

Bicycle Tours in New Zealand: Southern Alps - 15 days (TourzPlus™)

OVERVIEW

The Southern Alps tour takes one on a breathtaking loop through some of the world's finest scenery. Stay in charming inns and hotels. Walk on a glacier, experience the rainforest on a range of short hikes and meet friendly New Zealanders. Ride to Mt Cook and stay on a sheep farm. This is one of our most popular New Zealand bicycling trips.

Learn more about our [TourzPlus™ partner tours](#) and how they differ from regular ExperiencePlus! bicycle tours.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hooker, Fox and Tasman Glaciers
- The Remarkables
- Otago tussock country
- Arthur's Pass & Westland National Parks
- Small farms and sheep stations
- Christchurch & Queenstown
- Otira Gorge
- Okarito Beach

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	■ Classic: Learn more about our Classic tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/classic
Includes	15 days, 14 nights accommodation, 11 dinners, 9 lunches, & 14 breakfasts. Hybrid or road bike rental available for an additional fee
Countries	New Zealand
Begin/End	Christchurch/Christchurch
Arrive/Depart	Christchurch Int'l Airport (CHC)
Total Distance	Short Rides: 500 km (315 miles), Long Rides: 1075 km (668 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	Short Rides: 27-67 km (17-42 miles), Long Rides: 50-148 km (31-92 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	▶▶▶▶▶
Keep in Mind	We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour. Some long days with shuttle options for those who want shorter or intermediate mileage.

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the ■ [online itinerary](#) for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:

https://www.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/new_zealand/bike-touring-southern-alps

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DATES & PRICES

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
2	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
3	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
4	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
5	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
6	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
7	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
8	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
9	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
10	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
11	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
12	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
13	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
14	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			
15	0km / 0m (0mi / 0ft)			

Bicycle Tours in New Zealand: Southern Alps - 15 days (TourzPlus™)**Meet in Christchurch****DAY 1**

Highlights Introductions & bike fitting

Arrive in Christchurch. Orientation, fitting bikes and then take a short cycle ride to stretch our legs. Both lunch and dinner are included.

Christchurch to Arthur's Pass National Park**DAY 2**

Highlights Descent from Porters Pass, lake views

The minibus takes us through the suburbs and across the Canterbury Plains to the Torlesse Range and Porters Pass (929m). At the top of the pass we unload the bikes to enjoy an exhilarating descent to Lake Lyndon. The terrain is rolling as we pass Lakes Pearson, Grasmere and Sarah on our way to the Waimakariri River and the gentle climb through dense beech forest to Arthur's Pass National Park. Bicycling Options: Porter's Pass to Arthur's Pass: 51km / 32 miles. Springfield to Arthur's Pass: 68km / 42.5 miles.

Arthur's Pass National Park to Hokitika**DAY 3**

Highlights Arthur's Pass, Otira Gorge, Taramakau River Valley

We ride through beech forest to Arthur's Pass village and then climb to the top of the pass, dominated by Mt Rolleston (2270 m.) The descent through Otira Gorge is very spectacular and initially steep. From Jacksons (a quaint old pub) the terrain is gentle as we ride alongside the Taramakau River. Through stands of native forest, we reach Kumara (tavern) where we meet to drive the last few miles to our lodging. Bicycling Options: Wilderness Lodge to Jackson's 50km / 31 miles. Wilderness Lodge to Kumara: 89km / 56 miles. Arthur's Pass to Hokitika: 119km / 74 miles.

Bicycle Tours in New Zealand: Southern Alps - 15 days (TourzPlus™)**Hokitika to Franz Josef Glacier****DAY 4**

Highlights Jade workshops, ride through rolling bush country, Lake Mapourika

Hokitika is known for greenstone (jade) which is collected from local river beds and can be seen worked in a shop factory. Crossing the Hokitika River we head south through native bush of rimu and kahikatea (white pine). The country is rolling with one climb after the town of Harihari and a final flat run from Whataroa. Entering Westland National Park as we pass beautiful Lake Mapourika, we have superb views of snow-capped peaks. Bicycling Options: Mt Hercules to Franz Josef: 51km / 32 miles. Lake Lanthe to Franz Josef: 80km / 50 miles. Hokitika to Franz Josef: 135km / 84.4 miles.

Rest day in Westland National Park**DAY 5**

Highlights Glacier hikes, Okarito Beach

A walk up the the Franz Josef glacier valley gives spectacular views of the terminal ice, while the Westland National Park Visitors Centres house a wealth of information. (Thirteen percent of New Zealand is national park.) Also highly recommended options are ski-plane or helicopter flights over snowfields, forests and glaciers. Neighbouring Okarito Beach, site of Abel Tasman's landfall and once a thriving town, is a further option.

Westland National Park to Lake Moeraki**DAY 6**

Highlights Mountainous riding, rainforest and Southern Alps scenery

From Franz Josef to Fox Glacier is just 24 km, but includes three quite severe climbs (and descents); it is through beautiful native forest. The remaining terrain is very gently undulating. From Fox to Lake Paringa the road passes through lush rain forest of rimu and rata, flax filled swamps and past rugged hills. The many rivers become raging torrents after rain. With fine weather there will be superb views of Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps. Bicycling Options: Bruce Bay to Lake Moeraki: 43 km / 27 mi. Fox Glacier to Lake Moeraki: 89 km / 56 mi Franz Josef to Lake Moeraki: 114 km / 71 mi

Bicycle Tours in New Zealand: Southern Alps - 15 days (TourzPlus™)**Lake Moeraki to Makarora****DAY 7**

Highlights Basking seals, waterfalls, native birds

Just south of Lake Moeraki, Knights Point affords excellent views of the rugged coastline where seals can often be seen basking in the sun. From Haast we head inland, following the Haast River towards the snowcapped peaks. We pass innumerable waterfalls and much bird life, notably keas, fantails and bellbirds. After lunch the stiff climb through the Gates of Haast is negotiated before the gentle descent to Makarora. Bicycling Options: Haast to Pleasant Flat: 49 km / 31 mi. Lake Moeraki to Pleasant Flat 78 km / 49 mi Lake Moeraki to Makarora: 112 km / 70 mi

Makarora to Lake Wanaka**DAY 8**

Highlights Scenic riding through open bush country, Lakes Wanaka and Hawea

The country is now dramatically drier, dense bush giving way to open sheep paddocks. The road closely follows Lake Wanaka, crosses the Neck to Lake Hawea and then recrosses to Lake Wanaka. Bicycling Options: Makarora to Hawea: 50 km / 30 mi. Makarora to Wanaka: 66km / 41 mi.

Lake Wanaka to Queenstown**DAY 9**

Highlights Views of The Remarkables and the Crown Range; Queenstown.

Our route today takes us up the Crown Range, over the Cardrona Road. We climb past the historic Cardrona Hotel; on reaching the top there will be amazing views of The Remarkables mountain range and Queenstown. We descend the exhilarating hairpin bends down to Arrowtown, with its quaint old cottages and avenues of elms. An easy flat ride beneath Coronet Peak, a winter ski field, takes us to Arthur's Point where we cross the Shotover River on our way to Queenstown. Surrounded by mountain peaks (including the famous Remarkables), and set on Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown has much to offer. Bicycling Options: Wanaka to Cardrona Hotel: 27 km / 17 mi. Wanaka to Queenstown via Crown Range: 78 km / 49 mi.

Bicycle Tours in New Zealand: Southern Alps - 15 days (TourzPlus™)**Rest day in Queenstown****DAY 10**

Highlights Optional rafting, gondola or steamer ride, botanical gardens....

Options today include a jet boat or rafting trip on the Kawarau or Shotover Rivers, the steamer "Earnslaw" to visit a high country sheep station, the gondola cableway, Skippers canyon, a flight to Milford Sound (fjord), and much more. Queenstown also has an excellent botanical garden and a very good shopping center.

Queenstown to Omarama**DAY 11**

Highlights Lindis Pass views

We drive from Queenstown to Cromwell, on Lake Dunstan, as we head for Lindis Pass (971m), with its huge sheep stations of 25 to 30 thousand acres. From the tiny settlement of Tarras the road climbs gently beside the Lindis river with its weeping willows. The summit affords sweeping views of Otago tussock country and a wonderful descent to Omarama. Omarama is known for fly fishing and gliding. Bicycling Distances: Lindis Pass to Omarama: 32 km / 20 mi. Tarras to Omarama: 80 km / 50 mi. Cromwell to Omarama: 111 km / 69 mi.

Omarama to Mt. Cook**DAY 12**

Highlights Twizel, Lake Pukaki, Tasman Glacier & Mt. Cook

Mt. Cook, our next destination, should be visible before Twizel is reached (the town was built to house dam and canal construction workers and has an interesting audio-visual display centre). The road to Twizel is flat and thereafter gently undulating. The ride alongside Lake Pukaki will bring spectacular Tasman Glacier and Mt. Cook village ever closer. Bicycling Options: Peter's Lookout to Mt Cook: 44 km / 27.5 mi. Twizel to Mt Cook: 66 km / 41 mi. Omarama to Mt Cook: 94.5 km / 59 mi

Bicycle Tours in New Zealand: Southern Alps - 15 days (TourzPlus™)**Mt. Cook to Fairlie****DAY 13**

Highlights Hooker Valley, Lake Tekapo, farm stay

The Hooker Valley is the start of the trans-alpine Copland Track and we may have time to explore a bit before we spin our way to Fairlie. First we'll head by lovely Lake Tekapo, down Burke's Pass to stay on a sheep farm at Fairlie. Bicycling Options: Tekapo to Fairlie: 44 km / 28 mi. Lake outlet to Fairlie: 91 km / 57 mi. Mt Cook to Fairlie: 148 km / 93 mi.

Farmstay to Christchurch**DAY 14**

Highlights Quiet roads, Pareora Gorge, farm stay

Your hosts will show you their property and a little of their lifestyle and then we cycle along a very attractive quiet road through a gorge to Cave; the road then sidles above the Pareora Gorge, following the main water route to Timaru. Approaching Timaru you will pass lifestyle blocks (small farms). From Timaru we'll shuttle to Christchurch. Bicycling Options: Cave turn off to Timaru: 36 km / 23 mi. Fairlie to Timaru: 64 km / 40 mi.

Tour ends in Christchurch**DAY 15**

It is here that we must say farewell, a safe journey home and hope to see you again.

INCLUDED

WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include what we believe are the most important aspects of a bike tour.

- On all our guided tours, you can expect superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel. Plus, all the logistics are taken care of.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing EP!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Explorer and Self-guided tour styles excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: <https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/>. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer and Self-guided tours we include a GPS device on all bikes.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

On a guided tour, each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. On a self-guided tour you'll receive a comprehensive orientation and bike fit on the first or second morning of your trip. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to

RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information on the RWGPS Experience includes important phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks.

On a guided tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths. On a self-guided tour you will have luggage transfers that will transport your bags from one hotel to the other.

Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options or ask when you are planning your self-guided trip.

Need Fewer Miles? On a guided tour, the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. On a self-guided tour we recommend you review the tour level to make sure you can ride the full distance.

ON A GUIDED TOUR: TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADERS

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5-8% of the tour cost per traveler — this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know.

*Tips are included in Expedition pricing and not expected on self-guided tours.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or that are taken by our guides or other travelers, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

STYLES

OUR TOUR STYLES

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, GPS and van support
- Price: \$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip except for land extension.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

Self-guided Tours: perfect for those who have an independent spirit, want the flexibility to choose their own dates, and don't need van support or tour leaders during their trip. Every departure is a private tour!

- Tour Length: 6-8-days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel on bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: GPS routes and luggage transfers
- Price: \$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

**LEVELS**

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 — 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- Complete the Customer Information Form: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/customer-information-form/>
- We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/travel-insurance/>
- Choose a bicycle training program: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/>
- Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- Begin your chosen training program
- Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/>.
- Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at <https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/packing/>.
- We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!