

# NEW ZEALAND

2023-2024 GUIDED HOLIDAYS



**FIRST CHOICE** 3-17 day Fully Curated Experiences From page 24

**BEST BUYS** 8-21 day Flexible Guided Holidays From page 34



# Southern Spectacular



## Highlights

### Local Connection

Angie and Stan Taylor are the kind of people you will want as best friends. After visiting their lush estate in Tekapo – Angie's afternoon tea is a dream – they will be.

### Insider Knowledge

Cruising World Heritage listed Milford Sound/Piopiotahi is a 'pinch me' experience. The only way it gets better is with a guide pointing out dolphins and fur seals.

### Cultural Immersion

Farming is a big deal in New Zealand, as you'll fast discover at Walter Peak Station. Learn about life on the land, then sit down to a barbecue dinner.

### Sustainable Footprints

MAKE TRAVEL MATTER EXPERIENCE Pomona Island Charitable Trust works with passionate volunteers to rehabilitate the South Island's largest inland island. You get to be a part of the magic.

### Wildlife & Nature

Snow-capped mountains, a mirror-like lake, white-water rivers and vine-laced fields. Queenstown is blessed with natural assets.

## 1 Welcome to Christchurch

At once forward-thinking and fun, Christchurch is the kind of city you could lose yourself in for a week – or more. You have this afternoon, so make the most of it. We recommend riding the rails on the vintage Christchurch Tram, a narrated hop-on, hop-off experience that loops around town, your host pointing out historic architecture and new developments that have popped up since the 2010/2011 earthquakes. Time to meet your fellow adventure-seekers over a Welcome Reception. **Hotel: Distinction.**

## 2 Christchurch – Twizel

If you didn't get your Christchurch bearings yesterday, you certainly will on today's city tour, taking in the record-breaking Transitional Cathedral – who knew you could build a church from cardboard? The buildings of the city fade into a patchwork of farms as you ease across the Canterbury Plains toward Morelea. Here, Angie and Stan Taylor welcome you to their home with a slap-up Be My Guest afternoon tea and tales about life on the land. And this land is truly dramatic, backdropped by powdery mountains and cut with turquoise lakes, none quite as pretty as Lake Tekapo, on its banks the stone-hewn Church of the Good Shepherd. **Hotel: Mackenzie Country. B BG DW**

## 3 Twizel – Dunedin

More water awaits, your journey following the Waitaki River to mighty Benmore Dam; it powers 300,000 New Zealand homes. You're en route to Dunedin, replete with rolling green meadows and grand stone castles. It kind of feels like you've been transported to Scotland – small wonder it's known as the 'Edinburgh of the South'. Afternoon at your leisure, we recommend a cruise to spot penguins and fur seals along the Otago Peninsula, or perhaps a visit to Speight's Brewery – a New Zealand institution. There's always that castle to explore. **Hotel: Scenic Southern Cross. B DW**

## 4 Dunedin – Te Anau

Leave Dunedin's bucolic sheep-farming countryside behind as you venture into World Heritage listed Fiordland National Park, a place of yawning gorges and gem-like glaciers, and azure lakes so large they have their own islands. Case in point Pomona Island, where a charitable trust of

passionate volunteers works to restore flora and fauna. With your help. Your cruise across Lake Manapouri is remote and ravishing during the day – it's even prettier at night, when glowworms fill caves. Can we tempt you?

**Hotel: Distinction Te Anau. B DW**

## 5 Te Anau – Queenstown

Nature rules today, from the moment you depart Te Anau and begin your journey deep into the heart of Fiordland National Park. Think native rainforests, beech forests, alluvial flats and meadows; Mirror Lakes perfectly reflecting mountain scenery; and precipitous lookouts holding guard over alpine rivers. And this is just the entrée. The main course is Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, where you cruise in the company of dolphins that frolic under the torrent of mighty Bowen and Stirling Falls, and gaze at misty escarpments so sheer they appear to cleave off the edge of the Earth. Life in perspective. **Hotel: Millennium, 2 nights. B**

## 6 Queenstown Free Time

Take today at your own pace. Like things fast and furious? Feel the wind in your hair on the high-octane Shotover Jet, perhaps. Prefer wine to get your heart started? See why Central Otago makes some of the world's most raved about cool-climate pinots on a cellar door tour. Wherever your daily wanderings take you, reunite with your companions come dusk to glide across Lake Wakatipu aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw, your barbecue Highlight Dinner served on the grounds of Walter Peak High Country Farm. **B HD**

## 7 Queenstown – Franz Josef /Waiau

In the shadow of the Remarkables, Queenstown is pretty spectacular. But it has some stiff good-looks competition from neighbouring Arrowtown, with its movie-set tree-lined avenues and 19th-century buildings that once housed gold-rush fortune-seekers. Things grow well in this verdant countryside, from cherries to pinot grapes and all manner of stone fruit. Have you ever tasted a freshly-plucked peach handed to you by a farmer? Prepare for a flavour explosion. The next explosion is a visual one as you arrive at Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere. Get some perspective of this immense ice fall on an optional helicopter flight – you may even get to land on it. **Hotel: Scenic Franz Josef Glacier (Douglas Wing). B DW**





Christchurch Tram

**FIRSTLIGHTTRAVEL**   
Your South Pacific Travel Specialists

## 6 Included Experiences

### Departure Dates

2022	2023	2024
Oct 11	Jan 03, 10, 17, 24, 31	Jan 02, 09, 16, 23, 30
Nov 01, 22	Feb 07, 14, 21, 28	Feb 06, 13, 20, 27
Dec 06, 27	Mar 07, 14, 21, 28	Mar 05, 12, 19, 26
	Apr 04, 11, 18, 25	
	May 02	
	Jun 13	
	Jul 04	
	Sep 12, 19, 26	
	Oct 10, 17, 24, 31	
	Nov 07, 14, 21, 28	
	Dec 05, 12, 19, 26	

A limited number of single rooms are available.  
Ask your local travel agent at time of booking.

See available prices and departure dates from 01 Apr 2024 at [aatkings.com](http://aatkings.com). Or contact your local travel agent.

### Dining

9 Full buffet breakfasts B      1 Highlight Dinner HD  
1 Lunch L      5 Dinners with wine DW  
1 Be My Guest Afternoon Tea BG 1 Farewell Dinner FD

### Flight Information

Day 1 – flights to arrive by 4.00pm into Christchurch Airport  
Day 10 – flights to depart any time from Christchurch Airport  
Flights are not included in the holiday price

#### 8 Franz Josef/Waiau – Punakaiki

Wandering Hokitika's windswept shore on the West Coast feels a bit like you've discovered the end of the Earth. The town's other natural beauty is pounamu (native jade or greenstone). Artisans will show you just how talented they are at carving jewellery and mementos. Nature carved Punakaiki's Pancake Rocks and blowholes, where waves thunder through cracks in the Earth. **Hotel: Ocean View Retreat. B DW**

#### 9 Punakaiki – Christchurch

Wine may steal the scene across much of New Zealand, but at legendary Monteith's Brewery, beer rules. Sip your way through a tasting paddle of XPA, IPA, lager and pale ale because, hey, you're not driving to the station where your TranzAlpine train awaits. This is one of those experiences where the journey matters just as much as the destination, as you sweep through tunnels and over viaducts with panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, icy rivers, beech forests, gorges and river valleys. What a way to end a day. **Hotel: Distinction. B L FD**

#### 10 Farewell from Christchurch

Wait, the last 10 days flew by. Return home with new friends, a full SD card on your camera – and even more memories.. **B**

