



## Alps Tussock & Island Time Short Break South Island: Christchurch to Invercargill 7 days

This tour departs from Christchurch and heads south into the Mackenzie Basin. Walk beside the brilliant aqua waters of Lake Tekapo and up to a viewpoint giving stunning views over to the snow capped alps. From our accommodation, watch the dawn break over Aoraki/Mt Cook, and do a walk through the alpine herb fields beneath this majestic peak to a glacial lake. Back on the road to the South, cross the Lindis Pass and into Central Otago. Enjoy the relaxing atmosphere from our grand old boutique hotel in the historic precinct of Clyde. Soak up the schist buildings, willows, hollyhocks and ripe stone-fruit, and do a walk amongst the ancient rock tors, tussock and wild thyme. Sample local pinot noir and other award winning wines. Enjoy the transition to lush green farmland and virgin podocarp forests as we make our way through the Catlins. Look for seals and yellow-eyed penguins on the pristine windswept beaches, and view the fossilised forest, dating back to the Jurassic times. Brave Foveaux Straight on our short journey across to Stewart Island. Discover the surprisingly temperate oasis that is Halfmoon Bay. Join a local 'kiwispotting' tour at dusk, where seeing our national icon foraging for it's dinner in the wild is all but guaranteed. Meet the local characters and resident Kaka population as you explore the many walking tracks in the bay, or take up the option of a sea kayak tour, fishing trip, bird watching tour or extended flight/tramp to Mason's Bay. Returning to the mainland, your journey comes to an end in Invercargill.

### Day 1 Christchurch – Aoraki/Mt Cook

We depart Christchurch and head south over the Canterbury Plains to Lake Tekapo. This surreal lake is a terrific aqua blue colour due to the presence of glacial rock flour in the water, and is most striking against the yellow and brown hues of the surrounding hills of the Mackenzie Basin. We enjoy this stunning vista with a gentle hike [3hrs; Grade 2] up to a viewpoint providing a tremendous 360 degree view of the lake and Alps beyond. Our drive continues along the scenic canal system to Lake Pukaki where the imposing peak of Aoraki/Mt Cook can be seen in the distance. We spend the next two evenings in a B&B lodge on a high country station, with a million dollar view of Aoraki/Mt Cook. (L/D)

### Day 2 Aoraki/Mt Cook

Spend the day in the awe inspiring Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park. Hike up to the Sealy Tarns [3.5hrs; Grade 3+] for mind-boggling views of the surrounding mountains, or alternatively do a gentle hike up the Hooker Valley to a glacial lake [4hrs; Grade 2]. Options for the remainder of the day include visiting the newly opened Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre Museum; a boat tour on the glacier lake at the foot of the Tasman Glacier; horse riding in the high country terrain; or if you're up for it, take a stunning scenic helicopter flight round the many peaks of the park. (B/L/D)

### Day 3 Aoraki/Mt Cook - Clyde

We make our way over the Lindis Pass and into the dry region of Central Otago. Walk along a gentle ridgeline that takes us through alpine herb fields, great schist rock tors and gold mining relics that afford magnificent views of the basin below [3hrs; Grade 2]. Alternatively walk beside the Clutha River under the restful willow trees where, during the 1860's, gold rush miners would have abound [3hrs; Grade 1]. We stay at a beautifully restored historic hotel in the old gold mining precinct of Clyde, and eat out at a local restaurant. (B/L)

### Day 4 Clyde - The Catlins

Travel down the Clutha River valley into the remote Catlins area, at the southern tip of the island. The Catlins is a special place with its beautiful forests, waterfalls and wildlife, yet it remains largely 'non-touristy'. First up, we visit a seal colony on a battered rocky point with great views of the South Pacific Ocean and beyond. Explore the picture-perfect waterfalls

## Tour Map



## Grade



## Tour Details

Tour Price: \$2,195  
Single supplement: \$450

Deposit: \$400  
What's included? See bottom of page.

## Departure Dates:

Nov 5 - 11 2010  
Dec 6 - 12 2010  
Jan 18 - 24 2011  
Feb 7 - 13 2011  
Mar 18 - 24 2011

Tours outside these dates are run on demand for groups of 8+ people and can be customised to suit your requirements.

nestled amongst the lush virgin native podocarp forest, the vast sweeping white beaches, and hidden lakes with several shorter walks [Grade 1]. We make our way to our accommodation near Curio Bay, home of an incredible petrified forest that is visible at low tide - the original floor of the Jurassic forest, dating back some 160 million years. The very rare Yellow Eyed Penguins are resident in this bay, and we may be lucky enough to see the birds arriving back from a days fishing at sea in the late afternoon. Hector's dolphins, one of the smallest dolphin's in the world, are also resident in the bay. (B/L/D)

#### **Day 5 The Catlins – Stewart Island**

We head down the coast to the port town of Bluff where we catch the ferry over to Stewart Island, arriving on the island for lunch. Stewart Island lies 30km south of the South Island. It has a population of around 400 people, and only 20km of roads. It is our newest National Park, covering 157,000 hectares, or around 85% of the island. The quaint and friendly village of Oban is our base as we explore the island. In the afternoon your guides take you on a guided walk through the village and along a lovely coastal track with great views into Patterson's Inlet [3hrs; Grade 2]. Our giant forest parrot, the Kaka, abounds in this area. Then at twilight we take a locally guided tour out to an area where our rare and endanger kiwi are known to feed in the evening – this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to see kiwi in the natural habitat – something that most New Zealanders have never seen. (B/L/D)

#### **Day 6 Stewart Island**

Today we have left the options open to you to fill in as you please – venture off on one of the many walks in the area; take a tour to a wildlife sanctuary island; fly to the remote western side of the island and do a challenging 5-6 hour walk back; go sea kayaking or out on a boat fishing. In the evening we will catch up on the day's adventures at one of the local restaurants. (B)

#### **Day 7 Stewart Island – Invercargill**

We take the ferry back to the mainland and the city of Invercargill, where your tour ends. You will be dropped off at the airport or within the central city. (B)

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### **Included in the tour package:**

All prices are in New Zealand dollars and include GST of 12.5%. The fare includes just about everything including: 6 nights accommodation; 4 evening meals, 5 lunches, 6 breakfasts and plenty of healthy snacks in between [as indicated on the itinerary]; 2 guides; a twilight kiwi watching tour on Stewart Island; and all transport and guided hiking.

Not included in the tour price are 2 evening meals; 2 lunches; wine and beer [you are welcome to BYO], and any other adventure activities you would like to do along the way. We have indicated just some of the options in the itinerary, but the possibilities are endless! Prices quoted are approximate. If you choose not to participate in any optional activities we will always have walking options available so you don't need to spend a lot of money to have a great experience.

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### **Level of Difficulty:**



#### **Grade 1**

Walks on well formed walking trails or beaches with a mostly even surface, possibly with some slopes or steps. Distances walked average 5 - 10km, with a 50-150m altitude gain. For this grade we recommend an average level of fitness.



#### **Grade 2**

Walks on well formed walking trails with some slopes or steps. There may be muddy patches, tree roots and rocks to negotiate. Distances walked average 5 - 12km, with a 150-400m altitude gain. For this grade we recommend an average level of fitness.



#### **Grade 3**

Walks on walking trails with some steep slopes or steps. There may be muddy patches, tree roots, minor stream crossings and rocks to negotiate. Distances walked average 5 - 12km, with a 300-650m altitude gain. For this grade we recommend an above average level of fitness.