

Lakes



Digging deeper...

Central Otago is home to many smaller lakes including Lake Hayes – between Arrowtown and Queenstown, and Lake Dunstan – formed after completion of the Clyde Dam.



Stat attack

Lake Wakatipu: Area 293km², max depth 380m, max width 5.5km, length 77km, altitude 310m

Lake Wanaka: Area 180km², max depth 311m, max width 11.6km, length 45km, altitude 277m

Lake Hawea: Area 138km², max depth 348m, max width 13.5km, length 42km, altitude 340m

Brilliant blue lakes set amongst vast, jagged mountains and enough civilisation to make your stay to take it all in as comfortable as you like... In summer Otago's lakes are a mecca for all forms of watersport, as well as lazy sunbaking days on their shores.

Otago's major lakes, Wakatipu, Wanaka and Hawea are all the result of glacier movement in the ice ages. Massive glaciers ground out trenches hundreds of metres deep. Today these trenches are filled with water, with depths ranging to almost 400m.

Lake Wakatipu is New Zealand's third largest lake. It is fed by rivers that originate in high alpine areas or at the foot of glaciers. It is therefore not surprising that it is quite a cold lake, with surface temperatures of 9-10°C for much of the year. No trip through Otago is complete without a stopover in Queenstown to admire the breathtaking view of the lake and mountains beyond.

To the north of Lake Wakatipu you'll find Lakes Wanaka and Hawea. These lakes are separated by The Neck, a 1.6km wide ridge. The outlet of Lake Wanaka is the start of New Zealand's largest river, the Clutha, and a popular short walking track joining Wanaka and Albert Town follows the first few kilometres of this river. The outlet of Lake Hawea is controlled by a storage dam (for hydroelectricity), which raised the level of the lake by 20m when it was completed in 1958.



A holiday park on the shores of Lake Hawea



The lakes are a great place for a spot of fishing

