



Great Bike Tours

New Zealand 2027

Welcome to our 12-day bike tour of the world's 12th largest island – the South Island of New Zealand! We plan to take you on a very special trip that offers a rich assortment of scenery, wildlife, and once-in-a-lifetime experiences. We can't wait to show you around!

Tour Length

12 days/11 nights

2027 Tour Dates

- February 6-17
- Feb. 20-Mar. 3 (Sold Out)
- March 6-17 (Sold Out)

Tour Start & End

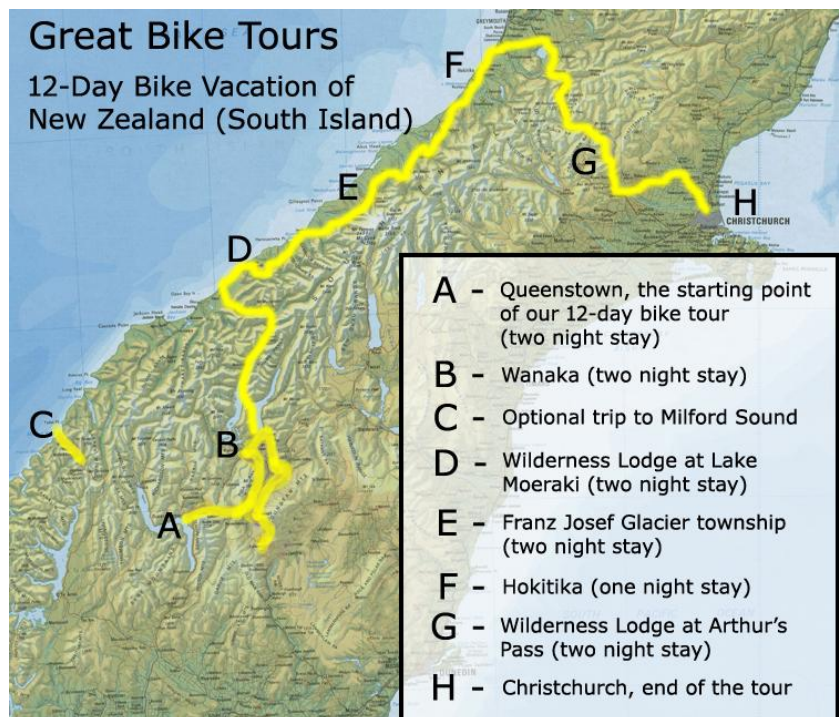
- Start in Queenstown, NZ
- End in Christchurch, NZ

Cost of the Tour

US \$8,395 per person
Single Supplement +\$2,000

Level of Difficulty

Easy to moderate – 20-45 miles/day, with total mileage of 210-380. Predominantly road riding, with a few optional gravel trails. Cycle at your own pace. Get a lift in the van whenever you like. Plenty of days off.



Highlights

- **Fantastic bike rides** through two National Parks, including riding on the beautiful Highway 6 on the West Coast, known as “one of the planet's 10 best road trips” (*Lonely Planet*)
- **Spectacular scenery** at every turn, including glaciers, old-growth rainforests, snow-capped mountains, cascading waterfalls, teal-colored rivers, and wild ocean beaches
- **View unique wildlife** including kiwi birds, merino sheep, sea lions, fur seals, giant eels, glow worms, and alpine parrots
- **Watch** sheep dogs in action at a high-country merino-wool sheep farm

- **Enjoy naturalist-led hikes** through rainforests and on pristine beaches
- **Take part in several mellow water activities**, including kayaking in a World Heritage Area; a guided boat tour of a bird sanctuary; and a sightseeing boat trip on a historic steamship
- **Option to Fly to Milford Sound** for a boat cruise in Fiordland National Park, part of the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Termed the 8th Wonder of the World by author Rudyard Kipling, it is also a favorite destination for our guests
- **Explore** the exciting towns of Christchurch, Wanaka, and the “Adventure Capital of the World” – Queenstown
- **Opportunity to explore** the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers, the only glaciers in the world that descend into the rainforest
- **Experience** manuka honey, vegemite, and Hokey Pokey ice cream; search for *pounamu* (greenstone, or NZ jade) on the beach; see the Southern Cross for the first time; and taste wine in the southernmost wine region of the world
- **Optional thrill-seeking** options such as skydiving over a World Heritage Area; or bungy-jumping and jetboating (both invented in NZ)
- **Savor Warm Weather!** We run our trips in February & March, which is late summer in NZ, so expect temps in the 60s and 70s, and staying light until 9 pm

What's Included?

- 12 days of cycling and/or other activities (with plenty of downtime)
- 11 nights of lodging + 20 meals (catering to all dietary needs)
- Your choice of bike style, which comes with a helmet, rear rack bag for your personal items, rear safety light, water bottle, and performance T-shirt. E-bikes available for an additional charge of US \$500 each (limited supply, first come first served)
- Superior level of support throughout your stay (each trip comes with two 12-passenger vans and three professional [bike tour guides](#))
- Guided boat tour of Okarito Lagoon (a bird sanctuary surrounded by rainforest) and a sightseeing trip on a historic steamship
- Unique Māori cultural experience, introducing you to NZ's indigenous people
- Half-day “signature activity” offered by the Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki, exploring the rainforest and its unique birds
- Full access to our online photo gallery with photo/videos from your trip
- Small group size of 15-20 people
- *Ride with GPS* navigation using your own phone (we provide the phone mount for the handlebars), or paper route notes
- Transport to the Christchurch airport at end of trip (cost of airfare not included). For more info on travel logistics, please request our “NZ Travel Information” document

Detailed Itinerary

[Suggested activities that are not included in the price of the tour are indicated with a \$]

Day 1 (Saturday) – Feb. 6, Feb. 20, or Mar. 6 – Arrival Day in New Zealand

Welcome to New Zealand, and welcome to Queenstown! **Our bike tour starts at 5:00 pm this evening** at the Novotel Hotel in Queenstown. We plan to gather for a Welcome Reception followed by dinner together. Most people will probably arrive in the country today (U.S. → Auckland, NZ → Queenstown, NZ), though you could arrive a day earlier if you wish. When you arrive at the Queenstown airport, please make your way from the airport to our first lodgings, the Novotel Queenstown Lakeside Hotel. Transportation is easy to arrange from the airport, and we recommend flagging down one of the *Super Shuttle* vans out front (\$).

We look forward to meeting you all at 5:00 pm for our Welcome Reception and Dinner.

Accommodations:	Novotel Queenstown Lakeside Hotel, Queenstown Amenities include laundry, Wi-Fi, TV
Meals included:	Dinner
Cycling Options:	None

Day 2 (Sunday) – Exploring Queenstown by bike and boat

Following breakfast at our hotel, we will hop on our bikes for a lovely warmup ride alongside Lake Wakatipu. This is Queenstown's most popular bike ride, and there are plenty of highlights along the way – you might decide to check out the exquisite Queenstown Gardens, cool off at the Frankton Beach, or explore the fascinating sculptures at Kelvin Heights.

After lunch, we will all head out for a trip aboard the historic steamship *TSS Earnslaw*. Our destination is the Walter Peak High Country Farm, located on the other side of Lake Wakatipu. We will be treated to a demonstration of sheep shearing, watch their sheepdogs at work, and we can greet their resident farm animals. And of course, no trip to a high-country sheep farm would be complete without a delicious afternoon tea, complete with pastries baked at their farm.

Dinner tonight is on-your-own, and our guides would be happy to steer you towards some of their favorite restaurants.

Accommodations:	Novotel Queenstown Lakeside Hotel, Queenstown Amenities include laundry, Wi-Fi, TV
Meals included:	Breakfast
Cycling Options:	Warm-up ride of 11 miles (18 km)

Day 3 (Monday) — Cycle through merino sheep country, from Lake Hawea to Tarras

After another scrumptious breakfast at our hotel, we will shuttle in the direction of Wanaka, our home for the next two nights. Our first stop will be at bungy bridge outside of Queenstown, where we can watch thrill-seekers (and maybe some of our cyclists) jump off a perfectly good bridge. (\$)

After lunch we will head to Lake Hawea where we start our 22-mile bike ride past several merino sheep farms, which also happen to be filming locations for some of the *Lord of the Rings* movies. Our bike ride ends in the village of Tarras, where you'll have the option to head off on an additional 13-mile loop ride, or perhaps you may wish to hang back and explore the local Tarras store featuring top-of-line merino clothing.

We end the day with a van shuttle from Tarras to Wanaka, our home for the next two nights. The *New York Times* has described Wanaka as “the laid-back cousin to Queenstown.” That article from the Travel Section went on to say that Wanaka is “similarly situated at the base of chiseled mountains on the shores of an azure lake, but without the same preponderance of in-your-face adventure advertising. It has plenty of hotels and activities, but not so many that they detract from the natural splendor of the area.” We hope you enjoy your stay in Wanaka.

This evening we will gather for a happy hour at our hotel, where we'll raise a glass to all those brave souls who bungy jumped from that “perfectly good bridge” this morning. We will dine together at our Lodge this evening.

Accommodations:	Te Wanaka Lodge, Wanaka
Meals included:	Breakfast and dinner (lunch is on your own at a local café)
Cycling options:	22 miles (35 km), or 35 miles (56 km)

Day 4 (Tuesday) — Layover Day – Visit Milford Sound, Cycle alongside Lake Wanaka, or explore Wanaka on your own

This is our first true layover day, meaning that we have many optional activities to choose from (besides cycling). You can do your own thing, or you can join us for our action-packed day:

- Optional four-hour morning excursion to the famous Milford Sound, a World Heritage Area. The highlights include a short scenic flight over the Southern Alps to get there, followed by a narrated boat cruise on the fiord itself, and then a flight back to Wanaka. (\$) See <https://www.southernalpsair.co.nz/>
- In the afternoon, you'll have the choice of two different bike rides (both departing directly from our hotel):
 1. 26-mile bike ride alongside the gorgeous Lake Wanaka with many great views of Mt. Aspiring along the way. After stocking up on some delicious

snacks, we then head back to the hotel, perhaps visiting the local Rippon Winery (requires advance reservations).

2. 10-mile bike ride along the shores of Lake Wanaka. This hard-packed dirt trail is suitable for all bikes, and provides some outstanding views of this gorgeous lake.

Other possible activities include:

- Stroll into Wanaka for some shopping and lunch, relax by the lake under the huge shady trees, or sit at a lakeside café and watch the world go by.
- Skydiving from Wanaka Airport (\$) See <https://www.skydivewanaka.com/>
- Via Ferrata beginner rock-climbing trip (\$) See <https://www.wildwire.co.nz/>

Tonight we are all free to head off to explore Wanaka's nightlife and dinner on-our-own.

Accommodations:	Te Wanaka Lodge, Wanaka
Meals included:	Breakfast at our Lodge; lunch and dinner on own in Wanaka
Cycling options:	10 miles (16 km) on a dirt track, or 26 miles (41 km) on paved roads

Day 5 (Wednesday) – Wanaka to the West Coast

After our delicious breakfast at our Lodge, our cycle group will gather down by the lake for a private Māori cultural experience, introducing you to the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

At 10:00 am we jump in the vans for a spectacular road trip alongside the glacial Lake Hawea and Lake Wanaka, and then we travel up-and-over the Haast Pass. We will start our bike ride at Pleasant Flat, which is located in the temperate rainforest of the West Coast. Our 28-mile bike ride will take us past waterfalls and raging rivers, eventually ending in the small village of Haast, located on the West Coast (Tasman Sea). From Haast we'll jump in the van for the final 30-minute shuttle to our lodgings, thus allowing us enough time to enjoy this little piece of paradise they call the Wilderness Lodge.

After settling into your room at the Lodge, don't miss the short ranger-led walk through the rainforest before dinner.

Accommodations:	Wilderness Lodge at Lake Moeraki Amenities include a restaurant, bar, laundry, Wi-Fi, <u>no</u> TV, great walks, free use of kayaks
Meals included:	Breakfast at our Hotel; lunch on own at local café; Dinner at the Wilderness Lodge
Cycling options:	28 miles (45 km) in the afternoon, with van shuttles available at any time

Day 6 (Thursday) — Layover Day at the Wilderness Lodge, Lake Moeraki

Although you will have access to your bikes all day, we recommend that instead you take the time to fully explore this ancient, untouched coastal rainforest. Feel free to head off on your own – we recommend a walk through the rainforest to Monro Beach, or perhaps borrow a kayak to explore Lake Moeraki on your own. The Lodge also offers several guided activities each day – the shorter walks/activities are complimentary; the longer ones are not (although GBT will be treating you to one of these longer adventures). Most of our past guests have said these guided activities were a major highlight of their trip. Some of the wildlife you might see during your stay include the morepork owl, the kea parrot, the New Zealand fur seal, hector dolphins, giant eels, black swans, and glow worms.

Accommodations:	Wilderness Lodge at Lake Moeraki Amenities include a restaurant, bar, laundry, Wi-Fi, <u>no</u> TV, great walks, free use of kayaks
Meals included:	Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner at the Wilderness Lodge
Cycling options:	None (although you will have access to your bikes all day)

Day 7 (Friday) — Cycle from Wilderness Lodge to Fox Glacier, then shuttle to Franz Josef Glacier

Today we continue traveling through the Southwest New Zealand World Heritage Area, with the wild ocean to our left and snow-capped peaks to our right. It is easy to see why the *Lonely Planet* guide dubbed our cycling route as “one of the planet’s 10 best road trips.” Today we pass by broad sweeps of coastline – including Bruce Bay Beach, a spectacular spot on the Tasman Sea – as well as cycling through open pastureland and dense rainforests, before ending our ride at the town of Fox Glacier. While waiting for your fellow cyclists to arrive, enjoy a latte at one of the many cafés, or perhaps sample a local cider or craft beer. If your legs allow it, you might consider cycling the extra 25 km ride over the three big hills between Fox Glacier and Franz Josef, a ride aptly named the Triple Bypass! The rest of us sane people will be in the van, which will take us to the town of Franz Josef Glacier, our home for the next two nights.

In the later afternoon you may visit the kiwis in the indoor Wildlife Centre (\$), soak in the hot tubs (\$), or indulge in a rejuvenating massage (\$). This evening we’ll enjoy a group dinner together at the hotel.

Accommodations:	Te Waonui Forest Retreat, Franz Josef Glacier
Meals included:	Breakfast and dinner
Cycling options:	55-70 miles (88-112 km), with van shuttle support available throughout the day

Day 8 (Saturday) — Layover Day in Okarito & Franz Josef

After breakfast, we'll offer a 17-mile bike ride to the small oceanside hamlet of Okarito, where we'll be treated to a guided boat tour of the Okarito Lagoon, the largest unmodified wetland in New Zealand. Led by our friends Swade & Paula, this boat tour will seek out the unique birds that have made the lagoon their home.

We plan to spend the afternoon in Franz Josef, allowing you time to walk around town on your own, explore the area on your bike, or walk up the river valley to see the glacier in the distance. To see the glacier up close, we suggest the half-day heli-hike (this very popular activity requires reservations several weeks in advance). Shorter options include the scenic helicopter flight that lands at the top of the glacier for a few quick photos. Another fabulous option is the helicopter flight that circles New Zealand's tallest peak, Mt Cook. Unfortunately, all of these options are weather dependent, and none of these options are included in the price of your trip! \$\$

This afternoon you'll have another chance to sign up for a soothing soak in the wood-fired hot tubs, or perhaps sign up for a relaxing massage (\$). This evening we will set you free to enjoy dinner at one of the many restaurants in town.

Accommodations:	Te Waonui Forest Retreat, Franz Josef Glacier
Meals included:	Breakfast
Cycling options:	17 mile (27 km) one-way ride from Franz Josef to Okarito, with other longer options available

Day 9 (Sunday) — Cycle from Franz to Hokitika

Today we offer another epic day of cycling, with options to cycle as far as 116 km (70 miles). Naturally the van will be available to give you a ride whenever you like. To ensure that you'll have enough time to explore the town of Hokitika, our final destination for today, we recommend opting for a van shuttle earlier in the day. Our bike ride continues north up the coast, past the towering mountains of the Westland National Park, and over the icy gray-blue rivers coming from the glaciers. Challenge yourself with the short but demanding switchbacks of Mount Hercules! After lunch we cycle through our last sections of tropical-looking temperate rainforest, as we say farewell to the multitude of ferns, and the ancient podocarp trees adorned with vines, mistletoes, and perching plants. We will pass through the quaint villages of Hari Hari, Pukekura and Ross on the way to the seaside town of Hokitika (famous for its jade). Enjoy an evening walk along their famous beach covered in driftwood, explore the shops in town, and have a great dinner in the restaurant of your choosing.

Accommodations:	Beachfront Hotel, Hokitika Amenities – restaurant & bar, fridge, Wi-Fi, TV
Meals included:	Breakfast
Cycling options:	27-73 miles (45-116 km)

Day 10 (Monday) — Hokitika to the Wilderness Lodge at Arthur's Pass

After a short van shuttle in the morning, we'll start our easy day of cycling from the town of Stillwater, heading in the direction of the Southern Alps. After a relaxing lunch in Moana, we'll finish the day with a gorgeous bike ride leading to the base of the mountains. From there we take an exhilarating drive up and over Arthur's Pass to the Wilderness Lodge at Arthur's Pass, our home for the final two nights of our trip. And with New Zealand being home to 30 million sheep, it is only appropriate that this lodge is located on a 4,000-acre merino sheep farm. Enjoy complimentary naturalist-led activities in the late afternoon.

Accommodations:	Wilderness Lodge at Arthur's Pass Amenities – restaurant & bar, store, laundry, Wi-Fi, <u>no</u> TV, several complimentary activities
Meals included:	Breakfast and dinner
Cycling options:	34 miles (55 km)

Day 11 (Tuesday) — Layover Day at the Wilderness Lodge, Arthur's Pass

For our final full day in New Zealand, the Lodge offers a wide array of activities. Many folks chose to sit back and chill at this most wonderful resort, and maybe even do some laundry before heading off on your flight tomorrow.

On a more active level, we highly encourage everyone to sign up for one of the wonderful hikes or kayaking trips led by the Lodge's naturalist guides.

During your stay, make sure you don't miss their complimentary sheep farm tour. You will learn about the sheep farming life from a real sheep farmer (who is in charge of 3,000 sheep). You will also get to watch their sheep dogs in action, hand feed some of their baby lambs, and perhaps see some of their merino sheep being sheared. By the end of the day, you'll know exactly how this superfine merino wool ends up in your Smartwool or Icebreaker clothing.

Tonight we will have one last dinner together, toasting our most wonderful New Zealand vacation together.

Accommodations:	Wilderness Lodge at Arthur's Pass Amenities – restaurant & bar, store, laundry, Wi-Fi, <u>no</u> TV, several complimentary activities
Meals included:	Breakfast, lunch, and dinner
Cycling options:	None

Day 12 (Wednesday) — Feb. 17, Mar. 3, or Mar. 17 – Fly back to the States, or Stay Longer in New Zealand

If you wish to start your day early, you may sign up for the Lodge's complimentary guided walk before breakfast. At 9:00 am both vans will depart for Christchurch. Along the way we'll stop for a one-hour hike at the Castle Hill/Kura Tawhiti Conservation Area. In 2002 the Dalai Lama paid a visit to Castle Hill, and he was so taken by this magical limestone scenery that he named the area a "Spiritual Center of the Universe."

Our estimated time of arrival at Christchurch airport is 12:00 pm. If you're staying an extra night, we'd be happy to drop you off at your hotel. If you aren't in any rush to get to your hotel (or to the airport), we have one last thing to show you... we'll take you to a lovely café for lunch (on-your-own), which just happens to be combined with an outstanding shop selling merino wool clothing.

Meals included: Breakfast at the Wilderness Lodge.
Lunch and dinner on your own.

If you require further information regarding travel logistics, please request our "New Zealand Travel Information" document.

**We hope you enjoy your New Zealand Bike Tour in 2027.
If you have any questions, or would like to
confirm some spaces on this trip, please contact us soon.**