



**CENTRAL  
OTAGO**  
A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

# A TRAVEL SELLER'S GUIDE TO THE CENTRAL OTAGO CYCLE TRAILS

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# New Zealand's Best Cycle Trails!

- Central Otago is home to four of NZ's Great Rides which provide a 300km network of world-class cycling, with even more trails under construction.
- The dry continental climate of Otago is ideal for cycling year-round with four distinct seasons to enjoy.
- The trails traverse a variety of spectacular landscapes from rugged mountains, river valleys and deep gorges to vineyards and orchards.
- It is easy to organise cycling experiences with operators providing bike hire (inc. E-bikes), trail transport and accommodation packages which are commissionable to the travel trade.
- Queenstown International Airport is an ideal gateway to the trails, and the official Central Otago Touring Route which connects Queenstown and Dunedin also offers easy trail access.



# Who can ride the Central Otago Cycle Trails?

- ✓ From novices to expert cyclists, our trails cater for every age and ability.
- ✓ We have easy trails suitable for beginners and families looking for short trips, through to full day or multi-day rides for more experienced cyclists seeking an epic adventure.
- ✓ Most people who enjoy our trails are active couples or groups of friends, often aged between 50 and 70 years old.
- ✓ New Zealand's iconic Otago Central Rail Trail is popular for family holidays where grandparents & their grandchildren can share their riding experience and cycle side-by-side together.



OPEN ALL YEAR





## Summer (Dec – Feb)

The long summer days provide plenty of time to explore the trails, surrounding vineyards, **cafés** & country taverns but it can be hot. Carry lots of water & sunscreen.



## Autumn (March – May)

Warm days and the spectacular golden colours of autumn. This is one of the most popular times to ride the trails, so book early especially for the Otago Central Rail Trail.



## Spring (Sept – Nov)

Cool mornings and warm days with beautiful blossoms in the fruit orchards. Spring can sometimes be windy, so talk to your trail operator about the best direction to ride the trails, and keep the wind at your back!



## Winter (June - Aug)

The hills will have a dusting of snow on the tops, yet the trails remain firm and dry. Wrap up warm and enjoy a mulled wine in front of a roaring fire at a cosy country tavern.

# Picking the right trail for your clients.

A bit like a ski resort, our trails are graded based on distance and difficulty to help visitors choose the best trail for their ability or fitness.

## **Grade 1: Easiest**

Suitable for novice riders & families seeking an easy, relaxing ride. These off-road trails have smooth surfaces and are wide with very gentle inclines.

## **Grade 2: Easy (for confident riders)**

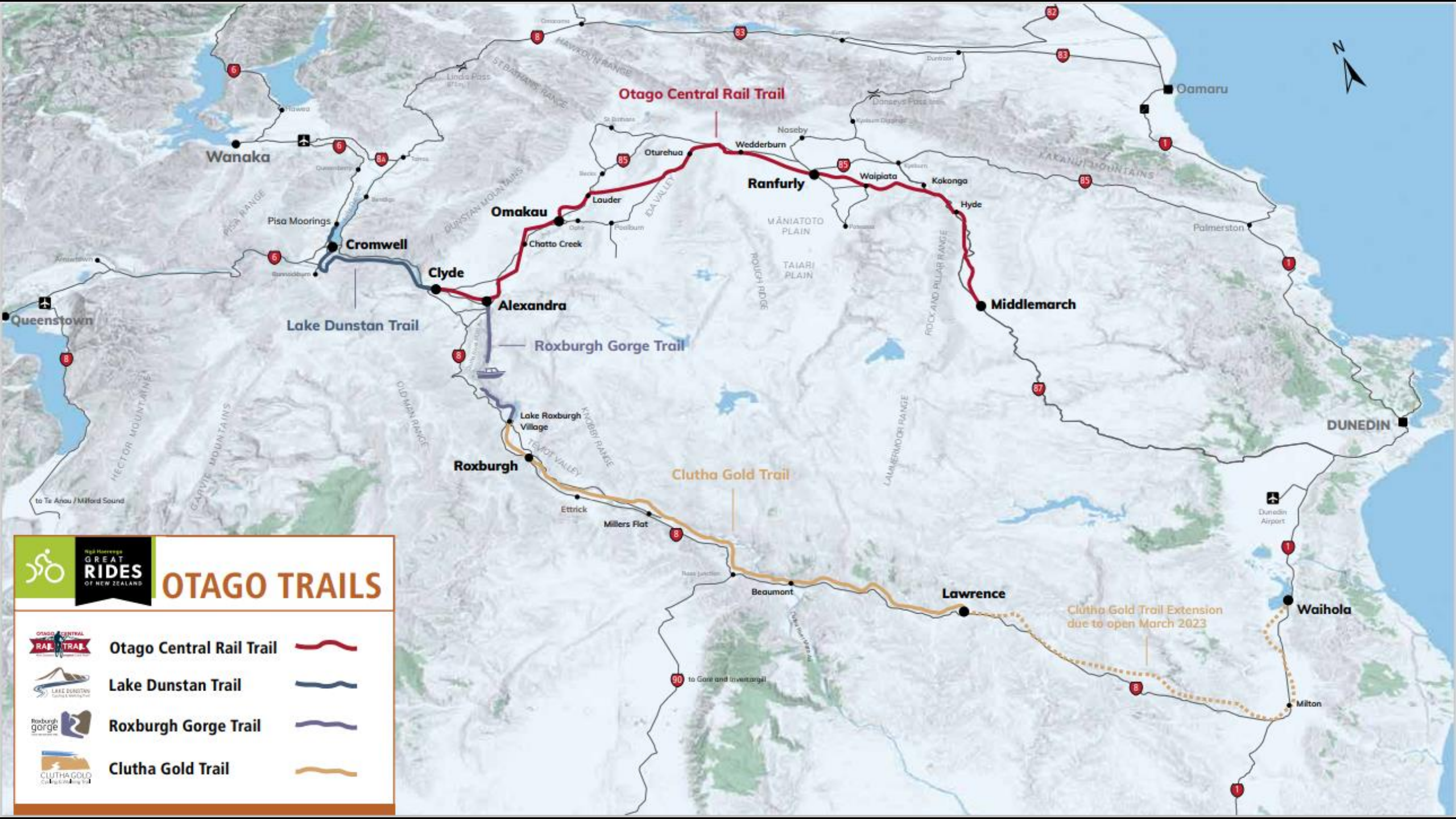
Suitable for more confident riders. A multi-gear bike with knobby tyres is recommended. Grade 2 trails are likely to be longer or have more gentle climbs than a grade 1 trail, but the trail surface will be wide and smooth. Moderate fitness and some experience and cycling confidence is recommended.

## **Grade 3: Intermediate**

Only suitable for experienced / advanced cyclists with good fitness levels. These trails are generally not suitable for children under 12 years old. Trails can be narrow including hills, steep drop-offs to the side of the track and small river crossings. The trail surface may be muddy or loose with obstacles like rocks or tree roots.

# ABOUT OUR CYCLE TRAILS





**OTAGO TRAILS**

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**Otago Central Rail Trail**

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**Lake Dunstan Trail**

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**Roxburgh Gorge Trail**

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**Clutha Gold Trail**


Clutha Gold Trail Extension due to open March 2023



# Otago Central Rail Trail



**Distance: 152km | Grade 1 Easiest**

New Zealand's original Great Ride and open all year round.

Ride without traffic, under Central Otago's big skies and surrounded by amazing landscapes and history. The trail can be ridden as a multi-day ride over 3-5 days staying at boutique country accommodation along the way with your bag transferred daily.

Or ride half or full day sections for a small taste of the Rail Trail.

Shuttle transport and bike hire is available for all options.

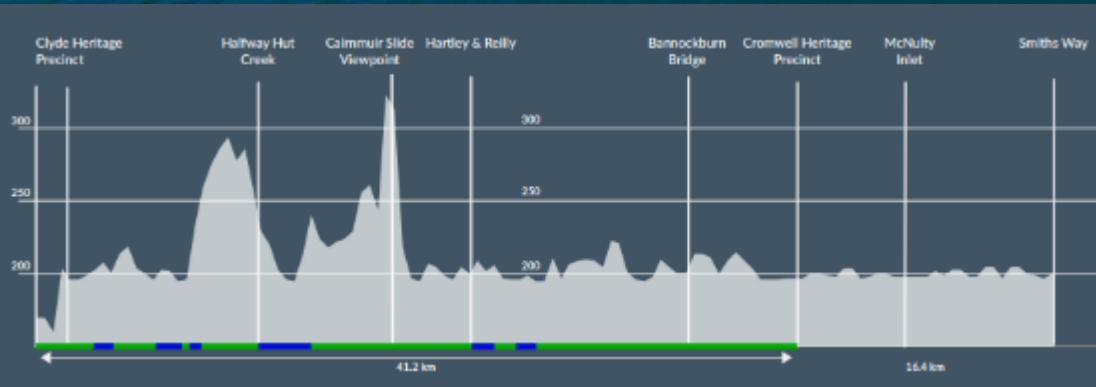


# Lake Dunstan Trail

**Distance: 55km | Grade 2-3 Intermediate**

The newest of The Great Rides opened in 2021 & has quickly become regarded as one of the best cycle trails in New Zealand! Ride across vast expansion bridges, exciting cantilevered sections and learn about Central Otago's rich history and heritage.

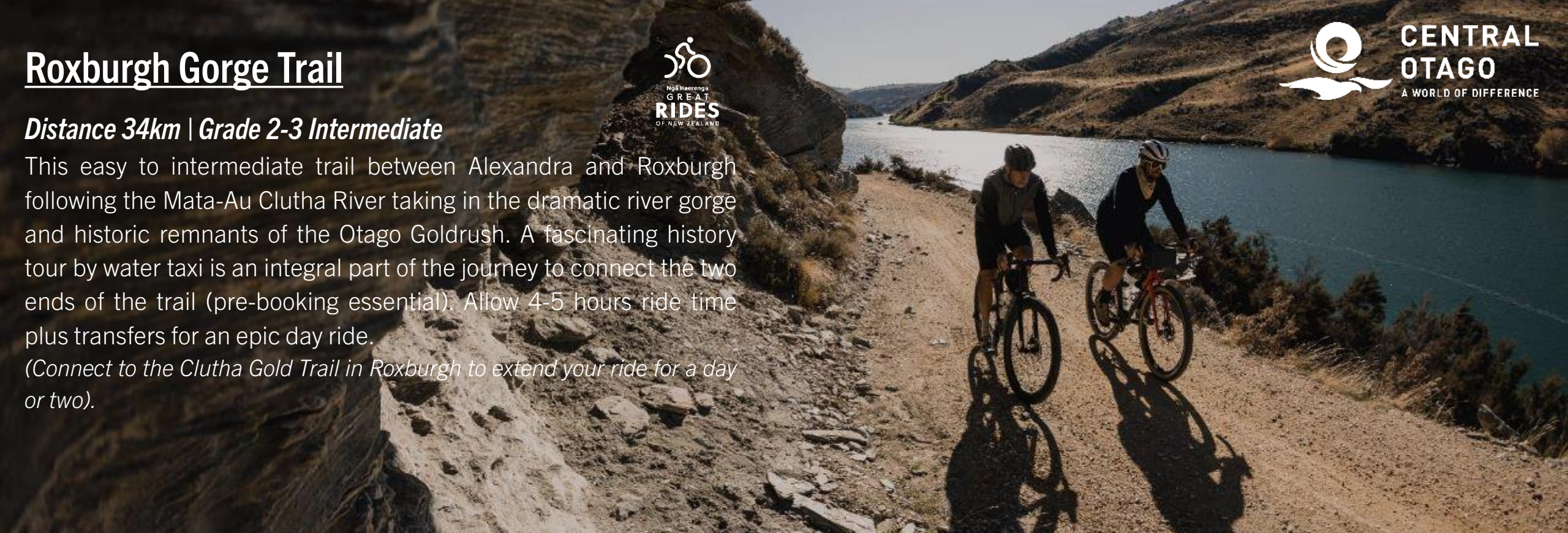
*(Note: this trail includes difficult grade 3 sections which are only suitable for experienced riders. Good fitness and bike skills are required. Not recommended for children under 12 years old).*



# Roxburgh Gorge Trail

**Distance 34km | Grade 2-3 Intermediate**

This easy to intermediate trail between Alexandra and Roxburgh following the Mata-Au Clutha River taking in the dramatic river gorge and historic remnants of the Otago Goldrush. A fascinating history tour by water taxi is an integral part of the journey to connect the two ends of the trail (pre-booking essential). Allow 4-5 hours ride time plus transfers for an epic day ride. *(Connect to the Clutha Gold Trail in Roxburgh to extend your ride for a day or two).*

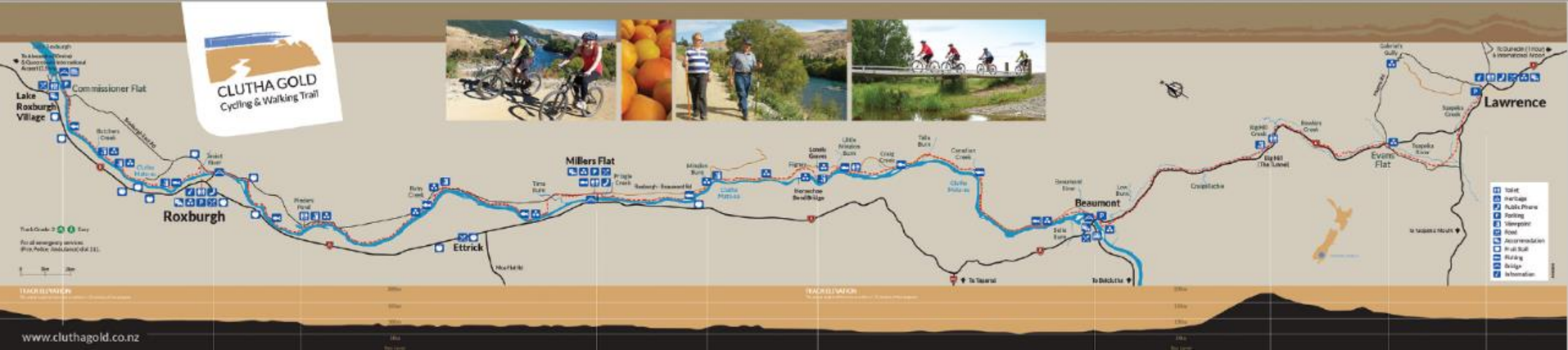


# Clutha Gold Trail

Distance 73km | Grade 1-2, Easy

The Clutha Gold Trail takes you on a journey of discovery through a landscape of outstanding natural beauty. Ride alongside the mighty Mata-au Clutha River through a lush valley, secluded gorge and into fertile green farmland. Begin your journey at any point, doing as much or as little as you like, and ride in either direction.

*(Note: the trail is currently being extended from Lawrence all the way to Waihola – just south of Dunedin – with the extension due to open in March 2023).*



# Itinerary Ideas

## Easy Half or Day Rides

**Suitable for families, beginners or those with less fitness.**

On the *Otago Central Rail Trail*, a trip along the Lauder to Auripo section (17km) or Auripo to Chatto Creek (29km) gives the opportunity to explore the Poolburn Gorge with its historic viaduct bridges, and tunnels. Stop for lunch at a country tavern.

Another popular short ride is from Roxburgh to Pinders Pond along the *Clutha Gold Trail*. This is a popular picnic spot and offers safe swimming in the summer.

On the *Lake Dunstan Trail*, ride from Smiths Way on the shores of the lake, through Cromwell Heritage Precinct and as far as the vineyards of Bannockburn where there are cellar doors for wine tasting, plus cafes and winery restaurants with stunning views.

*(Note: beyond Cornish Point in Bannockburn the trail is NOT suitable for families or beginners).*

## Intermediate Half or Day Rides

**Suitable more experienced riders and those looking for a longer adventure. Transport and packages available from Queenstown, Cromwell, Clyde and Alexandra.**

Riding between Alexandra and Roxburgh on the *Roxburgh Gorge Trail* takes 4-5 hours and includes an exhilarating jet-boat (water taxi) transfer. Relax in Roxburgh for lunch before taking a shuttle transfer back to your accommodation.

The *Lake Dunstan Trail* (55km) is a challenging intermediate to advanced category day ride which takes most people 4-5 hours. Shorter, easier options are available – talk to a local trail operator or visit our website.

## Multi-Day Rides

**Suitable for people with more time available and who are looking to ride either multiple trails during their stay, or to complete one of the longer trails .**

Cromwell, Clyde or Alexandra are great hubs from which to explore multiple trails on day trips.

Ride the length of the Otago Central Rail Trail or Clutha Gold Trail over a few days with packages available including transport, bike hire (inc. E-bikes) and cycle gear, accommodation and baggage transfers.

More information on our website.

# TRAIL OPERATORS

## TOURS & PACKAGES FOR

- ✓ Otago Central Rail Trail
- ✓ Lake Dunstan Trail
- ✓ Roxburgh Gorge Trail
- ✓ Clutha Gold Trail

### Bike It Now!



#### Contact:

Kathryn (Fletch) Fletcher, Director (Tours)

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P: +64 3 449 2228

W: [www.bikeitnow.co.nz](http://www.bikeitnow.co.nz)

- Qualmark Gold
- Locations in Cromwell, Clyde & Wanaka
- Bike Hire + Trail Transport
- Self-Guided tours
- Multi-day packages inclusive of accommodation
- “One Day Wonders” Tours available for:
  - ✓ Otago Central Rail Trail
  - ✓ Lake Dunstan Trail
  - ✓ Roxburgh Gorge Trail
- All tours available ex Queenstown, Cromwell or Clyde

### Trail Journeys



#### Contact:

Simon Stevens, General Manager

E: [info@trailjourneys.co.nz](mailto:info@trailjourneys.co.nz)

P: +64 3 449 2150

W: [www.trailjourneys.co.nz](http://www.trailjourneys.co.nz)

- Qualmark Silver
- Locations in Clyde, Cromwell & Middlemarch
- Bike Hire + Trail Transport
- Guided and Self-Guided tours
- Themed itineraries including
  - ✓ One Day Tours
  - ✓ Family Friendly
  - ✓ Food & Wine
- Tours available ex Queenstown, Clyde, Middlemarch or Dunedin

## TOURS & PACKAGES

- ✓ Across Central Otago, inc. all 4 Great Rides
- ✓ New Zealand Wide Tours & Packages

### Adventure South



#### Contact:

Philip Wyndham, General Manager

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P: +64 3 942 1222

W: [www.adventuresouth.co.nz](http://www.adventuresouth.co.nz)

- Qualmark Gold
- Small group, guided tours
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- Road Cycling
- Mountain Biking
- Hiking



# PREPARING YOUR CLIENTS FOR THEIR RIDE

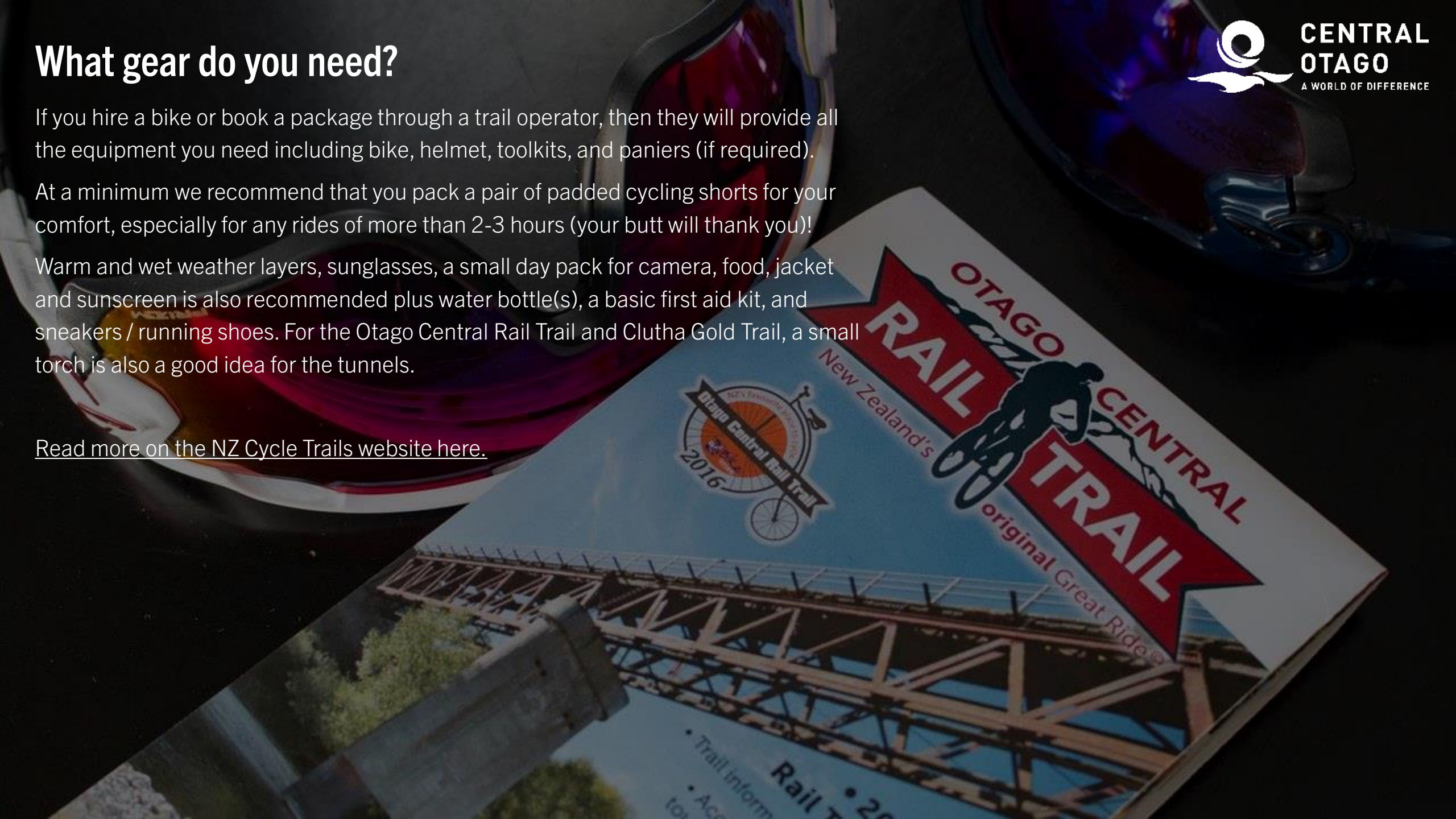
## What gear do you need?

If you hire a bike or book a package through a trail operator, then they will provide all the equipment you need including bike, helmet, toolkits, and paniers (if required).

At a minimum we recommend that you pack a pair of padded cycling shorts for your comfort, especially for any rides of more than 2-3 hours (your butt will thank you)!

Warm and wet weather layers, sunglasses, a small day pack for camera, food, jacket and sunscreen is also recommended plus water bottle(s), a basic first aid kit, and sneakers / running shoes. For the Otago Central Rail Trail and Clutha Gold Trail, a small torch is also a good idea for the tunnels.

[Read more on the NZ Cycle Trails website here.](#)





# Trail Safety

- Always wear a helmet.
- Ride to the conditions & your ability.
- Slow down...its safer and you'll see more!
- Choose the right trail and grade for your ability.
- Be considerate and respect other trail users.
- Always check the weather forecast before you depart and take appropriate clothing.
- Check cell phone coverage along the trail and make a plan in case of emergencies.
- If you haven't ridden for a while, or it's your first time on an E-bike, then take time to practice on an easy trail (grade 1) before trying a more challenging grade 2 or 3 trail option.

[More trail safety information is available on the NZ Cycle Trails website here.](#)

# Contacts & Resources

Please get in touch with the team at Tourism Central Otago with any questions or enquiries. We're here to help!

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**Website:** <https://centralotagonz.com>

**Image Gallery:** <https://centralotagonz.brandkit.io/>

**Visitor Guide & Map**

**Social Media:** @centralotagonz