

it's about the

Experience

Canterbury Stargazing & Lakes

Avida Daydreams > New Zealand



DURATION: 4 Days

TRAVEL: 750kms

DOWNLOAD MAP

EXPLORE THE BEAUTY AND EXCITEMENT OF CHRISTCHURCH, SOUTH CANTERBURY AND THE MACKENZIE REGION

Your journey begins in funky [Christchurch](#) and takes you through the rural settlements of [Ashburton](#), Timaru and [Waimate](#). Visit New Zealand's highest mountain, Aoraki Mount Cook, and enjoy stargazing at [Lake Tekapo](#), then head back to Christchurch via Geraldine and Methven.

STAGE 1: CHRISTCHURCH TO WAIMATE

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 2 H 50 MIN | 210 KM VIA SH1

Depart Christchurch and journey across the patchwork quilt of the Canterbury Plains. Take the time to explore the bustling farming town of [Ashburton](#). If gardens are your thing, you can't miss Trots Garden, selected as a Garden of National Significance by The Royal Institute of Horticulture.

[Timaru](#) is a great place to stop for lunch. Take time to visit the tranquil Botanical Gardens and blooms at the Trevor Griffiths Rose Gardens. The Te Ana Maori Rock Art centre is also well worth a visit. Enjoy an afternoon's stroll through native forest in [Waimate](#), where songs of the bellbird and tui will accompany you. At dusk keep an eye out for the famous Waimate Wallaby.

WHERE TO STAY?

North South Holiday Park - 0800 567 765 (Within NZ)

www.christchurchtop10.co.nz



STAGE 2: WAIMATE TO AORAKI MOUNT COOK

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 2 H 30 MIN | 211 KM VIA SH83

Take the inland route, through to [Twizel](#). Here, anglers might like to stop for a spot of salmon fishing. Visit the Kaki/Black Stilt Visitor Hide, where between September and February you can learn about the world's most endangered wading bird.

Continue past the turquoise shores of Lake Pukaki to Mount Cook Village. There are numerous ways to explore [Aoraki Mount Cook National Park](#), whether you want the thrill of an Argo tour, a short walk, long tramp or horse ride. Don't miss the [Glacier Explorers](#), which take you to the terminal lake of New Zealand's longest glacier, Tasman Glacier.

The [Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre](#) and the [stargazing experience](#) are also popular.

The darkness of the night sky around Aoraki Mt Cook is unbeatable (pictured above). The 4367sq km Gold Status Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve is the largest in the world and if you take a tour you, will be the centre of it all.



Tasman Glacier - Canterbury

STAGE 3: AORAKI MOUNT COOK TO LAKE TEKAPO

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 1 H 15 MIN | 105 KM VIA SH80 & SH8

In [Lake Tekapo](#), you'll find a plethora of activities to entertain you, whether it's a chilly winter evening or a sparkling summer day. Take a dip in the hot pools or relax with one of the therapeutic spa treatments. During winter, an ice skating rink and snow tubing are available, while in summer you can enjoy the world's largest inflatable slide.

For something truly special, take a [scenic flight](#) over the Southern Alps, glaciers and the Main Divide. Some operators even land on a glacier. No trip to the Mackenzie region is complete without a [stargazing tour](#). As the world's largest International Dark Sky Reserve, this is the perfect place to see the night sky.

Lake Tekapo is about three hours drive south-west of Christchurch in the Mackenzie Basin. The township faces north across the remarkable turquoise coloured lake to the mountainous drama of the Southern Alps. Lake Tekapo gets its intense milky-turquoise colour from the fine rock-flour (ground by glaciers) which is suspended in the water.

Lake Tekapo - Mackenzie Basin



WHERE TO STAY?

Lake Tekapo Holiday Park - 0800 853 853 (Within NZ)

laketekapo-accommodation.co.nz

STAGE 4: LAKE TEKAPO TO CHRISTCHURCH

TRAVEL TIME APPROX: 3 H 20 MIN | 260 KM VIA INLAND SCENIC & SH77

Travel back to Christchurch via Geraldine and Methven. [Geraldine](#) is home to the famous Barkers of Geraldine, a store offering delicious jams, chutneys and syrups; try a sample or buy a gift pack to take home. With [Mount Hutt](#) on its doorstep, the town of [Methven](#) is a hub of activity in winter (June-October), but it also offers fantastic biking and hiking options in summer.

Christchurch is brimming with innovativeness and creativity. The city boasts an array of diverse restaurants, cafes, bars and nightclubs along with its iconic activities. Visit the beautiful botanic gardens, enjoy a relaxing punt on the Avon River, and ride the historic tram.

Christchurch is the city of exploration, where urban regeneration and heritage thrive. The city is constantly evolving, always giving locals and visitors something new to explore. Expect street art and innovative projects, a bustling hospitality scene and established green spaces. Christchurch is the newest city in the world, and it's time the world rediscovered its secrets.

The central city is filled with cutting-edge architecture alongside some of the oldest buildings in New Zealand. The Avon River intersects the city, bringing a natural landscape to the urban environment. Christchurch is the basecamp for South Island exploration, with the Banks Peninsula within reach, as well as the stunning Southern Alps and famed Canterbury Plains.

The surrounding Canterbury region offers visitors unforgettable journeys and picturesque towns, zen-like retreats and thrill-seeking opportunities. Escape to Hanmer Springs for a thermal soak, or north to Kaikōura to encounter the local wildlife. Everything New Zealand has to offer can be found here.



This article was written in conjunction with Tourism Zealand.

For more information go to www.newzealand.com/au