

## **CENTRAL OTAGO RAIL TRAIL** **Queenstown / Clyde to Dunedin** **5 Days / 4 Nights**

### **ITINERARY**

*Please bring this information with you to the tour start.*

*Distances are given in kilometres. 1 km = 0.62 miles.*

*Cycling distances given are optional; the support van will be available.*

#### **General Description.**

Join us as for four days riding the former Otago Central Branch railway line from Clyde to Middlemarch. The trail surface is similar to a good unpaved road. For a truly authentic experience, we finish the trip with the Taieri Gorge Railway tourist train to Dunedin.

The rail originally provided a vital link between Dunedin, at that time New Zealand's largest city, and the major goldfields of Central Otago. After 83 years this stretch of line was closed. The Department of Conservation acquired the disused railway in 1993 and spent six years preparing and upgrading the route for use as a walking and cycling trail. Highlights of biking the Rail Trail include the tunnels at Price's Creek and Poolburn Gorge, viaducts and wooden trestle bridges . and of course, the absence of motor traffic. The popularity of the Otago Rail Trail has breathed new life into many of the small towns of the Maniatoto and Central Otago and you will be able admire the art deco buildings of towns such as Ranfurly, while enjoying excellent coffee and meals at classic country pubs. There will also be optional detours to the attractive little towns of Naseby and St Bathans.

\* The tour starts in Queenstown (or Clyde) but we are happy to give you a ride in our minibus from Christchurch if required.



MEETING DAY / DAY ONE: We meet at 2pm at  
Your hotel (Queenstown)  
or in Clyde if preferred

Should you need to contact New Zealand Pedaltours, please phone Richard, Helen or Lisa in Auckland 0800 302 096

You may wish to fly into Queenstown or join the tour in Clyde late afternoon. We will fit you to your rental bikes in the small town of Clyde at the start of the Rail Trail.

Lodging: L,D

Dunston House, 29 Sunderland St , Clyde (or similar)

Phone (03) 449 2295

Facilities: Ensuite rooms, internet facilities, laundry facilities

Features: A restored 1900 heritage hotel, once the stopping point for Cobb & Co coaches, Dunston House provided stabling for horses and a warm welcome for passengers.

Day Two: Clyde to Lauder 44 km  
Clyde to Alexandra 8 km  
Alexandra to Chatto Creek 17km  
Chatto Creek to Lauder 19 km

The Rail Trail starts at the former Clyde railhead and follows a semi-rural landscape of orchards, vineyards and lifestyle blocks. From Alexandra the route crosses the Manuherikia River and passes the old Tucker Hill gold diggings. You will cross the river again before Chatto Creek . the terrain is typical Central Otago schist rock and aromatic wild thyme landscape. Between Chatto Creek and Lauder you will see the 1650m high Dunstan Mountains to the northwest and the Raggedy Range to the southeast. Across the Manuherikia River from Omakau is the historic goldfields village of Ophir (renowned for the highest summer temperatures and the coldest winter temperatures in New Zealand), which was the most populous centre in the region until the railway was built.

This afternoon there is the option of a short excursion (by Pedaltours minibus) to the spectacular blue lake of St Bathans and the historic Vulcan Hotel.

Lodging: B ,L, D

Lauder Store B & B or Lauder Railhead School B & B

Phone: (03) 447 3006./ 447 3099

Features: Comfortable, character accommodation

Day Three: Lauder to Wedderburn            34.5km  
                   Lauder to Oturehua            23 km

First you cross the Manuherikia River on the trail's longest bridge (110.6m) before passing through the Poolburn Gorge to the Ida Valley. You will cycle through two tunnels cut through schist bluffs, cross the 37m high Poolburn Viaduct and then slowly descend Blackstone Hill to Oturehura, passing the Idaburn dam, popular for the winter sport of curling. Gilchists, New Zealand's oldest continuously operating general store, is located here. Beyond Oturehura we gradually climb the northern tip of the Rough Ridge range, reaching the highest point of the Trail (618m above sea level) ; near here the Trail crosses the line of 45 degrees south latitude . look for the marker. An easy descent takes us across the Maniatoto Plains to Wedderburn.

Lodging: B ,L, D

Wedderburn Lodge and Cottages, Wedderburn

Phone: 03 444-9194 [enquiries@wedderburn.net.nz](mailto:enquiries@wedderburn.net.nz)

Features: Attractive self-contained cottages, surrounded by stunning landscape of farmland and tussock country.

Day Four: Wedderburn to Hyde                46km  
                   Ranfurly to Hyde                32.5 km

This is one of the most spectacular sections of the Rail Trail, especially the final 25km. We cycle to the art deco town of Ranfurly. Take time for a break to wander around some of the picturesque buildings and museum before the final scenic run to Hyde.

Between Waipiata and Kokonga the trail skirts farmland that was once the Taieri Lake and passes beside where stone was collected to build the Dunedin Railway Station. From outside the Kokonga Station Ganger's Shed are wide views of the Kakanui Mountains and the Ida Range. We cross State Highway 87 at Daisybank and the trail gradually climbs into a spectacular gorge carved by the Taieri River. Features of this section include the historic Cap Burn Railway Bridge, Prices Creek Viaduct and the 152m long Prices Creek Tunnel.

There will be the option of visiting, by minibus, the attractive old goldmining town of Naseby.

Lodging: B,L,D

Otago Central Hotel Hyde

Phone (03) 444 4800 email : [Sutherland@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Sutherland@xtra.co.nz)

Facilities: Bar and restaurant, very spacious lounge

Features: Historic Hotel, located adjacent to the Rail Trail.

Day Five: Hyde to Middlemarch 27.5 km  
 Hyde to Rock & Pillar Station site 14 km  
 Rock & Pillar Station site to Middlemarch 13.5 km

The original 1894 Hyde Station building is still standing. Just south of Hyde village is the site of one of New Zealand's worst rail disasters, where in June 1943 the Cromwell to Dunedin train derailed and 21 passengers lost their lives.

The trail now traverses the foothills of the Rock and Pillar Range as you cycle through farmland to the trail end just north of Middlemarch Station.

Your guide will transfer you to Pukerangi station by minibus, where you board the heritage Taieri Gorge Train for your scenic journey to Dunedin (the Edinburgh of the South). You will travel from the rugged mountain interior of Central Otago to Dunedin's city centre, taking in tunnels and dramatic viaducts with superb views of the gorge and informative live commentary en route.

Depart Pukerangi 4.45pm / Arrive Dunedin 6.30pm.

Meals: B ,L

We wish you 'happy biking', 'bon voyage' and hope to see you again.

You may like to leave the following accommodation list with relatives or friends

#### OTAGO RAIL TRAIL

Day	Date	Location	Accommodation	Phone
1		Clyde	Dunston House	03 449 2295
2		Lauder	Lauder Store	03 447 3006
3		Wedderburn	Wedderburn Cottages	03 444-9194
4		Hyde	Otago Central Hotel	03 444 4800
5		Dunedin	Depart	