

West Coast Wilderness Trail & Beyond Trip Notes

210km of cycling on the West Coast's cycle trail, following historic rail and tram lines and logging roads along the wild coast and through virgin rainforest, and into the warm welcoming communities of 'The Coast'.



Tour Highlights

- + Cycle the West Coast Wilderness Trail, featuring native forest and wild coastline
- + Climb to the treetops and admire the forest from above at the Treetop Walkway
- + Visit the spectacular Hokitika Gorge
- + Enjoy cycle rides at Tauranga Bay, Waiuta and Moana
- + Learn the gold mining, logging and farming history of our early pioneers
- + Explore the small towns of Punakaiki, Reefton and Blackball
- + Visit a dairy farm and share morning tea with the Coates family

+

Tour Cost

Tour Price: \$2,050

Deposit: \$400

Grade 1



What's included?

- + 5 nights twinshare en-suite accommodation
- + 5 evening meals; 3 lunches; 5 breakfasts
- + fruit, snacks & morning teas on the trail
- + the services of a tour leader who provides vehicle support & information
- + cycle repair support
- + all transport from/to Christchurch
- + Entry to the West Coast Treetop walk
- + West Coast Wilderness Trail maintenance fee
- + Farm tour at Haupiri
- + Goods & Services Tax of 15%

Not included:

- + wine; beer; espresso coffees
- + Lunch on Day 1 & 6
- + bike hire (standard \$190; e-bike \$450)
- + single accommodation (\$400)
- + optional TranzAlpine Train from Moana to Christchurch Day 6 (\$183 approx)

Tour Details

- + 6 days
- + Grade 1
- + up to 210km cycling [74% cycling on gravel cycle trail/gravel roads; 26% cycling on sealed roads]
- + Starts/Ends in Christchurch

Departure Dates

Refer to our website for current departure dates and tour availability



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Itinerary

Day 1 Christchurch – Hokitika

The tour gets underway with a very scenic drive over Arthur's Pass to the west coast. We then head to the Hokitika Gorge, where the vivid turquoise waters will take your breath away. From here there is the opportunity to enjoy a 18.5km cycle on a sealed road that gently descends across farmland to the township of Kokatahi. This is a good opportunity to get familiar with your bike before we commence the West Coast Wilderness Trail. We transfer to a ridge overlooking the ocean and mountains and settle into our accommodation for the next two nights. **Meals (D) | Cycle Distance: 18.5km**

Day 2 Hokitika

This morning we transfer to the small gold mining town of Ross and commence our ride of the West Coast Wilderness Trail, following an old railway line north. Our morning tea stop is at the West Coast Treetop walkway, where you can enjoy a walk along a 450m steel platform suspended 20 metres high, giving you an amazingly different perspective of the forest. The trail then heads inland through native bush featuring towering rimu trees, and on to the roaring coast at Hokitika. Enjoy a picnic lunch on the beach and time to explore the township of Hokitika - the heart of the coast. Our final section of the ride follows an old tram line along the Hokitika River. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 38.5km**

Day 3 Hokitika - Kumara

The trail today features virgin rainforest and massive Podocarp trees as well as serene canals and streams. The first section features a stunning water race to Lake Kaniere. From here the trail follows a road across farmland and through native bush to the Arahura River, where the trail leaves the road and climbs along a well benched switch back trail to 'Cowboy Paradise'. Continue through the forest and over the spectacular swingbridges to the Kawhaka Pass. From here the trail descends the Kawhaka Valley to the picturesque hydro canals. Enjoy a picnic lunch before the final section of trail through to the historic mining town of Kumara. Here galleries occupy refurbished shops and the recently restored historic Theatre Royal Hotel, circa 1876, takes pride of place on the main street, the West Coast's only restored miners' hotel, and once world-renowned theatre. We settle in here for the night. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 58km**

Day 4 Kumara - Cape Foulwind

Today we finish the West Coast Wilderness Trail, cycling 28kms across farmland, through native bush, beside the roaring coastline and finally along the stop banks of the Grey River to the centre of Greymouth. After morning tea we head north along the famed coastal road to Punakaiki. View the famous Pancake Rocks. Back in the support vehicle we continue north to Charleston, and on to Cape Foulwind. Enjoy 14kms of riding along the beautiful coastline at Tauranga Bay where you can view the NZ fur seal colony. We then travel a short distance to our accommodation for the evening and dine at a pub full of warm West Coast hospitality. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 42km**

Day 5 Cape Foulwind - Moana

Today head inland via the Buller Gorge to Reefton, the first town in NZ to have a public electricity supply in 1888. We then travel a short distance in our support vehicle to the site of the historic gold mining town of Waiuta, regarded as the Coast's last great gold strike. Many rusty relics remain and there is time to look around before we begin our cycle ride of the day. Our 14km ride takes us gently off the plateau through native forest, and out across the open farmland of the Grey Valley. The next 21km cycle then follows river terraces of the Grey River, past the Pike River memorial towards Blackball. Enjoy a refreshment stop at the legendary 'Formerly The Blackball Hilton' Hotel, before we make our way to the village of Moana and our accommodation overlooking Lake Brunner. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 35km**

Day 6 Moana - Christchurch

Today we travel a short distance to another stunning lake hidden amongst the bush, well off the beaten track, and enjoy the last 20 km cycle ride of the tour. The route takes us along quiet rural roads, featuring a mix of native bush and open farmland, towards the mountains of the Southern Alps. Visit the Coates family on their dairy farm at Haupiri and enjoy a delicious morning tea and a tour of the milking shed. We return to Moana for lunch. From here you can opt to take the TranzAlpine train over Arthur's Pass and back to Christchurch, arriving at approximately 6.30pm, or travel back in our van. **Meals (B) | Cycle Distance: 20km**



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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
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

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

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

Closest hotel to Christchurch Airport.

Papanui Precinct:

Quality Hotel Elms

456 Papanui Road | Phone: 0800 109910 | 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

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 a restored historic hotel & cottage, motels and hotel. 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. To read more about our bikes, refer to our website: 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.

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.

Car Storage

In Christchurch secure car storage is available at our depot in Papanui for \$10 per day. This 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 6 days is Greymouth & Hokitika. EFTPOS and credit cards can be used at virtually all the cafes and hotels along the trail.

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 coverage throughout most of the region with the exception of the cycle trail between Kumara & Lake Kaniere.

Degree of difficulty & What to Expect

The 130km 'West Coast Wilderness Trail' is a purpose built **gravel** cycle trail that showcases the wild coastline and stunning forests and lakes of the West Coast. Our tour also features 80kms of riding on the sealed and gravel roads. Much of the trail goes through native forests and is very remote, with little infrastructure along the trail outside the main towns.

While we consider trip to be Grade 1 cycling overall, on Day 3 there is a 20km section with a number of climbs that is more akin to Grade 2. This section can be skipped if desired. Refer to our website for more information on our Difficulty Gradings.

www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/cycling-nz-information/level-of-difficulty. Cycling experience is necessary, as well as the ability to change gears proficiently.

Departure time and place

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**. Please be ready wearing your cycle gear at the start of the tour.

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.

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)

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

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Finishing your tour

If you are finishing your tour in Christchurch, you are likely to be back in the city by 5:00pm 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 6:00pm.

Guide

Your tour will be led by one of our friendly and professional guides who drives the support vehicle 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 ask if you have any queries or concerns. Your guide **does not participate in the cycling** with the group, but meets up with you along the trail in our vehicle every 15kms or so.

Health & fitness

You will be cycling 210km of the West Coast Wilderness Trail over 6 days so you should be reasonably fit and in good health. While the trail is not technically difficult, the more comfortable you are riding your bike beforehand, the more you will enjoy the trail. 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. 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 half an hour a day, building up to 3-4 longer rides (20km+) 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.

Laundry facilities

There are laundry facilities for you to use at our accommodation during the tour. There is usually a \$4 - 5 charge per wash and dry cycle.

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. On Day 1 when you join the tour, please be ready wearing your cycle gear. Those with excess luggage not needed on the tour are welcome to store bags at our depot free of charge while you are away.

Insurance Tip:

Domestic New Zealand travellers can obtain a Domestic Travel Insurance Policy online from www.1Cover.co.nz (Comprehensive Domestic) or 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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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 as a trail-side picnic or in cafes along the trail. For dinner we dine in the local restaurants in the villages where we stay following a two course set menu format.

We provide a range of high energy healthy snacks while biking such as bananas and fruit, froyo 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 (see page 8). 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 coverage throughout most of the West Coast, with the exception of the stretch of trail between Kumara and Lake Kaniere. Wifi is becoming more widely available and in most cases (but not all) is offered free of charge, and there is also good 3G/4G coverage.

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.

TranzAlpine Train

The TranzAlpine train ride across the Southern Alps from Moana to Christchurch is reputed to be one of the best train trips in the world, and it is a great way to finish your trip. We can book this for you at the rate of \$183. Cheaper fares are available by booking directly online. To get the best price (especially if you hold a NZ Super Gold card) you can book your fare directly at www.greatjourneysofnz.co.nz.



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Help us go green:

Help us save the planet by bringing your own reusable drink bottle and coffee cup. Alternatively a branded PureTrails 'Specialised' drink bottle can be purchased for \$10.

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).

1st Aid Kit Tip:

PureTrails NZ carries a comprehensive 1st 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.

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.

The train to book is the TranzAlpine Train departing from Moana at 3:03pm to Christchurch arriving at 6:31 on Day 6 of your trip. The train can often be delayed so we do not recommend booking flights out of Christchurch much before 8pm. Taxi's are available at the station to take you to your destination.

Weather conditions

The West Coast is generally perceived as being very wet all of the time, however you may find it surprising dry. The coast to the north of the Franz/Fox Glaciers receives far less rainfall than the coast to the south. Generally, you can expect the temperature to be around 15-27°C in Jan/Feb, and 15-22°C in Nov/Dec/Mar/April. The visual landscape is impossibly beautiful regardless of season or temperature. You will gain maximum enjoyment by being prepared for hot, cold, and wet conditions.

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:**
- A drink bottle (or buy a PureTrails branded bottle for \$10)
 - A cup for tea/coffee stops
 - Padded cycle gloves
 - Sunscreen, sunglasses & sunhat
 - Personal toilet gear
 - Personal first aid kit** containing paracetamol, voltaren, antihistamine and any other medication you take
 - Insect repellent

- 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 guide

On Day 1 when you join the tour, please be ready wearing your cycle gear.

For excellent quality NZ made cycle specific clothing and accessories, visit www.groundeffect.co.nz