



Bike Mackenzie Country

5 days | starts/finishes in Christchurch

With its amazing turquoise waters, velvety yellow brown foothills, and the rugged and imposing snow-capped peaks of the Southern Alps, the Mackenzie Basin is one of the most scenic parts of the country. This tour explores the quieter back-roads of the Basin by cycle where few tourists venture, and the only crowds you will encounter are of the merino kind. Spend time in the quaint village of Lake Tekapo with its stunning night sky and amazing mountainous backdrop. Get off the beaten track and discover rural communities and historic sites tucked away up the valleys. The ever-changing vistas and 'big sky' wide open landscape of Mackenzie Country will take your breath away.

Day 1 Christchurch - Lake Tekapo

We meet you at 8:00 for our hire bike fittings at the PureTrails depot. Departing Christchurch, we head south across the Canterbury Plains stopping for lunch at a beautiful rural café. After lunch it's just a short distance on to the start of our first bike ride through the Mackenzie Pass. The full distance of the ride is around 30km, but you can choose to do shorter sections if you prefer. We encounter the historic site where legendary sheep hustler James Mackenzie was caught in the act in 1855, and the views of the Mackenzie Country from here are simply stunning as we descend into the Basin. After the ride we continue by bus to Lake Tekapo and our accommodation a stones throw from the lake. Eat out at a local restaurant. In the evening there is the opportunity to visit the Mt John Observatory to view the southern night sky in one of the clearest locations in the Southern Hemisphere, or a soak in the new hot pools. (L)

Day 2 Lake Tekapo - Twizel

Today's ride takes us from Tekapo along a quiet back road with absolutely stunning views of the Southern Alps, down to Lake Pukaki (40km). After a picnic lunch beside Lake Pukaki you can continue riding along the sedate Pukaki-Ohau-Ruataniwha hydro canal system behind Twizel (25km). The elevated canal offers stupendous views of the Mackenzie Basin and even Aoraki/Mt Cook if you're lucky! We make our way a short distance on to the town of Twizel and our accommodation for the next two evenings, featuring million dollar views of Aoraki/Mt Cook. (B/L/D)

Day 3 Twizel

Today we drive a short distance to the far edge of the Basin where we have a stunning ride on a quiet rural road, deep into a glacial valley, featuring sheer mountain ranges either side of the valley (25km). After a picnic lunch, and possibly a latte stop in a local town, we head to a second ride featuring more great views of the surrounding mountains (25km), where there is also the opportunity to explore an historic woolshed. After the days biking we visit the viewing hide of the highly endangered Black Stilt or Kaki at the breeding recovery centre. Through loss of habitat wetland numbers declined to just 23 and now the birds are intensively managed by the Department of Conservation. This is a great opportunity to view the birds up close and learn about their plight. (B/L/D)

Day 4 Twizel - Ohau

We travel by bus a short distance to the quiet sealed road leading to Lake Ohau, where the biking begins. This is a great 42km ride, with views of the lake and mountains beyond unfolding as you go, which are absolutely stunning. There are optional starting points and plenty of refreshment stops and a picnic lunch along the way. We retire to the stunning Lake Ohau Lodge for the evening, which affords absolutely stunning views out over the lake and mountains. (B/L/D)

Tour Map



Grade



Tour Details

Tour Price: \$1,295
Deposit: \$200

What's included? See bottom of page.

Groups of 10+ people will receive a 5% discount off the tour price.

Departure Dates:

2011	2012
5 - 9 Sept	10 - 14 Jan
12 - 16 Sept	7 - 11 Feb
19 - 23 Sept	19 - 23 Feb
26 - 30 Sept	1 - 5 Mar
3 - 7 Oct	13 - 17 Mar
22 - 26 Nov	19 - 23 Mar
8 - 12 Dec	6 - 10 Apr
	16 - 20 Apr
	24 - 28 Apr

Day 5 Ohau - Christchurch

We farewell the Mackenzie Basin and travel down the Waitaki Valley. Our last bike ride takes us around the side of one of the great hydro lakes of the valley, under the cool shade of the willow trees (20km). After lunch we head down the Waitaki Valley and back to Christchurch via Waimate and the east coast. (B/L)

Included in the tour package:

All prices are in New Zealand dollars and include New Zealand Goods & Services Tax of 15%. The fare includes just about everything including: 4 nights accommodation; 3 evening meals, 5 lunches, 4 breakfasts and plenty of healthy snacks in between (as indicated on the itinerary - B/L/D); entry into the Black Stilt/Kaki viewing hide; a friendly guide; all transport and vehicle support; and bike repair support.

Not included in the tour price is one evening meal where we eat out at local restaurant; wine and beer (you are welcome to BYO where permitted); optional bike hire (\$170); and the optional activities mentioned in the itinerary.

Level of Difficulty:

On this tour we have full vehicle back up – the support vehicle will be travelling along the same piece of road that you will be biking on, so there is unlimited opportunities to ride out parts (or all) of each ride in our vehicle if you are not feeling up to biking the full distances.



Grade 2

Routes generally on mildly undulating quiet rural country roads. Surfaces range from seal to gravel, with some gravel areas rough in places. Distances cycled average 40-50km per day. For this grade we recommend an average level of fitness.

Testimonials

"This is our first trip to New Zealand and we are very impressed the PureTrails team. The trip was well planned and we were blessed with perfect weather. We found the biking challenging at times because we were not used to gravel roads, but the guides eased us through all our difficulties. As the only Canadians on the tour we were made to feel welcome by our New Zealand companions. Many Thanks!

Richard & Janet Miles, Canada, Apr 11

"As the only Poms on the trip we have been made to feel very welcome and have enjoyed superb scenery, fantastic biking, good food and more importantly great company. We have learnt a lot about N.Z. and thank Chris & Peter for their organisational ability and attention to detail. Thanks everyone for a great time."

Roger & Jean Parkes, UK, Mar 11

"I have been meaning to pass on my thanks to you and the team for a wonderful holiday biking Mackenzie Country in January. Everything was so well organized, the accommodation locations were stunning, and we enjoyed great food. Of course the biking is what we went for and we were not disappointed. We all enjoyed the whole trip that immensely. A special thanks must go to Jim who is the penultimate guide, a real gentleman, and an true asset to your company. It would be lovely to join you again sometime in the future."

Allana Mackertich, AUS, Jan 2011

"The "Mackenzie Country" trip was brilliant. Well selected bike trails took us through some great scenery. All the equipment worked well; the bikes; the bus etc. Food was good. Our tour guides, Jim, Stu and Dean were great. Thanks lads!! The accommodation was all good quality, especially the 2 nights at Twizel. A great experience. ... Apart from my backside which after 5 days is telling me it will never be on good terms with a bike seat!!"

Warren Sarginson Grp, Wellington, Dec 10

Great experience - beats the Otago Rail Trail for the grandeur and the big sky. Superb tour, well pitched, informed & helpful guides. Ride in from Mackenzie Pass has to rate as one of the best cycle trips in 50 years of cycling.

Feb 10

Here we are on the final morning of our trip. All agree it's been a marvellous experience. The scenery is awesome and our accommodation for the 4 nights has been exceptional, 4 star in fact. Jim & Grant have been outstanding in looking after us. So thank you to all for making this a very pleasant and relaxing trip.

Joan & Max Hook, New Zealand, Feb 09