

Otago Rail Trail CLASSIC Trip Notes

150km of flat cycling on NZ's iconic rail trail which follows the former Otago Central Branch railway line through historic mining towns and farming communities of Central Otago, a 'timeless' land.



Tour Highlights

- + Cycle the 150km Otago 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
- + Explore the historic gold mining town of St Bathans
- + Visit Hayes Engineering Works

Tour Details

- + 5 days
- + Grade 1
- + 150km cycling [100% cycle trail]
- + Starts/Ends in Christchurch Queenstown or Dunedin

Tour Cost

Tour Price: from \$1,995
Deposit: \$400

What's included?

- + 4 nights twinshare en-suite accommodation
- + 4 evening meals; 3 lunches; 4 continental breakfasts
- + fruit, snacks & morning teas on the trail
- + side trip to St Bathans & Naseby
- + the services of a tour leader who provides vehicle support & information
- + all transport from/to Christchurch
- + Goods & Services Tax of 15%

Not included:

- + lunch on Days 1/5
- + single accommodation supplement (\$300)
- + wine; beer; espresso coffees
- + bike hire (standard \$200; e-bike \$500)
- + tour of Hayes Engineering Works
- + transfers from Queenstown/Dunedin to Clyde on Day 1 (from \$60 approx)*
- + transfers from Middlemarch to Dunedin/Clyde/Queenstown on Day 5 (from \$60/\$120 approx)*



Departure Dates

Refer to our website for current departure dates and tour availability

Grade 1



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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 to Clyde. Alternatively there is the option of meeting the tour in Clyde in the afternoon from Queenstown or Dunedin, which we can organise for you. In the late afternoon get used to your bike and the terrain with a short ride around the lovely village of Clyde. We stay in the charming historic precinct of Clyde.

Meals (D) | Cycle Distance: 0km



Day 2 Clyde - Wedderburn

Begin the Otago Central Rail Trail, cycling from Clyde to Lauder (47km). Highlights of today's ride include the wooden trestle Muttontown Viaduct, the Old Tucker Hill gold diggings, lunch in the historic Chatto Creek Tavern, views of the Dunstan Mountains and Raggedy Range, spotting brown trout in the Manuherikia River. In the afternoon we make a side trip in our bus to the historic gold-mining town of St Bathans, with a mandatory stop at the Vulcan Hotel!, on the way to our accommodation at the very comfortable and peaceful Wedderburn Cottages.

Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 47km



Day 3 Wedderburn

Bike from Lauder to Wedderburn (35km). Highlights of today's ride on the rail trail include the engineering marvel that is the Poolburn Gorge Viaduct and tunnels, and the vast wide open Ida Valley (made famous by the painter Grahame Sydney), the Idaburn dam (famous for its winter curling), a visit to Hayes Engineering Works, and the wee town of Wedderburn at the top of the rail trail. We stay a second night in the cosy Wedderburn Cottages on a working farm with stunning views of the Hawkdun and Kakanui Ranges. Eat out at the Wedderburn Tavern.

Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 35km



Day 4 Wedderburn – Waipiata

Cycle from Wedderburn to Hyde (46km). Highlights of today's ride include crossing the Maniototo Plains, visiting the rural art deco town of Ranfurly, following the Taieri River as it snakes around the Rock and Pillar Range, crossing the unaltered stone bridge over Cap Burn, the 32m high Price's Creek Viaduct and 152m long tunnel, to Hyde. We travel a short distance back to Waipiata and enjoy a night of warm southern hospitality at our country accommodation.

Meals (B/L/D) | Cycle Distance: 46km



Day 5 Waipiata - Christchurch/Dunedin/Queenstown

Bike from Hyde to Middlemarch (27km) Highlights of the final days ride include views of the Rock and Pillar and Taieri Ranges, the Hyde Railway Disaster memorial, and dropping down into the Strath Taieri Plain to Middlemarch. We make our way back to Christchurch, arriving at around 6pm. Alternatively opt to end your journey in Dunedin (3.30pm), Clyde (4:30pm) or Queenstown (6.30pm) with shuttle transfers.

Meals (B) | Cycle Distance: 27km



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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 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 \$200 for the 5 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 5 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 and you.

Car Storage

In Christchurch secure car storage is available at Superior Airport Parking. www.superiorairportparking.co.nz. In Clyde or Middlemarch, car storage is available from Trail Journeys (www.trailjourneys.co.nz) from \$10 per day approx. Car storage in both Christchurch and Clyde needs to be booked in advance. We can organise a shuttle to get you from one end of the trail to another to fit in with your tour which costs approximately \$55 per person + \$20 per bike (if you are bringing your own bike).

Degree of difficulty & What to expect

The Otago Rail trail rates as among the easiest of all the cycle trails in New Zealand and is a good trail to start with if you are new to cycling. The 150km cycle trail is a disused railway corridor originally built for steam trains so the gradient is a very gentle incline. The surface of the trail is **hard packed gravel** for its entire length. The



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trail passes through many small communities, some dating back to the 1860s, providing lots of opportunities to explore the history of the area. Many of the 4th/5th generation farming families still live locally and enjoy conversing with those cycling the trail.

The trail is rated easy (Grade 1) to negotiate with no steep hills or obstacles. Refer to our website for more information on our Difficulty Gratings.

www.puretrailsnewzealand.co.nz/cycling-nz-information/level-of-difficulty

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 or Clyde or Dunedin)

For those flying into Queenstown or Dunedin, we can organise a door to door shuttle connection to Clyde for you. 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 (from \$60 pp) and bikes can be transported for \$20 per bike.

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.

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);

Finishing your tour in Christchurch

If you are finishing your tour in Christchurch, you are likely to be back in the city by 6pm on Day 5. Your guide can drop you off at any of the accommodation locations on page 4. If you are flying out of Christchurch on Day 5, do not book flights that require check in before 6.30pm.

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



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Finishing your tour in Dunedin, Clyde or Queenstown

If you are finishing your tour in Dunedin, Clyde or Queenstown we can organise a door to door shuttle connection for you. 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 \$55 pp approx to Clyde or Dunedin and from \$115 pp approx to Queenstown. Bikes can be transported for \$20 per bike.

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 150km of the Central Otago Rail Trail over 3½ 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 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 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 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

Central Otago and particularly the Maniototo often experience drought conditions and water shortages and, as such, there are no 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 5 days.

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.



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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 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.

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. 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 along the Otago Rail Trail. 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 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 has one of the greatest extremes of weather variation in New Zealand, with temperatures ranging from -10 to 38°C. The altitude of the rail trail 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.



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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.

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).

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 tissue as it is not provided in the public toilets along the trail
 - Torch/flashlight for the tunnels on the trail (a cellphone torch is not sufficient)

- 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

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



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