

5-DAY AUTUMN ITINERARY



 **Wanaka Queenstown**
NEW ZEALAND

WHAT YOUR CLIENTS CAN EXPECT IN AUTUMN

The autumn months are **March to May**, with temperatures typically sitting between **5°C and 20°C**.

Queenstown and Wānaka come alive with vivid red, gold and orange foliage across lakesides, rivers and historic streets, creating one of the most scenic times to explore. Guests can enjoy gentle walks, heritage experiences, winery visits and relaxed outdoor dining framed by seasonal colour.

WHAT TO PACK

- Light layers for changing temperatures
- A warm jacket or mid-layer for cooler mornings and evenings
- Comfortable walking shoes

AUTUMN TRADE INSIGHTS

- Autumn colours are a key seasonal draw, particularly around Arrowtown, and a popular inclusion for visitors
- Shoulder-season timing supports flexible itinerary planning across Queenstown and Wānaka
- Shoulder-season pricing offers strong value across accommodation, activities and dining
- Regular flight schedules continue through autumn, though with fewer services than peak summer and winter
- Harvest season enhances cellar-door experiences, vineyard dining and wine tours
- Mild daytime temperatures suit comfortable walking, biking and heritage exploration
- Suitable for couples, food-and-wine travellers and small groups seeking relaxed, varied outdoor days

DAY 1: AUTUMN HUES AND HERITAGE

Autumn in Queenstown and Wānaka brings vivid bursts of red, gold and orange across the region, creating a striking backdrop for relaxed exploration. Arrowtown is the focal point for these colours, known worldwide for its historic goldmining main street, tree-lined avenues and beautifully preserved heritage buildings. Clients can browse boutique shops and museums or visit the restored Chinese Settlement, a Tohu Whenua heritage site of significance, sharing stories of early miners.

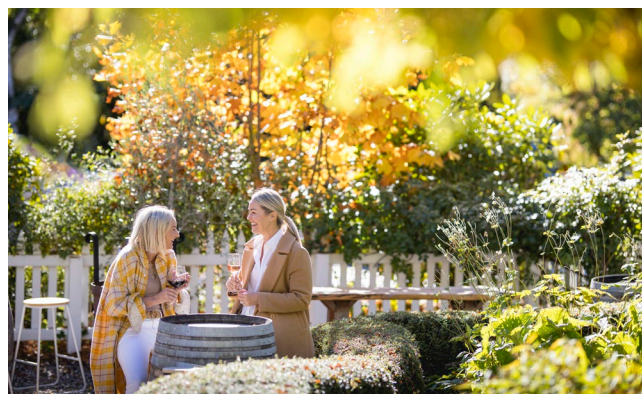
Across both towns, autumn lends itself to slow-paced cultural discovery, with galleries, artisan stores and short interpretive walks offering insight into local history. The Cardrona Valley adds a further layer of pioneer heritage, where the character-filled Cardrona Hotel provides a warm, atmospheric stop framed by seasonal hues.



DAY 2: WINERIES AND HARVEST SEASON

Autumn marks harvest season across the vineyards surrounding Queenstown and Wānaka, bringing a busy, atmospheric energy to cellar doors and wineries. Guests can see the landscape shift with seasonal colour while learning about the picking and processing that shape the region's renowned Pinot Noir. In Gibbston, the "Valley of the Vines," clients can enjoy relaxed tastings, vineyard dining and the region's distinctive wine-cave experiences as the harvest unfolds.

Wānaka offers a more intimate wine experience, with boutique producers set among scenic, mountain-framed vineyards. Tastings often highlight small-batch winemaking and warm local hospitality. Cultural wine tours across both towns add further depth, with storytelling from growers and winemakers that brings the region's history and flavour profile to life. Harvest-inspired menus and seasonal produce pair naturally with local wines, making autumn an ideal time for food and wine exploration.



DAY 3: HIKING AND BIKING TRAILS

Autumn's cooler temperatures and calm, clear conditions make Queenstown and Wānaka ideal for exploring the region on foot or by bike. Lakeside trails, riverside paths and short hillside walks come alive with seasonal colour, offering gentle options close to both town centres. The Queenstown Trail, part of New Zealand's Great Rides, links townships, lakes, rivers and vineyards, creating a relaxed way to experience varied scenery by bike or e-bike.



Those seeking more challenge can venture deeper into the landscape. Day hikes into Mount Aspiring National Park in early autumn reveal glacier-carved valleys, braided rivers and towering peaks.

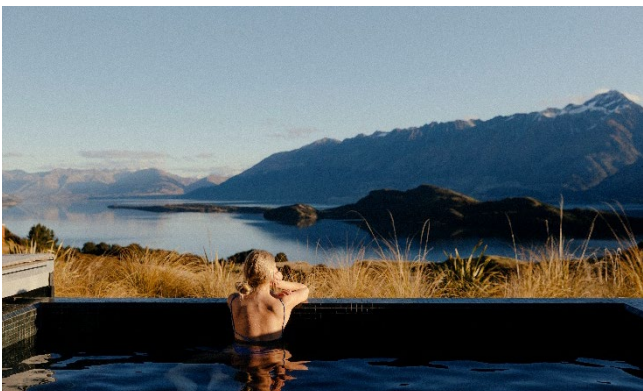
Sections of the Routeburn Track offer equally rewarding viewpoints, with crisp air and soft light enhancing the experience. Guided walking and cycling tours help support mixed-ability groups, while transport and gear hire simplify logistics for trade partners. Autumn's settled feel and rich colour palette create an inviting atmosphere for active days outdoors, whether clients prefer leisurely exploration or more adventurous terrain.



DAY 4: WELLNESS AND RELAXATION

Autumn's calm atmosphere and rich seasonal colours make Queenstown and Wānaka a natural fit for wellness and relaxation. Cooler temperatures and soft afternoon light create ideal conditions for slowing down, whether clients choose a spa treatment, a private hot pool soak or time spent unwinding in one of regions lakeside saunas. These experiences pair well with gentle movement, from mindful walks along lakeside paths to yoga or meditation sessions framed by shifting autumn hues.

Across both towns, accommodation providers and wellness retreats often introduce seasonal offerings, adding warmth and comfort through spa rituals, thermal experiences and peaceful outdoor spaces. As the day winds down, autumn lends itself to intimate dining, cosy interiors and menus featuring local, seasonal produce. Central Otago Pinot Noir and slow-cooked dishes complement the evening, creating a restorative and atmospheric close to the day.



DAY 5: SIGHTSEEING AND ADVENTURE

Autumn delivers an easy balance of sightseeing and accessible adventure across Queenstown and Wānaka, with crisp air and vivid seasonal colours enhancing every viewpoint. Lake activities such as cruises, guided kayaking and fishing charters operate throughout the season on both Lake Whakatipu and Lake Wānaka, offering calm conditions and reliable scheduling for planning. Scenic flights by helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft provide elevated views of colourful valleys, braided rivers and high alpine terrain, with autumn visibility supporting strong operating consistency.

Queenstown's iconic adventure activities, including jet boating, bungee jumping and canyon swings, continue year-round and take on a different character in autumn, framed by changing colour and clear alpine backdrops. The gondola remains a reliable option for panoramic views, with the Luge adding a fun, accessible experience at the summit. With comfortable temperatures, softer light and fewer peak-season pressures, autumn supports a more relaxed pace of touring and strong product availability, giving agents flexibility to tailor mixed-interest days and accommodate a wide range of traveller types.

