

# Mackenzie Country & Central Otago - itinerary

## DAY ONE

D

Our adventure begins in the morning as we gather for pickups and head to the airport for our flight to Christchurch. We'll enjoy lunch upon arrival at one of the many eateries at Christchurch Airport. After lunch, we'll embark on our journey to Lake Tekapo. The stunning beauty of the surroundings takes our breath away, and we can't help but feel grateful for the opportunity to experience it all. As we arrive at Peppers Blue Water Resort Tekapo, we're eager to unwind during the social hour, enjoying drinks and conversation while taking in the awe-inspiring views. Our day ends with a dinner at the on-site restaurant, where we can soak up the ambiance of this lovely property.

## DAY TWO

B, L, D

This morning, we will head out of town a few kilometres and drive-up Godley Peaks Road to a couple of hotspots for Lupin, spotting great opportunities for photos amongst the vibrant colours and the turquoise Lake Tekapo and whitecapped mountains as possible backgrounds. We will visit the hidden lake of Alexandria with its variety of lakeside character cribs. Then continue our scenic drive up the valley, taking in the splendid scenery until we reach the Cass River. From here we then make our way back to town for a stroll around the village shops and have lunch in a local cafe. We'll take our time to visit a few of the "Mackenzie Country" icons, including the lakeside Church of the Good Shepherd, the Sheep Dog Statue and Lake Tekapo Canals. From here we will drive out of town to Burkes Corner to check out the vintage shops. We'll then return to Tekapo for our last night at Peppers Hotel where we'll enjoy our dinner on-site at the restaurant.

## DAY THREE

B, L, D

On our journey to Mount Cook Alpine Village, we will stop at the Lake Pukaki viewing point taking time for a photo alongside the Bronze Himalayan Thar statue.

We head through to Glentanner Station Park Centre, stopping here for morning tea and looking through the Merino Retail shop. Glentanner Station's 9000 merinos are contracted to supply the world-renowned Ice Breaker brand. The drive to Mount Cook is spectacular with views across Lake Pukaki. Eventually, we travel parallel to the vast braided Tasman River and up into the Mountains. Arriving in the small Alpine village, we'll visit the Mount Cook Visitor Centre for an Introduction talk, a fantastic venue to get an insight into the National Park. We intend to have an officer provide a talk for us. We will enjoy lunch at the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre Cafe located in the Hermitage Hotel. This is a tribute to Sir Edmund Hillary, humanitarian, ambassador and one of the world's greatest explorers. The centre showcases the Aoraki Mount Cook region, its people and its place in the universe. We will enjoy some fantastic short films on the man himself, the park and a stunning planetarium display. After an informative day, we'll travel through the Hooker Valley onto the Heritage Gateway Hotel Omarama, where we will be enjoying our next night's accommodation. Relax and enjoy comfortable, country-style accommodation in the beautiful village of Omarama located close to lakes, mountains, and rivers, with dazzling starry skies by night. Tonight, we enjoy our meal at the on-site country style restaurant.

## DAY FOUR

B, L, D

Remember to bring a warm jacket and gloves as our day begins with a journey over the stunning Lindis Pass, with a stop for photos to capture the breathtaking views. We then head to the newly established Cromwell Heritage Precinct, Melmore Terrace, where we'll explore the area. Afterwards, we'll enjoy lunch and a glass of wine in Bannockburn, which is in the heart of Central Otago. This area is renowned for its world-class wineries, rugged landscapes, and historic gold-mining sites. Our next destination is Wanaka a picturesque town situated on the edge of Lake Wanaka. The town itself boasts an eclectic mix of boutique shops, galleries, and cafes. We'll take a stroll around the shops and soak up the local culture before embarking on a Lake Cruise to Stevenson's Island, where we'll take in the beauty of the lake and its surroundings. Tonight, we will be staying at the Oakridge Resort where we'll enjoy sharing conversations with our fellow travellers while indulging in

a dinner at the on-site restaurant.

## DAY FIVE

B, L, D

We start our day with breakfast before embarking on a journey to the impressive Benmore Power Station. After this we head to the Wrinkly Rams for a spot of morning tea, followed by a stop at the scenic Lake Benmore Picnic Area, where we'll take a moment to appreciate the serene beauty of the lake and its surroundings. Our adventure continues with a visit to the Lake Aviemore Power Station, where we'll take in the awe-inspiring views of the mountains and lakes and the stunning scenery, we'll then continue onto visit the charming St Albans Chapel and Vicarage. Our lunch will be at the fabulous Riverstone Kitchen located beside the Riverstone Castle. After lunch we'll take a guided tour of Riverstone Castle, the creation of Dot and Neil Smith. Surrounded by a lake and set on the Smith's dairy farm behind Riverstone Kitchen. Built from local Oamaru stone, Riverstone Castle makes for a dramatic backdrop to the rest of the Riverstone complex. From here we'll then make our way to the pretty seaside town of Timaru to the Comfort Hotel Benvenue for our final night's stay. Tonight, we will be dining at the on-site restaurant for some good old-fashioned Southern service, before retiring to our rooms for the evening.

## DAY SIX

B, MT, L

On our final morning, we'll have breakfast at our accommodation before checking out and heading to Hemsworth Estate. This is a picturesque property situated in the serene surroundings of Hampstead, Ashburton. The estate boasts an exquisite garden, which is home to a plethora of exotic plants, trees, and wildlife. Visitors can explore the stunning gardens while gaining insights into the history and lives of the estate's owners through a guided tour. A morning tea adds to the indulgent experience, making Hemsworth Estate a must-visit for anyone seeking a tranquil escape and an opportunity to connect with nature. From here we'll continue to Violinis Music Adventureland for a tour. Then off to Trott's garden where we'll enjoy lunch before heading onto Christchurch Airport to check in for our flights back home. As we reflect on our experiences, we'll cherish the memories of this

wonderful journey.