



AAT Kings Southern Wonders 25/26

Explore the dramatic South Island on this 9 day tour. Crossing the Southern Alps to the Wild West Coast and Franz Josef Glacier. Travel through Mt Aspiring National Park to Queenstown, the Alpine Resort town is renowned for its exciting activities and spectacular scenery. Enjoy a cruise on Milford Sound before crossing the rolling hills of Southland towards Dunedin, 'the Edinburgh of the South'. Through the Waitaki region and onto the magical high country of Mackenzie before returning to the garden city of Christchurch.



Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 9days / 8nights
Accommodation: Hotel 3 star
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: All coach transport
- Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
- Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving, instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)
- Includes: 24/7 support while touring in New Zealand
- Included: Franz Josef Glacier Valley Walk
- Included: Milford Sound Cruise
- Included: TranzAlpine Rail Journey
- Included: TSS Earnslaw cruise and dinner at Walter Peak high country farm, Queenstown



Day 1

You don't have to arrive in Christchurch early, but we recommend you do – this South Island city has some of New Zealand's most innovative architecture, not to mention forward-thinking restaurants and bars. Tonight, it's time to meet your Travel Director and traveling companions for a Welcome Reception.

Staying in:

- Ibis Hotel Christchurch (1 night)
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Day 2

Your South Island New Zealand Tour starts on a literal high as you jump aboard the TranzAlpine train, crossing the Canterbury Plains towards the Southern Alps and Arthur's Pass. This is one of the world's most scenic rail experiences, through tunnels and over viaducts with panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, icy rivers, beech forests, gorges and river valleys. At the other end of the line is Hokitika, the home of pounamu (native greenstone or jade). Just when you thought your day couldn't get any better, Franz Josef town twinkles on the horizon. This afternoon, you may choose to fly over Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier (1 night)
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Day 3

Over the Haast Pass, alpine drama awaits. The Southern Lakes deserve their name: there are almost more waterways here than you can count. First up there's oh-so-blue Lake Hawea and Lake Dunstan, where you'll pause to refuel on flavor-packed stone fruit. Visit the historic gold mining village of Arrowtown, where tempting as it is to linger in streets lined with trees and character-filled boutiques, Lake Wakatipu and The Remarkables await in Queenstown.

Staying in:

- Copthorne Hotel and Resort Queenstown (1 night)
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Day 4

Your New Zealand guided tour takes you from Christchurch to Queenstown. And the adventure capital of New Zealand doesn't disappoint when it comes to activities that are fast and furious. Take your pick, you could explore the natural drama of Skippers Canyon. Prefer life at a more leisurely pace? Opt to step onto a Lord of the Rings movie set or sip your way through surrounding vineyards. Wherever you wander, make sure you're back in time to glide across Lake Wakatipu aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet barbecue Highlight Dinner.

Staying in:

- Copthorne Hotel and Resort Queenstown (1 night)
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Day 5

Nature rules today as you motor from the Mirror Lakes through the Cleddau Valley. But this is just a teaser of what's to come: World Heritage listed Milford Sound. A Milford Sound cruise across this dreamy expanse will give you goosebumps, its string of waterfalls creating a misty curtain across sheer escarpments. Look out for fur seals – they're a common sight here. The road back through Fiordland National Park is an intoxicating union of beech forests, alluvial flats, meadows and gin-clear rivers, carving up the countryside en route to Te Anau. And just when you thought things couldn't get any more magical, nestled on the edge of the South Island's largest lake, Te Anau is the perfect place to savor some peace and relaxation after the spectacle of the day.

Staying in:

- Distinction Luxmore Hotel (1 night)
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Day 6

The South Island's biggest lake is a blissful place for an invigorating morning walk. If it doesn't set your pulse racing, than your outlook of rolling green hills dotted with doe-eyed sheep surely will. This pastoral countryside surrounds the city of Dunedin. While away the afternoon in atmospheric art-lined alleys or sipping a lager or two in Speight's Brewery (a national institution), or visit grand Larnach Castle, the only one of its kind in the country. You could venture further afield to discover the wildlife that thrives in this pretty pocket of the country – fur seals among them.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Dunedin City (1 night)
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Day 7

Time is on your side this morning. Sleep in or take a stroll around the manicured grounds of Otago University to the city's main George Street. Enjoy a visit to Oamaru, a town with a rich history, featuring Victorian architecture and original boutiques.

Staying in:

- Distinction Heritage Gateway Hotel (1 night)
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Day 8

If there's a lake with a more vivid turquoise color than Tekapo, we're yet to see it. It's made even more dramatic by snow-capped mountains, the quaint Church of the Good Shepherd and atmospheric towns that surround. Your Indoor Dark Sky Astronomy Experience at Tekapo, hosted by passionate guides, will forever change the way you see the night sky. You'll see for yourself it may be one of the quietest spots on the planet, yet it has one of the busiest skies in the universe. Back on earth, you're becoming reacquainted with Christchurch, your in-the-know Travel Director pointing out the city's miraculous transformation over the last decade. Local spirit is strong here.

Staying in:

- Ibis Hotel Christchurch (1 night)
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Day 9

If you feel like you've only seen the tip of the South Island's iceberg, you'd be correct. This beguiling part of the country could keep travel enthusiasts entertained for eons. Thankfully, we have more itineraries – ask your Travel Director and start planning your next trip to New Zealand.

Tour details

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| Departures: | Daily |
| Tour type: | Guided Coach Tour |
| Starts: | Christchurch |
| Finishes: | Christchurch |
| Tour length: | 9 |
| Accommodation: | Hotel 3 star |
| Car/transport type: | |

Included activities

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| Includes | 5 dinners |
| Includes | All breakfasts |
| Includes | Airport transfers |
| Includes | TranzAlpine Train from Christchurch to Arthur's Pass |
| Includes | TSS Earnslaw cruise and dinner at Walter Peak high country farm, Queenstown |
| Includes | Greenstone Jade craft experience |
| Includes | Dunedin City Sights tour |

Accommodation summary