

The Otago Rail Trail



**A Journey Into The Past
Through Spectacular
Central Otago**

4 Days, 3 Nights

Easy Grade



**Tour Cost (NZD)
2026 / 2027**

Tour Cost: \$2750

Single Supplement: \$540

Tour Highlights

- The iconic Central Otago Rail Trail
- Easy scenic trail riding
- Rich history
- Support from our experienced guide



Tuataratours NZ Ltd, PO Box 13544, Christchurch 8141, New Zealand



www.tuataratours.co.nz



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The Tour at a Glance

An easy ride along 150 km of scenic off-road trail following a historic railway line, with a gentle 2% max incline. Starting in Clyde, you'll pass through the towns of Alexandra, Chatto Creek, Omakau, Lauder, Oturehua, Wedderburn, Ranfurly, Waipiata, Hyde, to finish in Middelmarsh.

Trip Grading: Easy

Ideal for anyone comfortable biking 15–20km per day on well-formed trails with very little incline.

Pre-tour

We travel to Queenstown the day before the tour begins. If you would like to hitch a ride with us from Christchurch, please just let us know. There is no additional cost for this.

Please note, if you choose to join us for the journey, we ask that you arrange your pre-tour accommodation in Arrowtown, as this is where your guide will be staying.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Day 1 Clyde to Lauder

44km

Day 2 Lauder to Ranfurly

48km

Day 3 Ranfurly to Hyde

33km

Day 4 Hyde to Middelmarsh – Queenstown

40km

About your guide

Our guides are very experienced, friendly walkers and bikers who love to share their knowledge of New Zealand's flora and fauna and local history.

They all hold current first aid certificates, passenger driving licences and are the very best people to ensure your experience will be one to remember.



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Day 1 Clyde to Lauder (44 km)

Your adventure starts with a pickup in Queenstown around 8:30am, followed by a short drive to Clyde. That's where the real fun begins—hopping on bikes for the first stretch of the Otago Rail Trail.

The ride to Alexandra is full of wide-open views through rolling farmland. From there, the trail gently climbs toward Chatto Creek, levelling out near Omakau, with a quick detour to the charming village of Ophir—a hidden gem packed with old-world character and photo-worthy moments.

Today's highlights include the iconic Muttontown Viaduct, the historic Old Tucker Hill gold diggings, and stunning views of the Dunstan Mountains and Raggedy Range.

MEALS INCLUDED: L D

Day 2 Lauder to Ranfurly (48 km)

The morning starts with a short bus ride to the historic gold-mining town of St Bathans, where a stroll around the stunning Blue Lake sets the scene for the day. Then it's back on the trail and into today's biking adventure.

The ride winds through two old railway tunnels and over a couple of classic rail bridges, opening up into the beautiful Idaburn Valley. A gentle climb leads to the highest point of the trail—then it's all downhill into the charming art deco town of Ranfurly.

Along the way, there's no shortage of highlights: the dramatic Poolburn Gorge Viaduct and tunnels, the wide-open Ida Valley made famous by artist Grahame Sydney, the quirky Idaburn Dam (a local favourite for winter curling), and the fascinating Hayes Engineering Works, where some of New Zealand's most iconic inventions were born.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 3 Ranfurly to Hyde (33 km)

The day kicks off with something a bit different—a visit to Naseby for a game of curling at the only dedicated indoor rink in the Southern Hemisphere. It's a hands-on experience and a real local favourite.

After heading back to Ranfurly, it's time to jump back on the bikes. The trail rolls out toward Waipiata, skirts the edge of an ancient lakebed, and winds into the stunning Taieri Gorge. There's a mix of tunnels, bridges, and open spaces before a fast and fun downhill ride into Hyde.

Highlights include trying your hand at curling, cruising across the vast Maniototo Plains, following the winding Taieri River, and crossing the impressive Prices Creek Viaduct.

MEALS INCLUDED: B L D

Day 4 Hyde to Middelmarsh-Queenstown (40 km)

Setting off from Hyde, the trail heads toward the rural town of Middelmarsh—best known for its Easter Singles Ball. Winding through classic Central Otago scenery, there are wide-open views of the Rock and Pillar and Taieri Ranges. Along the way, pause at the Hyde Railway Disaster memorial and enjoy a smooth descent into the sweeping Strath Taieri Plain.

Before returning to Queenstown, there's time for one last scenic spin—this time along the beautiful Clutha River—before being dropped off at your accommodation, with plenty of great memories to take with you.

MEALS INCLUDED : B L



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What's Included



All Accommodation in comfortable hotel, motel or lodges, with ensuite facilities



Support vehicle and all transfers



DOC concession fees



Tour Kit Bag with helpful goodies



All meals during the tour—great local cuisine



Entrance fees to listed activities



Fully qualified, knowledgeable guide



Please Note:

Rooms are double or twin, either one queen bed or two separate beds. If you have a preference for a twin room please let us know when you make your booking. Solo travellers can choose to share or pay a single supplement for a private room

Dietary needs? We're happy to cater for gluten free, dairy free and vegetarian diets—just let us know at time of booking.

What's Not Included

Alcoholic beverages with meals – these are available for purchase.

Pre- and post-tour accommodation

Bike hire – you're welcome to bring your own bike, or you can hire one from our extensive fleet of e-bikes and mountain bikes. See our bike page for full details.



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Your travel check list:

The following is a list of recommended items. Please also use your own experience to supplement this list. **If you're bringing your own bike**, don't forget essential spares such as tyres and tubes, as well as your e-bike charger—ours may not be compatible. If you're unsure about anything, feel free to contact us.



	Waterproof rain jacket with hood
	Comfortable cycling shoes (with grip)
	Thermals (top and bottom)
	Warm jumper or jacket (fleece / wool) mid layer
	Gloves, warm hat
	Cycle shorts
	Drink bottle (we provide one , you might like to bring a second)
	Daypack /bag (this holds items you need for the day on the bus while you are biking)
	Camera/ phone and charger/ torch or head torch
	Sun hat , sun glasses sun block,
	Swimsuit and small towel
	One set of casual wear for the evening, including casual shoes or sandals
	Personal toiletries and essential medications, a small personal first aid kit
✓	Bringing your own bike? don't forget your E bike charger and spares (tyres/tubes)



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Frequently asked questions:

How do I book a tour?

A deposit of \$300 per person confirms your place and can be paid via credit card (Visa or Mastercard, no surcharge) through our website: <https://www.tuataratours.co.nz/make-a-payment/>, or by bank transfer to Tuatara Tours NZ Ltd: 01 0797 0308837 00.

When is the balance due?

The final balance is due 90 days prior to departure. A reminder will be sent via email. You're welcome to pay in instalments, as long as the full amount is received by the due date.

What if I need to cancel?

Our cancellation policy for the Otago Rail Trail Cycle Tour is:

- 91+ days before departure – no fee
- 90–60 days – \$300 per person
- 59–30 days – 30% of total cost
- 29–0 days – 100% of total cost
- After departure – no refund available

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance in case of unforeseen events.

How big are the groups?

Our tours typically accommodate up to 12 people, though we can cater to larger groups on request.

Do I have to bike as part of a group?

You're free to ride at your own pace. We regroup periodically for coffee breaks, meals, and scenic stops so your guide can check in and assist if needed.

Do I have to share a room?

Tours are priced on a twin-share basis (two people per room). Let us know if you prefer a queen bed or two singles. Solo travellers will be paired with another solo of the same gender, or you can opt to pay a single supplement for your own room.

Am I fit enough?

The Otago Rail Trail is graded Easy and suits those with average fitness. Expect to ride on well-formed, mostly flat, unsealed tracks for 15–20 km at a time. If you're unsure about your fitness level, feel free to contact us for advice.

Should I hire an e-bike or a standard bike?

E-bikes have become increasingly popular, making multi-day rides more accessible for all skill levels. They're especially helpful for hills, headwinds, and gravel sections. If you're unsure about completing the tour under varying weather conditions, we recommend an e-bike.

When is the best time to do the tour?

Our season runs from November to April. February and March are the busiest months, while April offers stunning autumn colours and remains a popular time. Tours run in all weather, so come prepared. See our gear list for what to bring.

What time do we return to Queenstown?

Arrival is typically between 4–6 pm, depending on the group. We advise against booking flights for the same day, just in case of delays.



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Frequently asked questions:

Can you pick me up for the tour?

We offer pick-ups and drop offs from Central Queenstown, Airport and Arrowtown hotels/motels. Unfortunately, we cannot collect guests from Airbnb properties or residential suburbs.

Is breakfast included on the first day?

Please have breakfast before your pick-up on the first day, as the tour begins immediately afterward. From then on, all meals are included as per your itinerary.

What kind of meals are provided?

You'll enjoy continental breakfasts, hearty packed lunches, and evening meals at your accommodation or a local restaurant. We can cater to vegetarian, gluten-free, and dairy-free diets—just let us know at the time of booking.

Is alcohol included?

Alcohol is not provided. However, you can purchase drinks with your evening meals or bring a small amount for personal consumption at the accommodation.

Do I need to arrive ready to bike?

Please arrive ready to ride on the first morning, with your overnight bag packed for transport. You won't have access to this bag during the day, so carry essentials in a small day pack which you can leave on the bus while you are riding.

Can I bring my own bike?

Absolutely. Please ensure your bike has been recently serviced and is suitable for trail riding. If you're bringing an e-bike, don't forget your charger.

What's included with the hire bikes?

Our hire bikes come equipped with memory foam saddles, a rack bag for essentials, a helmet, and a hi-vis vest—which must be worn while riding.

How much luggage can I bring?

Space is limited, so we ask that you bring one small day pack and one overnight bag or suitcase (maximum 20kg).

What's in the tour kit bag?

Each rider receives a surprise tour kit bag with practical items for the tour. It includes a 500ml thermal drink bottle and a thermal cup—perfect for hot drinks along the trail.

Are there any sections on the road?

The Otago Rail Trail is a dedicated off-road trail on a well-compacted gravel surface. However, there are a few road crossings where you'll need to stay alert and observe road rules.

Are the tours guided?

Our tours are supported by a driver-guide and vehicle. The guide provides trail advice, first aid, and assistance with bike issues. They may cycle parts of the trail to point out key features but do not guide the entire route. You're welcome to ride in the support vehicle at any time if you need a break.

Is this tour suitable for beginners or children?

Yes. The Otago Rail Trail is perfect for novice riders and families. Daily distances are manageable, and the tour includes plenty of scenic stops and side trips to keep the experience varied and enjoyable.



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Pickup Points

Please contact us to confirm the nearest pick-up location to your accommodation.
Unfortunately, we are unable to collect guests from Airbnb properties, private residences, or hill suburbs due to restrictions on access.



Arrowtown:
Shades of Arrowtown Motel



Central Queenstown
Beach Street, opposite Crowne Plaza Hotel



Queenstown Airport vicinity
Main road outside Queenstown Airport, or vehicle parking at Hawthorne Drive car park near Ramada Hotel

Tuatara Conservation

We're proud supporters of tuatara conservation.
We've adopted "BP"—a juvenile tuatara at Orana Park in Christchurch, helping ensure the future of this amazing native species.



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Our Hire Bikes

All hire bikes are supplied with carrier bag, memory foam comfort seat and helmet

Ebike Step Thru \$110 per day

Our most popular E bike.
The perfect cross over between comfort cruiser and trail bike

MOST POPULAR



Ebike High Bar \$110 per day

Same performance and specifications as the Step Thru, with a more mountain bike-style handlebar and top bar



Ebike M24 Full Suspension \$165 per day

The ultimate full suspension E bike for unparalleled comfort, with carbon fibre frame and dropper seat



Ebike Merida 8000 Full Suspension Electric Mountain Bike \$185 per day

LIMITED NUMBERS AVAILABLE



Manual (non-e) bikes \$57 per day



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TERMS & CONDITIONS

Tuatara Tours NZ Limited accepts bookings subject to the following terms:

Contract

This contract is between Tuatara Tours and you, the client—defined as any person travelling or intending to travel on a tour operated by Tuatara Tours. The contract, including all matters arising from it, is governed by New Zealand law and subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the New Zealand courts. Only employees or directors of Tuatara Tours have the authority to vary or omit any of the terms stated herein.

Cancellation Policy Due to Travel Restrictions

If your trip is impacted by travel restrictions imposed by the New Zealand government or any other government, Tuatara Tours will either work with you to transfer your trip to a future date at no additional cost, or provide a full refund.

Price

All prices are quoted in New Zealand dollars and include 15% GST. Prices are based on rates current at the time of publishing. Tuatara Tours reserves the right to modify prices without notice if deemed necessary or appropriate.

Accommodation on organised tours is based on twin or double share. Solo travellers will be paired with another traveller of the same sex. A single supplement is available upon request.

Confirmation of Booking

Bookings are confirmed upon receipt of the full tour price, which is due 90 days prior to the start of the tour. Tuatara Tours and its agents reserve the right to decline any booking at their discretion.

Cancellation

If a client cancels a tour, the following charges apply (unless otherwise stated):

- 91+ days prior to departure – no fee
- 90–60 days prior to departure – NZD \$300.00 per person
- 59–30 days prior to departure – 30% of the total package cost
- 29–0 days prior to departure – 100% of the total package cost
- After tour commencement – no refund available

These cancellation fees are non-negotiable. We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance.

Travel Insurance

Tuatara Tours strongly recommends that clients take out travel insurance, including tour cancellation cover and any other relevant insurances. It is the client's responsibility to ensure adequate coverage. Tuatara Tours cannot be held liable for any failure to obtain appropriate insurance.

Medical Conditions

You must inform us at the time of booking of any medical condition, history, or medication you are currently taking.

Changes to Tours

Tuatara Tours will make every effort to operate all tours as advertised. However, reasonable changes to the itinerary may be made if deemed necessary or advisable. Clients will be informed of any changes as soon as reasonably possible. Where a tour service must be substituted, a service of similar quality and standard will be provided.

Weather

Adverse weather may prevent planned activities from proceeding as scheduled. The tour guide may decide to alter the itinerary based on weather conditions, prioritising group safety. Tuatara Tours and its contracted suppliers are not responsible for changes resulting from weather-related circumstances.



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General conditions

Tuatara Tours, its agents, contractors and guides do not accept responsibility or liability for loss, damage to, or theft of personal belongings (owners risk) or for any expenses, including medical and transport expenses arising from a personal accident, injury, illness, or hospitalisation. Tuatara Tours and their guides reserve the right to make any alterations to the itinerary in the interest of safety, or unforeseen circumstances due to causes such as weather, illness or misadventure. Every reasonable endeavour will be made to keep to published schedules but no guarantee is given. Tuatara Tours will not be held liable for costs incurred by change, delay or the missing of connecting services. Tuatara Tours reserves the right to exclude a person from a tour at any time, if in the opinion of the guide or operator, that person may be likely to risk the health, safety or comfort (including unsociable behaviour) of other clients, him or herself or the environment. In such circumstances, Tuatara Tours will not be obliged to offer any refund or transfer ticket. These terms and conditions apply to each participant including in a group booking. Where a booking is made on behalf of a group of two or more people then each participant in the group must be made aware of and accept these terms and conditions.

RISK DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In any adventure activity, there is an element of risk involved. Risks in undertaking this activity include (but are not limited to): hypothermia, heat exhaustion, physical injury caused by environment i.e. rock falls, and physical injury caused by self, i.e. falling over.

The staff and management of Tuatara Tours and any of its agency partners take all practicable steps to identify and minimise potential dangers. The Operator makes all arrangements for all tours on the condition that it shall not be liable for any sickness, injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may be occasioned, either directly or indirectly, by reason of any defect in any vehicle, vessel or aircraft, by weather, by any other cause, or through acts of default of a company or person engaged in conveying the passengers, or in carrying out arrangements for these activities.

We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance prior to your trip.

By participating in this activity, you are expressly assuming those risks and responsibilities and are, to the maximum extent permitted by law releasing the Operator, its officers, employees, directors, agents and any other person associated with us, from any liability, claims, loss, damages or expenses (whatsoever and irrespective of whether direct, indirect or consequential) caused by any event including but not limited to: personal injury or death; property loss or damage; acts which may be construed as negligible or accidental; any other loss, damage, suffering, emotional or nervous disorder suffered by you or any other person in relation to this activity. You accept that you have been advised to obtain adequate travel insurance for all persons named on the booking.

In participating in the activity, the customer agrees to be bound by the following conditions:

- My successors, executors and administrators are bound by the Terms and Conditions;
- I agree not to commence any litigation proceedings in any country in relation to the risks and liabilities set out above and to indemnify the Operator against any claims;
- I confirm and warrant I am physically fit and suffer no medical conditions, which may affect my ability to participate in the activity;
- I confirm I am aware that professional medical assistance may be difficult and/or take some time to access due to the remote areas in which we are travelling;
- I consent to receive medical treatment in the case of injury, accident or illness during the activity and to indemnify the Operator against any claims, costs or expenses in respect of the treatment;
- I agree that any film, sound, video or other recordings taken of or during the activity will not be used in any production, or advertising without prior consent of the Operator, however the Operator may use such recordings itself at its complete discretion without any prior approval; and
- I agree to listen to my driver/guide/host, follow their instructions and make sure any children in my care do the same. Furthermore, the Operator will not be responsible for any personal injury and or property damage caused by you and any costs for such injury / damage will be your responsibility.



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Custom Tours Available

Want to change the itinerary or create something entirely new? We enjoy designing custom adventures for friends, families, work groups and clubs. Get in touch!

Keen to join a tour? Enquire now



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Australia free dial 1800 044 633

World +64 3 962 3280



Email: info@tuataratours.co.nz

Web: www.tuataratours.co.nz

You might also like....

The Around the Mountains Cycle Trail

The West Coast Wilderness Cycle Trail



Official Partner

Tuatar Tours is proud to be in an official partnership with Ngā Haerenga The New Zealand Cycle Trail.

The objective of the partnership is to create a nationwide network of cycle trails that connect the Great Rides with the rest of New Zealand.



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