

# New Zealand Road Trip from Christchurch to Auckland | Skyscanner Australia

New Zealand's South Island is an ideal road trip destination with its snow-capped spine of mountain ranges dissecting a coastal plain. [Skyscanner Australia](#) hit the highway between Christchurch and Auckland (yes, you can 'drive' across Cook Strait!) for a campervan driving holiday made in road trip heaven.



## Day 1 Christchurch to Lake Tekapo

Buckle up and hang on – we've got a lot of ground to cover in one week! While parts of Christchurch post 2011 earthquake remain no-go zones, the city is very much open for business. But, we're sorry Christchurch you're not the main attraction in these parts. No, there are far more enticing adventures and mind-blowing scenery further south which is we're heading first up. Think patchwork fields of the Canterbury Plains, dramatic, craggy-peaked mountains, ridiculously turquoise lakes and the sweetest little *Church of the Good Shepherd* on the shores of Lake Tekapo. There's also the Milky Way dazzlingly bright in a sky unspoilt by light pollution as well as Tasman Glacier viewed by boat in all its icy glory.

**Don't miss:** Tekapo Springs Hot Pools and Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre

**Stay:** [Lake Tekapo Holiday Park](#)

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*Photo: Tourism NZ*

## **Day 2 Lake Tekapo to Dunedin**

Continue southwards along the coast to Oamaru and Dunedin where you'll find historic Edwardian and Victorian architecture in the form of Gothic church spires and ornate mansions aplenty. Dunedin's cultural assets were recognised globally when UNESCO declared it to be a Creative City of Literature. Nature lovers will find plenty of distractions too. Surfing penguins, anyone?

**Don't miss:** Turquoise waters of Lake Aviemore, Lake Benmore and Lake Waitaki

**Stay:** Ditch the campervan bed for a night and check into [Larnach Lodge](#) at Larnach Castle, New Zealand's only castle



*Photo: Tourism NZ*

## Day 3 Dunedin to Queenstown

From Dunedin you've the option of detouring south for the bragging rights and Insta-selfies you'll claim from visiting New Zealand's southernmost town of Bluff. Or, you could seriously spike your adrenaline levels and head straight to Queenstown, the adventure capital of New Zealand. You'll miss famous Bluff oysters and the draw-dropping scenery between Te Anau and Milford Sound, but you'll make up for it in the kind of heart-pumping thrills that Queenstown delivers in spades.

If you're visiting during early March and are into adventure sports like trail running, mountain biking or offroad triathlons, the Macpac Motatapu event is a 'must do'. Fuel up on arguably New Zealand's best burgers at Ferburger.

**Don't miss:** Skyline Gondola mountain biking adventure

**Stay:** [Queenstown Lakeview Holiday Park](#)

[Compare cheap car hire](#)

[Queenstown mountain biking](#)

## Day 4 Queenstown to Franz Joseph

It would be easy to hang out in Queenstown for the rest of the week but we've got bigger fish to fry. Actually, if wild fly fishing is your thing, perhaps you'd best linger a while and cast a line in plentiful rivers fed by mountain runoff and snow melt. The rest of you should get an early start to see the sun's early rays catching the peaks that lure thousands of snow bunnies each winter on your way Wanaka.

Hit the coast with Mt Cook (New Zealand's highest mountain) on your right and the Tasman Sea to the left as the unexpected worlds of icy glaciers and lush

rainforest overlap. The West Coast is also known for its friendly rivalry between wild food producers and craft beer brewers, particularly around Hokitika Wild Food Festival time (March). Heck, why not just go with it (when in Rome, right?) and eat and drink till you've had your fill. We won't judge you.

**Don't miss:** Guided glacier ice hikes (crampons and skinny icy crevices included)

**Stay:** [Franz Joseph TOP 10 Holiday Park](#)



*Photo: Tourism NZ*

## Day 5 Franz Jospheh to Wellington

This is a big day! If we're to meet the Cook Strait Ferry and make it to Auckland we need to cover some serious ground, as tempting as the South Island's many charms are. Heading north, Hokitika Gorge, the Oparara Arches, Pancake Rocks and UNESCO Haast World Heritage Site are all worthy diversions. The Great Coast Road between Greymouth and Westport is rated in Lonely Planet's top 10 world coastal drives so make sure your camera batteries are charged.

Pass through the famous Marlborough Sounds wine region (don't forget to pick up some cellar door supplies) to arrive at Picton to board the [Interislander](#) Cook Strait ferry bound for Wellington.

**Don't miss:** Stocking up on food, wine, cider and beer around Nelson, New Zealand's craft beer capital

**Stay:** [Wellington City Cottages](#) – built in 1880, fully restored & in the city's Cuba Quarter



*Photo: Tourism NZ*

## Day 6 Wellington to Napier

It would be remiss to visit New Zealand's capital and not allow a few hours to explore Te Papa – Museum of New Zealand for an insight into the legends, myths and history of the Land of the Long White Cloud.

We know its not cool to drink and drive, and it might seem like there is an alcoholic theme developing here (we didn't mean to, promise!), but the Wellington to Hawkes Bay Wine Trail is the preferred route northwards through the North Island. This region is all about sun-drenched vineyards rolling over hills, cellar doors (more than 90 wine producers and 35 cellar doors gives some idea of the focus here) and restaurants at the top of their game (Craggy Range and Mission Estate regularly appear on 'best of' lists).

**Don't miss:** Art Deco architecture of Napier, known as the Art Deco Capital of the World

**Stay:** [Kennedy Park Resort](#) Napier, where campers can access resort facilities



*Photo: Tourism NZ*

## **Day 7 Napier to Auckland**

Leave the vineyards behind before skirting Lake Taupo, more like an inland sea and taking up as much space as the island of Singapore, and stopping at the Craters of the Moon, the fiery birthplace of the lake. But don't linger too long as the bubbling mud pools, shooting geysers, geothermals and natural hot springs of Rotorua await as a fitting final stop before hitting the big smoke of Auckland.

**Must do:** Learn about Maori culture, performance and the famous haka (traditional war dance) at a Maori cultural centre. **Stay:** Spoil yourself for your last night in New Zealand at [Hotel Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour](#)