

Signature | Spectacular South Tour

Wellington to Queenstown – 11 Days

Day 1

Wellington

Welcome to Wellington – New Zealand’s capital!

Wellington is known for its world-class dining, great coffee and eccentric shops. Your great journey will officially begin the moment you check into your hotel room. After 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, join your fellow travellers as well as the Journey Director at this evening’s welcome dinner.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night in Wellington)

Meals Included

Dinner with Welcome Drink

Activities

Welcome Dinner

Day 2

Wellington to Marlborough

Crossing Cook Strait

This morning, say poroporoaki ki te motu raki (goodbye to the North Island) as you board the Interislander ferry for your voyage across Cook Strait. Travel in style in the Premium Lounge, where you’ll enjoy a seafarer’s breakfast and perhaps a mimosa as you take in the sights of the open ocean.

Keep your eyes peeled for dolphins dancing in the ferry’s wake—or, if you’re lucky, a whale surfacing nearby. As you enter the stunning Queen Charlotte Sound, step outside and breathe in the fresh sea air while you cruise past native bush, mussel farms, and secluded coves.

Arriving into the picturesque port town of Picton, you'll journey into the heart of Marlborough for a gourmet customised experience. Enjoy a three-course lunch at Allan Scott Wines Bistro, complete with a glass of paired Marlborough wine. Afterward, visit two boutique wineries for tastings and stop at the Makana Chocolate Boutique for a sweet finish on this wine tour exclusive to Great Journeys New Zealand.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night in Blenheim)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

Interislander Ferry
Marlborough Wine Tour

Day 3

Marlborough

Aviation, Art & Arrival in the Sounds

After breakfast, take a short trip to the world-renowned Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre — home to one of the most significant private collections of WWI and WWII aircraft and memorabilia. The museum's immersive exhibits, brought to life with the help of Weta Workshop, make this a must-see experience for history and aviation enthusiasts alike.

In the afternoon, board a scenic water taxi into the Marlborough Sounds, where your accommodation awaits nestled in the natural serenity of a Marlborough Sounds resort. After check-in, enjoy free time to explore—relax in a hammock, take a walk through native bush, or kayak in the calm waters of the bay. As the sun sets over the Sounds, settle in for a delicious dinner, included with your stay.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre

Water Taxi Transfer
Resort Leisure Time

Day 4

Marlborough to Kaikōura

The Coastal Pacific Scenic Train

This morning, set off on a scenic 45-minute boat ride deeper into the Sounds for an exclusive Pāua Pearl Farm Tour. Begin with morning tea, followed by a guided visit to the hatchery and growing tanks where these shimmering gems of the sea are cultivated. Learn the unique process of pāua pearl farming and enjoy a tasting of fresh, locally harvested pāua—an ocean delicacy.

After the tour, return to Picton where you'll board the Coastal Pacific Scenic Train for one of the world's most beautiful rail journeys.

Relax as the train winds its way between sea and mountains, past rocky coastlines, and through rolling vineyards. Keep an eye out for fur seals basking on the rocks as you make your way to Kaikōura. On arrival, your evening is free to stroll the waterfront and enjoy fresh kai moana (seafood) at one of Kaikōura's inviting restaurants.

Relax for the remainder of the evening before hitting the town the following day.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night in Kaikōura)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Pāua Pearl Farm Tour
Coastal Pacific Scenic Train

Day 5

Kaikōura to Christchurch

Explore Kaikōura

Set out on an unforgettable Dolphin Encounter in Kaikōura, where the ocean comes alive with the playful energy of wild dusky

dolphins. Cruise along the stunning coastline as knowledgeable guides share insights into these intelligent marine mammals. Watch as pods leap, spin, and interact in their natural habitat—or elevate your adventure with the option to upgrade and swim alongside them for a truly immersive and exhilarating experience. 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. Gather again for the next leg of your journey. Late afternoon, board the Coastal Pacific for the Scenic Plus experience, treating yourself to unparalleled vistas as you glide along the coastline. Revel in dinner and drinks, included with your Scenic Plus package, as you unwind and soak in the breathtaking scenery. 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

Dolphin Encounter Experience
Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus

Day 6

Christchurch

Explore Christchurch

Christchurch, the gateway to South Island exploration, beautifully blends cutting-edge innovation with 19th-century Anglican Gothic Revival architecture. While the city is often remembered for the 2011 earthquake, today it stands as a vibrant, multicultural hub with a strong sense of renewal and creativity.

Your day begins with the convenience of the Hop-On Hop-Off Tram, a charming way to navigate the central city and discover its highlights at your own pace. Enjoy a custom walking tour with your Great Journeys New Zealand guide, who will bring the city's

stories, landmarks, and hidden gems to life. Explore must-see attractions like the Riverside Markets, Punting on the Avon, the Gondola, and the tranquil Botanical Gardens. Along the way, uncover a variety of boutique cafés tucked into laneways and side streets.

This evening, unwind and reflect on your discoveries over a beautifully curated dinner at Earl, one of Christchurch's most acclaimed dining spots, known for its relaxed elegance and refined seasonal cuisine.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

Hop on Hop off Tram

Custom Walking tour with GJNZ Guide

Dinner at Earl

Day 7

Christchurch to West Coast

The TranzAlpine Scenic Train

The moment has arrived to experience the world-famous TranzAlpine, indulging in the Scenic Plus service as you journey through the breathtaking Southern Alps and emerge onto the untamed West Coast.

On this unforgettable escape, marvel at dramatic alpine vistas, glide along the ice-fed Waimakariri River, and cross the Great Divide. As the landscape transforms before your eyes, you'll also traverse the historic Otira Tunnel — an engineering triumph over a century old. Along the way, enjoy regionally inspired food and rich commentary that enhances your Scenic Plus experience.

Arriving in Greymouth, you'll be met by a private coach and taken even further off the beaten track. Enjoy a custom Greenstone experience—a special insight into the cultural significance and

artistry of pounamu (New Zealand jade). Then stretch your legs on a guided walk through the stunning Hokitika Gorge, where vivid turquoise waters wind through lush native bush.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

TranzAlpine Scenic Plus

Custom Greenstone Experience & guided walk around Hokitika Gorge

Day 8

West Coast to Franz Josef

Explore the West Coast

This morning, your West Coast journey continues with a VIP experience at the West Coast Wildlife Centre—a special, guided walkthrough designed exclusively for Great Journeys New Zealand guests. Go behind the scenes to learn about the conservation efforts for the rare Rowi kiwi and discover the secrets of this fascinating native species in a truly immersive encounter.

After your wildlife experience, enjoy free time in Franz Josef to explore at your own pace. Take a short scenic walk to the glacier viewpoint, browse the charming local shops, or choose from optional adventures such as a thrilling helicopter flight over the glacier or a serene wilderness tour through the rainforest.

This evening, rejoin your group for a culinary highlight: a four-course dinner at Te Waonui Forest Retreat, where locally sourced ingredients and refined flavours are served in a tranquil rainforest setting.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Coach journey to Franz Josef
VIP West Coast Wildlife centre, guided walkthrough of Kiwi
(exclusive to Great Journeys New Zealand)
4 course dinner at Te Waonui

Day 9

Franz Josef to Queenstown

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, 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.

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

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Queenstown)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Scenic coach journey through Haast Pass with stops along the way
Haast River Safari

Day 10

Milford Sound

Explore Milford Sound

Charge your camera and prepare for one of the most awe-inspiring adventures of your journey. Today, you'll travel to the majestic Milford Sound / Piopiotahi, often called the 8th Wonder of the World, aboard our exclusive Cruise Milford Coach service.

Relax in comfort as we wind through native rainforests, alpine meadows, and mirror-like reflective pools—complete with custom stops tailored to your group's interests. On arrival, step aboard your boutique cruise and journey deep into the heart of the fjord. Feel the mist from Bowen and Stirling Falls, marvel at the vertical face of Mitre Peak, and take in the dramatic beauty carved by ancient glaciers.

For those looking to elevate the experience, there's an optional scenic flight available for your return—soaring above the Southern Alps for a breathtaking aerial perspective of Fiordland.

After this unforgettable day, return to Queenstown to enjoy farewell cocktails with your guide, followed by a relaxing evening at your own pace.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Queenstown)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

Milford Sound Day Excursion

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