

FIRST LIGHT TRAVEL



Your South Pacific Travel Specialists



Hiking New Zealand

- 2019 -



ULTIMATE NEW ZEALAND

ITINERARY



Experience the very best New Zealand has to offer with this, the ultimate outdoors package. This adventure starts in the North Island, hiking to a river-side hut deep in the lush Whirinaki rainforest. Explore Te Urewera with day walks on the Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk before heading to the volcanic wonderland of Tongariro National Park. Hike the Northern Circuit, including the world-renowned Tongariro Crossing, staying high above the world in alpine huts. Continuing on to the South Island, hike, swim and paddle a waka (Māori canoe) in the pristine waters of Abel Tasman National Park. Hike through rainforested canyons on the West Coast and sleep under the giant Ballroom Overhang. Mix it up with some cycling on the West Coast Wilderness Trail before heading into the mountains for a challenging hiking adventure in Arthur's Pass National Park. East of the Southern Alps head south to New Zealand's highest peak in Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park where we climb high for stunning views of Aoraki and the surrounding summits. Mt Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks wow us even more with majestic mountains, lakes and deep fiords, as we hike and camp out in this remarkable World Heritage Area. The tour concludes in Queenstown – a perfect place to celebrate and spend your final night in New Zealand or head off on further adventures.

The six overnight hikes as well as day hikes are carefully chosen to highlight the diversity of New Zealand's landscape and to experience a variety of accommodation options – including camping, lodges, cabins and backcountry huts. This trip can be split into North and South Island options: the Ultimate North and Ultimate South.

LENGTH	23 days
GRADE	D - River crossings, some uneven terrain, you need to be reasonably fit and enthusiastic
START	Auckland – 7:00am, pick up zone outside Sky City, 20m from Sky Tower base, corner Victoria and Federal Streets (Rotorua pickup by arrangement)
FINISH	Queenstown
ACCOMMODATION	Lodges, cabins, camping and backcountry huts
INCLUDED ACTIVITIES	Wai-o-tapu Thermal Wonderland, domestic flight from the North to the South Island, Abel Tasman waka experience, cycling the West Coast Wilderness Trail, Milford cruise
OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Milford Sound kayaking, Mt Cook heli-hiking
DEPARTURES	2019 Oct: 30 Nov: 20, 27 Dec: 11, 25 2020 Jan: 8, 22 Feb: 5, 12 Mar: 4, 18

ITINERARY

DAY 1 AUCKLAND TO WHIRINAKI

11 km/3 hours hiking

We head south to Rotorua, with a café stop at 9am for those who missed breakfast. Rotorua is renowned for its steaming thermal vents, bubbling mud-pools and stunning lakes. The area is also rich in Māori and early European history, including the violent 1886 Mt Tarawera eruption that buried a Māori village. We enjoy a quick stop by Lake Rotorua before heading away from the beaten track – southeast into the Whirinaki.

After a picnic lunch, we sort out gear and pack our backpacks for the hike into the rainforest. A further hours' drive get us to the south end of this huge park.

The Whirinaki Forest is a preserved remnant of the vast forests believed to have covered the super-continent of Gondwanaland more than 150 million years ago. Our first hike is an easy one, descending 300m on a track through native beech forest, to a simple forest hut beside the stunning Whirinaki river. We cook up our meal together and relax. We either camp or stay in the nearby hut with an evening campfire and time to enjoy the surrounds. *Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 WHIRINAKI TO TE UREWERA

16 km/5 hours hiking

This morning we continue down the valley track. This wilderness is off the tourist trail and we rarely see others, but we do often see rare blue ducks and robins, and hear kaka (a large bush parrot)! Lower down the valley, we hike beneath giant tree ferns and some of New Zealand's most stunning podocarp rainforest trees.

Later in the afternoon we drive east, into the rugged forest ranges of Te Urewera. This is the traditional home of the Tūhoe (Māori tribe) and one of the last places to have been reached by European settlers.

After two hours winding through the most incredible rain forest, we reach the western arm of remote Lake Waikaremoana. We continue around the lake before stopping for the night at a camping area with sweet little cabins. Here we relax and cook a meal together in the communal kitchen. We usually stay in the simple cabins but occasionally camp. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 LAKE WAIKAREMOANA

17 km/8 hours hiking

This morning we drive 20 min to the trail-head at the south end of the lake and ready ourselves for some spectacular views. We climb up the Panekiri Range through gnarled beech and bright green tawa forest ascending to a point over 500 metres above the lake. From here, we hike along with breath-taking vistas in every direction. After enjoying a lunch stop at Bald Knob, we return back along this undulating trail, and if time permits once back at the road end, we explore the fascinating 'caves' trail. Enjoy a second night at the cabins (occasionally we camp). *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 4 LAKE WAIKAREMOANA TO TAUPO

4 km/2 hours hiking

This morning we drive to the Volcanic Plateau where we explore an extraordinary thermal park (price included), bathe in a natural hot river and view the impressive Huka Falls. Feel the spray here as the mighty Waikato River plunges 11 metres into a stadium-like pool. This is New Zealand's longest river.

Later we arrive at Lake Taupo, the largest lake in New Zealand. Incredibly, this 600 square kilometre crater lake was formed in 186 AD by the most powerful volcanic explosion in recorded history.

At Taupo, we either grab takeaway food (own cost) or rustle up a quick 'trailer' meal at a lovely lake-side spot. Here we can relax on the unusual pumice beach and in summer enjoy an evening swim before continuing to our cabin accommodation in Tongariro National Park. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



DAY 5 TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK

15 km/6 hours hiking

Tongariro National Park is the oldest National Park in New Zealand and the fourth oldest in the world. In 1993, the park became a UNESCO mixed cultural and natural World Heritage Site. Although many hikers walk the busy one-day Tongariro Alpine Crossing, few explore the more remote and drier east side of this volcanic range. Enjoy our secret side trips and short cuts but rest assured we will hike the famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing – considered one of the world's finest day walks – but at a less busy time of the day whenever possible.

We sort out gear and pack our backpacks ready for our two nights away. In the late morning hike out of Whakapapa through tussock-grasslands and over the low saddle that cuts between the volcanoes Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe. Late afternoon we arrive at a simple but modern hut beside a quiet stream and among patches of mountain beech forest. There are great mountain-views from the spacious common room. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 6 TONGARIRO

8-15 km/3-8 hours hiking

The trail to the next hut takes just 3 hours, so we have the morning to explore.

Either amble (about an hour) to the splendid Ohineopango Springs and visit an historic hut and then return to hut for lunch, or we can negotiate an adventurous off-trail route over ash-moraine ridges and skirt lava cliffs to reach a viewpoint high above a remote lake. After lunch continue on, traversing stony deserts to an alpine hut at 1400m situated on the edge of an old lava flow.

We stop to enjoy fantastic views of the Park's three main peaks: Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe. The latter starred as Mount Doom in Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings films. It's an extraordinary landscape of active volcanoes and lava valleys.

Evening provides an opportunity to share an alpine hut with hikers from all over the world. Oturere 'sardine tin' Hut is small, quite busy, but still our favourite spot. We usually sleep in the hut, but sometimes we camp. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*





DAY 7 TONGARIRO

12 km/6 hours hiking

We hike through a moon-like valley of lava flows and ash fields before climbing steeply to the remarkable Emerald Lakes, which have graced the covers of many guidebooks.

From here we join the spectacular Tongariro Alpine Crossing.

The next few hours of hiking take us through an unforgettable wonderland of lava valleys, steaming craters and brooding volcanoes before our descent through bonsai-like alpine foliage and alongside mineral-infused streams. In good conditions, we have the option of climbing high on the volcanic peaks.

An evening drive takes us to a lodge in the heart of the National Park – the perfect place to relax with a beer and enjoy million-dollar volcanic views before dining in the alpine village. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



DAY 8 TONGARIRO TO WELLINGTON

1 km/1-2 hours hiking

Driving south, we leave the volcanoes to descend through the beautiful river valleys of the Rangitikei and along the coast to Wellington, where we arrive mid-afternoon after a café break.

Wellington is so much more than just New Zealand's capital. It is also the nation's stylish hub for arts, culture, cafés and politics. Enclosed by hills and a harbour, this compact city has many attractions within easy walking distance.

Options include enjoying the National Museum of New Zealand (Te Papa) or watching the political shenanigans of the 'Beehive' (Parliament House). Many visitors immerse themselves in the vibrant café scene and the accessible downtown area. *Includes breakfast.*



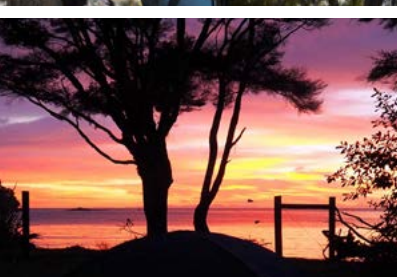
DAY 9 WELLINGTON TO ABEL TASMAN

13.5 km/4 hours hiking

We keep our options open this morning – some might prefer to relax, others might opt for a dash around the CBD or a walk along the waterfront. In any case, we regroup in time for our shuttle to the airport and our short flight to Nelson – our first stop in the South Island. Here, our South Island guide introduces us to the people joining us for the South Island portion of the Ultimate New Zealand.

From Nelson, we take a picturesque drive around Tasman Bay to Kaiteriteri, the gateway for our two nights and three days in Abel Tasman National Park. Our guide advises us on how to pack light and smart as we ready ourselves for this next adventure.

A boat cruise around the coast takes us to the beautiful and less visited part of the park at Awaroa. We enjoy a picnic on this idyllic beach before starting our hike following the Abel Tasman Coastal track south to Bark Bay, where our tents and some gear have been dropped by boat. We pitch our tents and enjoy a delicious meal together. Fall asleep to the sound of waves lapping the shore. *Includes lunch and dinner.*



DAY 10 BARK BAY TO ANCHORAGE

8.5 - 12 km/3-5 hours hiking

After a relaxed breakfast we continue our hike on the Coastal Track to Anchorage. The hike from Bark Bay takes us through glades of manuka, over a low saddle and across a 47-metre suspension bridge at Falls River. The optional side trip to Cleopatra's Pool is a must and a perfect place for a refreshing swim, and if you are feeling nimble you can join the guide for a boulder hop further up the valley exploring idyllic pools and waterfalls. Your guide may also talk you into taking another side trip up to the Falls River cascades, another stunning swimming spot. We camp tonight at the bush-fringed and bright blue inlet of Anchorage. Relax, read a book and go for a swim – before we meet in the evening to cook and eat together. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 11 ANCHORAGE TO MURCHISON

15 km/3 hours paddling

It's time to hit the water and explore the Abel Tasman's magical coastline by waka (Māori canoe).* After a traditional karakia (blessing) we learn the etiquette associated with joining a waka team. Then it's time to climb aboard and paddle!

Depending on conditions, we explore several coves on the mainland and the wildlife refuge of Adele Island, where we observe a breeding colony of New Zealand fur seals – beautiful animals that were almost hunted to extinction in the 1800s. Along the way our waka guide enlightens us with stories of local Māori history and customs. We paddle into the beautiful Kaiteriteri beach at around midday, where our guide awaits with our backpacks. After a picnic lunch and a restock on supplies in Motueka we drive south to our private campsite near Murchison, overlooking the confluence of the Buller and Maruia rivers. We enjoy an organic meal that is home-cooked by our hosts. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

*Note: The waka experience requires a minimum of 6 people. With smaller groups we return to Kaiteriteri via water taxi.

DAY 12 MURCHISON TO BALLROOM OVERHANG

8 km/3-4 hours hiking

After driving through the Buller Gorge our first stop and experience of the wild west coast is at Charleston. We take a short hike through lush West Coast bush checking out the dramatic headlands, wild waves and secluded bays.

After the hike we enjoy a picnic lunch and pack up for our next hike that takes us up a spectacular limestone river canyon in Paparoa National Park. Established in 1987, this park covers more than 30,000 hectares. Its attractions include mountains, limestone cliffs, caves, rivers, wilderness areas and coastlines.

The first half of the trail is on a reasonably well-formed track and is relatively flat, while the second half involves multiple river crossings and sections where the riverbed itself is our route. Some boulders here can be slippery and good hiking shoes or boots are essential. Our guide teaches us how to cross rivers by linking arms with our companions. We collect firewood along the way and set up camp under the massive Ballroom Overhang, a fluvial cave. For those that are keen on more hiking you can join the guide and explore up a beautiful side canyon, following the stream until it disappears into a cave. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 13 BALLROOM OVERHANG TO HOKITIKA

6 km/3 hours hiking

After a relaxed breakfast we hike back out the same way and head to the West Coast town of Punakaiki to check out the famous Pancake Rocks and seawater blowholes. Then it's down the coast to tonight's accommodation in Hokitika. A thriving gold rush town in the 1870s, Hokitika is now a great place to buy pounamu (greenstone), which was highly valued by early Māori for tools, jewellery and weapons.

Tonight's lodge accommodation is centrally located and just a short distance from the beach. Tuck in to traditional Kiwi fish and chips on the beach or eat at one of the many cafés in this bustling little seaside town. On arrival in Hokitika, we get fitted out with bikes for tomorrow's ride. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*





DAY 14 HOKITIKA TO ARTHUR'S PASS

39 km/4-5 hours biking

Before meeting the group grab breakfast at one of the great cafés in town. Today we get to cycle the stunning West Coast Wilderness Trail between the Arahura River bridge and the historic township of Kumara.

We will pedal our way through majestic native forest, cross crystal-clear rivers, and pass old reservoirs and water races. Today's ride is unguided, but the trail is very well marked, and our local partners will give you a very thorough briefing on riding the trail. The thoughtfully restored Theatre Royal Hotel in Kumara is the perfect place to celebrate our ride with a drink.

After the ride sit back and enjoy the mountain and rainforest landscapes as we turn east to drive into the Southern Alps and stay in the quaint mountain village of Arthurs Pass. Lodgings tonight are at a private hut with showers and electricity. We prepare dinner together and get ready for tomorrow's hiking adventure into Edwards Valley. *Includes lunch and dinner.*



DAY 15 ARTHUR'S PASS TO EDWARDS HUT

7 km/5-6 hours hiking

While not as well-known as some of the other National Parks visited on the tour, Arthur's Pass will awe you with its rugged alpine peaks, wild rivers and adventurous hiking trails. Our overnight hike takes us up the Edwards Valley to the Edwards Hut which sits just above the treeline with a great view up and down this beautiful valley.*

It is a challenging hike on a real 'kiwi-style' track. There are several river crossings and parts where you will need to use your hands for extra grip as the trail is rugged with steep slippery sections.

We either camp or stay in the hut depending on how many other hikers are there.

At nightfall we listen out for the distinct call of our national bird, the kiwi. Roroa or great spotted kiwi are known to inhabit this sub-alpine area. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



*Most departures will have two guides for this hike.

DAY 16 EDWARDS VALLEY TO MT SOMERS

7 km/5-6 hours hiking

We make the most of being in this wonderfully remote alpine valley with an optional hike to explore further up the valley this morning towards Falling Mountain, where the views of the surrounding mountains open up even more.

After returning to the hut we pack up and hike back down the valley having lunch along the way. The scenery changes dramatically on the eastern side of the divide. The steep forested slopes of the west are replaced with wide braided rivers, scree slopes and the surreal limestone formations of Castle Hill.

We leave the main highway following an inland route past Lake Lyndon, through the Rakaia gorge and onto the tiny village of Mt Somers where we stay overnight. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 17 MT SOMERS TO AORAKI/MT COOK

8 km/5 hours hiking

We spend the morning driving along the western boundary of the Canterbury plains and into the stunningly beautiful Mackenzie Country, an intermontane basin of huge glacial lakes and snow-capped mountains.

By late morning we arrive at Aoraki/Mt Cook village ready to maximise our afternoon with a hike with day-packs up to Sealy Tarns and possibly as far as Mueller Hut. Enjoy views across two valley glaciers to the Mount Sefton icefalls and Aoraki/Mt Cook. Towering moraine walls, glacial lakes and the frequent rumbling of distant avalanches are reminders of nature's sheer power in this dynamic landscape.



We return via the same track to our accommodation at a private hut/camp. We're in the heart of the Southern Alps, surrounded by huge mountains of commanding presence. With luck, we can watch the summit of Aoraki/Mt Cook turn from white to pink with the sun's last rays. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 18 AORAKI/MT COOK TO LAKE HAWEA

4km/2 hours hiking

We enjoy a relaxing breakfast together with a postcard view of Aoraki/Mt Cook from our dining room window.

There is the option today of joining a local operator for a guided heli-hike on the Tasman Glacier (NZ \$599).* A helicopter flight will take us onto the upper glacier where we attach crampons to our boots and marvel at the jagged landscape while exploring ice formations and ice caves.

For those not heli-hiking, join the guide for a hike up the steep glacial moraines to Red Tarns. More stunning views from here!

Those wanting to rest the legs today can either relax at the hut or visit the information centre and learn more about the park's natural history and the feats of pioneering mountaineers. By mid-afternoon we have re-united with the heli-hikers and depart Aoraki/Mt Cook to continue our journey south through the Mackenzie Country and over Lindis Pass into the Central Otago region. We stay tonight near the shores of Lake Hawea, a glacially formed lake over 35kms in length ringed by mountains. We take the night off cooking tonight and dine at a local restaurant. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

*Price correct at time of publishing.

DAY 19 LAKE HAWEA TO ASPIRING HUT

14km/6 hours hiking

We drive to Wanaka township this morning, grab a coffee and take a wander around this vibrant lakeside resort town before we drive along Matukituki Valley to the end of the road. We shoulder our packs and hike along the valley, perhaps opting to climb up for a view of Rob Roy Glacier. Cheeky and inquisitive kea (alpine parrots) often mingle with our group at lunchtime, so we might need to keep an eye on our gear (kea love shiny zips)!

In the afternoon, we enjoy stunning alpine views as we hike the valley to Aspiring Hut. Between high peaks we catch glimpses of the Matterhorn-like Mt Aspiring (3033m).

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

DAY 20 ASPIRING HUT TO KNOBS FLAT

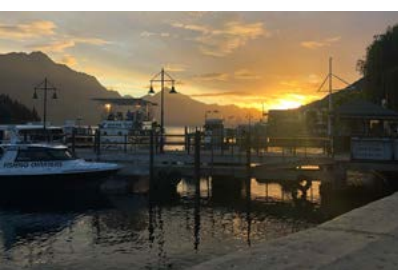
8km/3 hours hiking

We return down the valley early this morning enjoying the pretty views and easy hiking along the floor of this wide glacially formed valley. Once we are back in Wanaka we have a lakeside picnic and you may want to dive into the lake for a swim.

Next up is a remarkable drive over the Crown Range, offering breath-taking summit views of the Wakitipu Basin and lakes. By late afternoon, we're past Te Anau and well on our way to Milford Sound.

We camp for the next two nights at the beautiful Knobs Flat campsite, relaxing and making the most of the welcome hot showers. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*





DAY 21 KNOBS FLAT TO MILFORD

2-hour cruise (or Milford kayaking option*), 5 km/3 hours hiking

This morning we drive beneath imposing granite cliffs and hanging valleys into the heart of Fiordland National Park. This amazing World Heritage Site is one of the largest national parks in the world, with its huge glacial lakes of Te Anau and Manapouri and spectacular fjords.

By mid-morning, we are at Milford and ready to join one of the world's great day-cruises. Our vessel takes us out to Anita Bay and the entrance to Milford Sound. We enjoy stunning views of cascading waterfalls and the iconic Mitre Peak, which soars 1722 metres above the sea. We keep our eyes peeled for dolphins, Fiordland crested penguins and New Zealand fur seals, which often play near our boat.

Before returning to Knobs Flat, we enjoy a hike up to Key Summit. This is the final section of the famous Routeburn Track, which is another of New Zealand's Great Walks. We enjoy an informative nature walk and views of the Darran Mountains and Hollyford Valley. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

* If you have chosen the kayaking option you will be picked up at 6.30am by the kayak company to travel to Milford Sound. Paddle for 3 to 3.5 hours in double kayaks to waterfalls, spotting rare wildlife, and generally feeling dwarfed by the enormity of the fjords. Returning to land, you will be reunited with the group after their cruise. *Please advise us at the time of booking if interested in the kayaking option, as space is limited.*
Cost: NZ\$125

DAY 22 KNOBS FLAT TO QUEENSTOWN

2 km/45 minutes hiking

After breakfast we take a short hike to check out a beautiful waterfall near our campsite, where you may want to soak up one last little bit of Fiordland by jumping under for a shower! We then make our final drive to Queenstown arriving in the early afternoon. The afternoon is free for you to use as you wish. Our lodge is within easy walking distance to town. We meet up in the early evening and head out to celebrate the great hikes and adventures we have had together over the last two weeks. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 23 QUEENSTOWN – TOUR ENDS

Today is the end of the tour. Our guide departs early for Christchurch. For those staying on in Queenstown you will be spoilt for choice of adventure activities to try. Queenstown is the adventure capital of New Zealand and is surrounded by stunning landscapes with superb hiking and cycling tracks. Don't hesitate to ask one of our helpful team for tips of great hikes to do in the area at the conclusion of your trip.

Please let us know if you would like to book a return shuttle to Christchurch (\$60 – arrives Christchurch airport at 4pm).

“WORTH EVERY BIT OF MONEY AND TIME”

My husband and I would highly recommend this company. They took us to so many great places on our 22 day adventure. Our guides were wonderful. Even a landslide did not stop them from giving us a great experience. They were great in accommodating my husbands dietary needs.

~ Mark & Janet H - March 2018, **Trip Advisor**

“A TRUELY MEMORABLE AND WONDERFUL TRIP”

I have so enjoyed my trip and because I have never camped before, totally inspired me to buy a tent when I get home and go on adventures closer to home. Thank you all.

~ J. Wilson - UK, February 2018

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

This is a facilitated adventure - we believe great trips/ adventures are a team effort. So we will need your help from time to time when it comes to cooking meals, sharing the load on hikes, and washing up - many hands make light work.

GRADE D

- Average of 4-5 hours physical activity per day, up to 8-9 hours on longer days.
- Pack weights of 10-12kgs* on some days (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19 & 20).
- Altitude gains of up to 800m.
- Some uneven track surfaces and river crossings.
- No multi-day hiking experience necessary.
- You need to be reasonably fit and enthusiastic and have good agility.
- Some tracks may be slippery or rough and there will be some off-track hiking and river crossings.

*Will vary depending on the weight of personal discretionary items.

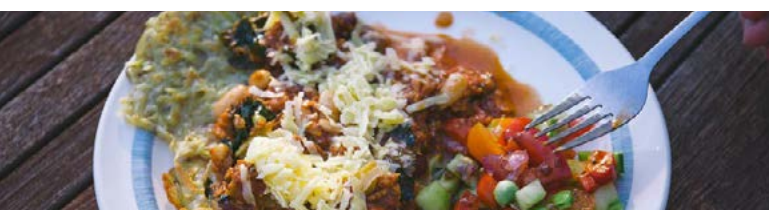


GUIDES AND SAFETY

An excellent guide can make the difference between a trip of a lifetime and just an ordinary trip. Our handpicked professionals come from a range of backgrounds. Each has extensive outdoor and hiking experience and a passion for New Zealand's wild and beautiful backcountry. The guides will ensure that your trip is truly inspiring, a huge amount of fun and safe. All guides are trained in Mountain Safety First Aid.

FOOD

As well as being the time to rest, refuel and recharge, meal times are also a great time to get to know your fellow travellers better, sit back and enjoy the amazing surroundings and enjoy some great food! Everybody has a turn with the preparation and cooking of meals: barbecues, salads, pancakes, curries, pasta, stir-fries, hangi... Vegetarian meals are no problem. On the "wild nights" the group will usually eat pasta and rice meals (special "secret" recipes used). There is always a lot of hiking food - chocolate, nuts, raisins, biscuits. The vehicles carry a full range of cooking equipment including gas burners, woks, frying pans and billies (cooking pot). When you go on an overnight hike the group will carry a portable stove.



TRANSPORT

The average driving time per day varies, some times you are in the wilderness and won't see the vehicle for 2 or 3 days! On other days you might be in the vehicle for 2-3 hours or occasionally more. The driving time is a chance to rest and enjoy the fantastic scenery which is forever changing. You will travel in a 12 seat minibus towing a custom-built trailer with camp equipment and your luggage. They are also equipped with a range of natural history reference books. There will be a range of roads - sealed and unsealed. The guide will often stop the vehicle if there is a great photo opportunity or primo ice cream shop!

ACCOMMODATION

"Wild nights" vs nights in civilisation: Wild nights are the nights where you are truly in the wilderness, staying in backcountry huts or camping in locations that may be several hours walk from the nearest road or populated area, versus nights in civilisation where you may stay in cabins, lodges or camp by the vehicle at Department of Conservation campsites. Some of these locations may still be relatively remote and in the wilderness but they can be reached by the vehicle.



Camping - You will camp in a range of campsites. On the "wild nights" you may camp under natural rock shelters, on remote beaches or even sleep out under the stars! On the non-"wild nights" you will occasionally camp near the vehicle in Department of Conservation or private campsites. If the weather is not great for camping, eg very wet, stormy or very cold conditions, your guide will seek out alternative accommodation, eg lodge, cabin or crib.

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Huts - New Zealand has an excellent network of backcountry huts and you will stay in huts on several nights. They are equipped with mattresses, running water and an outside toilet. Cooking is done on a portable stove. Huts are only accessible on foot and shared with other hikers. You also have the option of camping near the hut if that is your preference.



Lodges - You will stay in lodge type accommodation on some of the nights. The lodges are often conveniently located near the start or end of a hike and have multi-share and sometimes twin/double rooms.



Cabins/Cribs - some nights may be spent in private cribs (summer house) or cabins at a campground. Staying in the cribs is a real authentic New Zealand experience and you may even start to feel like a kiwi on holiday!



Bathroom facilities - on the wild nights there will be long drop (pit) toilets. There will be rivers or lakes nearby for a swim, and sometimes there are even natural hot pools! The Kiwi-style Hiking trips are set up so after a couple of nights of "roughing it" in the wilderness, you will stay somewhere where you can enjoy a shower and a few home comforts (including laundry facilities) before the next foray into the wild!

A very outdoor toilet - don't worry, just an actor!



ADDITIONAL COSTS

Meals

Meals that are not included in the trip price are detailed at the bottom of each day's itinerary.

Optional activities

Milford sea kayaking (NZ\$125*), Heli-hike (NZ\$599*)

*Prices are correct at time of publishing.

All other activities are included in the price: Rotorua thermal park, natural hot pools, domestic flight between the North & South Island, Abel Tasman waka experience, cycling the West Coast Wilderness Trail and the Milford Sound cruise.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

For bookings four or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 65 days prior to your trip. For bookings within four months of the departure, full payment is required.

Cancellations

More than 20 days prior to departure - 80% refund of full ticket price.

20 to 10 days prior to departure - 50% refund of full ticket price.

Less than 10 days prior to departure - NO REFUND.

Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.

PACKING LIST

Items shown in bold can be hired from us (see the rate table below).
Please arrange hire at least one week prior to your departure date.

CLOTHING - one set for walking, one set for evenings

WALKING CLOTHES: Several layers of wool, polypropylene and/or polar fleece will ensure you remain a comfortable temperature regardless of the weather. **No cotton shirts hiking/kayaking in the wet please!** Cotton gets cold when wet and is difficult to dry.

- Raincoat** (goretex or similar)
- Thermal underwear** (top and bottom, wool or polypropylene)
- Hiking boots or good hiking shoes
- Spare lightweight shoes or sandals
- Shorts or lightweight trousers (preferably quick-dry)
- Short-sleeved shirt x 2 (quick-dry, polypropylene or wool)
- Warm fleece/wool jersey** (not cotton) x 2
- Socks (we suggest 3 pairs)
- Warm hat or balaclava
- Sunhat
- Gloves or mittens (wool or fleece)
- Togs (swimming costume)
- Towel (lightweight travel towels are great)

SPARE CLOTHING: Extra socks and polypropylene layers are always handy - ensure you have enough warm items. Comfortable clothes for non hiking days. Spare clothing can be left in the secure trailer when we are away on the hikes, so don't worry about the extra weight - ensure you have enough warm items. Note: there are only limited opportunities to do laundry during a tour, so quick drying clothing is an advantage. Weather can change rapidly in the locations we hike so layers of clothing is ideal.

EQUIPMENT

- Backpack** (minimum 60 litres)
- Sleeping bag** (minimum 3 season, preferably down, lightweight, between 1-2 kg)
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Drink bottle or camel back - 1 litre
- Small Day pack
- Sunscreen and sunglasses
- Insect repellent (sandflies like foreign blood)
- Personal toiletries, medication and first aid
- Walking Poles** (optional)
- Gaiters (optional)

HOW TO PACK

We recommend that you bring two bags on your trip, a hiking backpack with an internal frame (at least 60 litres in capacity) for the overnight hikes, and a smaller day pack for the day hikes. We supply kit bags for the storage of your gear in the trailer when you are away on a multi day hike.

WE SUPPLY

- Pack-liner to keep things dry inside your backpack
- Kit bag to hold your spare gear when you are out hiking
- Emergency first aid kit
- Thermarests
- Plates, cutlery, mugs, pots, etc.
- Tents

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IMPORTANT INFO

Here is a kickstart on a few things you need to know...

WHEN HIKING

- Stay together. If you get separated, stop and wait until your guide finds you.
- Wait at all track junctions, huts and hazards, as well as river crossings, for the rest of the group to catch up.
- Tell someone if you are heading off the track to use "the bathroom" in case you get lost! It happens! If lost - shout or whistle!
- Watch out for sunburn. Remember, NZ sun burns fast, wear a hat and sun block at all times until you are familiar with its strength.
- Drink plenty of water, it is safe to drink from most of the rivers and streams in the wilderness without treating the water, but do ask.
- Help and look out for each other on river crossings, bush bashing and rock scrambling.
- Ensure you have correct clothing - see 'packing' list.
- Snow slopes are extremely dangerous - guide leads on snow. No fooling around unless guide gives the OK.
- Wasps - be observant (especially in beech forests). If you see a nest back off SLOWLY, unless they start to sting you - then move like greased lightning.

CROSSING RIVERS

- River crossing accidents are a major cause of fatalities in the NZ wilderness so learning correct techniques from your guide is imperative.
- If wearing a rain-coat turn up and tuck under hip belt so pockets don't fill with water.
- You must wear boots when crossing rivers!
- To prevent the spread of Didymo (an invasive algae) boots, gaiters, socks etc. must be washed and treated before entering another waterway.

KAYAKING

- Always attend the safety briefing.
- Always take spare warm clothing in case the weather turns bad.
- Go to the toilet before you get into the kayak!
- Wrap valuables and cameras securely in bags or dry bags and close PROPERLY. Put adsorbent cloth/t-shirt with camera.
- Always stay together.
- Sun protection - the reflection off water doubles the intensity!

CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

- Always attend the safety briefing, know the meet times and 'back up' plans.
- High visibility clothes if there are road sections.
- Be aware if you are in the front or back of group (otherwise you might be chasing imaginary people).
- Stop to smell the roses - you might be wearing yellow, but its not the Tour de France!
- Helmets are compulsory in NZ.
- In NZ front and rear brakes are opposite to US and Europe.

SWIMMING & BEACHES

Many NZ beaches are too dangerous for swimming, in particular the West Coast beaches.

Where conditions are suitable...

- Talk to your guide before you go swimming and don't swim alone.
- Respect the sea - never turn your back on the sea and watch out for freak waves & rips.
- If you get into difficulty while swimming - raise one of your hands up above your head - stay calm.
- Be careful entering the sea or body surfing, there may be rocks below the water.

- For rescues, things that float are - sleeping mats, spare tyre, empty water bottles (jerry cans), thermarests and dry bags stuffed with clothing.
- Look for jellyfish and stingrays (check along water edge and don't swim if there are lots about).

HOT POOLS (NATURAL)

- Keep head above water at all times - water may contain amoebic meningitis.
- Watch out for boiling water/mud around and in the pool.
- Remove jewellery as it tends to turn green or black.

FIRES

- Observe all fire bans. Keep fires small, use only dead wood and completely put out with water before leaving and at night (includes wood burners in huts).
- Always have a bucket of water near fire to extinguish it and for burns (or stream/river nearby).
- Be careful when wearing synthetic clothing around fires. Sparks put holes in Gore-Tex and tents.
- Do not use axe without guide's okay - wear boots.

HYGIENE & TOILETS

- You'll get to a shower generally every 1-2 days, otherwise there are rivers to swim in and freshwater to wash with.
- Keep streams, lakes and rivers clean - when cleaning and washing, take water and wash well away from the water source (drain used water into soil to allow it to be filtered) - all soaps/detergents are harmful to water-life.
- Always use toilets when they are provided even though long-drops may be a bit rustic.
- In situations where there is no toilet, bury toilet waste. No 1's (pee) off the track - No 2's (poop) in 5-10 cm deep hole 50-100m from any water (lake, river or stream), bury toilet paper, cover up hole with soil/leaf litter. Please do not burn toilet paper.
- Sanitary pads/tampons are treated as rubbish - carried out by user.

ENVIRONMENTAL CARE

- Remove rubbish - pack it in, pack it out. Please help guide to separate rubbish, recycling and compost.
- Keep to the track where there is one - protect native plants and animals.
- Respect cultural heritage.
- Enjoy your visit - camp carefully and leave no trace of your visit. Will the next visitor know you have been there?

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER...

- Laundry facilities are limited while on trips (every 2-3 days).
- Hypothermia - make sure you have the correct clothing! Be prepared for any weather!
- Hire gear - use the supplied liner with sleeping bags, carry all hire gear in pack not tied to outside. Please don't overextend walking poles - they will snap! Please tell us if any repairs are required.
- Equipment - it is so easy to lose stuff in shared huts. Help us keep an eye on gear, thanks.
- Roads - remember kiwis drive on the left, look carefully when crossing the street for an ice-cream.
- Tipping - it is not expected in NZ to tip for service, but if you feel your guide has done an excellent job, tips will be accepted graciously.
- Wild food & berries - always ask before you eat, many are poisonous to us.

Thank you for reading. Have a wonderful trip.

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson