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From
€8,159 EUR

Single Room
€9,453 EUR

Twin Room
€8,159 EUR

Prices valid until
30th December 2025

17 days
Duration

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Small group tour of New Zealand’s South Island

Oct 20 2025 to Nov 05 2025

Small Group Tour of New Zealand’s South island

Odysseytraveller is pleased to introduce our new small group tour of New Zealand, focusing on the beautiful South Island. Our tour is for up to 15 people, typically mature and senior travellers joining as a couple or as solo traveller. This program will guide travellers through the history, Maori culture, and landscapes of the South Island of New Zealand including the World heirtage Fiordland national park and Milford sound. Our itinerary gets off the beaten track, following the east coast of the

South Island through to the West coast, returning to Christchurch.

The arrival of Europeans – mostly British settlers – in New Zealand set in motion a startling and ultimately largely successful co-existence with the Maori people, that will be the focus of this small group South Island tour of New Zealand.

New Zealand was initially not of interest to colonial powers as there was no real mineral deposit wealth in the country. So the first few decades were tough for immigrants with low numbers dealing with a high proportion of mostly friendly but rather fierce and competent locals. Colonists were appealing to younger sons back in the British Isles to come and make their fortune in the South Pacific and making pastoral leases attractive to those with some money but not lots of it. The deal was you had to put a certain proportion of sheep onto a bit of land to gain a pastoral lease. This was just gathering pace in the late 1850s in New Zealand. Then there was a sniff of gold in the air, with the first major rush announced in Lawrence in 1861. The combination of available meat plus an immediate and large market worked together to kickstart the economic growth of New Zealand. Wool to England was a further bonus. The advent of electrification in 1882 then opened up meat exports to the UK which resulted in a healthy colony until the EEC appeared on the scene in the 1970s.

This tour focuses on that initial period in the bottom of the South Island. There was a flow of mining immigrants at the time which started in Europe, went to the US looking for gold (San Francisco 49ers), moved on to Victoria in the 1850s, and then onto New Zealand in the 1860s. Central Otago had very few trees at the time and the ones we admire today reflect that flow, with Redwoods from the California coast and gum trees from Australia.

On our small group tour of New Zealand:

New Zealand (Maori: *Aotearoa*) is an island country with a total land area of 268,000 square kilometres (103,500 sq mi) in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It is one of the most southernmost countries in the world, about 2,000 kilometres (1,200 mi) east of Australia. The country has two main islands: the North Island (Te Ika-a-M?ui) and the South Island (Te

Waipounamu), and about 600 smaller islands.

Our 17-day small group tour of New Zealand's South Island is the best guided tour of the island's west and east coast, designed especially for mature and senior travellers.

This small group tour will be accompanied by an Odyssey tour guide and are joined by expert local guides who will impart their knowledge about the places we will visit. Odyssey conducts educational tours designed for small groups of mature and senior travellers, focusing on history, culture, wildlife and other areas of particular interest where the trip is taking place. A small group tour is typically between 6 to 12 people. The cost of an Odyssey Traveller guided tour is inclusive of all entrances (unless otherwise indicated), tipping, and majority of the meals throughout the trip.

This particular tour has periods of free time built into the itinerary, allowing you explore each destination at your own pace, and choose from a variety of available activities. This way, we make sure that there is something to enjoy for every kind of traveller.

Articles about New Zealand published by Odyssey Traveller:

- Questions about New Zealand
- Foundations for democracy in New Zealand: 900s – 1945
- Definitive Guide to Auckland, New Zealand

For all the articles Odyssey Traveller has published for mature aged and senior travellers, click through on this link.

External articles to assist you on your visit to New Zealand:

- Visit New Zealand

- One day in Wellington: City walking tour itinerary
- Te Ara: Auckland
- New York Times: 36 Hours in Auckland

Highlights

1. Enjoy a scenic drive through the West Coast of the South island, incl Milford Sound
2. Meet and learn from Maori greenstone carvers about the heritage and history of Maori
3. Spend time immersed in the Gold rush city of Dunedin
4. Learn about leading New Zealand wines particularly the Pinot Noir in Otago
5. Visit and learn about the history of the Victorian era colonial gold and then sheep rush in the South island

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Christchurch

Overview:

We meet in Christchurch, introducing ourselves and enjoying a welcome dinner with our tour leader.

Accommodation:

Christchurch TBA

Day 2

Locations: Christchurch

Overview:

Today we head out to explore Christchurch and Sumner. Learning about the history of the this city and its bluestones.

Accommodation:

Christchurch . TBC

Day 3

Locations: Hokitika via Arthurs pass

Overview:

Today the group travels across to the West coast via Arthurs pass, we may take the train while our coach travels separately. History and the settlement of the Canterbury plains is close to hand.

Group Dinner.

Accommodation:

Cowboy Paradise or similar

Day 4

Locations: Hokitika

Overview:

Today we spend the day with Maori greenstone maters carver and gold prospector Bevan Climo, understanding those early years, early interaction with Maori and gold mining. Bevan has also prospected for gold in Australia.

We'll also see some historic sights around Hokitika.

Accommodation:

Cowboy Paradise or similar

Day 5

Locations: Makarora

Overview:

We drive down the west coast of the island with a stop at Okarito Lagoon, an international port and at Whataroa where two tectonic plates are exposed. We cross the Haast Pass and will end our journey at Makarora Ranch.

Accommodation:

Makarora Ranch or similar.

Day 6

Locations: Makarora

Overview:

You may take the day as a quiet one to relax and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

Or alternatively this is a rare time when we offer this as pre- booked option for the day at an additional cost. Travellers can discover the back country from the air with a helicopter experience followed by a 3 hour hike on old trails, at the end we meet with a jetboat for our trip back to our accommodation.

Accommodation:

Makarora Ranch or similar.

Day 7

Locations: Queenstown

Overview:

Today we head down past Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea. We will stop for lunch somewhere very scenic owned by a local geologist who is full of stories before we continue through Wanaka and over the Crown Range Road – the original way Queenstown was first found. At Cardrona Tavern we take a short stop and the opportunity for a

refreshing drink or a pint.

Accommodation:

Queenstown

Day 8

Locations: Queenstown

Overview:

Today we explore the picturesque Queenstown in the morning and enjoy a wine tasting in the afternoon.

Day 9

Locations: Queenstown

Overview:

In the morning we make a short trip to visit Glenorchy at the end of the lake, and possibly a high country station. This afternoon we drive through to Te Anau.

Group evening meal.

Accommodation:

Te Anau TBA.

Day 10

Locations: Clyde

Overview:

In the morning we depart for Milford sound. The group joins the morning cruise up to 2 hours. After pausing for lunch, the group travel back around to stay in Arrowtown.

Group evening meal

Accommodation:

Arrowtown. TBA.

Day 11

Locations: Clyde

Overview:

We start the day with exploring Arrowtown and then visit St Bathans, Ophir and other gold mining sites in the area. Following, we drop into Lauderdale for lunch and a walk around a property which was a former high country station farmstead and a successful gold miner's residence. Later in the afternoon we return to Clyde.

Accommodation:

Lord Clyde or similar

Day 12

Locations: Dunedin

Overview:

Today our group heads south to see the original gold strike location at Lawrence, then continue around to Dunedin.

Accommodation:

Dunedin TBA

Day 13

Locations: Dunedin

Overview:

Our day is spent exploring Dunedin on a historic tour, including Port Chalmers where the first refrigeration ship left for the UK.

Accommodation:

Dunedin TBA

Day 14

Locations: Dunedin

Overview:

In the morning we visit Dunedin's museums followed by a free afternoon.

Accommodation:

Dunedin TBA

Day 15

Locations: Oamaru

Overview:

We continue our journey around the South Island today, we depart Dunedin and visit a private coastal farm which is home to our native yellow-eyed penguin and a decent population of seals and sea lions and onto Oamaru.

Accommodation:

Oamaru TBA

Day 16

Locations: Oamaru

Overview:

We will visit the old flour mill today, and see it back in operation especially for our small group. Our day continues with a visit to a historic farm and the historic port area of Oamaru.

Accommodation:

Oamaru TBA

Day 17

Locations: Christchurch

Overview:

After breakfast we depart and make our way to Christchurch, approximately 3h drive. We will visit nearby Akaroa and then return to Christchurch for our group farewell dinner.

Accommodation:

Christchurch TBA

Day 18

Locations: Christchurch

Overview:

Our tour concludes today after breakfast.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 17 nights accommodation.
- 17 breakfasts, 2 picnic lunch, 10 dinners.
- Transport by modern and comfortable coach.
- Entrances and sightseeing as specified.
- Services of a Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Detailed Preparatory Information.

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfares.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry.
- Helicopter and jet boat experience in the Southern Alps on Day 6.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.