

Catlins, Stewart Island & Doubtful Sound

7 October 2025

8 Day Hosted Small Group Tour





Catlins, Stewart Island & Doubtful Sound

Join us on an exclusive, fully hosted 8-day journey through the breathtaking landscapes of the **Catlins**, **Stewart Island**, and **Doubtful Sound**. This intimate tour, led by an experienced host, promises personal connections, unique experiences, and a stress-free adventure with every detail taken care of for you.

We begin in the untouched beauty of the **Catlins**, where native forests, dramatic cliffs, sandy beaches, and stunning waterfalls meet unique wildlife, including penguins and fur seals. Continue south to the tranquil charm of **Stewart Island**, where we spend two days soaking in the island's natural beauty, including a guided cruise to **Ulva Island**, a sanctuary for native birds.

Travel the scenic Southern Route to **Te Anau**, our base for exploring the remote wilderness of **Fiordland National Park**. We enjoy a full-day guided journey across **Lake Manapouri**, over the breathtaking **Wilmot Pass**, and into **Doubtful Sound**, where rugged peaks, lush rainforests, and hidden inlets await.

Conclude this remarkable tour with a visit to the historic town of **Arrowtown** and the scenic **Edith Cavall Bridge** before arriving in **Queenstown**, the "Jewel in the Crown."

With the comfort and ease of a dedicated host by your side, this small group experience offers the best of New Zealand's southern wonders in an unforgettable, fully hosted adventure.



CATLINS, STEWART ISLAND & DOUBTFUL SOUND ITINERARY

7th to 14th October 2025

TUE 7 Wellington – Dunedin – The Catlins

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This morning, we arrive in Dunedin and meet our driver to begin our journey south to the stunning Catlins Forest Park—one of New Zealand's least explored and most captivating regions.

In this untouched paradise, native forests meet the crashing waves of the Pacific Ocean, forming a landscape of hidden waterfalls, dramatic cliffs, and tranquil river valleys. The Catlins offers breathtaking views and remarkable wildlife encounters, making it a haven of wonder and serenity.

Our first stop is Balclutha, the gateway to the Catlins, before continuing along the Southern Scenic Route. This coastal journey immerses us in the rural charm of one of New Zealand's most pristine areas, where golden beaches, native forests, and rugged cliffs abound. Keep an eye out for playful dolphins and sea lions basking along the shorelines.

During our time in the region, stops will include:

- The largest town in the Catlins, **Owaka**
- **Kaka Point** – a charming seaside village
- A short walk-through mature beech forest, to the three-tiered **Purakaunui Falls** - a true icon of the Catlins, this is one of New Zealand's most photographed waterfalls, gracing many calendars, postcards and book covers.
- **Tautuku Bay** – an easy stroll to a pristine white sand beach with sweeping views
- At **Curio Bay** see one of the world's most extensive and least disturbed examples of a Jurassic fossilised forest. The tree fossils you see here, similar to Kauri and Matai, are approximately 170 million years old. The forest was alive when New Zealand was part of Gondwanaland.
- Visit **Curio Scape** for the interactive **Gateway Experience** – learn about the region's ancient geological beginnings, the forces of nature; how people have transformed life on the coast many times and how the area has experienced great riches, great loss and regrowth.
- **Slope Point** – the most southerly point on the South Island of New Zealand. On a fine day, there are good views of Stewart Island/Rakiura, Bluff and the Tiwai Point aluminium smelter.
- The seaside village of **Pounaweia**, an area popular with birdwatchers.

Some locations in The Catlins may be visited on different days. Other stops and walks may also be included. Most stops include a short walk.

Trip Highlights

- **Catlins Forest Park:** Including a visit to the picturesque **Kaka Point**, a gateway to the wild beauty of the Catlins.
- **The Catlins:** Explore breathtaking natural wonders with walks at **Purakaunui Falls**, **Tautuku Bay**, **Curio Bay**, and **Slope Point**, the southern most point of the South Island.
- **Stewart Island Adventure:** Enjoy **two nights on Stewart Island**, including a comprehensive **Discovery Tour** and visits to **Rakiura National Park**.
- **Curio Scape Interactive Gateway Experience:** Delve into the history and ecology of the Catlins with this immersive and educational visit.
- **E Hayes Motorworks Collection:** Witness an impressive array of historical and innovative engineering marvels.
- **Ulva Island Cruise:** Sail through **Paterson Inlet** to the renowned **Ulva Island**, a predator-free wildlife sanctuary brimming with native birdlife.
- **Southern Scenic Route:** Experience stunning landscapes en route to **Te Anau**, the charming gateway to Fiordland.
- **Fiordland National Park:** Explore one of New Zealand's most dramatic natural landscapes.
- **Doubtful Sound Cruise:** Embark on a full-day guided journey including a cruise on the pristine, untouched waters of Doubtful Sound.
- **Queenstown Sightseeing:** Discover the "Adventure Capital of the World," including a visit to the charming gold-mining town of **Arrowtown**.

WED 8 The Catlins – Invercargill

Today, we conclude our exploration of the Catlins region, soaking in its final breathtaking landscapes before journeying south to **Invercargill**, New Zealand's southernmost city.

On arrival, we visit the impressive **Bill Richardson Transport World**, a world-class attraction featuring over 300 trucks and classic vehicles, more than 150 vintage petrol bowlers, and extensive motoring memorabilia spread across 15,000 square metres.

Next, we explore the **E Hayes Motor Works Collection**, home to Burt Munro's legendary **World's Fastest Indian Scout**. This renowned collection includes over 100 classic, vintage, and modern motorcycles, automobiles, and engines, along with working examples of early machinery and pumps. These fascinating exhibits showcase Invercargill's rich motoring heritage and provide a unique glimpse into the world of vintage and classic vehicles.

Tonight, we dine together, reflecting on an incredible day of discovery and shared experiences.

Note: Prepare for an overnight stay on Stewart Island by packing a light overnight bag; the remainder of your luggage will be securely locked aboard the coach.

THU 9 Invercargill – Stewart Island

This morning, we travel to Bluff, where we board a catamaran for the scenic journey across Foveaux Strait to Stewart Island. On arrival, it's a short walk to our accommodation, followed by a visit to the Department of Conservation (DOC) headquarters in Oban to learn more about the island's unique environment and history.

After time to refresh we join a local guide for a Village and Bays Tour, sharing this experience with other travelers. This informative tour offers fascinating insights into Stewart Island's rich community life, Māori legends, and unspoiled natural beauty. Along the way, enjoy plenty of opportunities for photos and short walks. Highlights include:

- The Rakiura National Park entrance at Lee Bay
- Stunning views of Halfmoon Bay and Horseshoe Bay
- Breathtaking vistas of Paterson Inlet from Observation Rock

The remainder of the day is free for you to explore the island at your own pace. Tonight, we come together for a group dinner at the iconic South Sea Hotel, enjoying the relaxed atmosphere and reflecting on the day's discoveries.

FRI 10 Exploring Stewart Island by Land & Sea

This morning, enjoy a leisurely start with time to explore Oban Village at your own pace. Wander its charming streets, browse local shops, or simply soak in the tranquil island atmosphere.

At midday, we board a modern catamaran for a scenic cruise of Paterson Inlet, offering a stunning perspective of Stewart Island from the water. As we glide past hidden coves and unspoiled beaches, our skipper and nature guide provide fascinating commentary on the island's early Māori history, European settlement, and whaling heritage. Keep an eye out for wildlife, including fur seals, penguins, and other seabirds, as sightings are common. A picnic lunch will be provided for us today.

A highlight of the day is a visit to Ulva Island, a predator-free wildlife sanctuary renowned for its rare and endangered native bird species and diverse plant life. We disembark for a 45-minute guided walk with a nature specialist through lush podocarp forest, where you'll encounter native flora and fauna, including the curious weka often seen along the beach.

Afterward, relax on board as we complete the cruise around Paterson Inlet, taking in the coastal beauty before returning to Oban. The remainder of the afternoon is yours to enjoy at leisure.

Tonight, we gather for dinner at the iconic South Sea Hotel, sharing stories of the day's adventures.

SAT 11 Stewart Island – Te Anau

We start the day with an early morning ferry crossing from Stewart Island back to Bluff, where we rejoin our coach. Our first stop is Stirling Point, the southernmost point of mainland New Zealand and the starting (or ending) point of State Highway 1. Stirling Point is famous for its iconic signpost, displaying the distances to major cities around the world—a perfect spot for photos. From Bluff, we travel west through Invercargill to join the Southern Scenic Route, celebrated as one of the world's most remarkable undiscovered drives.

Our journey then heads inland again before meeting the coast for a stop at the seaside town of Riverton. Fondly named "Riviera of the South", Riverton is nestled at the western end of Oreti Beach, set in a picturesque location that spans Jacob's River Estuary. Riverton's surrounding beaches and estuary are natural playgrounds for local residents. Nearly 200 years old, Riverton is the oldest Pākehā settlement in Southland and one of the earliest European settlements in New Zealand. The rocky coastline, great sandy beach and surf attract people to nearby Colac Bay.

Leaving the coast behind we head north to Tuatapere, a town steeped in sawmilling history and home to a fascinating logging museum and quaint relics of its pioneering past. From here we continue inland on our scenic drive through to Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park and our home for the next two nights.

Dinner tonight will be enjoyed at our accommodation, rounding off a day filled with remarkable scenery and rich history.





SUN 12 Doubtful Sound Excursion

(B) (L) (D)

This morning, we take a short drive to **Pearl Harbour** at **Lake Manapouri**. Here we board a comfortable launch and take a scenic cruise across the lake's crystal-clear waters to **West Arm** before boarding our coach and crossing the alpine route of **Wilmot Pass**, passing through some of Fiordland's lush and most dense rainforest. Here we catch our first glimpse of **Doubtful Sound** before descending to **Deep Cove**.

Our **Doubtful Sound cruise** takes us through the tranquil waterways of this remote and majestic fiord. Surrounded by alpine scenery, cascading waterfalls, dense rainforest, and rugged mountains, the journey offers plenty of opportunities to spot wildlife, including **bottlenose dolphins**, **fur seals**, and, in season, the rare **Fiordland crested penguin**. Throughout the cruise, knowledgeable nature guides provide fascinating insights into the region's natural history and wildlife. A **picnic lunch** is served onboard, allowing us to relax and soak in the serene beauty.

At the end of the cruise, we retrace our journey across **Wilmot Pass** and **Lake Manapouri** to **Pearl Harbour**, where we rejoin our coach and return to **Te Anau** for the evening.

Dinner tonight will be enjoyed together at the hotel restaurant, offering the perfect end to a remarkable day in Fiordland.



MON 13 Te Anau - Queenstown

(B) (D)

This morning, we depart **Te Anau**, traveling through an area dotted with deer farms, a hallmark of the region, before crossing the rolling farmland of Southland. The terrain transitions to a more rugged landscape, with tussock grasslands dominating the scenery. Passing through **Kingston**, at the southern tip of **Lake Wakatipu**, we wind along the spectacular **Devil's Staircase**, offering dramatic views of the lake and surrounding mountains, before arriving in the stunning resort town of **Queenstown**.

Nestled among majestic mountains and set on the shores of crystal-clear **Lake Wakatipu**, Queenstown combines natural beauty with a vibrant energy. Renowned as New Zealand's adventure capital, it offers endless opportunities for exploration and excitement. But Queenstown is just as celebrated for its indulgent side, with world-class wine, cuisine, and rich gold-mining history.

Upon arrival, we take a **sightseeing tour**, starting with a visit to historic **Arrowtown**. Nestled below rugged peaks, this charming town is steeped in history. Stroll down **Buckingham Street**, lined with heritage buildings that now house boutiques, galleries, cafés, and restaurants. You may also wish to visit the **Arrowtown Chinese Settlement**, a well-preserved tribute to the Chinese goldminers and businesspeople who contributed to the region's history.

On our way to Queenstown, we stop to admire the historic **Edith Cavell Bridge**, which spans the dramatic canyon of the **Shotover River**. Afterward, we take a drive through Queenstown before arriving at our hotel.

This evening, we gather for a **farewell dinner** at a local restaurant, celebrating the incredible journey we've shared and reflecting on the unforgettable experiences of our tour.

TUE 14 Queenstown - Home

(B) (D)

Our time exploring the southern regions of New Zealand comes to a close today as we transfer to Queenstown Airport for our flight home.

CATLINS, STEWART ISLAND & DOUBTFUL SOUND



8 DAY • FULLY HOSTED SMALL GROUP TOUR

DEPARTS 20 October to 9 November 2025

- Fully Hosted within New Zealand with a YOURTours Host
- Domestic flights with Air New Zealand Wellington to Dunedin and Queenstown to Wellington included in the price. *(Flights from other ports on application)*
- Home Pick Up (T & C's apply)
- Quality accommodation & Air-Conditioned Coach
- Domestic flights with Air New Zealand Wellington to Dunedin and Queenstown to Wellington included in the price. *(Flights from other ports on application)*
- All excursions and activities as per itinerary
- All Meals as per itinerary
- Departs 7th October 2025
- Price from \$5,750 pp twin share or double room
- Single Price from \$6,995 pp

You are invited to join us on our fully hosted small group tour. As this is one of our Sapphire tours the maximum number of guests is 18.

Based on the beautiful Kapiti Coast with our guests joining us from all corners of New Zealand, we believe you will be pleasantly surprised by just how much we include in our tour price.

You can be reassured that your tour host will always be one of our friendly well-experienced YOURTours Hosts, ensuring everything is taken care of from start to finish, allowing you to relax and enjoy your tour.

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