



Wellington to Queenstown Explorer Tour

As you cross the Cook Strait on board the Interislander Ferry and enter the Marlborough Sounds, you'll understand why starting your South Island adventure in the North Island city of Wellington was the way to go – you couldn't ask for a better introduction to the natural beauty of the South. Other highlights of this tour include the marine wildlife of the Kaikoura coastline, Mt Cook National Park and the pristine fiord and forest clad mountains of Milford Sound.



Starts in: Wellington
Finishes in: Queenstown
Length: 11days / 10nights
Accommodation: Motels
Can be customised: Yes



This itinerary can be customised to suit you perfectly. We can add more days, remove days, change accommodations, mix it up, add activities to suit your interests or simply design and create something from scratch. Call us today to get your custom New Zealand itinerary underway.

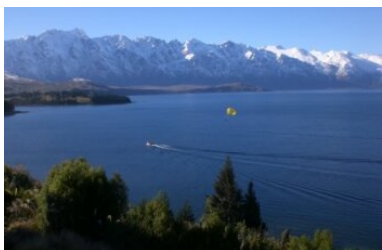


Inclusions:



Includes: Late model rental cars
Includes: Unlimited kms
Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees
Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)
Included activity: Private transfer Wellington airport to your accommodation (IST)
Included activity: Private transfer Wellington hotel to Interislander Ferry (IST)
Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and picnic lunch with RealNZ

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)
Includes: GPS navigation
Includes: Additional drivers
Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand
Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App
Included activity: Interislander Ferry Wellington to Picton
: 1 lunch



Day 1



Private transfer Wellington airport to your accommodation

You will be met on arrival at Wellington airport and transferred to your accommodation.

Welcome to Wellington

Wellington City is New Zealand's capital. It sits on a wonderful deep natural harbour and is surrounded by bush clad hills. The city centre itself is quite compact (only around 1 square kilometre) and so exploring on foot is relatively easy. From your city centre accommodation you can easily stroll the cafes and restaurants around Courtenay Place and if you arrive early enough New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa, is also close by.

Your accommodation: Adina CityLife Wellington

Adina CityLife Wellington is a suite style hotel with every amenity required for a comfortable stay, as well as being in a superb location to explore the compact city centre. Situated on Lambton Quay, you'll find the best shopping, tourist attractions and cultural landmarks all within easy walking distance.



Day 2



Wellington

Wellington, home to New Zealand's centre of government has a largely cosmopolitan feel. Often referred to as 'mini-Melbourne', this (self described) windy city is a melting pot of art, culture, food and fashion. Quirky laneway bars, underground art shows, and hipster eateries make up its inner city vibe, while a host of sandy beaches outside the urban bustle bring a cheerful holiday feel. Take a turn on the boardwalk en-route to Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum or catch a historic cable car from Lambton Quay and soak up the city sights. Wander the boutiques on Cuba St and check out the aptly named 'Beehive' off Parliament House. Play hobbit for day and book a tour through Weta Workshop, the Oscar Award winning design studio for Lord Of The Rings. If eating is your thing, drive an hour out of town to Martinborough and experience some of the region's best food and wine. For those interested in New Zealand's native species, a trip to Zealandia is a must, the world's first fully fenced eco-sanctuary. Then kick off your evening in style - search 'Metro Eats' to choose from a plethora of the city's best restaurants to dine.

Wellington's museums - suggested activity

Wellington Museum

Housed in the iconic Bond Store on Wellington's waterfront, the Museum of Wellington is dedicated to the preservation and study of Wellington's rich social and cultural history. It provides a backdrop for the permanent display of the people and events that have made Wellington what it is today. The Museum's atmosphere is thick with history. The Bond Store dates back to 1892, when it was a cargo warehouse and head office of the Harbour Board. Careful restoration has preserved the building's striking facade, as well as solid timber beams and the original flooring inside. The latest technology is used to further stimulate your senses. Traditional displays sit alongside interactive exhibits, holographs and a giant cinema screen that stretches the length and breadth of an entire wall, a feature unique in Australasia. The collection includes over 95,000 items. Open 10am to 5pm entry is free. New Zealand Portrait Gallery

The New Zealand Portrait Gallery Te Pūkenga Whakaata is a small gallery which tells the stories of New Zealanders through the art of portraiture. The Gallery is located in Shed 11 on Wellington's waterfront.

Open 10:30am to 4:30pm daily, entry is free. City Gallery Wellington

Showing art that is sometimes challenging and always captivating from some of the world's leading artists, City Gallery Wellington is known for world-class exhibitions of contemporary New Zealand and international art. It is located in Te Ngākau Civic Square and is open daily, 11am to 5pm.

Your accommodation: Adina CityLife Wellington

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Day 3



Private transfer to Interislander ferry terminal

You will be collected from your hotel and transferred to the Interislander ferry terminal in time for your ferry check in.

Interislander Ferry Wellington to Picton

The 92 km journey between Wellington and Picton takes around 3 hours and has been described as 'one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world'. Leaving Wellington Harbour you pass many interesting points such as Pencarrow Head on top of which is New Zealand's oldest lighthouse (1859). Red Rocks is home to a seal colony and Oterangi Bay is the site which recorded the country's highest ever wind speed of 268 kph (167 mph).

From the Cook Strait spectacular views of the Kaikoura Ranges on the South Island can be enjoyed and dolphins and many sea birds are often seen. Around one hour of the cruise takes you through the Marlborough Sounds and this region of bush covered mountains, small islands, crystal clear waters and secluded bays offer remarkable photographic opportunities. The final leg of your cruise travels through Queen Charlotte Sound before coming to an end in the picturesque town of Picton.

Collect your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Your accommodation: Harbour View Motel Picton

Spacious, self contained accommodation with views of the harbour and marina. Studio units each with its own private balcony, just minutes from the water's edge and a short stroll to town.



Day 4



Picton to Christchurch

From Picton you cross the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges as you head towards one of the most spectacular coastlines of the South Island, the Kaikoura Coast. The road hugs the shore for around 50 kilometres and offers many chances to view native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. To the east is the turquoise waters of the South Pacific Ocean and to the west the towering Kaikoura Ranges. Kaikoura Township is a bustling place with many cafes, restaurants and shops, but the main reason for visiting here is the wildlife. Whale Watch Kaikoura is New Zealand's only marine-based whale watching company offering visitors an exciting up-close encounter with the Giant Sperm Whale at all times of the year. Depending on the season you may also see migrating Humpback Whales, Pilot Whales, Blue Whales and Southern Right Whales.

The drive from Kaikoura to Christchurch continues to follow the spectacular coastline before heading inland and through North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley to arrive into Christchurch City.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Christchurch Gondola

In the Heathcote Valley, just fifteen minutes from the heart of Christchurch City, ride the Christchurch Gondola for nearly a kilometer to the collapsed rim of an extinct volcano, which exploded six million years ago. Take in the spectacular panoramic views of the central city, Lyttelton Harbour, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury Plains, and the distant peaks of the Southern Alps. Wander the summit complex, enjoy a coffee or lunch in the cafe, and choose one of many nature walks to explore or visit the Christchurch Discovery Rice, a dramatic reconstruction of the history of the Port Hills and Christchurch.

Your accommodation: Quality Suites Amore

Amore Motor Lodge is one of the newest motels in Riccarton, Christchurch. The modern, well-appointed studio suites and spacious 2-bedroom apartments provide the ultimate in comfort are fully self-contained. Stay just 100 metres from the Westfield Mall and a short walk to Hagley Park and Riccarton Bush Farmers Market.



Day 5



Christchurch to Aoraki Mt Cook National Park

Today you'll drive through the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury plains. Catch your breath in Geraldine before continuing through Fairlie. Ascending Burkes pass you'll come to the picturesque lakeside town of Tekapo. Follow the road and take in the view of Aoraki Mt Cook (New Zealand's tallest mountain) from the shores of Lake Pukaki, known for its glacier fed turquoise blue colour. Continue along the lake to your final destination Mt Cook Village.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glacier Explorers Mt. Cook

Experience 500 year old icebergs up-close on the Mt Cook terminal lake. The Glacier Explorers tour is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and one of only three in the world! Very few glaciers terminate into lakes and even fewer of them are accessible. See towering ice cliffs and floating icebergs from the safety of a specially designed boat. These boats provide a safe way to view unseen and inaccessible areas of New Zealand's largest glacier The Tasman.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Big Sky Stargazing

Mt Cook is far from the city lights and therefore has some of the darkest skies in New Zealand, perfect for viewing the night sky! Their fully trained guides are delighted to show you the beautiful southern night sky using the naked eye, state of the art astronomy telescopes and binoculars at the outdoor viewing platform. If the weather is not favourable then there will be an indoor alternative featuring New Zealand's first full dome digital Planetarium, a high-definition video images on a suspended 9m wide x 4.5m high full dome. Unleash your imagination as you discover the night sky including the Southern Cross, seasonal ecliptic objects, planets, star clusters, moons, distant galaxies and even our very own galaxy, the spectacular Milky Way!

Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel is located in the centre of Mt. Cook village. The self-contained units are spacious and all are surrounded by alpine mountain views.



Day 6



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Dunedin

Today you'll leave Aoraki Mt Cook National Park and travel past Twizel, one of the locations for the Lord of the Rings films. Go through Omarama, the gliding capital of New Zealand, be sure to stop at The Wrinkly Ram, a quirky local cafe and souvenir store. Driving through the Waitaki Valley follow the hydro power generating system towards the east coast. Stretch your legs in Oamaru, known for its white stone buildings constructed with the local Oamaru Stone. If you were a little late off the mark this morning you may get the chance to see the blue penguins come ashore at dusk.

Continue south down the coast to Moeraki, and take a detour towards the beach to see the Moeraki Boulders, a unique geological feature well worth a look. As you arrive in Dunedin, take in the city's Edwardian and Scottish heritage reflected in the buildings around the city centre The Octagon.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Monarch Wildlife Cruise from Wellers Rock

An unforgettable experience viewing rare and fascinating wildlife. Board the Monarch Boat and take in the fascinating sight of the Northern Royal Albatross as it comes into nest on the spectacular cliffs of Taiaroa, Otago Peninsula. You'll also see eight other species of birds including sooty shearwaters and petrels as well as sea lions and fur seals and if you're lucky dolphins and whales.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Standard Tour with Monarch

Join a local guide for a journey across the Otago Peninsula on this small-group tour of Dunedin. Travel over the high road with postcard views of the harbour and coast. You'll travel past quaint communities and rural farms. Spot wading birds as your mini-bus explores around the inlets and the wetland eco-systems. Your tour will visit a remote Otago Peninsula beach. A short walk from the mini-bus will provide dramatic views of rugged coastal cliffs, offshore islands and perhaps some huge sea lions. The trip continues to Taiaroa Head, home to the Royal Albatross Centre. Time is allowed to go inside and check out the displays. Take a walk down to Pilots Beach and see fur seals hauled out on the rocks, or walk out to the clifftop viewpoint, you might spot a royal albatross gliding past. Food & drink can be purchased here from the Albatross Cafe. Guests are also welcome to bring a pre-packed meal on tour with them. We recommend having a good-sized lunch before the tour departs Dunedin.

The final stop is at a Yellow-eyed Penguin conservation reserve. Visit the on-site rehab centre before a tour of the reserve. You'll take trails through native bushland, walking through tunnels and trenches to different viewing hides scattered around the reserve. Watch as the world's rarest penguin returns ashore and interacts around their nesting sites. The tour ends with a relaxed drive, following the harbour, back to Dunedin.

Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 7



Dunedin to Te Anau

The drive to Te Anau takes you through classic Southland farming scenery. Head off-the-beaten-track today and follow the coastline instead of the inland route. Go through The Catlins area and be sure to take a detour to Kaka Point to view its majestic cliffs and pounding surf. Continue through Invercargill to Riverton and Colac Bay, and then head north to Manapouri. From here you can embark on a day or overnight cruise to the remote Doubtful Sound, renowned for its natural beauty. Just a short way further will bring you to your lakeside destination of Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.



Day 8



Te Anau to Milford Sound and return to Te Anau

The road to Milford Sound offers some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery in the country. From crystal clear lakes and towering mountains to lush glacier formed meadows, this area is dramatic and unyielding. Stretch your legs on the Chasm Walk, a short stroll through native beech forest to see several powerful waterfalls. Continue on through the Homer Tunnel, an engineering marvel at 1219 metres long. Arriving into the village of Milford, you will be greeted with an amazing view of Mitre Peak. A day cruise into the heart of the sound is not to be missed. You'll learn about how this magnificent area was formed and experience the wonder of the falls that line the Fiord before back-tracking the way you came.

Please note: Make sure to allow 2.5hrs to Milford Sound, this takes into account the current road works on the Milford Road.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Milford Premium Cruise with RealNZ

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord aboard the M.V Sinbad, an exclusive vessel for a premium experience. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. With a glass of bubbles on arrival and canapes provided throughout the journey, this is the perfect way to explore Milford Sound. At a capped capacity of 40 people and a roaming nature guide providing informative commentary throughout the extended cruise, this experience allows guests to enjoy the Fiord at a relaxing pace.

Milford Sound Cruise and picnic lunch with RealNZ

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. Informative, participative and relaxed, this is the perfect way to experience Milford Sound to the fullest.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 9



Te Anau to Queenstown

Today you'll cross vast tussock lands on your way to Queenstown. Pass through Mossburn, the deer capital of the nation. Continue on through the Southland countryside where the road begins to hug the lake edge and the Remarkables mountain range towers over your approach into the adventure capital of New Zealand.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its four star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 10



Explore Queenstown

Well-known as New Zealand's 'adventure capital', Queenstown is home to a range of adventures, from the world's first and most famous bungy jumps to jet boat thrills, white-water rafting, and skydiving. However, Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of beautiful Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by many historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Take a stroll through the beautiful lakefront parks and gardens, browse through market stalls on weekends, dine in wonderful al-fresco restaurants, or ride on the 100-year-old historic Steamship - TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Take the Queenstown Gondola up to Bob's Peak and soak up the panoramic views of the magnificent lake and mountain ranges. And after all of that, if you do want the adrenaline rush, Queenstown is known for taking your pick from the Shotover Jet, Canyon Swing, Zipline, Luge, or Heli-hike.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shotover Canyon River Jet Boat Adventure

Riding the iconic 'Big Red' Jet Boat through the narrow Shotover Canyon is an exhilarating experience not to be missed. Your skilled jet boat driver pushes the boat to 85 kph, skimming across shallow water and past towering canyon walls. This 25 minute white water ride includes 360 degree spins and maximum thrills.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Skyline Gondola Queenstown and 3 Luge Rides

In the heart of Queenstown, located 450 metres above town in the Ben Lomond Scenic Reserve is the Skyline Complex. A gondola ride to the summit makes for awe-inspiring views of the city surround. Arrive at the complex and wander the outside viewing decks for a picture perfect outlook. Then onto the Luge! The 800 metre luge track offers an exhilarating journey through banked corners, tunnels and dippers.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TSS Earnslaw cruise to Walter Peak including gourmet BBQ dinner and a farm tour

Enjoy a quintessential Kiwi experience, a delicious gourmet BBQ buffet meal and a farm demonstration in a stunning lakeside setting. Take in the stunning views of Lake Wakatipu and its surroundings as you cruise across the lake to the historic Walter Peak high country farm aboard the TSS Earnslaw Steamship.

Enjoy the ambience of the heart of the stately homestead while your Colonel's Homestead Restaurant chef prepares a gourmet BBQ dinner. Your seasonal menu includes an extensive selection of local New Zealand produce, including succulent meats and a selection of delicious vegetables and salads. Complete your meal with your choice of delicious desserts, New Zealand cheeses, tea and coffee.

After dinner, watch the farm dogs in action with a sheep-herding demonstration and say hello to the other farm animals. Finally, cruise home under the southern stars and enjoy the fresh night air as the lights of Queenstown draw ever closer.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its four star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 11



Your final morning in Queenstown before driving to the airport and catching your next flight

Depending on when your flight departs you might have time for one last Queenstown adventure before dropping your car off at the airport and catching your flight.

Farewell from New Zealand

Bid farewell to New Zealand, taking with you unforgettable memories of its breathtaking landscapes and incredible adventures.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Nationwide Self Drive
Starts:	Wellington
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	11
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Interislander ferry crossing
Includes	Real Journeys Milford Sound Cruise

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 2	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 3	Harbour View Motel Picton
Day 4	Quality Suites Amore
Day 5	Mt Cook Motel
Day 6	Motel on York
Day 7	Lakefront Lodge
Day 8	Lakefront Lodge
Day 9	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 10	Scenic Suites Queenstown