
THE SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER

“Adventure for the sake of a dream, for the pleasure of searching”

- Sir Edmund Hillary

SOUTH ISLAND RAIL & COACH TOUR

Departing Wellington 26 March - 7 April 2022

13 Day Tour



Inspired by one of the greatest and most iconic adventurers of our time, The Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer invites you on an epic journey by rail and luxury coach throughout the majestic South Island of Aotearoa.



THE SIR EDMUND HILLARY EXPLORER

Sir Edmund Hillary epitomised the New Zealand spirit of adventure and he is our inspiration when planning your experience of a lifetime.

We pay homage to Sir Edmund Hillary and learn more about his achievements and humanitarian efforts as we explore the South Island of New Zealand and experience the postcard perfect vistas and dramatic alpine scenery that this part of the world is renowned for. You will spend the first week travelling the entire length of the South Island by heritage rail, in the comfort of vintage carriages, staying in Blenheim, Kaikoura, Christchurch, Aoraki/Mount Cook (detour inland by coach) & Dunedin.

Heritage rail highlights include: from Marlborough to Kaikoura, 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. South of Kaikoura, your rail journey continues with two magnificent heritage 1950's DA locomotives in an impressive & powerful double-header formation.

Further in the tour, a return journey between Kingston & Fairlight on the iconic Kingston Flyer steam train will be the icing on the cake for our railfans.

Once we reach Invercargill at the bottom of the mainland, we begin the traverse inland on luxury coaches to experience the wonders of Te Anau, Milford Sound, Queenstown and Franz Josef, before the home stretch to Christchurch on the iconic TranzAlpine via Arthur's Pass.

TOUR OPTIONS

TOUR OPTION 1:

13-DAY TOUR Departing Wellington
from 26 March – 7 April 2022

TOUR OPTION 2:

12-DAY TOUR Departing Blenheim
from 27 March – 7 April 2022

TOUR OPTION 3:

13-DAY TOUR Departing Christchurch
from 28 March – 9 April 2022

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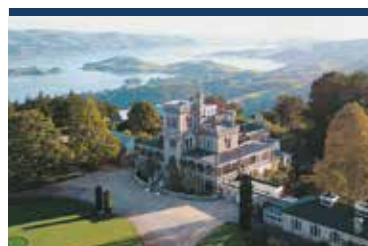
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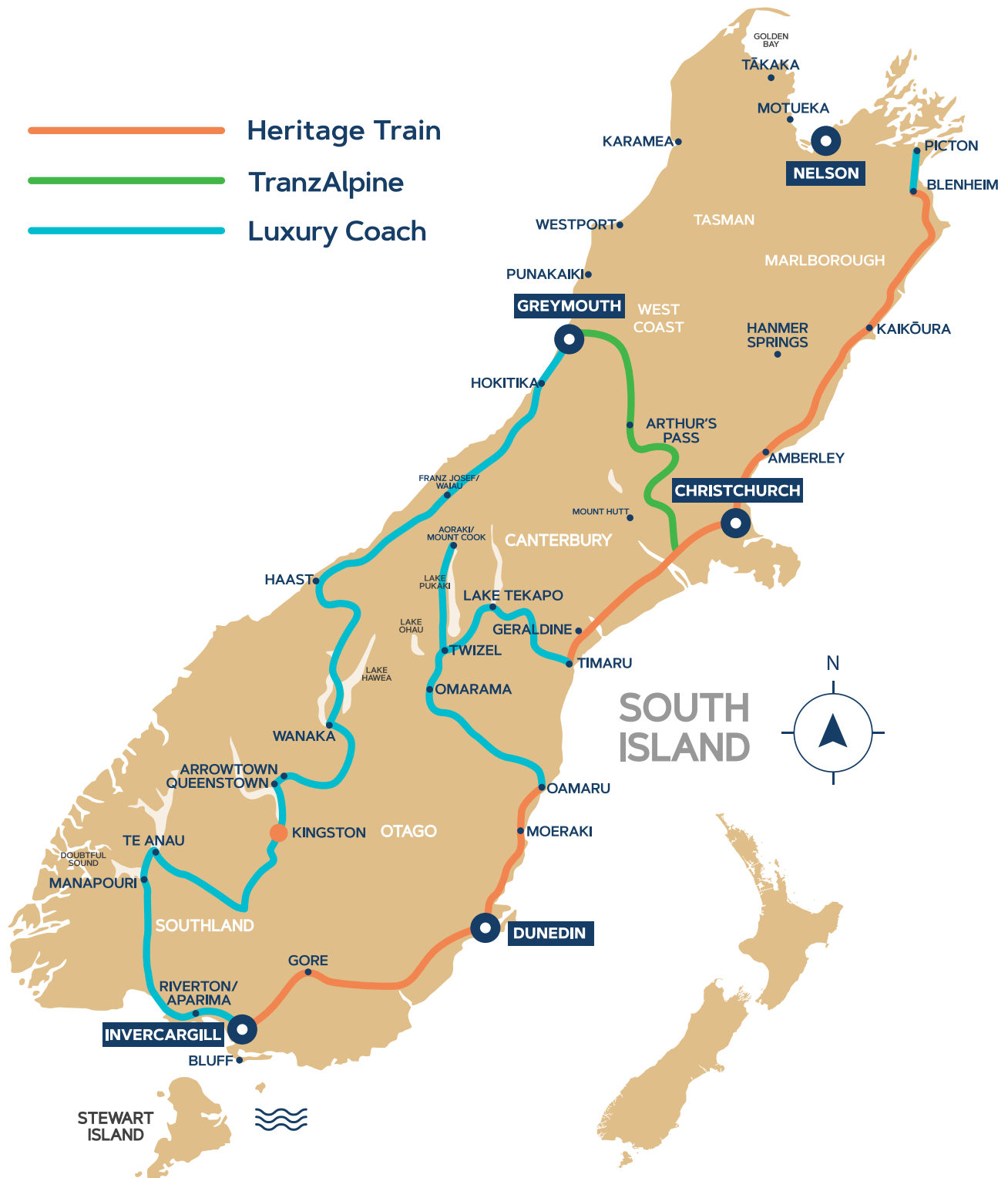
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13-DAY TOUR DEPARTING WELLINGTON

26 MARCH - 7 APRIL 2022



13-DAY TOUR DEPARTING WELLINGTON

26 MARCH - 7 APRIL 2022

Your journey begins in the harbour city of Wellington, followed by one of the most scenic picturesque ferry crossings in the world across the Cook Strait, then weaving our way through Queen Charlotte Sound to the port town of Picton. First overnight stop is in the famous Marlborough wine region boasting over 100 vineyards, then onwards to spectacular Kaikoura, home of resident whales where the great mountains of the Southern Alps rise from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, then on towards Christchurch by rail.

The tour is escorted by a fleet of luxury coaches that provide seamless transfers from the train to your accommodation each evening.

Departing from Christchurch to Timaru by rail, luxury coaches then provide the link inland to Aoraki/Mt Cook, home of the tallest mountain in New Zealand - a familiar playground of Sir Edmund Hillary where he developed his climbing skills in preparation for the ascent of Mt Everest. Highlights include dinner with celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary, and a visit to Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre.

Journeying back to the coast to meet the train in Oamaru and continue south by rail to Dunedin where we explore places of interest, such as a decadent high tea at Larnach Castle or the option to visit the Albatross Colony and Fort Taiaroa. Continuing to the end of the main rail trunk line in Invercargill, then traversing the Southern Scenic Route inland by coach to the Fiordland National Park district, where we spend a couple of awe-inspiring days experiencing the wonders of Te Anau and Milford Sound.

A detour to ride the iconic Kingston Flyer between Kingston & Fairlight is a must and then the adventure playground of Queenstown awaits. Evening sunset drinks cap off a special day as we take in The Remarkables Mountains and the view of Lake Wakatipu below.

Queenstown highlights include the historic and picturesque goldmining town, Arrowtown, on the banks of the Arrow River, taking in the Lakes District Museum. Plus the lake cruise on board the historic TSS Earnslaw, the 1912 Edwardian steamboat, which takes us across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for gourmet BBQ lunch.

Leaving Queenstown, we pass by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Dunstan, Lake Wanaka, and Lake Hawea. Travel through the Haast Pass, journeying through native beech forest and over the Southern Alps, before emerging on the West Coast. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and snow-capped mountains.

Our last night is spent at Franz Josef where options are available for helicopter tours of the glacier. All guests are encouraged to wind down and enjoy some well-deserved pampering at the Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools.

The final day and the TransAlpine awaits to return you to your ultimate destination of Christchurch. 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, cross the southern alps, view large tracts of native beech forest, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri river and traverse the majestic Canterbury Plains – the journey of a lifetime.

DAY	DATE	ITINERARY	HOTEL	MODE
Pre Tour	Fri 25 March	Pre-tour registration at hotel from 2:30pm – 5:30pm (optional)	James Cook Grand Chancellor (optional)	
1	Sat 26 March	WELLINGTON - PICTON - BLENHEIM Registration at Wellington Ferry Terminal Morning Interislander ferry to Picton Excursion to Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre (optional) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Dinner (lunch on your own)	Scenic Hotel & Chateau Marlborough	Ferry / Coach
2	Sun 27 March	BLENHEIM - KEKERENGU - KAIKOURA Morning tea at The Wine Station Picnic lunch at Kekerengu "The Store" Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Morning tea, Picnic lunch & Dinner	The White Morph Hotel and equivalent	Steam Train
3	Mon 28 March	KAIKOURA - CHRISTCHURCH Whale watching cruise, scenic flights (optional) Charter Tram Ride Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Novotel Cathedral Square	Diesel Loco
4	Tue 29 March	CHRISTCHURCH - TIMARU - AORAKI/MT COOK Christchurch Antarctic Centre Train to Timaru & Coach to Mt Cook Stargazing in Planetarium after dinner (optional) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Hermitage Hotel	Diesel Loco / Coach
5	Wed 30 March	AORAKI/MT COOK Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre & scenic drive Helicopter tour, scenic flight (optional) Dinner with celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Dinner (lunch on your own)	Hermitage Hotel	Coach
6	Thur 31 March	AORAKI/MT COOK - OAMARU - DUNEDIN Coach to Oamaru & Train to Dunedin Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Scenic Hotel Southern Cross	Coach / Diesel Loco
7	Fri 1 April	DUNEDIN Larnach Castle morning tea Albatross & Fort Tairaroa Tour (optional) Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Morning tea (dinner on your own)	Scenic Hotel Southern Cross	Coach
8	Sat 2 April	DUNEDIN - INVERCARGILL - TE ANAU Train to Invercargill & Coach to Te Anau Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Picnic lunch & Dinner	Distinction Hotel Luxmore	Diesel Loco / Coach
9	Sun 3 April	TE ANAU - MILFORD SOUND - TE ANAU Coach along Eglinton Valley to Milford Sound via Homer Tunnel Milford Sound Cruise Meal Inclusions - Breakfast, Lunch on cruise & Dinner	Distinction Hotel Luxmore	Coach / Cruise
10	Mon 4 April	TE ANAU - QUEENSTOWN Takahe bird sanctuary Kingston Flyer Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Dinner (lunch on your own)	Novotel Lakefront Hotel	Coach / Steam Train
11	Tue 5 April	QUEENSTOWN Arrowtown - Lakes District Museum TSS Earnslaw & Walter Peak Homestead Gourmet BBQ Lunch Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Lunch (dinner on your own)	Novotel Lakefront Hotel	Coach / Steam Ship
12	Wed 6 April	QUEENSTOWN - FRANZ JOSEF Haast Pass canyon lookout Franz Josef Hotpools Meal Inclusions - Breakfast & Dinner (lunch on your own)	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef	Coach
13	Thur 7 April	FRANZ JOSEF - ARTHUR'S PASS - CHRISTCHURCH Helicopter glacier tour (optional extra) TranzAlpine Tour ends Meal Inclusions - Breakfast	Novotel Cathedral Square (Optional)	TranzAlpine

Please note that this Itinerary is subject to change

DAY 1 Saturday 26th March 2022

Wellington – Picton – Blenheim (Marlborough)

There is an optional pre-tour Registration at the James Cook Chancellor Hotel to meet your fellow explorers and tour guides from 2:30pm – 5:30pm on 25th March.

Your journey begins in the harbour city of Wellington. The tour commences with one of the most picturesque ferry crossings in the world as we cruise across the Cook Strait, then weave our way through Queen Charlotte Sound to the port town of Picton. Travelling by coach to Blenheim, there is the option to visit Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre in the afternoon.

Passengers will stay at Scenic Hotel and Chateau Marlborough, both are modern and stylish properties located in the heart of Marlborough's wine country town of Blenheim.



DAY 2 Sunday 27th March 2022

Blenheim – Kekerengu – Kaikoura

Arrive at Blenheim Station for a complimentary morning tea and then we introduce you to the historic WW1 memorial steam locomotive Ab608 Passchendaele, (named in honour of our fallen soldiers at The Battle of Passchendaele in 1917). The steam train will gently roll into Blenheim Station and it is “all aboard” and onward South via the Dashwood Pass and Awatere Valley. We steam ahead for Kekerengu where we disembark for lunch overlooking the Pacific Ocean at “The Store”. After taking on water for the steam train we pull away for the spectacular coastal journey to Kaikoura.

Passengers will stay at The White Morph Hotel (or equivalent), taking in spectacular views of the Kaikoura Esplanade.



Kaikoura – Christchurch

“Where the mountains meet the sea”

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. There will be optional excursions for whale, dolphin and seal watching (by boat or plane). We depart Kaikoura for Christchurch hauled by two heritage 1950's DA locomotives - in dramatic double-header formation - displaying in their impressive racing colours. After arrival in Christchurch, be collected at your hotel by a privately chartered Tram for a historic tram journey around the city before dinner.

Passengers will stay at the centrally located Novotel Cathedral Square.



Christchurch – Aoraki/Mt Cook

A morning visit to explore modern day Antarctica at the International Antarctic Centre and experience a taste of this unique and breath-taking continent - just like the explorers before you. After departing from Christchurch by train to Oamaru, luxury coaches then provide the link inland to Aoraki/Mt Cook, the tallest mountain in New Zealand, which helped Sir Edmund Hillary to develop his climbing skills in preparation for the conquest of 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".

Passengers will stay at the iconic Hermitage Hotel with majestic mountain views.





DAY 5 Wednesday 30th March 2022

Aoraki / Mt Cook

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.

Afternoon 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 celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary.

Passengers will stay at the iconic Hermitage Hotel with majestic mountain views.



DAY 6 Thursday 31st March 2022

Aoraki / Mt Cook – Dunedin

Departing from Aoraki / Mt Cook, we journey back to the coastal route via Omarama and Pukaki to meet the train in Oamaru and continue south by rail to Dunedin.

Passengers will stay at Scenic Hotel Southern Cross which is Dunedin's most established hotel, nestled in the heart of the city.



Dunedin

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. In the afternoon, there is the option to explore the 'hidden' underground Fort Taiaroa - the fort was established over 100 years ago to counter the threat of invasion from Tsarist Russia and is located underneath the Albatross colony. This is the only mainland breeding colony of Royal Albatross in the world.

Passengers will stay at Scenic Hotel Southern Cross which is Dunedin's most established hotel, nestled in the heart of the city.



Dunedin – Te Anau

We bid farewell to Dunedin by train and head towards the southern-most point of the main trunk line. We initially hug the coast, the train winds its way inland towards the town of Gore, and then southwards to Invercargill. Luxury coaches provide the link inland, traversing the Southern Scenic Route from Invercargill to the Fiordland National Park district, where we spend a couple of awe-inspiring days experiencing the wonders of Te Anau and Milford Sound.

Passengers stay at Distinction Hotel Luxmore in Te Anau.

DAY 9

Sunday 3rd April 2022

Te Anau – Milford Sound – Te Anau

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.

Passengers stay at Distinction Hotel Luxmore.



DAY 10

Monday 4th April 2022

Te Anau – Kingston – Queenstown

Wake up to enjoy a visit to 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. Continuing to the village of Kingston nestled on southernmost end of Lake Wakatipu, is the iconic Kingston Flyer Steam Train, taking you on a memorable journey between Kingston & Fairlight. The adventure playground of Queenstown then awaits. Cap off a special day as we take in The Remarkables Mountain Range and lake views from the hotel.

Passengers will stay in the Novotel Lakeside Hotel in Queenstown, centrally located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu.





DAY 11 Tuesday 5th April 2022

Queenstown

Wake up to join a lake cruise on board the historic TSS Earnslaw, the 1912 Edwardian steamboat, which takes us 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.

Passengers will stay in the Novotel Lakeside Hotel in Queenstown, centrally located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu.



DAY 12 Wednesday 6th April 2022

Queenstown – Franz Josef

Leaving Queenstown, we pass by the crystal-clear waters of Lake Dunstan, Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea. Continuing through Makaroa on the boarder of Mount Apsiring World Heritage Park, we will travel through the Haast Pass, journeying through native beech forest and over the Southern Alps, before emerging on the West Coast. This remote area has a ruggedly beautiful landscape of vast rainforests, gushing waterfalls and snow-capped mountains. Our last night is spent at Franz Josef and all guests are encouraged to wind down and enjoy some well-deserved pampering at the Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools.

Passengers stay at the Scenic Hotel in Franz Josef, located on the edge of the Westland World Heritage Park.

DAY 13 Thursday 7th April 2022

Franz Josef – Arthur's Pass – Christchurch

The final day and before departing Franz Josef - options are available for helicopter tours of the glacier. Then, the 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 in one direction, taking almost five hours. Along this journey 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 - the journey of a lifetime.

Tour ends in Christchurch.

INCLUSIONS: For your convenience the following has all been included in your tour price.

ACCOMMODATION

We have selected minimum 4-star standard accommodation for Sir Edmund Hillary Explorer Tour in order to ensure the comfort and quality of your experience for this journey of a lifetime.

LUXURY COACHES & TOUR OPTIONS

The 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 Tour Leaders who are there to guide and assist you throughout your journey.

PREPAID ATTRACTIONS (INCLUDED)

- Cruise on the Interislander Ferry
- Morning Tea at The Wine Station, Blenheim
- Visit to The Store, Kekerengu
- Private Tram Charter, Christchurch
- International Antarctic Centre
- Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at Aoraki/Mt Cook
- Celebrity guest speaker, Peter Hillary
- High Tea & Garden Tour at Larnach Castle
- Takahe Sanctuary
- Milford Sound Day Trip & Cruise
- Arrowtown Lakes District Museum
- Kingston Flyer ride
- Cruise Lake Wakatipu on the TSS Earnslaw
- Walter Peak Homestead
- Franz Josef Hot Pools
- TranzAlpine Rail Journey

INCLUSIONS - MEALS

- 12 cooked breakfasts
- 10 sumptuous dinners
- Morning Tea at The Wine Station

- High Tea at Larnach Castle
- Gourmet BBQ lunch at Walter Peak Homestead
- Other included lunches: Kekerengu, Kaikoura, Christchurch, Oamaru, Invercargill, Milford Sounds (other lunches on your own)

EXCLUSIONS:

Flights to and from your points of arrival/departure are not included. Pre and post tour accommodation is optional and also not included.

PLEASE NOTE:

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.

13-DAY TOUR FROM WELLINGTON

Per Person Sharing \$6,950

Single Supplement \$995

- Package price includes 2x complimentary beverage vouchers to be enjoyed on board each heritage train day

BOOKINGS

A 10% deposit is required to secure a booking, 40% in October 2021 and the balance in February 2022.

For all bookings and for further information:

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