

Driving to Queenstown or Wanaka in one day

Turn right out the Grasmere driveway and travel east on State Highway 73 to Waddington, just on the far side of Sheffield. Turn to the right onto SH 72, marked Inland Scenic Route.

Continue on SH 72 to Geraldine, where you'll turn right onto SH 79. The sign is quite high, outside a secondhand shop called Murch and Dice on the left, with Barker's Bakery on the right.

You can have lunch at the Old Library Café in Fairlie, or at Barker's Bakery in Geraldine. Actually, the pub meals at the Geraldine Licensing Trust hotel in the main street are very good too, and nice surroundings.

Leaving Geraldine, there's a dairy on the right opposite the primary school that serves very big ice cream cones. You have to try the hokey pokey flavour while you're in New Zealand!

At Fairlie, turn right onto SH 8, through Burke's Pass, Lake Tekapo, and Omarama and over the Lindis Pass. Just after Tarras you can turn left to go to Wanaka. Be warned – SH89 on the map, known as the Crown Range Rd, looks like a short cut between Wanaka and Queenstown but it goes straight up a mountain and tightly hairpins down the other side.

If you stay on SH 8, follow the signs for Queenstown. At the foot of Lake Dunstan, go over the outflow, then past Cromwell, turn to the left onto SH6 and follow it through the Kawarau Gorge to Queenstown.

The area all around Cromwell and the Kawarau River is being turned into vineyards producing mostly pinot noir. Gibbston Valley Wines, on the right, does a good tour of its underground cellars and has an excellent café, if you have time to visit while you're in Queenstown. Soon after Gibbston, watch for the original bungy bridge on the left.

All the turns you need are well-signposted. Take some time to stop at Lake Pukaki to admire Mount Cook if it's clear, (or drive in to Mount Cook village from there).

You may also like to drive down to the water at Lake Tekapo and see the Church of the Good Shepherd and the monument to McKenzie's dog, and all the other sheepdogs that are the backbone of high country farming. McKenzie was a sheep rustler who discovered the McKenzie Basin (between Burke's Pass and the Lindis), with thousands of acres of grazing.

- To reach Blanket Bay or Matakauri Lodge drive through Queenstown's centre and follow the lake around to the left. Continue along the lakefront, past Sunshine Bay towards Glenorchy. Matakauri is on the left, about 10 minutes out of town, with a very small sign. Blanket Bay is also on the left, about 40 km past Queenstown, marked with its name in a big boulder. Check your petrol tank as there are no gas stations between Queenstown and Glenorchy.
- Eichardt's Private Hotel is down on the Queenstown waterfront, on Marine Parade.
- To reach Nugget Point drive through Queenstown's centre to the roundabout at the corner of Shotover St and Stanley St, and turn left into Gorge Rd. This will take you north out of town and over the Shotover River. As you climb up the other side the road passes the Arthur's Point motor camp. Nugget Point is on the right, just past the camp, with quite steep access down to Reception.

Alternatively you can turn off at Lake Hayes, before reaching Queenstown, and go to Arrowtown, then follow the signs for Queenstown, in which case Nugget Point will be on your left, on the river side of the road.