

# Queenstown & Wanaka



If Queenstown didn't exist, someone would have to invent it. With a cinematic background of mountains and lakes you actually have seen in the movies, and a 'what can we think of next?' array of adventure activities, it's little wonder that the South Island's premier tourist town tops many travellers' Kiwi itineraries. This Disneyland of derring-do will prompt you to scabble for a hundred synonyms for 'exciting' and 'thrilling' when writing in your travel journal, but lurking in and around the tangle of bungy cords are experiences that will last longer than a shriek-inducing 10 or 20 seconds.

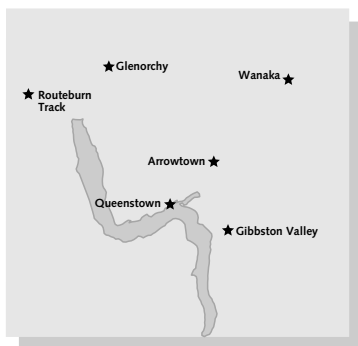
Venture out on the Greenstone and Routeburn Tracks for extended outdoor thrills amid arguably New Zealand's most stunning scenery, or sample world-beating wines in world-beating surroundings in the Gibbston Valley. If you listen really closely, you might even hear the screams of glee across the road at bungy's birthplace, the Kawarau River.

Slow down (slightly) in Wanaka, Queenstown's junior sibling, now offering its own menu of outdoor adventure and a growing restaurant and bar scene. Explore Mt Aspiring National Park to reinforce that you're only a short drive from true NZ wilderness.

Slow down even more in sleepy Glenorchy, a scenic reminder of what Queenstown and Wanaka were before the adventure groupies moved in. Reduce your speed further in Arrowtown to consider the town's gold-mining past over dinner in a quiet bistro. The following day there'll be plenty of opportunities to jump back into the region's cavalcade of fun.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Sampling superb wines amid the dramatic scenery at **Gibbon Valley** (p316)
- Relaxing and dining in **Arrowtown** (p319) after the last of the day-trippers have left
- Doing things you've only dreamed about in **Queenstown** (p305), the adrenaline-rush capital of NZ
- Walking the peaceful **Routeburn Track** (p324)
- Exploring by horseback, kayak and jetboat the upper reaches of Lake Wakatipu from sleepy and stunning **Glenorchy** (p322)
- Watching a flick at **Cinema Paradiso** (p333) in Wanaka, with pizza during intermission
- **Bar-hopping** (p316) and **dining** (p314) in cosmopolitan Queenstown





## QUEENSTOWN REGION

Surrounded by the soaring indigo heights of the Remarkables, crowned by Coronet Peak, and framed by the meandering coves of Lake Wakatipu, it's little wonder that Queenstown is a show-off. The town wears its 'Global Adventure Capital' badge proudly, and most visitors take the time to do crazy things they've never done before. But a new Queenstown is also emerging, with a cosmopolitan restaurant and arts scene and excellent vineyards. Go ahead and jump off a bridge or out of a plane, but also make time to slow down and experience Queenstown without the adrenaline. And once you've eased up, look forward to more of the same in historic Arrowtown or beautiful Glenorchy.

### QUEENSTOWN

pop 11,000

No one has ever visited Queenstown and said, 'I'm bored'. Looking like a small town, but displaying the energy of a small city, Queenstown offers a mountain of activities. If your 'Things to Do' list contains bungy jumping, caving, rafting, sledging, jetboating, skiing, skydiving and hang gliding, trained operators are waiting on your call right now.

Maximise bragging rights with your souvenir T-shirt in the town's atmospheric restaurants, laid-back cafes and bustling bars. Be sure to also find a lakeside bench at sunrise or dusk and immerse yourself in one of NZ's most beautiful views. It's a pretty good option for an alfresco afternoon picnic as well.

Confident Queenstown is well used to visitors with international accents, so expect great tourist facilities, but also great big crowds, especially in summer and winter. Autumn (March to May) and spring

### Climate

Summer (December to February) has long days with temperatures up to 30°C, but January also sees the region's highest rainfall. This elevated region gets crisp winters (June to August) with daytime temperatures around 5°C to 10°C, dipping to freezing or below at night, and lots of mountaintop snow. Autumn (March to May) is pleasant with relatively warm temperatures (15°C to 20°C), while spring (September to November) is slightly cooler.

### Getting There & Around

Air New Zealand links Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to Queenstown, with connections to Wanaka. Jetstar flies to Auckland, Christchurch and Rotorua from Queenstown. Bus and shuttle companies criss-cross Otago from Dunedin to Queenstown and Wanaka. Several divert south to Te Anau and Invercargill, and others migrate north to Christchurch or travel through the Haast Pass and up the West Coast. The major operators include InterCity, Atomic Shuttles, Naked Bus, Tracknet and Wanaka Connexions.

### MAORI NEW ZEALAND

Kiwi Haka (p318) perform nightly atop the Queenstown gondola, and Te Maori (p303) perform cultural shows during the day at the Kiwi Birdlife Park. Two Queenstown galleries worth checking out for contemporary Maori art and design are Kapa (p318) and toi o tahuna (p318). For active travellers, Kawarau Jet operates highly rated jetboat cultural tours with Maori guides (p306).