

## New Zealand Guided Tours

### 15-Day Ultimate South Island Experience

**Operator:** Grand Pacific Tours

**Days:** 15

**Start:** Christchurch

**Finish:** Christchurch

**Our price:** Check [www.experiencenz.com](http://www.experiencenz.com)

**Enquiries:** Email [travel@experiencenz.com](mailto:travel@experiencenz.com)



#### Overview

This is a very special new tour utilising luxury accommodation and a specially commissioned purpose-built luxury coach. This really is the 'ultimate' South Island tour and it will transport you in style through spectacular beauty from Christchurch to Dunedin, Te Anau, Doubtful Sound, Queenstown, Mount Cook, Hanmer Springs, Nelson, Blenheim, and Kaikoura. The coach is loaded with extras, as is the tour itself. If luxury and company is your thing, then this is *the* tour for you.

#### Highlights

- Breakfast with the Penguins at the International Antarctic Centre
- Punting on the Avon river
- Haggis ceremony with Highland dancers
- Larnach Castle and Olveston House guided tours
- 8-wheel-drive ARGO Adventure
- Cruise through Doubtful Sound on the Fiordland Navigator
- Jetboat ride on the Shotover River
- Scenic Helicopter flight to the Remarkables, and landing
- Tasman Glacier in Mount Cook National Park
- Hanmer Springs thermal pools and spa
- World of Wearable Art and Classic Car Museum
- 4-wheel Quad bike through native forests
- Greenshell Mussel Cruise through the Marlborough Sounds
- Learn about wine making techniques at Forrest Estate Winery
- Spot giant sperm whales on the Whale Watch cruise in Kiakoura

## Tour itinerary

**B** = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

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### Day 1: Christchurch

Fly into Christchurch where you will be met by a Grand Pacific Tours representative and transferred to your hotel. This evening enjoy a pre-dinner welcome drink and meet your fellow travellers. **D**

*Accommodation:* Junior suite, Millennium Hotel (1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights)

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### Day 2: Christchurch

Travel to the International Antarctic Centre this morning for a totally unique experience as you have breakfast with the penguins in a “state of the art” enclosure. Climb aboard the amazing Hagglund, buckle up and experience an adventure ride in this all terrain amphibian vehicle. Enjoy a guided tour around the centre as you discover how life in Antarctica survives through a series of fun, exciting and interactive exhibits.

Return to the city for a tour of the grand architecture, historic homesteads and immaculate parks. Visit the historic Antigua Boat Sheds, your boarding point for an authentic Edwardian punting experience along the picturesque Avon River.

During the afternoon some free time is available. Use your complimentary Tramway Pass to explore the city including the popular arts and crafts markets. This evening you will experience the dramatic encounter, Lost in our Own Land, where the Maori Village, the fortified pa and the Colonial Village sites come to life throughout this spectacular display. Feast on a traditional Maori Hangi and Colonial banquet before a steam train ride concludes your evening as you take with you memories of this powerful journey that shaped the history of New Zealand. **B, D**

*Accommodation:* Junior suite, Millennium Hotel (2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights)

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### Day 3: Christchurch - Dunedin

Heading south this morning you visit Trotts Garden, a garden of National Significance. This stunning private garden offers different landscaped sections and delightful vistas at every corner. Morning tea is served before travelling to Oamaru, famous for its limestone buildings. On arrival enjoy a personal ‘local’ welcome followed by free time to explore and admire the unique architecture of the vibrant Historic Precinct.

A short journey brings you to the Parkside Limestone Quarry and Garden. A tour of the quarry showcases one of nature's finest building materials and you will see many sculptured pieces located throughout the garden.

Continue to Dunedin, a city where a strong Scottish heritage remains today. This evening prior to dinner, an entertaining Haggis Ceremony will comprise of traditional bagpipes, Highland dancers and the Robbie Burns world famous poem “Address to the Haggis” will be recited. **B, D**

*Accommodation:* Southern Cross Hotel (1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights)

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#### **Day 4: Dunedin**

Travel out along the spectacular Otago Peninsula to Larnach Castle, an iconic New Zealand attraction built in 1871. A guided tour will reveal the exciting yet scandalous history, magnificent architecture, New Zealand antiques and breathtaking tower views. Morning tea will be served as you marvel at the beautiful gardens which have been lovingly restored by the Barker family over the last 40 years.

A short drive brings you to Natures Wonders where your hosts will thrill you with a cross-country adventure in the ultimate all terrain vehicle, an 8-wheel-drive ARGO. See stunning coastal scenery and an extraordinary range of wildlife, including the world's rarest penguin, the Yellow-Eyed, in its natural habitat. Travel back to the city where you enjoy some free time to explore at your own pace. After a relaxing afternoon this evening is also free, which allows you to dine at leisure. **B**

*Accommodation:* Southern Cross Hotel (2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights)

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#### **Day 5: Dunedin – Te Anau**

A leisurely start to the day before an informative guided tour of Dunedin's premier historic home - Olveston House, which showcases the lifestyle of a privileged family in the early 1900s. Morning tea will be served before departing Dunedin. Travel through Balclutha to Gore where time is available for lunch and to explore the Hokonui Moonshine Museum that celebrates the history of illicit whisky making. Continue to Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland and our overnight stay. Tonight a special crayfish dinner is on offer. **B, D**

*Accommodation:* Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas

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#### **Day 6: Te Anau – Doubtful Sound**

A walk along the lakefront may provide a pleasant option to start your day. Later, relax in the comfort of the Fiordland Cinema as you view the amazing production of *Ata Whenua - Shadowland* which brings to life the Fiordland World Heritage areas. After the screening, board your coach for the short trip to Manapouri, the starting point of your breathtaking Doubtful Sound experience. A short cruise across Lake Manapouri is followed by a coach ride over the Wilmot Pass to the boarding point of your overnight vessel, the Fiordland Navigator. Stunning views of the dramatic landscape including dynamic mountain ranges, cascading waterfalls and an abundance of wildlife, will keep you entertained. Enjoy a kayak trip around the shoreline or take the tender craft out with your nature guide before its time to drop anchor for the night and enjoy a delicious evening meal in the spacious dining saloon. **B, L, D**

*Accommodation:* Fiordland Navigator (vessel)

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#### **Day 7: Doubtful Sound – Queenstown**

This morning after a hearty breakfast, time is available to explore once again, before returning to Deep Cove then onto Manapouri where your coach will be waiting. Continue to Queenstown, located on the shores of magical Lake Wakatipu and your home for the next three nights. Your first stop is the spectacular Shotover River where you board the world's most exciting Jet Boat ride for the thrill of a lifetime.

Next, take to the skies on your premier scenic helicopter flight. View the breathtaking beauty of the Wakatipu basin and the untamed Shotover River before landing on The Remarkables, situated 1538 metres above Queenstown. A glass of champagne is served as you enjoy the stunning scenery offering incredible views. Reboard your helicopter for a special flight to land on site at Millbrook Resort, where you will be warmly welcomed and given a full update on all the facilities available. Tonight a welcome to Millbrook dinner will be provided. **B, D**  
*Accommodation:* Villa suite, Millbrook Resort (1<sup>st</sup> of 3 nights)

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### **Day 8: Queenstown**

Start the day with a short coach ride to the Winehouse and Kitchen, a stunning renovated homestead with superb views. A cooked breakfast is served before a short stroll across to the Kawarau Bridge where the world's first commercial bungy site opened in 1988. Here, experience the Secrets of Bungy Guided Tour revealing the origin of bungy through a range of interactive exhibits plus a fascinating cinematic experience. Exclusive viewing decks allow you to witness a bungy jump up close and personal.

Escape back in time as you board a 1937 convertible Chevrolet bus that has been lovingly restored. Your driver and guide will provide a fascinating talk on the region as you visit a number of well known art and craft studios in and around Arrowtown. Lunch is included at Stoneridge Estate, which offers a spectacular setting and expansive gardens. Return to the Resort late afternoon for some free time. Dinner this evening is at your leisure. **B, L**  
*Accommodation:* Villa suite, Millbrook Resort (2<sup>nd</sup> of 3 nights)

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### **Day 9: Queenstown**

Today is a free day for you to explore Queenstown at leisure, or simply soak up the surrounds and luxurious facilities at Millbrook. Your Coach Captain and Tour Escort are available to assist with the many sightseeing options available whether it be a heritage tour to Skippers Canyon or a total wilderness experience on the famous Dart River. **B**  
*Accommodation:* Villa suite, Millbrook Resort (3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 nights)

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### **Day 10: Queenstown – Mt Cook**

The mountain ranges of Queenstown will fade into the distance as you journey into the Mackenzie Country, also known as the Mt Cook region. This is a powerfully emotive landscape, over one million acres of high golden tundra encircled by sky piercing mountains. Depending on weather conditions, a range of activities have been organised for you this afternoon to showcase the dramatic scenery and turquoise glacial lakes.

Late afternoon time is available to relax and soak up the ambience or you may choose to visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre. This multi-million dollar 'state of the art' museum and theatre showcases the history of climbing and transport in the Mt Cook region. You may also like to experience the region's dramatic mountains first hand with an optional scenic flight (weather permitting) including a snow landing. This evening enjoy a superb dinner in the hotel's premier restaurant, Panorama. **B, D**  
*Accommodation:* The Hermitage Hotel

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### **Day 11: Mt Cook – Hanmer Springs**

The majestic scenery continues as you travel via Lake Tekapo towards Hanmer Springs. View the brilliant turquoise water, visit the Church of the Good Shepherd and the Sheep Dog Statue. The highlight of the region is a visit to Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa where you will unwind in this unique alpine environment. Included is either a 30-minute back massage or facial at the award winning spa complex. **B, D**

*Accommodation:* Heritage Hanmer Springs

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### **Day 12: Hanmer Springs – Nelson**

Today you travel via Springs Junction to Nelson, renowned for its abundance of working artists and galleries. Take the creative ride of your life when you visit the totally unique World of Wearable Art and Classic Car Museum. An exclusive area has been reserved for you where an informative talk will be presented on how art is literally taken off the wall to adorn the body in wildly wonderful ways. Also housed in the Museum is an amazing collection of cars ranging from the early 1900s. Continue to your resort where your luxury one bedroom cottage overlooks the immaculate Village Green. Dinner this evening is a barbecue cooked and served al fresco style in the relaxed surrounds of the courtyard. **B, D**

*Accommodation:* Grand Mercure Nelson Monaco

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### **Day 13: Nelson – Blenheim**

Travel into the countryside to a local farm for a real Kiwi experience. Suit up and climb aboard your 4-wheel quad bike for a guided tour through farmland and native forest admiring New Zealand's largest Matai trees. Arrive at the Treetops Café where spectacular coastline views are on offer. Morning tea is served in this panoramic setting and you may choose to try the adrenalin charged Skywire (optional) set 305m above sea level.

Continue to Havelock, the Greenshell mussel capital of New Zealand. Enjoy a truly unique cruise and take in the natural beauty of this tranquil environment. Learn about the history of the pioneering families who have settled in the Sounds over six generations and visit a mussel farm where freshly steamed mussels are served with a glass of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.

Continue to your overnight accommodation, set amongst the vines. A special wine maker's dinner will be presented this evening commencing with a visit to Forrest Estate Winery. Here you will be greeted by the vineyard owner and wine maker who will share his wine making experiences with you. Return to the hotel for pre dinner drinks and canapés. A tastefully decorated private dining room reflecting a food and wine theme will be your venue for a five course degustation menu with specific wines matched for each course. **B, D**

*Accommodation:* Marlborough Vintners Hotel

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### **Day 14: Blenheim – Christchurch**

After breakfast you will depart the region of vines and head south to the coastal town of Kaikoura. Iconic to the region, the Whale Watch tour is a unique experience. Giant sperm whales are the stars of the show and year round residents. You may encounter New Zealand fur seals, a pod of Dusky dolphins and the endangered Wandering Albatross as you enjoy a 2.5 hour boat cruise to view the whales up close with full commentary.

En route to Christchurch, travel through the Waipara Valley, pioneers of local grape growing and wine making. Continue to Christchurch where this evening you enjoy an intimate farewell experience. Reminisce with your new friends over the many highlights of the last two weeks as you enjoy a 'Taste New Zealand' dinner with wine in your own private room which has been specially themed. **B, L, D**

*Accommodation:* Millennium Hotel

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### **Day 15: Christchurch**

Enjoy breakfast at leisure this morning. After an ultimate New Zealand experience it is time to say goodbye. You will be personally transferred to the airport for your flight home. Take with you the fond memories of your time in New Zealand that will last forever. **B**

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