



Alpine Pacific Triangle - South Island

Compact and highly scenic, the Alpine Pacific Triangle takes you to the wine and food experience of Waipara.

Itinerary Overview

Recommended Days:

4 Days

Distance:

600 kms

Best time of year:

Anytime

Itinerary Highlights

This South Island road journey is a pleasant and easy drive beginning at its southern end just 45 minutes from Christchurch and at its northern end from Kaikoura.

At almost every turn a new vista unfolds - pastoral countryside, majestic mountains, rivers, forests, lakes and seascapes combine the sculptured limestone formations and bubbling hot springs to capture your imagination

Day 1: Commence in Christchurch

While the September 2010 and February 2011 earthquakes caused massive damage and upheaval in Christchurch it is still a must on all itineraries.

We suggest you spend a day or two in the city which is reinventing itself in a unique way. A small area of the business district remains closed to the public, but a new "pop up" city has emerged. This ingenious use of shipping containers has brightened the environment and boosted the morale of its business community.

Sight seeing Tours are available to show you the best that Christchurch has to offer, beautiful parks and gardens, quaint seaside suburbs and superb views of the city and surrounds. Look for the Red Double Decker Bus for a fun and informative tour and see some of the areas affected by the earthquakes. Visit the International Antarctic Centre which is unique working Antarctic campus and the only one of its kind in the world. Have fun in real snow and ice or get "exhilarated" in the Antarctic Storm!

Take an exciting outdoor ride on a genuine antarctic vehicle - the Hagglund. These vehicles will take you over a purpose built adventure course where you will experience the amazing capabilities of these unique Antarctic work horses. One hours drive from Christchurch is Akaroa, a delightful "French" inspired village. Plan a day trip to explore the galleries craft stores and cafes over looking the picturesque harbour. Fresh locally caught seafood features on menus, along with fine wines from the Canterbury region.

Join one of the cruises around the harbour where the dolphins "play" alongside the boat. Akaroa Harbour is the only place on the planet where you can swim with the worlds smallest and rarest dolphins - the Hector's or New Zealands Dolphin. From Christchurch drive 58 kms along State Highway 1 to Waipara where you will commence the Alpine Pacific Triangle.

Recommended Activities

- > Punt on the Avon River
- > Visit Hagley Park
- > City Sightseeing Tour
- > The International Antartic Centre
- > Visit Akaroa
- > Kowhai River Walk

Day 4: Kaikoura - Waipara

122 kms - 1 hour 45 mins

Lying on the coastal route between Kaikoura and Amberley, Cheviot is another great base for those who enjoy fishing and hiking. Gore Bay, one of the safest surf beaches in the South Island, lies just out of town.

Cheviot lies between the Waiau and Hurunui Rivers, meaning those who enjoy fishing are spoilt for choice, with plenty salmon and trout to be caught. As you drive along State Highway 1 on your return to Christchurch take the time to check out some of the many walks along the way. One of these is the Amberley Beach Walkway, a flat, easy walk of about 2 kms that makes a figure 8. To find it turn down Amberley Beach Road, turn left into Grierson Avenue and follow that road until it merges into Golf Links Road. The walkway will be on your left not far from the Amberley Golf Course.

Recommended Activities

- > Amberley Beach
- > Walk The Weka pass
- > Grey River Nature Trail
- > Kowhai River Walk

Day 3: Hanmer Springs - Kaikoura

135 kms - 2 hours 30 mins

From Hanmer Springs take State Highway 7 back to State Highway 70 and continue on to the coastal township of Kaikoura. Kaikoura's nutrient waters make it a favourite location for a host of marine life.

Sperm whales frequent the waters year round, migratory Humpbacks arrive in June and summer sees the arrival of Orca whales. Permanent residents include the tiny Hector dolphins and the high spirited Dusky dolphins, Royal Albatross and a huge variety of other pelagic birds. Kaikoura is also famous for its fishing and succulent crayfish.

Recommended Activities

- > Whale Watching
- > Seal Swim
- > Kayaking

Day 2: Waipara to Hanmer Springs

77 kms - 1 hour

The first leg takes you on state Highway 7 through the Waipara Valley. This valley is one of New Zealand's fastest expanding grape growing regions, and its gaining a fine reputation for its Pinots, Rieslings, Chardonnays and Sauvignon wines.

Many wineries are open to the public and several have restaurants featuring local cuisine. The fascinating diversity of the local terroir is also ideal for olive farms, nut farms, lavender and other flower growing. The Waipara Valley Wine and Food Festival, held annually on the last Sunday of March, gives the region's growers a chance to showcase their produce, and visitors the opportunity to savour a selection of local wines and foods.

For over one hundred years the thermal pools at Hanmer Springs have been attracting visitors eager to rejuvenate themselves in their therapeutic waters. Hanmer Springs is an alpine village and its environment of rivers and mountains makes it an appealing destination all year round with a good mix of activities for everyone to try - anything from forest walks, thermal pools and gold to jet boating, horse trekking, mountain biking and bungee jumping.

Recommended Activities

- > Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools
- > Jet Boating
- > River Rafting