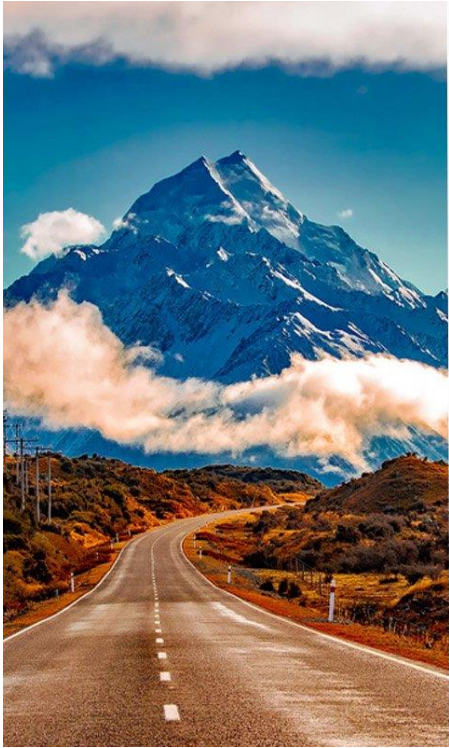




New Zealand South Island Secrets:
Nature, Flavors, and Hidden Gems



Week 1: February 27th- March 5th, 2026

Week 2: March 9th – March 15th, 2026

Experience 7 days of breathtaking beauty, charming small towns, and local culinary delights on New Zealand’s South Island. From Wellington’s vibrant harbor to Lake Tekapo’s starlit skies and the dramatic fjords of Milford Sound, each day offers unforgettable adventures. Savor Marlborough’s seafood, taste wines in Gibbston Valley and Waipara, and enjoy unique experiences like a mussel cruise and stargazing. With carefully selected accommodations and great company, this tour promises relaxation, discovery, and memories to last a lifetime.

Contact us with questions:
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Day 1: Welcome to Wellington – The Heart of the Harbor



Your tour will start as you **arrive in New Zealand's lively capital, Wellington**. Some of you will join us from international journeys, while others will continue their New Zealand adventure from the North Island. Known for its vibrant arts scene, coastal beauty, and dynamic cultural energy, Wellington is nestled between steep hills and a stunning harbor. With hidden laneways, bustling cafés, and scenic waterfront walks, this creative hub will captivate you from the moment you arrive.

Following a **private group transfer to your hotel, enjoy free time** to unwind or explore. Head to Cuba Street's lively boutiques and street art or immerse yourself in New Zealand's rich heritage at Te Papa Museum. For a scenic delight, take the historic Cable Car up to the Botanic Gardens for a panoramic sunset view of the city. Wellington awaits with a warm, vibrant welcome!

In the evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a **welcome dinner at One80° Restaurant**, one of Wellington's premier fine dining establishments. Perched on the seventh floor of the Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay, One80° offers panoramic views of the harbor, providing a stunning backdrop as you meet your companions and share stories. Savor exquisite dishes crafted from the freshest local ingredients, reflecting the rich flavors of New Zealand cuisine. Notably, One80° has been recognized among the top 250 restaurants in New Zealand by Cuisine Magazine and has won the Burger Wellington competition in both 2023 and 2024. Toast to the beginning of an unforgettable adventure, filled with discovery, connection, and breathtaking experiences.

Accommodation: Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay (4-star, 1 night) Perched above the serene harbor, the Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay offers stylish comfort and breathtaking views of the sparkling waters and cityscape. Guests can unwind at the acclaimed One80° Restaurant, known for its panoramic dining experience and local culinary delights. Enjoy a refreshing swim in the heated pool or relax in your well-appointed room, designed for both comfort and elegance. With eco-friendly practices embedded in its operations, this hotel provides a sustainable stay that complements the natural beauty of Wellington.



Day 2: Southward Voyage – Blenheim & Marlborough Marvels



Rise early for an unforgettable journey as you leave Wellington by ferry, **crossing the majestic Cook Strait to New Zealand's South Island**. This stunning 3-hour voyage offers endless photo ops as you glide through the Cook Waterway and enter the spellbinding Marlborough Sounds. Here, rugged mountain ridges emerge as narrow peninsulas between deep, fjord-like inlets, creating a natural masterpiece dotted with salmon and mussel farms.

In Picton, the adventure continues with **an exclusive Seafood Odyssey Cruise** through Queen Charlotte Sound/Tōtaranui. Enjoy a bounty of fresh local delicacies like salmon and Greenshell mussels while soaking in the panoramic views and spotting local wildlife—keep an eye out for seals, dolphins, and native birds. After this memorable cruise, your guide will lead you to Blenheim for the evening.

Accommodation: Scenic Hotel Marlborough (4-star, 1 night) Following a multi-million-dollar renovation in 2012, the Scenic Hotel Marlborough shines with modern elegance and comfort. Located in the heart of sunny Blenheim, it's just a short walk to the center and close to Marlborough's acclaimed food and wine offerings. With plush rooms featuring air-conditioning, a media hub, and signature wool and down bedding, Scenic Hotel Marlborough offers a restful retreat in a prime location. Enjoy amenities like a heated outdoor pool and stylish lounge bar, ideal for relaxation after a day of exploring.



Day 3: Coastal Wonders and City Charm – Christchurch Awaits



Travel along New Zealand's wild, scenic coast to the **charming town of Kaikoura**, renowned for its rich marine life and dramatic coastal views. Here, you may spot sperm whales drawn to the nutrient-rich waters, as well as playful fur seals basking on the rocks and dolphins leaping through the waves.

After a leisurely coastal lunch, head into the renowned **Waipara Hills for a tasting of local wines**. Established in the 1970s, this region is celebrated for its Sauvignon Blanc, nurtured by unique soils, ample sunshine, and cool winters, producing a distinctive flavor profile.

Arrive in Christchurch, the South Island's largest and most cosmopolitan city, known for its vibrant blend of history, innovation, and natural beauty. Often called the "Garden City" for its lush parks and gardens, Christchurch also features a dynamic arts scene, renowned theaters, eclectic shopping districts, and bustling food and café culture. From street art and markets to scenic Avon River walks and restored heritage buildings, this city offers a delightful mix of the old and new, making it an exciting destination to explore and unwind.

Accommodation: Drifter Christchurch (3-star, 1 night)

Nestled in vibrant Sol Square, Drifter Christchurch offers a welcoming blend of comfort and local charm. This central location provides easy access to the city's top dining and cultural experiences, making it a perfect base for your Christchurch adventure.



Day 4: Alpine Ambiance at Lake Tekapo



Today's journey takes you through **Canterbury's fertile farmlands**, where vast fields and pastures give way to the rugged beauty of the Southern Alps. As the landscape changes, the highland farms and alpine scenery unfold, leading you to the breathtaking Lake Tekapo, your destination for the day. Here, the **iconic 'Church of the Good Shepherd'** stands in serene isolation, offering a moment of reflection amid awe-inspiring views. Nearby, Pukaki Glacier Lake provides an ideal vantage point for capturing the grandeur of Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest peak, whose snow-capped heights mirror in the turquoise waters on clear days.

As night falls, unwind with a unique hot pools and **stargazing experience at Tekapo Springs**, located within the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve. This 1.5-hour tour combines fascinating stargazing and storytelling, followed by exclusive use of warm, soul-soothing hot pools. Float on a hammock and gaze up at the Southern Hemisphere's magical night sky, for an unforgettable blend of relaxation and wonder.

Godley Resort Hotel (3-star, 1 night) Nestled in the heart of Lake Tekapo village, this hotel offers comfortable, country-style accommodations with stunning lake and mountain views. With 60 guest rooms, the Godley offers modern facilities and services for a comfortable stay. A large restaurant and cozy bar, as well as a spa pool and outdoor swimming pool, are available. Enjoy a drink poolside during the summer or a glass of mulled wine by the log burner in the winter months.



Day 5: Into the Southern Majesty – Queenstown Beckons



Today, get ready for an unforgettable expedition into the heart of New Zealand's awe-inspiring scenery. Begin your journey with a mesmerizing drive along the glistening turquoise waters of **Lake Pukaki**. On clear days, this pristine lake perfectly mirrors the towering, snow-draped peaks of the Southern Alps, with Aoraki/Mount Cook majestically standing as the country's highest peak at 3,754 meters—a breathtaking sight that will leave you spellbound.

Continue your adventure over the dramatic Lindis Pass, winding through rugged landscapes at 971 meters above sea level, before reaching the captivating **lakeside town of Wanaka**. Known for its scenic splendor, Wanaka is a beloved retreat that seamlessly blends natural beauty with the gateway allure of Mount Aspiring National Park. Take a moment to stroll through this charming town, where the backdrop of sparkling waters and towering peaks invites you to linger and explore.

Your journey takes you to **Gibbston Valley**, one of New Zealand's most iconic wine regions, celebrated for its dramatic scenery and cool-climate wines. **Visit Kinross Winery**, the official cellar door for several boutique labels, each with a unique story. Discover the passion of pioneers who planted the first vines and winemakers who blend tradition with innovation. Savor their signature Pinot Noirs and other varietals that embody the essence of Gibbston's rich winemaking heritage.



Finally, **arrive in the legendary Queenstown**, affectionately dubbed the "St. Moritz of the South Seas." Nestled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu and surrounded by the dramatic, serrated peaks of the Remarkables mountain range, this vibrant town is the South Island's ultimate destination for adventure, relaxation, and breathtaking alpine vistas.

Accommodation: Ramada Queenstown (4-star, 2 nights) Conveniently located just two minutes from Queenstown Airport and a quick seven-minute drive from the city center, Ramada Queenstown offers stylish, spacious apartments. Each apartment features a kitchenette equipped with European appliances, including a refrigerator, microwave, and dishwasher. Select rooms also provide in-room laundry facilities. Guests can enjoy complimentary Wi-Fi and access to a 24-hour fitness center. The hotel houses an on-site restaurant and bar, offering a variety of dining options, and is just steps from The Remarkables Park Town Centre, featuring an array of shops and restaurants.

Day 6: Wonders of the Fjords – Discover Milford Sound



Today, prepare for an adventure into the heart of New Zealand's natural splendor as you journey to **the legendary Milford Sound, often called the eighth wonder of the world**. Begin with a scenic drive along the famed Milford Road, winding through lush landscapes, glacial-carved valleys, and dramatic mountain vistas. **Stop at the Homer Tunnel**, where you may spot the playful keas—New Zealand's cheeky alpine parrots—adding a splash of character to the journey.

Arrive at Milford Sound and step aboard a modern, spacious ship for **a breathtaking cruise through the mystical fjords**. Surrounded by towering cliffs, cascading waterfalls, and ancient glaciers, you'll feel truly immersed in nature's masterpiece. Keep an eye out for fur seals lounging on sunlit rocks, dolphins riding the waves, and perhaps even a shy penguin making an appearance! Expansive decks and panoramic windows offer spectacular views from every angle, allowing you to fully savor the fjord's beauty.

As you enjoy **a delicious buffet lunch with complimentary tea and coffee**, let the crew's stories transport you through the fjord's fascinating natural history. After an awe-inspiring day on the water, return to Queenstown for one last night, embraced by the magic of New Zealand's southern wilderness.



Day 7: Farewell to New Zealand – Until We Meet Again



Begin your final day with a hearty breakfast, savoring the last moments of your incredible New Zealand adventure. A **shuttle transfer** will pick you up from your accommodation and take you to Queenstown Airport. Please be aware that flights to the U.S. from Queenstown usually require a connection in another New Zealand city, most commonly Auckland (AKL) or sometimes Christchurch (CHC).

We hope this journey has left you with unforgettable memories and a newfound love for New Zealand's breathtaking landscapes. Wishing you a safe and smooth onward or homeward flight!

Price for the Tour:

\$4,275 (per person, double occupancy) when paid by cash or check.

\$4,975 (per person, single occupancy) when paid by cash or check.

**3% extra costs will apply to credit card payments*

Included:

- Comfortable hotel stays with breakfast provided each morning
- Private vehicle for all transfers and travel
- Knowledgeable local Haka Driver-Guide providing tours in each town visited
- Welcome dinner in Wellington
- Wine tastings at Kinross Winery and Waipara Springs
- Milford Sound Day Tour (Coach/Cruise/Coach) with buffet lunch
- InterIslander Ferry from Wellington to Picton
- Greenshell Mussel Cruise from Picton
- Tekapo Hot Springs – Soak and Stargazing experience

Not Included:

- Activities not specifically mentioned in the itinerary
- Additional meals beyond those listed
- Domestic and international flights
- Travel insurance
- Gratuities