



Weka cycling tour

Multi-day, fully-supported bike tour of the South Island

**Cycle to Fox Glacier and optional hike to terminal face • Natural hot pools at Hanmer Springs
Cycle Lewis Pass and Mt. Nicholas high-country station roads • Cycle the West Coast
Cruise Milford Sound and cycle Hollyford Valley • Cruise Milford Sound and cycle Hollyford
Valley • Queenstown • Bike Central Otago Rail Trail**

**13 days: Christchurch - Christchurch
US\$3499 + tax**

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 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. You can bike as little or as much as you like and there is no chance of being stuck in the middle of nowhere with a flat tyre!

Our specialist cycling guides are experienced, compassionate and enthusiastic. Our usual guide for the Weka trips is Jim Hawkrige; Jim, the author of our 'Xtreme' Rimu trip and is a serious athlete and cycling enthusiast. In between competing in, and sometimes winning, New Zealand's top multisport, mountain running and cycling races, Jim fulfills his passion for guiding cycling trips with us, so it's a win all round! Our other cycling guides are equally competent and experienced, although none would dare challenge Jim to a race! Here at ACTIVE NZ, we're all 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.

Cycling notes are provided for each day's ride describing the riding surface, terrain, and mileage. We maintain plenty of flexibility on our trips, so the mileage figures are indicative only and you are welcome to ride more or less if you wish. On most days you can also head out for an extra ride in the morning or evening to enjoy the local sights.

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.

15 - 20 miles (25 - 30km) of road riding – predominantly flat cycling to get accustomed to your bike.

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

Wednesday Cycle Lewis Pass and Matakitaiki 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 Matakitaiki River Valley towards Maruia Saddle and down into Murchison. The Matakitaiki is an upper tributary of the mighty Buller River and includes several sections of white water which are popular with local kayakers.

30 miles (50km) of downhill sealed road followed by 30 miles (50 km) of unsealed road with a gradual 1000

foot ascent along a stunning remote river valley.

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.

30 - 70 miles (50 - 110km) of road riding – slightly downhill, descending 400 feet to the coast alongside a river gorge – short coastal walk at Punakaiki.

ACCOMMODATION: Beach front Chalets, 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!

30 - 70 miles (50 - 110km) of flat road riding – coastal vistas – deserted beaches – views of the Southern Alps.

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, if you like, you can take a quiet and remote beach walk.

30 - 60 miles (50 - 100km) of undulating road riding, alongside dense native rainforest, from the base of Fox Glacier to the beach of Bruce Bay – optional one hour return hike to Fox Glacier.

ACCOMMODATION: World Heritage 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.

25 - 50 miles (40 - 80km) of road riding – an uphill stretch gaining 1,400 feet to the Haast Pass; and cycling along a smooth, gently undulating trail to Lake Wanaka.

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Wanaka Lodge, 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.

30 - 60 miles (50 - 100km) of 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 (B)

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!

40 - 60 miles (65 - 100km) of deserted farm road – steamship across Lake Wakatipu to road head – winding, undulating road with a total elevation gain of 1,000 feet - remote high-country lakes.

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Te Anau lodgings, 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 Jim's favourite rides and definitely one of the most memorable rides on the trip!

20 - 40 miles (30 - 65km) mostly downhill road and gravel road riding descending 1,000 feet – undulating terrain with breathtaking alpine scenery.

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Te Anau lodgings (B,L,D)

Friday Central Otago Rail Trail – Lauder to Danseys Pass

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, before taking a backroad through Naseby to our lodgings at Danseys Pass for a hearty roast dinner (with vegetarian options available).

30 - 70 miles (50 - 110km) of compact gravel trails, bridges, viaducts and road riding - slight uphill gradient all day with a 500 foot elevation gain.

ACCOMMODATION: Danseys Pass Coach Inn, Danseys Pass

(B,L,D)

Saturday

Cycle over Danseys Pass into Limestone Country

From Danseys Pass, we'll ride 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.

20 - 60 miles (30 - 100km) of gravel and road riding - steep uphill section gaining 1,000 feet followed by long downhill ride descending 2,500 feet before gently undulating road riding through limestone country.

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

ACCOMMODATIONS: The *Weka* is a fully-supported cycling tour of the South Island. You'll be staying in the highest level of accommodations available in the remote places we take you. While it features more creature comforts than some of our other trips, it's not a scenic tour of the luxury hotels of the South Island. We prefer to stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments. Rooming is based on twin-share, although single rooms are available upon request. As there's a variety of accommodations on this tour, most places will have ensuite bathrooms and one or two will have shared bathrooms - so we may ask you to share a bathroom 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 about 9 - 10.30am on Tuesday, and departing from Christchurch after 2.30 - 4pm on Sunday. Other flight times may also be possible - if you are considering alternative flight times please let us know.

PICK UP INFORMATION: On the first day of the tour we can either pick you up from the Heritage Hotel in Christchurch at 10.30am, or at the Christchurch domestic airport in front of the information desk at 11am.

DROP OFF INFORMATION: 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 reasonable level of cycling fitness to enjoy yourself on the *Weka*. 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 doing at least some riding. 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 you choose between the *Weka* and our other trips.

EXPERIENCE: You don't need any cycle touring experience to enjoy the *Weka* cycling tour, but if you're a seasoned cyclist you'll find plenty of challenges as well. All we ask is that you be energetic and in reasonable shape. We manage the level of commitment to suit your experience and we have an impeccable safety record. We hold all relevant government licenses and our staff are highly trained and experienced.

FLEXIBILITY: Because of the off-the-beaten path and non-commercial nature of some of our accommodation on this tour, we sometimes need to change a night stop. 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.

INCLUDED: The trip fare is US\$3499 + 12.5% NZ government taxes. We quote all prices in US dollars, so our guests from all over the world can more easily relate prices to their own currencies. You can also join for shorter periods of time, at a pro-rated fare. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- Good quality bikes for your entire tour. There is no extra charge for bike rental.
- All guiding services. We have two guides per trip, a lead guide/driver and a co-guide who is responsible for meals and accommodations. This means we can really make sure you have a great time! We operate with small groups and we don't hesitate to offer a second departure when our trips start getting full.
- Comfortable accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organize accommodation for you if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- All your meals, except in Queenstown where we've found people prefer to check out the wide range of restaurants. Alcohol is not generally included, although we do spring for a few drinks here and there!
- All cycling described in the itinerary, except optional extra activities. There are many optional activities available at extra cost, particularly in Queenstown. None of these activities are compulsory and nor will your trip seem less awesome if you do the cheap or free options. Although some people enjoy sampling hang gliding, bungee jumping, jet boating, skydiving, and so on, others prefer to focus on more cycling, which is of course the reason you're coming to New Zealand in the first place!

NOT INCLUDED: This is your holiday, and we are serious about not nickel-and-diming 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 on your ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND tour!

We'll see you soon!

Itinerary valid through April 2009