

Itineraries

- 1) Walk on the wild side:** this could be done over two to three days or be combined with other itineraries – it goes down the Southern Scenic Route and main road through the Catlins from north to south, it can also be done in reverse.
 - **Day 1:** Stroll out to the 1869 lighthouse at Nugget Point perched above those famous rock formations (named because Captain Cook thought they looked like golden nuggets with the sun shining down on them).
 - Stop at first viewing lookout just above the car park and spot the fur seal colony below with a chance to see dolphins as well.
 - You can also see seals below the lighthouse along with a range of sea birds and of course truly spectacular views as the sea meets the sky.

And you can actually kayak around the Nuggets for a completely different perspective! For more including bookings go to:

www.catlinskayak.co.nz/ or [facebook.com/catlinskayak/](https://www.facebook.com/catlinskayak/)

Commissionable rates are available for Tour Operators and Wholesale Agents

- Next door is Roaring Bay with its hide to spot the very rare yellow eyed penguins. The best time is late in the afternoon when they come back to nest after a day's fishing.
- Onwards to Cannibal and Surat Bay which are rightly renowned as some of the best places to see sea lions in the Catlins. A marked walkway through the dunes connects these two beautiful beaches.
- Then head to Long Point and Jack's Bay for more opportunities to see penguins, seals and sea lions. The reserve is run by the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust and the Department of Conservation.
- From there it would be rude not to head up to Jack's blowhole a sunken sea cave with marvelous views of Long Point and all the way back to the Nuggets.
- Purakaunui Bay could be the place to rest your head in this picture postcard perfect campsite right by the beach where sea lions are regular visitors.
It is also a stellar surfing spot with the highest ever winter waves recorded in New Zealand.

- **Day 2:** Next stop could be Tahakopa beach reached from the Old Coach Track at Papatowai where seal lions and penguins turn up to enjoy the solitude.
The area is well known for its fantastic birdlife and song with lots of the terrific tuis. The estuary also offers some good fishing options for flounder and clams.
- On to Florence Hill for breathtaking vistas of Tautuku bay and peninsula but the best way to experience this special place is below on the beach.
- Head to the layby opposite the Outdoor Education Centre and take the wonderful bush walk with the roar of the waves getting louder before you emerge through the rainforest on to the sandy shore.
- You can then walk out to peninsula and into the estuary at low tide or turn left and head for the cliffs and caves at the other end.
- Next stop is Cathedral Caves one of the World's largest sea cave complexes with 200 metres of passageways and amazing acoustics thanks to their sheer size rising up 30 metres high. Oh and Waipati beach is stunning as well! It's just \$5 per person. Check the tides and opening times at www.cathedralcaves.co.nz
- From here the final stop on the "Walk on the Wildside" is stunning Curio Bay which has a 180 million year old Jurassic forest, one of only 3 accessible fossil forests in the World. The nearby Living Forest allows you to step back in time and is the only place on the planet where you can experience a direct descendant lying so close to its petrified counterpart.
- But it gets even better as Curio Bay is a superb spot to see yellow eyed penguins and Hector's dolphins...you might even get the chance to swim or surf with them at Porpoise Bay.

This a great place to start or end your Catlins adventure with the incredible, innovative, interactive Gateway Experience sharing the area's unique stories curioscape.co.nz/the-gateway-experience-and-tours

You can also take specialist eco tours which take you to those seriously secret spots and hidden highlights. They are the only people to have the official Department of Conservation license to operate.

For bookings and more about Catlins Scenic and Wildlife tours just go to: [Tours](#)

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2) Our Wonderful World of Waterfalls

Did someone say waterfalls? Well you are in the right place with six splendid sites which are some of the only waterfalls down south that aren't in or close to the Alps. These are all just a short distance from the ocean!

This can be done in a day or combined with other itineraries to cover a couple of days or more. Again it can be done in reverse.

- Barr Falls are probably the smallest of the sensational six and are signposted just south of Owaka. It's an easy rainforest walk to these vertiginous cliff faces with falls down either side and a smaller one downstream.
- Perhaps the most famous is Purakaunui with its triple tiered cascade. It is a short stroll from the car park and offers the rare treat of a central viewing platform really close to the falls. Mesmerising and magical!
- A short drive takes you to the double delight of Matai and Horseshoe Falls which each have their own character and like all these spots the beautiful bush walk is part of the charm.
- Mclean falls are the highest of the lot and the longest walk but still only 20 minutes each way and definitely worth it. Mighty and majestic the word "awesome" actually does apply for a change.
- Last but by no means least is the lesser known but enchanting Koropuko Falls which is signposted with a layby just past Cathedral Caves. It looks like a tropical paradise particularly if you clamber over the rocks to the oh so inviting cool pool.

3) Olden and Golden

One of the World's largest and fastest ever gold rushes swept through Lawrence and the surrounding area in the 1860's and you can still get a real sense of the rich history today.

This itinerary could be done in day or spread out over a few days combining with the Clutha Gold Cycle Trail.

- Start or end with a trip on our fantastic free ferry which crosses New Zealand's mightiest river every morning and afternoon running between 8-10am and 4-6pm. It dates back to the 1890's and is the only one of its kind left in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Take the cross country route to Lawrence via Tuapeka or take the river route up to Beaumont and on to Lawrence hugging the amazing turquoise blue hue of the country's most impressive waterway.
- Once you get to lovely Lawrence saunter round the historic town with its Victorian gems like Anthem House where you guessed it the music for the national anthem was composed.
- Pop into the museum for a taste of the good old days before strolling to the very pretty Bellview wetlands in the heart of town.
- Just down the road is Gabriel's Gully named after the guy who found the first really big golden nugget in 1861. It's a lovely walk with panels along the way telling the story.
- A longer stroll from the town centre or quick drive gets you to the Chinese Gold Miners Camp which is one of the most important sites of its kind in the whole country. And yes you can also pan for gold around the town.
- If you are in the area on a Spring weekend then you could check out the dazzling delightful daffodil display in the ruins of the Weatherstons Brewery on Waipori road.

Perhaps the best way to truly soak up that heritage of early New Zealand is to get out and about on the **Clutha Gold Cycle and Walking Trail**.

- Follow in the steps of Maori moa hunters, Chinese gold miners and pioneer settlers who have all made this stunning valley their home. It is set to get even bigger and better, with the route being extended all the way south to Lake Waihola!

- The Clutha Gold Cycling & Walking Trail already links with the Roxburgh Gorge Trail.
- A jet boat ride links the two trails and this is the only one of New Zealand's great rides to have a wonderful on the water experience!



- Go to www.cluthagold.co.nz

4) You just can't beat the Blues

Get away from the madding crowds and truly escape. Take a day or a few to truly unwind in this stunning snapshot of real rural New Zealand at its finest!

- The Blue Mountains is a wonderful wild place with various tracks and trails through the bush with waterfalls and other hidden gems to discover.
- Whisky Gully and Black Gully are lovely little jaunts while the more challenging and longer ridgetop walk is well worth the work for the simply amazing views.
- You can stay in rustic bushman huts or in your campervan or tent at the Black Gully reserve.
- The area has fantastic fly fishing and hunting with the largest herd of fallow deer down south and beautiful birdlife with the very rare Mohua or yellowhead.
- Get back to nature finding one of our best kept secrets and yet you are only a very short drive from Tapanui with its charming independent shops and great local cafe.

5) Clutha Culture

We do things differently down here and that's a big part of Clutha's charm with more space and that wonderful slower pace. This itinerary could be done in one day or just chill and take a little longer.

- Tupaeka Mouth Punt – just north of Balclutha or south of Lawrence is this fabulous free ferry which crosses the country's most powerful river..the Clutha. You can even take your campervan across between 8-10am and 4-6pm and there are no gimmicks it just goes with the flow.
- Owaka Museum – this 3D story book tells tales of the passionate people who have made the Catlins their home. From the Maori moa hunters who lived by the free food larder that was and still is the Catlins coast which is why there is so much wildlife on and off shore. Through to the settlers and their shipwrecks, onto the rainforest railway line which was built to ferry timber, through to the eco haven it is today. It is a wonderful storytelling museum which connects the Catlins past and present.
- Earthlore Wildlife Gardens - This quirky little oasis right next to Owaka shows what green should mean using ingenious interactive attractions at this splendid sanctuary. It is Catlins Conservation as it should be festooned with fun and frolics.
- The Lost Gypsy at Papatowai – an institution in these parts this veritable treasure trove of imagination and invention has been brought to life using recycled bits and bobs by our very own organic mechanic. Magic, movement, mayhem, mirth and merriment await.

6) Desert Island Dreams

Well we all need to daydream from time to time. This is your chance to discover deserted pieces of paradise and feel the silky sand between your toes.

This can be done over a day or spread out over a few leisurely days or combined with the “Walk on the Wildside” or “Wonderful World of Waterfalls” itineraries. It goes north to south but of course can be done the other way.

- Start or finish at Kaka Point or Port Molyneux with a stunning sweeping sandy shore dotted with little coves which is often overlooked as people rush to the nearby Nuggets. Take your pick from Wilsher, Molyneux or Short Bay.
- Onwards to Cannibal and Surat bay which are linked by a dreamy dune walkway. A great place to spot wildlife but also to just kick back and relax. It's a one and half hour walk return trip either way with the tidal lake off Pounaweia offering those magical mirror reflections.
- Next up is Long Point and Jack's Bay where you can amble over the headland or just park up for a picnic. It's a top spot to see sensational sunsets.
- The lost world feel of Purakaunui bay with the highest sea cliffs in the Catlins and pounding surf framed by the beautiful backdrop of lush rainforest is only a short drive from the famous falls bearing the same name. You will fall in love with this special spot and might be sorely tempted to try and stay longer...well you can because it is a DOC campsite.
- Tahakopa beach and the Papatowai Estuary are up next which can both be reached from the car park by the bridge. This beach has that really wild feel but in a good way. You might spot a penguin or seal but probably won't see another soul.
- Just across the water is the slice of paradise that is Papatowai which feels totally tropical despite staring out at Antarctica. There is a wonderful walk through the greenery to perhaps the best bench ever! Christmas time brings a real treat of the flowering red rata making this place even more gorgeous if that is possible.
- Tautuku just round the corner again is the next stretch of sumptuous sand where rainforest slides gracefully to the seashore. You can walk for hours right the way down to the peninsula and the hidden gem that is

Sweet Pea beach. Yes you are still in New Zealand but it feels like paradise lost, so just dream.

- One of us locals' favourite sanctuaries for serenity and tranquility is the hidden Lake Wilkie which has marvelous mirror reflections, lush bush and red rata at the start of summer. Nearby Tautuku Boardwalk is another place to dream in this hallowed place which feels like an Eco Amphitheatre in the heart of the rainforest.
- Waipati beach – well where is that you might reasonably ask? It is the lovely beach where you will find the glorious Cathedral Caves. You need to pay \$5 per person to reach this beautiful beach and can only go when Mother Nature allows....that means either side of low tide.
- Curio and Porpoise Bay is the final dream destination! A fossilized forest, penguins and surfing await. Oh and you might even get to swim with dolphins. Living the dream Catlins style!

If those itineraries don't quite float your boat, then here's our Activity Trail

<https://www.cluthanz.com/resources/themes/clutha/images/activitytrail.pdf>

Or you could peruse and ponder our Hidden Tracks and Trails just go to

[hidden-tracks-and-trails](#) and live like a local!