



## 19Day NZ Road Tour Auckland to Christchurch

Route: Auckland – Whitianga – Rotorua – National Park – Wanganui – Wellington – Nelson – Westport – Hokitika – Fox Glacier – Wanaka – Queenstown – Twizel – Christchurch

### Day 1 Auckland

All tour members will meet at the hotel early afternoon. Participants arriving on the same day between 7am and 2pm will be picked up from the airport and transferred to their accommodation. Later in the afternoon we take off to a short sightseeing tour of "The City of Sails", with the largest population of New Zealand. A stroll along the famous harbour will finish the first day.

**Cycling:** No cycling today

### Day 2 Auckland to Whitianga

After breakfast we head to Clevedon by bus. Here you start your first cycling day riding along the amazing coastal road to Miranda. From there we drive over the forest covered Coromandel range, where remnants of the beautiful Kauri trees that once covered the Peninsula can be found, to reach our destination of Whitianga.

**Cycling:** 52km Clevedon to Miranda

### Day 3 Whitianga (Rest Day)

Whitianga has much to offer, from kayaking, riding and hiking some of the local bush walks, to an excursion to Hot Water Beach, so named because a hot spring bubbles up through the sand, making it a lovely warm place to relax at low tide and watch swimmers enjoying the sea and surf.

**Cycling:** No cycling today

### Day 4 Whitianga to Rotorua

Eastwards from the Coromandel Peninsula lies the `Bay of Plenty`. The coastal road threads its way between the rugged Coromandel range to our right and the coast, littered with beautiful beaches on our left. We cycle from Tairua to Whiritoa through the Tairua Forest. At Tauranga we head inland and travel through the Kaimai - Mamaku Forest to the shores of Lake Rotorua.

**Cycling:** 49km Tairua to Whiritoa

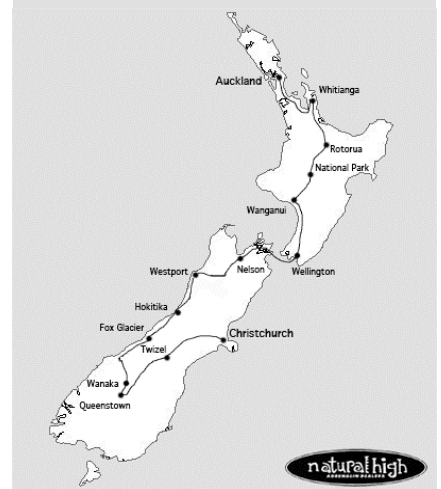
#### Tour includes:

- Transfer from and to airport ( conditions apply)
- Sightseeing Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland
- 18 nights accommodation in hotel, motels or chalets (please note sometimes with shared facilities)
- Ferry from Picton to Wellington
- Tour guide
- Support vehicle & Luggage transfer

**Please Note:** Meals and drinks not included. There is an option to contribute to a group kitty for the occasional breakfast and many picnic lunches.

#### Grade:

2 Moderate



## **Day 5 Rotorua - Activities day**

Today a morning city tour along the lake to the famous church of St Faiths. After lunch an optional tour through the Whakarewarewa Thermal Park, famous for its active wonderland of geysers, hot springs and boiling mud pools as well as a dinner feast at a Maori Hangi (optional).

**Cycling:** No cycling today

## **Day 6 Rotorua to National Park**

Driving south, we head toward New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo. We follow its shores to Turangi, and start cycling at its southern end, before it takes us past Lake Rotoaira and up onto the Volcanic Plateau. En route there are spectacular views of Lake Taupo to the North, and Mount Tongariro, Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu to the south.

**Cycling:** 53km Turangi to National Park

## **Day 7 National Park to Wanganui**

We ride along the western side of the Tongariro National Park, before leaving it behind at Raetihi. Here we follow the Mangawhero River to Wanganui, one of New Zealand's oldest towns. Nestled on the plains near the mouth of the river, which gave the city its name, it is famous for its many mature gardens, earning it the appropriate nickname of the "Garden City".

**Cycling:** 57km Kakatahi to Wanganui

## **Day 8 Wanganui to Wellington**

A coastal journey through lush, rolling pastoral land slowly changes as we approach Wellington. In the afternoon there is a short sightseeing tour around New Zealand's capital, euphemistically known as the "Windy City", if you are unlucky, you may learn why! Take the chance to visit the National Museum "Te Papa" in the afternoon or have a ride in the cable car to the botanical garden.

**Cycling:** No cycling today

## **Day 9 Wellington to Nelson**

First up is a 3 1/2 hour ferry journey across Cook Strait. We enter the South Island via Tory channel and Queen Charlotte Sound. From Picton we cycle along the beautiful Queen Charlotte Drive to Havelock, which lies at the head of the Pelorous Sound. From there we take the bus to Nelson, New Zealand's sunniest town, situated not far from the beautiful Abel Tasman National Park.

**Cycling:** 34km Picton to Havelock

## **Day 10 Nelson (Rest Day)**

The township of Nelson is very beautiful, colourful and offers a great opportunity to stroll around. Today's program could be hiking, kayaking or just relaxing with a good book. The famous Abel Tasman Coastal walk offers an easy graded track on which to explore some of the lovely native forest and sandy beaches.

**Cycling:** No cycling today

## **Day 11 Nelson to Westport**

Just before Lyell we visit the longest swing bridge in New Zealand. From there we start cycling

along the gorgeous Buller gorge, with its deep, slow flowing waters contrasting against the lush vegetation of the native forest. As you travel westwards note how the trees change, the forest becomes denser and damper and takes on a sub-tropical, rainforest look. After arriving in Westport we drive to Cape Foulwind to visit a small fur seal colony before checking into our Motel.

**Cycling:** 65km Lyell to Westport

### **Day 12 Westport to Hokitika**

It is an hours drive to Punakaiki where we stop to visit the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes. This area is famed for its blowholes and pancake rocks, and is so named because the sand and limestone formations look like, well stacked pancakes! This is a must-see when visiting the West Coast.

From Punakaiki you ride along the spectacular coastal road to Greymouth. Here we stop to visit a Greenstone factory, where you have the opportunity to buy jade carvings and jewellery at reasonable prices. The final 40km to Hokitika is by bus. In the evening enjoy a pleasant stroll along the beach and watch the sun set into the sea.

**Cycling:** 45km Punakaiki to Greymouth

### **Day 13 Hokitika to Fox Glacier**

A few kms south of Hokitika is Ross, a rural service town and centre for a small open cast gold mine. The flora begins to change, from open pastoral land to dense rainforest.

In Hari Hari we start cycling as the road twists and turns, seeking passage through this almost impenetrable forest and unforgiving, rugged countryside taking us to the township of Franz Josef.

Continuing in the vehicle for the last 25km to Fox Glacier, we visit the Glacier Face before checking into our accommodation. There may be time for an optional helicopter flight to the Glaciers (including landing) with spectacular views to Mt.Cook on a clear day.

**Cycling:** 62km Hari Hari to Franz Josef

### **Day 14 Fox Glacier to Wanaka**

First thing this morning we suggest you take a walk to the picturesque Lake Matheson. After breakfast as we travel south, the journey becomes more spectacular, the Alps are higher, and the coast more rugged. The road snakes its way through dense rainforest, the Pakihi swamp and along the coast. Just before Haast we cross the longest single lane bridge in New Zealand.

We cycle along the Haast River. What begins as an almost flat ride slowly steepens as you enter the Haast River valley, past Thunder Falls, through the Gates of Haast where the waters of the Haast river tumble past huge boulders carelessly strewn about the riverbed. A steady climb follows as you ascend the newest alpine road to transect the Southern Alps. Your goal is the 563m Haast Pass. Once there your reward is an exhilarating downhill to the Blue Pools, where we go for a walk. In Makarora the dense native bush gives way to dryer, more arid countryside as we pass Lakes Wanaka and Hawea. Wanaka is a beautiful and very well known tourist destination, during summer and winter.

**Cycling:** 81km Pleasant Flat to Hawea

### **Day 15 Wanaka to Queenstown**

Today's journey takes you passed the historic Cardrona Hotel, a relic from the gold prospecting

days to the Crown Range. From the saddle there is a great downhill ride to Arrowtown, an idyllic gold town with its lovely tree lined streets and fascinating shops. After a short stroll we continue to Queenstown.

**Cycling:** 51km Wanaka to Arrowtown

### **Day 16 Queenstown - Rest Day or Activities Day**

Queenstown is an outdoor adventurers playground. Options include: A day trip to Fiordland's, Milford or Doubtful Sound. Local activities: shopping, gondola ride to the Skyline restaurant and viewpoint, lake ride aboard the historic steamship Earnslaw, jet boating on the Shotover River, bungy jumping, white water rafting, tandem paragliding, or a visit to the Kiwi house to see New Zealand's national icon in the flesh.

**Cycling:** No cycling today

### **Day 17 Queenstown to Twizel**

Heading out of Queenstown we once again follow the Kawarau River through its gorge and past vineyards. After a brief stop at "Mama Jones" fruit stall, we travel north across Lake Dunstan and head toward Lindis Pass. Here we start cycling an amazing downhill ride. After the pass the ride is predominantly flat, however if the Norwest wind is blowing, watch out for strong gusts! In Omarama we stop for a lunch break and continue cycling to Twizel.

**Cycling:** 61km Lindis Pass to Twizel

### **Day 18 Twizel to Christchurch**

On a clear day you will be treated to magnificent views of New Zealand's highest mountain, Mt Cook, or Aoraki, the cloud piercer at the head of Lake Pukaki. From there we cycle along the Pukaki canal until reaching the turquoise glacier lake in Tekapo. The area is now famous for its Merino sheep and Hydro-Electric Power System, which consists of 6 lakes joined by canals. We leave the MacKenzie Basin over the 671m Burke Pass and travel via Fairlie, Geraldine and Ashburton through the Canterbury Plains to Christchurch. Once in Christchurch we head to a short sightseeing tour of the city, including the Port Hills and the 'Sign of the Takahe' with its magnificent views over the South Pacific and across the Canterbury Plains to the Southern Alps.

**Cycling:** 33km Twizel to Lake Tekapo

### **Day 19 Christchurch - Departure**

All participants will be transported to the airport between 7am and 3.30pm.