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## Top of the South Island - a 7 day New Zealand Tour



### Top of the South Island

Christchurch, Banks Peninsula, Akaroa, Arthurs Pass, Punakaiki, Westport, Murchison, Nelson, Kaiteriteri, Marlborough, Kaikoura & more...

Our Top of the South Island tour starts with 2 nights in Christchurch, time to explore the city and Banks Peninsula. Then over Arthurs Pass to the West Coast, to the dramatic coastline rich in history. From Westport we head north along the Buller River to Nelson for 2 nights. A morning cruise along the coast of the Abel Tasman National Park followed by lunch at Mapua. Next we head east through the extensive Marlborough wine region, with a visit to the Omas Aviation museum before continuing down the coast to Kaikoura. On the last day enjoying lunch and wine tasting in Waipara before flying home.

23rd Nov 2022 & 28th Apr 2023

\$2750pp twin share - Single Sup \$590

**Day 1** - After pick up at the door (all part of the Hinterland service) we take a direct flight to Christchurch and then its just a short transfer to our city hotel. Time here to relax or perhaps take a walk before we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

**Day 2** - It's out to Banks Peninsula. Our first stop is at Little River for a cuppa and to check out the local arts and crafts, before continuing on to the French influenced town of Akaroa. Here we visit the eclectic gardens of the Giants House - now rated as a Garden of International Significance and owned by renowned artist Josie Martin. Then you have some free time to explore the township and buy a light lunch if needed. On our return route to Christchurch we visit a sheep farm for a shearing and sheep dog show followed by homemade afternoon tea and cakes (so don't eat too much lunch!).

**Day 3** - We are off to traverse the Southern Alps by road\*. Departing Christchurch, we cross the Canterbury Plains, stopping for morning tea at Springfield, before climbing steeply up to Arthurs Pass. Time here for a lunch before heading over the pass to the West Coast, driving the scenic route past Lake Brunner we visit the historic Brunner Mine - location of New Zealand's worst mining disaster back in 1896. Time to look around this abandoned mine site before joining the main coast road north to Punakaiki to view the famous rock formations.

A short boardwalk takes you to the viewpoints where columns of water shoot skyward from rocks that resemble giant stacks of hotcakes. These rock formations started forming about 30 million years ago, when alternating layers of small marine creatures and sand became buried and compressed on the ocean floor. The outcome is cliffs and ravines with hundreds of horizontal slices along their vertical faces, like huge stacks of pancakes, a remarkable sight. We continue along the dramatic coast road with the wild seas to the left and steep forested mountains on our right. Our destination tonight is Westport. \*You have the option to ride the world famous TranzAlpine train to Greymouth for an additional charge instead of the road trip (if the train timetable allows).

**Day 4** - Our first visit today is to Westport's Coaltown Museum - as coal played a major part in the town's history. There are displays that focus on coal mining as well as maritime history, unionism, the communities, transport and the men who worked underground. Its a colourful and modern museum that brings the past to life and links the past to the present.

To get a real flavour of the arduous life of the coal workers we next head to Denniston, famed for its railway system that brought coal from the plateau 600 metres above sea level down to the coast for shipment out from Westport. Little remains of the extensive industrial buildings and equipment as nature has reclaimed the area but the "incline" can still be seen, a daunting sight as this was how people as well as coal travelled.

#### What's Included:

- 7 days of touring
- 6 nights quality accommodation
- Door to door service (Tauranga area)
- Quality air-conditioned vehicle
- Full commentary by your guide
- All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 5 dinners
- Return Air New Zealand flights
- Day trip to Akaroa & Banks Peninsula
- Visit to the Giants House Art Garden
- Sheep farm visit with afternoon tea
- Brunner Historic Mine site visit
- Coaltown Museum in Westport
- Boat cruise from Kaiteriteri
- Lunch at Mapua Wharf
- Nelson Classic Car Museum
- Omas Aviation Heritage Centre
- A Garden of Significance at Clarence
- Wine Tasting and lunch at Waipara

#### You will see:

- Akaroa and Banks Peninsula
- Christchurch City & Lyttelton
- The Canterbury Plains & Arthurs Pass
- Punakaiki Pancake Rocks
- Westport & The Denniston Plateau
- Buller Gorge & Murchison
- Nelson - Kaiteriteri and Mapua
- Pelorus Bridge & Havelock
- Marlborough & Waipara wine regions
- Kaikoura coastline & North Canterbury.

Returning to Westport we then head inland and follow the Buller River through to Murchison, for our lunch break. The Buller Gorge has some very narrow sections where the road has literally been cut into the rock face and is famous for having New Zealand's longest swing bridge at 110m length, time to give it a try if you want. After lunch we continue towards Nelson with stops to admire the scenery of this remote area.

Arriving in Nelson we visit an impressive private collection of over 150 cars, all in immaculate condition. From a little 1908 Renault AX, to classics of the 1950's including Vauxhalls, Triumphs and Cadillacs, through to the exquisite mastery of Jaguar and Ferrari. Relive memories of your father's or grandad's cars, maybe even spot your own dream car! It's then just a few minutes drive to our city centre hotel, our base for the next 2 nights. If you are not into classic cars then there are some options for you as well.

**Day 5** - Our first destination today is to the golden sand beach of Kaiteriteri where we board our cruise for a 2 hour trip along the picturesque Abel Tasman National Park coastline. You'll get a chance to see the world-famous Split Apple Rock and native Fur Seals in their natural habitat. Marvel at the golden sands and turquoise waters of the Astrolabe Roadstead, Anchorage, Bark Bay and Medlands Beach.

After our cruise it's just a short drive along the coast road to Mapua Wharf, our venue for our included lunch today at a stunning harbourside location. Relax and enjoy the views and the food with plenty of time after to browse the interesting boutique shops here in Mapua. Returning to Nelson the rest of the day is free for you to do as you wish. Maybe explore the town and the Cathedral (just across from the hotel). Dinner is not included this evening (may not even be needed after our great lunch) so you can dine as you please.

**Day 6** - Today we depart Nelson and head east to the Marlborough region with our first stop at Pelorus Bridge. Chance here to stretch our legs with a short walk to view the clear flowing river and maybe have a coffee at the cafe. We then continue on through Havelock, past extensive vineyards to Blenheim to the Omas Aviation Heritage Centre.

This is a world-class destination for the appreciation of historic aircraft. It's not just for aviation enthusiasts, as the centre tells the story of aviation during two World Wars. With the generosity of Sir Peter Jackson (as owner of the Great War collection) the exhibition brings to life the story of our wartime flying pioneers in a series of dioramas. Using the formidable creative talents of WingNut Films and enhanced by mannequins by Weta Workshop, you will be amazed at the realism of the displays.

We have time for lunch at the museum cafe before departing southwards along SH1 to Kaikoura. The road was badly damaged by the earthquake in 2016 and you can see how the land has risen almost 20 feet, exposing the once submerged seabed.

Before reaching Kaikoura we visit a very special garden that has been designed along bold classical lines, the result of over nearly four decades of hard work by its creators. This proudly run family operation incorporates nearly 10 acres of formal garden and provides a wealth of atmospheric vistas and settings nestled above the rugged Marlborough coastline. We enjoy afternoon tea here before departing for Kaikoura for our last night.

**Day 7** - On our last day of our tour we continue south along the dramatic Kaikoura coastline, with the Seaward Kaikoura mountain ranges seeming to force the road into the sea (which happened during the earthquake!) and into the gentler landscapes of North Canterbury. This is an area of extensive sheep farming and our first stop is the small rural town of Cheviot - plenty of choices here for a morning coffee or to browse the shops.

Heading further south, our next stop is at one of the leading wineries of the Waipara wine region. We begin with wine tasting, followed by a lovely lunch (included) at this great winery. What a great way to round off our trip around the 'Top of the South', with good friends and wonderful food and wine. If you want to stock up on a few bottles of great value wine then we will be happy to have the wine delivered to you when we return.

We have just a short drive into Christchurch for our mid afternoon flights back home.

*All Hinterland multi-day tours can be taken by clients from any region of New Zealand or Australia. Please contact us for details. Additional charges may apply.*



\* Please note, that unless specified in the itinerary we do not usually include the cost of lunches or morning and afternoon tea stops in the tour cost, but we always make stops where there are a range of options available so you can choose what you want, and have flexibility to do things on your own.

This tour can be added onto our South Island Ultimate Highlights 14 day tour or the 9 day Best of the Lower South tour for an ultimate South Island Tour.

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