

## Central Otago suggested itineraries

### 3-5 days Otago Central Rail Trail

*Ride it, walk it, experience it! This is New Zealand's first Rail Trail, let it take you across old wooden trestle bridges and viaducts; past schist rock, parched hills, tussock grasses, awesome gorge scenery and spectacular mountains; through farmlands and tunnels to historic landmarks, goldfields and pioneer settlements.*

The Otago Central Rail Trail (Rail Trail) is 150km gravel path following the former Otago Central Branch railway line from Middlemarch to Clyde. Its gentle gradient has no steep hills and cycling takes 3-5 days to complete. Discover its treasures on any of its spectacular day sections.

[http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Otago-Central-Rail-Trail\\_IDL=24\\_IDT=294\\_ID=1518\\_.html](http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Otago-Central-Rail-Trail_IDL=24_IDT=294_ID=1518_.html)

Day 1	Clyde to Omakau <span style="float: right;">35 km</span>
	<p>The Otago Central Rail Trail (Rail Trail) starts (or ends) at the former Clyde railhead and this section runs through flat semi-rural landscape of orchards, vineyards and lifestyle blocks, schist rock and wild thyme landscapes, crosses the Manuherikia River and has views of the Dunstan Mountains and Raggedy Range.</p> <p>Key points of interest include; the old Tucker Hill gold diggings, Chatto Creek Tavern with New Zealand's smallest post office and just off the Trail near Omakau, is the historic goldfield town of Ophir.</p> <p><a href="http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Manuherikia-Area_IDL=24_IDT=294_ID=1594_.html">http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Manuherikia-Area_IDL=24_IDT=294_ID=1594_.html</a></p>
Day 2	Omakau to Wedderburn or Ranfurly <span style="float: right;">43 – 55 km</span>
	<p>From Lauder to Oturehua would perhaps be the most spectacular section of the Trail. This section of the Trail has several claims to fame in its historical railways engineering and spectacular gorge scenery as you pass from one valley to the next. Do you know it took 300 workers, 3 years to build the 2 tunnels and 2 impressive bridges necessary to get the railway through the rugged terrain? The gorge is also home to the rare New Zealand falcon, the Karearea.</p> <p>Key points of interest include; the tunnels, the spectacular Poolburn Gorge, crossing the Poolburn Viaduct and the Wedderburn Goods Shed made famous by the artist Grahame Sydney.</p> <p>Visit Hayes Engineering Works and the authentic 1930's style Gilchrist's Store in Oturehua.</p> <p><a href="http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Maniototo-Area_IDL=24_IDT=294_ID=1579_.html">http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Maniototo-Area_IDL=24_IDT=294_ID=1579_.html</a></p>

<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Rest day around Naseby / Ranfurly</b>
	<p>Located among shady trees at the head of the sun-bleached Maniototo Plain, Naseby is the most charming of Central Otago's gold rush settlements. Naseby's present day, permanent population is 100, but this swells to upwards of 3000 people during the holiday season, enjoying the tranquil delights of this corner of the Maniototo.</p> <p>Try your hand at the ancient Scottish ice-sport of curling. Curling was introduced to Central Otago by Scottish gold miners in the 1800s, nowadays, curling can be done indoors <b>all year round</b> at the Maniototo Curling International Rink, the Southern Hemisphere's first international and Olympic standard indoor curling rink.</p> <p>Take a half or full day 4WD trip into the high country surrounding Naseby and the Maniototo or visiting picturesque historic gold mining towns. Enjoy walking or biking established tracks through the forests, or play a relaxing round of golf in one of the spacious country 9 hole courses in Naseby or Ranfurly.</p> <p>Visit Ranfurly's museum, one of only two in the world dedicated to art deco. Next door, the station building houses a display commemorating the 1943 Hyde train tragedy.</p>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Wedderburn or Ranfurly to Hyde</b> <b>46 km</b>
	<p>Long straights take the trail across irrigated 'big sky country' of the Maniototo. From Kokonga to Hyde (14.5km) is another spectacular section of the Rail Trail. The trail gradually climbs into a spectacular gorge carved by the Taieri River, allow time to enjoy the historic stone Cap Burn Railway Bridge, 32m high Prices Creek Viaduct and 152m long Prices Creek Tunnel.</p> <p>Key points of interest include; the historic stone bridge over the Cap Burn at Tiroiti, Price's Creek Viaduct and Price's Creek tunnel with spectacular views of the Taieri Ridge.</p>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Hyde to Middlemarch</b> <b>27.5 km</b>
	<p>The trail crosses numerous small bridges and culverts over the Taieri River, through the upper Taieri Gorge to the wide spaces of the Strath Taieri plain and gently rolling landscape until you reach Middlemarch.</p> <p>Key points of interest include; the 1894 Hyde Railway Station, great views across lush farmland to the 1400m high Rock and Pillar Range.</p> <p><a href="http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Hyde-to-Middlemarch_IDL=24_IDT=294_ID=1563_.html">http://www.centralotagonz.com/Central-Otago/Hyde-to-Middlemarch_IDL=24_IDT=294_ID=1563_.html</a></p>
	<p>The Rail Trail ends (or starts) 400m north of the Middlemarch Railway Station. From Middlemarch <b>or</b> Pukerangi catch the historic Taieri Gorge Train which takes you through to Dunedin. The Taieri Gorge Train runs daily and dependent on season can operate two return journeys.</p>

