

CENTRAL OTAGO & CATLINS

with a touch of Mount Cook

(Optional Stewart Island Extension available)

HOME – OAMARU – MT COOK – CROMWELL – DUNEDIN – GORE – CATLINS –
QUEENSTOWN – HOME

07 October 2022



11 Day Fully Hosted Tour



OTAGO & CATLINS with Mt Cook

07 October to 16 October 2022

FRI 07 Home – Christchurch – Oamaru (D)

On arrival at Christchurch Airport you will be met by your tour host and transferred to your coach, before travelling south across the fertile patchwork Canterbury Plains crossing braided rivers and passing through the rural service towns of Ashburton and Timaru, continuing along the eastern coastline to the town of **Oamaru** our stop for the evening.

Oamaru, the largest town of the Waitaki District, has a rich history and proud heritage, enriched by the passionate and perhaps quirky locals. Here we explore this heritage in the Victorian Precinct, where you will find, shops, galleries, and traditional crafts within some of the Southern Hemispheres most complete Victorian streetscapes and 19th century architecture.

This evening we visit the **Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony**, to view the penguins in their natural habitat, as they return home from sea in the evening. Making our way out to the grandstand before entering into the breeding colony on a boardwalk and to walk among their nesting burrows. In our Premium Viewing grandstand, we will view the penguins from only a few metres away. Later this evening we dine at a local restaurant for our Welcome Dinner.

SAT 08 Oamaru – Mt Cook (B D)

This morning we head a little further south to Moeraki and the famous boulders; mysteriously spherical stones scattered across a beach. Each boulder weighs several tonnes and is up to two metres high, with some being formed over 65 million years ago.

Retracing our steps, we head back north before turning inland through the Waitaki Valley. A region of scenic contrast and natural beauty, the Waitaki region combines wild, windswept coastline with green plains, bare brown hills, and towering mountains. Following the Waitaki River passing the major hydro dams of Aviemore and Benmore a major source of power for New Zealand, then after passing through the junction town of Omarama we continue north through the tussock covered MacKenzie Country to Lake Pukaki a classic glacial formed lake. Travelling along the shores of the lake into the Southern Alps and Mt Cook National Park we reach our home for the night at the **Hermitage Mt Cook**.

Aoraki – Mt Cook is New Zealand's tallest of many spectacular mountains in Mt Cook National Park deep in the heart of the Southern Alps. Aoraki/Mt Cook Village is situated near the spectacular turquoise waters of Lake Pukaki and provides a comfortable base for alpine activities. On every side, the Southern Alps scrape the sky. The Park attracts visitors who want to walk, hike or climb in the Southern Alps – or those that just want to soak in the scenic splendor of the area.



Trip Highlights

- OAMARU BLUE PENGUIN COLONY
- MOERAKI BOULDERS
- MOUNT COOK/LAKE PUKAKI
- MOUNT COOK SCENIC FLIGHT *(Optional)*
- TOUR OF 'OLD CROMWELL TOWN'
- 4WD ADVENTURE THROUGH WEST WANAKA STATION
- HISTORIC CARDRONA HOTEL AFTERNOON TEA
- CROWN RANGE ROAD JOURNEY
- CLUTHA RIVER HERITAGE CRUISE
- EXPLORE CENTRAL OTAGO INCLUDING WANAKA, CLYDE & ALEXANDRA, BLUE LAKE
- CURLING IN MONIOTOTO
- THE OCTOGAN & BALDWIN STREET, DUNEDIN
- GUIDED TOUR OF OLVESTON HOUSE, DUNEDIN
- VISIT HISTORIC LAWRENCE
- CROYDON AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE, GORE
- CATLINS FOREST PARK *(including Kaka Point & Cathedral Caves)*
- VISIT TO CURIO SCAPE INTERACTIVE GATEWAY EXPERIENCE, THE CATLINS
- CATLINS *(including walks at Purakaunui Falls, Tautuku Bay, Curio Bay and Slope Point)*

SUN 09 Mt Cook – Cromwell (B D)

This morning we have a leisurely start at Mt Cook with time for a scenic flight *(optional)*, before retracing our journey alongside glacial Lake Pukaki, passing through the small towns of **Twizel** and **Omarama** and crossing the barren terrain of the **Lindis Pass** which links the **Mackenzie Basin** with Central Otago. This dramatic alpine area of tall, tussock-covered mountains is beautiful in every season and crosses a saddle at an altitude of 971 metres above sea level.

Passing through **Tarras Village**, where the vast open space includes a superb vista taking in the **Dunstan Range** to the east and the Pisa Range to the west, we will have plenty of stops along the way. To the south is a great view looking down the Cromwell Valley, north east to the St Bathans Range and north west to the mountains and Matukituki Valley.

Continuing onto **Cromwell**, our base for the next three nights, located on the shores of **Lake Dunstan**. Cromwell has the appearance of a modern town, however its history stretches back to the gold rush days of the 1800s. This history is best experienced in '**Old Cromwell Town**', a mix of original and reconstructed buildings from the old main street of the 1860's gold town of Cromwell and we take time this afternoon to have a wander through this heritage area and along the lakeshore.

This evening we dine at **The Stoker Room Bistro** and Bar. Utilising retired French oak Pinot Noir wine barrels, they steam, bake, grill and smoke their delicious array of regional foods on the spot. We enjoy the signature dish - The Signature Stoker Banquet - a chef's selection of five tasting dishes, matched with five of their award-winning wines.

Otago & Catlins with Mt Cook

Join us over 11 delightful days, exploring everything Central Otago, with a little bit of McKenzie Country & Mt Cook thrown in for good measure, before we travel further south to discover the unspoilt Catlins.

From Oamaru to Mount Cook, from Cromwell to Dunedin, with a touch of everything in between, from remote sites, inland river basins and deep river gorges, fascinating history, wonderful wildlife, incredible scenery and rocky outcrops, Central Otago and beyond is sure to delight.

We try a spot of Curling in Maniototo before discovering the Scottish heritage of Dunedin and the charming historic town of Lawrence with an overnight stay in Gore, New Zealand's official home of Country Music and the fabulous Croydon Aviation Heritage Centre. All of this before venturing south to discover a world of native forests fringed by high cliffs, pristine sandy beaches, sparkling bays, and dramatic cascading waterfalls, along with penguins, fur seals, sea lions and native birds in the truly remarkable Catlins. Our final leg of this majestic journey then takes us northwest, travelling through Southlands dramatic fertile farmlands and onwards to Otago's "jewel in the crown" Queenstown.

MON 10 Central Otago – Wanaka (B L D)

Today we travel along the base of the Pisa Range and through the small settlements of Queensberry and Luggate to Wanaka on the shores of **Lake Wanaka**.

We take a short wander along the lakeshore to see **#ThatWanakaTree** – reputedly one of the most photographed trees in New Zealand!

Here in Wanaka we meet our local guide and take an exciting 4WD adventure that encompasses Wanaka's finest lakeside scenery plus an exciting (and sometimes rugged!) **4WD journey through West Wanaka Station** – a real, alpine mountain farm. Our guided scenic safari adventure gives us the rare opportunity to visit a working New Zealand high country farm. We travel by 4WD and get to take in some of the most jaw-dropping scenery Lake Wanaka has to offer and enjoy an easy nature walk. West Wanaka Station is a privately owned family farm and with exclusive access, we will encounter alpaca, red deer, high country cattle, sheep, and horses. We also enjoy magnificent panoramic views across Lake Wanaka to snow-capped mountains and see locations made famous by the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit movies. Here we take time to relax with a cup of coffee or a good cup-of-tea, along with delicious home baking at their exclusive 'alpine café' high in the hills.

Upon our return to Wanaka we will make a stop for a light afternoon tea at the historic Cardrona Hotel situated at the start of the spectacular Crown Range. Certainly, world-famous in New Zealand and perhaps the most photographed building in NZ, the **Cardrona Hotel** is one of the New Zealand's oldest and most iconic hotels.

From here we head over the Crown Range, NZ's highest main road and famous for its switchbacks and spectacular views towards Queenstown before dropping down into the Gibbston Valley and heading through the rugged **Kawarau Gorge** back to Cromwell.

After our day out, we dine together this evening in our hotel.



TUE 11 Central Otago (B D)

Today we explore the region around Clyde and **Alexandra**, including a stop at the lookout over the **Clyde Dam**, the largest concrete gravity dam in New Zealand.

The town of Clyde is steeped in history and culture and would have been crammed with rowdy gold miners in the 1860s. Here we take some time to explore the perfectly preserved historic buildings precinct and take a potter around the boutique shops,

Alexandra is a gold mining town at its heart with its personality very much rooted farming and the outdoors. We have time here for a wander before our **Clutha River Heritage Cruise**, a journey back in time venturing through the spectacular scenery of the Roxburgh Gorge to the perfectly preserved gold mines (1860's) of Doctors Point and Butchers Point. Our cruise offers a unique opportunity to explore these isolated reaches of the mighty Clutha River and view some of New Zealand's best examples of European and Chinese Gold mining. Commencing with the discovery of gold in New Zealand, all the way through to gold mining during the depression, our skipper will bring to life tales of endeavour and hardship. We land and take a guided tour of the Doctors Point gold mine, before sitting back and relaxing as we enjoy a leisurely return trip to Alexandra, with plenty of opportunity to take in more on the stunning Central Otago scenery.

We dine this evening at our accommodation.



WED 12 Cromwell - Dunedin (B D)

Today we have an early start as we head deep into **Central Otago** visiting small towns and settlements along the way that are definitely 'off-the-beaten track'.

We made a quick diversion to St Bathans. This tiny town of about 10 permanent residents was once a place of riches as the Otago Gold Rush swept through this region in the mid-late-1800s. Once a boomtown and home to around 2000 miners, now some buildings from that era remain today and it is easy to imagine the town as it was during the gold rush. Here we view the iconic Vulcan Hotel built in 1882, a fine example of mud-brick construction – and reputedly haunted! Our next stop is the **Blue Lake**, created by extensive mining activity, the surrounding rocks give the water an astonishing blue colour which is offset by surrounding columns of white quartz tailings.

From **St Bathans**, we pass through the small communities of **Hills Creek**, **Idaburn** and **Wedderburn** before reaching Naseby often referred to as 'the jewel of the Maniototo'. One of New Zealand's unparalleled places, the **Maniototo** is a vast, soulful plain fringed by craggy, tussock-clad hills and sturdy mountain ranges.

Historically a gold mining centre, **Naseby** now showcases perfectly preserved Victorian shops and buildings and features New Zealand's only year-round curling rink – bowling on ice! Whilst here we take the opportunity at **Maniototo International Curling Rink**, to don non-slip shoes, receive some tuition then try our hand at this unique game – it's not a matter of muscle power, just skill, strategy and of course good sportsmanship!

Continuing on, we head south through the towns of **Kokonga** and **Middlemarch** before travelling towards the coast through **Outram** and **Mosgiel** and arriving in **Dunedin**.

Dunedin sits at the head of the magnificent **Otago Harbour**. Founded in 1848 by Scottish settlers, Dunedin was envisaged as the "Edinburgh of the South" and the city still wears its Scottish heritage with pride. She is a city of gracious dignity and charm, characterised by many handsome stone buildings mixed with a quirky city vibe influenced by the local university students.



THU 13 Dunedin – Gore (B D)

This morning we spend time exploring Dunedin firstly with visits to the **Octagon** and then **Baldwin Street** – the world’s steepest street.

We then take a guided tour at historic **Oveston House**, learning about this home, which was completed in 1907 and was a masterpiece of modernity in the Edwardian era, featuring central heating, an in-house telephone system and even heated towel rails. Oveston has been carefully preserved and now offers a glimpse into the lifestyle of a privileged family in the early 1900’s and the rich historical heritage of Dunedin.

Leaving Dunedin behind we then head towards **Lawrence**, where during the gold rush and sawmilling eras the whole district rattled with the sound of diggers and wagon trains as trade routes were established through the plains and across the Clutha River.

The town of Lawrence was once the centre of one of The World’s largest gold rushes, being the first gold rush town in Otago, nowadays you will find the main street lined with boutique shops, quirky cafes and a wonderfully old fashioned museum.

We then continue our journey today through Beaumont before turning at Raes Junction and heading south to **Gore**, one of Southland’s main hub towns.

Dinner tonight is at our accommodation.

FRI 14 Gore – Catlins (B D)

This morning we head west briefly to visit the **Croydon Aviation Heritage Centre**, housing mostly aircraft from the 1920s and 30s, including an extensive collection of de Havilland aircraft. This nationally significant museum is dedicated to preserving and celebrating New Zealand’s civil aviation heritage – both the stories of pioneer aviators and their equally colourful machines. It is unique in that nearly all of the aircraft on display actually fly.

From here we turn west and follow State Highway 1 across to **Balclutha** then south to **Kaka Point** and into **Catlins Forest Park**. Catlins Forest Park is an area where native forest meets the water’s edge; a place of hidden waterfalls and river valleys; of rocky coastal bays, inlets and estuaries where the great Pacific Ocean bites into the land. This wooded, wild coastal corner is the most unsung of South Island regions.

SAT 15 Catlins (B D)

Today we explore **The Catlins** at a leisurely pace.

During our time in the region, our stops will include:

- 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 walk down to a magnificent white sand beach
- 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.

Other stops and walks may also be included.

We dine together again this evening at our accommodation.

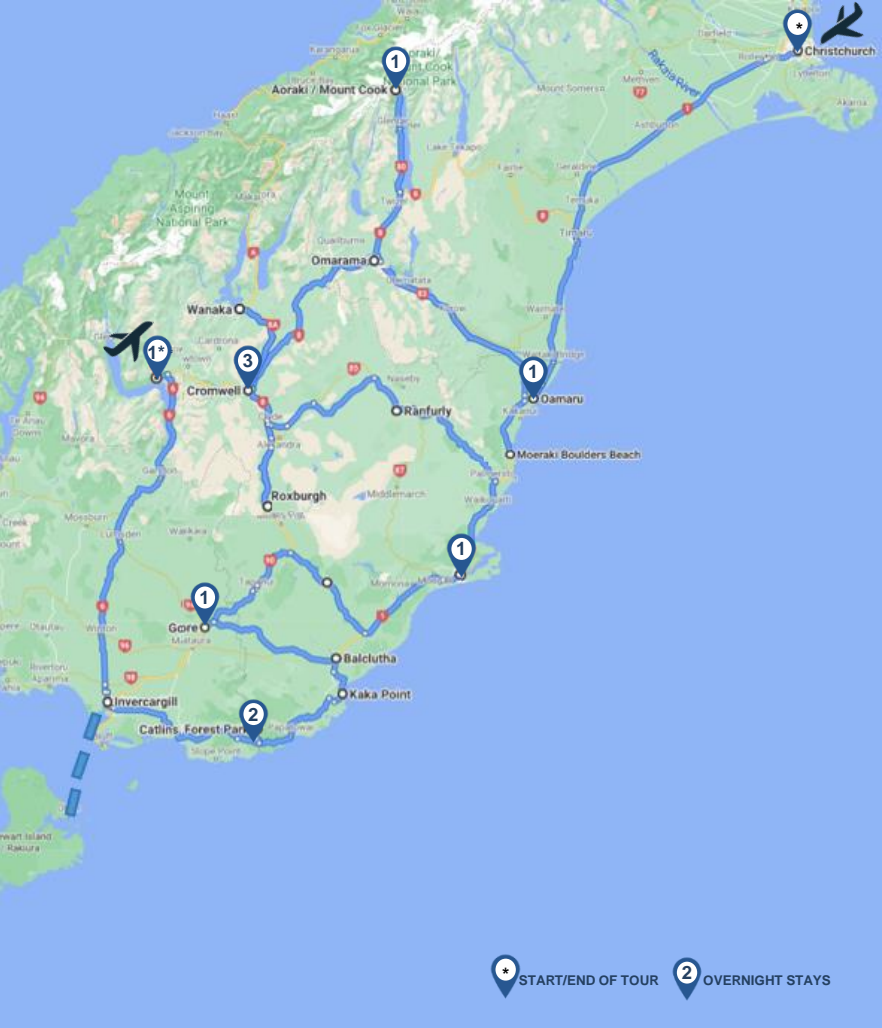
SUN 16 Catlins – Queenstown (B D)

Today we leave The Catlins as we head north through the small towns of Lumsden and Kingston before skirting the shores of Lake Wakatipu and ascending the Devils Staircase before reaching Queenstown.

Our farewell dinner tonight is at a local restaurant.

THU 31 Queenstown – Home (B)

This morning you will be transferred to Queenstown Airport for your return flight home. Perhaps taking this time to regale stories and collect contact details of newly found friends.



OTAGO & CATLINS with Mt Cook

11 Day Tour Includes

Fully hosted by a YOURTours Host

Quality Accommodation & Coach

Sightseeing and Entrance Fees as indicated
on itinerary

Meals as per itinerary

Domestic Flights and Home Pick-up**

Departs 07 October 2022

Price \$6,350 pp twin share

Price for single room \$7,745

**Optional tour extension to Stewart Island
available** (tour extension is not hosted, however guided
tours on Stewart Island are included) **price available
upon request**

Terms & Conditions Apply **

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