

# Kaikoura, Coastal Pacific by Rail. - itinerary

30% Deposit Required on Booking.

Moderate Fitness Required.

## DAY ONE

D

Pickups are complete, we arrive at Tauranga Airport to begin our journey with a flight to Christchurch. Once we land, the adventure starts with a guided tour showcasing the city's remarkable rebuild and transformation since the devastating earthquakes. Witness innovative architecture, vibrant street art, and the blend of heritage buildings and modern design that gives Christchurch its unique charm. After settling into our hotel, we'll have time to freshen up before enjoying a special dining experience. Tonight's dinner will be at the stylish and sophisticated Bloody Mary's, an upscale Bar & Grill that offers a swanky setting. This is the perfect way to relax and enjoy the atmosphere as we prepare for the exciting days ahead. A wonderful evening awaits!

## DAY TWO

B, D

We are up early this morning, with a short trip down the road to catch the reinstated Coastal Pacific Train. Once settled into our seats and underway we can enjoy breakfast with an ever-changing view. Our Coastal train Journey north will run from Christchurch through Kaikoura then on to Picton, where we will turn around and travel back to Kaikoura. You will see some of New Zealand's most incredible scenery. We will pass through the patchwork farmlands of the Canterbury Plains and journey over the region's magnificent, braided rivers. The Coastal Pacific train is rated one of New Zealand's best scenic train trips. With an on-board licensed café, GPS triggered (at-seat) commentary and open air-viewing, it's an unforgettable experience and a relaxing journey. Once we reach the coastal town of Picton, at the head of the Marlborough's sounds, we will hop off the train stretch the legs for 20 minutes, then return to the train to cruise the rails once

again along the rugged coastline to our final destination Kaikoura and our accommodation.

## DAY THREE

B, L, D

This morning, we visit the Kaikoura Museum, beginning with an introductory talk before exploring at your own pace. Located in the heart of Kaikoura, the museum features exhibits that highlight the stories of local Māori, early European settlers, and the region's unique marine wildlife. Afterward, we'll head to Lavendyl Lavender Farm, where you'll enjoy wandering through 2.5 hectares of lavender fields, ornamental gardens, and farm animals. Don't miss the gift shop with its selection of locally crafted lavender products. Next, we'll indulge in a delicious lunch at Hapuku Lodge and Treehouses, beautifully situated on a deer farm, followed by an insightful talk and a chance to explore the property. Our final stop is Ohau Point Lookout in Rakautara, where we'll admire seals and stroll along the paved walkway, thoughtfully revamped since the earthquakes. This evening, we'll gather for a delightful dinner at a local eatery to end our memorable day.

## DAY FOUR

B, D

Remember to take sea legs medication if you experience motion sickness. Today's adventure is all about Kaikoura's world-famous whale watching, a highlight of New Zealand's marine attractions. Whale Watch, the original guided cruise company, offers a captivating experience along the Kaikoura coast. A deep undersea canyon near the shore draws an extraordinary variety of marine life, with the majestic Sperm Whale as the main star. Each tour is unique, with possible sightings of Fur Seals, Dusky Dolphins, and even the rare Wandering Albatross. Depending on the season, migrating Humpback, Pilot, Blue, and Southern Right Whales may also appear, along with occasional visits from Orcas and the rare Hector's Dolphin. This 3.5-hour expedition may be weather-dependent, but a backup plan is ready if needed. After our ocean adventure, we'll spend a relaxing afternoon exploring Kaikoura's coastal walks and scenic spots, enjoying the charm and beauty of this coastal gem.

## DAY FIVE

B, L, D

After breakfast, we journey up the coast from Kaikoura, keeping an eye out for seals along the rugged shoreline. Crossing the Hapuku River, we head inland through the scenic Puhi Puhi River Valley, with the Seaward Kaikoura Mountains towering above. Our destination is Puhi Peaks Station, where host Nicky McArthur will guide us through this significant reserve. Nicky will share a captivating tour and recount her harrowing experience of the earthquake and its impact on the station. Puhi Peaks is home to one of the world's two remaining colonies of the endangered Hutton's shearwater, which nest in high mountain burrows. A charitable trust established to protect this seabird led to the preservation of the entire upper area under a QE covenant. Nicky, a trust member and convenor of the Friends of the Hutton's Shearwater, will provide insights into efforts to secure its future. After a fascinating day, we return to Kaikoura for our final evening.

## DAY SIX

B, MT

This morning, we bid farewell to Kaikoura and begin our scenic journey back to Christchurch via the stunning Inland Road. This picturesque route offers breathtaking views of the rolling countryside, dramatic mountain landscapes, and peaceful rivers that make the South Island so captivating. Along the way, we'll pause at a charming local café to enjoy a delightful morning tea and take in the serene surroundings. As we continue, the mountain scenery will unfold around us, providing a fitting farewell to our southern adventure. Arriving in Christchurch, we make our way to the airport for our return flights home, bringing with us wonderful memories of the natural beauty, unique wildlife, and warm hospitality that have defined our journey. Safe travels until we meet again!