

Christchurch to Oamaru

Via Rakaia Gorge, the Inland Scenic Route & Waimate

TOTAL DISTANCE
≈ 330 km

DRIVING TIME
4 – 4.5 hrs

FULL DAY INCL. STOPS
7 – 8 hrs

MAIN ROADS
SH1 · SH79 · SH72



START

Christchurch

The Garden City of New Zealand

Depart Christchurch heading west on **SH73**. At **West Melton** join **SH72** south — the beginning of the Inland Scenic Route through the Canterbury foothills.

Christchurch SH73 → SH72

▼ Head west on **SH73**, join **SH72** south through the Canterbury foothills to the **Rakaia Gorge**.

~130 km
≈ 1.5 hrs

STOP 1

Rakaia Gorge

Inland Scenic Route, SH72, Canterbury

The Inland Scenic Route crests a rise to reveal the sudden drama of the Rakaia Gorge — a deep river canyon cut through the Canterbury foothills, its water a brilliant turquoise. Pull into the **Rakaia Gorge Camping Area** for the best viewpoint. A short walking track leads to the gorge rim and a swing bridge. Allow time to linger.

Free — roadside stop Allow 30–45 min SH72 Inland Scenic Route

▼ Continue south on **SH72** through Geraldine. At **Winchester** join **SH1** south, then take the **Waimate** turnoff (**SH82**) into town and follow signs to **Bathgate Road**.

~65 km
≈ 50 min

STOP 2

Tame Wallabies — EnkleDooVery Korna

71 Bathgate Road, Waimate

A charming family-run sanctuary where you can hand-feed and pet Bennett's wallabies — among the tamest in New Zealand. The knowledgeable owner provides an entertaining introduction before you enter. Also home to peacocks, parrots, and other animals. A genuinely unique and unhurried experience.

Open daily 10am–5pm \$15 adult / \$10 child Allow 1–1.5 hrs

▼ Return to **SH1** and continue **south** into Oamaru.

~45 km
≈ 45 min

DESTINATION

Oamaru

North Otago, New Zealand

Arrive into Oamaru via **SH1**. New Zealand's Victorian heritage town offers whitestone architecture, the historic precinct, a blue penguin colony, and warm North Otago hospitality.

via SH1 south Oamaru

PRACTICAL NOTES

- Wallaby sanctuary: **\$15 adult / \$10 child** — NZ eftpos or cash
- The Inland Scenic Route (SH72) is fully sealed throughout
- Fuel available in Oamaru, Waimate, Geraldine, and Christchurch
- Geraldine (on SH72) is a good lunch stop with excellent cafés
- Allow extra time on SH72 — the scenery invites frequent stops

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Waimate: a quiet South Canterbury market town
- SH79/Geraldine: rolling foothills, stone-fruit orchards
- Inland Scenic Route: dramatic gorges, tussock, big skies
- Rakaia Gorge: turquoise river canyon and swing bridge
- Canterbury Plains: vast flatlands with Alps on the horizon

Distances and times are approximate · Always check road conditions before departure · NZ road conditions: nzta.govt.nz