Abercrombie & Kent



SOUTH ISLAND FAMILY DISCOVERY

Embark on this self-drive discovery of New Zealand’s spectacular South Island, road tripping with the family from Christchurch to Queenstown.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

New Zealand & South Pacific, New Zealand

10 days Call for a quote pp

Private

Journey Overview

Embark on this self-drive discovery of New Zealand’s spectacular South Island, road tripping from Christchurch to Queenstown. You’ll uncover a kaleidoscope of active experiences, wildlife encounters and natural wonders from Mount Cook/Aoraki to Lake Wakatipu and Mt Aspiring National Park, bedding down each night in some of the region’s best boutique havens. Exploring by boat, funyak, and zipline to name a few, you’ll see the island from every angle on this journey sure to surprise and delight.

Journey Highlights

- Set sail on a harbour safari, eyes peeled for native dolphins, fur seals, penguins, and a variety of seabirds
- By spellbound by the sparkling on a stargazing discovery sky in Mackenzie Dark Sky Reserve
- Cruise the Tasman Glacier terminal lake, gazing in awe of the ancient icy monuments
- Indulge in a lakeside high tea, looking down on the mystical landscapes of Mou Waho Island
- Get up-close with nature as you discover the Dart River region by jet boat and funyak
- See the wonders of Queenstown from every angle on a thrilling adventure by gondola, luge and zipline



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Christchurch

Arrive into Christchurch, known as the "Garden City" and the largest centre in the South Island. The tree-lined River Avon meanders through its heart and the neo-gothic architecture exudes a distinctly medieval air.

Make your way to the car rental depot and collect your rental vehicle, travelling at your own pace to the indulgent Hotel Montreal.

Hotel Montreal

Day 2: Christchurch

Today drive to the French-inspired seaside village of Akaroa, embarking from its main wharf on an enthralling shared nature cruise.

Floating through the harbour, keep your eyes peeled for rare native wildlife like the Hector's or New Zealand dolphin, white-flippered little blue penguin, fur seals and a variety of sea birds. Enjoy the opportunity to witness a working salmon farm, explore the natural wonder of Cathedral Cave and discover remnants of Akaroa's fascinating past including sailing by early Maori, French and British settlements.

Return to the mainland at the end of your adventure with the rest of the day yours to enjoy as you like.

Note that if children are aged 8 years or over there is an opportunity to upgrade to a swim with the dolphins cruise.

Hotel Montreal | B

Day 3: Christchurch – Mount Cook

Today continue your journey at your own pace, cruising through the breathtaking scenery from Christchurch to Aoraki/Mt Cook, a journey of approximately 4 hours.

Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park is home to the highest mountains and the longest glaciers in New Zealand, its skyscraping peaks, glaciers and permanent snow fields all set under a star-studded sky.

This evening, enjoy a shared stargazing tour in Aoraki Mackenzie Dark Sky Reserve, the world's largest. Be enthralled by the beautiful southern night sky as your expert guide talks you through the sparkling constellations, with the chance to try your hand using state-of-the-art telescopes and other astro-technology.

Hermitage Aoraki Mount Cook | B

Day 4: Mount Cook

Today starts with adventure, as you set off on a shared glacier explorer tour. Travelling to the Tasman Valley, be immersed in the ethereal landscapes with a short alpine walk through the national park scenery. Then take to the lake on a boat cruise, admiring up close the ever-changing surfaces of the Tasman Glacier terminal lake and its icebergs, natural wonders that have stood tall for decades.

A truly humbling experience, witness the majesty of New Zealand's largest glacier, and its monumental ice wall that is constantly evolving as global warming continues to impact the region.

Return to your accommodation with the evening to do as you please.

Hermitage Aoraki Mount Cook | B

Day 5: Mount Cook – Wanaka

Today self-drive from Mt Cook to Wanaka, a stretch boasting breathtaking scenes sure to leave you in awe. Arrive into Wanaka and settle into your elegant lodgings on the edge on crystal-clear Lake Wanaka.

Edgewater, Lake Wanaka | B

Day 6: Wanaka

Today you will enjoy some of the South Island's natural wonders both on land and over water with a shared guided tour, cruising the sparkling surface of Lake Wanaka and wandering the alpine scenes of Mou Waho Island.

Situated in the middle of Lake Wanaka surrounded by stunning natural vistas, your discovery of the island will be led by a local eco guide, shining a light on the varied native plant and birdlife including the rare Buff Weka, a very inquisitive flightless bird not seen on the mainland for over a century.

Set out on a bush walk to truly appreciate the diverse landscapes, discovering a serene lake right on top of the island where you'll enjoy a delicious high tea experience. Drink in the vibrant birdsong and the panoramas of the Southern Alps as you indulge in a selection of treats. Those feeling a little more relaxed can enjoy their own time at the base of the island.

Should you wish, there is also the opportunity to plant a native tree on the island, to add to the over 8000 trees planted since touring in this region began.

Edgewater, Lake Wanaka | B

Day 7: Wanaka – Queenstown

Today you drive at your own pace from Wanaka to Queenstown, an adventure wonderland situated on the shores of Lake Wakatipu and surrounded by rolling farmlands and mountains. Settle into your luxury base and enjoy the day as you would like, perhaps wandering along the shores of the lake, setting out on a discovery of the local art scene or tracking down some epicurean delights.

The Rees Hotel Queenstown | B

Day 8: Queenstown

Your appreciation for the country's landscapes continues today, with a shared journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mt Aspiring National Park.

Departing Queenstown for the Dart River, you will get up-close with nature on a funyak tour, paddling on the crystal clear waters in an inflatable kayak. Be spellbound by the beauty of the Dart River as well as hidden side streams, rock pools and dramatic chasms. Enjoy the peace and tranquility of this stunning area at your own pace as you float downstream before a sumptuous buffet lunch. Travel onwards to Glenorchy taking scenic back-country routes to return to your start point, passing by iconic scenes used to depict famed Middle Earth locales.

The Rees Hotel Queenstown | BL

Day 9: Queenstown

Today is full to bursting with adventure. Start with a birds-eye view of the region on a scenic gondola ride, drifting 450 metres above Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu to the top of Bob's Peak. En route you will enjoy a spectacular 220 degree panoramas of some of the most renowned mountains, including Coronet Peak, The Remarkables, Walter Peak and Cecil Peak.

Then it's time to get the heart racing with three thrilling luge rides from the top of the gondola, zipping down past the spectacular scenes. The last in your trifecta of adventures, set off on an exhilarating zipline experience. High above Queenstown, you'll journey through ancient native beech forest across four breathtaking, tree-to-tree ziplines.

Conclude your day of discovery by returning on foot to the top of the gondola, travelling back to your lodge with your last evening at leisure.

The Rees Hotel Queenstown | B

Day 10: Depart Queenstown

Today after breakfast, drive to Queenstown airport and return your rental vehicle before your onward flight.

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Map


NEW ZEALAND
(SOUTH ISLAND)
Christchurch
Aoraki/
Mt Cook
Akaroa
Wanaka
Queenstown
ARRIVE/DEPART
ROAD

Accommodation

Hermitage Hotel, Mount Cook



A haven for adventurous travellers since 1884, the world-renowned Hermitage Hotel is nestled among stunning scenery within the Aoraki Mount Cook National Park, offering a complete alpine holiday experience for all.

Luxurious rooms offer unsurpassed views of Aoraki Mt Cook or the Sefton mountain range, and a variety of restaurants and bars offer an assortment of dining options with spectacular views from every seat. Experience world renowned activities, including a cruise amongst glaciers, explore the Tasman valley, stargaze within the International Dark Sky Reserve or be educated and entertained in the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre.

Edgewater, Wanaka



A lakeside haven standing proudly on Lake Wanaka. Edgewater is the perfect destination for you to experience the distinctive four seasons that Central Otago offers, cocooned in private luxury while just moments from the best of this stunning city.

At Edgewater Southern warmth complements the inviting accommodation, spaciously set on 10 acres of lawns and gardens down to the lake edge. The comfortable & relaxing Wineglass Cafe is open daily featuring seasonally inspired menus including baked to order gourmet scones, High Tea and Ares-ski menu.

For those looking to get active and explore the surrounding natural wonders, saddle up on a mountain bike, or perhaps practice your serve on the all-weather tennis courts. If you’re looking for a little more tranquillity, relax in Edgewater Element Day Spa and indulge in one of the rejuvenating treatments on offer. Edgewater is only minutes from the heart of Wanaka. Stroll along the lake-hugging walkway, or drive a few minutes to explore the boutique shops, meet friendly locals and enjoy the inviting atmosphere of Wanaka.

The Rees, Queenstown



Quiet, private and sophisticated, The Rees Hotel Queenstown epitomises southern hospitality at its finest and an authentic New Zealand experience, situated right on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, in the South Island of New Zealand.

The Rees offers a variety of spacious and luxurious accommodation options including 60 Hotel rooms, 90 Apartments and five private, 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom Lakeside Residences, all with terraces, showcasing spectacular views across Lake Wakatipu to the alpine panorama of the Remarkable Mountain range.

The many exceptional features at The Rees Hotel include a library of rare books and art, courtesy shuttle to/from Queenstown town centre, and complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi. Keep fit at the onsite gym, or relax on the private beach and wharf.

Abercrombie & Kent

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