

NEW ZEALAND'S GLACIER HIGHWAY

OPTION ONE: 7 NIGHTS



Duration
8 Days



Distance
952 km

Discover breathtaking scenes of the south all the way from the new-age Christchurch to tranquil and trendy Queenstown.



NAU MAI, HAERE MAI

WELCOME TO THE SOUTH



DAY 1

WELCOME TO ŌTAUTAHI CHRISTCHURCH

Head straight into town, walk in and around some of Christchurch's most beautiful buildings like the historic **Art Centre** and impressive **Christchurch Art Gallery** (the Design Store tucked inside is filled with treasures from near and far).

If you're keen for a cost-effective guided tour, get aboard the **Christchurch Tram**. Hop on and hop off all day while the drivers tell you all about Ōtautahi.

You must jump off at **Riverside Market**. Filled to the brim with top-tier eateries like **Empire Chicken** and **Ramen Ria**. If you fancy al fresco, DIY your own antipasto board from the **Mediterranean Food Co** and then park up at the river and enjoy!

Need to burn off some energy? **Holey Moley Golf Club** is a hit with kids of all ages. This fun zone features a mini golf course (you can get a

photo on The Simpsons' couch), bowling lanes, arcade games and a bar. Make sure you book activities in advance – it's one of Christchurch's hottest hot spots.

Head to **The Terrace** for some afternoon cocktails at **Kong** or **Amazonita** followed by a bowl of nachos as big as your head from **Chiwahwah**.

DAY 2

EXPLORE WHAT ŌTAUTAHI HAS TO OFFER

Start the day with a stroll around the **Botanic Gardens**. Grab your caffeine fix from **Ilex Café** and see if you can find the tree that locals hide inside (hint it's by the Canterbury Museum).

Christchurch's breakfast of champions is an American-style diner, **Drexels** – fluffy pancakes, crispy hashbrowns and bottomless coffee...need we say more?

Once you're fuelled, whip up to **Christchurch Adventure Park** for

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TOP TIP

Pack a picnic lunch and stop along the way. It's a great way to experience New Zealand.



views over the city. The park has the longest zipline in New Zealand, mountain biking, walks (for both the fearless and the faint-hearted) and a whole lot of pure South Island air – it doesn't get much better than that. For the kids, hit **Willowbank Wildlife Reserve** and get up close and personal with native and exotic animals. Their award-winning Kiwhouse can have you less than a metre away from the iconic flightless bird.

A meal at **5th Street** is among the South Island's best dining experiences – order the chargrilled ribeye, you won't regret it.

DAY 3

CHRISTCHURCH TO HANMER SPRINGS (133KM)

Skip brekky in Christchurch and hit the road, **Little Vintage** in Amberley is calling your name.

Amberley also has a few boutiques well worth a look, **Ruby Six**, **Out of the Bleu** and **Me, Now You Clothing**.

Just down the road, it's wine time! You've arrived in **North Canterbury Wine Region** (aka the coolest little wine region in the country).

With limestone soils and a unique microclimate, the 90+ wineries in this area are famed for their award-winning Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling.

The menu at organic **Greystone** winery is sensational (you must try their Pétillant Natural) while family-owned **Pegasus Bay** and **Black Estate**

are also great. If you ask nicely, the staff at Peg Bay may show you where you can feed their friendly eels.

The next stop is hot pool heaven, the alpine wonderland of **Hanmer Springs** will envelop you with tranquillity – so much so you'll find it hard to leave.

Every drop of the Hanmer Springs' mineral-filled thermal waters has been warmed by heat from the earth's core – a natural process that takes 173 years.

Indulge in a long soak, and if you really want to relax book a treatment at **The Spa** (their 90 minute Aroma Bliss massage is divine). The kids are set with some of the largest hydrosides in New Zealand – Hanmer Springs is a place for everyone.

Make dinner easy so you don't disturb your zen, **Boulder Burgers** and curry at **Spice Village** are mouth-watering options or the pizzas at **Saints Café** are always great.

DAY 4

HANMER SPRINGS TO PUNAKAIKI (252KM)

Start the day off right – stroll up Conical Hill for 360-degree panoramic views of the village or head to Hanmer Heritage Forest for a **Forest Amble** among sculptures – including a friendly giant.

You can't go past **The Powerhouse Café** for breakfast or brunch and take some time to browse in the boutiques in the village's centre.

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Photo Credit: Barekiwi

As you travel to pretty **Punakaiki**, don't miss a tour of the **Reefton Distilling Company** (there's a reason Little Biddy gin is so popular).

Punakaiki is famous for its natural beauty that was 30 million years in the making. Time you walk around the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes for high tide so you see them at their best.

DAY 5

PUNAKAIKI TO HOKITIKA (83KM)

Wake up and smell the pancakes (see them again if you want to!) at **Pancake Rocks Café** which promises a mean pancake – quite appropriate really.

Want a keepsake you'll treasure forever? You can forge your own knife at **Barrytown Knifemaking** from red-hot steel with a native timber handle and lunch is provided (even better!).

As you travel to Hokitika, beer lovers will want to stop and enjoy the 45-minute tour of the **Monteiths Brewery Company** in Greymouth – it's a great spot for lunch too.

Hokitika is the coolest little town on the West Coast. Snap a selfie in front of its iconic driftwood sign on the beach – it's a great pic to send to the whānau (family) back home.

The **Pioneer Hotel** boasts a classic kiwi pub feed or, if you are looking for views of Hokitika, look no further than **Ocean View Restaurant & Bar**.

A natural marvel you can't miss is the **Glow Worm Dell** just a short wander from Hokitika town. Bring a flashlight

but turn it off once you get to the glow worm colonies so you can see the bugs at their brightest.

DAY 6

HOKITIKA TO FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER (134KM)

Start the morning with a glorious sandwich from the **Hokitika Sandwich Company**. Regarded as some of the best grub in Aotearoa, we promise these are worth the wait.

Head 30 minutes out of town to **Hokitika Gorge** and take the an easy one-hour walk through lush native bush to a rocky gorge with iridescent turquoise blue water. It's a real sight.

It's onwards towards the glaciers through native forests and stunning mountain views. If you feel like it, take a short detour to **Ōkārito** ... it's a coastal hideaway and hidden gem.

Half an hour south and you arrive in Glacier Country.

Franz Josef and **Fox Glaciers** are the only glaciers in the world to span all the way to sea level, with Fox Glacier stretching 13 kilometres in length.

There are so many ways to see the glaciers in all their glory, from **simple walks** to **Glacier Heli Hiking**. Whatever way you choose to see the glaciers doesn't matter, it's only important that you do.

Warm up with a hearty meal at **Alice May** or perhaps you fancy a bit of pool and pizza at the **Blue Ice Restaurant** down the road.



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DAY 7

FRANZ JOSEF TO QUEENSTOWN (350KM)

With a long day of travel ahead, fuel up at **SnakeBite Brewery**. On offer is a mix of kiwi classics and Asian-inspired breakfasts, the big brekky is not one to look past.

The drive further south is up to you. If you don't mind a few stops along the way, **Fantail Falls** and the **Blue Pools** are known to be one of the best sights of the south – if it's hot enough to swim, bring your togs and take a refreshing dip in the ice-cold water.

Make your next pit stop **Wānaka**, there is plenty to do in this adventure-packed town. We are talking **sky diving**, the world's **highest waterfall climb** and if you are making the trip in winter, **skiing and snowboarding galore**. If a bite to eat is all you're after, **Francesca's Italian Kitchen** will have you drooling with their beef cheek gnocchi or try Wānaka's bustling **food truck scene**. Don't forget a stop for a bevvie at the iconic **Cardrona Hotel**.

Continue on to your final destination, **Queenstown**! A pocket rocket of a little town, you have adventure, entertainment and world-class dining at your fingertips.

One of the best ways to see the surrounding landscape is a cruise across Lake Whakatipu on the iconic century-old coal-fired steamship, the **TSS Earnslaw**.

No matter what night of the week it is in Queenstown, the town will be abuzz. For drinks, all you need to know is the three B's – **Bardeaux, The Bunker** and **Barmuda**.

Dinner is the dealer's choice, brave the lines of the infamous **Fergburger** (it's absolutely worth it), maybe an upmarket experience at **Rātā** or perhaps Asian fusion with a whole lot of flare at **Blue Kanu**.

Come desert, head to **Patagonia Ice Cream** – you can't go wrong with their award-winning banana split.

DAY 8

QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown has some absolute bangin' brekky spots, including **Bespoke Kitchen, Vudu Café & Larder** and **Yonder**.

Now your next big decision is wine and dine or action and adventure? Maybe a bit of both? After all, Queenstown is the adventure capital of the world.

As well as jetboating, you can **bungee jump, tandem skydive, river surf and canyon swing**. Can't decide how to get your blood pumping? **AJ Hackett** have some ka mau te wehi (awesome) combo adventure deals.

The **Gondola and Luge** are perfect ways to inject a small dose of adventure into your day if you have kids in tow or don't quite have the stomach for a bungee.

If you are a dedicated winer and diner, book a **Queenstown Wine Trail Tour** and be guided through some unforgettable wineries, enjoy a perfectly paired lunch and taste why Central Otago is renowned for wine.

Prefer to go it alone? **Gibbston Valley Winery, Mt Rosa** and **Kinross** should all be on your list.