

# ALPS 2 OCEAN Cycle Trail



Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail  
© Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail Marketing

## AORAKI MT COOK VILLAGE to OAMARU

6 days | 306km

The Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail is a journey of epic proportions, from the highest mountains all the way down to the Pacific coast.

The expansive scenery along the way has to be seen to be believed: bright turquoise lakes fringed by golden grassland, braided blue rivers, wide open skies, majestic mountains, fields of flowers in full bloom – to say it's

stunning doesn't even begin to do it justice.

Amid the scenic grandeur, there are plenty of off-bike activities to maximise your experience including wine tasting, gliding flights, exploring Maori rock art, penguin

watching, star spotting, and relaxing in hot tubs beneath a dazzling Milky Way.

The trail starts at New Zealand's highest mountain, Aoraki Mt Cook, before winding its way down 2000ft to the coast at Oamaru via the Waitaki Valley. It's the longest continuous ride in New Zealand, but there are plenty of food and accommodation options en route plus shuttle services if you need them. Suitable for all abilities of cyclists, the trail includes a mixture of off- and on-road trail, which can be enjoyed in sections or in its entirety.

It's recommended that you start from Aoraki Mt Cook Village (the Southern Alps) – although there are numerous access points along the trail including Lake Tekapo and the Jollie car park.

### look out for...

#### Aoraki Mt Cook & the Tasman Glacier

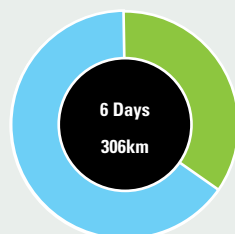
Lording over the beautiful Mackenzie region, Aoraki Mt Cook Village takes advantage of some of the country's most stunning scenery. Big mountains meet big skies here with more turquoise lakes and braided blue

rivers than you could shake a stick at. Explore the mountains on a walk or hike, take a scenic flight, go skiing or snowboarding (heli-skiing and glacier skiing available), take a guided boat tour on a lake and experience the mighty Tasman Glacier or visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at the Hermitage Hotel.

#### Wines of Waitaki

The Waitaki area is becoming increasingly famous as a cool climate wine region, so take a break at a local winery to sample superb Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Chardonnay and Gewurztraminer.

### TRAIL INFO



#### TRAIL GRADES:

**AORAKI MT COOK TO TWIZEL** GRADE 2 (EASY)

**TWIZEL TO LAKE OHAU LODGE** GRADE 2 (EASY)

**LAKE OHAU LODGE TO OMARAMA** GRADE 3 (INTERMEDIATE)

**OMARAMA TO OTEMATATA** GRADE 3 (INTERMEDIATE)

**OTEMATATA TO KUROW** GRADE 3 (INTERMEDIATE)

**KUROW TO DUNTRON** GRADE 2 (EASY)

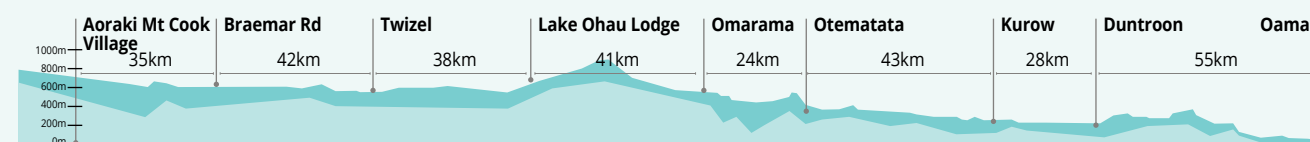
**DUNTRON TO OAMARU** GRADE 3 (INTERMEDIATE)

**MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE:**  
Coverage is generally good along the trail, though it may be patchy in places.

**DRINKING WATER:**  
Water is available in the towns along the trail.



### riding the trail



#### ► AORAKI MT COOK TO BRAEMAR RD, 35KM

The trail starts at the White Horse Hill Campground, 2km north of Aoraki Mt Cook Village. A 7.2km off-road trail takes you to Mt Cook Airport, where riders need to take a short helicopter flight across the Tasman River. If you wish to avoid the helicopter crossing there are several different starts: from Lake Tekapo, from the Tekapo B Power Station or from the Jollie car park.

#### ► BRAEMAR RD TO TWIZEL, 42KM

The trail continues along a quiet country road that follows the eastern shores of Lake Pukaki, passing the Tekapo B Power Station. Riders will enjoy outstanding views across Lake Pukaki towards the Southern Alps. The off-road trail starts at the bottom of Hayman Rd and follows the Lake Pukaki shoreline before passing over the Pukaki Dam and heading across the Pukaki Flats to Twizel.

#### ► TWIZEL TO LAKE OHAU, 38KM

From Twizel, head off on Mackenzie Dr then follow the signs. You'll head across a canal bridge just past Loch Cameron then follow the road until the edge of Lake Ohau. From here the trail descends to the lake foreshore, taking you to the Ohau Weir. Then skirt around the foreshore before heading for Lake Ohau Lodge. Note: When the Ohau Weir is in flood, there is no way across. See [alps2ocean.com](http://alps2ocean.com) for alternative route.

#### ► LAKE OHAU LODGE TO OMARAMA, 41KM

This section traverses the lower slopes of the Ruataniwha Conservation Park, with views across the basin to the Benmore Range. After easy cycling to Freehold Creek it's a steady climb to the high point, 900m above sea level (bring high-energy food, drinking water is available from various mountain streams). The trail then descends to Quailburn Rd. At the end of Quailburn Rd, about 2km along, you will find the

historic woolshed and toilets. On the way down Quailburn Rd you can take a side trip to the Clay Cliffs (14km return) before following the highway to Omarama.

► **OMARAMA TO OTEMATATA, 24KM**

Ride east down the Waitaki Valley, over Chain Hills and on past Pumpkin Point to Sailors Cutting – a popular boating, fishing and camping destination. The trail then follows SH 83 (extra care is needed on the highway). There's a short climb to Otematata Saddle with views of Lake Aviemore, then it's downhill to Otematata.

► **OTEMATATA TO KUROW, 43KM**

From Otematata, take the sealed pathway beside Loch Laird RD, then follow the gravel track beside the lake. This takes you through several camping areas. You then ride up Loch Laird Rd onto the massive Benmore Hydro Dam 6km. It's a steep road up to the dam, so you may need to walk the last 800m. Follow Te Akatarawa Rd along the margins of Lake Aviemore to the Aviemore Dam 28km. After crossing the dam the trail follows SH 83 to Lake Waitaki and the Waitaki Dam (36km). 1km after the Awakino River, turn right onto the off-road trail that links to Kurow. This section of trail has an interesting hydro history with dams and project towns. Please be careful when turning right onto the new trail off

SH 83. You must check that there is no traffic behind you, or pull over to the shoulder of the road before crossing the highway.

► **KUROW TO DUNTRON, 28KM**

A gravel track takes you across to the Waitaki River which you follow down the valley, traversing ancient alluvial plains through Kurow's wine country. The off-road trail then follows alongside the highway to the Maori rock art site. From there it's back to the Waitaki River, and through the wetlands into the township of Duntroun.

► **DUNTRON TO OAMARU, 55KM**

From Duntroun head to the rock formations known as the Elephant Rocks. An off-road trail then takes you through several farms. You rejoin the road at Prydes Gully before heading off-road again beside Karara Creek. A series of gravel roads take you to the Rakis Railway Tunnel. Then it is on to Windsor and Weston where you re-join the old railway line for a flat run to Saleyards Rd. Follow the cycleway downhill to the Oamaru Gardens. Bike through the gardens, across SH 1, then through the park to the main street (Thames St). Turn right into the far lane and ride south past the i-SITE, turning left on Itchen St, right onto Tyne, then left onto Harbour St. Go through the Victorian Historic Precinct to the Oamaru Harbour where the trail ends.

**Around every bend is beautiful scenery, a geological wonder or a welcoming township.**

Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail © davidwallphoto.com



**TREASURED LANDMARKS**

One of the country's most photographed churches, the Church of the Good Shepherd's altar window frames breathtaking views of the lake and mountains. The bronze dog nearby is a memorial to working dogs.

Statue, Lake Tekapo

**Along the trail**

**Twizel**

named after Twizel Bridge in Northumberland • 161km W of Timaru on SH 8

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**Lake Tekapo**

corruption of takapo 'sleeping mat' • 105km NW of Timaru on SH 8

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Not only is **Lake Tekapo** phenomenal in daylight – with its turquoise lake reflecting the snow-capped peaks – but at night the star-filled sky is positively dazzling thanks to the clearest air in the southern hemisphere. Make sure you check out the dazzling night sky and visit the renowned Mt John University Observatory at Lake Tekapo.

**Twizel**, glorious in all seasons but especially in autumn colours, is often used as a base for exploring Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, especially with plenty of eccentric

baches to choose from and some great cafés. Skiers have the choice of four nearby ski fields, while in summer there is tramping and extreme mountain biking, fishing and boating on Lake Ruataniwha, black stilt tours and tramping

The little village of **Duntroun** is situated at the end (or start) of the Vanished World driving trail, which winds through the North Otago hills, leading visitors to some spectacular fossil and geological sites – 'Elephant Rocks' and 'Earthquakes' are just two of the highlights.

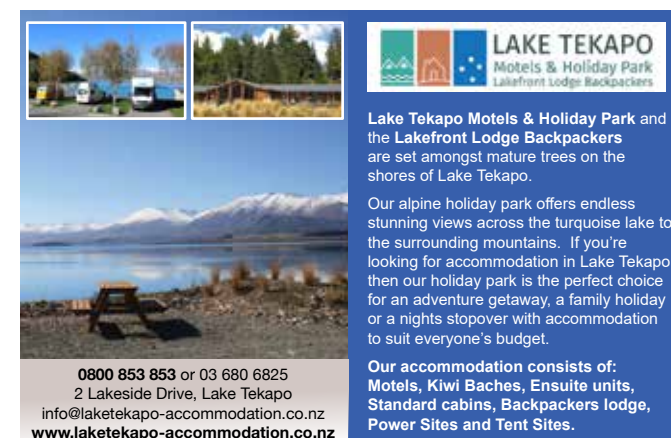
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Early winter, Lake Ohau © Lake Ohau Lodge  
RIGHT: Takiroa rock art site by SH 83, Waitaki Valley © davidwallphoto.com  
INSET: Gliding in the Waitaki Valley © Southern Soaring, Omarama

## Trail Highlights

The famed lakes of the region come in all different shapes, sizes and colour palates, but they've all got pristine beauty in common.

One such lake, **Lake Ohau**, with its deep waters and rugged terrain, is well known for the nearby Ohau snowfield's high-country skiing and snowboarding, and come the end of the ski season there are stunning wilderness areas to be explored by either walking, hiking or biking.

The township of **Kurow** is lucky enough to be surrounded by three picturesque hydro lakes - Waitaki, Aviemore and Benmore. Not only are their shores great places for a picnic or a wander, there are also great water sports to be had here. The Waitaki River, from Kurow to sea, is one of the country's best jet-boating rivers and has good canoeing, while trout fishing in this area is legendary.

### Lake Ohau

place of hau (wind) • 175km NW of Oamaru

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### Omarama

place of moonlight • 119km NW of Oamaru

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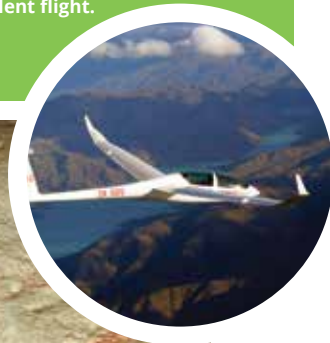
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### OMARAMA GLIDING

Omarama is Maori for 'place of light', an apt name for an area with exceptionally clear skies and rich dawn and dusk colours. Soak under the big sky in a private hot tub. The nearby giant fluted Clay Cliffs are one of New Zealand's best-kept natural secrets. Omarama has some of the best conditions in the world for gliding, where you can experience riding thermals above the Southern Alps in silent flight.



Under a limestone bluff on SH 83, you'll find the historical Takiroa Maori rock art site.

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### Kurow

corruption of Kohurau (many mists) • 68km NW of Oamaru on SH 82

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## Steampunk HQ

Part of Oamaru's eccentric charm is its obsession with the weird and wonderful world of Steampunk - an imagined Victorian future where electricity fizzled out and steam remained king. The beautifully preserved historic town attracts international followers in June when it holds a Steampunk festival when everyone dresses up in top hats and goggles and every weird, makeshift invention and contraption is put on show. There's a dedicated, all-year round attraction, Steampunk HQ, where this alternative world is embraced with retro-futuristic sci fi art, movies, sculpture, and light and sound experiences.

### Oamaru

place of Maru • 115km NE of Dunedin on SH 1

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# Oamaru

**Fine Victorian architecture, a steampunk subculture, blue penguins and cheese rolls - there are many reasons to fall in love with this curious seaside town.**

Explore the intact Victorian precinct and its fine limestone buildings designed by the best architects of the day and crafted from the distinctive Oamaru milky limestone. A wander around the elegant streets will lead you past antiquarian bookshops, vintage clothes shops, antique stores, galleries, gift stores, slightly alternative healers and herbalists and artist studios. Don't miss Whitestone City, the heritage hub that's fit out in the style of a colonial town, period costumes and all.

Oamaru is inspirational, too: the area has given rise to some remarkable New Zealand artists and writers, the most famous being Janet Frame. Her childhood home has been fully restored and

is seasonally open to the public. In that tradition, the historic precinct houses a community of artistic and creative folk, many of whom exhibit their wares in the area.

These days, the town's favourite residents are a colony of blue penguins, the world's smallest. Every night just after dark you can witness them waddling ashore en masse to a natural nesting area under the cliffs. Sit in the covered grandstand and enjoy the spectacle with a cheese roll, the 'sushi of the south'. Another penguin colony is located a 30-minute walk away at Bushy Beach.

Venture to Cape Wanbrow, 1km south of the town, to see the lighthouse and former gun placement and enjoy great views.

IMAGE LEFT: Whitestone City, Oamaru © Waitaki Development Board

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