

THE SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER

“Adventure for the sake of a dream, for the pleasure of searching”

- Sir Edmund Hillary

SOUTH ISLAND RAIL & COACH TOUR

Departing Christchurch • Ending Christchurch

May 2026

11 Day Tour



INCLUDED RAIL & STEAM ADVENTURES OF THE SOUTH ISLAND

The Mountaineer (Christchurch to Arthur's Pass) • TSS Earnslaw Steamship

Kingston Flyer (Steam) • Taieri Gorge

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.



The Mountaineer (Christchurch to Arthur's Pass)



Kingston Flyer



TSS Earnslaw Steamship



Taiari Gorge



SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER TOUR

INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING
RAIL & STEAM ADVENTURES
OF THE SOUTH ISLAND...
AND MORE...

The Mountaineer (Christchurch to Arthur's Pass) •
TSS Earnslaw Steamship • Kingston Flyer (Steam)
• Taieri Gorge

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 the South Island of New Zealand and experience the postcard perfect vistas and dramatic alpine scenery that this part of the world is renowned for.

Your guided journey begins in The Garden City, Christchurch, where you board one of the world's great train journeys, **The Mountaineer** and traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps to Arthur's Pass. Luxury coaches await to escort you

from Arthur's Pass via Hokitika to the glacial beauty of Franz Josef.

We then track inland to experience the wonders of Queenstown and Te Anau with the option to explore either Milford Sound or Doubtful Sound. Cruise on the steamship **TSS Earnslaw** and ride the iconic steam train, **The Kingston Flyer**, the icing on the cake for railfans and historians.

A special journey is made to Waimea Plains Railway, home to a static display of the historic **Rogers K92** Steam Locomotive (the original Kingston Flyer) and the Croydon Aviation Museum.

Onward to Dunedin where we enjoy another iconic rail journey with **Dunedin Railways** through the remote and rugged landscape of the world-famous **Taieri Gorge**, an epic rail journey over white water rapids, towering viaducts and historic tunnels.

Our departure from Dunedin continues by luxury coach along the coastal route to explore the famed boulders at Moeraki Beach and onwards to Oamaru. Then, a detour inland to "mountain country", staying in Aoraki Mount Cook at the prestigious Hermitage Hotel with access to the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, where you will banquet after a keynote presentation from a Hillary family member.

Returning to the coast by coach via Lake Tekapo, where your journey ends on arrival at Christchurch.

TOUR DATES

11-DAYS (CHRISTCHURCH RETURN)

- Departing 6 May 2026 (ending 16 May 2026)
- Departing 12 May 2026 (ending 22 May 2026)

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11-DAY TOUR DEPARTING CHRISTCHURCH

- The Mountaineer
- Luxury Coach
- TSS Earnslaw Steamship
- Kingston Flyer
- Rogers K92
- Dunedin Railways



DAY	ITINERARY	HOTEL	MODE
1	CHRISTCHURCH Tour Registration at hotel from 2:30pm – 5:00pm Meal Inclusions - Welcome dinner	Sudima Airport Hotel, Christchurch	
2	CHRISTCHURCH – HOKITIKA - FRANZ JOSEF The Mountaineer Train to Arthurs Pass Coach to Franz Josef (via Hokitika) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & dinner (lunch on your own)	Scenic Hotel, Franz Josef	Train / Coach
3	FRANZ JOSEF - HAAST - QUEENSTOWN Haast Jet Boat River Safari Experience Haast Pass canyon lookout Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, lunch & dinner	Mercure Queenstown Resort	Coach
4	QUEENSTOWN TSS Earnslaw & Walter Peak Homestead Gourmet BBQ Lunch Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & barbeque lunch (dinner on your own)	Mercure Queenstown Resort	Coach / Steam Ship
5	QUEENSTOWN - TE ANAU Kingston Flyer Takahe bird sanctuary Te Anau glow worm cave tour (optional) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, picnic lunch & dinner	Distinction Hotel Luxmore	Coach / Steam Train
6	TE ANAU Option for a day cruise on Milford Sound or Doubtful Sound or day at leisure Meal Inclusions - Breakfast (lunch & dinner on your own)	Distinction Hotel Luxmore	Coach / Cruise
7	TE ANAU - MANDEVILLE - DUNEDIN Coach from Te Anau via Mandeville to Dunedin Croydon Aviation Museum & Waimea Plains Railway, "Rogers K92" display Meal Inclusions – Breakfast, lunch & dinner	Distinction Hotel, Dunedin	Coach
8	DUNEDIN Taieri Gorge train trip Larnach Castle (optional) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & picnic lunch (dinner on your own)	Distinction Hotel, Dunedin	Train
9	DUNEDIN - OAMARU - AORAKI MT COOK Moeraki Beach to view boulders (subject to tide) Lunch in Oamaru Heritage Precinct Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, picnic lunch & dinner	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Mt Cook	Coach
10	AORAKI MT COOK Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre & scenic drive to Mueller Lake Helicopter scenic flight & Glacier Explorer Cruise (both 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
11	AORAKI MT COOK - CHRISTCHURCH Coach to Christchurch (via Lake Tekapo) Lunch at Barkers in Geraldine Christchurch Airport drop off / Sudima Airport Hotel drop off / CBD (Cathedral Square) drop off Tour Ends Meal Inclusions – Breakfast and lunch	Sudima Airport Hotel, Christchurch (optional)	Coach

Please note that this Itinerary is subject to change

DAY 1

Christchurch

Registration to meet your fellow explorers and tour guides is from 2.30pm – 5pm at Sudima Airport Hotel in Christchurch.

Welcome Dinner and Tour Briefing will be held at the hotel restaurant at 6.30pm.

Guests stay at the Sudima Airport Hotel in Christchurch.

DAY 2

Christchurch – Hokitika – Franz Josef

Your journey begins at Rolleston Railway Station, where the iconic Mountaineer Train awaits. Often regarded to be one of the world's great rail journeys for the scenery through which it passes. 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. Luxury coaches await at Arthur's Pass to transport you to Hokitika and then onto your hotel in the ruggedly beautiful Franz Josef.

Guests stay at the Scenic Hotel Franz Josef.



South Island 11-Day Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer



DAY 3

Franz Josef – Haast – Queenstown

Leaving Franz Josef, we travel down the West Coast and encounter the mighty Haast River on a Jetboat Safari, then continue through the Haast Pass. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and the snow-capped Southern Alps. 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 from the hotel.

Guests stay at the Mercure Queenstown Resort located with breathtaking views over Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables Mountain range.



DAY 4

Queenstown

Wake up to join a lake cruise on board the historic TSS Earnslaw, the 1912 Edwardian steamboat, which takes us across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet BBQ lunch.

Guests stay again at the Mercure Queenstown Resort located with breathtaking views over Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables Mountain range.



DAY 5

Queenstown – Kingston – Te Anau

Departing Queenstown, we continue to the village of Kingston which is nestled on southernmost end of Lake Wakatipu. Here, the iconic Kingston Flyer Steam Train awaits to take you on a memorable return journey between Kingston & Fairlight.

Then, we enter the Fiordland National Park district, continuing to traverse the Southern Scenic Route, our journey calls in to visit the Takahe Bird Sanctuary. Takahe are the stars of the show and meeting these prehistoric-looking characters is a 'must do' for Fiordland visitors. The sanctuary is a large part of the success of the Takahe Recovery Programme.

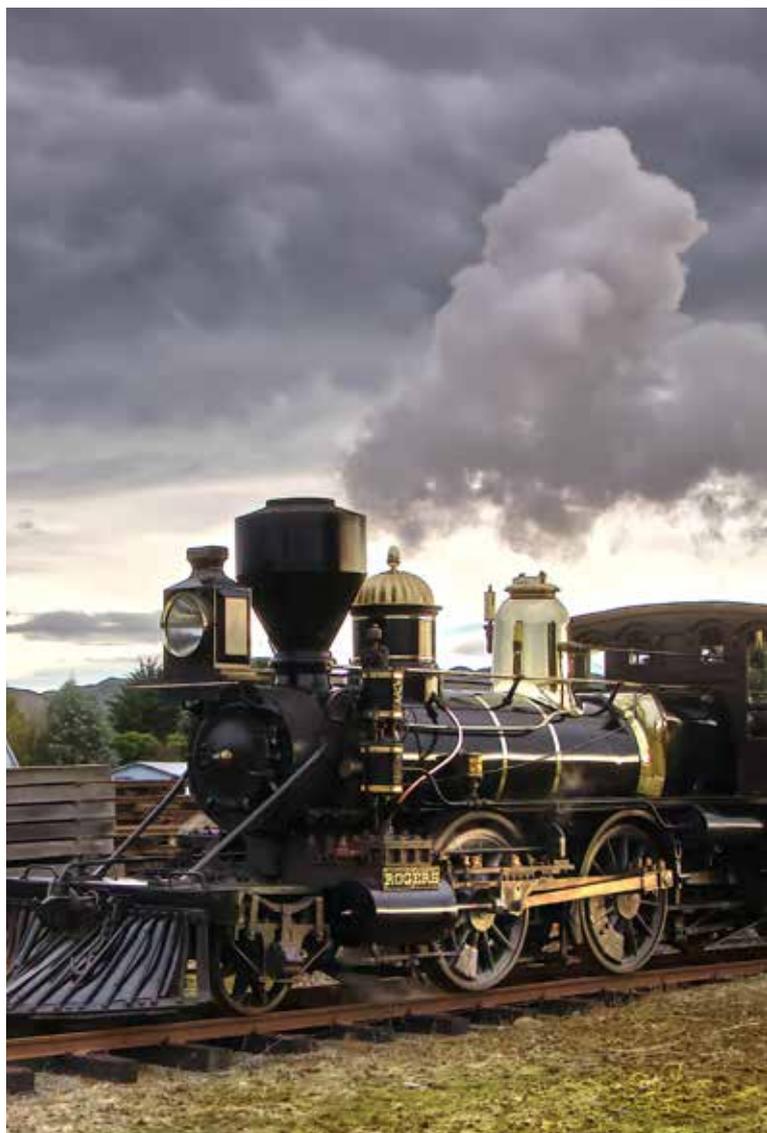
Guests stay at the Distinction Hotel Luxmore in Te Anau.

DAY 6

Te Anau

Enjoy a day at leisure or there is the option for a day cruise to Milford Sound or Doubtful Sound that offers some of the most spectacular natural scenery to be viewed anywhere in the world. Experience the numerous waterfalls up close and amazing wildlife, such as dolphins and seals. Cruise the inner most reaches of Sound to the open Tasman Sea and back

Guests stay again at the Distinction Hotel Luxmore.



DAY 7

Te Anau – Mandeville – Dunedin

Departing Te Anau for Dunedin, via Mandeville a special journey is made to Waimea Plains Railway, which is home of a static display of the historic Rogers K92 Steam Locomotive (the original Kingston Flyer) and we also explore the Croydon Aviation Museum.

Guests will stay at Dunedin's premier luxury hotel, the Distinction Hotel, nestled in the heart of the city.

DAY 8

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.

Guests stay again at the luxurious Distinction Hotel in Dunedin.



DAY 9

Dunedin – Oamaru – Aoraki Mt Cook

Departing Dunedin by luxury coach, we continue to hug the coast and visit the famed spherical boulders at Moeraki Beach. Then onto Oamaru, where we enjoy lunch in the heritage precinct. Then, a detour inland via Waitaki Valley & Omarama 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.

Guests stay at the iconic Hermitage Hotel with majestic mountain views of Aoraki Mt Cook.



DAY 10

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 drive to Mueller Lake walk & lookout surrounded by the silent splendour of the Southern Alps. Morning optional activities include a glacier explorer cruise or a scenic 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. Guest speaker is a Hillary family representative in the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre Theatre before dinner. The optional Planetarium Show takes place in the theatre after the Hillary presentation.

Guests stay again at the Hermitage Hotel.

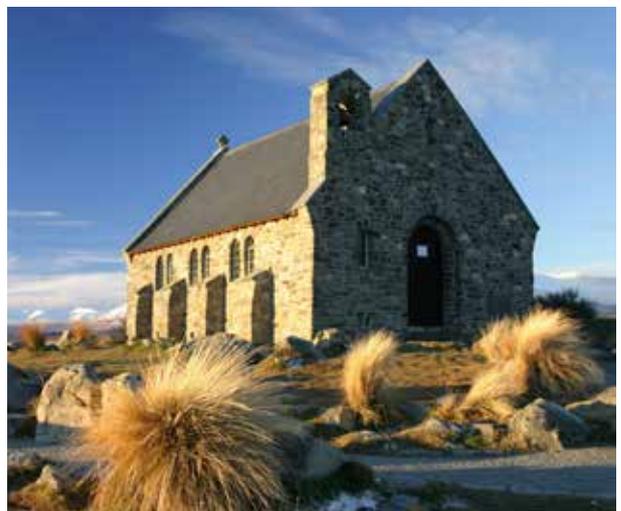


DAY 11

Aoraki Mt 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 Sudima Airport Hotel or a drop off at Christchurch Airport or the Cathedral Square (Christchurch CBD).



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

ACCOMMODATION

10 nights accommodation is included in the 11-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

Two 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)

- Mountaineer Train Journey to Arthur's Pass
- Haast Jet Boat River Safari Experience
- Cruise Lake Wakatipu on the TSS Earnslaw
- Walter Peak Farm Experience
- Kingston Flyer Historic Train Excursion
- Takahe Sanctuary
- Croydon Aviation Museum
- Waimea Plains Railway (Rogers K92 display)
- Taieri Gorge Train Journey
- View boulders at Moeraki Beach
- Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at Aoraki Mt Cook
- Guest speaker from the Hillary family

INCLUSIONS - MEALS

- 10 cooked breakfasts
- 7 sumptuous dinners
- 6 picnic lunches including Gourmet BBQ lunch at Walter Peak Homestead (other lunches on your own)

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

- Doubtful Sound or Milford Sound Cruise
- Te Anau Glow Worm Tour
- Larnach Castle Tour & High Tea
- Tasman Glacier Explorer Cruise
- Tasman Glacier Helicopter Flight
- "Galactic Journey" Planetarium Show

EXCLUSIONS:

Flights to and from your points of arrival/departure are not included. Pre and 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 at times, and be able to walk some distances on uneven ground. Please refer to the Terms & Conditions found on www.siredmundhillaryexplorer.com/terms-and-conditions

11-DAY TOUR FROM CHRISTCHURCH

Per Person Sharing NZ \$6,995

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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