

GUEST INFORMATION BOOK



# Rock Climbing Guided Tour

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**ADVENTURE**  
BY NATURE

## Welcome to the Guided Rock-Climbing Tour!

Discover world-class climbing right on Christchurch's doorstep. The volcanic cliffs of the Port Hills offer varied routes, stunning views, and a relaxed outdoor atmosphere—perfect for learning the basics or sharpening your skills with guidance from a local expert.

**Duration:** • Full-day: 7 - 7 ½ hours • Half-day: 3 - 3 ½ hours (morning or afternoon)

**Activities:** Rock Climbing, Abseiling

**Transport:** Minivan or luxury car (private tours)

**Food:** • Full-day: Picnic lunch, morning tea & afternoon tea • Half-day: Morning or afternoon tea

**Start/Finish location:** Christchurch City Centre

**Pick-up/drop-off time:** • Full-day: 8:30am-4:00pm • Half-day: 8:30am-12:00pm or 1:00pm-4:30pm

**Min/Max numbers:** 2 – 8 pax

### Overview:

Spend a day climbing on the Port Hills, home to some of the best rock climbing close to Christchurch. This experience is suitable for all ability levels, from absolute beginners to confident climbers wanting to learn about local routes and techniques. You'll climb under the supervision of a qualified local guide who provides instruction, safety management, and insider knowledge of the area. Transport from your Christchurch accommodation is included, with drop-off at the end of the day.



View from Cattlestop climbing area, Christchurch



Climber at Cattlestop climbing area.

## Full-Day Rock Climbing Itinerary

Your guide will collect you from your accommodation or our pick-up point in the city centre by 8:30 am.

The 30-minute drive up to the climbing area will take you through some of Christchurch's most affluent suburbs, affording an uninterrupted view from the Pacific Ocean to the east to the Southern Alps in the West. Our climbing areas are scattered across the summit of an enormous extinct volcano that formed Banks Peninsula and Lyttelton Harbour. With over 2000 established climbing routes, Christchurch is one of the largest and most popular climbing areas in New Zealand.

Once you have been fitted with a harness and helmet, it's only a short 5-minute walk to the Crag (climbing area). Your guide will set up the ropes and give you a safety briefing and belay lesson before you start your first climb. Once you're feeling confident with the climbing systems your guide will review the abilities of the group and continue to setup some climbs that will be challenging, achievable and fun for the group.

We will have lunch up at the crag overlooking either Christchurch City or Lyttelton Harbour. After lunch, we have a go at abseiling (controlled lower) where you will have the opportunity to lower yourself off one of the Crag. If you're keen for some more climbing, abseiling or just relaxing, your guide will be happy to find the perfect spot to finish the day. At the end of the day, you'll be dropped off at your pickup location, having experienced an unforgettable day of adventure and fun.

### Gear and equipment

Adventure by Nature will supply all the climbing and safety equipment required for the day.

#### **Tour starts – Christchurch**

- *Travel – Depends on pickup location*



#### **1. Lyttelton – Sightseeing, 30 minutes**

- *Travel – 15 minutes*



#### **2. Evans Pass Lookout – Photo stop, 10 minutes**

- *Travel - 10 minutes*



#### **3. Cattlestop Crag – Snack, Safety Briefing Guided Climbing, Lunch – 6 hours**

- *Travel - 45 minutes*

#### **Tour finishes – Christchurch**

## Half-Day Rock Climbing Itinerary

Your guide will collect you from your accommodation or our pick-up point in the city centre by 8:30 am or 1:00pm.

The 30-minute drive up to the climbing area will take you through some of Christchurch's most affluent suburbs, affording an uninterrupted view from the Pacific Ocean to the east to the Southern Alps in the West. Our climbing areas are scattered across the summit of an enormous extinct volcano that formed Banks Peninsula and Lyttelton Harbour. With over 2000 established climbing routes, Christchurch is one of the largest and most popular climbing areas in New Zealand.

Once you have been fitted with a harness and helmet, it's only a short 5-minute walk to the Crag (climbing area). Your guide will set up the ropes and give you a safety briefing and belay lesson before you start your first climb. Once you're feeling confident with the climbing systems your guide will review the abilities of the group and continue to setup some climbs that will be challenging, achievable and fun for the group.

At the end of the tour, you'll be dropped off at your pickup location, having had an adventurous and fun experience.

### **Gear and equipment**

Adventure by Nature will supply all the climbing and safety equipment required for the day.

#### **Tour starts – Christchurch**

- *Travel – Depends on pickup location*



#### **1. Lyttelton + Evans Pass Lookout – Photo stop, 10 minutes**

- *Travel - 10 minutes*



#### **2. Cattlestop Crag – Snack, Safety Briefing, Guided Climbing – 2.5 hours**

- *Travel - 45 minutes*



#### **Tour finishes – Christchurch**

# Local Information – Christchurch & Banks Peninsula.

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## About Christchurch (Ōtautahi)

Christchurch, known as Ōtautahi in te reo Māori, is New Zealand's oldest city, founded in 1850. Its origins trace back to the Canterbury Association, a colonial group established in England in 1848 with the goal of creating a planned settlement based on English social structures. The first European settlers arrived on the First Four Ships, landing in Lyttelton between December 1850 and January 1851. The city was named after Christ Church, Oxford, reflecting the heritage of its founders, particularly John Robert Godley.

Over the years, Christchurch has evolved into a vibrant urban centre renowned for its stunning gardens, parks, and rich cultural heritage. Despite facing significant challenges, such as the devastating earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, the city has shown remarkable resilience and continues to thrive as a key destination in New Zealand.

### Major Cities in New Zealand (2023):

- **Auckland:** 1,571,700
- **Christchurch:** 369,000
- **Wellington:** 202,700
- **Hamilton:** 160,900
- **Tauranga:** 136,700
- **Dunedin:** 126,300

### Formation:

The Canterbury Association was established in London in 1848 by Edward Gibbon Wakefield and John Robert Godley, among others. It aimed to create a model settlement in New Zealand based on the principles of systematic colonisation.

The Association's vision was to establish a planned settlement in Canterbury, modelled on the English social structure and featuring a network of towns and rural districts. The plan aimed to attract settlers of high social standing and wealth, with an emphasis on the Anglican Church.

The Canterbury Association purchased land from the New Zealand Company in the Canterbury region, including the area around present-day Christchurch. Surveying of the land began in 1849 in preparation for the arrival of settlers.

## First Four Ships:

The Canterbury Association organised the immigration of the First Four Ships, which arrived in Lyttelton, the port for Christchurch, between December 1850 and January 1851. These ships brought the initial wave of European settlers to the Canterbury region.

1. **Charlotte Jane:** The Charlotte Jane was the first of the First Four Ships to arrive in Lyttelton, the port for Christchurch, on December 16, 1850. It carried approximately 150 passengers, mostly from Scotland. The arrival of the Charlotte Jane marked the beginning of organised European settlement in Canterbury.
2. **Randolph:** The Randolph arrived in Lyttelton on December 16, 1850, just a few hours after the Charlotte Jane. It carried around 140 passengers, also primarily from Scotland.
3. **Cressy:** The Cressy arrived in Lyttelton on December 27, 1850, with approximately 240 passengers. Like the Charlotte Jane and the Randolph, most of its passengers were from Scotland.
4. **Sir George Seymour:** Sir George Seymour was the last of the First Four Ships to arrive in Lyttelton, reaching the port on January 17, 1851. It carried around 240 passengers, primarily from England.

- Families of these first four ships are prominent in Canterbury society today.
- Christchurch and Dunedin have more social structure than other areas of New Zealand
- What High School students attend in Christchurch is of extreme importance. An interesting local quirk is asking, “What high school did you go to?” during the first meeting. This doesn’t happen in other areas of NZ

**Dubbed the “Garden City,” Christchurch is renowned for its abundant green spaces,** meticulously maintained parks, and botanical gardens, including the sprawling Hagley Park, which provides a tranquil retreat for outdoor recreation and leisure activities.

**The Avon River, meandering gracefully through the heart of the city,** offers opportunities for punting, kayaking, and leisurely strolls along its picturesque banks, providing residents and visitors with a serene escape amidst urban surroundings.

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# The Christchurch Cathedral

The Christchurch Cathedral, formally known as the Cathedral Church of Christ, was built between 1864 and 1904 in the heart of Christchurch, New Zealand. It is a notable example of Gothic Revival architecture, designed by the English architect Sir George Gilbert Scott.

The cathedral features a distinctive spire rising to a height of approximately 63 meters (207 feet), making it one of the tallest structures in Christchurch. Its Gothic architecture includes pointed arches, intricate stonework, and decorative elements typical of the style.

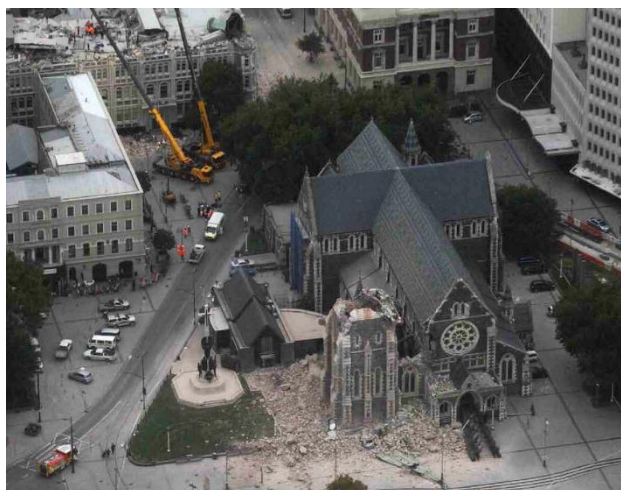
The cathedral suffered significant damage during the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, particularly the collapse of its spire and extensive damage to its structure. These earthquakes had a profound impact on Christchurch and its built environment, including the cathedral.

Following the earthquakes, debates and discussions ensued regarding the future of the cathedral. Various proposals were put forward, including restoration, demolition, or rebuilding. The decision-making process involved considerations of heritage preservation, engineering feasibility, and financial resources.

Construction of the cathedral began in 1864 but was interrupted several times due to funding issues, labour shortages, and the effects of the New Zealand Wars. It took 40 years to complete, with the final sections finished in 1904.

At its peak, the cathedral's spire stood approximately 63 meters (207 feet) tall, making it one of the tallest structures in Christchurch at the time.

In addition to its spire, the cathedral also featured a bell tower with a peal of 13 bells,



including a Bourdon bell weighing over 6,000 kilograms (13,000 pounds). These bells were used for various purposes, including marking the hours and special occasions.

As of recent years, plans for the restoration or redevelopment of the Christchurch Cathedral have been ongoing. Following the Government's decision in 2024 not to provide further funding towards the reinstatement of the cathedral, construction is now be paused while all options are being considered.

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## Treaty of Waitangi – Te Tiriti o Waitangi (signed 6<sup>th</sup> February, 1840)

The Treaty is a broad statement of principles on which the British and Māori made a political compact to found a nation state and build a government in New Zealand. The document has three articles. “In the English text, Māori leaders gave the Queen 'all the rights and powers of *sovereignty*' over their land. In the Māori text, Māori leaders gave the Queen 'te kawanatanga katoa' or the complete *government* over their land.”

(<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty>)

It is common now to refer to the intention, spirit or principles of the Treaty. The Treaty of Waitangi is not considered part of New Zealand domestic law, except where its principles are referred to in Acts of Parliament.

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## Māori History of Ōtautahi

**The Māori name Ōtautahi translates to “The Place of Tautahi” or “The Place of Tautahi’s People.”** Tautahi was a significant rangatira (chief) of the Ngāi Tahu iwi (tribe) who played a prominent role in the region’s early history. The name Ōtautahi honours his legacy and the ancestral connections of Ngāi Tahu to the land where Christchurch now stands.

**According to stories, Tautahi is an important figure in the migration stories of the Ngai Tahu people.** Te Waka o Aoraki is the name given to the migration story from their ancestral homeland to Te Ika-a-Māui (North Island) and then down to Te Waipounamu (South Island). This migration, known as Te Waka o Aoraki, is a foundational aspect of Ngāi Tahu people’s identity and history.

**The Māori name for the North Island of New Zealand is “Te Ika-a-Māui,”** which translates to “The Fish of Māui.” According to Māori mythology, the North Island is said to be the fish that Māui, a legendary figure in Māori culture, caught while fishing with his magical hook.

**The Māori name for the South Island of New Zealand is “Te Waipounamu,”** which translates to “The Greenstone Waters” or “The Waters of Greenstone.” This name reflects the significance of pounamu (greenstone or jade) in Māori culture and the abundance of this precious stone found in the rivers and mountains of the South Island.

**Hawaiki:** In Māori tradition, Hawaiki refers to the legendary homeland from which the ancestors of the Māori people are believed to have originated. It is considered a mythical place, often described as a distant island or land across the ocean. According to oral tradition, Māori ancestors migrated from Hawaiki to Aotearoa (New Zealand) many centuries ago in voyages by waka (canoes). While the exact location of Hawaiki remains unknown, it holds deep cultural and spiritual significance in Māori cosmology. It serves as the ancestral homeland of all Māori tribes, including Ngāi Tahu.

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## Christchurch Earthquakes

On September 4, 2010, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck the Canterbury region, with its epicentre near the town of Darfield, approximately 40 kilometres west of Christchurch. While this earthquake caused widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure, fortunately, there were no fatalities.

The most destructive earthquake occurred on February 22, 2011, when a magnitude 6.3 quake struck much closer to Christchurch, with its epicentre only 10 kilometres southeast of the city centre. Its shallow depth and proximity to populated areas resulted in significant devastation. This quake led to the destruction of numerous buildings, including homes, businesses, and heritage sites. Tragically, 185 people lost their lives, and many others sustained injuries.

In the months and years following the earthquakes, Christchurch experienced thousands of aftershocks, which complicated recovery efforts and caused ongoing disruption for the city's residents. The recovery and rebuilding process has been extensive, involving the demolition of damaged buildings, repairs to infrastructure, and urban redevelopment initiatives. The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) was established to coordinate these recovery efforts, collaborating with local government, businesses, and community groups.

Despite the immense challenges posed by the earthquakes and their aftermath, the people of Christchurch have shown remarkable resilience and community spirit. There has been a significant outpouring of support from within the city and around the world, with volunteers, charities, and government agencies coming together to assist those affected by the disaster and to rebuild the city stronger and more resilient than before.

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## Geology of Banks Peninsula

The Banks Peninsula is primarily the result of volcanic activity that occurred around 10 to 12 million years ago. The area features several calderas, which are remnants of ancient volcanic activity. These calderas were created when volcanic cones collapsed following significant eruptions millions of years ago. Over time, these depressions filled with water from the surrounding sea, resulting in the deep bays and harbours that define the peninsula's coastline.

Akaroa and Lyttelton Harbours are the two most notable calderas on Banks Peninsula. These harbours were formed when the summits of large volcanoes collapsed into the sea, leaving behind a submerged caldera rim.

Over millions of years, erosion has shaped the peninsula, creating its rugged coastline, steep cliffs, and deep bays. The volcanic rock, including basalt and andesite, is evident in the cliffs and coastal formations.



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## Whakaraupō / Lyttelton Harbour

Whakaraupō, or Lyttelton Harbour, was shaped by volcanic activity between 11 and 6 million years ago. Over time, this ancient landscape has been filled with water due to rising sea levels, creating the stunning harbour we see today.

The name Whakaraupō means "harbour of the raupō reed," a vital resource for Māori. Raupō is a well-known and easily recognisable wetland plant. Traditionally, raupō stalks were used for thatching walls and roofs, and the down was used to stuff bedding. The leaves were used for canoe sails and kites, while bundles of the stalks made temporary rafts. The starchy rhizomes were an important food, and the yellow pollen was gathered and baked into a sweet, light cake.



Māori have inhabited this region since around 1250 AD, with a strong focus on moa hunting.



In 1770, James Cook mistook Banks Peninsula for an island, marking a significant moment in its history. Fast forward to 1850, when the first four ships brought immigrants from Great Britain to Lyttelton, setting the stage for a diverse community. Remarkably, the world's first rail tunnel through volcanic rock opened here in 1867, followed by a road tunnel in 1964.

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## Ōtamahua / Quail Island

Ōtamahua, known as Quail Island, has its own unique history. The name means "place children gather sea bird eggs," and it honours the now-extinct native quail. This island also features King Billy Island, or Aua, where large schools of yellow-eyed mullet can be seen in summer. Historically, the island served as a quarantine station beginning in 1875, later becoming New Zealand's only leprosy quarantine colony from 1906 to 1925. In the early 1900's, dogs and ponies were trained here for Scott and Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions.



After being leased for farming from 1934 to 1975, the island transformed into a recreational reserve. Visitors can explore the ship graveyard, which holds the remains of eight vessels, including the Mullogh, an iron steamer, and the Darra. The Darra, built in 1886, was primarily used to transport immigrants and goods. It was beached at Quail Island in 1951, and in 1953, attempts by the army to destroy the remains only resulted in a hole, now accessible by paddling.

For those seeking adventure, the island offers a delightful two-hour loop track, a thirty-minute walk to the summit for breathtaking views, and facilities for camping on Swimmer's Beach.

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## Climbing Facts

- Rock is volcanic basalt formed between 6 and 11 million years ago when Banks Peninsula was volcanically active. Basalt is very hard and erosion-resistant, so it forms steep cliffs, crags and prominent ridgelines.
- There are more than 1500 climbing routes on the Port Hills and another 1500+ on Banks Peninsula, all within a 1.5-hour drive of Christchurch City.
- Hills above Lyttelton are called **Ō Kete Upoko**, which means basket of heads after a battle between Ngāi Tahu and Ngāti Mamoe. The Ngāi Tahu chief, Te Rakiwhakaputa, displayed defeated Ngāti Mamoe warriors' heads in baskets on the peaks above Lyttelton.
- In the 1920's, people start climbing at **Rapaki Rock** and **Castle Rock** as training for the Southern Alps.
- **Cattlestop crag** sees first climbs in the 1970's with continuing development and retro bolting taking place through to today.
- **Early Exploration (1800's):** Climbing in the Christchurch area can be traced back to the early European settlers and Māori inhabitants who explored the surrounding hills and mountains for practical reasons rather than recreational climbing.
- **Mountaineering Pioneers (Late 19th - Early 20th Century):** With the rise of mountaineering as a sport in the late 19th century, Christchurch-based climbers began exploring the Southern Alps, which offer some of the most challenging terrain in the country. Notable figures like Samuel Turner and Arthur Paul Harper played significant roles in pioneering routes and establishing climbing traditions in the region.
- **Canterbury Mountaineering Club (1930's):** The Canterbury Mountaineering Club, founded in the 1930's, became a hub for climbers in Christchurch. The club organized expeditions, provided training, and fostered a sense of community among climbers in the region.

# Rock Climbing Tour - Maps and Routes



Christchurch – Lyttelton – Climbing Area (Cattlestop Crag):

