

Otago Itineraries

FIVE DAY ITINERARY

100% Pure Nature

Summary:

Day 1 Christchurch to Oamaru

- Pick up rental car
- Drive to Oamaru
- Watch the little blue penguins come in from the ocean.

Day 2 Oamaru to Dunedin

- This morning drive to Dunedin
- Stop at the Moeraki Boulders
- Visit Otago Museum, and take in the New Zealand Natural History Gallery.

Day 3 Dunedin New Zealand's Eco-Tourism Capital

- Otago Peninsula ogansied eco-tours
- Royal albatross
- World's rarest penguin – the yellow-eyed penguin
- Hooker's sealions, fur seals, leopard seals, and marine and wading birds
- New Zealand Marine Studies Centre and Aquarium
- Larnach Castle, the only castle in the Southern Hemisphere.

Day 4 Dunedin to Invercargill (via the Southern Scenic Route through the Catlins)

- Travel along the Southern Scenic route to Nugget Point
- Curio Bay with its 18 million-year-old fossilised forest
- Waipapa Point – the last wooden lighthouse built in New Zealand
- Drive on to Invercargill

Day 5 Invercargill – Stewart Island - Christchurch

- Day trip to Stewart Island, home of the kiwi
- Ferry from Bluff to Halfmoon Bay on Stewart Island
- Travel around the island with one of the local tour companies
- Lunch
- Ferry back to Bluff and then on to Invercargill
- Fly to Christchurch.

Transport by rental car – pick up Christchurch and drop off Invercargill

Domestic flight IVC/CHC

All accommodation options

100% Pure Nature

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Christchurch to Oamaru

(Total driving distance 247km, 3 hours)

On arrival in Christchurch collect your rental car and drive to Oamaru. Oamaru is the heart of what is known as Whitestone Waitaki, due to the proliferation of the local limestone. In the evening take time to watch the little blue penguins come in from the ocean.

Day 2 Oamaru to Dunedin

(Total driving distance 111km, 1½ hours)

This morning drive to Dunedin via the coastal roads taking you past the small seaside hamlet of Kakanui. Further toward Dunedin stop at the Moeraki Boulders. The boulders are large calcite concretions once underwater that have over millions of years literally fallen out of the hillsides and on to one of New Zealand's most picturesque beaches. The road winds around beaches and over hills to reach New Zealand's eco-capital – Dunedin. Make sure you visit the splendid Otago Museum, and take in the New Zealand Natural History Gallery.

Day 3 Dunedin New Zealand's Eco-Tourism Capital

No nature experience would be complete without devoting a day to exploring the wonders of the Otago Peninsula. Organised eco-tours take in the world's only mainland breeding colony of the royal albatross, the world's rarest penguin – the yellow-eyed penguin, Hooker's sealions, fur seals, leopard seals, and marine and wading birds. Visit the New Zealand Marine Studies Centre and Aquarium in the small seaside village of Portobello where you can view the marine life of the southern waters, and even touch some of the shallow seashore creatures. No visit to the Peninsula would be complete without a visit to Larnach Castle, the only castle in the Southern Hemisphere.

Day 4 Dunedin to Invercargill (via the Southern Scenic Route through the Catlins)

(Total driving distance 256km, 5 hours)

Travel along the Southern Scenic route to Nugget Point where seabirds and sea mammals are in abundance. At the Southern end of the Catlins there is Curio Bay with its 18 million-year-old fossilised forest, exposed on a rocky platform. The forest is best viewed at low tide and provides clues about the ancient origins of New Zealand's unique forests. At Waipapa Point is the last wooden lighthouse built in New Zealand. Throughout the Catlins there are opportunities to view yellow-eyed penguins, Hooker sealions, Hector dolphins, Fern birds and Podocarp forests with trees such as the miro and rimu. Drive on to Invercargill and enjoy dinner in one of the many restaurants.

Day 5 Invercargill – Stewart Island - Christchurch

(Total driving distance 27km to Bluff, ½ an hour each way)

Take a day trip to Stewart Island, home of the kiwi. Ferry from Bluff to Halfmoon Bay on Stewart Island and travel around the island with one of the local tour companies. Lunch at one of the wonderful restaurants or cafes on the island and then take a stroll up to Observation Rock. From here you can get an appreciation of the size of the island and excellent views over Paterson Inlet. Ferry back to Bluff and then on to Invercargill to fly to Christchurch.

100% Pure Heritage

Summary:

Day 1 Christchurch to Oamaru

- Drive to Oamaru
- Stay in one of the many heritage manors or stately homes.

Day 2 Oamaru to Dunedin

- This morning leave Oamaru for Dunedin
- Visit Kuirheka homestead – a large Victorian farm homestead with an impressive collection of Victoriana and weapons
- Larnach Castle
- Fort Taiaroa home of the historic Armstrong Disappearing Gun

Day 3 Dunedin

- Otago Settlers Museum
- Guided City Walk – architectural highlights
- Speights Brewery guided tour
- Antique shops
- Taieri Gorge Railway – heritage train journey

Day 4 Dunedin to Invercargill

- Dunedin Public Art Gallery
- Olveston
- Depart Dunedin for Invercargill
- Hokonui Moonshine Museum
- Croydon Aircraft Company – take a ride in a Tiger Moth
- Travel on to Invercargill

Day 5 Invercargill to Christchurch

- Spend the day exploring Invercargill
- Visit the Water Tower, this 42.5m high city landmark in red brick was completed in 1889 and gives a fantastic view of Invercargill city
- The Southland Museum and Art Gallery , Niho O Te Taniwha is the major cultural organization for the Southland region
- Anderson Park Art Gallery
- Fly back to Christchurch.

Transport by rental car – pick up Christchurch and drop off Invercargill

Domestic flight IVC/CHC

All accommodation options with suggested heritage-stay in Oamaru

100% Pure Heritage

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Christchurch to Oamaru

(Total driving distance 247km, 3 hours)

On arrival in Christchurch collect your rental car and drive to Oamaru. Oamaru is famous for its streetscapes of original Victorian Buildings built of local limestone. Doric, ionic and Corinthian columns abound. Stay in one of the many heritage manors or stately homes.

Day 2 Oamaru to Dunedin

(Total driving distance 111km, 1½ hours)

This morning leave Oamaru for Dunedin. On the way visit Kuirheka homestead – a large Victorian farm homestead with an impressive collection of Victoriana and weapons.

Dunedin is noted for having the finest collection of Victorian and Edwardian architecture in the Southern Hemisphere. The cityscape is punctuated with spires and towers of notable neo-gothic buildings and stately homes. Take a 20 minute drive along the Otago Peninsula to visit the Southern Hemisphere's only castle – Larnach Castle and learn about the scandalous and tragic lives of the Larnach family. A further 30 minute drive along the Peninsula takes you to Fort Taiaroa home of the historic Armstrong Disappearing Gun and catacomb of passages constructed to protect Dunedin against the threat of Russian invasion in the late 19th Century.

Day 3 Dunedin

This morning visit the Settlers Museum which outlines the history of the city of Dunedin and region of Otago from the earliest Maori settlers to more recent arrivals. From the Settlers Museum you can take a Guided City Walk which takes in architectural highlights in the context of the city's history. Take time to celebrate over 125 years of brewing the South Island's favourite beer on the Speights Brewery guided tour. Dunedin is renowned for its antique shops stocking enviable examples of the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian items imported and crafted by the locals. In the afternoon board the Taieri Gorge Railway heritage train journey that snakes its way through tunnels and over viaducts along the historic Taieri Gorge.

Day 4 Dunedin to Invercargill

(Total driving distance 217km, 3 hours)

This morning visit the Dunedin Public Art Gallery which boasts New Zealand's finest collection of European Arts. A must-see is Olveston, a Jacobean-style mansion filled with antique treasures – left to the city by the last family member, and now open for the public to experience. Depart Dunedin for Invercargill and along the way stop in Gore at the Hokonui Moonshine Museum. Discover the legend of Hokonui Moonshine – the unique illicit whisky product of the stills hidden in the bush-covered hills bearing the same name. Ten minutes drive from Gore is the Croydon Aircraft Company. Step back in time to the gentle elegant aviation era of the 1930's – view vintage aircraft being restored and take a ride in a Tiger Moth. Have dinner at the quality restaurant there, then travel on to Invercargill and stay.

Day 5 Invercargill to Christchurch

Spend the day exploring Invercargill with its wonderful historic buildings and art galleries. Visit the Water Tower, this 42.5m high city landmark in red brick was completed in 1889 and gives

a fantastic view of Invercargill city. The Southland Museum and Art Gallery , Niho O Te Taniwha is the major cultural organization for the Southland region. Situated in the largest pyramid in the Southern Hemisphere (27m high) a major feature of the museum is the roaring 40's subantartic experience. A short drive from the city center will take you to Anderson Park Art Gallery where a wonderful collection of New Zealand art can be found. Fly back to Christchurch.

100% Pure Gold

Summary:

Day 1 Dunedin

- Arrive in Dunedin

Day 2 Dunedin

- Visit the Otago Settlers Museum
- Take a Guided City
- Larnach

Day 3 Dunedin – Queenstown

- Dunedin Public Art Gallery
- Olveston
- Taieri Gorge Railway heritage train & coach to Queenstown.

Day 4 Queenstown

- 4-wheel drive safari into Skippers Canyon
- Mine for gold
- Take a jetboat ride, flying fox or bungy
- Visit Arrowtown

Day 5 Queenstown

- Winery visit
- Fly out

Domestic flight to Dunedin

Rental Car option – pick up CHC, d/o DUD

All accommodation options

100% Pure Gold

Detailed Itinerary:

Day 1 Dunedin

Upon arrival in Christchurch catch a connecting domestic flight to Dunedin. Dunedin is a city of grand Victorian and Edwardian buildings constructed at the height of a financial boom – led by a gold rush in the late 1800s. Due to the enormity of the gold rush that brought settlers over from the fields in Victoria, Australia, Dunedin was New Zealand's financial capital. Imports and people flowed into the city as the gold travelled to other corners of the world.

Day 2 Dunedin

This morning visit the Settlers Museum which outlines the history of the city of Dunedin and region of Otago from the earliest Maori settlers to more recent arrivals. From the Settlers Museum you can take a Guided City Walk which takes in architectural highlights in the context of the city's history. Dunedin is renowned for its antique shops stocking enviable examples of the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian items imported and crafted by the locals. Take a 20 minute drive along the Otago Peninsula to visit the Southern Hemisphere's only castle – Larnach Castle and learn about the scandalous and tragic lives of the Larnach family.

Day 3 Dunedin – Queenstown

This morning visit the Dunedin Public Art Gallery which boasts New Zealand's finest collection of European Arts. A must-see is Olveston, a Jacobean-style mansion filled with antique treasures – left to the city by the last family member, and now open for the public to experience. In the afternoon board the Taieri Gorge Railway heritage train journey that snakes its way through tunnels and over viaducts along the historic Taieri Gorge. The train used to service the gold fields of Central Otago. A coach will take you from the train and on to Queenstown.

Day 4 Queenstown

This morning join a 4-wheel drive safari into New Zealand's version of the 'Grand Canyon' following in the tracks of the goldminers along the Shotover River, 'The Richest River in the World'. The road was carved out of sheer rock in the 1880's in an impressive testament to the miner's bold and tenacious search for gold. Cross the spectacular suspension bridge now used for bungy jumping and head up to the cemetery and old schoolhouse of the past. Mine for gold, take a jetboat ride, flying fox or bungy in this ruggedly spectacular region of Otago. Later visit the historic goldmining town of Arrowtown. Wander the banks of the Arrow River and discover life as it was for the thousands of Chinese miners whose humble village remains tucked into the riverbank. Pop into Ah Lum's store or crouch to enter tiny dwellings.

Day 5 Queenstown

Before departing Queenstown be sure to visit, or at least sample fine wines, one of the many gold medal award winning wineries in the region.

100% Pure Outdoors

Summary:

Day 1 Dunedin

- Arrive

Day 2 Dunedin

- Mt Cargill and Organ Pipes Track walk – 4 hrs return
- Tunnel Beach Walk – two hours return

Day 3 Catlins

- Travel through the Catlins
- Nugget Point lighthouse
- Purakaunui falls
- 5-hour beech forest walk along the Catlins river
- Stay the night in one of the many bed and breakfasts in the area.

Day 4 Catlins – Invercargill

- Continue your exploration of the Catlins
- Visit Lake Wilkie
- A 20-minute bush and beach walk – Cathedral caves
- Curio Bay home to one of the world's finest fossil forests
- Accommodation in Invercargill.

Day 5 Invercargill – Christchurch

- Make your way back to Christchurch for your flight back home.

Rental Car or Motorhome pick up/drop off Christchurch

All accommodation options

100% Pure Outdoors

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Dunedin

Upon arrival in Christchurch catch a connecting domestic flight to Dunedin, pick up your rental car. Dunedin city is known for its beautiful inner city bush walks. When Dunedin was established in the 1800s, the city designers allowed for a "green belt" above the central business district that would forever be used for recreation by city residents. Today that legacy remains and provides a unique opportunity to access the native New Zealand bush as it would have been centuries ago prior to the arrival of the European settler.

Day 2 Dunedin

This morning make your way to the start of the Mt Cargill and Organ Pipes Track walk. This walk is a distance of 4km and takes approximately 4 hours return. The track goes to a lookout high above Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula with commanding 360 degree views . You walk past the "Organ Pipes", aptly named hexagonal basalt columns that protrude towards the sky. On your return to the city head towards the beach suburb of St Clair and enjoy an ocean-side restaurant meal. From here make your way to the Tunnel Beach Walk. Tunnel Beach Walk takes one hour from the carpark. The tunnel was dug down to this private beach in the 1870s by workmen employed by John Cargill, the fifth son of the region's co-founder Captain William Cargill (after whom Mt Cargill is named).

Day 3 Dunedin - Catlins

(Total driving distance 102km, 1½ hours)

Travel through the Catlins on the Southern Scenic route and stop at Nugget Point lighthouse. Abundant food sources mean Nugget Point is a popular place for wildlife such as birds, penguins and seals. Continue on to Purakaunui falls. Surrounded by bush, this magnificent waterfall cascades 20 metres over three distinct tiers. Stretch your legs and take a 5-hour beech forest walk along the Catlins river. Stay the night in one of the many bed and breakfasts in the area.

Day 4 Catlins - Invercargill

(Total driving distance 193km, 2 hours)

Continue your exploration of the Catlins and visit Lake Wilkie a reflective and peaceful lake. A 20-minute bush and beach walk will take you to spectacular caves shaped like a towering cathedral, aptly named the Cathedral caves and accessible only at low tide. Spend some time at Curio Bay home to one of the world's finest fossil forests. These fossilized trees similar to Kauri and Matai lie embedded on coastal bedrock. They are remnants of a 180 million year old Jurassic age forest. Finish your days journey enjoying a well deserved rest in one of the comfortable accommodation in Invercargill.

Day 5 Invercargill - Christchurch

(Total driving distance 575km, 7 hours)

Make your way back to Christchurch for your flight back home.