



DARK SKY DELIGHTS

Stewart Island Small Group Tour

DARK SKY DELIGHTS TOUR

6 days | ex Invercargill

From NZ\$3,230pp twin share. Single room supplement NZ\$885
Departs monthly from April to September.

Experience the enchanting natural wonders of Stewart Island/Rakiura. This carefully crafted small group tour is a six-day exploration of Stewart Island's pristine landscapes, rare wildlife, and the cosmic wonders of its night skies.

By day, embrace the pristine beauty of Stewart Island, from the captivating bird sanctuary of Ulva Island to serene cruises along the picturesque Paterson Inlet. Encounter wild kiwis roaming in their natural habitat, and majestic Albatross soaring through the skies.

Enjoy an insightful evening with a 3rd generation Stewart Islander for a glimpse into the island's rich history, and photograph the cosmos in all its splendour from the southernmost Dark Sky Sanctuary in the world.

Winter on Stewart Island offers a chance to witness the majestic southern lights. Spend an evening learning about auroras, and if you are a keen aurora hunter, you will be able to head out in search of auroras at night.



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Stewart Island is a truly unique place and Viva's tour was an amazing way to explore it.

We followed kiwis in the dark, saw the night sky like never before and enjoyed this beautiful island.

- Anastasia



TOUR ITINERARY

Dark Sky Delights

2025 TOUR DATES

20 – 25 Apr 2026

18 – 3 May 2026

13 – 18 Jul 2026

13 – 18 Sep 2026

DAY 1 | Invercargill to Stewart Island

Your journey starts in Invercargill with a 20-minute scenic flight to Stewart Island, past Oreti Beach and over Foveaux Strait.

On arrival to the island we take an orientation tour of Oban - New Zealand's southernmost town, and surrounding bays, including Lee Bay, the gateway to Rakiura National Park and stunning views of Paterson Inlet from Observation Rock.

After checking in to your accommodation at the centrally located Bay Motel, enjoy a welcome dinner at the South Seas Hotel followed by an evening kiwi spotting tour. We have exclusive access to private land where New Zealand's precious kiwi come out at night to feed. If there is aurora activity tonight you may have your first chance to see it while on the kiwi spotting tour.



DAY 2 | Ulva Island Tour & Visit a Local Aurora Photographer

Enjoy a short walk to the wharf before setting off on a guided walk of predator-free Ulva Island, known for its rich birdlife, lush native forest, and deep Māori and conservation history. Explore the island with a knowledgeable local guide, spotting colourful birds among towering rimu and rata.

Dinner is included this evening at the South Seas Hotel, followed by time with a local Stewart Island astronomer to learn about island life and the art of aurora hunting.



Image credit: Sandra Whipp

*Please note, images of the aurora will appear brighter/with more colour than viewing with the naked eye, as modern digital cameras and phones have greater sensitivity and can capture more colours and greater contrast. As we are in nature's hands, we cannot guarantee seeing the aurora, however these tours are timed close to the new moon when skies are dark, and over the months where aurora activity is most likely.

DAY 3 | Paterson Inlet, Stewart Island

Cruise the southern bays of Paterson Inlet with wildlife spotting opportunities including bottlenose dolphins, sea lions and yellow-eyed penguins.

Your tour escort will always be monitoring the weather conditions and aurora alerts, and will let you know the best local spots for astrophotography, always with an eye out for the aurora!

DAY 4 & 5 | Exploring Stewart Island

By day you are free to explore the island. There are walks, kayaking, e-bikes to rent, fishing, visit the local museum, have a beer at the local pub - there is always something to do. Your tour escort will be more than happy to assist. After gathering for dinner together, we head out to continue our search for the mysterious Aurora Australis.

DAY 6 | Stewart Island to Invercargill

A fond farewell from Rakiura. Enjoy one final breakfast on the island before your transfer to the airport and flight back to Invercargill.

*Please note, the itinerary is flexible and the order of tours may change depending on the weather.

"Excellent"

★ Trustpilot

For more information contact your local travel agent: