



Weka

Multi-day, fully-supported bike tour of the South Island • Cycle to Fox Glacier • Soak in Hanmer Springs • Cycle the West Coast • Cycle high country station roads • Explore Queenstown • Milford Sound • Central Otago Rail Trail

13 days: Christchurch – Christchurch Total 590 miles (950km)* US\$3999 + tax

**All distances are approximate and can be adjusted to suit your level of ability.*

The Weka cycling tour ensures you'll do the best cycling New Zealand has to offer. We've included our favourite South Island rides, from the stunning coastal routes of the West Coast, to the historic Otago Rail Trail. The scenery and terrain you'll cover is as diverse as it is beautiful. We cover various distances on this trip, from 25 and 70 miles (40 - 112km) per day, with the opportunity to do more or less if you prefer. We generally cycle between 25 and 60 miles (40 - 100km) a day, although you can ride less or more than that if you prefer. The Weka is fully vehicle-supported, so there is plenty of flexibility and freedom on the road. Our specialist cycling guides are experienced, compassionate and enthusiastic. Here at ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND, we're all very passionate about cycling, and we're confident that if you're keen to see New Zealand from handlebar level, you'll love the Weka cycling tour.

Who did we design this trip for?

The Weka trip is designed for people who enjoy biking and want to ride on and off the road and see all the best parts of New Zealand. You'll complete a loop of the South Island, from Christchurch and back, with the opportunity to cycle around 590 miles (950km). There is the chance each day to cycle more than the daily mileage, or jump in the support vehicle and do less, depending on your mood. This is your cycle tour and we are here to help you make it as physically demanding as you like.

Tuesday **Arrive, cycle to Hanmer Springs**

Most people leave the Northern Hemisphere on a Sunday, arriving in New Zealand early Tuesday morning. You'll lose a day to the dateline – but you'll get it back on the way home! You'll need to arrive in Christchurch by around 10am, where we'll adjust your bike to your liking. You'll then have a chance to stretch your legs and cycle the Waiau Valley near Hanmer Springs. This evening you can soak, relax and mingle in Hanmer's fresh water mineral spas.

Notes: Cycling distance 20 miles (30km) of road riding – predominantly flat.

ACCOMMODATION: Hanmer Springs lodgings, Hanmer Springs (L,D)

Wednesday **Cycle Lewis Pass and Matakita River Valley**

This morning we head into the mountains, starting the day with a downhill ride through native beech forest in the Lewis Pass, one of the three main passes that straddle the Southern Alps. We'll turn onto a remote backcountry road and follow the Matakita River Valley towards Maruia Saddle and down into Murchison. The Matakita is an upper tributary of the mighty Buller River and includes several sections of white water, which are popular with local kayakers.

Notes: Cycling distance 30 miles (50km) downhill sealed road. Then 30 miles (50 km) of unsealed road with a gradual 1000 foot ascent.

ACCOMMODATION: Murchison lodgings, Murchison (B,L,D)

Thursday **Cycle along the Buller Gorge and Punakaiki Coast**

From Murchison we head through the Buller River past the Inangahua Slip, a huge landslide that dammed the river after a massive earthquake in the 1960's. As you pedal along, you have time to enjoy the thick temperate rainforest and historic gold mining sites of the area before arriving on the West Coast. The last leg of today's biking is a stunning coastal ride to Punakaiki, where you can walk on the beach and enjoy the sun setting over the Tasman Sea after dinner.

Notes: Cycling distance 70 miles (110km) road riding – slightly downhill, descending 400 feet.

ACCOMMODATION:

West Coast Lodgings, Punakaiki (B,L,D)

Friday

Coastal cycle from Punakaiki to Kakapotahi Ecological Area

Today we'll ride south along the isolated West Coast. This area is full of dense native rainforest, huge fast-flowing rivers and spectacular views of the snow-capped Southern Alps. We'll follow the main inland road, turning after the Mikonui River onto a smaller coastal road to the village of Kakapotahi. We'll enjoy sweeping views of deserted West Coast beaches before heading into the Westland Tai Poutini National Park and glacier country!

Notes: Cycling distance 70 miles (110km) flat road riding.

ACCOMMODATION:

The Westhaven, Fox Glacier (B,L,D)

Saturday

Cycle from Fox Glacier to the Tasman Sea

The scenery today is off the charts! From our lodgings, we'll cycle a winding road through an ancient podocarp forest to Fox Glacier. This glacier drops 7000 feet in about seven miles, from its névé in the Southern Alps almost to the sea. After visiting the glacier, we'll cycle south past farmland, ending at the deserted mineral beaches of Bruce Bay. Tonight we stay in the West Coast village of Haast. During the evening, you can take a quiet and remote beach walk if you like.

Notes: Cycling distance 60 miles (100km) undulating road riding from the base of Fox Glacier to the beach of Bruce Bay – optional one hour return hike to Fox Glacier.

ACCOMMODATION:

World Heritage Heartland Hotel, Haast (B,L,D)

Andrew: "On one of my cycling expeditions, I traversed the length of New Zealand in 30 days. It was a hard ride, but well worth it. Riding on the West Coast was a particular favourite – with only 40,000 people on a 400 mile stretch of coast, it's off-the-beaten-track, but really amazing to see from handlebar level!"

Sunday

Cycle Haast Pass, and Lake Wanaka Track

We'll travel inland today, cycling from Pleasant Flat to the "Gates of Haast" and over Haast Pass. This memorable ride takes us into the Makarora Valley bordering Mt. Aspiring National Park. After we're through the Pass, we'll take a short drive to Albert Town, where we'll ride along a smooth trail with spectacular views of the Clutha River, the South Island's longest river, as it flows into Lake Wanaka. If you prefer, you can explore Wanaka township or relax by the lake.

Notes: Cycling distance 50 miles (80km) road riding –uphill 1,400 feet to Haast Pass. Then a smooth, gently undulating trail to Lake Wanaka.

ACCOMMODATION:

Lake Wanaka Hotel, Wanaka (B,L,D)

Monday

Cycle the Cardrona Valley over the Crown Range to Queenstown

This morning we'll cycle from our lodgings through the historic gold mining area of Cardrona, stopping for a cold drink at an old miners' tavern. Then we'll bike through tussock-clad hills, before crossing the Cardrona Saddle on the Crown Range. It's a steep climb to the saddle, but the views from the top are worth it. Then we wind our way down towards

Queenstown, where we'll be staying for the next two nights. As with all cycling on the *Weka cycling tour*, you can skip the steepest part of today's ride if you like.

Notes: Cycling distance 60 miles (100km) road riding – gentle valley cycle that steepens towards the saddle gaining 2000 feet.

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments, Queenstown (B,L)

Tuesday Free day in Queenstown

Queenstown is the adventure capital of New Zealand where you'll find all the comforts of civilization: massage therapists, restaurants, sidewalk cafés, window shopping, as well as incredible hikes, bike rides, and adrenaline pumping activities such as hang gliding, bungee jumping, jet boating and skydiving. Ask your guides for more information on organizing local activities, while we take the opportunity to give your bike a mid-trip tune up. There are some great mountain and road cycling options around Queenstown too if you're keen to fit in some extra bike time!

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments, Queenstown

Wednesday Cycle Mt Nicholas Road from Walter Peak to Mavora Lakes

A refreshingly early start sees us cruising across Lake Wakatipu on the steamship TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Here you'll get on your freshly tuned bike and follow Mt. Nicholas farm road to the isolated Mavora Lakes. You'll bike up through the head waters of the Von River surrounded by the Livingston Mountains. This is a true wilderness cycling experience on a deserted back road and after your time in Queenstown, you'll appreciate the peaceful surroundings!

Notes: Cycling distance 60 miles (100km) deserted farm road. Then winding, undulating road with a total elevation gain of 1,000 feet - remote high-country lakes.

ACCOMMODATION: Matai Lodge, Te Anau (B,L,D)

Andrew: "While the Weka is predominantly a road biking trip, having more than one type of bike on hand means that we can occasionally go off road into true New Zealand wilderness. Mt. Nicholas is one of my favourite areas for biking and the gravel road that we ride is well maintained, which gives it the perfect balance of amazing remote scenery and comfortable riding."

Thursday Cruise Milford Sound, cycle Hollyford Valley

Today starts with a spectacular cruise on Milford Sound, rated the 8th Natural Wonder of the World by Rudyard Kipling. We'll glide past sheer rock walls, huge waterfalls and the famous Mitre Peak, and hopefully be visited by the fur seals, penguins and dolphins that frequent the area. After lunch, we have a spectacular ride through the Hollyford Valley, a remote backcountry road lined with unspoilt beech forest and towering peaks. This is one of our favourite rides and definitely one of the most memorable rides on the trip!

Notes: Cycling distance 40 miles (65km) mostly downhill road and gravel road riding descending 1,000 feet – undulating terrain.

ACCOMMODATION: Matai Lodge, Te Anau (B,L,D)

Friday Central Otago Rail Trail – Lauder to Ranfurly

The Central Otago Rail Trail follows an old train line built in the early 1900's. The line was retired in 1990 and is now one of the best multi-day bike rides in New Zealand. We'll cross 60 bridges and viaducts, winding our way along the smooth track past Raggedy Range and Rough Ridge. We have a gradual climb through the Ida Valley, and once at the summit of the Rail Trail it's a slight downhill all the way into Ranfurly, and our accommodation right on the trail.

Notes: Cycling distance 70 miles (110km) - gravel trails, bridges, viaducts and road riding - slight uphill

gradient all day with a 500 foot elevation gain.

ACCOMMODATION: Hawkdun Lodge, Ranfurly (B,L,D)

Saturday

Cycle over Dansey's Pass into Limestone Country

From Ranfurly we'll take a backroad through Naseby and then ride over Dansey's Pass, cycling into the limestone country of North Otago. We'll head over the Pass, with stunning views of the Pacific Ocean from the top. Then we'll descend from remote high-country into green valleys, lined with impressive limestone cliffs and crags. We'll have lunch in the village of Duntroon, where you can see fossils dug up from the local limestone, before continuing on through the peaceful farmland with a backdrop of mountains. It's then a short drive to the historic Millhouse, where we'll celebrate our two unforgettable weeks of cycling together.

Notes: Cycling distance 60 miles (100km) - gravel and road riding with a steep uphill section gaining 1,000 feet. Then a long downhill ride descending 2,500 feet.

ACCOMMODATION: The Millhouse, Oamaru (B,L,D)

Sunday

Depart for home

This is the last day of your 13-day South Island cycling tour. See our *Kauri* itinerary if you want to take a few more days to see the North Island. After breakfast, we'll set out for Christchurch, arriving by mid afternoon. Any international flight after 4pm is ideal, and we can make domestic flights as early as 2.30pm with advance notice. International flights from Auckland usually leave early evening, so if you're heading to North America you'll get home some time on Sunday, even though you left on Sunday evening. Flights back to Europe, of course, take a little longer. You'll be refreshed and invigorated from the good rides and great times you'll have had with us in New Zealand! (B,L)

Important Information

ACCOMMODATION: The *Weka* is a fully-supported cycling tour of the South Island with all accommodation included, from the moment we pick you up, to when we drop you off at the end. We stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments, so while we appreciate creature comforts on our cycle tours, they're not a scenic tour of luxury hotels of the South Island. Rooming is twin-share, although single rooms are available on request at an extra charge. We find that most solo travellers get on great sharing a room with a fellow cyclist of the same gender. We use a variety of accommodation and most places have ensuite bathrooms, but there are a couple of places where the bathrooms are shared – so we ask you to share with other group members on occasion.

RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS: If you're flying in on the first day of the tour, or out on the last day, we recommend arriving in Christchurch by 10.30am on Tuesday, and departing from Christchurch after 4pm on Sunday. If you're considering alternative flight times, please call us so we can make the arrangements and make sure your trip runs as smoothly as possible.

TRIP START: Tuesday - on the first day of the tour, we can either pick you up from the Chateau on the Park Hotel in Christchurch at 10.30am, or at the Christchurch airport Travel and Info desk at 11am.

TRIP END: Sunday - on the last day of the tour, we can drop you off at the Christchurch airport in time for the flights above or anywhere in central Christchurch in mid-late afternoon.

FITNESS: You must have a good level of cycling fitness to enjoy yourself on our cycle tours. You don't have to be young and extremely fit (although if you are, you won't be bored) but you should be in the habit of cycling regularly. Age and experience are not as important as attitude. If you're concerned about your fitness level, have a chat with us so we can help make sure you've chosen the most suitable trip.

EXPERIENCE: You don't need any cycle touring experience to enjoy our trips, but if you're a seasoned cyclist you'll find plenty of challenges and be in very good company. All we ask is that you be energetic and in good shape, and ready for a challenge. We manage the challenge level to suit your ability and experience and we have an impeccable safety record. We hold all relevant government licenses and our staff are highly trained and experienced.

FLEXIBILITY: The off-the-beaten path and non-commercial nature of some of the accommodation on this tour means we occasionally need to make changes to where we stay. We try to make as few changes as possible, but retain the flexibility to make sure your trip is as good as it can be. We are also very flexible on the road, which means no two trips are the same. We pride ourselves on having the skill and experience to take new routes, suggest additional rides to those that are keen and keep the adventurous spirit of the trip alive.

INCLUDED: The Weka trip fare is US\$3999 + 12.5% NZ government taxes. Part of our trip philosophy is to include everything we can, leaving you nothing to worry about. Our trip fares include just about everything, specifically:

- Great quality road bikes for your entire tour. There is no extra charge for bike rental, but there is the option to upgrade to a high performance bike should you prefer.
- All guiding services. We have two guides per trip. You'll have a lead guide who drives the support vehicle and is responsible for leading the trip and maintaining the bikes. You'll also have a co-guide that will cycle with you and is responsible for your meals and accommodation. Having two guides means we have the flexibility to make sure you always have a great time! We operate with small groups and don't hesitate to offer a second departure when our trips start getting full.
- Accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organise accommodation for you if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- All breakfast (B), lunch (L), and dinner (D), except during free time in places like Queenstown and Nelson where there is heaps of choice. Alcohol is not generally included on the trips, although we do spring for a few drinks here and there after a good day!
- All cycling described in the itinerary, except optional extra activities. There are many activities available at extra cost, particularly in Queenstown, Nelson and Rotorua. None of these activities are compulsory and nor will your trip seem less awesome if you don't do any additional options. Although some people enjoy sampling hang gliding, bungee jumping, jet boating, skydiving, and so on, others prefer to focus on more cycling. It's up to you!

NOT INCLUDED: This is your holiday, and we are serious about not nickel-and-dime you! You'll have a few meals and drinks to cover, extra activities if you choose them, and you'll probably feel like tipping your guides at the end of a fabulous time, but you won't be pulling out your wallet every few minutes when you're on an ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND Cycle Tour.

ITINERARY UPDATES: We generally update our itineraries each April, so please check our website or give us a call for the latest information if you've been holding on to this booklet for a while.

DON'T BE A STRANGER! When you get back from your trip, please let us know how you got on! We have an official 'post-trip survey' that we always look forward to receiving as it helps us fine tune our trips, but we like to just stay in touch too. We have other adventures, trips to other destinations and lots going on that we'd like to include you in. Also, if you'd tell your friends about this little quirky New Zealand company you've discovered, we'd really appreciate it!

We'll see you soon!

Itinerary valid through April 2012