

8-DAY SOUTHERN LAKE ITINERARY

Queenstown, Wānaka and
Central Otago Touring Itinerary



DAY 1: QUEENSTOWN

Begin your client's journey in Queenstown, where dramatic alpine landscapes frame a vibrant lakeside town. Nestled on the shores of Lake Whakatipu, this four-season, alpine destination offers world-class experiences that connect visitors with its unique surroundings and welcoming community.



Settle in and explore Queenstown on a guided [sightseeing](#) tour, cruise the crystal-clear waters of Lake Whakatipu, or take to the skies on a scenic helicopter or fixed-wing flight.

For [adventure](#) seekers, Queenstown is the birthplace of the world's first commercial bungee jump and jet boat operation. Alongside these icons, clients can also experience ziplining through native forest or ride the gondola up Bob's Peak for panoramic views before racing back down on the Luge.

During the warmer months, clients can [bike](#) the 150km Queenstown Trail, one of New Zealand's Great Rides, or test their skills at one of three lift-assisted bike parks. In winter, four world-class [ski areas](#) transform the region into a snow sports playground.

As evening falls, Queenstown's vibrant [dining and nightlife scene](#) comes alive with more than 150 restaurants, bars and cafés. From cosy wine bars to fine dining eateries showcasing locally sourced ingredients, there are flavours and experiences to suit every taste.

ACCOMMODATION IN QUEENSTOWN

- Lakeside hotels & luxury lodges
- Boutique alpine retreats
- Central hotels & budget friendly stays

DAY 2: QUEENSTOWN - GLENORCHY

A scenic 45-minute drive from Queenstown, [Glenorchy](#) sits at the head of Lake Whakatipu, surrounded by snow-capped peaks and bordering Mount Aspiring National Park, part of the Te Wāhipounamu UNESCO World Heritage Area.

Your clients can immerse themselves in some of New Zealand's most spectacular wilderness on a guided walk along the famed Routeburn Track (one of New Zealand's Great Walks), paddle the Dart River on a kayak adventure, or discover hidden valleys and remote locations on a 4WD tour. For a different perspective, scenic flights reveal dramatic glaciers, braided rivers and vast untouched wilderness.



Recognised as New Zealand's first inland mountain [Dark Sky Sanctuary](#), Glenorchy offers extraordinary guided stargazing experiences for clients staying into the evening.

ACCOMMODATION IN GLENORCHY

- Wilderness lodges & retreats
- Eco-friendly hotels and boutique stays



DAY 3: QUEENSTOWN - ARROWTOWN & GIBBSTON

Begin the day in [Arrowtown](#), a beautifully preserved goldmining town where history comes alive. Your clients can stroll along the heritage main street, lined with boutique shops, eateries, and galleries, or tee off at the town's scenic golf course, framed by the surrounding mountains. Then explore the town's history by wandering the restored Chinese Settlement, a [Tohu Whenua](#) site that tells the stories of early Chinese miners, or try gold panning in the Arrow River. For those seeking adventure, a 4WD journey along the historic route to Macetown, an abandoned goldmining settlement tucked deep in the mountains, offers a glimpse into a bygone era.



Cycle the Arrow River Bridges Trail which offers a scenic route through the countryside to Gibbston, crossing the historic Kawarau Bridge, a Tohu Whenua site and the birthplace of commercial bungy jumping.



Known as the “Valley of the Vines,” [Gibbston](#) is the world's southernmost wine growing region and famous for producing award-winning Central Otago Pinot Noir. Your clients can self-explore vineyards, cellar doors and the region's only wine cave, or join a guided tour to meet and hear from local winemakers.

ACCOMMODATION IN ARROWTOWN & GIBBSTON

- Luxury lodges
- Historic B&Bs
- [Winery stays](#)

DAY 4: WĀNAKA

The journey to [Wānaka](#) is as memorable as the destination. Drive 60 minutes along the scenic Crown Range Road, offering sweeping alpine views, and pause [along the way](#) at the historic Cardrona Hotel or the artisan Cardrona Distillery before arriving in this relaxed lakeside town.

Wānaka invites visitors to slow down, connect with nature, and indulge in a moment of [mindfulness](#) with a lakeside sauna and dip, boutique spa treatments, yoga, or a short walk, then take time to explore the [boutique shops](#) and local artisan stores in this lakeside township.

The town's [food and drink](#) scene compliments the slower pace, with charming cafés, boutique wineries, and farm-to-table dining led by passionate local chefs. Clients can also join cultural wine tours that uncover Māori history alongside modern-day culture or pedal their way through the region's wineries on a guided cycling tour.

Clients can venture out on Wānaka's alpine lakes and rivers. with options including kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, scenic boat cruises, or guided fishing tours.



DAY 5: WĀNAKA

Wānaka's adventurous spirit comes alive with many ways to explore its spectacular alpine landscapes. Just an hour's drive from the Wānaka township, the small settlement of [Makarora](#) offers a gateway to Mount Aspiring National Park, part of the Te Wāhipounamu UNESCO World Heritage Area.



Clients can take to the skies on a scenic flight over dramatic glaciers, wild valleys, and braided rivers, or land in remote wilderness on a heli-hiking or heli-skiing adventure.

Back on ground, explore rugged backcountry on a 4WD tour, ride glacier-fed rivers by jet boat, or climb alongside cascading waterfalls on a via ferrata for unforgettable thrills. These experiences combine [adventure](#) with rich storytelling, showcasing the landscapes and history of high-country stations.

Seasonal adventures are a highlight in Wānaka. In summer, Wānaka offers a wide network of [biking](#) trails for all levels, from flowing singletrack to relaxed lakeside rides. In winter, the three [ski areas](#) of Cardrona Alpine Resort, Treble Cone and Snow Farm, deliver diverse terrain and some of New Zealand's best snow experiences. Whatever the season, Wānaka provides the perfect balance of outdoor adventure pursuits, as well as softer ways to connect with its landscapes.

ACCOMMODATION IN WĀNAKA

- Lakefront hotels & apartments
- High end lodges & retreats
- Boutique B&Bs
- High country stations

DAY 6: CENTRAL OTAGO

Just a short drive from Wānaka, Central Otago reveals a landscape of wide skies, rugged hills and dramatic schist outcrops. This is one of the world's most distinctive wine regions, producing Pinot Noir shaped by hot summers and crisp winters. Clients can begin with hosted tastings at [iconic wineries](#), where rare vintage pours and curated flights showcase the region's character, paired with menus celebrating seasonal, locally sourced ingredients. Guided [wine tours](#) make it easy for clients to explore boutique cellar doors, hear the stories behind each vineyard, and enjoy leisurely long lunches among the vines.



Visitors can taste their way through the region with orchard visits, fruit-picking, or stocking up on seasonal produce at [roadside stalls](#), where flavours of cherries, apricots and other stone fruit thrive in Central Otago's unique climate. For a change of pace, Highlands Motorsport Park adds an element of excitement with experiences ranging from Lamborghini hot laps to family-friendly activities and its acclaimed motorsports museum.

Central Otago's export-quality produce, rich flavours, living history and welcoming locals, make for a memorable day of exploration.



DAY 7: CENTRAL OTAGO

Time to stretch the legs and swap the car for a [cycling experience](#), whether it is a scenic two-hour ride or a multi-day adventure across four of New Zealand's Great Rides. Local cycle operators manage gear, transfers and on-trail support, matching trails to ability, making it ideal for all styles and levels of rider. Along the way, clients can explore gold rush [heritage](#) precincts, meet artists in galleries, browse boutique stores and enjoy al fresco dining in character-filled cafés and taverns dotted along the trails.



In the evening, head to [Naseby](#), New Zealand's first accredited Dark Sky Community. Begin with dinner at a nearby tavern where the flavours are local and the welcome is warm. Then step outside for a guided stargazing experience with a local astrophysicist, a night where the stars shine bright and the memories shine even brighter.

ACCOMMODATION IN CENTRAL OTAGO

- Vineyard cottages & luxury lodges
- Glass-roof eco-pods
- Self-contained apartments
- Heritage precinct stays

DAY 8: THE SOUTHERN WAY

The Southern Lakes journey concludes back in Queenstown, home to an international airport with direct domestic and Australian connections.

Yet this doesn't have to be where the adventure ends. From Queenstown, clients can extend their travels along the [Southern Way](#), a network showcasing the best of New Zealand scenery and experiences in the lower South Island. Venture along an iconic touring routes, from Waitaki in the north, to Stewart Island in the south, and from the Tasman sea in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east, taking the time to explore and immerse in the spectacular southern region.



From Queenstown, clients can venture to the southern tip of Lake Whakatipu to [Kingston](#), a historic settlement once famed for its railway heritage and now a charming stop before venturing into the lower South Island. From here, continue into [Fiordland](#) with a day or overnight journey into Milford Sound or Doubtful Sound, where sheer cliffs, waterfalls, and wildlife encounters create once-in-a-lifetime memories.



