

Self Guided Cycle Package

Otago Rail Trail - Trip Notes

Cycle the vast open landscape of tussock and schist rock plains, cattle and sheep stations, and willow lined streams in fertile valleys, all surrounded by an alluring mountainous backdrop on the Otago Central Rail Trail.



Trail Highlights

- + Cycle the 152km Otago Central Rail Trail
- + Discover the impressive hand built stone culverts and viaducts
- + Enjoy the vast 'big sky' scenery
- + Meet the locals and enjoy southern hospitality at its best
- + Add on activities to enhance your Central Otago experience

Trail Details

- + 5 days
- + Grade 1
- + 161km cycling [100% cycle trail]
- + Starts/Ends in Clyde, Queenstown or Dunedin
- + Available year round

The Otago Central Rail Trail is New Zealand's iconic rail trail, built on a former railway corridor. It passes through numerous small farming communities on an otherwise vast open landscape of tussock and schist rock plains, cattle and sheep stations, and willow lined streams in fertile valleys, all surrounded by an alluring mountainous backdrop. Described as a 'timeless land' the scenery will keep you mesmerised as you cycle the 152km trail.

The trail is rated Grade 1 and is at the easier end of the spectrum with no big hills or technically difficult sections to negotiate. It is a great trail for families to enjoy together, being entirely off road. There is good infrastructure along most of this 152km trail, with lots of eating options and places to replenish water and food supplies.



Questions? Call us
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Pricing

Based on our recommended 5 day itinerary package:

- + 1 adult: \$795
- + 2 adults: \$480 pp
- + 2 adults & 1 child (under 18): \$377 pp
- + 2 adults & 2 children (under 18): \$399 pp

ALL PRICING IS SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION AT THE TIME OF BOOKING.

Other sized groups can be priced on request.

Package Includes:

- + 4 nights comfortable ensuite accommodation
- + daily bag transfers (15kgs per person)
- + 2 continental breakfasts (per person)
- + Comprehensive information pack including local history; dining recommendations and contact phone numbers for meal bookings

Extras:

- + comfort bike hire: \$235 pp
- + ebike hire: \$420 pp

- + transfers QTN to CL day 1: from \$55* pp
- + transfers DN to CL day 1: from \$55* pp
- + transfers MM to CL day 5: from \$55 pp
- + transfers MM to DN day 5: from \$55* pp
- + transfers MM to QTN day 5: from \$110* pp

- *Price based on 4+ people travelling. Add \$5 pp for 2-3 people travelling or \$65 pp for 1 person travelling

- + Bikes can be transported on these transfers: \$20 per bike; \$40 per bike MM to QTN

- + Excess baggage (max 15kg per bag) transported from CL to MM or vs versa: \$20 per bag

- + Vehicle storage Clyde: \$15 per day
- + Vehicle storage Middlemarch \$10 per day
- + Vehicle relocation: \$250 per vehicle

- + Otago Rail Trail guide book \$15

Add on Activities:

- + Clutha River Cruise Day 1: \$110 pp
- + St Bathans'/Cambrians Tour Day 3: \$90 pp
- + Curling & Naseby transfer Day 4: \$60 pp
- + Otago Central Rail Trail Souvenir Passport: \$12.50



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Environment

The Otago Central Rail Trail is a 152km cycle trail built on a former railway corridor through what was once referred to as Otago's 'interior wasteland' due to the harsh brutal climate that our pioneering gold-miners endured during the gold rush of the 1860s. Nowadays the landscape is much admired for its raw beauty, though the conditions can still be brutal at any time of the year. Temperature variations from 5-35 degrees Celsius between October and April are the normal. Snow can fall year-round.

The fantastic feature of the Otago Central Rail Trail is that many of the original cob and coach hotels still exist today (pre-railway era) and many operate as pubs and 'watering holes' along the trail. Conveniently these are mostly 16 miles apart, which was the limit of a horse team in the cob and coach days.

So starting your ride from Clyde, there are three 'watering holes' to stop at and get a coffee/meal/water etc before arriving in Ophir, which is a 44km ride. From Ophir to Wedderburn, again there is water/meal facilities available at three towns along the way servicing this 43km ride. For the 23km ride from Wedderburn to Waipiata there is one service towns to pass through. Stopping at all these villages along the way is a wonderful way to explore the small communities of Central Otago, with the bonus of having access to top class meals, coffee, beer and wine to make your whole journey a enjoyable and memorable experience.

However once you leave Waipiata there is very limited accommodation and virtually no places to get a meal or coffee from until you reach Middlemarch, some 52kms away. There is potable water available at the Hyde Station. So on this final section of the trail you need to be self sufficient with your food and water requirements. Fortunately from Hyde it is on a downhill gradient, so unless there is a southerly wind blowing, it is generally quite a quick ride.

Other Options

If you feel you may be pushed out of your comfort zone with the lack of vehicle support while you ride, you may find our supported tour packages to be a more fun, enjoyable and safer holiday experience. We have a tour guide who drives the support vehicle with you (and our tour group of up to 14 people) for the whole trip, and organises all the meals and refreshment stops (including hot drinks) along the way so you do not have to worry about where your next meal is coming from or what to do if the weather takes a turn for the worst.

We also take pride in showing you much more of Central Otago than simply the rail corridor, with a number of side trips (in our bus) to the outlying historic gold mining towns, the possibility of having a go at curling, as well as a tour of one of the high country cattle, sheep and deer stations in the area, and a tour of a garden of national significance, all part of our packages.

[Otago Rail Trail CLASSIC 5 day supported tour](#)
[Otago Rail Trail RELAXED 6 day supported tour](#)



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Tour Itinerary

Our recommended itinerary below features comfortable daily cycling distances with time to relax and explore the sights of interest along the way. **All packages can be customised to suit your requirements, so you can add or deduct days to suit your needs. Some more budget friendly or luxurious accommodation is available at some of the towns.**

Day 1 Arrive in Clyde, explore local area

Make your own way to Clyde, or alternatively we can organise transport for you from either Queenstown or Dunedin to Clyde. Check into your accommodation. Explore the fantastic galleries and boutiques of the historic precinct of Clyde, a former gold mining town. Walk around the township and discover some of its history. Enjoy the local cafes, restaurants, and craft brewery. In the late afternoon you can collect your hire bike (if ready for collection). You may wish to get a practice cycle in on local river trail beside the mighty Clutha River. Or you may prefer to leave the cycling for tomorrow and opt for a cruise along on the Clutha River with a local boat operator (see add on activities).

Cycling Distance 0km (optional ride available)

Day 2 Cycle Clyde to Ophir

Begin cycling the Otago Central Rail Trail, biking from Clyde to Ophir. Highlights of today's ride include the wooden trestle Muttontown Viaduct, the Old Tucker Hill gold diggings, breathing in the wild thyme growing around Alexandra, views of the Dunstan Mountains and Raggedy Range and the charming historic town of Ophir. Check into your accommodation and relax and explore the Ophir township.

Cycling Distance 42km

Day 3 Cycle Ophir to Wedderburn

Continue cycling the Otago Central Rail Trail from Ophir to Wedderburn. Highlights of today's bike ride on the rail trail include the engineering marvel that is the Poolburn Gorge Viaduct and tunnels, the vast wide open Ida Valley (made famous by the painter Graham Sydney), the Idaburn dam (famous for its winter curling) and also a visit to Hayes Engineering Works. Explore Gilchris Store in Otarehua. On arrival at the wee town of Wedderburn, relax and enjoy the views from the porch of your lovely cottage nestled under the Hawkdun Range at your accommodation at Wedderburn Cottages. Relax and enjoy the space and views. There is the option of taking a sightseeing tour of the local area with a local character and retired farmer, which is a great way to learn a little bit more about life in rural Central Otago (see add on activities). Dine at the nearby Tavern.

Cycling Distance 44km

Day 4 Cycle Wedderburn to Waipiata

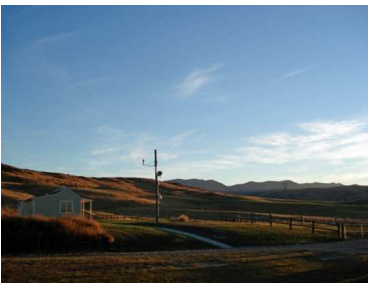
Today's ride is fairly short (and downhill!) which means you have time to visit the nearby town of Naseby and have a go at the ancient sport of curling, a game which is played extensively by the local communities (see add on activities). Back on your bike, highlights of today's bike ride include crossing the Maniototo Plains and exploring the rural art deco town of Ranfurly. Check into your accommodation in the village of Waipiata and enjoy an evening of fine southern hospitality at the Country Hotel.

Cycling Distance 21km

Day 5 Cycle Waipiata to Middlemarch

Highlights of the final days cycle ride on the Otago Central Rail Trail include following the Taieri River as it snakes around the Rock and Pillar Range, and crossing the unaltered stone bridge over Cap Burn, the 32m high Price's Creek Viaduct and 152m long tunnel, views of the Rock and Pillar and Taieri Ranges, the Hyde Railway Disaster memorial, and dropping down into the Strath Taieri Plain to Middlemarch. This final section of the ride has very little infrastructure so you need to be totally self contained for all your food and water needs until you arrive in Middlemarch. From here you have the option of taking a shuttle back to Clyde, or on the Dunedin or Queenstown which we can organise for you.

Cycling Distance 52km



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Terms & Conditions

1] Bookings

Once a self guided cycle package has been finalised, a quote raised and accepted, a 25% non-refundable deposit is required to secure your package. Accommodation bookings will be held for no more than 48 hours pending the receipt of a deposit. Booking received within 60 days of the departure date required full payment to confirm your booking.

Cancellation charges are detailed in 3] below.

2] Payments

Prices quoted are in New Zealand dollars. The balance of the tour or package 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 2.9% surcharge applies);
- + international bank transfer (add \$25 funds clearance fee);

3] Changes, Cancellations & Refunds

PureTrails New Zealand strongly recommends all clients, including domestic travellers, purchase travel insurance to protect against unexpected cancellations. Cancellations or changes must be received in writing and the following conditions apply:

Changes to your package after it has been finalised:

(such as changing shuttle times, or swapping a client name, cancelling shuttles/bike hire)

- + More than 60 days prior to travel: will incur a \$50 alteration fee
- + 15 – 60 days prior to travel will: incur up to a \$100 alteration fee. There may also be cancellation or change fees on some third party services (eg accommodation; ebike hire)
- + 1 – 14 days prior to travel or after trip start: changes are not possible and no refunds are available

Cancel entire booking & rebook at a later date:

- + More than 30 days prior to travel: a \$100 pp booking transfer fee applies and the remainder is transferred to a new departure date within 12 months
- + 15 – 30 days prior to travel: 40% of the booking total is forfeited; the remainder is transferred to a new departure date within 12 months
- + 1 – 14 days prior to travel or after trip start: 100% of the booking total is forfeited; no booking transfer is available

Cancellations & Refund by either the whole group or part of the group:

- + Cancellations outside 60 days of the package departure date: will forfeit the full deposit;
- + Cancellations between 60-30 days of the departure date: will forfeit 50% of the package price*;
- + Cancellations within 30 days of the departure date: will forfeit 100% of the package price*.

See the full terms & conditions at <https://puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/booking-terms-conditions/>



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