

Itinerary for Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Tour

A2025-0503 (05.03.2025 – 11.03.2025)

and

A2025-1004 (10.04.2025 – 16.04.2025)

On above dates we will be staying two nights in Omarama instead of one night in Lake Ohau and one night in Omarama. See Day 3&4 for details.

An epic cycle journey... New Zealand in all its colour and natural beauty

This trip will take you from the grandeur of Aoraki Mt Cook, past glacial lakes, rivers, dams, canals, wetlands, fields, farming country and cliffs all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Your days are filled with one breathtaking vista after another.

The cycling terrain is as varied as the views and you will find yourself on wide open plains, 4wd tracks and remote backcountry tracks. Sometimes you will be able to relax on tarseal, then get challenged on uphill trails and enjoy the thrill of the descent. Overall, this cycling journey is sure to give you a sense of profound adventure, excitement and accomplishment.

Day 1: Christchurch - Canterbury High Country - Southern Alps - Twizel

We will meet you in Christchurch between 10:00 am and 10:30 am. Our journey begins with a drive through the beautiful Canterbury Plains and the Mackenzie High Country. We will stop at picturesque Lake Tekapo and its famous Church of the Good Shepherd. It won't be long before we truly feel like being in an alpine environment and reach our first base near Aoraki/Mt. Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain (3.753m). Twizel is the perfect place to start our cycle adventure on the Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail as it gives us flexibility for our first cycle day tomorrow.

Accommodation: Twizel – Motel

Meals: D

Day 2: Cycle Tekapo to Twizel or vice versa

Depending on local weather/wind conditions we can choose to ride the classic route from Tekapo to Twizel, or opt for the other direction. Classically, one would ride along turquoise canals and down a quiet 4WD road along the shores of stunning Lake Pukaki with the Southern Alps and Mt. Cook as your backdrop, while if we cycle from Twizel to Tekapo we'd ride towards them, including fabulous views on a clear day. Heading South we bike through native plants, such as Kowhai, Flax and Tussock, follow an off-road section, all along the lake shores, pass over Pukaki dam and arrive at a car park at the southern end of Lake Pukaki. After a short break, we cross the Pukaki Flats, an expansive area of dry grasslands that are characteristic of the Mackenzie landscape and arrive back in Twizel.

Cycling: 54 km, easy

Accommodation: Twizel – Motel

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 3: Cycle Twizel to Lake Ohau

From Twizel, we carry on along quiet backcountry roads. Turquoise waters characterize the first hours of today's ride. We cross the canal bridge and cycle along the canal on paved roads, until we get to Lake Ohau. From there an off-road trail descends down to the lake foreshore, taking us to the Ohau Weir, offering spectacular views and the feeling of being totally alone in this vast landscape. We continue along the lake shore to Lake Ohau Lodge from **where our bus takes us to Omarama, our base for the next two nights.**

Cycling: 38 km, easy

Accommodation: **Omarama – Motel**

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 4: Cycle Lake Ohau to Sailor's Cutting

In the morning we bus back to where we left of yesterday and continue our journey along the lower slopes of the Ruataniwha Conservation Park, with stunning views back across the basin to the Benmore Range. From here it's a bit rough at times and a steady climb to the high point of the trail and a 300m height gain. There is no need to rush and push yourself too hard. A descent with great views awaits us on the other side and into the valley, where we take a break and a detour (by van) to visit the stunning Clay Cliffs. Then it's mostly downhill until we cross over the Ahuriri River. The trail soon will be off-road again and we cycle along the beautiful Lake Benmore shoreline until you reach Sailor's Cutting. Our van takes us back to Omarama from here.

Cycling: 58 km, moderate

Accommodation: Omarama – Motel

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 5: Cycle Sailor's Cutting to Kurow

With the latest section from Sailor's Cutting to Benmore Dam, which opened in December 2020 to the public, it is no longer a requirement to ride on SH83 over the Otematata Saddle from Sailor's Cutting. Instead, we will cycle through absolutely stunning scenery along the Lake Benmore shoreline. The scenery of this new 16km purpose built off-road section is amazing and adds an absolute highlight. It's a mix of Grade 2 (Easy) and some narrower and steeper Grade 3 (Moderate) parts. You might want to get off your bike to take photos but also perhaps to push your bike for a very short section or two. Great views await us from the top towards Benmore dam. From there a fast and enjoyable downhill section follows along the shores of Lake Aviemore. There are plenty of nice places to stop and enjoy the scenery. After crossing over Aviemore dam, we cross State Highway 83 to enjoy another off-road section to Waitaki power station and further to Kurow. There are no real highlights on the last few kilometres from Kurow to Duntroon, so we finish our cycle day in Kurow, after thoroughly enjoying the new section (time well spent!).

From Kurow we drive to Oamaru, where we spend the next two nights.

Cycling: 55 km, easy/moderate

Accommodation: Oamaru - Motel

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 6: Cycle Duntroon to Oamaru

This last part of our incredible journey is an exciting mix of cycle paths, roads and rail trails. Starting in Duntroon, we first pass a Maori rock art site before we meet the unique limestone and rock formations known as Elephant Rocks. We will explore the impressive granite rocks and embedded fossils. An off-road section takes us through several farms all the way to Rakis railway tunnel which makes a fantastic picnic spot. From here, we join the old railway line for a flat run to the coastal town of Oamaru. The trail ends at Friendly Bay near the centre of Oamaru - we made it - from the Alps to the Ocean!

Cycling: 54 km, easy/moderate

Accommodation: Oamaru - Motel

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 7: Oamaru and Return to Christchurch

With a deep sense of achievement from our massive journey, we spend a relaxing morning enjoying the unique little town of Oamaru - renowned for its Victorian architecture, fascinating history and love of Steampunk. We enjoy lunch at a local cafe (not included) before hitting the road for our return journey to Christchurch. Sit back and let your guide do the driving while enjoying the views of the Canterbury plains before we arrive back in the city in the late afternoon.

Meals: B

B-Breakfast L-Lunch D-Dinner S-Snack