



16 Day Road Tour Picton to Queenstown

Route: Picton – Nelson – St Arnaud – Murchison – Westport – Punakaiki – Hokitika – Hari Hari – Fox Glacier – Lake Moeraki – Makarora – Queenstown.

Day 1 Picton – Arrival Day

Our South Island Adventure starts at Picton, a picturesque fishing town at the northern tip of the South Island. It is a small town (pop.2,600) nestling under bushclad hills of Queen Charlotte Sound, named by Captain Cook in 1770.

We meet at 1 pm at our centrally located hotel. Your tour leader will hold a trip orientation meeting after lunch. Time will be set aside to fit you to your rental bike or unpack your own. We will then take a short cycle ride to Waikawa Bay and return to stretch our legs and try out the bikes.

Should you need assistance getting to Picton let us know as our guide drives up from Christchurch in the morning.

Meals: L/D

Cycling: Short warm up ride

Day 2 Picton to Nelson

We climb out of Picton along a delightful, twisty little road to Mahau Sound and the sleepy town of Havelock, from where the mail boat leaves. There is an attractive bush reserve at Pelorus Bridge. Through Rai Valley and over the climbs of Rai Saddle and Whangamoia Saddle we descend to the cathedral city of Nelson (pop 43,000), New Zealand's sunniest city with its neighbouring orchards and sandy beaches..

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling:

Easy: Picton to Nelson 110km

Moderate: Picton to Havelock 35km

Challenging: Picton to Pelorus Bridge 56km

Day 3 Nelson to St Arnaud

We cycle up the Motueka Valley, a delightful quiet road that passes apple orchards, berry farms and wineries before reaching open sheep country. Through Golden Downs forest we continue to climb to St Arnaud, set in beech forest by beautiful Lake Rotoiti

Meals: B/L/D

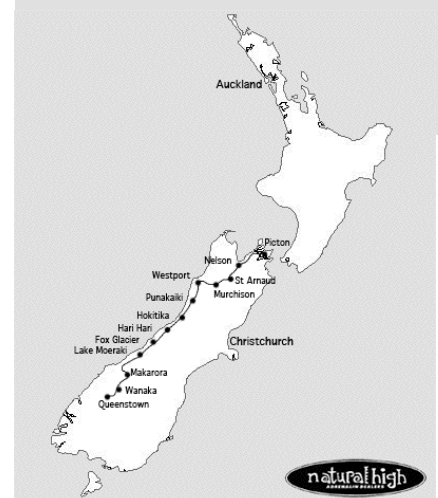
Cycling:

Tour includes:

- 9 nights accommodation in 3 – 4 Star hotels, motels or chalets.
- 9 Breakfasts (B)
- 6 Lunches (L)
- 7 Dinners (D)
- Tour guide
- Support vehicle & Luggage transfer
- DOC fees

Grade:

2 Moderate



Easy: Motueka to Kohatu 52km
Moderate: Motueka to Golden Downs 56km
Challenging: Motueka to St Arnaud 97km

Day 4 St Arnaud to Murchison

We take a short walk in the beech forest by the lake before starting the day's ride. From St Arnaud we follow the Buller River downhill through sheep farming country to Murchison. Once a goldmining town, it is best known for the devastating 1929 earthquake.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling: St Arnaud to Murchison 63km

Day 5 Murchison to Westport

There is the option (at extra cost) to raft down the impressive Buller Gorge to Lyell for lunch, or cycle the road which follows the river. We then continue down hill to the quaint old pub at Berlins, before heading for the sea and Westport. The sparsely populated West Coast is relatively isolated being cut off by the Southern Alps.

Before dinner at Cape Foulwind there will be an opportunity to see seals and cheeky black wekas (flightless native birds).

Meals: B

Cycling: Murchison to Westport 97km. Short option Murchison to Berlins 64km.

Day 6 Westport to Punakaiki

At Charleston you may wish to go caving or underwater rafting. The rolling coastal road offers many spectacular views and delightful sandy coves. At Punakaiki we explore the fascinating Pancake Rocks and watch the sea surge through blow holes.

Meals: B/D

Cycling: Westport to Punakaiki 57km. Short option Westport to Charleston 26km.

Day 7 Punakaiki

Options today include swimming with dolphins and seals, kayaking, walks in Paparoa National Park, or simply relaxing in the beautiful surroundings.

Meals: B

Cycling: No cycling today

Day 8 Punakaiki to Hokitika

We head south to Greymouth, the principal town of Westland. Named after Sir George Grey, New Zealand's first Governor, it was the site of Mawhera, the largest Maori settlement on the West Coast. From here it is a flat run to Hokitika, a town famous for its goldrush in the 1860's and more recently timber milling. The town has greenstone (jade) and glass blowing factories and now relies on tourism

Meals: B/D

Cycling: Punakaiki to Hokitika 84km. Short option Punakaiki to Greymouth 44km.

Day 9 Hokitika to Whataroa

Much of the ride today is through native bush. The Bushman's Centre at Lake Inanthe at Lake Inanthe is well worth a stop, as is beautiful Lake Inanthe, renowned for trout fishing. Harihari is a small logging town and has an excellent craft shop.

Shortly after leaving Harihari we tackle Mt Hercules – a far easier climb than the name suggests.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling: Hokitika to Whataroa 85.5km. Short option Hokitika to Lake Inanthe Tarvan 49km

Day 10 Whataroa to Fox Glacier

It is a flat run into Westland National Park and Franz Josef Glacier where you will have superb views of snowcapped peaks.

From Franz to Fox (24 km) there are three climbs (and descents) through beautiful native forest, a spectacular way to finish the day.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling: Whataroa to Fox Glacier 74km. Short option Whataroa to Franz Josef 50km.

Day 11 Fox Glacier

A walk up the glacier valley gives spectacular views of the terminal ice, while the Westland National Park Visitors Centre houses a wealth of information. (Thirteen percent of N.Z. is national park.) Also highly recommended are ski-plane or helicopter flights over snowfields, forests and glaciers and the lovely walk around Lake Matheson, with its mirror views of Mt's Cook and Tasman.

Day trips can be arranged to the White Heron colony at Okarito (optional extra) Okarito Beach is the site of Abel Tasman's landfall and once a thriving town.

Meals: B

Cycling: No cycling today

Day 12 Fox Glacier to Lake Moeraki

From Fox to Lake Paringa the road passes through lush rain forest of rimu and rata, flax filled swamps and past rugged hills. The many rivers become raging torrents after rain. With fine weather there will be superb views of Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps

Meals: B/D

Cycling:

Easy: Fox Glacier to Lake Moeraki 90 km/

Moderate: Fox Glacier to Bruce Bay 48km/

Challenging: Fox Glacier to Salmon Farm 65km

Day 13 Lake Moeraki to Makaroa

Just south of Lake Moeraki, Knights Point affords excellent views of the rugged coastline where seals can often be seen basking in the sun. From Haast we head inland, following the Haast River towards the snowcapped peaks. We pass innumerable waterfalls and much bird life, notably keas, fantails and bellbirds. After lunch the stiff climb through the Gates of Haast is negotiated before the gentle descent to Makarora.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling:

Easy: Lake Moeraki to Haast 30 km

Moderate: Lake Moeraki to Haast Pass 81km
Challenging: Lake Moeraki to Makaroa 112 km

Day 14 Makaroa to Wanaka

The country is now dramatically drier, dense bush giving way to open sheep paddocks. The scenery is breathtaking as the road closely follows Lake Wanaka, crosses the Neck to Lake Hawea and then recrosses to Lake Wanaka.

Meals: B

Cycling: Makaroa to Wanaka 66km. Short option Makaroa to Hawea 50km

Day 15 Wanaka to Queenstown

Our route today takes us up the Crown Range, over the Cardrona Road. We climb past the historic Cardrona Hotel; on reaching the top there will be amazing views of The Remarkables mountains and Queenstown. We descend the exhilarating hairpin bends down to Arrowtown, with its quaint old cottages and avenues of elms.

A short leisurely ride beneath Coronet Peak, a winter ski field, takes us to Arthur's Point where we cross the Shotover River on our way to Queenstown. Surrounded by mountain peaks (including the famous Remarkables), and set on Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown has much to offer.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling: Wanaka to Queenstown 78km. Short option Wanaka to Cardrona Hotel 27km.

Day 16 Queenstown

Options today include a jet boat or rafting trip on the Kawarau or Shotover Rivers, the steamer "Earnslaw" to visit a high country sheep station, the gondola cableway, Skippers canyon, a flight to Milford Sound (fiord), and much more. Queenstown also has an excellent botanical garden and a very good shopping centre.

It is here that we say farewell, a safe journey home and hope to see you again.

Meals: B

Cycling: No cycling today.