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South Island Experience Tour

Duration: 7 days

Start: Wellington, **Finish:** Queenstown

Tour Description: Maritime atmosphere, mountains, big cities, lakes, Maori culture, adrenaline thrills and stunning landscape! Enjoy the best of what the South Island has to offer in just 7 days!

Day 1 (Saturday): Wellington – Picton – Kaikoura

You meet your tour guide this morning at your accommodation in Wellington. Together you take a shuttle to Wellington's ferry terminal. After taking a quick look back at the harbour city Wellington, the ferry starts to make its way towards the Marlborough Sounds through the Cook Strait. Let the rough sea wind blow through your hair standing on the deck or enjoy a view over the waves as you sit in one of the restaurants on board. Soon, the evergreen hills of the Marlborough Sounds appear in front of you. New Zealand consists of two main islands, which are quite similar in some regions, but can be completely different in others. In the next 7 days, you are able to explore the best of what the South Island has to offer. After having arrived in Picton, we are picked up by our driver and start the journey towards Kaikoura. The Highway leads us through Koromiko and Para - always surrounded by green hills and farmland. Once we reach Blenheim we get to the heart of the Marlborough wine region that is known especially for its Sauvignon Blanc. Soon we pass Lake Grassmere. From here you can very soon see the sea and often you can observe seals relaxing on sharp cliffs. Kaikoura is mainly known for its maritime attractions. One can eat delicious crayfish (that's where the name Kaikoura comes from: "kai" is Maori for "eat" and "koura" for "crayfish"). We check in to our hostel and if there is still some time, you can relax in the spa or take a swim in the pool of the hostel before we meet for a group dinner in the evening.

Day 2 (Sunday): Kaikoura – Christchurch

After breakfast, you can participate in one of the optional activities: whale watching or dolphin swimming. Alternatively, go on a coastal walk with the tour guide and visit the seal colony and try to spot some puppy seals. After these exciting experiences you can get some lunch in town before we continue our journey towards Christchurch, which is known as the 'Garden City' and is the South Island's largest city. Christchurch has an English feel, with the Avon River running through the centre. After checking in to our hostel, we will go on a guided tour around the city centre. After that you have the afternoon for yourselves, you can enjoy your free time and either do sightseeing, go to museums or shopping before we meet again for dinner.

Optional activity options in Kaikoura:

Whale watch by boat: NZ\$60 (up to 15 yrs), NZ\$145 (16+yrs)

Dolphin Swim: NZ\$155 (up to 14 yrs), NZ\$170 (15+ yrs)

Day 3 (Monday): Christchurch

After a lovely breakfast we start our day with a gondola ride offering spectacular views over the city and its suburbs. The Port Hills, a collapsed crater rim of an extinct volcano which exploded six million years ago, shelters Lyttelton's sparkling harbour. To the west, the Southern Alps seem close in the clear pure air and to the East, the ocean and the sky stretch as far as the eye can see. Revive your spirits with a snack at the new Red Rock Cafe, and browse what is on offer in the shop. Hop back on the Gondola for the 360° views to get back to the base station. In the afternoon we visit the Maori village Ko Tane. We hear the haunting traditional call, the Karanga, performed by a wahine (woman) as the powhiri (ritual of arrival) begins. After the Karanga we listen to a tane (male) explain the customs of the Ngai Tahu tribe as we visit the Living Village.

We learn about the Maori culture and join in the laughter as we take part in a performance of the haka (men) or the poi dance (women). We also dine and enjoy a special Maori dinner called hangi. Experiencing a hangi is another great way to interact with the Maori culture and Ko Tane performers.

Day 4 (Tuesday): Christchurch – Queenstown

From Christchurch, we are heading for Queenstown today. After breakfast, we drive through the Canterbury Plains to Geraldine. Here and in the nearby village Fairlie not only interesting museums are located, but it is also famous for traditional trade. The majestic mountain tops of the Southern Alps soon appear in front of you. White snow, green fields and hills will soon appear as you reach Lake Tekapo with its ice blue water. Tekapo is the ideal location for a stop and to take photos. Also, the "Church of the Good Shepherd" is definitely worth a visit. After you enjoyed the breath-taking view on the ice blue lake as well as the snow-capped mountains of Mount Cooks and the Southern Alps, we drive straight towards Queenstown. Located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu and overlooked by the Remarkables Mountain Range, Queenstown is known as one of the world's most beautiful resorts. Whether you're a seasoned adventurer, keen to try something new or just want to kick back and relax - Queenstown is the place to have fun any time of the year, any time of the day and offers endless options for thrills such as jet boating, white water rafting and is home to bungy jumping.

Day 5 (Wednesday): Queenstown

We spend the next two days in Queenstown to enjoy some its great numbers of activities. After breakfast, a guided city tour is on the agenda. In the afternoon we take a scenic cruise of Lake Wakatipu on board the iconic steamship TSS Earnslaw. There is plenty of time to explore the decks and bridge, view the engine room, join a sing-along with the on board pianist or sit back and relax while enjoying food and a drink from the Promenade Café. There is enough time for you to explore the city by yourselves in your free time, so you can go shopping, go for a swim, relax at the lake, go for a walk, take the gondola up the hill or just sit in a cosy café downtown before you meet the tour guide again in evening to have a group dinner.

Day 6 (Thursday): Queenstown

After having breakfast together you could optionally go on a day tour to the famous Milford Sound. This tour is departing from Queenstown early in the morning and includes all the stunning scenic sights, short walks along the way as well as a superb 90 minute boat cruise on Milford Sound. For those who choose to stay in Queenstown, there are plenty of other things to do: Jump off a bridge, swing over a canyon, paddle your way through a raging river – there's nothing you can't do in this city! So get ready for the adventures of your life and experiences you will never forget!

Extra activity options:

Kawarau Bungy (43m): NZ\$130 (up to 14 yrs), NZ\$180 (15+ yrs)

Milford Sound Coach/ Nature Cruise: NZ\$120 (up to 14yrs), NZ\$175 (15+yrs)

Skydiving: NZ\$299.00 for 9,000ft, NZ\$339.00 for 12,000ft, NZ\$439 for 15,000ft

Shotover Jetboat Tour: NZ\$69 (up to 15 yrs), NZ\$129 (16+ yrs)

Horseback riding (1 ½ hours): NZ\$95 (up to 14 yrs), NZ\$120 (15+ yrs)

Canyon Swing: NZ\$215

Day 7 (Friday): Queenstown – Home

Sadly, today is your last day. After breakfast, the tour guide takes you to the airport from where you fly out to your home destination.

Tour costs:

The following prices are dependent on group size and are subject to availability at the time of the booking.

NZ\$1,190 per student with a group size of **20-28 students** + 1 teacher

NZ\$1,480 per student with a group size of **13-19 students** + 1 teacher

NZ\$1,950 per student with a group size of **8-12 students** + 1 teacher

What's included in tour cost?

- Professional tour guide (English speaking)
- All transport during the tour
- Comfortable accommodation at hostels/backpackers (students in 4-or 6-bed dorms, teacher in private room)
- Tour costs for the 1st teacher/chaperone
- 6x breakfast and 6x dinner
- Ferry Wellington – Picton
- Visit a seal colony in Kaikoura
- City Tour Christchurch
- Gondola ride in Christchurch/Banks Peninsula
- Maori Experience and Cultural Show Ko Tane
- City tour Queenstown
- Boat Cruise on Lake Wakatipu (TSS Earnslaw Steamship) in Queenstown
- Airport transfer in Queenstown

Additional costs:

The following costs are not included in the tour price:

- Extra Activities
- Lunch
- Pocket money
- Transport to/from tour start

Additional teacher/chaperone:

If the group wants to bring along a 2nd teacher/chaperone, the additional cost will be NZ\$1,250.