



19Day NZ Road Tour Christchurch to Auckland

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

Day 1 Christchurch

All tour members 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 the accommodation. Later in the afternoon we will be doing 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: No cycling today

Day 2 Christchurch to Twizel

After driving in our escort van across the flat, alluvial Canterbury plains through Ashburton, Geraldine and Fairlie the road climbs the 671m Burke Pass, which serves as the northern entrance to the area known as the MacKenzie Basin. The area is now famous for its Merino sheep and Hydro-Electric Power System which consists of 6 lakes joined by large canals. After a short lunch break we start cycling along the canal to Lake Pukaki and then further to Twizel. 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.

Cycling: 33km Lake Tekapo to Canal Road

Day 3 Twizel to Queenstown

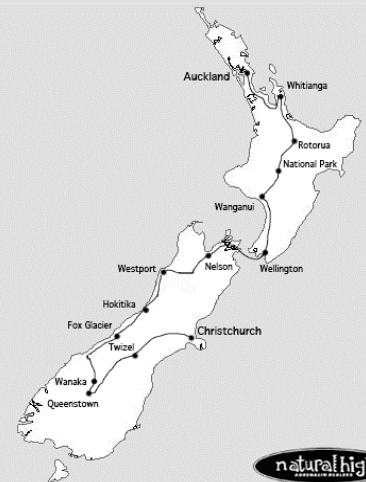
Today's ride is predominantly flat, however if the nor'west wind is blowing watch out for strong gusts! Once over Lindis Pass you have left the province of Canterbury and entered Central Otago. Further on you will come to New Zealand's newest hydro lake, Lake Dunstan, on the Clutha River. Cromwell is at the heart of a large pip fruit growing area, with many of the growers selling their wares at roadside stalls, which you will pass on the way to Queenstown. The route into Queenstown follows the Kawarau River through its gorge, past the world famous A.J Hackett bungy bridge and several wineries and vineyards.

Cycling: 61km Lindis Pass to Lake Dunstan

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.



Day 4 Queenstown - Rest Day/Other 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, bungee 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 5 Queenstown to Wanaka

An early morning visit to Arrowtown, an idyllic gold town with its lovely tree lined streets and fascinating shops, is followed by a challenging ride over the Crown Range. From the saddle there is a great downhill into the Cardrona Valley. On your left you will pass the historic Cardrona Hotel, a relic from the gold prospecting days. From there we cycle to the beautiful lake town of Wanaka.

Cycling: 51km Arrowtown to Wanaka

Day 6 Wanaka to Fox Glacier

Travelling west toward the main divide of the Southern Alps the road initially follows Lake Hawea, then rejoins Lake Wanaka over a low pass. We witness a gradual change in New Zealand's ever changing landscape. The dry, arid pasturelands of central Otago slowly give way to the dense native bush of the Mount Aspiring National Park. As we start cycling, the road slowly climbs out of the Makarora Valley and heads towards the newest alpine road to transect the Southern Alps, the 563m Haast Pass. Further on a short walk leads to the 30m Thunder Creek Falls, a good place to stretch the legs and enjoy the rainforest. From here the road follows the Haast River plains into Haast Village, situated in Fiordland National Park, New Zealand's largest World Heritage Park. There may be time to stop at the local Visitor's Centre, which has excellent displays showing how the land has evolved.

The northward journey is spectacular. The road snakes its way through dense rainforest, over fast running rivers and past lovely lakes, such as Lakes Paringa, lanthe and Moeraki. To the left the rugged, ever changing coastline and to the right the massive, snow covered peaks of the Southern Alps towering above all.

Today's destination is the Fox Glacier township, which lies a short distance from it's glacier. A short walk to the Glacier face - just above sea level will be the perfect ending to the day.

Cycling: 81km Makarora/Blue Pools to Haast

Day 7 Fox Glacier to Hokitika

This morning you may choose to take an optional helicopter flight to the Glaciers (including landing) with spectacular views to Mt.Cook on a clear day.

Or maybe take a walk to the picturesque Lake Matheson. which is also known as mirror lake. Leaving Fox the road twists and turns as it seeks passage through the almost impenetrable rainforest and unforgiving, rugged countryside passing Franz Josef Glacier and heading towards Ross - a rural service town and centre for a small open caste gold mine which is situated beside the town.

From here we continue our trip by bus to Hokitika, As a fitting finale to the day, take a walk along the nearby beach and watch the setting sun disappear into the sea.

Cycling: 62km Franz Josef to Hari Hari

Day 8 Hokitika to Westport

We drive the 40km north to Greymouth where we visit a greenstone factory with the opportunity to buy jade carvings and jewellery at reasonable prices. From here we bike along the spectacular coastline to Punakaiki, where you can take a walk around the famed blowholes and pancake rocks, so named because the limestone formations look like, well pancakes of course! A visit to a small fur seal colony at Cape Foulwind, near Westport will be the last highlight of the day.

Cycling: 45km Greymouth to Punakaiki

Day 9 Westport to Nelson

Starting on the Coast you will travel northeastwards along the gorgeous Buller gorge, with its deep, slow flowing waters contrasting against the lush vegetation of the native forest. The ride finishes at Lyell, now an empty paddock surrounded by bush. Into the van for a drive through the upper gorge to Murchison and further to New Zealand's newest National Park, the Kahurangi. The day finishes in Nelson - the sunniest town of the South Island, situated not far from the beautiful Abel Tasman National Park.

Cycling: 65km Westport to Lyell

Day 10 Nelson - Rest Day/Other Activities 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 Wellington

The days ride is a short one, although equipped with enough climbs to keep you honest. It starts in Havelock and traverses the lovely Queen Charlotte Drive, finishing in Picton in time to catch the afternoon ferry, which takes about 3 hours and travels along Queen Charlotte Sound, leaving the South Island via Tory Channel bound for New Zealand's capital, Wellington, euphemistically known as the "Windy City", if you are unlucky, you may learn why!

Cycling: 34km Havelock to Picton

Day 12 Wellington to Wanganui

Today is a cycle free day. After a short sightseeing tour of Wellington you still have got time to visit the famous National Museum 'Te Papa' or the option for a cable car ride to the botanic garden. Around lunch time the van heads north along state highway 1 towards Wanganui, nestled on the plains near the mouth of the river that gave it its name. It is one of New Zealand's oldest towns and, due to its many mature gardens, is known as the "Garden City".

Cycling: No cycling today

Day 13 Wanganui to National Park

The three volcanic peaks of Tongariro National Park, New Zealand's oldest, Mt's Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro beckon as you ride along the Mangawhero river toward your nights destination in National Park.

Cycling: 57km Wanganui to Kakatahi

Day 14 National Park to Rotorua

This morning you cycle along Lake Rotoaira and further on to Turangi, which lies on the shores of Lake Taupo, the largest lake of New Zealand. Consider for a moment that this lake was formed by a huge volcanic eruption around 135 AD. From there we continue our journey aboard the van for a ride on state highway 1 to Rotorua, famous for its active wonderland of geysers, hot springs and boiling mud pools. Optional afternoon visit to the Whakarewarewa thermal park as well as the possibility for a dinner feast at a Maori Hangi.

Cycling: 53km National Park to Turangi

Day 15 Rotorua – Rest/ Other Activities Day

Today there is a morning city tour along the lake to the famous church of St Faiths. After lunch we recommend a tour (optional) through the Whakarewarewa Thermal Park, famous for its active wonderland of geysers, hot springs and boiling mud pools. This evening, why not enjoy a traditional Maori concert & Hangi dinner (also optional).

Cycling: No cycling today

Day 16 Rotorua to Whitianga

From Lake Rotorua we take the Kaimai - Mamaku forest road toward temperate Tauranga, which lies on the edge of the Bay of Plenty. Its warm climate and rich soil enables it to grow much of the countries citrus fruits including kiwi fruit, tamarillos and feijoas. The cycle leg today starts in Whiritoa and takes you north east along the Coromandel Peninsula where the coastal road threads its way between the rugged Coromandel range on the left and the coast, littered with beautiful white sandy beaches to our right.

Cycling: 49km Whiritoa to Tairua

Day 17 Whitianga

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 18 Whitianga to Auckland

The day starts with a drive over the forest covered Coromandel range, where remnants of the beautiful Kauri trees that once covered the peninsula can be found. We travel through Coromandel's main town, Thames, which lies at the northern foot of the Peninsula, en route to Miranda and the start of the day's ride. What follows is a beautiful way to finish your tour on an easy coastal section to Clevedon. After arriving in Auckland, "The city of Sails", we head off to a sightseeing tour in the largest population centre of New Zealand.

Cycling: 52km Miranda to Clevedon

Day 19 Auckland - Departure

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