

Central Otago Trail Trip Notes

A collection of cycle trails alongside the rivers and lakes of the stunning Central Otago district including Arrowtown, Cromwell, Wanaka, Clyde and Roxburgh. Incredible scenery and excellent cycle trails.



Tour Highlights

- + Cycle 187km of cycle trails around Central Otago's stunning lakes & rivers
- + Ride the stunning purpose built Gibbston Valley Trail; Lake Hawea Trail; Lake Dunstan Cycle Trail; Roxburgh Gorge and Clutha Gold Cycle Trails
- + Experience the colours of the seasons
- + Take in the spectacular scenery and relaxed vibe of the Central Otago
- + Explore the small communities of Arrowtown, Cromwell & Clyde
- + Travel through the stunning Roxburgh Gorge by bicycle and jet boat
- + Indulge in fresh Central Otago produce and local wines
- + Dial out and enjoy a week away in this most stunning part of NZ

Tour Details

- + 6 days
- + Grade 2
- + 187km+ cycling with full vehicle support [100% gravel cycle trail]
- + Starts/Ends in Queenstown or Christchurch

Tour Cost

Tour Price: from \$2,450
Deposit: \$400

What's included?

- + 5 nights twin-share ensuite accommodation
- + 5 evening meals; 4 lunches; 5 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
- + Roxburgh Gorge jet boat shuttle
- + Goods & Services Tax of 15%

Not included:

- + wine; beer; espresso coffees
- + lunch on Days 1 & 6
- + wine tasting fees
- + bike hire (standard \$200; e-bike \$515)
- + single accommodation (\$400)
- + transfers from Clyde to Queenstown on Day 6 (from \$55 approx; bikes additional)



Departure Dates

Refer to our website for current departure dates and tour availability.

Grade 2



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Itinerary

Day 1 Christchurch/Queenstown - Arrowtown

We head south across the plains and through the Mackenzie Basin. The scenic drive continues as we head over the Lindis Pass and into Central Otago. We continue through the Kawarau Gorge to our accommodation, a stone's throw from the quaint village of Arrowtown. In the afternoon enjoy a walk around the village and historic Chinese gold mining village relics. Alternatively, there is the option to join the tour in Arrowtown from Queenstown. In the evening get acquainted with your companions over a meal at the local pub. **Meals (D) | Cycle Distance: 0km**

Day 2 Arrowtown - Cromwell (Arrow River Bridges Trail/Gibbston River Trail/Lake Dunstan Trail)

Our ride commences in Arrowtown on the Arrow River Bridges Trail which follows the serene Arrow River amongst willow and poplar trees. Cross over two very impressive suspension bridges and over the historic Kawarau Bridge to the AJ Hackett bungy centre. Enjoy a coffee here while watching those brave enough to take a leap at this iconic bridge. We continue riding further into the Gibbston Valley on the Gibbston River Trail. From here we transfer through the scenic gorge to Bannockburn and enjoy a leisurely lunch and the opportunity to taste the world renowned wines. A further ride after lunch is an easy jaunt alongside the stunning Lake Dunstan, through the Pisa Moorings township to Cromwell, finishing up at our accommodation for the next two nights. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 38km**

Day 3 Cromwell (Hawea River Trail/Wanaka Outlet Track)

Today we travel to Lake Hawea. Enjoy morning tea with another view of the mountains before our cycle for the day, alongside Lake Hawea and then following the Hawea River terraces (17km) to Albert Town. Here we cross the river and follow the Lake Wanaka outlet around Point Eely and into the township of Wanaka (18km), stopping for a picnic lunch at one of the beachside reserves beside the lake. This is the best of Central Otago with the raw brown plains coupled with sparkling cool blue waters and a backdrop of snowcapped mountains. Take some time to explore the Wanaka township before we travel a short distance back to Cromwell. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 35km**

Day 4 Cromwell - Clyde (Lake Dunstan Trail)

Today we ride the stunning new Lake Dunstan Trail. Starting from our accommodation, enjoy riding alongside Lake Dunstan to the historic precinct of Cromwell. From Cromwell the trail follows the Kawarau River to Bannockburn and around through the vineyards and olive groves to Cornish Point. From here the trail enters the Cromwell Gorge, through a bare landscape of spectacular schist rock, above the deep blue waters of Lake Dunstan. Take your time through this spectacular landscape and enjoy a picnic lunch along the way. Finally, head past the Clyde Dam and power station to Clyde. Check into our accommodation for the next two nights. In the afternoon explore the galleries and boutiques in the delightful village of Clyde, or have a walk around the historic precinct to appreciate the gold mining history of the township. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 44km**

Day 5 Clyde (Roxburgh Gorge Trail/Clutha Gold Trail)

This morning we travel a short distance to where the Roxburgh Gorge Cycle Trail begins. The trail through the Roxburgh Gorge is just stunning and will take your breath away. A 10km cycle is followed by a scenic jet boat transfer from Doctors Point to Shingle Creek, followed by another 13km cycle to the Roxburgh Dam. Here we enjoy lunch before continuing on the Clutha Gold cycle trail to Millers Flat (30km). This section features orchards as well as gold mining relics which makes for a very pleasant ride. At Millers Flat we load up our bikes, enjoy a cold drink at the local pub, then travel back to our accommodation in Clyde. Enjoy a celebratory meal together. **Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 53km**

Day 6 Clyde - Christchurch/Queenstown (Clyde - Alexandra River Trail)

This morning we finish the final piece of the Central Otago Trails puzzle, a lovely cycle is a 13km ride beneath the willow trees following the Clutha River from Clyde to Alexandra. Enjoy a final morning tea beside the mighty Clutha River. This is the end of the tour and from here you have the option of getting a shuttle bus back to Queenstown (arriving 2pm approx) or travelling in the PureTrails bus to Christchurch (arriving 5:30pm approx). Or you may wish to stay on in Central Otago and ride the 150km Otago Central Rail Trail. **Meals (B) | Cycle Distance: 13km**



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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 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 in Queenstown

If you need accommodation in the Queenstown area before and/or after your tour we recommend the following:

[Scenic Heartland Hotel & Scenic Suites](#)

27 Stanley Street, Queenstown | 03 442 4718 | www.scenichotels.co.nz
3 star hotel complex offering a variety of rooms and rates.

[Garden Court Suites & Apartments](#)

41 Frankton Road, Frankton | 03 442 9713 | www.gardencourt.co.nz
Well appointed modern motel complex.

[Shades of Arrowtown](#) (our accommodation for night 1 of the tour)

9 Merioneth Street, Arrowtown | 03 442 1613 | www.shadesofarrowtown.co.nz
Cottage style motel close to Arrowtown's main street

Accommodation on the tour

Our comfortable accommodation on this tour includes comfortable and quiet motels. 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.

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'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.

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 \$515 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.

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. There is a \$15 charge to take your own ebike on the Roxburgh Gorge Jet also.

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 and you.



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Car Storage

In Christchurch secure car storage is available at Superior Airport Parking. www.superiorairportparking.co.nz. In Queenstown Campervan's/Motorhomes can be left at the Arrowtown Holiday Park by prior arrangement.

Degree of difficulty & What to expect

The Central Otago Trails tour is a collection of cycle rides totalling 187km that we have put together that showcase the beautiful Central Otago region. This tour is a visual feast with mountains and pristine lakes everywhere you look, fantastic Autumn colours (during April), fun cycle trails, as well as great local food and wine.

The cycling is all on purpose built **gravel cycle trails**. The trails are a mix of grade 1 & 2. Days 4 & 5 are on the stunning Lake Dunstan Cycle Trail and Roxburgh Gorge Cycle Trail, which, due to the nature of being narrow gorges, features some well benched zig-zag climbs/descents with narrow trails and steep drop-offs. The riding is rated Grade 2. There is no vehicle access on either ride. 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 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 join the tour in Queenstown rather than Christchurch, the tour will meet you in Arrowtown at approximately 5pm on Day 1, at our accommodation at Shades of Arrowtown, cnr Buckingham/Merioneth Streets. Check in is available *from* 2pm.

You need to make your own way to Arrowtown. Supershuttle (www.supershuttle.co.nz) provide transfers, or the local bus service run regular and affordable buses between Queenstown, Frankton and Arrowtown. The blue #2 run from Arthur's Point to Arrowtown is the bus to catch from the Frankton bus shelter, outside of the airport terminal to Ramshaw Lane, Arrowtown. Uber is also available.

<https://www.orc.govt.nz/public-transport/queenstown-buses/queenstown-bus-timetables/2-arthurs-point-to-arrowtown>



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International Transfers Tip:

Conventional Banks have high fees when it comes to international transfers (hence our \$15 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:

- + direct transfer (NZ bank account holders only);
- + international transfer (subject to a \$15 funds clearance fee which covers the fee NZ banks charge to receive your payment);

Finish time and place

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

If you are finishing your tour in Queenstown we can organise a shuttle connection for you from Clyde at 12:30pm, arriving in Queenstown at 2pm approximately. 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 from \$60pp approx for this door to door (or airport) service. Bikes can be transported for an additional \$20.

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 10 - 20kms or so.

Health & fitness

You will be cycling 187km over 5 days so you should be reasonably fit and in good health. The **gravel trail** has a few moderate climbs so 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.

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.



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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.

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.

Laundry facilities

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

Luggage

Please limit yourself to 18kgs of luggage. 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.

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 generally a continental style breakfast, and lunches are taken either in cafes along the trail or as a trail-side picnic. 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 much of the area. 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.



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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).

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

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.

Tour Information and Safety Declaration Form

All tour participants (including non-riders) are required to complete a 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 from year to year so we require that a new form be completed for each tour you join.

Weather conditions

Central Otago and the Southern Lakes experiences big extremes of weather, with temperatures ranging from -10 to 38°C. The altitude of the trails range from 100 – 360 metres above sea level, and the region can be subject to strong winds. You could experience very hot or cold temperatures (including snow) at any time of the year.

Generally, you can expect the temperature to be around 15-30°C in Jan/Feb, and 10 - 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 tissue as it may not be provided in the public toilets along the trails

- 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



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