

8 Day 4WD NZ South Island Explorer

Christchurch - Lake Tekapo - Wanaka

From **\$1,899** Typically \$1,999 pp twin share



- Boutique 4-5 star accommodation*
- 8-day car hire with unlimited kms
- All-inclusive car insurance
- Daily breakfast
- Venture off the beaten track and explore NZ like a local!

Description



The South Island in New Zealand plays host to some of the purest natural landscapes you'll ever experience.

The scenery on this adventure is unknown to tourists, you will ride on tracks where you will mainly meet only locals. Enjoy travelling in the comfort and safety of either a new model Toyota RAV4 or Similar vehicle.

Begin your journey in Christchurch, making your way through Blenheim, Hammer Springs, Mt Somers, Mt Sunday, Geraldine, Lake Tekapo, Kurow, Duntroon, Danseys, Maniototo, and Wanaka.

Your touring includes 7 nights along the journey at a selection of beautiful properties to call home for the night before you are off again exploring the stunning tussocked fields, snow capped peaks, glaciers, river systems and temperate rainforests.

The goal of our approach is to help you discover New Zealand off the beaten track, away from the regular tourist trails, while still ticking off all the essentials.



Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Christchurch

The rental company will pick you up at the airport.

Please keep the map and driving instructions that will be handed to you, you will need them to drop off your vehicle.

The world-famous 'Garden City', Christchurch's well-established expansive parks and public gardens owe much to the planning and foresight of the city's founding fathers. The central city area and some eastern suburbs were heavily affected by the earthquake of February 2011 which led to the destruction of many of the original multi-story buildings, especially historic ones. But the rebuild of the CBD is now in full swing, it has brought with a new vibrancy to the ever-changing city as an influx of workers and the completion of new buildings carries on. The silver lining of the earthquake cloud has been the resilience of Christchurch residents and the innovation and creativity that has come out of rather dire circumstances.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **HAGLEY PARK** - This park has been at the heart of Christchurch since the 1850s and is today the most significant central city park. It offers a diverse range of entertainment and recreational facilities close to the city centre. It is renowned for its extensive area of 165 hectares (407 acres), its wide-open spaces and mature woodlands. The park is a major sporting and cultural focal point.
- **CATHEDRAL SQUARE** - The central and unifying public space has been a landmark and a cultural magnet for over 150 years. The space provides the perfect backdrop for events, with open spaces, historic architecture and lots of through traffic. You can still see ruins from the Cathedral whose rebuild is on the cards.
- **CARDBOARD CATHEDRAL** - Constructed from large cardboard beams as an interim cathedral while the original building is rebuilt. It sounds like a weird concept but the outcome is rather impressive.
- **EARTHQUAKE MEMORIAL** - Made up of 185 white chairs in tribute to the 185 casualties of the quakes, it is a moving and fitting tribute to those who lost their lives.
- **QUAKE CITY** - By the restart mall, is a unique multi-sensory attraction aimed at informing, engaging and educating New Zealanders and international tourists about the Canterbury earthquakes.
- **Re:START Container Mall** - On Cashel Street is a shopping experience like no other, originally constructed as a way of bringing retailers back into the central city post-earthquake it has now become an integral part of the city's landscape with its colorful shipping container buildings. Re:START has great cafes, a range of specialty gifts stores and a selection of fashion boutiques not found elsewhere.
- **ART GALLERY** - One of the most important collections of art in the country.
- **PUNTING ON THE AVON** - A relaxing way to discover the city with a ride on the river Avon complete with uniformed punter.
- **CHRISTCHURCH GONDOLA** - Is a great way to get up onto the port hills and see the city and Banks

Peninsula from above while learning about Canterbury's first settlers.

- WILLOWBANK WILDLIFE RESERVE - You will experience New Zealand wildlife first hand and learn about the diversity of this country's natural environment and history. You can observe kiwis up close in the kiwi house.

- ANTARCTIC CENTRE - Embark on a journey through Antarctica without leaving Christchurch. You'll experience snow and ice, a storm, learn about life in modern day Antarctica and Scott Base, and hang out with Little Blue Penguins! There's also the famously exciting Hagglund ride and an awesome simulated 4D cruise plus heaps more!

- SUMNER BEACH & LYTTLETON - For a great family atmosphere and walks on the beach. The best local swimming spots are Taylor's Mistake and Corsair Bay.

- BANKS PENINSULA - Is full of picturesque bays, seaside villages, boutique galleries and cafes. The highlight of this peninsula is Akaroa, a historic French and British settlement nestled in the heart of an ancient volcano. Explore the village with its colonial architecture, galleries, craft stores, and cafés. Akaroa Harbour is the only place on the entire planet where you can get up close and personal with NZ's playful Hector's dolphins.

There is now a huge range of food offerings available in the city, from pop-up stalls with all different types of cuisine to more traditional restaurants. The cheesemongers in the Art's Centre is a cheese lover's paradise. For a unique experience try ordering a slider at C1 espresso on the corner of High and Tuam streets and for a bit of Latin atmosphere and South American food try Tequila Mockingbird.

Accommodation: Christchurch City Hotel

A la carte breakfast

Day 2

Christchurch - Blenheim

The road is long today, go up the SH1 to the north.

ON YOUR WAY

- KAIKOURA is world-famous for its abundant marine fauna. From the sea, you will also have the chance to admire snow-capped mountains 10 months of the year. For lovers of fresh lobster, do not hesitate to stop about 20 minutes from Kaikoura at one of the caravans located on the side of the road, north of the city.

BLLENHEIM, this farming town is well known for its aviation museum, but most especially for its vineyards. Only 18 vineyards in the 90s, there are now 160!

HIGHLIGHTS

- VINEYARDS, the region is full of them and they are mostly located towards Renwick. We recommend Clos Henri, and Montana Brancott wins the prize for the best view. Wither Hills offers you the opportunity to taste the different grape varieties and / or have lunch in the grass on comfortable beanbags. Finally, Bladen is a family vineyard where the harvest is still done by hand.

- OMAKA AVIATION CENTER, this aviation museum is exceptional for history buffs, particularly on the 1st and 2nd World War and its air battles. Some planes in the collection belong to Peter Jackson. A stunning staging.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS SELECTION

- WAIRAU RIVER WINES, a beautiful wine list in modern and bright decor. The menu is studied there according to the seasons. You will also appreciate its outdoor space and its view of the vineyards.

- HERB + OLIV, located in the city center, do not hesitate to go for a coffee or a snack.

- FIGARO'S CAFE, brunch and its 'Figaros Benedict' are served there until 2 p.m.!

- PELORUS BRIDGE, this is the river where to swim when it is hot, you will mainly meet locals.

- THE WINE STATION, an opportunity to taste up to 80 wines from the region in a completely renovated historic building.

Duration 04:20 hrs.

Accommodation Chateau Marlborough, Chateau Superior Studio

Cooked Breakfast included

Day 3

Blenheim - Hanmer Spring

Molesworth: Please note that the track is open from 07:00 to 19:00 during the summer season schematically from the end of October to approximately mid-April.

Molesworth road is the longest track in the country, it is more than 180 km but it is without particular difficulties. The first 60 km is a mixture of asphalt and gravel and then becomes a track. You first drive along a river before gradually gaining altitude to arrive in more mountainous atmospheres.

You will meet many animals and sometimes even herds of cows or sheep that farmers can move, be careful.

At kilometer 78 from the start of the track, take the bridge on your right.

The Historic Molesworth Cob Cottage is a good lunch break option since picnic tables are provided.

If you want to stretch your legs, you can go to the Trig Lookout which represents 50 minutes round trip or even continue to Mt Chisolm, it takes 2.5 hours round trip on a sloping ground with stones.

When you reach the end of the track, go to Hanmer Springs by continuing on the track for 14 km, do not take the Jolies Pass option which is more challenging.

Duration 03:30 hrs.

Accommodation: Hanmer Springs Hotel

Cooked Breakfast included

Day 4

Hanmer Springs - Mt Somers - Mt Sunday - Geraldine

Follow SH7 towards Christchurch, from SH1, take SH72 at Amberley, follow the road southbound.

Duration 02:50 hrs.

Mt Sunday :

Mount Sunday, better known as Edoras in the Lord of the Rings trilogy, is a beautiful place between mountains, lakes and rivers whose visual appeal justifies moving even if you are not a fan of the trilogy.

22 km after Mt Somers you leave the asphalt to arrive on a track. About ten kilometres further you will arrive at Lake Camp and Lake Clearwater, a holiday destination for Canterbury kiwis. Lake Camp is used for water skiing, we invite you to turn right to arrive on the banks of Clear Water. Once facing the lake, turn right and take the track that runs along the lake for about 2 kilometres, until you see a bench. Park your vehicle and in good weather admire the reflection of the mountains in the lake.

You still have about 14 kilometres to reach Mt Sunday. Once there, park your vehicle and walk to the summit which rises to an altitude of 611 meters, the views of the valley and the surrounding mountains are superb. Allow 1-hour round trip for 3 kilometres.

Duration 02:30 hrs.

Accommodation: The Vicarage Geraldine, super king room

Breakfast is served at Barker's Foodstore & Eatery next door

Day 5

Geraldine - Lake Tekapo

Take SH79 to Fairlie and turn right onto SH8 to Tekapo.

Since June 2012, Tekapo has been one of the rare World Heritage StarLight Reserves.

HIGHLIGHTS

MT JOHN OBSERVATORY - An asymmetrical rock shaped by the movement of ancient glaciers. The large mass of bedrock attains an altitude of 1031 metres above sea level, rising approximately 300 metres above Lake Tekapo below. On the summit of Mount John is the University of Canterbury's astronomical observatory. The mountain was chosen as the best observatory site in New Zealand because of its high number of clear nights throughout the year, the stability and transparency of the atmosphere and the uniquely dark skies in the Mackenzie Basin, devoid of city light pollution. It is internationally recognised as one of the best-situated observatories for viewing the southern night skies. For example, the Magellanic Clouds (satellite galaxies to our own Milky Way) can be seen continuously throughout the year.

HOT POOLS - Nestled into the base of Mount John, overlooking Lake Tekapo and the mountains beyond is the Alpine Springs, Spa and Winter Park. Heated alpine water supplies four outdoor, large public hot pools and several private pools. A health spa, complete with massage facilities are a great way to lose stress.

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD - Built-in 1935 to the glory of God as a memorial to the pioneers of the Mackenzie Country.

SCENIC FLIGHTS - Breath-taking scenic flights around Mt Cook (Aoraki) and Westland National Parks. The flights contain views of New Zealand's highest mountains, twelve major glaciers and 200km of alpine and rainforest scenery unique to New Zealand.

MOUNT JOHN - 2h return trekking. Or you can go by car; the 360 degrees view won't disappoint you.

Our Tips:

"Willow Bay" beach for a refreshing swim in a glacier lake. It is located about 500 meters after the forest when you drive on the right hand side of the lake towards North.

Duration 01:05 hrs.

Accommodation: Three Rivers Lodge B&B, Lake View room: Night at Three Rivers Lodge

Cooked breakfast included

Day 6

Lake Tekapo - Danseys

Hakataramea Valley :

Hakataramea Valley is a trail that alternates between valley and highlands from Tekapo to Kurow. It is known to the locals, but is little known to other kiwis. It has the advantage of offering a real shortcut compared to the route via the asphalt road.

On the first part of the track, do not hesitate to make a few stops to photograph the mountains of Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to which you turn your back.

You then arrive on hilly reliefs in various colors before joining the farms then the village of Kurow where Richie McCaw, captain of the All Blacks double world champion in 2011 and 2015 was born, his parents still live there.

Plan your lunch break at the picturesque, unmissable Kurow Hotel with its blue and yellow colors.

Duration 02:00 hrs.

Danseys Pass :

One of our favorite tracks. You can take the short 1-kilometer detour to Elephant Rock, limestone rock formations, some of which are shaped like an elephant.

You then gradually enter the track, from kilometer 27 the spectacle becomes grandiose with colorful reliefs in the middle of the Tussock, these long and fine wild grasses from the south island that float in the sandstone of the wind. This part is the occasion for many photo stops, be careful when you park because of many turns that hide the visibility.

About twenty kilometers later, you arrive at the improbable Danseys Pass Hotel. If we haven't booked your night here, take the time to have a drink.

You finally arrive in Naseby, a very small village known for its international Curling, ask us to book a session for you there.

Duration 02:00 hrs.

Accommodation: Danseys Pass Coach Inn, standard room

Cooked breakfast included

Day 7

Maniototo - Wanaka

Drive down SH8 to Cromwell and then SH6 to Wanaka.

BENDIGO

One of our real favorites. Bendigo owes its rise to the discovery of gold in the Central Otago region. From the 1860s, the village became very prosperous, even being one of the richest mines in the country. The extraction of quartz then replaced that of gold, the end of the final exploitation of Bendigo dates from 1940. The 1085 hectares are now protected, classified as a historic reserve.

Stroll among the ruins for a true return to the past while enjoying the mountain views across Lake Dunstan towards Wanaka.

Wanaka is the world's first Protected Lifestyle Reserve.

HIGHLIGHTS

PUZZLING WORLD, a world unique attraction specializing in puzzling eccentricity, it offers a great maze and incredible illusion rooms.

TOYS & TRANSPORT MUSEUM, one of the largest private collections in the world with 4 major buildings housing over 600 vehicles, 12 aircraft, 30,000 toys and 1,000's of miscellaneous items.

BASECAMP, if you've never climbed before, or if you pull hard on some serious stone, we have something for you. Standard climbing wall with top rope and lead in a unique large outdoor wall with 21 challenging lines that feel just like the real thing. You'll also find hot pools at Hotel Grand Mercure Oakridge just behind the basecamp.

CINEMA PARADISIO, this small classic movie theatre located in Wanaka is a real find. Watch your movie in a comfy old sofa or in one of 3 seats in an old Morris Minor.

Top Tips

To understand the local quality of life, don't hesitate to go to bars and mingle with the locals.

Duration 01:00 hrs.

Accommodation: Edgewater, Garden View

Breakfast included

Day 8

Wanaka - Queenstown

A short section through CROWN RANGES via CARDRONA, which is one of the highest and most scenic roads in the country.

On your way, make a stop for photos at Cardrona Hotel and then at Crown Terrace for a unique view of Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu and “The Remarkables” mountain range.

ARROWTOWN - You'll be enchanted by this historic town. It is charming and quirky – a delightful gold rush village nestled below the beautiful peaks that surround the sparkling Arrow River.

Drop off your car at the airport in Queenstown.

Breakfast included

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- 7 nights luxurious 4-5 star accommodation
- 8 day car hire (Rav 4, or similar)
- Unlimited KMs'
- All-inclusive car insurance
- Child Seats (if required)
- GPS Navigation System (if required)
- Daily Breakfast

Accommodation

- Christchurch City Hotel - Christchurch
 - Chateau Marlborough- Blenheim
 - Hanmer Springs Hotel - Hanmar Spring
 - The Vicarage Geraldine - Geraldine
 - Three Rivers Lodge - Lake Tekapo
 - Danseys Pass Hotel - Danseys Pass
 - Edgewater - Wanaka
-

Exclusions

- Travel insurance
- Flights
- Meals not mentioned
- Upgrade Vehicle types available on request

Child Policy: Child discount applies to children 12 or under contact for price.

Single Supplement : The single supplement for this package is \$1500. Available at checkout.

Triple & quad share: Available on request. Please contact us for a quote.

Upgrades: Want to upgrade your car? Option available at check out!

Safety: Please bear in mind that there is still a chance of snow on the roads. Be aware of weather conditions for the season you wish to travel in, and ensure you feel comfortable driving in slippery or icy conditions.

***Accommodation standards:** although all the accommodation is high quality, the property in Danseys Pass (due to the remote location) is quite basic. All other properties are premium and 4-5 star as mentioned.