

Highlights



- Mount Cook National Park
- Dunedin
- Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu
- The Milford Sound and Milford Track
- Haast Pass
- Fox Glacier & Franz Josef Glacier
- Punakaiki 'pancake rocks' and blowholes
- Wellington
- Lake Taupo
- Rotorua
- Auckland
- Waitomo Caves
- Marlborough wine region
- Kaikoura
- Hanmer Springs
- Christchurch and the Banks Peninsula



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| Drive Distance Guide | Drive Distance (kilometres) | Approximate Travel Time |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Christchurch to Mt Cook (Day 1) | 350 km | 4 hrs 25 mins |
| Mt Cook to Dunedin (Day 2) | 323 km | 4 hrs 10 mins |
| Dunedin to Queenstown (Day 3) | 280 km | 3 hrs 30 mins |
| Queenstown (Day 4) | Day Touring | Day Touring |
| Queenstown to Milford Sound (Te Anau) (Day 5) | 414 km | 5 hrs 30 mins |
| Milford Sound (Te Anau) to Wanaka (Day 6) | 275 km | 3 hrs 50 mins |
| Wanaka to Franz Josef (Day 7) | 284 km | 3 hrs 45 mins |
| Franz Josef to Punakaiki (Day 8) | 218 km | 3 hrs |
| Punakaiki to Nelson (Day 9) | 283 km | 3 hrs 45 mins |
| Nelson (Day 10) | Day Touring | Day Touring |
| Nelson to Wellington (Day 11) (ferry included) | 110 km (on land) | 5 hrs (ferry included) |
| Wellington to Taupo (Day 12) | 369 km | 4 hrs 45 mins |
| Taupo to Whangamata (Day 13) | 255 km | 3 hrs 20 mins |
| Whangamata to Auckland (Day 14) | 180 km | 2 hrs 50 mins |
| Auckland to Waitomo Caves (Day 15) | 198 km | 2 hrs 30 mins |
| Waitomo Caves to Wanganui (Day 16) | 342 km | 2 hrs 20 mins |
| Wanganui to Picton (Day 17) (ferry included) | 195 km (on land) | 6 hrs (ferry included) |
| Picton to Kaikoura (Day 18) | 156 km | 2 hrs 15 mins |
| Kaikoura to Hanmer Springs (Day 19) | 132 km | 1 hr 30 mins |
| Hanmer Springs to Christchurch (Day 20) | 135 km | 1 hr 45 mins |
| Christchurch and Banks Peninsula (Day 21) | Day Touring | Day Touring |
| TOTAL | 4499 km | 64 hrs 10 mins |



Touring Itinerary

BRITZ DISCOVER NZ RIDE

Start: Christchurch
 Finish: Christchurch
 Duration: 21 days
 Total Distance: 4499 kms

Britz bikes



Description:

Day 1: Christchurch to Mt Cook

Follow the inland route west to the Rakaia Gorge and Methven towards Lake Tekapo. In Geraldine, visit the interesting car museum. After Fairlie you enter the region known as the Mackenzie Country. Have lunch in Lake Tekapo, at the southern end of the lake, an area popular for fishing, kayaking, bike riding, and horse trekking and skiing. Then cross the McKenzie basin to Lake Pukaki and north through to Mt Cook alpine village. From Mt Cook you can explore the popular Mt Cook National Park and Westland National Park. Aoraki/Mt Cook is the highest mountain in New Zealand (Mt Cook - 3755m). This area is popular for mountain climbers, bush walkers, and hikers. The scenery is stunning. Walking trails begin from in or near Mt Cook Village and some only take a few hours.

Day 2: Mt Cook to Dunedin

Heading south, follow the shore of Lake Pukaki to Twizel. If you're into birdwatching, Twizel is home to the rarest wading bird in the world – the Black Stilt. It is also a great place to try fresh salmon. Continue on to Oamaru (watch out for the giant merino sheep statue) and then south-east via Otematata, Aviemore, Kurow, Dunroon and Pukeuri to Oamaru on the East Coast. The Waitaki Valley takes you past the hydro lake of Benmore and Aviemore. From Oamaru, head south along the coast to Dunedin. Oamaru has an impressive heritage. Visit the Harbour-Tyne area - the best-preserved collection of historic commercial buildings in New Zealand. Also check out the penguin colony, the museum and the pretty public gardens. Just south of Oamaru is Totara Estate Centennial Park, where you can see restored 1860s farm buildings. Ancient stones can be found on the beach at Hampden, and visit the mysterious spherical boulders at Moeraki. Dunedin was built in the late 1800's, with many ostentatious Victorian buildings still visible today. Dunedin is also well-known for Eco-tourism – see penguins, albatross and seals.

Day 3: Dunedin to Queenstown

There are a couple of ways to get to Queenstown, this way is north via the gold trails and old gold mining towns, through Pillar Range, Middlemarch, and on to Ranfurly. Ranfurly is an attractive art deco town. St Bathans is an excellent side tour along on the way. Heading south-west now to Alexandra, the main town for Central Otago, visit the huge clock on the hill or the gold mining displays at the local museum. In winter, Manorburn Dam freezes to become a skating rink. In

summer, enjoy the delicious local fruit available. Continue west to Queenstown, passing through the charming historic town of Clyde and the Kawarau Gorge, where you can stop and admire the Roaring Meg power station. Spend the rest of the day exploring Queenstown, a beautiful and sophisticated alpine resort town.

Day 4: Queenstown (day touring)

Spend the day visiting the key sights of Queenstown, including a visit to Lake Wakatipu, do a local wine trail, enjoy gourmet food and wine, take a cruise, a scenic flight, or if you prefer, take a more adventurous activity. Queenstown is a centre for 'action', including bungee jumping, night skiing, jet-boating, whitewater rafting, hot air ballooning, luge, gondola rides, or tandem hang-gliding. There will be plenty to keep you occupied!

Day 5: Queenstown to Milford Sound (Te Anau)

Your journey starts by clinging to the scenic shore of Lake Wakatipu, south through Kingston, where you can see the remarkable vintage steam train, and then continue through Garston and Athol, and then head west through Mossburn to Te Anau. This ride includes high country scenery and rivers popular for trout fishing. The township of Te Anau lies on the shores of Lake Te Anau. From here, head north to the Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound, including the start of the famous Milford Track. Your ride today travels through some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. Return on the same road to Te Anau to stay the night (121 km each way between Te Anau and Milford Sound).

Day 6: Milford Sound (Te Anau) to Wanaka

Head back to Queenstown along the same scenic route as yesterday. From Queenstown, head north-east over the magnificent Crown Range Rd (the highest main road in New Zealand) to the old Cardrona Pub and Wanaka. This road is the shortest route to Wanaka, and also the most scenically dramatic. The views are amazing and if you're lucky you will see the friendly keas (mountain parrots). Wanaka is a resort town on the shores of Lake Wanaka, it is well-known for its mix of fine dining, cafes, interesting shops and fun and adventure. Don't miss the 3D maze while you are in town. Wanaka is home to the 'warbird' air show, held every two years.

Day 7: Wanaka to Franz Josef

Today's ride is one of the most spectacular motorcycling roads in the world. Head north along the east shore of Lake Hawea and the northern end of Lake Wanaka towards the west coast. Head over the dramatic Haast Pass, enjoying waterfalls and river scenery before arriving in rainforest country. You will pass through a section of the Mount Aspiring National Park, a hiker's paradise, with the centre piece – Mt Aspiring over 3000m high. The settlement of Haast makes a fun stop for lunch - local pubs make a feature of stuffed animal trophies. North of Haast is pretty Lake Paringa. The Fox Glacier terminal face is just 5km from the township. Both the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers are unique relics of the last ice age. These glaciers are also unique as nowhere else in the world have glaciers advanced so close to the sea at this latitude. Franz Josef Glacier is just a short drive north. Since 1985 the glacier has been advancing at a rate of about 1 metre a day. You can walk to the glacier from town. Stop and stay at either Fox or Franz Josef Glacier villages and enjoy.

Day 8: Franz Josef to Punakaiki

Head north from Franz Josef through Whataroa and Harihari, to Ross and Hokitika – through native forests and along deserted beaches. At Ross there's a goldfield walkway to explore. A rare White Heron colony near Whataroa is worth a stop. Hokitika was a gold town, settled in 1860, after the discovery of gold on the west coast. The town's more famous these days for greenstone (New Zealand jade) – watch it being carved in town. Hokitika also has a good museum and a historical walk. Follow the road along the wild west coast north between Hokitika and Greymouth, offering fantastic coastal views. Shantytown, just south of Greymouth, is a reconstructed 1880s gold rush town. Greymouth is also an old gold mining town, and is the largest town on the west coast. Visit the local museum or try panning for gold. North from Greymouth, the road to Punakaiki is breathtaking. Rugged coastal rocks and views are on your left, and mountains on your right. The town of Punakaiki is famous for its 'pancake rocks' and booming blowholes. It is situated in the Paparoa National Park, offering excellent coastal and inland walks. It is estimated that the pancake rock formations are about 30 million years old.



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Day 9: Punakaiki to Nelson

Without a doubt, this section of road is another of the most outstanding motorcycling roads in the world. Heading north, hug the coastal road to Westport. See spectacular coastal views, wild beaches and the unruly Tasman Sea. Stop at Charleston, formerly a prosperous gold town, and now popular for cave exploring trips. Westport is a coal mining town, and a centre for adventure activities. Visit the local coal mining museum, investigate the seal colony or try some outdoor excitement: black water rafting, jet boating, horse trekking or surf rafting. Continue and head north-east to Nelson, via the scenic Buller Gorge and Hawks Crag where you can ride under a dramatic rock overhang. At Lyell, stop and pan for gold or visit the local pioneer cemetery. Murchison has a museum worth a visit - learn about the massive earthquake that took place in 1929. Arrive into Nelson late afternoon for the night.

Day 10: Nelson (day touring)

Use this day to explore the Nelson, Motueka and Golden Bay area. Great roads, wineries and beautiful golden beaches. Other options including bird-watching tours, eco tours, boat cruises and fishing (salt water and fresh water fishing). Nelson is known as the sunniest region in New Zealand, and is a popular place for artists and crafts people to make their home base. There are over 350 working artists and craftspeople living in Nelson, including traditional and contemporary Maori artists. The region's beautiful geography is often the inspiration for their art and craftwork. In Maori legend, Nelson is known as Te Tau Ihu o Te Waka a Maui (the tip of the nose of the canoe of Maui). The Maori legend goes that from his canoe, Maui used his fish hook to catch the North Island (Te Ika a Maui - the fish of Maui).

Day 11: Nelson to Wellington

Head off to the east towards Picton and the Marlborough Sounds via the twisty Grove Road, a scenic road passing by the Richmond Range. Continue through Rai Valley, and stop at Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve where you can bush walk or swim. Havelock is a great place to stop for a meal, famous for its seafood - it's known as the Green Shell Mussel Capital of the World. In Picton, hop on the Picton ferry with your bike, and pass through the Marlborough Sounds and on to Wellington for the night. Allow time for the ferry, it takes between 2-3 hours depending on what service you take. Wellington is a pretty city full of culture and character. It is located between the harbour and the hills, with plenty of cafes, restaurants, shops, museums and theatre to enjoy.

Day 12: Wellington to Taupo

Travel north through the towns of Levin and Bulls. Two beautiful dune lakes are an easy detour from Levin. Bulls has great antique shops to browse through. Heading north east now, pass by the Mangaweka Gorge, a very scenic spot. Passing by rivers and valleys, head to Taihape (the Gumboot Throwing capital of the world), and Waiouru, where you can visit the QE2 Memorial Museum. Travelling along the Desert Road you'll see amazing views of Tongariro National Park's volcanoes. Turangi is the trout fishing capital of New Zealand with famous fishing spots in almost every direction, including 'Tailrace' (believed to contain the world's fattest trout). Follow the eastern edge of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake, on to the town of Taupo. The drive is very scenic and there are many places for perfect picnics along the way. Taupo is a resort town, with excellent restaurants and opportunities to experience the underground thermal activity with hot spa treatments.

Day 13: Taupo to Whangamata

Head north from Taupo to Rotorua - famous for the volcanic activity and hot bubbling pools. Rotorua is the thermal capital of New Zealand. In Rotorua, explore the geothermal areas and discover the unique culture of New Zealand's Maori people. Head over the Mamaku Range to Te Puke on the way to Tauranga. Tauranga is located on the edge of an attractive harbour, a nice place for lunch. Nearby Mt Maunganui is popular for surfing and beach walking. North from Tauranga you will head towards the Coromandel Peninsula, with lovely winding motorcycle roads, and pass through an area known for its seasonal fruit and roadside stalls. Historic Waihi is a former gold mining town. Whangamata is one of the country's most attractive surf towns, with a great beach, cafes and bush walks. Diving, fishing tours, windsurfing, kayaking and day cruises can all be arranged in Whangamata. Day trips to Mayor Island, the summit of a volcano, are available.

Day 14: Whangamata to Auckland

Head slightly north from Whangamata, across the scenic Coromandel Peninsula, to Thames. The historic township of Thames was founded during the Coromandel gold rush. It's a great place for walking - through the town, the bush and on the mangrove board walk. Visit the museum and discover an interesting range of shops. From Thames, head around the edge of the Firth of Thames, and then north along the scenic farmland route, through the beachside settlements of Orere Point, Kawakawa Bay. Alternatively you can travel the quicker way across the Hauraki Plains to Auckland. Via both routes you can visit Miranda's hot springs and bird

sanctuary. Auckland is New Zealand's largest city, and is situated between two enormous harbours dotted with 48 extinct volcanic cones. Take a Ferry ride to Waiheke Island on the spectacular Waitemata Harbour.

Day 15: Auckland to Waitomo Caves


Head south down the motorway towards Hamilton, the centre of New Zealand's dairy industry. You will follow the Waikato River along the way and pass through the wine growing district of Te Kauwhata and the coal town of Huntly. The city of Hamilton is split across both sides of

the mighty Waikato River, and attractions include river boat cruising, gardens, museums, a giant free flight aviary, and great cafes and restaurants - a good place to stop for lunch. South from Hamilton you travel through attractive lush-green rolling countryside and pass through prime Waikato farmland. Stop in Otorohanga to visit the Kiwi House - where you can see New Zealand's national symbol. Continue on to the famous Waitomo Caves. This is an ancient limestone region with a series of vast cave systems with stalactites, stalagmites and glow-worms. Some caves are open to the public, and are easy to walk through, others require specialised caving equipment. You can also stay overnight in nearby Te Kuiti.

Day 16: Waitomo Caves to Wanganui

Head south, in Te Kuiti, you can decide to continue south through the middle of the island via Mt Ruapehu and Tongariro National Park, or head towards the west coast through a mixture of farmland, forest and rugged mountain country. Heading west via the coastal route, at Awakino or Mokau, you can take a break to enjoy the wild beauty of the Tasman Sea. The city of New Plymouth is known for its beautiful parks and gardens. Take a picnic to Pukekura Park to admire the rhododendrons. The national park that surrounds the volcanic cone of Mt Taranaki has spectacular waterfalls and walkways to discover. Continue and follow the 'Surf Highway' around Cape Egmont towards Wanganui. If you take the inland route, you will enjoy mountain scenery, and an attractive ride with views to the volcanic peaks of Mt Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro. You will pass through National Park Village, on the edge of the Tongariro National Park, a World Heritage area. The picturesque river city of Wanganui is a lovely place to explore, with restored heritage areas and the Whanganui River.



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Day 17: Wanganui to Picton

From Wanganui, travel south along the island, back through Bulls and Levin to Wellington and across the ferry again to Picton for the night. You can detour via Palmerston North if time allows - one of New Zealand's largest provincial cities, with an interesting historic centre. Many of the original buildings built in the 1920s and 1930s have been restored and now operate as boutiques, cafes and restaurants. The Rose Gardens are also worth a visit if you have time. Make sure you get to Wellington and the ferry in time to travel across to Picton. The passage across Cook Strait and through the Marlborough Sounds is one of the most scenic ferry trips in the world. The fast ferry takes just over 2 hours; the cruise-style ferry takes 3 hours. Both ferries can transport bikes. The picturesque seaside town of Picton is the gateway to the marine, forest and island attractions of the Marlborough Sounds.

Day 18: Picton to Kaikoura

Travel south through Blenheim and the Marlborough wine area - home of the great New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc wines. Blenheim is the main centre of this region. Heading south-east from Blenheim towards the East Coast, pass through the picturesque Awatere Valley and the township of Seddon. Head south through Ward to Kaikoura, with fantastic views of the Pacific Ocean on your left. Kaikoura is well-known as a great place to view wildlife - whale watching tours and day cruises provide the opportunity to see Minke, Humpback and Southern Right whales, seals, dolphins, orcas, and seabirds including petrels, albatross and mollymawks. It's also a great place to eat fresh local crayfish.

Day 19: Kaikoura to Hanmer Springs

Head west along the inland road via Waiau, Rotherham, and on through to Hanmer Springs. Hanmer Springs is a destination for relaxation, indulgence and outdoor activities. In Hanmer Springs, use the Hot Springs to ease away the aches, take a jet boat ride, or go for a bush walk in nearby Hanmer Forest Park. Hanmer Forest contains some of New Zealand's oldest exotic trees, planted in 1902. Native birds commonly found in the park include bellbirds, fantails, miromiro, riroriro, rifleman, tui, kereru and New Zealand falcon. Other outdoor options include horse trekking, trout fishing, bungee jumping or a game of golf. After a few days on the bike though, relaxing and a spa treatment is probably the preferred choice!

Day 20: Hanmer Springs to Christchurch

Head south-east from Hanmer Springs for a leisurely ride back to Christchurch. The road to Christchurch follows the beautiful Waiau River, through the Balmoral Forest and then across the Hurunui River. The Waipara region is known for its food and wine, with scenic farmland, vineyards and olive groves to be seen along the way. Continue south through the pretty surf-beach townships of Amberley, Leithfield, Waikuku and Woodend before arriving into Christchurch. Scenic Christchurch lies on the banks of the Avon River, and is the South Island's largest city.

Day 21: Christchurch and Banks Peninsula

Spend the day exploring Christchurch and the Banks Peninsula. The Banks Peninsula and Akaroa Harbour were formed by volcanic eruptions, many thousands of years ago. Head out to the French village of Akaroa, on the Banks Peninsula for lunch, then explore the bays of Akaroa Harbour and Lyttelton. Originally a French settlement, the historic town of Akaroa is a place to enjoy fine cuisine and wildlife cruises. New Zealand's rarest dolphin - the Hector's dolphin - can be seen on a wildlife cruise of Akaroa Harbour. In Lyttelton, visit the Timeball Station. The station was built in 1876 as a timekeeper for shipping in the late 1800's. Head back to Christchurch for the night.

Best photo spots:


- Views of Mt Cook - New Zealand's highest mountain
- Historic Victorian buildings in Dunedin
- The city of Queenstown from the lake - on a cruise on Lake Wakatipu
- Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound
- Views from Crown Range Rd (highest main road in New Zealand)
- Haast Pass
- Close-ups of Fox Glacier and Franz Josef Glacier
- The Punakaiki blowholes in action (need to get your timing right!)
- Views from the Picton Ferry of the Marlborough Sounds
- Tongariro National Park's volcanoes and Mt Ruapehu
- Lake Taupo
- Rotorua - hot bubbling pools and Maori culture
- Waitemata Harbour views in Auckland
- Underground at Waitomo Caves
- Wildlife viewing and ocean views at Kaikoura
- The French village of Akaroa on the Banks Peninsula

Special Note: All roads in this itinerary are sealed and accessible for motorbikes, however this itinerary does include alpine region/s on the North and South Islands; regions with stunning scenery and fantastic to explore on a motorbike, but some road sections may not be accessible during the winter months (June-August) due to snow or ice on the roads. It is not recommended to take a motorbike on these roads in adverse weather or road conditions. Please check with a local Visitor Information Centre or call 0800 44 44 49 (available daily 24hrs) for local road conditions (or visit: www.transit.govt.nz/road) before travelling on these alpine roads in winter.

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