

# Challenger Series: Central Otago Trip Notes

Take a journey through Central Otago's 'timeless land' and enjoy 300km of challenging cycle rides on quiet rural roads that showcase the area's vast 'big sky' horizons, rugged rock & tor ranges and sweeping farmland.



## Tour Highlights

- + Cycle 306km on quiet rural gravel roads
- + Enjoy the vast 'big sky' scenery
- + Meet the locals and enjoy southern hospitality at its best
- + Explore the historic gold mining town of St Bathans
- + Visit the quaint and serene Poolburn Dam
- + Tour a high country station and try your hand at clay target shooting

## Tour Details

- + 6 days
- + Grade 3
- + 306km cycling [100% gravel roads]
- + Starts/Ends in Christchurch Queenstown or Dunedin

## Tour Cost

Tour Price: \$2,250  
Deposit: \$400

### What's included?

- + 5 nights twinshare en-suite accommodation
- + 5 evening meals; 4 lunches; 5 breakfasts
- + fruit, snacks & morning teas while riding
- + side trip to Poolburn Dam *\*when road open*
- + Wedderburn farm clay target shooting
- + Entry to Clachanburn Gardens
- + the services of two tour leaders who provide vehicle support & information
- + all transport from/to Christchurch
- + Goods & Services Tax of 15%

### Not included:

- + lunch on Days 1/6
- + single accommodation supplement (\$350)
- + wine; beer; espresso coffees
- + bike hire (standard \$190; e-bike \$450)
- + Taieri Gorge Train or bus Dunedin Day 6 (\$78 - \$94/\$20)
- + transfers from Queenstown/Dunedin to Clyde on Day 1 (\$35/\$20 approx)
- + transfers from Middlemarch to Queenstown on Day 6 (\$115 approx)



## Departure Dates

Refer to our website for current 2018-2019 departure dates and tour availability

Grade 3



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## Tour Itinerary

### Day 1 Christchurch - Clyde

We depart Christchurch for the drive south through the Mackenzie Country to Central Otago via the scenic inland route that passes by Lakes Tekapo and Pukaki, and over the Lindis Pass. Our first ride begins on the descent of the Lindis Pass into Central Otago, to the small village of Tarras on a quiet rural road affording lovely views of the surrounding mountains. This 18km ride is a great 'leg-stretcher' before we continue on the Clyde in the bus. Alternatively there is the option of meeting the tour in Clyde in the afternoon from Queenstown or Dunedin, which we can organise for you. We stay in the charming historic precinct of Clyde.

**Meals (D) | Cycle Distance: 18km**

### Day 2 Clyde - Ophir

We head out of Clyde on the river trail that takes you alongside the Clutha River beneath the shade of the willow trees right through to Alexandra. From here we shoot up the Otago Central Rail Trail to Galloway. At Galloway we abandon the trail and head up into the hills on a road that dissects the Raggedy Range into the Ida Valley at Moa Creek. This climb will get the blood pumping but afford magnificent views of the Manuherikia Valley and Dunstan Mountains. From here we have a brief (optional) respite from the bikes as we head up to the Poolburn Dam\* for a picnic lunch. This was a location of the Lord of the Rings films and is a quaint place to spend some time. From here it is back on the bikes for the descent to the Ida Valley all the way to Poolburn. Here we load our bikes and travel a short distance to our accommodation at Blacks Hotel in the historic gold mining village of Ophir.

**Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 63km**

\*Access to the Poolburn Dam is subject to the road being open

### Day 3 Ophir - Wedderburn

Our ride today travels the length of the Manuherikia Valley on a terrace nestled beside the Dunstan Mountains all the way to Becks. Take in views of rolling farmland, the Hawkdun Range to the north, and explore numerous abandoned mudbrick settlements along the way. Enjoy lunch at the White Horse Hotel at Becks before and second part of the ride. Heading out of Becks, we take an elevated route across the top of a ridge providing 360 degree views of the mountains to St Bathans. Enjoy some well earned refreshments and explore the village. Back in the bus we visit Falls Dam on the way to our accommodation at the Wedderburn Cottages.

**Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 59km**

### Day 4 Wedderburn

Today we enjoy a ride that takes us right into the base of the majestic Hawkdun and St Bathans Ranges, in the upper Manuherikia Basin. It is a vast landscape of golden tussock and changing light which will leave you mesmerised. Following the ride we return the Wedderburn Cottages. The cottages are part of a working farm and there is the opportunity to meet the Duncan Family, 4th generation farmers, and learn a little about their farming operation that includes sheep, cattle and deer, as well as tourism. There is the option of trying clay target shooting too!

**Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 52.5km**

### Day 5 Wedderburn - Waipiata

The ride today is a tour of the Maniototo Plain. Maniototo is translated as 'Plains of Blood' referring to the way the rising/falling sun casts a red glow over the thousands of hectares of red tussock that was once covered the plain. Today the land is mostly cultivated farmland, though the changing light and colours will still strike you. Heading out of the cottages, we head south following the White Sow Valley all the way to Linnburn. Stop off at Clachanburn Garden, a magnificent country garden of National Significance. Enjoy a wander around the garden and morning tea. Back on the bike and it is time to tackle the climb through rock & tor landscapes through Linnburn Runs. Views of the Rough Ridge, Lammermoor, and Rock and Pillar Ranges are beautiful. We then come out onto the Paerau Valley Scroll Plain. This area is a large wetland, home to many waterfowl and trout, and the headwaters of the Taieri River. From here we ride to the town of Patearoa. Enjoy a beverage at the local pub before we transfer to our accommodation at the north end of the plain at Waipiata.

**Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 87.5km**

### Day 6 Waipiata - Christchurch (or Dunedin/Queenstown)

Our final ride in Central Otago follows a road nestled into the Taieri Ridge to Middlemarch, with great views of the Rock and Pillar Range. After morning tea at our final destination of Middlemarch we load up and head back to Christchurch, arriving by 6pm approx. There is the option of taking a bus (or train) to Dunedin, or Queenstown instead.

**Meals (B) | Cycle Distance: 27km**



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## Trip Notes Index

Accommodation in Christchurch	3
Accommodation on the tour	4
Bike hire	4
Bringing your own bike	5
Booking Conditions & Cancellation & Refunds policy	5
Car Storage	5
Cash facilities	6
Contact details while on the tour	6
Degree of difficulty & What to expect	6
Departure time and place (Christchurch)	6
Departure time and place (Queenstown, Clyde or Dunedin)	6
Final Payment	7
Finishing your tour in Christchurch	7
Finishing your tour in Clyde or Queenstown	7
Finishing your tour in Dunedin via bus	7
Finishing your tour in Dunedin via the Taieri Gorge Train	7
Guide	7
Health & fitness	8
Insurance	8
Laundry facilities	8
Luggage	8
Meals & Special Dietary Requirements	8
Medical conditions	9
Phone reception/Wifi	9
Tour Information and Safety Declaration Form	9
Weather conditions	9
What to bring checklist	10

### Accommodation in Christchurch

If you need accommodation before and/or after your tour we recommend the following places. We provide **courtesy transfers from any of these locations** before/after your trip:

Airport Precinct:

[Airport Palms Motel](#)

56 Roydvale Avenue | Phone: 0800 200 529 | [www.airportpalmsmotelchch.co.nz](http://www.airportpalmsmotelchch.co.nz)  
Motel complex with a range of room options and free airport transfers. Breakfast available. Close proximity to the airport.



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## Airport Gateway Motel

45 Roydvale Avenue | Phone: 0800 242 8392 | [www.airportgateway.co.nz](http://www.airportgateway.co.nz)  
Motel complex with a range of room options and free airport transfers. It also has an on-site café/restaurant & bar for convenient dining. Close proximity to the airport.

## Copthorne Hotel Commodore Christchurch Airport

449 Memorial Avenue | Phone: 0508 226 663 | [www.commodore.net.nz](http://www.commodore.net.nz)  
Hotel complex in close proximity to Christchurch airport. Free 24 hour courtesy shuttle. Free bike's available to explore the local area.

## Sudima Hotel

550 Memorial Avenue | Phone: 03 358 3139 | [www.sudimahotels.com/christchurch](http://www.sudimahotels.com/christchurch)  
Closest hotel to Christchurch Airport.

## Papanui Precinct:

### Quality Hotel Elms

456 Papanui Road | Phone: 0800 109910 | [www.elmshotel.co.nz](http://www.elmshotel.co.nz)  
Hotel complex with a range of room options. On-site café/restaurant & bar for convenient dining. Close proximity to shops & restaurants and the PureTrails depot.

### Christchurch Top10 Holiday Park & Motels

39 Meadow Street | Phone: 0800 396323 | [www.christchurchtop10.co.nz](http://www.christchurchtop10.co.nz)  
Holiday park with a range of motel style accommodation at budget-wise prices. Close proximity to shops & restaurants and the PureTrails depot.

## **Accommodation on the tour**

Our comfortable accommodation on this tour includes restored historic hotels, motels, lodges and cottages. Accommodation is based on double or twin share rooms with en-suite facilities. Single travellers are required to pay the single room supplement fee, however if there are other singles on the trip willing to share a twin room we can arrange this for you in which case no single supplement fee will be payable.

On our website you will find links to some of the accommodations we use within the tour itinerary description. We do not send out a list of accommodation venues for your trip prior to the tour departure unless specifically requested.

## **Bike hire**

Standard bike hire is available at a rate of \$190 for the 6 days. The bikes we use are hybrid style mountain bikes that are high quality and well maintained. We also have a small fleet of electric bikes (ebikes) available for hire at a rate of \$450 for the 6 days. Ebike availability is strictly limited so if you'd like to secure an ebike for your trip you need to book this in with us at your earliest convenience. For standard or ebike hire we need an **accurate measurement** of your height before we can confirm availability.

All bikes are fitted with comfortable gel seats and a small handlebar pannier bag. We also supply you with a helmet and drink bottle. To read more about our bikes, refer to our website: [www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/cycling-nz-information/cycle-trail-bike-hire](http://www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/cycling-nz-information/cycle-trail-bike-hire)

Please note the wearing of cycle helmets on PureTrails tours, whether you are cycling on a public road or cycle trail, is a compulsory requirement.

### **'Saddle Sore' Tip:**

No amount of gel seats or padding will protect you from saddle sore if you do not cycle regularly. The best way to prepare your backside for your tour is to cycle regularly (3 or more 20km+ rides per week) during the month leading up to your trip. Failing that you are welcome to bring a gel seat cover or even your own bike saddle to fit to your hire bike.

You are also welcome to bring your own spd pedals and cleat shoes to fit to your hire bike.



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## Bringing your own bike

You are welcome to bring your own bike. Please ensure it is in good condition, recently serviced, and suitable for the terrain you will be riding on. Your bike must not weigh more than **20kgs** as anything over this weight is unmanageable for our guides to handle. You need to supply your own spare inner-tubes and other spare parts. Your guide can assist with basic repairs such as repairing punctures, however any running repairs required beyond this are your own responsibility.

If you require the services of a bike mechanic to unpack and assemble your bike prior to your trip and/or box it up again at the end of your trip, this service is available for \$25 (for those starting/finishing in Christchurch only).

## Booking Conditions & Cancellation & Refunds policy

Bookings will be confirmed and held on receipt of a deposit by PureTrails New Zealand. The full name and contact details (phone, email & postal address) for each person booking the tour are required at the time of booking.

Prices quoted are in New Zealand dollars. The balance of the tour price is payable **60 days** prior to departure and payments must be made in New Zealand dollars.

Payment is accepted by:

- + direct credit;
- + visa or mastercard & debit cards (add 2.5% surcharge);
- + cheque (in NZ currency);
- + international bank transfer (add \$25 funds clearance fee);
- + international bank draft

Cancellations must be received in writing and the following conditions apply:

- + Cancellations outside 90 days of the tour departure date will receive a full refund;
- + Cancellations between 90-61 days prior to the departure date will lose the deposit; this deposit can be transferred to an alternative tour within 12 months of the original departure date
- + Cancellations between 60-31 days of the departure date will receive no refund; however a 50% credit can be transferred to an alternative tour within 12 months of the original departure date
- + Cancellations within 30 days of the departure date will receive **no refund**; and no transfers or credits are available.

PureTrails New Zealand strongly recommends all clients, including **domestic** travellers, purchase travel insurance to protect against unexpected cancellations. We strongly recommend you obtain travel insurance should you need to cancel your trip unexpectedly within 3 months of departure.

Tour departures are subject to a **minimum of 4 people**. You can enquire with us as to the status of your tour at any stage. The full conditions are available on our website at [www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/booking-terms-conditions](http://www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/booking-terms-conditions).

## Car Storage

In Christchurch secure car storage is available at our depot in Papanui for \$10 per day. and needs to be booked in advance.



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## Cash facilities

The only places you will encounter a cash ATM machine or bank during the 5 days is Alexandra & Ranfurly. EFTPOS and credit cards can be used at virtually all the cafes and hotels along the way.

## Contact details while on the tour

If your friends or family need to contact you urgently during the tour, they can contact you via our office on: Phone: +64 21 178 8287. Please note there is good mobile phone reception throughout Central Otago.

## Degree of difficulty & What to expect

The Challenger Series Central Otago tour is a collection of cycle rides totalling 300km that we have put together that showcase the beautiful Central Otago region.

The cycling is all on **gravel roads** rather than trails/paved roads. The riding is rated Grade 3. A good level of fitness, cycling experience, as well as the ability to change gears proficiently is necessary to complete the rides on these trips. There are a number of hill climbs that will challenge all but the most experienced/fit cyclist.

Refer to our website for more information on our Difficulty Gradings.

[www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/cycling-nz-information/level-of-difficulty](http://www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/cycling-nz-information/level-of-difficulty).

**If you do minimal training before your tour or are not 'cycle fit', you may find that you are not able to cycle all of the sections of the trail, and may require the use of our support vehicle (which is available at any time throughout the trip).**

## Departure time and place (Christchurch)

PureTrails offer courtesy pick ups and drop offs from the locations recommended on pages 3 & 4. If you are staying at one of these locations, we will pick you up between 8:00am and 8:20am approximately. For those staying elsewhere, we ask that you make your way to our depot in Papanui (11a Langstone Lane) **by 8:15am**.

Unfortunately we are not able to provide pick ups or drop offs at Christchurch Airport. The nearest pick up point available is at the Airport Gateway Motel, 2kms from the terminals.

## Departure time and place (Queenstown or Clyde or Dunedin)

If you opt to start your tour from Queenstown or Clyde or Dunedin rather than Christchurch, the tour will meet you in Clyde at approximately 5pm on Day 1, at our accommodation in Clyde.

For those flying into Queenstown or Dunedin, we can organise a bus connection to Clyde for you. Bus times available vary from day to day and month to month, so please check the timetable with us before finalising your flights. Please note tour transfers need to be booked and paid for at least one month in advance. The cost is Queenstown – Clyde (\$35 pp approx) and Dunedin to Clyde (\$20 approx).

Bicycles are not easily transported on public buses so you may find you are not able to bring your own bike if you require a bus connection from Queenstown or Dunedin.



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## International Transfers Tip:

Conventional Banks have high fees when it comes to international transfers (hence our \$25 funds clearance fee). Third party institutions such as Western Union or CurrencyFair or TransferWise will offer you a competitive currency exchange rate and significantly lower transfer fees. We are happy to refund you the difference (in NZ\$ cash) in funds clearance fees if you manage to secure a better rate.

## Final Payment

Your final payment is required **60 days prior** to your tour departure date, and will include items which may not be listed on your original invoice such as bike hire and any tour transfers required. You will receive an updated invoice around 10 weeks prior to departure once we have received your Tour Information & Safety Declaration Form – see page 9.

Payment can be made by:

- + visa or mastercard (Inc debit cards) - subject to a 2.5% surcharge;
- + direct transfer (NZ bank account holders only);
- + international transfer (subject to a \$25 funds clearance fee which covers the fee NZ banks charge to receive your payment);
- + cheque in NZ currency ;
- + international bank draft (cheque)

## Finishing your tour in Christchurch

If you are finishing your tour in Christchurch, you are likely to be back in the city by 6:00pm – 7pm on Day 6. Your guide can drop you off at any of the accommodation locations on pages 3 & 4. If you are flying out of Christchurch on Day 6, do not book flights that require check in before 7:00pm.

## Finishing your tour in Clyde or Queenstown

If you are finishing your tour in Clyde or Queenstown we can organise a shuttle bus connection for you. Bus times available vary from day to day and month to month, so please check the timetable with us before booking any onward travel. Please note tour transfers need to be booked and paid for at least one month in advance. The cost is \$55 pp approx to Clyde and \$115 pp approx to Queenstown.

## Finishing your tour in Dunedin via bus

If you would like to get to Dunedin at the end of the trip, we can drop you off at Palmerston where you can connect with the public bus to Dunedin. The cost is approximately \$20. No bikes can be taken on the public bus.

## Finishing your tour in Dunedin via the Taieri Gorge Train

You can finish your tour in Dunedin via the highly recommended Taieri Gorge Railway (2.5hrs), which is a magnificent way to end your journey. The cost for taking the train is \$78 - \$94 (approx). Bicycles can be transported for \$10 per bike. The departure time from Middlemarch (or sometimes the nearby settlement of Pukerangi) varies from day to day and month to month, so please check the timetable with us before booking any onward travel.

For those flying out of Dunedin off the Taieri Gorge Train, we recommend you ask the train conductor when you get on the train if you can disembark at Wingatui rather than Dunedin city. If asked, the train staff will also organise a taxi to meet you at Wingatui to take you the short distance to the airport. It is advisable to prebook an airport shuttle from Dunedin Railway Station if you are disembarking in Dunedin and heading to the airport.

## Guide

Your tour will be led by two of our friendly and professional guides who drive the support vehicles and will be at hand for (almost) anything you need or want to know during your tour (we try our best anyway!) We are very approachable so please do



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ask if you have any queries or concerns. Your guide may not participate in the cycling with the group, but meets up with you along the way in our vehicle every 8 – 15kms or so.

## Health & fitness

You will be cycling 300km over 6 days so you should be reasonably fit and in good health. While the riding is not technically difficult, the fitter you are beforehand, the more you will enjoy the trip. You bike at your own pace and can have plenty of photo and snack stops. Our emphasis is on having fun and enjoying the scenery and hospitality of the locals... If you need a rest, there is always the option of taking the support vehicle.

We strongly encourage you to get out and do some biking before your tour, on gravel roads if possible, starting out with an hour a day, building up to 3-4 longer rides (40km+) per week during the month prior to your tour (at the very minimum). The secret is to start slowly and increase your exercise gradually. The fitter you are the more enjoyable your experience will be.

## Insurance

You never know when either yourself or a family member may fall ill. You are urged to take out travel insurance to cover yourself in the event that you need to cancel your tour with us within three months of the tour departure date. **This includes New Zealander's travelling within New Zealand.** PureTrails New Zealand Ltd is not obligated to give you a refund within this period. Refer to our website for the full terms and conditions [www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/booking-terms-conditions](http://www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/booking-terms-conditions).

## Laundry facilities

Central Otago and particularly the Maniototo often experience drought conditions and water shortages and, as such, there are limited laundry facilities for you to use during the tour. Well, that's what holidays are all about aren't they?! Please bring enough clothing for the 6 days. It is possible to handwash and dry some items.

## Luggage

We urge you to try to keep your luggage to a minimum. Please limit yourself to 18kgs. All luggage is transported in our vehicle during the day. Anything you need access to during the days cycle ride should be stored in a small bag which can be left on the bus rather than in your suitcase. Those starting and finishing in Christchurch with excess luggage not needed on the tour are welcome to store bags at our depot free of charge while you are away.

## Meals & Special Dietary Requirements

Meals are supplied as indicated on the itinerary (B/L/D). Beer and wine, tea & coffee etc are not included in the tour package however there will be the opportunity for you to buy beverages along the way.

Breakfasts are a continental style breakfast supplied by our accommodation hosts, and lunches are taken either in taverns along the trail or as a trail-side picnic. For dinner we dine in the local taverns in the villages where we stay following a two course set menu format.

### Insurance Tip:

Domestic New Zealand travellers can obtain a Domestic Travel Insurance Policy online from [www.1Cover.co.nz](http://www.1Cover.co.nz) (Comprehensive Domestic) or [www.CoverMore.co.nz](http://www.CoverMore.co.nz) (Domestic Plan D) for reasonable prices (approx \$100-\$150 for two seniors for 8 days cover). Ensure your policy includes cover for 'Cancellations & Lost Deposits'. Pre-existing medical conditions are not generally covered so check the policy wording and exclusions carefully.

### Laundry Tip:

If you need to give your cycle gear a wash during your trip, bring some travel liquid detergent and an elastic travel clothes line (available from Kathmandu etc). You can wash your garments and hang them out to dry in your room overnight. Merino and quick-dry fabric garments will dry out overnight.

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We provide a range of high energy healthy snacks while biking such as bananas and fruit, froyze balls, muesli bars, fruit cake and biscuits.

PureTrails New Zealand will **endeavour** to cater to any special dietary requirements you may have (please disclose this on the Tour Info & Health & Safety Declaration form). Vegetarian and gluten free and dairy free diets are not a problem for our meal providers. Requests such as a sugar free or grain free diet and vegan meals etc are a little more problematic given the remote rural location of the tour. In these instances you may need to bring your own snacks and specialty foods. We are unable to guarantee a peanut free or allergen free trip, and therefore we strongly encourage that travellers with life threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self administering these medications.

## Medical conditions

If you have a medical, physical or mental condition that may affect your ability to participate in the tour you must disclose this to us on our Tour Information and Safety Declaration form. Your guide may follow up on your condition with you on Day 1 to help us manage your safety in the event of a medical event.

## Phone reception/Wifi

There is very good mobile phone reception throughout Central Otago. Wifi in this area is not readily available at most accommodation places, and where it is available it is quite slow being a rural area. There is good 3G/4G coverage however.

## Tour Information and Safety Declaration Form

All tour participants (including non-riders) are required to complete a separate copy of our 'Tour Information and Safety Declaration Form', and return it to us **3 months** prior to your tour departure date. Please note this includes those who have been on another PureTrails New Zealand tour at some point in the past. Although we keep a database of information from previous tours, medical/dietary/emergency contact details can change from year to year so we require that a new form be completed for each tour you join.

## Weather conditions

Central Otago has one of the greatest extremes of weather variation in New Zealand, with temperatures ranging from -10 to 38°C. The altitude ranges from 200 – 600 metres above sea level, and the region can be subject to strong winds. You could experience very hot or cold temperatures at any time of the year.

Generally, you can expect the temperature to be around 15-30°C in Jan/Feb, and 15 - 25°C in Nov/Dec/Mar/April, and -4 - 15°C through the winter months. The visual landscape is impossibly beautiful regardless of season or temperature. You will gain maximum enjoyment by being prepared for both hot and cold temperatures.



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## Cycle Clothing Tip:

Bright reflective cycling gear makes you far more visible to other road users and increases your safety significantly. We require that those not wearing bright reflective cycle clothing wear a PureTrails supplied high-vis safety vest for all cycle sections that are on public roads.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Kit Tip:

PureTrails NZ carries a comprehensive 1<sup>st</sup> Aid Kit and an Emergency Response Kit in our support vehicle; however this is kept for emergency situations only. Please bring your own supply of paracetamol, voltaren, antihistamine and any other medication you take, as well as bandaids and some dressings etc in a small kit that you can take with you on your bike.

## Wet Weather Tip:

Bring a large plastic zip-lock bag that you can use inside the pannier bag of your hire bike to store your camera, phone, wallet etc to prevent them from getting wet (the pannier bags are not 100% waterproof).

## What to bring

In the interest of safety and enjoyment, please ensure you are adequately equipped for your tour. **Warm clothing is essential even in January/February.** The following is a list of what you need to bring:

- Clothing:**
- Waterproof raincoat – **essential**
  - Thermal top – **essential**
  - Thermal leggings – **essential in Spring/Autumn**
  - Shorts, bike pants or light trousers for cycling
  - Woollen or fleece jacket layers (not cotton)
  - T-shirts (breathable fabrics are best)
  - Warm hat and gloves
  - A comfortable pair of shoes for cycling
  - Sports socks for cycling
  - Comfortable casual wear for evenings

- Equipment:**
- Padded cycle gloves
  - Sunscreen, sunglasses & sunhat
  - Personal toilet gear
  - Personal first aid kit** containing paracetamol, voltaren, antihistamine and any other medication you take

- Optional:**
- Gel seat cover
  - Camera
  - A large plastic ziplock bag for use inside the hire bike pannier bag if it is very wet
  - Mobile phone to enable phone contact with your guides

## Extra items recommended from May - September

- A merino neck muff (to cover head/ears/throat while cycling)
- An extra pair of gloves eg ski gloves
- thick wool sox
- 'overboots' (a waterproof membrane that fits over your shoes)

For excellent quality NZ made cycle specific clothing and accessories, visit [www.groudeffect.co.nz](http://www.groudeffect.co.nz)