

Canterbury Trails

PERSONALLY GUIDED TOURS

Christchurch- Arthurs Pass - West Coast - Glaciers – Queenstown

TranzAlpine, Valleys, Coastlines, Geology, History

3Days 2Nights
Tour Code: SH04

Day 1: Christchurch to Franz Josef

Depart Christchurch on the world famous TranzAlpine™ train and cross the vast expanses of the Canterbury Plains. Travel through the dramatic gorge of the Waimakariri River and enter Arthur's Pass National Park. Here, your guide will meet you and show you some of the highlights of the national park.

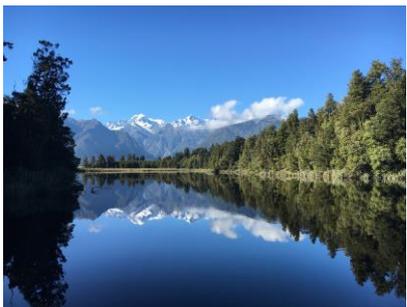
-The highest mountains have glaciers and surrounding them are tussock basins, flowering herbs and alpine grasses. You will travel through the Arthur's Pass National Park and depart Canterbury province for Westland ("The West Coast"). This route was originally used by the Maori to move greenstone (jade) from the west coast, and later as a link to the gold rush fields. Today will reveal great mountain valleys and you will marvel at the road as it winds its way down the spectacular Otira Gorge, a Geographer's dream.

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. A stop will be made in 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 and on a Pacific Island - truly incredible! At the end of the day, your guide will take you to your accommodation where you will be staying for the next two nights

Day 2: Glacier Country

A day to explore the glaciated landscape of the Franz and Fox Glacier region. Walks are available to the terminal face of the Franz Josef or Fox Glacier and to a viewpoint to witness the glacier's descent down the mountain into the rainforest. Here you can also experience a guided hike on the glaciers with an alpine guide or perhaps an exciting helicopter ride to view the Southern Alps with a snow landing on the upper reaches of the glacier. (Please note that the optional 'On the glacier hike' and helicopter trips are not included in the tour cost and are subject to the weather).



A beautiful and tranquil walk can be taken around the edge of Lake Matheson, the "mirror lake". It is here that incredible reflections of Mount Cook and Mount Tasman in the lake can often be seen on a clear day.

Or a visit to Okarito where you can meet some "coasters" in a village with a population of 18 and depending on the weather and the tides a nature boat tour may be done or kayak (own expense) on the lagoon. Your guide is at your disposal to explore and enjoy this almost untouched natural playground.

Day 3: Glacier Country to Queenstown

From Glacier Country, you will travel south and 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.

Inclusions:

- Travel by deluxe mini-van
- Picnic morning or afternoon teas
- Café lunches on each day
- Guided walks to explore the alpine and rainforest landscapes (as required)
- TranzAlpine train Christchurch to Arthur's Pass on Day 1
- Fully escorted with local knowledgeable guide

Not included:

- Guest accommodations, breakfasts, evening meals or optional activities

Depart Christchurch at 7.30am on Day 1, finish in Queenstown at 5.30pm on Day 3

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WE'LL GUIDE YOU
PROPERLY
SO YOUR ADVENTURE
UNFOLDS AT YOUR PACE

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