



New Zealand

Mountains, Fiords and the Open Road

September 26 - October 07, 2028

Women Travel Tribe

Small Group Adventures for Women 50+

womentraveltribe.com/tours/new-zealand-sep-2028

Tour Overview

Duration:	12 days
Maximum Group Size:	12 women
Start Date:	September 26, 2028
End Date:	October 07, 2028
Arrival Airport:	Christchurch Airport (CHC)
Departure Airport:	Christchurch Airport (CHC)

There are places where the road is simply how you get from one stop to the next. On New Zealand's South Island, **the road is part of the wonder**. Around one bend, a turquoise lake rests beneath snow-covered mountains. Around the next, the highway enters rainforest, crosses a broad alpine valley, or follows a coast where the land meets the Southern Ocean. Here, even the drive becomes something you'll remember.

The road will lead us to people and stories as well as scenery. In Christchurch, we'll meet a **pounamu carver** and learn why greenstone is treasured by Ngai Tahu, the Maori people whose ancestral homeland covers much of the island. We'll see how the city has rebuilt after its earthquakes, pause in country towns and share wine and lunch among the vineyards of Central Otago.

We'll stargaze beneath the dark skies of the Mackenzie Country, stand below **Aoraki-Mount Cook** and cruise through **Milford Sound** as waterfalls drop from the cliffs around us. Farther south, we'll follow forest paths and look for northern royal albatross above the Otago Peninsula.

This small-group journey is designed for **women 50+** who want to experience New Zealand's breathtaking natural beauty, rich culture, and unforgettable landscapes on a thoughtfully planned trip from beginning to end.

Itinerary

Day 1: Christchurch (Arrival Day)

Included meals: Dinner

Your time in New Zealand will begin in Christchurch, where you'll transfer to our centrally located hotel. Cafes, shops, gardens, and the Avon River will all be within easy walking distance. Depending on your arrival time, you'll be able to rest or head outside for a first look around the city. That evening, we'll gather for an orientation and welcome dinner with the women who will be sharing this journey.

Day 2: Christchurch

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Our first full day will take us inside a working pounamu studio where we'll meet the head carver and learn how stone from New Zealand's West Coast is selected, cut, and polished into finished pieces. He'll also explain why pounamu is considered a taonga, or treasured possession, by Ngai Tahu, the Maori people with ancestral ties to much of this island. We'll then step into the stone courtyards and Gothic Revival buildings that once formed Canterbury College. As we walk beneath the archways and through the restored spaces, we'll hear how the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 changed Christchurch and how the city rebuilt without erasing its past. There will be time to explore the center independently before we meet again for dinner.

Day 3: Christchurch / Geraldine / Fairlie / Lake Tekapo

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

As we leave Christchurch, city streets will fade into sheep farms, rolling foothills, and the first snow-tipped ranges of the trip. The journey to Lake Tekapo will take about four hours with stops, and the scenery will keep changing along the way. In Geraldine, we'll pause for a flat white and a look through the town's food shops. Beyond Fairlie, the farmland will spread into the Mackenzie Country and the mountains will appear closer with every mile. By early afternoon, Lake Tekapo's turquoise water will fill the view beneath the Southern Alps. We'll visit the Church of the Good Shepherd, built beside the lake in memory of the region's early settlers, and stop at several viewpoints before checking into our resort. Once darkness settles over the basin, we'll join a guided stargazing experience. Weather permitting, laser pointers and telescopes will help us explore the southern constellations, planets, star clusters, and other sights visible that night.

Day 4: Lake Tekapo / Aoraki-Mount Cook / Wanaka

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

This will be one of the most striking drives of the tour. Over about five hours on the road, broken up by walks, viewpoints, and lunch, we'll travel past stunning lakes, glaciers, mountain passes, and some of New Zealand's highest peaks. Lake Pukaki will be our first stop, with its milky-blue water stretching toward Aoraki-Mount Cook. When the skies cooperate, New Zealand's highest mountain will rise above the far shore. We'll follow the lake into the national park and step into a vast valley surrounded by glaciers and rocky summits. There may also be time for a short trail if the weather and group's energy allow. Following lunch in Twizel, we'll cross the rolling slopes of Lindis Pass and pause beside Lake Hawea. By late afternoon, we'll reach Wanaka and settle into our lodge near the lake and town center.

Day 5: Wanaka / Cromwell / Bannockburn / Wanaka

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today will begin among the stone cottages and timber storefronts rescued from Cromwell's original town center before much of it disappeared beneath Lake Dunstan. We'll have time to visit the galleries and workshops or stop for coffee before continuing into the dry hills and vineyards of Bannockburn. This part of Central Otago has earned an international reputation for Pinot Noir, thanks to its sunny days and cool nights. At a winery, we'll taste several regional varieties and learn how the area's climate shapes each bottle. We'll then slow down for an unhurried seasonal lunch overlooking the vines. Once we return to Wanaka, you'll be free to explore the shops, follow the lakefront path, or walk toward the willow tree growing from the water.

Day 6: Wanaka / Mount Aspiring National Park / Haast Pass / Wanaka

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

The drive west from Wanaka will take us into a wilder side of New Zealand. Blue water will run beside the route, mountains will rise close to the van, and the forest will grow thicker as we enter Mount Aspiring National Park. Following coffee in Makarora, we'll walk beneath beech trees toward the Blue Pools. Suspension bridges will carry us over a narrow gorge where icy meltwater moves around enormous gray boulders. When conditions are right, the river will glow in brilliant blue-green tones. Farther into Haast Pass, waterfalls will appear between the trees and rushing rivers will follow the road. Short paths will take us to Fantail Falls and Thunder Creek Falls, where water drops through the forest into the valley below. By afternoon, we'll retrace the pass to Wanaka, seeing the rivers and peaks from a new angle before gathering for dinner.

Day 7: Wanaka / Queenstown / Te Anau

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Queenstown will bring a livelier rhythm to the journey. After about 90 minutes on the road, we'll arrive beside Lake Wakatipu, where boats cross the water and the Remarkables rise beyond the

shoreline. We'll walk beside the lake and sit down for lunch overlooking the water. You'll then have time to browse the boutiques and outdoor shops, wander through the gardens, or enjoy an ice cream near the shore. If you would like to see Queenstown from above, you can also take an optional ride on the Skyline Gondola. Leaving town in the afternoon, we'll follow the lake through the Devil's Staircase, a winding stretch of highway squeezed between the slopes and the water below. A lookout and a break in Kingston will divide the two-hour journey to Te Anau, where we'll check into our hotel and gather for dinner.

Day 8: Te Anau / Milford Sound / Te Anau

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Fiordland will unfold around us as we travel toward Milford Sound. Farmland will disappear behind beech forest, rivers will race through valleys shaped by ancient ice, and the mountains will close in around the road. The drive will take just over two hours each way before stops. We'll step outside at selected viewpoints before passing through the Homer Tunnel and descending through rainforest to the water's edge. At Milford Sound, we'll board a boat and cruise beneath cliffs rising directly from the water. Waterfalls will pour from the forest above, and rain may cover the rock faces with temporary cascades. In clearer conditions, we'll be able to see more of the summits towering overhead. We'll also watch for fur seals, dolphins, and seabirds. Once back on land, we'll return through Fiordland to Te Anau.

Day 9: Te Anau

Included meals: Breakfast

Today will be yours to shape, with several very different ways to experience Te Anau and Fiordland. Our tour leader will be available to help you organize the option that suits you best. If you choose an optional full-day journey to Doubtful Sound, you'll begin with a boat ride across Lake Manapouri. A coach will then carry you over Wilmot Pass before you board another boat and cruise into a remote fiord filled with still water, forested cliffs, and waterfalls. For a shorter optional adventure, you could cross Lake Te Anau to the Glowworm Caves. A guide will lead you through limestone passages shaped by an underground river before a small boat carries you into the darkness beneath the blue-green lights of the glowworms. If you prefer to remain nearby, you can walk an easy section of the Kepler Track, visit the bird sanctuary, enjoy lunch overlooking the lake, or explore Te Anau's waterfront and cafes at your own pace.

Day 10: Te Anau / The Catlins / Dunedin

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

One of our longer travel days will carry us from Fiordland's mountains to the forests and exposed shoreline of the Catlins. Coffee in Gore and several walks will break up the journey. A path lined with ferns will lead us to Purakaunui Falls, where the river descends over three wide tiers of rock. From here, we'll continue toward Nugget Point and follow a headland trail to its lighthouse. Below

the cliffs, waves will break around rock stacks rising from the sea. Lunch near Kaka Point will divide the remaining drive to Dunedin, a university city with Scottish roots and an impressive collection of Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

Day 11: Dunedin / Otago Peninsula / Dunedin

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Our last full day will begin at Larnach Castle, a grand 19th-century home built high above Otago Harbor. We'll explore its carved interiors, period furniture, and the complicated story of the family who lived there. Outside, we'll wander through gardens that should be showing their spring flowers. The drive around the Otago Peninsula will take us past farmland, sheltered bays, and stretches of ocean before we reach Taiaroa Head. Here we'll join a guided visit to the world's only mainland breeding colony of northern royal albatross. October marks the transition between seasons, so we may see late-departing chicks or adults returning to nest. Exactly what we observe will depend on nature. We'll also learn about the birds' breeding cycle and the work protecting the colony. Once our experience is finished, we'll return to Dunedin for our farewell dinner.

Day 12: Dunedin / Christchurch (Departure Day)

Included meals: Breakfast

Our closing drive will take us north from Dunedin to Christchurch Airport. The journey will last about five hours and carry us through farming communities and the eastern countryside. We'll pause for comfort stops and refreshments along the way before arriving at the airport. *****IMPORTANT*:** Please book your departure flight from Christchurch Airport (CHC) for 5:00 PM or later to allow enough time for the drive and airport check-in. If you wish to fly out the following day, we can help book a night of accommodation at an airport hotel.

Tour Inclusions

Included

- ✓ Small group experience with a maximum of 12 women
- ✓ Professional tour leader throughout the trip
- ✓ 11 nights of accommodation in comfortable 3-star/4-star hotels and lodges
- ✓ Transportation by private van
- ✓ Daily breakfast, 7 lunches, and 6 dinners
- ✓ Local guides, cultural hosts, and specialists
- ✓ All included activities, entrance fees, and experiences listed in the itinerary
- ✓ Arrival airport transfers and one group departure transfer to Christchurch Airport

Not Included

- ✗ Flights to/from New Zealand (arrive and depart from Christchurch)
- ✗ Passport/visa fees
- ✗ Meals and activities not mentioned
- ✗ Travel insurance (mandatory)
- ✗ Other gratuities

Pricing

Shared Room:	\$ 6,500
Single Room:	\$ 7,900
Deposit:	\$ 750

Accommodations

On this tour, we'll stay in comfortable and conveniently located 3/4 hotels and lodges. All rooms have a private bathroom. There are a maximum of 8 single rooms available.

Physical Demand

MODERATE

This trip includes moderate walking, generally in shorter stretches of no more than 1-2 hours at a time. Guests should be comfortable walking on gravel tracks, forest paths, wet or uneven ground, inclines, steps, and suspension bridges. None of the included walks are difficult hikes, but good balance, steady footing, and comfortable walking shoes are important.

Some travel days may last approximately 8-9 hours once scenic stops, meals, walks, and other activities are included, with up to about 6 hours of actual driving. Guests should be comfortable sitting in the van for extended periods, getting in and out throughout the day, and boarding the Milford Sound cruise. This trip is best suited for women who can manage moderate daily activity and walking.

Ready to Book Your Adventure?

Women Travel Tribe

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Tour Details: womentraveltribe.com/tours/new-zealand-sep-2028

*Small group adventures designed specifically for women 50+
Experience the world with like-minded travelers!*