
THE SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER WINTER EDITION

“Adventure for the sake of a dream, for the pleasure of searching”
- Sir Edmund Hillary



SOUTH ISLAND RAIL & COACH TOUR

Departing and Ending in Christchurch

June – September 2026

12 Day Tour

WINTER EDITION TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

TranzAlpine • Mainlander Train (Invercargill-Dunedin) • Taieri Gorge Train • Mainlander Train (Dunedin-Oamaru)
Explore Picturesque Queenstown, Doubtful Sound and Aoraki Mount Cook.

Inspired by one of the greatest and most iconic adventurers of our time, The Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer invites you on an epic journey by rail and luxury coach throughout the majestic South Island of Aotearoa.



TranzAlpine



Taiari Gorge



Mainlander Train



SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER TOUR – WINTER EDITION

12 DAYS STARTING AND ENDING IN CHRISTCHURCH

Sir Edmund Hillary epitomised the New Zealand spirit of adventure and he is our inspiration when planning your experience of a lifetime. We pay homage to Sir Edmund Hillary as we explore Te Waipounamu South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand and experience the postcard perfect winter vistas and dramatic alpine scenery that this part of the world is renowned for.

Enjoy the perfect combination of adventure, exploration and relaxation. Wake up to crisp winter mornings, discover the hidden gems along scenic routes and unwind each night in beautiful accommodation, perhaps with a New Zealand Pinot Noir in hand.

Your guided journey begins in “The Garden City” Ōtautahi Christchurch, where the iconic TranzAlpine awaits. Often regarded to be one of the worlds great train journeys for the scenery through which it passes. The journey is 223 Kilometres one-way, taking almost five hours, you will see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps via Arthurs Pass. Your guided tour is escorted by luxury coaches that provide seamless transfers from the train to your accommodation in Franz Josef.

The following morning, where an optional helicopter flight of the Fox Glacier is available for the adventurous.

Departing the West Coast we will travel through Haast Pass, journeying through large tracts of native rain forest. We then track inland to experience the wonders of Tāhuna (meaning shallow bay) Queenstown, Te Anau and Doubtful Sound. Cruise across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet BBQ lunch and later enjoy spectacular views of Coronet Peak and The Remarkables sky high from the iconic Queenstown Gondola.

Soak up the tranquillity aboard the Doubtful Cruise and enjoy taking in the surrounding nature and wildlife.

Exclusive to the winter edition tours, we board our recently re-established train to Dunedin, a rail experience exclusive to our tours - “The Mainlander” which weaves its way through rolling hills and lush scenic rural landscapes of the deep south of New Zealand, to Ōtepoti Dunedin.

In Ōtepoti Dunedin, we enjoy another winter rail experience with Dunedin Railways through the remote and rugged landscape of the world-famous Taieri Gorge. This is an epic rail journey along the white-water rapids, towering viaducts and historic tunnels. Later on, we have the option to explore Larnach Castle and indulge in a decadent High Tea. Our departure from Dunedin is by “The Mainlander” train along the coastal route to Oamaru, then a detour inland by luxury coach to mountain country’ staying in Aoraki Mount Cook at the prestigious Hermitage Hotel. You can explore the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, and enjoy a sumptuous dinner after a keynote presentation from a Hillary family member. If you want a truly unforgettable winter experience, view Mount Cook sky high with an optional Ski plane and Helicopter flight to the glacier.

Journeying back to Ōtautahi Christchurch by luxury Coach for the final night of the tour, you will have the opportunity to visit the International Antarctic Centre to see Penguins, experience the Antarctica chill in the Storm Dome and learn about the first expeditions to the icy continent. This completes the Winter Edition of the “Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer” tour.

TOUR DATES

- 27 June 2026 (ending 8 July 2026)
- 4 July 2026 (ending 15 July 2026)
- 11 July 2026 (ending 22 July 2026)
- 18 July 2026 (ending 29 July 2026)
- 25 July 2026 (ending 5 August 2026)
- 1 August 2026 (ending 12 August 2026)
- 8 August 2026 (ending 19 August 2026)
- 15 August 2026 (ending 26 August 2026)
- 22 August 2026 (ending 2 September 2026)
- 29 August 2026 (ending 9 September 2026)
- 5 September 2026 (ending 16 September 2026)
- 12 September 2026 (ending 23 September 2026)



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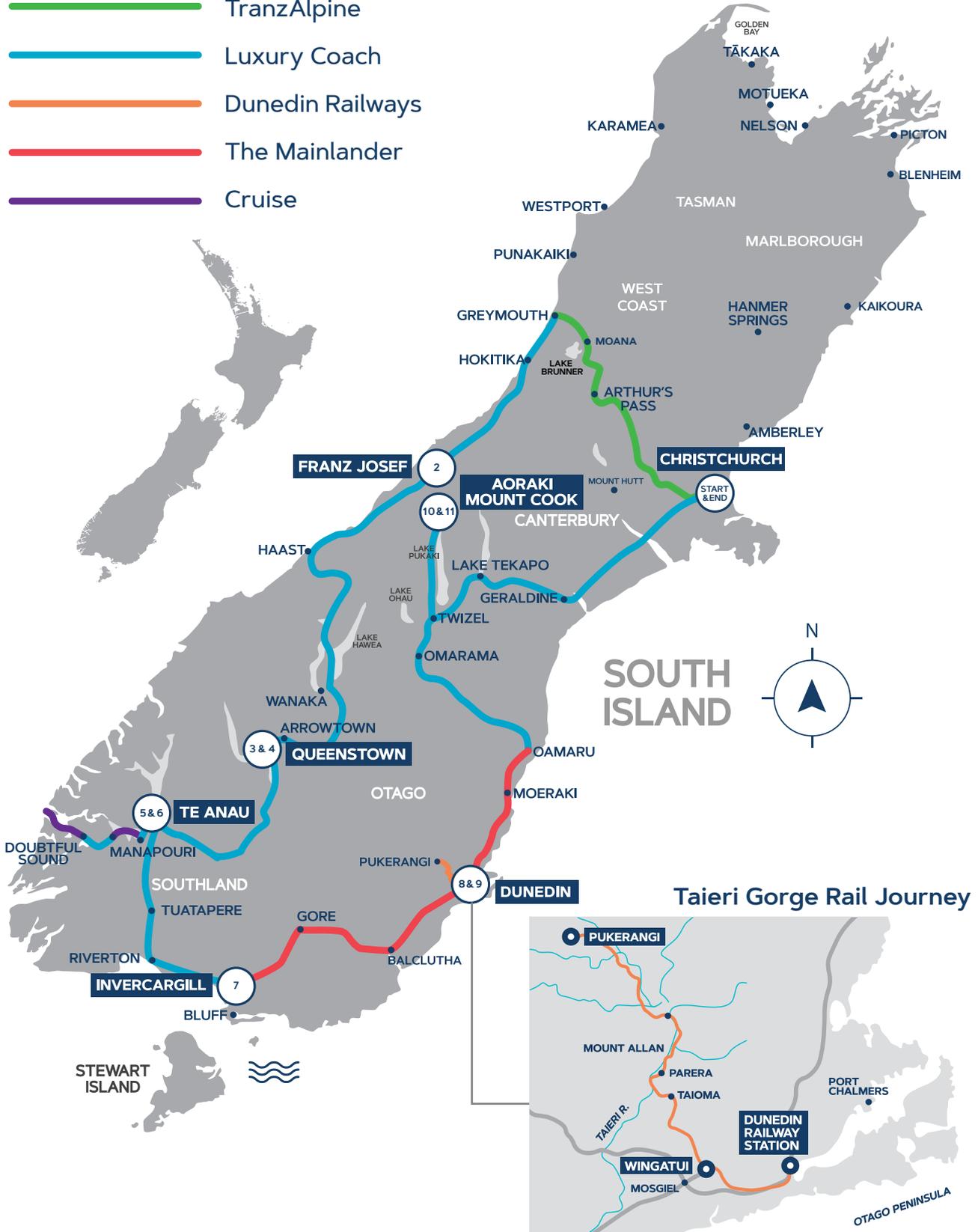


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12 DAY TOUR DEPARTING CHRISTCHURCH



- TranzAlpine
- Luxury Coach
- Dunedin Railways
- The Mainlander
- Cruise



DAY	ITINERARY	HOTEL	MODE
1	CHRISTCHURCH Tram ride voucher at hotel check-in Tour registration at hotel between 2:30pm – 5:00pm 6:00pm "Ice-Breaker" Welcome drink, briefing & dinner Meal Inclusions – Welcome dinner	Distinction Hotel Christchurch	
2	CHRISTCHURCH – GREYMOUTH – FRANZ JOSEF Coach from hotel to Addington train station TranzAlpine to Greymouth Pounamu Pathway – immersive Māori cultural experience Coach to Franz Josef Meal Inclusions – Breakfast & dinner (lunch on your own)	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef	TranzAlpine / Coach
3	FRANZ JOSEF – FOX - HAAST - QUEENSTOWN Fox Glacier helicopter flight (optional) Coach to Queenstown (via Haast) Lunch at the Hard Antler Cafe Thunder Creek falls lookout Meal Inclusions – Breakfast, lunch & dinner	Millennium Hotel Queenstown	Coach
4	QUEENSTOWN Real NZ Cruise & Walter Peak Homestead gourmet BBQ Meal Inclusions – Breakfast & BBQ lunch (dinner on your own)	Millennium Hotel Queenstown	Cruise
5	QUEENSTOWN – TE ANAU Gondola & Stratosfare lunch Coach to Te Anau (via Mossburn) Te Anau glow worm cave tour (optional) Meal inclusions - Breakfast, lunch & dinner	Distinction Hotel Luxmore Te Anau	Gondola / Coach
6	TE ANAU – DOUBTFUL SOUND – TE ANAU Doubtful Sound cruise Meal Inclusions – Breakfast, lunch on cruise (dinner on your own)	Distinction Hotel Luxmore Te Anau	Coach / Cruise
7	TE ANAU – TUATAPERE – INVERCARGILL Takahe Bird sanctuary Coach to Riverton (via Tuatapere) Tuatapere – Tui Base Camp Bar & Restaurant Riverton - Te Hiko Museum Coach to Invercargill Meal Inclusions – Breakfast, lunch & dinner	Distinction Hotel Invercargill	Coach
8	INVERCARGILL – DUNEDIN Bill Richardson Transport Museum Mainlander Train to Dunedin Meal Inclusions – Breakfast, lunch & dinner	Distinction Hotel Dunedin	Train
9	DUNEDIN Taieri Gorge train trip from Dunedin to Pukerangi (return) Larnach Castle (optional) or afternoon of leisure Meal Inclusions – Breakfast, lunch on train (dinner on your own)	Distinction Hotel Dunedin	Train / Coach
10	DUNEDIN - OAMARU - AORAKI MT COOK Mainlander Train from Dunedin to Oamaru Harbour Street Café – Oamaru lunch Coach to Aoraki Mt Cook (via Omarama) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, lunch & dinner	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Mt Cook	Train / Coach
11	AORAKI MT COOK Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre & scenic drive Ski plane & helicopter scenic flights (optional) Presentation by guest speaker from the Hillary family Galactic Journey Show in Planetarium after Hillary presentation (optional) Meal Inclusions – Breakfast & dinner (lunch on your own)	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Mt Cook	Coach
12	AORAKI MT COOK – GERALDINE - CHRISTCHURCH Coach to Christchurch (via Geraldine) Lunch at Barkers Christchurch Airport drop off / Christchurch Distinction Hotel drop off Meal Inclusions – Breakfast & lunch	Distinction Hotel Christchurch (optional)	Coach

Please note that this Itinerary is subject to change

DAY 1

Your Tour Registration starts at 2:30pm and then you get to spend the afternoon exploring Christchurch by Tram at a leisurely pace. The “Ice-breaker” Welcome Dinner and Tour Briefing will be held at the hotel restaurant at 6pm.

Tour Guests stay at the Distinction Hotel in Christchurch.

DAY 2

Christchurch – Greymouth – Franz Josef

Your journey begins at Christchurch Railway Station, where the iconic TranzAlpine awaits. Often regarded to be one of the world’s great train journeys for the scenery through which it passes. The journey is 223 kilometres one-way, taking almost five hours. You will see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps, and see large tracts of native beech forest.

On arrival in Greymouth, the “Pounamu Pathway” is a newly opened immersive visitor experience highlighting the rich Māori Culture, history, and West Coast heritage - crafted by Wētā Workshop. Luxury coaches await to transport you to your hotel in the ruggedly beautiful Franz Josef.

Tour Guests stay at the Scenic Hotel Franz Josef.



DAY 3

Franz Josef – Haast – Queenstown

Wake up to enjoy the option for a helicopter tour of the Fox Glacier. Leaving Franz Josef, we travel down the West Coast to Fox to enjoy the option of a helicopter tour of the Fox Glacier. Continuing on through the Haast Pass, journeying through large tracts of native rain forest and over the Southern Alps. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and snow-capped mountains. Continuing through Makarora on the border of Mount Aspiring World Heritage Park, we pass by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Wanaka, Lake Hawea and Lake Dunstan.

The adventure playground of Queenstown then awaits! Cap off a special day as we take in The Remarkables Mountain Range and the view of Lake Wakatipu.

Tour Guests stay in the heart of Queenstown at the Millennium Hotel.

DAY 4

Queenstown

Wake up to join a winter lake cruise which takes us across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet BBQ Lunch. Enjoy the afternoon on your own exploring Queenstown.

Tour Guests stay again at the Millennium Hotel in Queenstown.



DAY 5

Queenstown – Te Anau

Before departing Queenstown enjoy unforgettable views sky high with a trip up the iconic Queenstown Gondola, followed by a delicious buffet on top of the world at Stratosfare Restaurant and Bar.

We then travel by luxury coach to Te Anau, known as the gateway to Fiordland National Park.

Take in the breathtaking landscapes and for those who wish to add on a unique experience, take part in a guided Glowworm cave tour for a truly magical experience.

Tour Guests stay at the Distinction Hotel Luxmore in Te Anau.

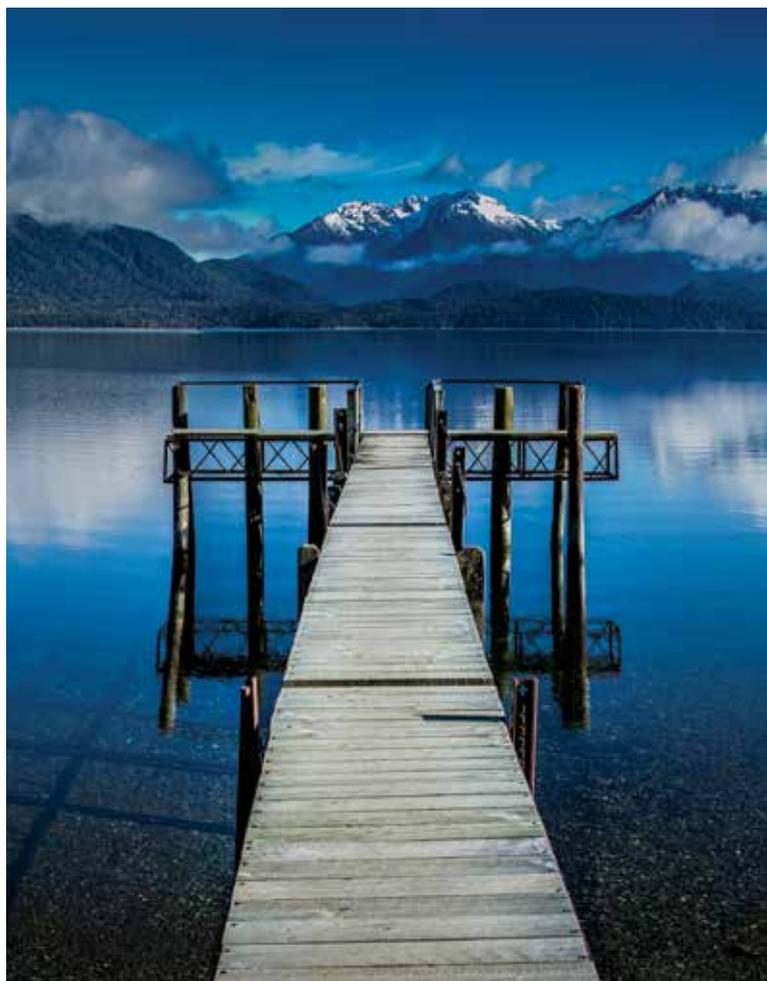
DAY 6

Te Anau – Doubtful Sound – Te Anau

Traveling from Te Anau to Doubtful Sound is one of the finest scenic drives in the world. The scenery is exceptional, ranging from glacial lakes, deep fiords, towering mountains and dense rainforest. Board the coach and travel through stunning scenery from Te Anau and into Fiordland, where it is a short cruise across Lake Manapouri to get you to the base of Wilmot Pass. After travelling over Wilmot Pass by coach, you will find the remote & magical Doubtful Sound. The tour includes a cruise around the fiord so you can experience its wonders up close and see waterfalls and amazing wildlife, such as dolphins and seals. Cruise the inner most reaches of Doubtful Sound to the open Tasman Sea and back.

A one-day itinerary is enough to see all the beautiful views along the way, take a scenic cruise around the fiord, and get back to Te Anau in time for dinner.

Tour Guests stay again at the Distinction Hotel Luxmore.



DAY 7

Te Anau – Tuatapere – Invercargill

As we depart Te Anau for Invercargill, we start the morning with a visit to the Takahe Bird Sanctuary. Takahe are the stars of the show and meeting these prehistoric-looking characters is a 'must do' for the Fiordland visitors. The sanctuary is a large part of the success of the Takahe Recovery programme. Driving to Riverton via the small rural town Tuatapere we stop at Te Hiko Museum which showcases the history of how Māori and Europeans adapted to life in this area. Arriving in Invercargill we will stay at the newly opened Distinction Invercargill Hotel.

Tour Guests stay at Distinction Invercargill in the heart of the city.



DAY 8

Invercargill – Dunedin

In the morning, we will visit Invercargill's Bill Richardson Transport World which features over 300 classic vehicles. Then board our recently re-established train to Dunedin, a rail experience exclusive to our tours - "The Mainlander" which weaves its way through rolling hills and lush scenic rural landscapes of the deep south of New Zealand.

Tour Guests stay at the luxurious Distinction Hotel Dunedin.



DAY 9

Dunedin

In the morning, we explore the remote Taieri Gorge by Dunedin Rail over river gorges, weaving our way through a myriad of historic tunnels and guide you to the historic Wingatui Viaduct, a marvel of 1880s construction that remains the largest wrought iron structure in New Zealand.

An afternoon at leisure is planned or there is the optional excursion visit to Larnach Castle for a decadent high tea & garden tour.

Tour Guests stay again at the luxurious Distinction Hotel in Dunedin.



DAY 10

Dunedin- Oamaru – Aoraki Mount Cook

Departing from Dunedin by rail, we continue to hug the coast towards Oamaru. We then detour inland via Waitaki Valley & Omarama by coach and onwards towards the spectacular Aoraki Mt Cook. Here, we find the home of the tallest mountain in New Zealand, which helped Sir Edmund Hillary to develop his climbing skills in preparation for the conquest of Mt Everest. Recognised as part of the Te Wahipounamu UNESCO World Heritage Area, the National Park is a breath-taking environment of glaciers, terminal lakes, turbulent rivers and Australasia's tallest peak, the mighty Aoraki Mt Cook soaring above at 3,724 metres. There is the option after dinner to enjoy star-gazing at the Planetarium, digitally immersed in what has been voted the world's largest "International Dark Sky Reserve".

Tour Guests stay at the Hermitage Hotel.



DAY 11

Aoraki Mt Cook

Enjoy a leisurely morning and then a visit to the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, which is a tribute to New Zealand's global icon as well as discovering New Zealand's colourful transport, climbing and hotel history. Followed by an afternoon scenic drive through the National Park surrounded by the silent splendour of the Southern Alps. Morning optional activity includes a scenic ski plane or Helicopter flight with expert pilots navigating their way over the glacial lake, passing soaring mountain tops over NZ's longest glacier – the 600-metre thick, Tasman Glacier. A true highlight to round off a magical day is a Hillary family representative presentation in the Sir Edmund Hillary Centre Theatre before dinner. The optional Planetarium show takes place in the theatre after the Hillary Presentation.

Tour Guests stay again at the Hermitage Hotel.





DAY 12

Aoraki Mount Cook – Geraldine – Christchurch

A morning departure from the hotel leaving Aoraki Mt Cook by coach, we journey back to the coast via Tekapo, Geraldine and Rakaia on the way to Christchurch. On arrival in Christchurch this brings us to the end of the tour. There is the option for post-tour accommodation at the Distinction Hotel in Christchurch.



INCLUSIONS: For your convenience the following has all been included in your tour price.

ACCOMMODATION

11 nights' accommodation is included in the 12-day tour. We have selected minimum 4-star standard accommodation for the Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer Tour to ensure the comfort and quality of your experience for your journey of a lifetime.

LUXURY COACHES & TOUR OPTIONS

Luxury coaches will escort the train throughout the journey, providing seamless transfers to your accommodation and excursions. You will be accompanied by experienced Tour Guides who are there to guide and assist you throughout your journey.

PREPAID ATTRACTIONS (INCLUDED)

- Christchurch City Tram Trip
- TranzAlpine Train journey
- "Pounamu Pathway" Māori cultural experience centre
- RealNZ Cruise Lake Wakatipu
- Walter Peak Homestead
- Skyline Gondola and Stratosfare lunch
- Doubtful Sound Day trip & cruise
- Takahe Sanctuary
- Te Hikoi Museum
- Bill Richardson Transport Museum
- Mainlander Train (Invercargill-Dunedin)
- Taieri Gorge Train Journey
- Mainlander Train (Dunedin to Oamaru)
- Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at Aoraki Mount Cook
- Hillary family guest speaker presentation

INCLUSIONS - MEALS

- 11 cooked breakfasts
- 8 sumptuous Dinners (including a Welcome Dinner)
- 9 lunches including a Gourmet BBQ lunch at Walter Peak Homestead and at Skyline Queenstown's Stratosfare Restaurant and bar.

Meals that are not included:

- Explore local hospitality with Dinner on your own for one of the nights in Queenstown, Te Anau and Dunedin.
- Lunch on your own at Aoraki Mount Cook and on the TranzAlpine train.

THE FOLLOWING OPTIONAL EXTRA EXCURSIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR BOOKING PRE-TOUR:

- TranzAlpine Train upgrade to Scenic Plus
- Fox Glacier Helicopter Flight
- Te Anau Glowworm Tour
- Larnach Castle Tour & High Tea
- "Galactic Journey" Planetarium Show
- Tasman Glacier Helicopter Flights

EXCLUSIONS:

Flights to and from your points of arrival/departure are not included. Post tour accommodation is optional and also not included. We recommend that you take out comprehensive travel insurance.

PLEASE NOTE:

For your own enjoyment and safety during the tour, please note that a reasonable level of fitness and mobility is required as there will be the need to climb and descend stairs (on coaches, excursions and at hotels), carry your own bag and at times walk some distances on uneven ground.

12-DAY TOUR FROM CHRISTCHURCH

Per Person Sharing NZ \$7,995

Single Supplement NZ \$1,495

BOOKINGS

A 20% deposit is required to secure a booking; 40% six months before your tour departs and the balance due the month before your tour departs.

For all bookings and for further information:

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