier Central Otago wineries, lake cruises, 4WD excursions into the hills or for adrenalin junkies, bungee jumping, white water rafting, ziptrekking and skydiving!

### Day 7 QUEENSTOWN / MT COOK / CHRISTCHURCH

Today travel north through diverse landscapes including Lake Dunstan and the barren Lindis Pass before reaching the Mackenzie Country. Pass the small towns of Omarama and Twizel then drive along the shores of Lake Pukaki into [Mt Cook National Park](#), home to [New Zealand's tallest mountain Aoraki / Mt Cook](#). Time here to breath the fresh alpine air and perhaps an optional scenic flight over the Southern Alps before heading to Lake Tekapo with its glacial blue waters for a stop to view the solitary [Church of the Good Shepherd](#). Continue across Burkes Pass and the Canterbury Plains before arriving in Christchurch for your last night's stay.

### Day 8 CHRISTCHURCH

Farewell from New Zealand. Today depart from Christchurch International Airport for your flight home.

