



Bike the Otago Rail Trail

South Island: Christchurch/Clyde to Christchurch/Dunedin

5 days

This biking tour explores the remote and picturesque Central Otago area on the 150km recreational Rail Trail. The rail trail follows the former Otago Central Branch railway line from Middlemarch to Clyde, completed at the turn of the 20th century, which once provided a vital link between New Zealand's largest city (Dunedin) and the country's major goldfields. As well as biking the rail trail and enjoying the picturesque scenery in this amazing part of the country, you'll also explore the historic gold mining towns of St Bathans and Macraes Flat, try your hand at the ancient sport of curling in Naseby, visit Hayes Engineering Works, and enjoy a tour of one of the district's oldest high country farms - guided by the 3rd/4th generation locals. You'll meet the people as we pass through each town, learn about the rich history of the area, and more than likely fall in love with 'central'. To top it all off, there is the option of completing your journey on the stunning Taieri Gorge Train that runs from the end of the rail trail, Middlemarch, to Dunedin. This is THE best tour of the Otago Rail Trail if you want a complete experience of the region, and not just the rail trail.

Day 1 Christchurch - Clyde

We depart Christchurch at 8:30am for the drive south via the inland route through Mackenzie Country to Central Otago, stopping for lunch at a beautiful rural cafe. Alternatively there is the option of meeting the tour in Clyde in the afternoon. In the late afternoon get used to your bike and the terrain with a short ride along the lovely Clutha River. We stay in the charming historic precinct of Clyde in the beautifully restored Dunstan House - an historic hotel, and eat out at a local restaurant. (L)

Day 2 Clyde - Lauder

Begin the Otago Central Rail Trail, biking from Clyde to Lauder (43km). Highlights of today's ride include the wooden trestle Muttontown Viaduct, the Old Tucker Hill gold diggings, views of the Dunstan Mountains and Raggedy Range, spotting brown trout in the Manuherikia River, and a side trip to the charming town of Ophir. In the afternoon we make a side trip in our bus to the historic gold-mining town of St Bathans, with a mandatory stop at the Vulcan Hotel! (B/L/D)

Day 3 Lauder - Wedderburn

Bike from Lauder to Wedderburn (34km). Highlights of today's ride on the rail trail include the engineering marvel that is the Poolburn Gorge Viaduct and tunnels, and the vast wide open Ida Valley (made famous by the painter Grahame Sydney), the Idaburn dam (famous for its winter curling), a visit to Hayes Engineering Works, and the wee town of Wedderburn at the top of the rail trail. In the afternoon we make a side trip in our bus to the town of Naseby where you can opt to try your hand at the ancient sport of curling on the new indoor purpose built ice facility. Eat out at the legendary Wedderburn Tavern. (B/L/D)

Day 4 Wedderburn - Hyde

Bike from Wedderburn to Hyde (46km). Before we begin today's biking, we're treated to a guided tour of the Duncan family's high country station. The Duncan's are 3rd and 4th generation farmers who farm a land that is often either plagued by drought or covered in snow. What they have achieved over the years is a great feat which they are eager to share with us. This is one of the highlights of the trip, and will hold a great interest for rural and city bikers alike. After morning tea at

Tour Map



Grade



Tour Details

Tour Price: \$1,200
 Deposit: \$200
 What's included? See bottom of page.

Groups of 10+ people will receive a 5% discount off the tour price.

Departure Dates:

2010	2011
Oct 4 - 8	Jan 5 - 9
Oct 27 - 31	Jan 26 - 30
Nov 3 - 7	Feb 2 - 6
Nov 10 - 14	Feb 16 - 20
Nov 17 - 21	Feb 23 - 27
Nov 24 - 28	Mar 2 - 6
Dec 1 - 5	Mar 9 - 13
Dec 29 - Jan 2	Mar 16 - 20
	Mar 23 - 27
	Mar 30 - Apr 3
	Apr 6 - 19
	Apr 13 - 17
	Apr 20 - 24
	Apr 27 - May 1
	May 4 - 8

the homestead, it's back on the saddle. Highlights of today's ride include crossing the Maniototo Plains, visiting the rural art deco town of Ranfurly, following the Taieri River as it snakes around the Rock and Pillar Range, crossing the unaltered stone bridge over Cap Burn, the 32m high Price's Creek Viaduct and 152m long tunnel. In the afternoon we may, depending on weather conditions and visibility, have time to visit the Macraes gold mine, atop the Taieri Ridge. We stay the night in Hyde township and enjoy a celebratory meal in the adorable Hyde School restaurant. (B/L/D)

Day 5 Hyde - Christchurch/Dunedin

Bike from Hyde to Middlemarch (27km - all downhill!). Highlights of the final days ride include views of the Rock and Pillar and Taieri Ranges, the Hyde Railway Disaster memorial, and dropping down into the Strath Taieri Plain. In the afternoon we make our way back to Christchurch, arriving at around 7pm. Alternatively, opt to end your journey in Dunedin in true style by taking the historic Taieri Gorge Railway to Dunedin. (B/L)

Included in the tour package:

All prices are in New Zealand dollars and include New Zealand Goods & Services Tax of 12.5%. The fare includes just about everything including: 4 nights accommodation; 3 evening meals, 5 lunches, 4 breakfasts and plenty of healthy snacks in between (as indicated on the itinerary by B/L/D); bus side trips to St Bathans, Naseby and Macraes; a guided farm tour at Wedderburn; a friendly guide; all transport and vehicle support; and bike repair support.

Not included in the tour price is one evening meal where we eat out at a local restaurant; wine and beer; optional bike hire (\$170); optional curling (\$25); and the optional Taieri Gorge train to Dunedin (\$61).

Level of Difficulty:

On this tour we have vehicle back up – the support vehicle will meet you every 8-10kms (approximately), so there is plenty of opportunities to ride out parts (or all) of each section in our vehicle if you are not feeling up to it.



Grade 1

Routes on flat/slight incline terrain such as a rail trail (disused rail corridor). Surface likely to be compact gravel, which could be a little rough in places. Distances cycled average 40-50km per day. For this grade we recommend an average level of fitness. Training beforehand is recommended, on gravel roads if possible.

Testimonials

"This adventure & experience is definitely in the Top 3 of any of my travels - it's right up there! Made all the more enjoyable by super travelling companions and a good leader in Jim. The drizzle on the first cycling day was soon forgotten when the BIG blue sky appeared on the downhill run in Ida Valley. We especially enjoyed the visit with the Duncan Family on their farm and meeting locals along the way. A very special area of our great country - Thanks for a wonderful experience, we will spread the word."

Trevor & Christine, NZ, Jan 08

"Great tour & great company & guide. Exceeded all our expectations & we will have no trouble recommending this to all our friends & family. The side trips & commentary were the highlights, and the bum & legs didn't play up too much either. Thanks again Jim, had a fantastic time and hopefully the exercise factor put paid to the odd beer consumed."

Nick & Amanda Young, NZ, Jan 08

"Great trip, exceeded all expectations. Wonderful weather, excellent food and Robin is a top guide. The curling was great fun and farm visit also very good. We enjoyed all the side trips. So much more than just a bike trip."

Roger & Jeanette Whiteman, NZ, April 08