



**Christchurch**  
& Canterbury. New Zealand

**Top of the South Island Itinerary - Harvest  
9 day Tour - including Best Kept Secrets (shhhhh!)**

*Find countless ways to unwind, recharge and rejuvenate in the top of the South Island of New Zealand. Long, warm days result in the bounty of the summer sun, as the landscape transforms into a kaleidoscope of Autumn colours. It's the ideal time to sample some of New Zealand's finest vintages in the country's Great Wine Capital vineyards. Enjoy the season's freshest produce showcased in local restaurant and café menus, and indulge, relax, and soak in the plentiful scenery.*

**Day 1 Arrive in Christchurch**

Arrive in the South Island at Christchurch International Airport. As you fly in take in the breathtaking views of the Southern Alps and the stunning Canterbury plains. An Alps to ocean backdrop makes Christchurch one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Centrally located on the South Island's east coast, Christchurch is surrounded by the diverse Canterbury region. From the spectacular Pacific coastline, volcanic peninsula with hidden bays and endless views, to world-class wine regions, alpine spa villages and the mighty Southern Alps, home to New Zealand's highest peak – the South Island starts here.



**Best Kept secrets:**

- Best in flight entertainment. Flying into Christchurch Airport from overseas you will be privy to a million dollar view of NZ's Southern Alps.
- Best post flight coffee. Upon arrival go and see Bianca at Underground for a coffee. Those in the know, know she makes the best!
- Widest welcome. Christchurch Airport features Australasia's largest video wall showcasing Canterbury's amazing landscapes. Head to Customs for this large scale window into the South Island. (From October 2010).

## Day 2 Christchurch city

Explore the city. The 'Garden City' itself is lined with 19th century stone buildings, contemporary galleries and open-air markets. Experience the Cultural Precinct and banks of the Avon River by vintage tram, classic Edwardian punt or the comfort of a riverside restaurant. By foot, explore the growing network of urban laneways packed with bars, eateries and an eclectic mix of boutique shops. Head west out of the city for just 20 minutes and you will find yourself in Selwyn, home to some of the best boutique wineries in the land.



### Best Kept secrets:

- Best taste bud fiesta. Visit the Riccarton bush markets held on Saturday mornings at Riccarton house. The home made macaroons are unforgettable.
- Best chocolate indulgence. Visit the clever chocolaterie in Governors Bay.
- Best urban artsy wine experience. Visit SOL Square's intimate laneways.
- Best Ocean to Alps view. This can be seen from almost anywhere along the Summit Road, 15 mins from the city.
- Best inner city forest. Riccarton Bush - simply untouched nature at its best.

## Day 3 Christchurch – Waipara – Hanmer Springs

Head north into the Waipara Wine Region. The Waipara Valley in North Canterbury is one of New Zealand's fastest-growing wine regions. Today there are 11 well-established wineries producing a range of varieties including, Sauvignon, Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling, Pinot Noir & Chardonnay. This long narrow valley offers ideal conditions for growing premium quality grapes.

This evening stay in the alpine spa village Hanmer Springs. Nestled in a high country basin 385m above sea level, this picturesque village has, for 125 years, attracted visitors seeking the benefits of its natural mineral waters and clean, clear alpine air.

### Best Kept Secrets:

- Best place to start a hangover. Waipara is currently producing an excess of 200,000 cases of wine in an average year.
- Every year Waipara plays host to a number of intimate concerts throughout its many vineyards. In addition, the annual Waipara Food and Wine Festival is an event not to be missed.
- Best pies. Be sure to sample one of the 'Wild Pies' from the Mud House Winery.
- Best accommodation. Sleep in a historic railway wagon in the heart of the wine region.
- Best way to feel young. The thermal water in Hanmer Springs originates from rainwater that fell 180 years ago.



#### Day 4 Hanmer Springs – Picton/Blenheim

Awake in New Zealand's favourite alpine spa village. Your morning begins with personal pampering and relaxation. Soak in natural thermal pools or indulge in a treatment at the onsite spa, explore mountain bike and nature trails, enjoy gourmet dining or try your hand at a round of golf. Continue your journey to the top of the South Island, where spectacular scenery awaits.



##### Best Kept Secrets:

- Best alpine vista. Panoramic views of the village and Hanmer basin can be seen from Conical Hill - access by foot, one hour return from Hanmer Village.
- Best chocolate indulgence II. The 1 hour Cocoa treatment from the Hanmer Springs Spa, simply delicious.
- Best Italian vs. NZ experience. Find secluded olive groves with 1,300 thriving olive trees – the only horticulture in the Hanmer Basin.
- Best jaunt in the forest. 50km of mountain bike and forest trails exist in the Hanmer Forest; hire a bike from the village and explore!
- The view from The Kaikoura Winery
- During autumn the region is buzzing with harvesters gathering in the grapes which yield 63% of New Zealand's total wine production. Following harvest during autumn the vines turn gold and red making a perfect backdrop for sampling the latest wines at cellar doors and vineyard restaurants.
- Spend a night in the vines. Look out for places to stay amongst the vineyards, from farmers' cottages to five star villas.

#### Day 5 Picton/Blenheim - Havelock – Nelson

We love seafood! Nelson is Australasia's largest fishing port, and the large sandy Tasman Bay and Golden Bay produce succulent clams, scallops and mussels. The calm seas and benign climate make waterside dining popular, and talented chefs ply their craft with local delights, fresh from land and sea.



##### Best Kept Secrets:

- Enroute to Nelson stop at Havelock – the home of Greenshell Mussels. Tuck into a chowder, chocker with the local delicacy, or take a cruise to see the mussels growing and learn about how they are harvested. Onboard, enjoy a bowl of freshly steamed mussels washed down with a cold glass of sauvignon blanc.
- Dine on fresh seafood delights, presented with creative flair, in a historic boatshed overhanging Nelson's sheltered haven. Be careful not to drop your knife. You may lose it through the floorboards to the bottom of Tasman Bay below.
- Discover fresh seasonal product and gourmet delights at Nelson's Saturday Morning Market. Grab a coffee or chai, and Join the locals prowling the lanes of food, art, jewellery, fashion and more. Don't miss this – every Saturday morning from 8.

### Day 6 Nelson – Abel Tasman National Park

At 22,530 hectares, Abel Tasman is New Zealand's smallest national park. Abel Tasman National Park is renowned for its golden beaches, sculptured granite cliffs, and world-famous Abel Tasman Coast Track. Apples, pears, berries, hops, olives and of course, grapes thrive in the fertile land surrounding the Abel Tasman. Nelson's innovative winemakers are renowned for their award-winning aromatics. Over 350 full time artists enjoy the unique quality of light, and draw inspiration from the productive landscape.



#### Best Kept Secrets:

- Visit historic Mapua Wharf, from where Nelson's abundant apple crop was once exported. Now the cool-stores and wharf buildings house galleries, cafes, a boutique brewery, and many more cool specialty stores! Smoked fish is legendary here, and not to be missed.
- Colour your wine tour of the Nelson Tasman region by visiting the studios of acclaimed artists along the way. Pick up a copy of the Nelson Art Guide to let you discover the art that stirs your passion. Stop at local gourmet food producers and create a picnic lunch to do justice to the bottle you couldn't resist taking the top off.
- This is where New Zealand's entire export hop crop is grown. Little wonder that this has spawned a thriving craft brewing industry. Taste the local brew in freehouse pubs, and myriad breweries in charming locations. Coals to Newcastle? - Beer from here is exported to Belgium!

### Day 7 Abel Tasman National Park – West Coast

To get to the West Coast travel through the rugged Buller Gorge, where you will arrive in Westport. You have the choice of heading up to historic Denniston and further north to the unspoiled Karamea area or heading south along the spectacular Coast Road. There's a postcard photo opportunity around every corner.



#### Best Kept Secrets:

- West Coast Luxury Lodges. Try Rough 'n' Tumble, Birds Ferry or Rimu Lodge.
- Greenstone hunting. For Maori, the river valleys and mountains of this region were the traditional source of pounamu (greenstone). Today, a find is rare –but it's always worth looking.
- Heritage pubs. Experience unique West Coast culture, in a region that represents 9% of the country's area but holds less than 1% of the population.
- Coastal hamlets. Okarito (with its lagoon and white herons, and setting for best-seller *The Bone People*), Granity (home to world-class adventure racer Emily Miagza) and Jackson Bay (incredibly beautiful but swimming here is only for the sharks!).

## Day 8 West Coast

The words “rugged” and “spectacular” feature in most descriptions of the West Coast – usually in the same sentence. The Southern Alps to the east and Tasman Sea to the west create wild coastlines and stunning mountain backdrops. The West Coast has five national parks within its boundaries; in fact, nearly 90% of the land in this region is administered by the Department of Conservation. From Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers, to Punakaiki’s Pancake Rocks, trout fishing at Lake Brunner and tramping along the Heaphy Track, the West Coast is, according to Lonely Planet, “like nowhere else in New Zealand.”



### Best Kept Secrets:

- Going underground. Oparara Basin – visit the Honeycomb Hill Caves, ancient home of the moa.
- Glacier climbing – Nowhere else in the world at this latitude do glaciers come so close to the ocean.
- Wild Foods. An annual festival (early March) invites thousands of Kiwis and travelers alike to sample the wildest West Coast foods – from wasp larvae ice cream to traditional favourites like huhu grubs.
- Crafting your own unique keepsake. From pounamu pendants to bone carving and even knife making.
- White water and whitebait – paddling, surfing, fishing or just enjoying local favourites for supper!

## Day 9 West Coast – Christchurch, depart Christchurch

Travel west to Christchurch through Arthur’s Pass National Park. Emerging from the Southern Alps, you will enter a world of braided river, wide, shingle-filled riverbeds and vast beech forests as you head back into Canterbury.

Catch your departure flight from Christchurch International Airport.

### Best Kept Secrets:

- Best place to spot a kea. In Arthur’s Pass village, these cheeky mountain parrots can always been seen hopping around the village.
- Leading footprints. From the main terminal at Christchurch Airport follow the blue footprints and you’ll end up at the very cool Antarctic Attraction. You might need to save this one for next time though as your plane is nearly ready to depart!



For more information: [www.westcoastnz.com](http://www.westcoastnz.com)