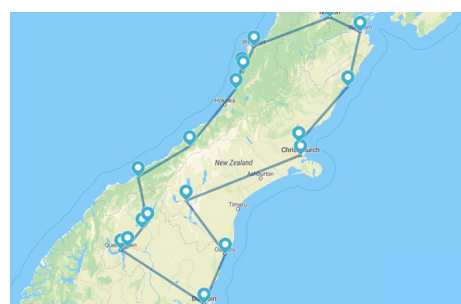




New Zealand, 13 Days · Tailor-made by car

## South Island Route

Travelling to the point diametrically opposite to Europe on the globe is like imagining a Jules Verne novel. New Zealand, or the 'land of the long white cloud', as the Maoris knew it, sits in the Tasman Sea and boasts so many fascinating locations that you'll feel like you're flicking through the pages of a fantasy novel. Discover the South Island of this extraordinary country, abound with national parks and breathtaking scenery. You'll fall in love with its Mirror Lakes, embraced by lush vegetation and towering mountains, with the majestic Southern Alps as the perfect specimen. And don't miss its fjords and glaciers, natural wonders unfortunately threatened by global warming. And if you like extreme sports, go skydiving for a true bird's eye view of the landscape or have a go at bungee jumping in the Queenstown area, dubbed the adventure capital of the world. Driving on this island is pure bliss. The Milford Highway is a sequence of stunning sights that you'll never forget.



NATURE

ADVENTURE

**Departure date:** Departures from June 2026 till May 2027

**From:** Cork, Shannon, Dublin

### Travel details

#### ● DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - CHRISTCHURCH

Flight departure from the city of origin to Christchurch. Night on board.

#### ● DAY 2 · IN FLIGHT.

#### ● DAY 3 · CHRISTCHURCH

Arrival and rental car pick-up at the airport. Head into the city, the largest settlement on South Island and located on the east coast. Christchurch owes its name to its Christian founders who came from Oxford University and were sponsored by the Archbishop of Canterbury, after whom the region is named. The Canterbury Association was rumoured to have the utopian goal of creating a new Jerusalem in New Zealand. You can visit the city's magnificent gardens and its museum, where historical exhibits underline its key role in the exploration of Antarctica. In fact, several expeditions have actually set sail from the port of Lyttelton. In the city centre, there's a statue dedicated to one of the explorers, Robert Falcon Scott, sculpted by his widow. Overnight stay in Christchurch.

#### ● DAY 4 · CHRISTCHURCH - TWIZEL (OPTIONAL EXCURSION TO MT. COOK AND TASMAN GLACIER)

Departure towards the south of the island crossing through Rangitata Valley and past Lake Tekapo until reaching Twizel, three and a half hours away. We recommend extending the drive down to Mt. Cook, the highest mountain in New Zealand, about forty-five minutes past Twizel. Mt. Cook, aka Aoraki, towers 3,754 metres high in the extraordinarily beautiful National Park that takes its name. There are several mountain trails that start out near the village. Panoramic flights, tours to Tasman Glacier and stargazing are great options to enjoy in this area. Overnight stay in Twizel.

#### ● DAY 5 · TWIZEL - OAMARU COASTLINE - DUNEDIN

Set off to the coastal area of Dunedin and Coastal Otago, both of undeniable beauty. Some people consider them the ecological capital of New Zealand. The Otago coastline stretches from Waitaki to north of Oamaru and is dotted with stunning green meadows and cute fishing villages. Oamaru is about an hour and a half north of Dunedin, but it's well worth driving up this stretch of coast. The historic white stone architecture in Oamaru is really interesting. A must-see in this area are the mysterious Moeraki Boulders, huge spherical rocks that dot Koekohe Beach, some forty kilometres south of Oamaru. They're nicknamed the "Dragon Eggs" and some weigh up to seven tons. Round the day off in Dunedin, a beautiful city dubbed the Edinburgh of New Zealand for its Scottish heritage. Its Victorian buildings are also in a perfect state of repair. In fact, just fifteen minutes' drive away is Larnach Castle, the only castle in New Zealand and the best portrayal of Victorian style. Visit this magnificent fortress built between 1873 and 1887 and which some say is cursed, as its original owner committed suicide and his daughter died at the age of just twenty-one. (Note: Admission not included. Entrance costs approximately 27 dollars). Near the city, you can also spot the most exotic penguins in the world and, in Cape Taiaroa, the only breeding colony on land of the royal albatross. (Note: discover all the secrets of the local flora and fauna at the Royal Albatross Centre). You can end the day with dinner in the city centre and taste some of New Zealand's famous wines. More of a beer person? Then we recommend Speight's Brewery, where you can pair craft beers with generous servings of delicious food. Overnight stay in Dunedin.

#### ● DAY 6 · DUNEDIN - QUEENSTOWN

Get ready to bid farewell to Dunedin. Before getting back on the road, take a final stroll along its quiet streets peppered with eclectic boutiques and stunning Edwardian and Victorian buildings. Don't forget to take photos of sights such as St. Paul's Cathedral and the spectacular gardens around town. Then onward with this road trip through places of outstanding beauty and fascinating history. Today's route ends in Queenstown, a lively city known as the "adventure capital" in New Zealand. Located about three and a half hours away by car, we advise getting there with enough time to enjoy an experience of pure adrenaline. You're in one of the most fascinating places in the world to go skydiving. Being up 12,000 feet in the sky with a bird's eye view - first from the plane and then during the fall - of the stunning natural treasures found here will be something that you'll never forget. It's breathtaking to observe the immensity of the Central Otago area and the snowy mountains that surround spectacular lakes, among them Wanaka. If you're interested in this activity, you can opt for a tandem parachute with an expert. If you like extreme sports, another option is "bungee jumping", throwing yourself into the void with your feet fastened. Queenstown is the birthplace of the bungee, and leaping forty-three metres from Kawaru Bridge down to the river (dunk included) will definitely get your heart pounding. If you're travelling in winter, you can have a go at skiing, snowboarding and snowshoe walking. Meanwhile, horse riding, golf, hiking and cycling are recommended for those in search of gentler activities. Queenstown is also the perfect destination for some rest and relaxation. End the day admiring the most privileged views of Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu from a gondola or pampering yourself with a rejuvenating spa session. Overnight stay in Queenstown.

## ● DAY 7 · QUEENSTOWN (OPTIONAL EXCURSION TO THE MILFORD SOUND FJORD)

Day at your leisure to continue enjoying Queenstown and its surroundings. Suggestions? There's something for all tastes and budgets in Queenstown. Breathe in the pure air and feel an indescribable sense of freedom while exploring the hiking trails that surround the town; soak up the charm and history of the gold rush village of Arrowtown; enjoy the water by taking a cruise on the lakes or by having a go at parasailing; head to Kingston on a beautiful steam train; savour the local wines at the many wineries dotted across the area; or indulge in some retail therapy in Queenstown, to name just a few options. For height lovers, there's nothing better than flying over the area in a hot air balloon. One of the must-dos here is a trip out to Milford Sound Fjord, which you can easily do thanks to your rental car. It was even called the eighth wonder of the world by British writer Rudyard Kipling, author of "The Jungle Book" and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature. The fjord is nestled in the extraordinary Fiordland National Park, which in turn is part of the Te Wahipounamu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As the crow flies, Queenstown seems quite close, but the terrain in the area calls for a detour of three hours and forty minutes to get there. The return trip is long, but in itself is amazing. Milford Highway weaves its way through incredible landscapes and takes you to an extraordinary world of unspoilt beauty. Known as Piopiotahi in Maori, the fjord is a magical place, with huge fast-flowing waterfalls. You can take a boat from its pocket-sized port on a beautiful crossing to the Tasman Sea, or charter a kayak and feel the majestic presence of mountains soaring 1,200 metres high. If you're in luck, you'll also see seals and penguins in freedom. After a fantastic day at one with nature, head back to the city to regain strength. Overnight stay in Queenstown.

## ● DAY 8 · QUEENSTOWN - FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER

Continue your journey north past Lakes Hayes, Wanaka and Hawea, so beautiful that they look like something out of a fairy tale. You'll then venture into the mountains through the Haast Pass until you reach the glacier region in the Westland National Park. Here you can visit the 12-kilometre-long Franz Josef Glacier, named after an Austrian emperor. After a 30-minute trek, you'll reach its final stretch, although you can also make trips from the car park to the many vantage points for some magnificent views of this spectacular frozen river. The bad news is that climate change is making it retreat at a frightening rate. After a long day of driving and walking, we recommend the unique experience of soothing your muscles at the Hot Pools, less than ten minutes away. These are natural thermal pools nestled in lush rainforest. Then head to Franz Josef, located five kilometres away. It's a quaint and endearing town, and always very hospitable to visitors. Overnight stay in Franz Josef.

## ● DAY 9 · FRANZ JOSEF - GREYMOUTH

We recommend a trip out to Fox Glacier today, just half an hour away by car. Like Franz Josef, it's in the Southern Alps. What's more, you should take the opportunity to visit Lake Matheson. You can get there along a road in the direction of the coast. It's breathtaking, like a mirror, and you can marvel at the outstanding views of Mt. Cook. There are several options in this glacier region: climbing the ice walls; visiting the glaciers with a guide; or taking a helicopter ride to see the spectacular and otherwise impenetrable corners of this World Heritage Site. In the afternoon, head north along the west coast to Greymouth, two hours away. The drive is simply amazing. Greymouth is a town with a history of jade hunting, gold mining and dramatic river floods. If you arrive with enough time (if not, you'll have the chance tomorrow), you can visit its fascinating local museum showcasing the history of precious metal mining. But even more interesting is a stroll along the Point Elizabeth Walkway, which trails its way through a scenic reserve and former gold mines. Greymouth is the largest town on the western coast of South Island. Make sure you stop by its local brewery, almost a legend in New Zealand, and savour a wonderful beer or two. Overnight stay in Greymouth.

## ● DAY 10 · GREYMOUTH - NELSON

We recommend driving along the coast up to the famous Punakaiki Pancake Rocks, about forty minutes away, where you can marvel at one of the most spectacular landscapes in the whole of New Zealand. They're found on the edge of the Paparoa National Park. The 'pancakes' are limestone formations on the shore where the sea bursts through several vertical blowholes during high tides. Afterwards, get back on the road and head through Buller Gorge, via Westport, up to Nelson, three hours away. And, finally we reach Nelson, one of the sunniest cities in New Zealand. Its idyllic seascapes, its stunning beaches of white and golden sand and its exuberant nature make the area a true paradise for hiking and water sports. The town captivates visitors with an alluring creative aura. Hundreds of artists live and work here, who find in this town and its surroundings an endless source of inspiration. Discover their art by popping into their ateliers and shops. Who knows, maybe you'll head home with a unique work of art. Take advantage of the visit to taste the city's delicious cuisine, savour its craft beers and sample a glass of local wine. Overnight stay in Nelson.

## ● DAY 11 · NELSON - BLENHEIM - KAIKOURA - RANGIORA - CHRISTCHURCH

Head off early to Christchurch, as there's a long day ahead today. You have to get the very most out of this trip to the Antipodes before heading back home. The sunny village of Blenheim, an hour and a half away from Nelson, is an ideal place for exploring the local food and wine culture. The next stop is just under two hours away in the picturesque seaside town of Kaikoura, a perfect place for observing marine life, strolling along the seafront and sinking your teeth into a dish of crayfish. The landscape of Kaikoura is truly spectacular: the village is nestled between the rugged Seaward Kaikoura mountain range and the Pacific Ocean. In winter, the snow-capped mountains add mysticism to the landscape. Before arriving in Christchurch, we recommend a stop-off in Rangiora, two hours and twenty minutes from Kaikoura. This town was home to the Maoris for hundreds and hundreds of years before the arrival of the Europeans. The beaches of Pegasus Bay are easily accessible, while the nearby rivers are popular among anglers and walkers. Christchurch is about thirty-five minutes away, an essential stop on any tour of South Island, as we saw at the start. So, it's back to idyllic gardens and enticing activities such as rowing on the River Avon. Stroll through its old town brimming with fascinating buildings, enticing restaurants and eclectic shops where you'll be able to pick up a souvenir or two from this once-in-a-lifetime trip. You could also drive over to Port Hills to take in the stunning views of the city and the coast. And bid farewell to New Zealand savouring the delicious local dishes. Overnight stay in Christchurch.

## ● DAY 12 · CHRISTCHURCH - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Night on board.

## ● DAY 13 · CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

## Your trip includes

### Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Christchurch.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Christchurch.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Twizel.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Twizel.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Dunedin.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Dunedin.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Queenstown.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Queenstown.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Franz Josef.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Franz Josef.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Greymouth.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Nelson.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Nelson.

✓ Rent-a-car.

### Your trip doesn't include

✗ Possible toll charges.

✗ Insolvency protection.

✗ Sports and adventure activities.

✗ Entrance to historic buildings, museums, natural parks, activities and attractions mentioned during itinerary (some are free).

## Destinations Visited

Christchurch



Twizel



Oamaru



Dunedin



Queenstown



Lake Hayes



Wanaka



Lake Hawea



Haast



Franz Josef



Greymouth



Punakaiki



Paparoa National Park



Westport





Nelson



Blenheim



Kaikoura



Rangiora



## Important remarks

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- Driving through New Zealand: 1. To drive in New Zealand, you'll need to get an international driving licence, which is a very simple. Procedure that you can do at any traffic office. 2. The roads are in good conditions, but the terrain means that long detours are needed to reach certain places. 3. Obeying speed limits and drink driving levels are important elements to consider, with severe penalties for offenders.
- Triple rooms in Oceania are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far the possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.
- You can request the service of expert guides who will take you on foot, by helicopter or by ski plane to the most spectacular points of the best-known glaciers. Marvel at authentic ice valleys that stretch almost to the coastline, as if the Ice Age was still happening right here in New Zealand!