

Guest Information Book



Sea Kayaking Guided Day Tour

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Welcome to the guided Sea Kayaking Tour!

Carved by ancient volcanic forces, Lyttelton Harbour is a place of dramatic landscapes, sheltered bays, and rich maritime history. On this full-day sea kayaking adventure, paddle across calm waters to discover hidden coves, sea caves, and shipwreck sites, with Quail Island as a highlight along the way. This immersive journey offers a unique perspective of one of New Zealand's most scenic harbours—best experienced from the water.

Duration: 7 – 7 ½ hours

Transport: Provided

Food: Morning tea, lunch, hot and cold drinks are provided

Start/Finish: Christchurch City Centre

Start time: 8:30 am

Finish time: 4:00 pm

Gear and equipment: All the kayaking and safety equipment will be provided for the day.

Overview:

This full-day sea kayaking tour is an unforgettable way to explore Lyttelton Harbour and visit Quail Island, the largest and most intriguing of the harbour's three islands. Shaped by millions of years of volcanic activity, the harbour now offers sheltered paddling, stunning scenery, and fascinating natural and human history. Suitable for beginners, the tour includes all equipment, transport, and lunch, allowing you to relax and enjoy a day on the water discovering one of Christchurch's hidden gems.



Itinerary

Get ready for an unforgettable adventure! Your journey begins with a scenic drive over the Port Hills via Dyers Pass, treating you to breathtaking views of the mountains and coast as you make your way to Lyttelton Harbour. There, your sea kayak expedition kicks off from Charteris Bay, just a 45-minute drive from Christchurch's city centre. Your expert guide will provide a safety briefing and teach you essential paddle strokes before you embark on your exploration.

As you paddle towards the head of the harbour, you'll discover hidden sandy beaches, rugged cliffs, and intriguing small bays while your local guide shares fascinating stories about the area. Next, you'll venture out to Quail Island, the largest of the three islands in the harbour, and delve into its rich local history. Keep an eye out for the ship's graveyard, where three partially sunken steamships rest.

Lunch will be provided on Quail Island or one of the charming small beaches nearby. You'll have free time to explore Quail Island or unwind by the beach. If time allows, we'll circumnavigate the island and marvel at the stunning sea cliffs and caves. As the tour concludes, you'll be dropped off at your pickup location, filled with memories of an incredible day of kayaking, discovery, and natural beauty.

Tour starts – Christchurch or Lyttelton

- *Travel – Depends on pickup location*



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

- *Travel – 30 minutes*



2. **Charteris Bay** – Snack, safety briefing, 30 minutes



3. **Otamahua/Quail Island** – Paddling, lunch, sightseeing – 5.5 hours

- *Travel – 30-45 minutes*

Tour finishes – Christchurch or Lyttelton

Local Information – Lyttelton Harbour & surrounding area.

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.



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.

Otamahua Quail Island Ecological Restoration Trust

Since 1998 dedicated volunteers have worked to restore the native ecology of Ōtamahua or Quail Island. The Trust has eradicated most pests (except for mice) from the island and planted thousands of trees as part of an eco-restoration project in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Ngati Wheke of Rapaki.



Volunteer groups contribute more than 5,600 hours annually, weeding, planting and monitoring traps. As the plantings mature, the island is slowly being transformed. Native bird numbers have increased as trees mature and provide more nesting sites and a more varied food source.

They have completed our 2023 planting with another 2500 trees to bring the total number planted to over 106,000.

Ripapa Island

Ripapa Island is steeped in history as well. It was originally a pā, or fortified village, built by Ngāi Tahu chief Taununu in the early 1800's. The island witnessed several battles between rival Ngāi Tahu

hapū, and by 1832, it was abandoned after being overrun by Te Rauparaha. In 1872 and 1873, pacifist protesters from Parihaka were held on the island without trial, marking a significant chapter in its history. Construction of Fort Jervis began in 1885, and the fort was later upgraded for World War I. Today, Ripapa Island holds Tōpuni status, meaning the Rapaki hapū has a say in its management.

Governors Bay

Governors Bay is a charming settlement with a population of roughly 864 residents. One of the highlights of the area is its historic hotel, founded in 1870. This is one of New Zealand's oldest hotels still in operation, having survived various earthquakes. The jetty, built in 1874, stretches 300 meters and has been restored after being closed due to damage from the 2011 earthquake. It's a lovely spot to take in the views of the bay.

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.



Sea Kayaking Tour Maps



Lyttelton/Christchurch – Charteris Bay:



Ōtamahua/Quail Island:

