

Alps to Ocean Trail *EPIC* Trip Notes

An epic 320km bike ride from the mountains of the majestic Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park, through the Mackenzie Basin and down the Waitaki Valley all the way to the Pacific Ocean at Oamaru Harbour.



Tour Highlights

- + Cycle 320km of the Alps 2 Ocean Trail from the mountains to the sea
- + Enjoy the spectacular scenery of the Mackenzie Basin
- + Admire the engineering of the Waitaki Valley hydro scheme
- + Explore the small communities of Omarama, Kurow and Duntroon
- + Discover the Maori Rock art and limestone outcrops of North Otago
- + Step back in time in Oamaru's splendid Victorian Precinct
- + Stargaze in the 'Aoraki Mackenzie international dark sky reserve'

Tour Details

- + 6 days
- + Grade 3
- + 300km cycling with full vehicle support [100% gravel cycle trail/ gravel roads]
- + Starts/Ends in Christchurch or Queenstown

Tour Cost

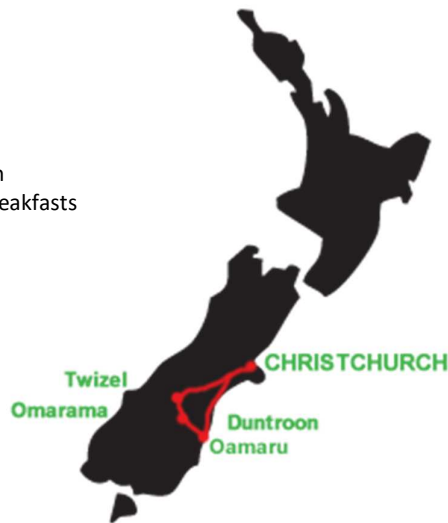
Tour Price: from \$2,250
Deposit: \$400

What's included?

- + 5 nights twin-share en-suite accommodation
- + 5 evening meals; 4 lunches; 4 continental 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
- + Goods & Services Tax of 15%

Not included:

- + wine; beer; espresso coffees
- + lunch on Days 1 & 6; breakfast on Day 6
- + bike hire (standard \$200; e-bike \$500)
- + single accommodation supplement (\$400)
- + transfers from Queenstown to Lake Tekapo Day 1 (\$50 approx)
- + transfers from Oamaru to Queenstown Day 6 (\$70 approx)



Departure Dates

Refer to our website for current departure dates and tour availability

Grade 3



Official Partner



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Itinerary

Day 1 Christchurch - Twizel

We head south across the plains to the Mackenzie Basin, driving past Lake Tekapo to Lake Pukaki and the start of our great cycling epic. The first section is on a sealed road providing a good opportunity to get familiar with your bike. You then enter the trail on the Lake Pukaki foreshore that follows the fringe of Lake Pukaki, featuring fantastic views of Aoraki Mount Cook and the snow-capped Southern Alps, all the way to the spillway. Enjoy a refreshment break at the Lake Pukaki foreshore before embarking on the next section of trail across the Pukaki Flats to Twizel featuring great views of the immense Mackenzie Basin and the afternoon sun falling across the Benmore Range. Check into our comfortable accommodation for the next two evenings. **Meals (D) | Cycle Distance: 25km**

Day 2 Twizel

This morning's Alps 2 Ocean cycle trail section is a highlight of the bike tour and could contend for the title of the best bike ride in the country. The cycle trail travels 8.5km north deep into the mountains to 'Rotten Tommy'. The views here are quite simply superb and will take your breath away. The trail then retraces south to Jollie River where we enjoy a picnic lunch. The next section follows the shores of Lake Pukaki, passing by the location of 'Lake Town' in the Hobbit Trilogies, back to the Tekapo B power station. At the conclusion of the bike ride we drive back to Twizel. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 45km**

Day 3 Twizel – Omarama

Cycle out of Twizel on a sealed road to the Pukaki - Ohau canal. This section follows the road alongside the canal to the Ohau weir. Here we enjoy morning tea with a fabulous view overlooking Lake Ohau and the Ben Ohau Range. The next section is on purpose built trail along the edge of Lake Ohau and across to Lake Middleton. Continue to Ohau Lodge where a sumptuous lunch awaits. From here a challenging but spectacular 19km section of trail awaits, featuring a climb to the Tarnbrae highpoint and down again to the Quailburn. The final section takes you on an easy descent of the Quailburn Road, and a short distance along trail to Omarama and our accommodation. Enjoy an optional visit to the Omarama Hot Tubs. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 82km**

Day 4 Omarama – Duntroon

Today's bike ride takes us down the Waitaki Valley. Firstly we bike from Omarama to Lake Bemoire via Sailors Cutting on a lovely bike trail alongside the lake. From here a new section of trail takes you up and over the hills to Benmore Dam of a very scenic but challenging trail. Then the next section follows Benmore Dam, past the power station and along the pleasant sealed road beside Lake Aviemore. From here we follow the Waitaki River down the valley to Kurow and (conditions pending) onto Duntroon. This section features an ancient Maori rock drawing site. In Duntroon explore the township and enjoy the warm southern hospitality at our accommodation in the recently restored country hotel. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 94km**

Day 5 Duntroon - Oamaru

Today the trail leaves the Waitaki river valley and heads inland through the North Otago countryside, home to the unusual limestone 'Elephant Rocks' to Windsor. Enjoy lunch before the next section through very attractive looking 'English' countryside, into Oamaru, finishing up by the sea at Friendly Bay. Explore in the splendid Victorian precinct of Oamaru featuring some of New Zealand's best 19th century architecture and enjoy a celebratory meal together. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 54km**

Day 6 Oamaru – Christchurch

Have a well deserved lie in and leisurely breakfast. Spend the morning taking in the sights of the amazing Victorian precinct of Oamaru. We head back to Christchurch arriving at approximately 5:30pm. Alternatively catch a travel connection through to Queenstown. **Meals (nil) | Cycle Distance: 0km**



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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. We do not provide central city or city-wide pick ups at the start or end of your tour.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Accommodation on the tour

Our comfortable accommodation on this tour includes motels and historic hotels. 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 \$200 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 \$500 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 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.

'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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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.

Bringing your own bike

If you are bringing your own, please take the following into consideration:

- Your bicycle **does not weigh more than 20kg** – including e-bikes (with the battery off). Bikes heavier than this are too heavy for our guides to be able to lift on and off the cycle trailer safely and are too heavy for our trailer fittings.
- Your bike **does not have any mudguards fitting on the front tyre** (due to how they are secured on the trailer). Rear mudguards are fine.
- The bike is well maintained, recently serviced, and in a good safe condition.
- Your helmet is in a good safe condition with no cracks, and can be fastened properly.
- The tyres have a good level of tread on them, suitable for trails/gravel. Slick tyres are not recommended.
- A basic bike repair kit must be carried including 2 x spare inner tubes.
- Any major mechanical breakdown is your own responsibility.
- **PureTrails staff will secure your bike on our cycle trailer when in transit during the tour, but the company is not held responsible for any damages that occur during transportation.**

Your guide can assist with basic repairs such as repairing punctures, however any running repairs required beyond this are your own responsibility.

Booking Terms & Conditions

Our Booking Terms & Conditions can be found on our website at:

<https://puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/booking-terms-conditions/>

Please read carefully these terms and conditions of contract. In completing and submitting the Booking Form and/or paying a deposit, you agree to be bound by these conditions which constitute the agreement between PureTrails New Zealand Ltd (hereafter referred to as PTNZ) and you.

Car Storage

In Christchurch secure car storage is available at Superior Airport Parking.

www.superiorairportparking.co.nz

Degree of difficulty & What to Expect

The 'Alps 2 Ocean Trail EPIC' is a challenging 300km cycle trail that consists of a mix of purpose built firm **gravel trails**, and sealed and **gravel public roads**. The trail features some of the best scenery in the country from the awe inspiring snow capped peaks of the Southern Alps, to the tawny tussock of the Mackenzie Basin, down to the fertile farmland of North Otago and the coast at Oamaru, a delightfully impressive Victorian city.

The riding is rated Grade 3 and there are **a few longer rides and technically challenging climbs** that can be skipped if desired. Ebikes are not a great help of technically challenging sections so riders should not rely on an ebike to get them through these challenging grade 3 sections. Some parts will require you to walk (& push your bike for



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periods). 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. If this itinerary sounds too ambitious for you, we now also have an 'EASY' grade 1 version of the Alps to Ocean Trail which you may like to consider.

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.

Departure time and place (Christchurch)

PureTrails offer courtesy pick ups and drop offs from the locations recommended on page 4. If you are staying at one of these locations, we will pick you up between 8:00am and 8:20am approximately. We do not provide central city or city-wide pick ups at the start or end of your tour. If you choose to stay elsewhere in Christchurch we will talk to you about a meeting location at one of the locations below, or a suitable location (*where we can park our 7m bus + 6m cycle trailer off any suburban roads*) en-route (EG Yaldhurst), prior to your tour departure.

Unfortunately we are not able to provide pick ups or drop offs at Christchurch Airport terminals. The nearest pick up point available is at Spitfire Square Shopping Centre, 800m from the terminals. Please factor in a 10 minute walk to get to/from the terminal from there. Our bus stops outside the Lonestar Restaurant.

Departure time and place (Queenstown)

If you opt to start your tour from Queenstown rather than Christchurch, the tour will meet you in Tekapo at approximately 1pm on Day 1, at the bus stop alongside the Tekapo Village or in that vicinity.

For those flying into Queenstown, we can organise a bus connection to Tekapo 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 – Tekapo (\$50 pp 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.

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 2.9% 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);

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.

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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 5pm on Day 6. Your guide can drop you off at any of the accommodation locations on page 4. If you are flying out of Christchurch on Day 6, do not book flights that require check in before 5pm.

Finishing your tour in Queenstown

If you opt to finish your tour in Queenstown rather than Christchurch, we can organise a bus connection to Queenstown for you from Oamaru (via Dunedin). Bus times available vary from day to day and month to month, so please check the timetable with us before finalising your flights. The usual time is a 12pm departure and a 7:20pm arrival time (IE 7.5hrs travel time). Please note tour transfers need to be booked and paid for at least one month in advance. The cost is Oamaru – Queenstown (\$65 pp 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 to Queenstown.

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 8 – 15kms or so.

Health & fitness

You will be cycling 300km of the Alps 2 Ocean Trail over 5 days so you should be reasonably fit and in good health. The trail is technically difficult in parts, so riders should not rely on ebikes to get them through these sections. 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.

If this itinerary sounds too ambitious for you, we now also have an 'EASY' grade 1 version of the Alps to Ocean Trail which you may like to consider.

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.

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. **This includes New Zealander's travelling within New Zealand.** Refer to our website for the full terms and conditions www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/booking-terms-conditions.

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.

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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.

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.

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, froye 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 coverage throughout most of the Mackenzie Basin. Wifi is becoming more widely available and in most case (but not all) is offered free of charge, and there is also good 3G/4G coverage.

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

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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.groudeffect.co.nz

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.

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.

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.

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).

Tour Information and Safety Declaration Form

All tour participants (including non-riders) are required to complete a separate copy of our online 'Tour Information and Safety Declaration Form' **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 so we require that a new form be completed for each tour you join.

Weather conditions

The Mackenzie Basin has one of the greatest extremes of weather variation in New Zealand, with temperatures ranging from -10 to 38°C. The altitude of the basin ranges from 500 – 700 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. By April, it tends to get quite cold in the evenings with frosts, and possibly snow in late April (!) 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.

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
 - 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
 - A supply of toilet for public toilets along the trails
 - Torch/flashlight for the tunnel on the trail (Day 5)

- Optional:**
- Gel seat cover
 - 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
 - Swimming costume (Omarama Hot tubs)