

Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer

Departures between 14 January - 15 April 2025

13 days - Ex Christchurch

TOUR OVERVIEW

Sir Edmund Hillary epitomised the New Zealand spirit of adventure and he is the inspiration for this unique tour.

Learn more about his achievements and humanitarian efforts as you explore the South Island and experience the postcard perfect vistas and dramatic alpine scenery that this part of the world is renowned for.

Your guided journey begins in The Garden City, Christchurch, where you board one of the world's great train journeys, The TranzAlpine and traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps via Arthur's Pass. Luxury coaches await in Greymouth to escort you to the glacial beauty of Franz Josef. We then track inland to experience the wonders of Queenstown, Te Anau and Milford Sound. Cruise on the steamship TSS Earnslaw and ride the iconic steam train, The Kingston Flyer, the icing on the cake for railfans and historians.

Onward to Dunedin where we enjoy another iconic rail journey with Dunedin Railways through the remote and rugged landscape of the world-famous Taieri Gorge, an epic rail journey over white water rapids, towering viaducts and historic tunnels. Our departure from Dunedin continues with Dunedin Railways along the coastal route to Oamaru, then detours inland to "mountain country", staying in Aoraki Mount Cook and the prestigious Hermitage Hotel and Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, where you will banquet after a keynote address from a Hillary family member.

Back to Christchurch to join The Coastal Pacific Scenic Train, one of the most picturesque journeys on New Zealand's railways. Throughout this scenic experience, you will meander along the Pacific coast across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breath-taking beauty to Kaikoura. From Kaikoura through to Marlborough, saving the best for last, the grand finale of epic proportions, sees you hauled under a full head of steam by the glorious Marlborough Flyer. This historic WW1 memorial steam locomotive Ab608 Passchendaele, named in honour of our fallen soldiers at The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. This is a locomotive fit for kings, having hauled royal trains on two previous royal visits in the early 1900's. A journey to end all journeys from a bygone era. On the final day, journey via ferry from Picton through Queen Charlotte Sound and cruise across the Cook Strait to end in Wellington.

An epic 13-day journey of a lifetime!



13-DAY TOUR DEPARTING CHRISTCHURCH



TOUR INCLUSIONS

Attractions that are included:

- TranzAlpine Rail Journey
- Walter Peak Homestead
- Cruise Lake Wakatipu on the TSS Earnslaw
- Arrowtown Lakes District Museum
- Kingston Flyer Historic Train Excursion
- Milford Sound Day Trip & Cruise
- Takahe Sanctuary
- Croydon Aviation Museum
- Waimea Plains Railway (Rogers K92)
- Taieri Gorge Train Trip
- Dunedin Railways Train Journey to Oamaru
- Guest speaker from the Hillary family
- Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at Aoraki Mt Cook
- International Antarctic Centre or Private Tram Trip
- Coastal Pacific Scenic Train journey
- Marlborough Flyer Steam Train journey
- Cruise on the Interislander Ferry

A fleet of luxury coaches will escort the train throughout the journey, providing seamless transfers to your accommodation and excursions.

You will be accompanied by experienced Sir Edmund Hillary Tour Leaders who are there to guide and assist you throughout your journey.

Meal inclusions:

- 12 cooked breakfasts
- 9 sumptuous dinners
- Gourmet BBQ lunch at Walter Peak Homestead
- 7 picnic lunches (other lunches on your own)

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK ONLINE](#)



Heritage rail highlights:

A journey between Kingston & Fairlight on the iconic Kingston Flyer steam train will be the icing on the cake for all rail fans. From Christchurch to Kaikoura, your rail journey continues on The Coastal Pacific Scenic train, one of the most picturesque journeys on New Zealand's railways.

From Kaikoura to Marlborough, you will be hauled under a full head of steam by the historic WW1 memorial steam locomotive Ab608 Passchendaele, named in honour of our fallen soldiers at The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- Domestic flights/travel to/from Christchurch, (*arrangements can be made for you at an additional cost*)
- Travel insurance
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Beverages during included meals, unless specified
- Personal expenses
- A 1.5% surcharge if you wish to pay by Visa or Mastercard, Amex 3%.
- Please note a Calder & Lawson Tour manager will not be travelling with the tour as you will be well looked after by the other tour leaders on the journey.

Please ask us about optional extra excursions that are available to be booked pre tour.



IS THIS TOUR FOR ME

This is a comprehensive tour of the South Island and will delight rail enthusiasts with the opportunities to ride on iconic steam hauled trains.

For your own enjoyment and safety during the tour, please note that a reasonable level of fitness and mobility is required as there will be the need to climb and descend stairs (on coaches, excursions and at hotels), carry your own bag and walk some distances on uneven ground.

DAILY ITINERARY

** There is an optional pre-tour registration at the Sudima Airport Hotel to meet your fellow explorers and tour guides from 2:30pm – 5:00pm on evening before your tour starts.

Tuesday 14 January 2025 Christchurch - Franz Josef

Overnight:
Scenic Hotel Franz Josef
D

Your journey begins at Christchurch Railway Station, where the iconic TranzAlpine awaits. Often regarded to be one of the world's great train journeys for the scenery through which it passes. The journey is 223 kilometres one-way, taking almost five hours. You will see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains and Southern Alps, and see miles of native beech forest. Luxury coaches await in Greymouth to transport you to your hotel in the ruggedly beautiful Franz Josef.

Wednesday 15 January Franz Josef - Queenstown

Overnight:
Novotel Lakeside Hotel
B/PL

Wake up to enjoy the option for a helicopter tour of the Franz Josef glacier. Leaving Franz Josef, you travel along the West Coast through the Haast Pass, journeying through native beech forest and over the Southern Alps. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and snow-capped mountains. Continuing through Makarora on the border of Mount Aspiring World Heritage Park, you pass by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Wanaka, Lake Hawea and Lake Dunstan. The adventure playground of Queenstown then awaits! Cap off a special day as you take in The Remarkables Mountain Range and the view of Lake Wakatipu from the hotel.

Thursday 16 January Queenstown

Overnight:
Novotel Lakeside Hotel
B/PL

Wake up to join a lake cruise on board the historic TSS Earnslaw, the 1912 Edwardian steamboat, which takes you across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet BBQ lunch. Enjoy an afternoon visit to the historic and picturesque goldmining town, Arrowtown, with a visit to the Lakes District Museum.

Friday 17 January Queenstown - Te Anau

Overnight:
Distinction Hotel Luxmore
B/PL/D

Departing Queenstown, continue to the village of Kingston which is nestled on southernmost end of Lake Wakatipu. Here, the iconic Kingston Flyer Steam Train awaits to take you on a memorable journey between Kingston & Fairlight. Then, you enter the Fiordland National Park district, continuing to traverse the Southern Scenic Route, your journey calls in to visit the Takahe Bird Sanctuary. Takahe are the stars of the show and meeting these prehistoric-looking characters is a 'must do' for Fiordland visitors. The sanctuary is a large part of the success of the Takahe Recovery Programme. You will spend a couple of awe-inspiring days experiencing the wonders of Te Anau and Milford Sound.

Saturday 18 January Te Anau - Milford Sound - Te Anau

Overnight:
Distinction Hotel Luxmore
B/PL/D

Traveling along the Milford Road (between Te Anau and Milford) is one of the finest alpine drives in the world. The scenery is exceptional, ranging from broad grassy flats, dense rainforest and towering mountains through to glacial lakes and alpine herb fields. A day tour to Milford Sound offers some of the most spectacular natural scenery to be viewed anywhere in the world. Board the coach and travel through stunning scenery along the Milford Road and into Fiordland, where your cruise boat awaits you. The tour includes a cruise around the fiord so you can experience its wonders up close and see landmarks like Mitre Peak and amazing wildlife, such as dolphins and seals. Cruise the inner most reaches of Milford Sound to the open Tasman Sea and back. A one-day itinerary is enough to see all the beautiful views along the way, take a scenic cruise around the fiord, and get back to Te Anau in time for dinner.

Sunday 19 January Te Anau - Dunedin

Overnight:
Distinction Hotel Dunedin
B/PL/D

Departing Te Anau for Dunedin, via Mandeville and the Croydon Aviation Museum and Waimea Plains Railway – where we “fire-up” the Rogers K92 Steam Locomotive (the original Kingston Flyer). During this luxury coach journey, we take in the unmatched pristine beauty and rugged countryside that the Southland region is renowned for

DAILY ITINERARY

Monday 20 January

Dunedin

Overnight:

Distinction Hotel Dunedin

B

In the morning, we explore the remote Taieri Gorge by Dunedin Rail over river gorges, weaving our way through a myriad of historic tunnels and guide you to the historic Wingatui Viaduct, a marvel of 1880s construction that remains the largest wrought iron structure in New Zealand. Then, there is the option to discover Larnach Castle, which is situated on the picturesque Otago Peninsula - Larnach Castle is one of New Zealand's premier visitor attractions. Lovingly restored by the Barker Family, the Castle and surrounding grounds are at the heart of the Dunedin visitor experience. Arrive in time for refreshing high tea in the Ballroom Café followed by a guided garden tour.

Tuesday 21 January

Dunedin - Aoraki/Mt Cook

Overnight:

Hermitage Hotel

B/PL/D

Departing from Dunedin by rail, you continue to hug the coast towards Oamaru. You then detour inland by luxury coach via Omarama and Pukaki towards the spectacular Aoraki / Mt Cook. Here, you will find the home of the tallest mountain in New Zealand, which helped Sir Edmund Hillary to develop his climbing skills in preparation for the conquest of Mt Everest. Recognised as part of the Te Wahipounamu UNESCO World Heritage Area, the National Park is a breath-taking environment of glaciers, terminal lakes, turbulent rivers and Australasia's tallest peak, the mighty Aoraki / Mt Cook soaring above at 3,724 metres. There is the option after dinner to enjoy star-gazing at the Planetarium, digitally immersed in what has been voted the world's largest "International Dark Sky Reserve".

Wednesday 22 January

Aoraki/Mt Cook

Overnight:

Hermitage Hotel

B/D

Enjoy a leisurely morning and then a visit to the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, which is a tribute to New Zealand's global icon as well as discovering New Zealand's colourful transport, climbing and hotel history. Followed by a scenic drive through the National Park surrounded by the silent splendour of the Southern Alps. Morning optional activities include a glacier helicopter tour or a scenic flight with expert pilots navigating their way over a glacial lake, passing soaring mountain tops over NZ's longest glacier - the 600 metre thick, Tasman Glacier. Dinner that evening is with a guest speaker from the Hillary family. Optional Planetarium Show available after.

Thursday 23 January

Aoraki/Mt Cook - Christchurch

Overnight:

Distinction Hotel Christchurch

B/PL/D

A morning departure from the hotel leaving Aoraki Mt Cook by coach, we journey back to the coast via Tekapo, Geraldine and Rakaia on the way to Christchurch. On arrival in Christchurch, enjoy a private tram journey around the city or explore modern day Antarctica at the International Antarctic Centre and experience a taste of this unique and breathtaking continent – just like the explorers before you .

Friday 24 January

Christchurch - Kaikoura

Overnight:

Sudima Hotel

B/D

Departing Christchurch on the Coastal Pacific Scenic Train, our destination is Kaikoura, home of resident whales, where the guardians of the seas – the mountains of the Southern Alps – rise majestically from the deep trenches of the Pacific Ocean. Several different species of whale can be seen off the coast of Kaikoura at different times of the year, and most of the time, the huge resident Sperm Whales can be sighted. The ocean trench just off the coast means sperm whales are often seen close to shore.

Saturday 25 January

Kaikoura - Marlborough

Overnight:

Scenic Hotel Blenheim (or similar)

Marlborough

B/PL/D

This morning we introduce you to a true "rockstar of rail" and a grand finale of epic proportions, as the train is then hauled under a full head of steam by the glorious Marlborough Flyer. It is "all aboard" and we continue to take in the spectacular coastal journey as we depart Kaikoura. Onwards north via the Dashwood Pass and Awatere Valley to Marlborough, the famous wine region boasting over 100 vineyards. This historic WW1 memorial steam locomotive Ab608 Passchendaele, named in honour of our fallen soldiers at The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. Having hauled royal trains on two previous royal visits in the early 1900's, this is a journey fit for a king.

Sunday 26 January

Marlborough - Wellington

B

On the final day of the tour, one of the most picturesque ferry crossings in the world awaits. We weave our way through the Queen Charlotte Sound and cruise across the Cook Strait to the harbour city of Wellington. Tour ends in Wellington. There is the option for post-tour accommodation at the James Cook Grand Chancellor. Tour ends in Wellington.

TOUR PRICE

13 day tour departing from Christchurch

Share twin per person NZD \$7,995

Single supplement NZD \$1,495

HOW TO SECURE YOUR PLACE ON THIS TOUR

A deposit of \$2,000 is required to secure your place on the tour.

[Click here](#) to complete the online registration form and pay the \$2,000 deposit.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Can be found on the website www.calderandlawsonstours.co.nz, on the back of the paper registration form or on the summary page when you complete an online registration. If you wish to pay by credit card, a surcharge of 1.5% will be charged.

VARIATIONS This itinerary is Version 1 dated 30/03/24 and is subject to change. Exchange rate fluctuations may result in a change to the tour price.



TERMS & CONDITIONS - SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER:

- The 'Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer' Tour is organised by Pounamu Tourism Group Limited (PTG) in partnership with Steam Incorporated. PTG is a New Zealand owned and registered company.
- PTG accept no responsibility for variations to any arrival or departure. However, every attempt will be made to keep passengers fully informed of any alterations to the schedule.
- All passengers must arrive within a reasonable time before the scheduled time for departure of the train.
- Departure of the train will not be delayed because of the late arrival of passengers.
- PTG does not guarantee the availability of any seat or any specific area within a carriage to any passenger.
- PTG reserve the right to substitute motive power or rolling stock if operational needs require it.
- Ticket prices are subject to change.

SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER TOUR CANCELLATION POLICY:

- In the event the passenger cancels a tour, the following fees apply prior to departure:
- 60 days or more prior to departure, your \$2,000 deposit is non-refundable.
- Between 30 and 59 days prior to departure, 50% of the tour package price;
- Less than 30 days prior to departure, 100% of the tour package price.
- In the event that Pounamu Tourism Group cancels the tour, 100% refund will apply.
- No refunds will be given in the event of breakdown or delay after joining the train.



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