

New Zealand South Island 2019

Marlborough to Queenstown

Monday 18 February, 2019 to Friday 08 March, 2019

Day to Day

Whether you're on the bike coasting past the deep blue lakes or taking in the endless shades of green that make up the hills and forests, New Zealand's South Island will leave you awe-inspired. The opportunity to experience this route on a fully supported cycling tour with AllTrails - the experts in long-distance cycle tours, and with the AllTrails community, made up of wonderful like-minded people who are all in the experience together - all adds up to a spectacular trip.

Daily distances are set out below - and remember, shorter routes are always available and our support vehicle is on hand whenever you feel you have cycled enough for the day.

Location	Distance	Date	B	L	D	A
Picton, Marlborough and Surrounds (pre tour)	NA	Sun 17 Feb 2019	--	--	--	--
Picton Arrival Day	NA	Mon 18 Feb 2019	--	--	Y	Y
Picton to Nelson	109km	Tue 19 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nelson to St Arnaud	87km	Wed 20 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
St Arnaud to Murchison	60km	Thu 21 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Murchison to Westport	96km	Fri 22 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Westport to Punakaiki	56km	Sat 23 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Punakaiki to Greymouth (train to Christchurch)	43km	Sun 24 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Christchurch Rest Day	NA	Mon 25 Feb 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Christchurch to Springfield (transfer to Christchurch)	66km	Tue 26 Feb 2019	Y	Y	--	Y
(Transfer to Springfield) to Arthurs Pass	83km	Wed 27 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Arthurs Pass to Hokitika	99km	Thu 28 Feb 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hokitika Rest Day	NA	Fri 1 Mar 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Hokitika to Franz Joseph Glacier	108km	Sat 2 Mar 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Franz Joseph Glacier Rest Day	NA	Sun 3 Mar 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Franz Joseph Glacier to Haast	116km	Mon 4 Mar 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Haast to Wanaka	85km	Tue 5 Mar 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wanaka Rest Day	NA	Wed 6 Mar 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Wanaka to Queenstown	78km	Thu 7 Mar 2019	Y	Y	Y	Y
Queenstown	NA	Fri 8 Mar 2019	Y	--	--	--
Total distance cycled	1086km		18	13	14	18
Average daily distance	84km					

Meal and accom inclusions noted as B, L, D, A (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Accom)

Picton, Marlborough and Surrounds (pre tour) — NA — Sun 17 Feb 2019 — - - - -

Day 0 (pre-tour). Picton is situated right at the top of the South Island in the Marlborough Sounds at approximately the same latitude as Launceston, Tasmania. It is a small but busy port town and the arrival point for the Interislander ferry from Wellington (North Island). We suggest that most people will arrive to begin our ride by flying into Wellington International Airport then catching the ferry to Picton. The ferry journey is a highlight in itself on a sunny day as you wind your way in through the Sounds on one of the most scenic ferry journeys in the world. The Marlborough region is a wonderful location to spend a few days if you have time (as is Wellington). Our tour starts on a Monday so the weekend is yours to explore – suggestions include heading 30km south of Picton to Blenheim in the heart of the Marlborough Wine Region and/or finding a relaxing pocket of the Marlborough Sounds to kick back in and soak up the beauty; from the big names like [Furneaux Lodge](#) or [Portage](#) to the hidden gems like [Hopewell Lodge](#) there's a place for you.

Picton Arrival Day — NA — Mon 18 Feb 2019 — - - D A

Day 1 (arrival day). Arrive anytime today into the port town of Picton where this afternoon we will hold our orientation talk, briefing and registration. We will go over the route planned for the days and weeks ahead and have a close look at tomorrow's route discussing the snack stops, meeting points, potential hazards and attractions. Our bike mechanic will be available to assist in re-assembling bikes after air travel or a few last-minute tune-ups if required, then we will all enjoy a welcome group dinner together at our hotel as we get to know each other and prepare for the exciting first day of cycling tomorrow.

Picton to Nelson — 109km — Tue 19 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 2. Today we are on the bike and head out of the township of Picton straight onto Queen Charlotte Drive which hugs the coastline offering beautiful views over the Marlborough Sounds through the gaps in the vegetation including Ngakuta Bay and Momorangi Bay. We then leave the sounds and follow the Pelorus River and Rai River into the Rai Valley before a couple of climbs over the ranges as we make our way into the Nelson region – the sunniest place in NZ. Our stopover is in the township of Nelson itself, on the banks of Tasman Bay, which has long been a magnet for creative people. There are more than 300 working artists and craftspeople living in Nelson, traditional, contemporary and Maori. Visit their studios and find a unique piece to take home with you. Every evening we meet together before dinner for an entertaining recap of the day and a briefing of the following day's ride – what to look out for and what not to miss.

Nelson to St Arnaud — 87km — Wed 20 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 3. We leave Tasman Bay today – the last of the waters at the northern end of the South Island. We cut a track right down the geographic middle of the island heading for the tiny town of St Arnaud, sitting quietly beside Lake

Rotoiti in the Nelson Lakes National Park Region. It is off the beaten tourist track and doesn't get much attention from the bulk of international tourists but the statistics showing 100 residents and 400 holiday homes shows that it is not a secret to the Kiwis. Head to the Information Centre for details on the Bellbird walk, a ten minute loop track through beech forest near Kerr Bay, or try the 40 minute Honeydew walk, named after the 'Honeydew' that you can find and taste on the trees in the area (it's actually insect poo so do your research first!).

St Arnaud to Murchison — 60km — Thu 21 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 4. The Buller River is our constant companion today as it winds a consistent and gentle downhill all the way to Murchison through pastoral lands, valleys, tiny townships and past rural farming communities. It's a beautiful day on the bike as we make our way towards the West Coast. Upon arrival in Murchison you'll notice the township is an ode to its gold mining past with many buildings still in their original form from the late 1800's and early 1900s. In contrast to this charming old-world feel is the vibrant and active buzz around the town. Despite being a small settlement, Murchison dubs itself the 'white-water capital' of the country, because there are rivers everywhere. Along with that are action sports and experiences such as zip-lining across the Buller River, walking the longest swing bridge in the southern hemisphere, blasting the rivers by jet boat or hiking.

Murchison to Westport — 96km — Fri 22 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 5. The Buller River is again our guide today as we follow it all the way to the coast. The ride itself has small undulations all the way as you wind through the remote forests, cut through the valleys and soak up the majestic scenery. 5km before Westport you clear the ranges and leave the main road behind as you enter a town which holds a spectacular location on the mighty Buller River and the Tasman Sea. The backdrop is the steep Paparoa Ranges and around it a beautiful estuary area called the Orowaiti Lagoon. Named after a town in Ireland, it is the service centre for the Northern West Coast and Buller region making it a busy hub of activity in an area made up predominantly of small rural communities and vast landscapes of forest and bushland.

Westport to Punakaiki — 56km — Sat 23 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 6. Today is the day that we begin our ride down the West Coast, including the Great Coast Road which kicks in about two-thirds into the day's route. It's one of the most spectacular coastal drives in the world – in the top ten according to the Lonely Planet Guidebook. Before hitting that section we pass through the historic gold mining township of Charleston, famous also for its glow worm caves, where we will stop for morning tea, after which we enjoy the spectacular scenery of the Great Coast Road leading us to Punakaiki, where beach walks, sunsets and towering limestone cliffs define the area. Tonight's accommodation is a treat as we enjoy a beautiful resort located just 300m from the world-famous Pancake Rocks and Blowholes – the most visited natural attraction on the West Coast. Tonight why not join a 1 hour stargazing tour exploring the star studded southern night sky above the West Coast of the South Island where there is almost no light, dust or air pollution.

Punakaiki to Greymouth (train to Christchurch) — 43km — Sun 24 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 7. Today we continue on the last section of the Great Coast Road with the Tasman Sea on the right and Paparoa National Park on the left, passing through the townships of Barrytown (once a centre for flax harvesting

but its claim to fame these days is knife-making), and Runanga (with a rich coal mining history), on the way to our cycling destination of Greymouth. You can pack up your bikes for the day but don't think that the day is over just yet. A special treat lays ahead as we all board the TranzAlpine railway to Christchurch this afternoon. You will experience the South Island's striking natural landscape from a different perspective, taking in epic vistas, travelling the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traversing the Southern Alps, and seeing miles of native beech forest. The TranzAlpine is one of the world's great train journeys covering 223 km one-way. You'll traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains, to the backdrop of the mighty Southern Alps - the journey of a lifetime. In Christchurch, the AllTrails crew will meet you with your bikes and luggage as we settle in for a rest day in our city-centre hotel in the Garden City of NZ.

Christchurch Rest Day — NA — Mon 25 Feb 2019 — B - D A

Day 8. Today's rest day is also a 'changeover point' for any cyclists who are on the shorter tours (Picton to Christchurch or Christchurch to Queenstown). Despite its devastating and destructive history, Christchurch is rising again and proving it is still one of the most beautiful cities in NZ. The manner in which the local businesses and community have bounced back, adjusted and creatively adapted to the aftermath of earthquakes in 2010 & 2011 has brought out the entrepreneurial spirit of the people, shown in many aspects of the city such as the outdoor mall temporarily rebuilt using shipping containers. There is plenty to do on your day off from flat-bottomed punt rides on the Avon River, which meanders through the city centre, to the cycling paths, the green expanse of Hagley Park, Botanic Gardens, a day trip to the lovely French settlement of Akaroa, or just wandering around the intriguing CBD with its mix of English heritage, Kiwi ingenuity, destruction, construction, old and new. Tonight we will conduct our nightly briefing to discuss the following day's ride followed by a dinner together to welcome any new cyclists to the group arriving for the second part of the journey.

Christchurch to Springfield (transfer to Christchurch) — 66km — Tue 26 Feb 2019 — B L - A

Day 9. Today we begin our crossing of the island via bicycle from east to west, beginning with the Canterbury Plains. The area of braided rivers and pastoral perfection between the Southern Alps and the Pacific Ocean is a long, flat patchwork of agricultural activity that ranges from grazing grass and wheat to herbs and sunflowers and is a magnificent place to cycle. The area produces more than 80% of New Zealand's grains, crops and seeds. The ride today is a gentle, easy, consistent 400m climb over the full 66km of the route which will land us in Springfield in the foothills of the Alps. Springfield's main claim to fame is a statue of a giant pink doughnut which was erected to promote the 2007 Simpsons Movie. It was set alight and destroyed by an arsonist in 2009, replaced by a tyre painted pink until it was in turn replaced with a concrete version unveiled in 2012. Given that Springfield is a very small town with not enough accommodation for our group and a top highlight of a Simpsons donut statue we have decided to bus the group back to Christchurch tonight for a third night in our downtown hotel (Shelbyville accom was also unavailable).

(Transfer to Springfield) to Arthurs Pass — 83km — Wed 27 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 10. This morning we will transfer cyclists back to Springfield to begin our assault of the Southern Alps. For the first 15km, we ride a gentle gradient that will warm up the legs in preparation for a 550m climb to the highest point of the day and the entire tour (945m). It's a steep 3km climb, particularly the last 1km to the top. For those unwilling or unable, our support vehicle is always on hand to assist where required. For those accepting the challenge, as you roll over the summit you will be rewarded by New Zealand's finest vista's as you traverse a corridor of high country plateau's margined either side by towering snow-capped peaks. Thankfully we do not

climb any of those monsters! We follow the Waimakariri River through this ancient, glacier carved valley into Arthurs Pass National Park. You'll probably spot New Zealand's inquisitive and comical alpine parrot, the kea, along the way. We overnight in Arthurs Pass Village in cosy motels, enjoy a well-deserved rest and celebrate a challenging day on the bike. As usual, our nightly brief will recap the challenges, achievements and highlights of the day as well as discuss tomorrow's wonderful downhill run and points of interest along the route.

Arthurs Pass to Hokitika — 99km — Thu 28 Feb 2019 — B L D A

Day 11. Don't let the first section of climbing fool you – today you need to be prepared for downhill. As we pass from the Canterbury District into the West Coast District at the 4km mark, you begin 5km of downhill that can be as steep as 16% gradient until you meet the Otira River. The road itself is a piece of extreme engineering involving viaducts, rock shelters and waterfalls (that have been redirected into chutes over the road). From this point you still have another 50km of downhill before the terrain flattens out, but it is much gentler and will appeal to the "rolleur" within us. If you would like to skip any steep uphill or downhill sections on any day, remember that our support vehicle will always be there for you. Today will be a stunningly beautiful ride as the road follows the Otira Gorge and River, branches off and follows the Taramakau River to Kumara Junction and on to the Tasman Sea. After riding coast to coast, we turn south and follow the beach towards our overnight stop and rest day in Hokitika.

Hokitika Rest Day — NA — Fri 1 Mar 2019 — B - - A

Day 12. After crossing over the Southern Alps you'll be ready for the rest day today. Hokitika, at approximately the same latitude as Hobart is dubbed 'The Cool Little Town', and that says it all really. It's big enough to have all the services and facilities that you need but still has that small-town feel where you can walk around everywhere very easily. It's right on the coast and has a vibrant art, culture and heritage scene. Go to the beach, have a whitebait fritter from the Fish 'n' Chip Shop (or whitebait pizza!) or shop for some Pounamu (Greenstone / NZ Jade) in one of the many shops & galleries. Highly recommended is to spend the day at Bonz & Stonz studio where you get the opportunity to make your own Kiwi bone-carving or Pounamu – an ideal present for a loved-one. You can also purchase pieces made by the in-house artist.

Hokitika to Franz Joseph Glacier — 108km — Sat 2 Mar 2019 — B L D A

Day 13. You'll be ready and rearing to go again today and it's an easy, flat 10km out of town. If you have time, take Shanghai Rd on the left at 10km to Lake Mahinapua for a nice photo opportunity. The road then travels inland for some time as we have morning tea at the lovely town of Ross and push on further past the lakes and forests that occupy the relative flatlands between the mountains and the sea. It's a long day today (108km or full route option 136km) but you'll love the scenery and contrasts as you make your way to the Franz Joseph Glacier village where we have a great 4 star motel located a stone's throw from the Glacier which you can explore on tomorrow's rest day.

Franz Joseph Glacier Rest Day — NA — Sun 3 Mar 2019 — B - - A

Day 14. We couldn't come all the way here and not take the time to explore the glacier, so we have scheduled in another rest day for our cyclists to take a walk or a Heli Tour to one of NZ's biggest attractions. The magnificent

Franz Josef Glacier is widely regarded as the gem of New Zealand's West Coast Glaciers, and one of the most impressive sights to be found anywhere in the world. Other rest day options include a visit to the Glacier Hot Pools, walking tracks, kayaking to name just a few.

Franz Joseph Glacier to Haast — 116km — Mon 4 Mar 2019 — B L D A

Day 15. Yet another day of spectacular scenery and cycling accompanies us today on the route. It's another long day in the saddle as the main group will ride 116km (full route option 141km, shorter route option 60km). The full route includes a climb over 3 peaks in the Westland National Park between Franz Joseph and Fox Glaciers which will get the blood pumping; 600m climbing with 550m downhill over a 18km stretch. You can take this section on if you wish and you are prepared to leave very early, or you can jump in the support vehicle with the main group and take in the mountain climbs from the bus until the terrain flattens out at Fox Glacier where you can begin your day. The rest of the ride leads you through dense native bushlands with ferns, rivers, hills and mountains until we finally hit the coast again at Bruce Bay for a short stint of 2km before heading inland once more to our lunch stop at the Salmon Farm Café sitting up on the banks of the Paringa River. We don't hit the coast again until Knight's Lookout Point, our afternoon tea stop, from which the last 25km into Haast mostly hugs the coast offering intermittent views and lookouts over the Tasman sea and the beaches of the west coast. Haast is situated in the heart of Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area. There are national parks to the north, south and east and everywhere you look, Westland rainforest tumbles across the landscape.

Haast to Wanaka — 85km — Tue 5 Mar 2019 — B L D A

Day 16. Say one last goodbye to the Tasman Sea as we work our way inland today around and through Mt Aspiring National Park. Today's full route to Wanaka is 143km's and again available for experienced cyclists up for the challenge. The rest of us will ride either the first 85km from Haast or the last 85km into Wanaka. At the 50km mark there is a very short but steep climb (up to 19%) and again our support vehicle is available to shuttle those who may wish to avoid it. The top of the climb also doubles as our morning tea stop at the beautiful Fantail Falls which drops into the Haast River which we have followed against the flow from Haast township today. Moving further into the National Park we also move from the West Coast Region to the Otago Region and begin following a new river, the Makarora, this time downstream as it flows towards Lake Wanaka. Be sure to stop at Blue Pools Walk – a definite "Well Worth A Look" (WWAL). From Makarora town, the road hugs the shores of Lake Wanaka for some time in a stunning display of natural beauty – depending on the recent weather you may get the famous picture postcard vista of the snow-capped mountains backdrop, fronted by the beautiful deep blue lake, fringed by green ferns and trees, and a crisp blue sky to accentuate the scene. Take a few photos at Lake Wanaka Lookout before the roads cuts through 'The Neck' and takes you past the equally impressive Lake Hawea, where we will enjoy afternoon tea on a lakeside beach. In the final leg of our day, we cross over the flatlands to the township of Wanaka where Lake Wanaka again reveals itself in all its glory, waiting for you to enjoy on your rest day here in the town tomorrow.

Wanaka Rest Day — NA — Wed 6 Mar 2019 — B - - A

Day 17. Visitors from around the world are drawn to the Wanaka region by its outstanding natural beauty. With the backdrop of lakes and mountains and Mt Aspiring National Park, opportunities for outdoor activities abound but it's also the galleries, stylish shops, cool cafes and restaurants that make the township buzz. For the adventure seekers there's canyoning, skydiving, off road tours, airborne adventures, jet-boating, kayaking, and paddle-boarding. If you'd rather go down the gourmet route on your day off, try the artisan produce, world-class vineyards,

boutique breweries or the award-winning distillery. Some may choose to take it easy today and take a walk to the lakeside, read a book or relax at our friendly and welcoming lodge accommodation.

Wanaka to Queenstown — 78km — Thu 7 Mar 2019 — B L D A

Day 18. Our last day on the bike! You'll notice a distinct change of scenery today as we take the Cardrona Valley Road up into the alpine region past the cute town of Cardrona – gateway to the Cardrona Alpine Ski Resort – and continuing along to Crown Range Road. The rich greens and deep blues that you have become accustomed to in the scenery give way to shades of brown today and the dense vegetation on the roadside has now become much more barren and open, with outstanding vistas out over mountain ranges which will often still be holding snow capped peaks in the distance, even in summer. Make sure you take a break at a few of the rest stops and roadside viewing areas. You will reach the Crown Range Summit at around 40km which is followed by 10km of downhill and a comparatively flat run for the final 30km of the day. As we plateau out for that last section we loop around the north road via the charming and quirky gold rush village of Arrowtown, where we stop for lunch, and Arthurs Point where we gather at the Shotover River, made famous by the Shotover Jet (anyone up for a ride?!). The last 5km into Queenstown we will ride together as the road snakes down through the hills and opens into the hustle and bustle of Queenstown - finishing lakeside with a celebratory champagne flute. Our final night digs are at our Swiss Style hotel with stunning views of the surrounding region. Congratulations on your achievement! Tonight, we celebrate with one last group dinner reflecting on an amazing Kiwi cycling journey.

Queenstown — NA — Fri 8 Mar 2019 — B - - -

Day 19. After breakfast the tour officially disbands however that doesn't have to mean the end of your holiday – it's only Friday! The world-renowned Milford Sound Day Tour is right at your doorstep and there may be a few of our cyclists who would like to join that tour today. If you would rather stick close to town, take the Gondola 450 metres above Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu to the top of Bob's Peak, where you'll enjoy the best views in the region unfolding before your eyes (don't miss the luge ride at the top!). If you're not sure what to do, just take a walk down to the lake-front and through the main centre of town where a thousand tour operators offer everything from Bungy-Jumping to 4X4 tours, to kayaking, rafting and everything in between. Thanks for joining us on this wonderful ride.

