



Whales Sounds & Golden Sands Short Break South Island: Christchurch to Nelson 7 days

This tour departs from Christchurch and heads north along the stunning coastal route to the seaside community of Kaikoura, known for its prolific marine life. See the mountains drop to the sea on a stunning coastal walk. Get up close to the resident population of sperm whales on a whale watching cruise. Travel to Marlborough and sample local sauvignon blanc and other award winning wines. Walk part of the beautiful Queen Charlotte walkway and enjoy the view from the deck of our seaside accommodation, deep within the sounds. Head over the marble mountain to Golden Bay, home of 'golden age hippies'. Walk the stunning and quiet northern end of the Abel Tasman coastal track. Soak up the organic produce, vibrant arts and crafts, pristine sandy beaches, fertile farmlands and lush forests. Relax in our Mediterranean style accommodation, a gentle stroll from the beach. Walk the windswept beaches of Farewell Spit, or take a nature tour right to the tip, home to many migratory species of birds. Travel back inland to Tasman Bay and the friendly city Nelson, where your tour comes to an end.

Day 1 Christchurch – Kaikoura

We start the trip off with a walk [2.5hrs; Grade 2] on Christchurch's Port Hills, offering great views of the coast and mountainous isle to the north. Departing the city we head north over the vast Canterbury Plains. After a picnic lunch we continue up the rugged eastern coast to the seaside town of Kaikoura. Explore the local crafts and cafes, and enjoy a short afternoon walk [1.5hrs; Grade 1] around the peninsular looking out for the resident New Zealand fur seals on the rocks below and the dolphins and whales in the waters beyond. Relax over dinner at our secluded accommodation. (L/D)

Day 2 Kaikoura - Marlborough Sounds

Experience a glimpse of the iconic whale-tail as it descends into the Pacific at sunrise on the whale-watching cruise. Alternatively you may prefer to swim with the seals or experience an Albatross encounter cruise. Leaving Kaikoura we continue up the coast to the premier wine-growing region of Marlborough. Lunch and a wine-tasting stop gives you the chance to sample world-renowned Sauvignon Blanc. We make our way to a quiet, secluded bay in the Marlborough Sounds by water taxi and spend the next two nights at a lodge in the sounds close by the Queen Charlotte Walkway. A selection of walks is available this afternoon, including a hike up to a viewpoint offering stunning views of the sounds [1.5hrs; Grade 3]. (B/L/D)

Day 3 Marlborough Sounds

Today you can relax and enjoy the stunning Marlborough Sounds. You have several walking options including hiking part of the Queen Charlotte walkway. This excellent walk [4-5 hrs; Grade 2] gently meanders through regenerating native forest around the top of the numerous bays, occasionally dropping in to a secluded bay. There may also be kayaking and fishing trip options, or you may wish to simply relax, take in the views and write postcards. (B/L/D)

Day 4 Marlborough Sounds - Golden Bay

Leaving the sounds we make our way to sunny Tasman Bay, through the delightful city of Nelson. We then drive on to Golden Bay, one of the most beautiful regions in the country with its lovely sandy beaches and secluded coves fringed by native forest, and best of all, few people. We stay at our accommodation base here for 3 nights while we explore the area. (B/L/D)

Tour Map



Grade



Tour Details

Tour Price: \$2,525
Single supplement: \$450

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

Departure Dates:

Oct 23 – 29 2010
Jan 5 – 11 2011
Feb 2 – 8 2011
Mar 5 – 11 2011

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

Day 5 Abel Tasman National Park

Today you have the opportunity to hike one of the most beautiful sections of the famed coastal trail in the Abel Tasman National Park [5hrs; Grade 2]. From native forest, secluded coves and sandy white beaches, it doesn't get much better than this! Shorter Grade 1&2 walk options are also possible. Alternatively, explore the lovely golden beaches and secluded bays on an optional guided sea kayaking. Eat out at a local restaurant. (B/L)

Day 6 Farewell Spit

Enjoy exploring the remote northern tip of the South Island. Hike [1-3hrs; Grade 1/2] along the spectacular coastline, or take an optional nature tour to Farewell Spit, the longest natural sandbar in the world. Do an optional horse trek on Cape Farewell, or simply take time out to relax on the beach and write postcards. Golden Bay features numerous artists in residence and quirky cafes that we will also have time to explore. Eat out at a local restaurant. (B)

Day 7 Golden Bay - Nelson

We begin the day with a short walk [Grade 1] beside the crystal clear waters of Pupu Springs. We leave Golden Bay and head inland over Takaka Hill to Nelson and the end of the tour. You will be dropped off at the airport or your central city accommodation at around 2pm. (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: 6 nights accommodation; 4 evening meals, 6 lunches, 6 breakfasts and plenty of healthy snacks in between [as indicated on the itinerary]; 2 guides; a whale watch cruise at Kaikoura (or alternative option); water taxi transfers; and all transport and guided hikes.

Not included in the tour price is 2 evening meals; 1 lunch; wine and beer (you are welcome to BYO) and any other adventure activities you would like to do along the way, such as a sea kayaking. 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 activity, we will always have walking options available so you don't need to spend a lot of money to have a great experience.

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.