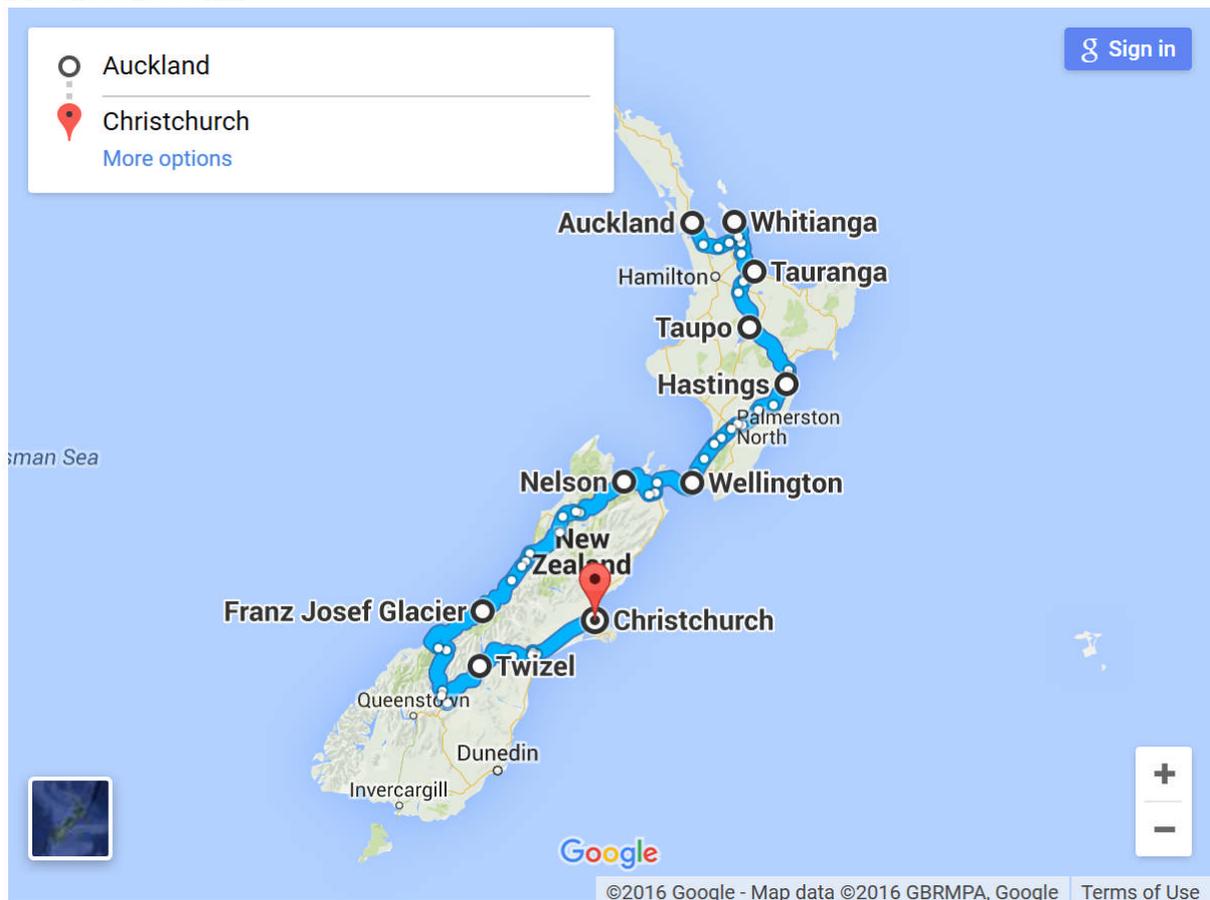


# Auckland to Christchurch in 10 days

- Auckland to Whitianga
- Whitianga to Tauranga
- Tauranga to Taupo
- Taupo to Hastings
- Hastings to Wellington
- Wellington to Nelson
- Nelson to Hokitika
- Hokitika to Franz Josef Glacier
- Franz Josef Glacier to Twizel
- Twizel to Christchurch

Distance: 2360 km



## Day 1. Auckland to Whitianga

Pick up your campervan in Auckland today. Allow at least one hour for pick up and time to familiarise yourself with your vehicle before you leave the depot.

Depart this morning and take the State Highway 1, SH 2, State Highway 25, State Highway 25A and State Highway 25 to Buffalo Beach in Whitianga.

Te Whanganui-A-Hei, also known as Cathedral Cove, is a must-visit for tourists. Isolated from civilisation, you can only see the cove through walking, boat or kayak. There are several walking trails which will take you to not only Cathedral Cove, but Gemstone Bay and Mares Leg. The vivid turquoise waters and shelter from the cove will entice you into this natural wonder.

Explore the Mercury Bay Museum, located in an old dairy factory from the 1930s. The museum takes you through the history of the Mercury Bay area, touching on both its Maori and European heritage. The museum has an array of displays covering everything from the shipwrecks in the bay, the Polynesian navigator Kupe and displays about the natural history in the area. This fascinating insight into the area will quench your thirst for knowledge, and spouting facts for days about Mercury Bay.

Distance: 190 km, 2 hours 30 minutes.

Stay: Mercury Bay Holiday Park.

## **Day 2. Whitianga to Tauranga**

Depart this morning and take the State Highway 25 and SH2 to Cameron Road in Tauranga.

Climb to the summit of Mount Maunganui, also known as Mauao, to see the spectacular sites of the Bay of Plenty coastline, Pacific Ocean and the town of Tauranga. The mountain is very special to the locals, with mythic tales surrounding how the mountain came to be. The summit is 232 m high and will take roughly 40 minutes to reach it, so don't forget water. Whilst there, the Mount Maunganui Main Beach has been crowned one of the best beaches in New Zealand, and is perfect for cooling off after your climb up the mountain.

If you are a fan of The Lord of the Rings films, why not take a tour to Hobbiton to see where some of the films was filmed. Walk along the rolling hills of Middle Earth, where Frodo and his friends undertook the ultimate journey to destroy the One Ring, and have a meal in a recreation of one of their taverns. With a diverse range of locations, with everything from mountains to farmlands, so even if you are not a fan of the films, you will still find something to love about New Zealand's beauty.

Distance: 165 km, 2 hours 30 minutes.

Stay: Silverbirch Holiday Park & Hotel.

## Day 3. Tauranga to Taupo

Depart this morning and take Elizabeth Street to SH2. Take Takitimu Drive to State Highway 29 in Tauriko. Continue on State Highway 29 to Tapapa. Turn right onto SH 5/ State Highway 28 to Lichfield. Turn left onto State Highway 1, and follow Thermal Explorer Highway to Tamamutu Street in Taupo.

For the thrill-seekers out there, Taupo is a great place to try jet boating through the Aratiatia Rapids that spill out from the dam each day. Bounce along the top of the rapids as you speed along the river. To get even closer to the water, arm yourself with a helmet and oar and try some river rafting.

The Taupo Museum & Ora Garden of Wellbeing is a great insight into the Maori culture. See an authentic Kiwiana caravan, art galleries, and a virtual tour of the Tongariro Alpine crossing. The award-winning Garden of Wellbeing is a ‘living’ exhibit, where the native flora and steamy geothermal areas will relax you after a long day.

Distance: 150 km, 1 hour 50 minutes.

Stay: Great Lake Holiday Park Taupo.

## Day 4. Taupo to Hastings

Depart this morning and continue along the Thermal Explorer Highway/ SH5. Follow to Hawke’s Bay and then take Evenden Road, Pakowhai Road and St Aubyn Street W to Nelson Street in Hastings.

Visit the Te Mata Park, one of the many nature parks, which holds a strong history and cultural importance to the Maori people. The ‘Drive to the Top’ is a rite of passage for locals and visitors alike. When you reach the top, you will be surrounded by magnificent views of the Heretaunga Plains, the Ruahine and Kaweka Ranges. Take a picnic and spend the day walking the nature trails and enjoying the peacefulness of the mountain.

Pick up some local produce at the Hastings Farmers Market on a Sunday morning. Go with an empty stomach and try some of their famous cheeses and preserves. The market comes alive with buskers and entertainers, and is a great chance to pick up some bargains on locally produced goods.

Distance: 160 km, 2 hours.

Stay: Hastings TOP 10 Holiday Park.

## Day 5. Hastings to Wellington

Depart this morning and take the SH2 to State Highway 57 to State Highway 1 in Levin. Follow the State Highway 1 to Willeston Street in Wellington.

Visit Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand. Established in 1865, it is a must-visit, especially to see their latest exhibition “Gallipoli: The scale of our war”. It tells the story of eight New Zealanders during the Gallipoli campaign in World War I. Using large sculptures, 2.3 x normal human size, the haunting stories of these brave Kiwis will be with you long after you leave the museum.

Continuing with the theme of war, check out the Great War Exhibition. Walk through The Great Hall of Wellington, which depicts year by year what happened in World War I with the ANZACs. Currently under development, the Trench Experience will immerse visitors in the war experience, with recreations of the sights and smells.

Distance: 295 km, 4 hours.

Stay: Wellington’s Kiwi Holiday Park.

## **Day 6. Wellington to Nelson**

Depart this morning and drive from Waterloo Quay and Aotea Quay to Pipitea. Pre-book a ticket for the Interislander Cook Strait Ferry, and take the ferry to cross to the South Island. Take the State Highway 6 to Trafalgar Street in The Wood, Nelson.

In Milton Street, you will find the centre of New Zealand. Marked by a sign, the middle of New Zealand sits up on a hill, so you will find beautiful views of Nelson surrounding you. The best time to go is during either sunrise or sunset for spectacular views – one to definitely bring your camera to. There are many trails around, so why not extend your walk and see more.

For something that you would have never seen anything like before, visit the World of Wearable Art & Classic Cars Museum. Each year, thousands of visitors come to this unique attraction which contains one of Australasia’s largest collections of classic cars. Alongside the cars, you can see over 60 pieces of competition-winning wearable art, something you cannot see at many museums.

Distance: 235 km, 5 hours 30 minutes.

Stay: Nelson City TOP 10 Holiday Park.

## **Day 7. Nelson to Hokitika**

Depart this morning and take Waimea Road to State Highway 6. Follow State Highway 6 to State Highway 69 in Inangahua. Follow State Highway 69 to State Highway 7 in Reefton. Follow State Highway 7 to State Highway 6 in Hokitika.

Visit the Hokitika Gorge, with lush native bush and vivid blue waters, it is the perfect place to take postcard worthy photos. Hire a kayak and discover the waters up close, or take a picnic and walk along the Gorge Walk to see the podocarp forest and swing bridge.

For an authentically New Zealand experience, visit The National Kiwi Centre. Dedicated to protecting their national icon, see these beautiful birds up close and personal. You can also have a go at feeding the eels, which are up to 100 years old, or see the Tuatara, New Zealand's oldest living dinosaur.

Distance: 325 km, 4 hours 13 minutes.

Stay: Hokitika Camping Ground and Holiday Park.

## **Day 8. Hokitika to Franz Josef Glacier**

Depart this morning and head south-west on State Highway 6 towards Weld Street. Turn right and stay on State Highway 6. Turn left onto Cowan Street.

As it says in the title, you must visit the Franz Josef Glacier. The 12 km long glacier offers an experience for everyone in the family, from hiking around it, relaxing in the hot pools, or for the more experienced, actually climbing the glacier. The icy glacier juxtaposed with the surrounding rainforests is a striking picture of beauty, and is a fun day out for the whole family.

Distance: 135 km, 1 hour 40 minutes.

Stay: Rainforest Holiday Park.

## **Day 9. Franz Josef Glacier to Twizel**

Depart this morning and take the State Highway 6. Follow to State Highway 8 to Ruataniwha Road in Pukaki. Turn left onto Ruataniwha Road into Twizel.

Twizel is another popular destination to take a Lord of the Rings tour. Dress up as your favourite character or learn about some exclusive behind the scenes trivia. A bit further south, there are even more film locations, utilising all that New Zealand has to offer. Perfect for any fan of the film franchise, and film buffs alike.

Twizel is also a great town for salmon. Visit the Mt. Cook Alpine Salmon Farm for a freshly cooked meal. Nothing beats the flavours from locally-produced food. Match your fish to a local wine and enjoy a relaxing finish to your day.

Distance: 420 km, 5 hours.

Stay: Twizel Holiday Park.

## **Day 10. Twizel to Christchurch**

Depart this morning and turn left onto State Highway 8. Follow State Highway 79 to SH 1 in Rangitata. Follow SH 1 to Montreal Street in Sydenham, Christchurch.

Visit the 185 Empty White Chairs, a memorial to those who lost their lives from the Christchurch earthquake in 2011. Each chair is a poignant reminder of the devastation from the earthquake, emphasising the fragility of life.



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The Air Force museum of Christchurch is the national museum for the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Located on a former airbase, the museum has over 30 historic aircrafts and exhibitions. A particular highlight is the Mosquito Flight Simulator, where you can fly through the French countryside during 1944, based upon the Amiens Prison Raid.

Allow up to 60 minutes to return your campervan.

Distance: 285 km, 3 hours 20 minutes.

Stay: Amber Kiwi Holiday Park.