

Marlborough Region - Kaikoura - Arthur's Pass - The West Coast & The Glaciers - Queenstown

Whales, Dolphins, Alpine, Glaciers, West Coast
Short Hop - 4 Days 3 Night

Code: SH06

Day 1... Marlborough (Nelson/Blenheim/Picton) to Arthur's Pass

Your guide will collect you from your accommodation and head south along the east coast. Arriving in Kaikoura, where the mountains meet the sea, there is a possibility of a scenic flight to see the whales, which frequent this particular piece of coast all year round. Enjoy lunch at a seaside bistro and wine tasting before heading inland towards the mountains and Arthur's Pass.

In the heart of the Southern Alps, Arthur's Pass National Park has an incredible diversity of flora and landscape. They range from eastern beech clad hills and tussock valleys to the luxuriant rain forest in the west. The highest mountains have glaciers and surrounding them are tussock basins, flowering herbs and alpine grasses. Stop at Castle Hill Rocks for a fascinating walk amongst these limestone outcrops - a sacred Maori site.

At the end of the day, head to Wilderness Lodge for the next two nights.

Day 2... Arthur's Pass

Today take a guided walk or relax and enjoy the stunning surroundings of the alpine vistas.



Day 3... Arthur's Pass to Glacier Country

You will travel through the Arthur's Pass National Park and depart Canterbury province for Westland ("The West Coast"). This route was originally used by the Maori to move greenstone (jade) from the west coast, and later as a link to the gold rush fields. Follow rivers that flow to the West Coast and observe the changes to the rainforest and the many varieties of ferns that dominate this region. Visit Hokitika, once the capital of Westland and a roaring gold mining town, now a bustling centre of art and craft shops where greenstone and gold feature.

As you journey south you will see the West Coast forests and further evidence of the last Ice Age in the kettle lakes created by the melting ice sheets. You will then arrive at Glacier Country and a walk can be made to view the Franz Josef Glacier pushing into rainforest - truly incredible!

Your overnight stay will be in Franz Josef village.

Day 4: Franz Josef to Queenstown

After exploring both Franz Josef and Fox Glacier and Lake Matheson we travel south to reach the mighty Haast River Valley. Following the Haast Highway, observe how the landscape again changes dramatically as the road climbs over the Haast Pass from the dense rain forest of the West Coast to the drier tussock lands of Otago. After the Haast Pass, the road skirts first alongside Lake Wanaka and then making a slight turn and rising over a ridge, Lake Hawea is before you. The road follows the shoreline of this lake and then you reach Wanaka village.

From Wanaka, head over the rugged and remote Crown Range, the site of gold diggings in the 1860's and arrive in quaint old gold mining village of Arrowtown.

It is then a short drive to your Queenstown accommodation where your Canterbury Trails guide will bid you farewell.

Tour Inclusions:

- Private travel by deluxe mini-van
- 3 Café lunches
- Picnic morning or afternoon teas
- Guided walks to explore the alpine and rainforest landscapes (as required)
- Fully escorted with local knowledgeable guide
- Flexible itinerary

Not included:

- Optional activities
- Accommodation
- Meals (unless otherwise stated)
- Flights

