

Weka cycling tour



Multi-day, fully-supported bike trip of the South Island • Cycle to Fox Glacier and hike to terminal face • Natural hot pools at Hanmer Springs • Cycle Lewis Pass and Mt. Nicholas high-country station road • Cycle the West Coast • Cruise Milford Sound and cycle Hollyford Valley • Explore Queenstown • Bike Central Otago Rail Trail

13 days: Christchurch–Christchurch

Fare: US\$3999 + 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. Here at ACTIVE NZ, we're all very 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..

DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

Cycling notes and maps 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.

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 fave - with only 40,000 people on a 400 mile stretch of coast, it's off-the-beaten-track, but a real hoot to see from handlebar level!"

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 Matakītaki 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 Matakītaki River Valley towards Maruia Saddle and down into Murchison. The Matakītaki 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, Punakaiki to Kakapōtahi 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 Kakapōtahi. 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.

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 Heartland Hotel, Haast (B,L,D)

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 Hawea, 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: Wanaka hotel, Wanaka (B,L,D)

MONDAY

Cycle the Cardrona Valley and 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)

"The Weka was the most memorable trip I've ever taken. Seeing New Zealand's South Island by bike was incredible... I don't think I'd do it any other way. I felt healthy, fit, and re-energized at the end of the two weeks and can't wait to do another trip with Active in the future!"

Amy Thomas (Hawaii, USA) November 2008

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, Queenstown (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

Andrew: "While the Weka is predominantly a road biking trip, the versatility of our bikes 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."

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)

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 unspoiled beech forest and towering peaks. This is one of our 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, Te Anau (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

Specific Information – Weka

ACCOMMODATION: 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.

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.

TRIP START: On the first day of the tour we can either pick you up from the Chateau on the Park in Christchurch at 10.30am, or at the Christchurch domestic airport in front of the information desk at 11am.

TRIP END: 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.

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)

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.

INCLUDED: Details of what's included in your trip fare are available in the General Information section on the next page. In addition, our Weka trip includes:

- 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 accommodation. 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.

For more information on accommodation, fitness and experience requirements and what's included in the trip fare, see 'General Information' overleaf.



General Information

We've included trip-specific details in the Specific Information section at the end of each itinerary. This is also where you can find details on recommended flights, pick ups and drop offs.

ACCOMMODATION: We've chosen interesting and comfortable accommodations for all of our trips. Some places are quite civilised, but many of the other locations we visit are off-the-beaten-track – and don't have many accommodation options – but they are really, really spectacular. We think you'll love the places we stay! We prefer to stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments. Rooming is based on twin-share, although single room upgrades are available on request. As there's such a variety of accommodation on our trips, some places will have ensuite bathrooms and some will have shared bathrooms – so we may ask you to share a bathroom with other group members on occasion.

FITNESS: You must have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on our trips. 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 exercise. Age and experience are not important, but our trips are not passive scenic tours of New Zealand. For example, a person in their 50s who hikes every couple of weeks will be happier than a 22-year-old couch potato. If you're concerned about your fitness level, have a chat with us so we can help you choose between our trips.

Our focus is on getting you out of the vehicle, out of stress-mode, and into the scenery.

EXPERIENCE: You don't need any outdoor experience at all to enjoy our trips. All our trips allow you to make the most of New Zealand's incredible environment. Our experienced guides are highly trained and will look after you!

You don't have to carry a heavy pack on hikes and you don't have to have been kayaking or rafting to enjoy taking to the water. You don't even need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy some of the rides we have available. In fact we have so many options available that you don't need to ride at all if you'd rather hike, fish, or just laze around!

All we ask is that you be energetic, in reasonable shape and we guarantee you'll have an incredible time. The challenges are there though, if you're looking for them. We manage the level of commitment to suit your experience and we have an impeccable safety record. We hold all relevant government licenses and permits.

FLEXIBILITY: Because of the off-the-beaten-path and non-commercial nature of some of our accommodation, we sometimes need to change a night stop. When we do this the daily activities don't change and we use accommodation of a similar level. We try

to make as few changes as possible, but we ask that you know we retain the flexibility to make sure your trip is as good as it can be.

INCLUDED: Your trip fare is quoted in US dollars so our guests from all over the world can more easily relate prices to their own currencies. The trip fare doesn't include air fares to or from the trip start and end points or NZ government taxes which are 15%. You can join most of our trips for shorter periods of time, at a pro-rated fare. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- All guiding services. We have two guides per trip, a Lead Guide/driver and a Co-Guide who is responsible for meals and accommodation. This means we can really make sure you have a great time! We operate with small groups and we are happy to offer a second departure when our trips start filling up.
- Comfortable accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organise pre- and post-trip accommodation for you if you let us know.
- Breakfast (B), lunch (L), and dinner (D), except during free time in places like 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 hiking, kayaking, cycling, rafting and caving described in the itineraries, except the optional extra activities. Optional activities are available at extra cost, particularly in Franz Josef and Queenstown. We have estimated the rates for optional extra activities operated by local activity operators in US dollars, including all required equipment, but these rates may vary according to the USD/NZD exchange rate on the day.
- None of these activities are compulsory, nor will your trip seem less awesome if you do the cheap or free options. Although some people enjoy sampling extra activities others prefer to focus more on the hiking, paddling and cycling, which is of course the reason you're coming to New Zealand in the first place!
- Transport during our trips, in a comfortable vehicle.

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 trip!

ITINERARY UPDATES: We update our itineraries each April so please check our website for the most up-to-date itineraries and pricing.

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