

## **Swain Destinations: Natural New Zealand**

### **Day 1 USA to Auckland**

Today you will begin your Swain Destinations customized itinerary. Please note, international air has not been included in this package price.

### **Day 2 Cross the International Date Line**

Cross the International Date Line, an imaginary line on the surface of the Earth that runs from the North to the South Pole - and defines one calendar day from the next. Crossing the International Date Line adds one day (24 hours) traveling west, and subtracts one day (24 hours) traveling east.

### **Day 3 Welcome to Auckland, New Zealand**

You will be met by your driver outside the customs and immigration area. You will be transferred to your Auckland city accommodation.

Auckland, 'City of Sails', located between two stunning harbors, enjoys a mild year-round climate. Auckland is the country's most visited region and largest urban area, offering exciting activities and great shopping.

The City lies across an 11km wide volcanic isthmus separating two harbors. The Waitemata to the east opens into the Hauraki Gulf, and to the Pacific Ocean. The Manukau Harbour to the west offers many estuaries and surf beaches and opens to the Tasman Sea.

Skycity Grand Hotel

### **Day 4 Auckland to Coromandel**

Your nature-loving guide will meet you at your Auckland accommodation this morning. Escape from the city in the air-conditioned luxury of Kiwi Dundee Adventures' mini coach, traveling south through picturesque farmland and along the seabird coast to the beautiful, historic Coromandel Peninsula. Visit the fascinating old goldmine town of Thames with its buildings and churches dating from the 1860's.

After a delightful lunch, travel over spectacular volcanic mountains to the Pacific coast of the Peninsula, stopping to admire a giant Kauri tree, over 24 feet around and set amongst the world's largest ferns and semi tropical rainforest. Enjoy a gentle walk through forest to a stunning uninhabited white sand beach and off shore islands, after which a short journey to a quiet coastal town takes you to your accommodation for the next two nights.

Grand Mercure Puka Park Resort

### **Day 5 Glowworms, Giant Ferns & Beaches**

Highlights of your day may include a leisurely walk through a beautiful regenerating Kauri forest full of fern trees, along the old tracks of Puketui, the 1890's gold mining town. See glowworms in an historic old gold cave and learn about the flora and fauna of this magical area.

Lunch will be at a delightful cafe, or a delicious picnic with a chance to view your guide's spectacular collection of quartz, obsidian, minerals, old photos of the Coromandel and beautiful rocks full of gold.

From the panorama of mountains and forest, travel to the contrasting coastal scenery with beautiful beaches, off-shore islands and magnificent cliffs decorated with ancient Pohutukawa trees. Visit Hotwater Beach (tide permitting) where you can dabble your feet in the natural hot-springs on the beach. Walk to the old Maori fortification to enjoy the spectacular panorama. Visit the famous Cooks Beach where you will learn the fascinating history of the area.

Grand Mercure Puka Park Resort  
Meals: B, L

### **Day 6 Coastlines, Orchards, Craters & Mud**

Today is an ever-changing panorama of forests, mountains, beaches and islands before leaving the Coromandel behind to enter the Bay of Plenty, home to plantations of kiwi fruit, citrus, avocados, flowers and deer farms to name a few. Stop at New Zealand's 'Mural town', Katikati, with its open-air art on the history of the area. Continue south to visit a private working orchard, growing Kiwi fruit, avocados and export flowers.

After a delightful lunch, continue to Rotorua, the thermal city built in the crater of a huge volcano. Your guide will give you an overview of this fascinating region before arriving at your overnight accommodation.

The Springs  
Meals: B, L

### **Day 7 Rotorua to Christchurch**

Today you will transfer to the airport for the flight to the South Island and the garden city of Christchurch. On arrival you will be met by your guide from Canterbury Trails and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation for the next two nights.

The George  
Meals: B

### **Day 8 Christchurch**

Today is a day on your own to explore this city which is sometimes said to be 'more English than England'. Founded by English settlers in 1850, Christchurch became a city by Royal Charter in 1856 which makes it the oldest officially established city in New Zealand. The peace. The open spaces. The lush colors and rich textures of a city, where a leisurely pace still prevails, never fail to capture the imagination.

Officially known as the 'Garden City', Christchurch has over 3,000 hectares of parklands which include Hagley Park and the famous Botanic Gardens. Christchurch is perfect for exploring on foot because it is attractive, fascinating – and flat! The central city is a particularly dynamic place, offering numerous opportunities to shop, sightsee and socialize. Hop aboard one of the beautifully restored vintage trams, hire a bicycle, enjoy a punt on the Avon River or simply stroll about on foot.

Day tours to Akaroa and Kaikoura are also available as an optional extra.

The George  
Meals: B

### **Day 9 Christchurch, Plains & Alps**

After being met by your guide at noon, you will be driven through the 'Garden City' and up onto the

Port Hills, the flanks of one of the ancient extinct volcanoes that form the Banks Peninsula. From the hills there are spectacular views of the city and the Kaikoura Range can be seen far to the north, while the Pacific Ocean sparkles to the east. To the south and west the vast Canterbury Plains stretch to the horizon and in the distance, the Southern Alps beckon you to discover them.

The tour will then escape the city and start the journey west across the Canterbury Plains. Crossing Porter's Pass, a dramatic landscape change occurs as you enter the high country, a high tussock grass basin bounded by the Torlesse Mountains to the east and the Craigieburn Mountains to the west. Traveling through this region you will pass glacial formed lakes and the limestone formations of Castle Hill which dominate the landscape. Further on, you will reach the wide expanse of the Wai-makariri River and the Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass.

Wilderness Lodge At Arthur's Pass

Meals: B, D

### **Day 10 High Country, Sheep, Valleys and Keas**

This is a day to discover the real high country - a day where you can explore and learn about the alpine landscape, plants and the animals in the spectacular Southern Alps. From the lodge, head into the heart of the Southern Alps - Arthur's Pass National Park which has an incredible diversity of flora and landscape, ranging from the eastern beech clad hills and tussock grass valleys to the luxuriant rain forest in the west. In Arthur's Pass National Park, you may take walks to see waterfalls, learn about the forests and alpine plants of this area and experience the alpine landscape. Seek out and hopefully find a unique South Island personality who is mischievous, inquisitive, comical and rowdy; the cheeky kea - the world's only alpine parrot.

A tour of the high country sheep farm, which is part of the lodge will enable you to visit the woolshed and see a sheepdog demonstration. For those who might be escaping from a busy lifestyle and are seeking some quiet relaxation, the lodge's guest lounge is just the place to relax and gaze at the surrounding peaks or perhaps take a short nature walk.

Wilderness Lodge At Arthur's Pass

Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 11 Mountains, Pioneers and Ice**

After breakfast, travel through Arthur's Pass National Park and depart Canterbury province for Westland (The West Coast). Originally used by the Maori to move greenstone from the west coast and later as a link to the gold rush fields, this route will reveal great mountain valleys as it winds its way down the spectacular Otira Gorge - a geographer's dream. Travel on a back country road, walk through old gold Miners' tunnels and marvel at the tenacity of the miners in their quest for gold.

Visit Hokitika, once the capital of Westland, a roaring gold mining town and also a place where the Maori sought their treasured greenstone (jade). Greenstone is a feature in the town's bustling center of art and craft shops. Heading further south see the West Coast bush and further evidence of the last Ice Age in the kettle lakes created by the melting ice sheets. Stop at Franz Josef and view the Franz Josef Glacier pushing into rainforest - truly incredible! Continue to Fox Glacier for the night.

Distinction Fox Glacier - Te Weheka Boutique Hotel

Meals: B

### **Day 12 Geology, Ice Age and Podocarps**

A day to explore the glaciated landscape of the Fox Glacier region. Walks are available to the

terminal face of the Glaciers and to a viewpoint to witness the Glacier's descent down the mountain into the rainforest. Here you can also experience a guided hike on the Glacier with an alpine guide or perhaps an exciting helicopter ride to view the Southern Alps with a snow landing on the upper reaches of the glacier. (Please note that the optional glacial hike and helicopter trips are not included in the tour cost and are subject to the weather).

After lunch, a beautiful and tranquil walk can be taken around the edge of Lake Matheson. Alternatively, take a drive through the lush rainforest to a remote beach on the Tasman Sea for views of the alps and the chance to look for the rare Hector's Dolphins. From Fox Glacier, travel south to the Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki, set in the heart of Te Wahi Pounamu – the South West New Zealand World heritage area.

Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki  
Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 13 Wilderness, Wildlife and Rainforests**

Today is an opportunity to spend the day at a Wilderness Lodge with its own special attractions and complimentary guided activities. Untouched lowland rain forests spread between pristine lakes and rivers which drain the snow-capped Southern Alps. This special place is home to breeding colonies of the rare Fiordland Crested Penguin (seasonal), the world's smallest dolphin, the Hector's Dolphins and numerous native birds. Lake Moeraki is a nature lover's paradise.

Visits can be made to wild and remote beaches and activities include guided walks to get close to the wildlife, learn about the rainforest and experience the amazing scenery. If you prefer to have a restful day then you can take a canoe out on the tranquil lake or just relax in the lodge.

Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki  
Meals: B, L, D

### **Day 14 Coastline, Explorers, Tussocks and Gold**

From Lake Moeraki, travel to nearby Ship Creek. Here, from a viewing tower on the beach there is a good chance of seeing the rare Hector's Dolphin playing beyond the surf. Walk through a primeval swamp forest to see ancient 'dinosaur' trees, view a coastal lagoon and fossick for greenstone on the remote beach.

Continuing the drive along the Haast Highway, observe how the landscape again changes dramatically as the road climbs over the Haast Pass from the dense rain forest of the West Coast to the drier tussock lands of the Otago province. On the way, there are short walks to see waterfalls and if there has been recent rainfall, the Haast River passing through the gorge known as the Gates of Haast can be truly spectacular. Further along, the road skirts first along the banks of Lake Wanaka and then making a slight turn and rising over a ridge, Lake Hawea is before you. The road follows the shoreline of this lake and to the alpine village of Wanaka - a quiet mountain resort on the southern shores of Lake Wanaka.

From Wanaka, pass the old gold mining village of Cardrona and head over the rugged and remote Crown Range, the site of gold diggings in the 1860's. From the top of the Crown Range there are dramatic views of the Queenstown district, before descending to the valley floor and reach the quaint and historic village of Arrowtown. It is then a short drive to your accommodation for the next three nights.

Sofitel Queenstown Hotel & Spa

Meals: B

### **Day 15 Adventure or Relaxing in the Mountains**

A free day for you to experience and enjoy some of the many activities which Queenstown has to offer. You might like to enjoy a relaxing cruise on the old steamship Earnslaw, the lady of the lake. For those wanting more excitement, try an exhilarating jetboat trip through the Shotover Canyon. There are wineries to visit and also an art and craft trail around the district to visit some of the many artists and craft studios. Golf and horse trekking are other possibilities available in Queenstown. For those who wish to hike, a climb up Queenstown Hill offers spectacular views or perhaps a walk around a remote and beautiful glacial lake. Your guide is available to transfer you to the venues and activities of your choice, in the Queenstown area (please note that activities are not included in the tour cost).

Millbrook Resort

Meals: B

### **Day 16 Milford, Glacial Lakes, Alps & Fiords**

The road to Milford Sound through the Fiordland National Park is justifiably almost as famous as the sound itself. To Te Anau there is farmland, then there are lakes and tussock flats and then the breathtaking sheer U shaped glaciated valleys. As the road proceeds, the landscape becomes more rugged and the sound of water becomes more prominent, especially after rain when it roars and there are waterfalls everywhere.

At Te Anau there is a bird sanctuary where you can catch a glimpse of the extremely rare Takahe, one of NZ's flightless native birds as well as some of our other rare birds. On the journey to Milford Sound, you can see waterfalls, spectacular alpine views and lakes. The Homer Tunnel, started in the Great Depression is a tribute to the laborers who made this route possible. Dug through the Darran Mountains into the Cled-dau Valley, it gives access to Milford Sound, a truly majestic place voted as one of the seven scenic wonders of the world. You will then explore the magic of the fiord on a small boat cruise before heading back to Queenstown.

Optional extras (not included in tour cost) for the day are a return flight from Milford to Queenstown by plane or perhaps a private helicopter charter with a snow landing.

Millbrook Resort

Meals: B

### **Day 17 Queenstown to USA (Via Auckland)**

After breakfast, time for last minute shopping or to experience that last piece of adventure before you are bid farewell to New Zealand as you transfer to the airport for your departure flight back to the USA.