



# 13-DAY BACKYARD BEAUTIES TOUR

**FIRSTLIGHTTRAVEL**   
*Your South Pacific Travel Specialists*

Join us on this New Zealand adventure tour for thirteen unforgettable days exploring Wellington, Christchurch, Wanaka, Abel Tasman National Park, Franz Josef Glacier, Punakaiki and Queenstown - with the option to visit Milford Sound along the way.

We have some amazing included sights and activities over your 13 day action-packed adventure holiday in New Zealand. You'll be strolling secluded beaches, whale watching in Kaikoura, traversing jaw-dropping mountain ranges, paddling a Māori waka, staying in a lush rainforest, being wowed by the stars at an International Dark Sky Reserve, admiring turquoise lakes, intriguing rock formations, blue glaciers, picturesque cities, quaint gold-rush towns and carving your own greenstone pendant - phew! So, what are you waiting for? Let's get this adventure started!

Plus feel free to add on your choice of activities along the way to maximise your New Zealand holiday. Perhaps you yearn to take on New Zealand's highest bungy? Step right up! Want to experience a high-speed jet-boat ride through a canyon close to where jet boating was invented? You got it! Want to hike the blue ice of a glacier after a breathtaking helicopter ride? We know the place to go! Fancy a scenic flight over two World Heritage Parks? We've got it covered. If paragliding has been your dream, we know where to get the best air - and dream views!

[firstlighttravel.com](http://firstlighttravel.com)

And let's not forget all the other included sights and activities you'll experience over 13 action-packed days. You'll be strolling secluded beaches, traversing jaw-dropping mountain ranges, paddling a Māori waka, staying in a lush rainforest, being wowed by the stars at an International Dark Sky Reserve, admiring turquoise lakes, intriguing rock formations, blue glaciers, picturesque cities, quaint gold-rush towns and carving your own greenstone pendant - phew! So, what are you waiting for? Let's get this adventure started!

## Backyard Beauties Tour Tips:

- ▶ Activities can also be purchased on the road - just let your tour guide know. We can't always guarantee availability when booking on the road, so we suggest pre-booking any activities you especially want to do.
- ▶ As the tour starts early in the morning, you can opt to book accommodation in Wellington with us the night before the tour - only having to walk downstairs on the day the tour starts makes for a stress-free morning!
- ▶ The tour price includes dorm share accommodation (4-6 share) but if you would prefer your own space you have the option to upgrade to a private room for the duration of your tour.



# TOUR INCLUSIONS

## AWESOME INCLUSIONS

- ▶ Explore downtown Christchurch and see its inspiring regeneration since the 2011 quake
- ▶ Visit the tiny Church of the Good Shepherd, nestled by the shores of Lake Tekapo
- ▶ Unparalleled stargazing opportunities in Tekapo's Dark Sky Reserve
- ▶ Visit the charming, historic gold rush village of Arrowtown
- ▶ Carve your own pounamu (jade) pendant in Franz Josef
- ▶ Visit the Mountain Jade Factory in Hokitika
- ▶ Visit the famous Pancake Rocks of Punakaiki
- ▶ Two nights and a full day to play in the coastal paradise of Abel Tasman National Park
- ▶ Learn to paddle a waka (Māori war canoe) along the Abel Tasman coastline
- ▶ Iconic ferry ride between the North and South Islands across the Cook Strait
- ▶ Fall in love with Wellington's cafe and craft beer culture

## ALL HAKA ADVENTURE TOURS INCLUDE

### ORIENTATION TOURS

We give you the low-down on every location.

### COMFORTABLE TRANSPORT

With plenty of room to spread out.

### CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST EVERY DAY

Heaps of options for everyone (you too, vegans!)

### HIGH-END HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION

Dorm share, upgrades available.

### CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

To teach you about our unique Māori culture.

### EXPERIENCED LOCAL GUIDE

Friendly, knowledgeable and passionate about NZ

### SMALL GROUPS - MAXIMUM 16

Because you're more than just a number!



# ITINERARY SUMMARY

**DAY 1 - WELLINGTON TO KAIKOURA**

**DAY 2 - KAIKOURA TO CHRISTCHURCH**

**DAY 3 - CHRISTCHURCH TO TEKAPO**

**DAY 4 - TEKAPO TO QUEENSTOWN**

**DAY 5 - QUEENSTOWN**

**DAY 6 - QUEENSTOWN TO WANAKA**

**DAY 7 - WANAKA TO FRANZ JOSEF**

**DAY 8 - FRANZ JOSEF**

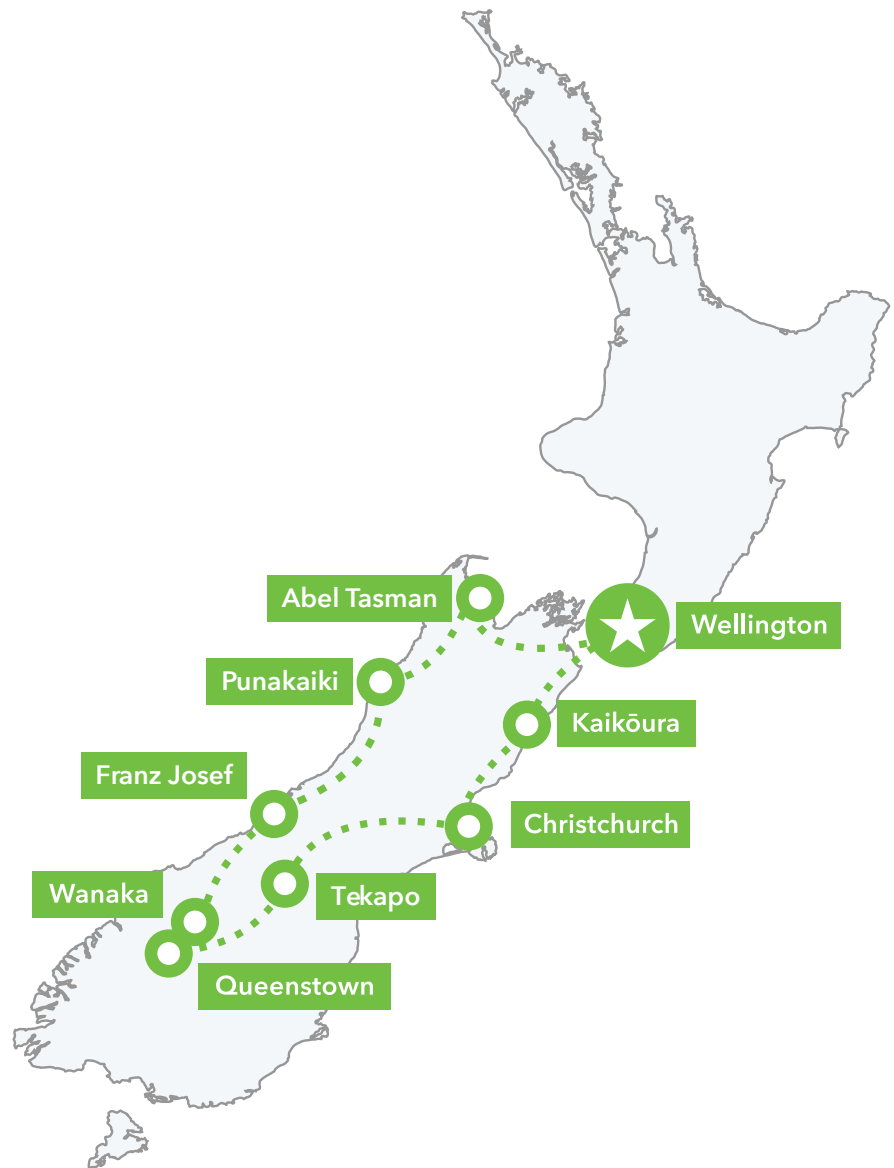
**DAY 9 - FRANZ JOSEF TO PUNAKAIKI**

**DAY 10 - PUNAKAIKI**

**DAY 11 - PUNAKAIKI TO ABEL TASMAN**

**DAY 12 - ABEL TASMAN**

**DAY 13 - ABEL TASMAN TO WELLINGTON**





## DAY 1 - WELLINGTON TO KAIKŌURA

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Cook Strait Ferry Crossing

Packed with quirky cafes and beautiful street art, and famous for its wind, Wellington will blow you away in more ways than one! Your guide will introduce you to some of our favourite spots this morning. If there wasn't a chance yesterday we'll take a trip up Mount Victoria for the best views in town.

Later on we say farewell to the North Island with a scenic ferry journey across the Cook Strait. The South Island has a stunning welcome in store for us - gliding through the Marlborough Sounds as we approach Picton Harbour, you'll feel like you're in another world.

Our next destination, Kaikōura literally means "to eat crayfish", and the area is teeming with them. The nutrient-rich waters of this area attract a wide variety of marine wildlife including the stars of the show - the whales and dolphins.



## DAY 2 - KAIKŌURA TO CHRISTCHURCH

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Visit a seal colony
- ▶ Whale Watching

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Dolphin Encounter

The chance to swim with dolphins in the wild is a massive New Zealand highlight for many travellers, and Kaikōura is one of the best places to find them, with pods of up to 300 of these playful creatures hanging out here at any one time.

If you want to get up close to the giants of the ocean, a whale watching tour here is the way to do it. Humpbacks, sperm whales and orca all stop by at various times of year, so this is a great chance to meet some of them.

After visiting the local seals on our way out of town, our road trip continues to our home for the night - Christchurch, known as the "Garden City" for its peaceful parklands and lazy rivers.



## DAY 3 – CHRISTCHURCH TO TEKAPO

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Christchurch City Tour
- ▶ Visit the Church of the Good Shepherd
- ▶ Experience Tekapo's Dark Sky Reserve

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Grand Traverse Scenic Flight

This morning we'll explore iconic downtown Christchurch and your guide will show you the cool and creative ways the city is being rebuilt after the life-changing 2011 earthquake here. Christchurch folk are an innovative and creative bunch - the Transitional Cathedral, created from cardboard, is totally inspirational.

After lunch we leave the city behind and head for Lake Tekapo. The lake's breathtaking turquoise colour and mountain backdrop is a photographer's dream come true.

The tiny Church of the Good Shepherd stands right at the water's edge, proving that small is definitely beautiful. Grab some confetti and congratulate any passing brides - couples travel from all over the world for wedding shots in front of the chapel!

Tekapo has been declared an International Dark Sky Reserve and the super clear skies make it the best place in New Zealand to see the stars and galaxies on a clear night. Sit back, relax and enjoy.



## DAY 4 - TEKAPO TO QUEENSTOWN

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Hike up Mt John (optional)
- ▶ Visit Kawarau Gorge

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Grand Traverse Scenic Flight
- ▶ Kawarau Bridge Bungy

This morning if you're feeling energetic, hike up to the summit of Mt John. With awesome views of the Southern Alps, you'll feel on top of the world. Speaking of views, today's scenic drive to Queenstown is a show-stopper.

From the golden tussocklands of Mackenzie country - where epic battles of Return of the King were filmed - to the dramatic peaks of the Southern Alps, it's like you're driving into a postcard.

We'll pause for lots of photo stops en route to give your camera a workout, including a stop at the spectacular Kawarau Gorge. This also happens to be the World Home of Bungy, give it a go or enjoy watching the jumpers scream their way through the gorge!

Whether you're an adrenaline junkie, an avid hiker, wine taster or scenery lover, Queenstown has something for absolutely everyone. With two nights and plenty of daylight hours here, get ready - this town certainly knows how to live life to the max!



## DAY 5 - QUEENSTOWN

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Milford Sound Coach/Cruise/Coach
- ▶ Milford Sound Fly/Cruise/Fly Package
- ▶ Canyon Swing
- ▶ Kawarau Bridge Bungy
- ▶ Nevis Bungy
- ▶ Skydiving
- ▶ Paragliding
- ▶ Shotover Jet Boat
- ▶ Canyoning
- ▶ Horse Trek Lord of the Rings
- ▶ Lord of the Rings 4WD Tour
- ▶ Heli-Mountain Biking

With a full day in Queenstown, let's work on that bucket list! There are heaps of options to choose from: paragliding over the lake, mountain bike parks and trails to die for, bungy jumping while your Haka friends cheer you on, horse riding through *Lord of the Rings* scenery, and swinging through a canyon are just a few of our favourites.

For scenery lovers, Milford Sound is a must-see. Whether you fly or drive, the scenery en route is as awesome as the destination. Once on the Sound, sailing beneath thundering waterfalls and towering cliff faces, you'll understand why some call it the "8th Wonder of the World".

Tonight you have around 40 bars to choose from - your guide will fill you in on their favourites - to share your adventures with your travel buddies, and party the night away.





## DAY 6 – QUEENSTOWN TO WANAKA

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Visit Arrowtown – a charming and historic gold rush village

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Canyon Swing
- ▶ Kawarau Bridge Bungy
- ▶ Nevis Bungy
- ▶ Paragliding
- ▶ Shotover Jet Boat
- ▶ Canyoning
- ▶ Horse Trek Lord of the Rings
- ▶ Lord of the Rings 4WD Tour

One last morning in Queenstown to work on that bucket list. What will it be today - a canyoning experience, Lord of the Rings 4x4 safari, or a jet boat ride along the Shotover River? There are so many options. You decide.

After the excitement of Queenstown, the afternoon is a chance to chill. Wanaka is Queenstown's slightly quieter little sister, a mere one hour drive away. On the way we'll stop in at charming Arrowtown, a historic gold rush village with heaps of old world character.

Blessed with towering peaks and a glacial blue lake, you'll soon see why Wanaka's considered to be one of New Zealand's most beautiful mountain towns. There are stunning hikes and bike rides all around for a welcome chance to relax.



## DAY 7 - WANAKA TO FRANZ JOSEF

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Lake Hawea Lookout
- ▶ Haast Pass

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Flying Lessons
- ▶ Skydive
- ▶ Wanaka Ebike Tour
- ▶ Mou Waho Lake Cruise & Island Nature Walk

This morning is about exploring Wanaka. How, exactly, is up to you! Optional activities include a flying lesson, skydiving, a bike tour along Wanaka's lakeside, or a lake cruise and nature walk on Mou Waho Island.

If none of those appeal, there are lots of scenic short walks in the area - including a visit to #thatwanakatree. Talk to your guide for the best options.

The journey to Franz is another stunner - many of our Haka Guides rate it as their favourite drive in New Zealand.

As we hit the road, we'll stop at one of our favourite lakeside lookout points at Lake Hawea or Lake Wanaka. Your guide will keep an eye on the weather and pick the best option.

From the cascading waterfalls of Haast Pass to classic Kiwi coastal views, you won't want to nap on the bus in case you miss anything. Your guide will have some epic surprise photo stops and short walks along the way.

We roll into Franz Josef around late afternoon/early evening. This UNESCO World Heritage area is famous for its spectacular glacier, just 5 kilometres from town, which is begging to be explored tomorrow.



## DAY 8 – FRANZ JOSEF

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Carve your own pounamu necklace

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Glacier Heli Hike
- ▶ Heli Experience with Snow Landing
- ▶ Glacier Kayaking
- ▶ Quad Biking

With Aoraki/Mount Cook (New Zealand's highest mountain) twinkling behind the glaciers, Franz Josef is about as beautiful a setting as you can find in New Zealand.

Te Wahi Pounamu (which means 'the place of greenstone' in Māori) is the name given to this part of the West Coast because of the abundance of pounamu (greenstone/jade) to be found here. Included in your tour today is a special opportunity to carve your very own pounamu pendant at a local gallery.

There are heaps of ways to enjoy Franz Josef Glacier; weather permitting, to get up onto the bluest ice you can take a scenic helicopter flight and hike onto the glaciers. Maybe you'd prefer to kayak on a glacial lake; or just relax in the steamy hot springs down below.

As well as the awesome glacier activities you could also try out quad biking and even a bit of group karaoke tonight in Franz Josef!



## DAY 9 – FRANZ JOSEF TO PUNAKAIKI

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Visit Hokitika Greenstone Factory
- ▶ See the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks
- ▶ Stay in a rainforest retreat

Driving along the incredible coastal road and exploring the lush forests around Punakaiki, it almost feels like you've stepped back in time. It's a rare treat to experience such remote prehistoric landscapes, so make the most of this awesome opportunity to unplug from the outside world.

Get excited; our trusty guides always have some surprises up their sleeves for this part of the trip, including a spot or two to get your feet wet.

We'll visit one of the famous artisan greenstone factories in Hokitika as we make our way north, as well as passing through some old gold mining towns before arriving in Punakaiki.

One of Punakaiki's many natural wonders is the subtropical rainforest – and we are staying in the heart of it for the next two nights!

Cook up a group dinner (not included) in this rainforest paradise, and be sure to end the day watching the sun set over the ocean tonight.



## DAY 10 - PUNAKAIKI

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Stay in a rainforest retreat

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Cave Tubing
- ▶ Surf Lesson
- ▶ Glow Worm Caves
- ▶ Canyoning

Whether you decide to soak up the sun on the unspoilt beaches or stroll through the rainforest to a chorus of birdsong, you'll shed your cares in this magical place.

A short walk to see a giant stack of pancakes is a must-do: Punakaiki's limestone Pancake Rocks developed over 30 million years ago. You'll see what water pressure can do when the waves power through some seriously impressive blowholes - watch out for that spray!

Today you could try your hand at surfing or exploring the region's underground caves by tube. Or simply chill by the beach near your rainforest home.

On a clear night, head to the beach with your buddies and watch the stars come out to play - seriously, is there a better way to end the day?



## DAY 11 - PUNAKAIKI TO ABEL TASMAN

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Skydiving

Cruising up north from Punakaiki, the scenery gets better and better. The powerful, untouched coastline gives way to rivers and gorges before we drive over the hills and down towards the bayside town of Nelson, to stock up on supplies before our next remote hideaway.

Marahau, the gateway to Abel Tasman National Park, boasts golden beaches, tranquil lagoons and crystal clear waters. Abel Tasman is the perfect contrast to the wildness of the rainforests and mountains.

Why will you fall in love with Abel Tasman? Lush forests, sandy beaches, sheltered bays, and jaw-dropping views... not to mention the resident wildlife. Get ready to lose your heart to the most popular National Park in New Zealand.



## DAY 12 – ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Sea Kayaking + Walk (full or half day)
- ▶ Canyoning
- ▶ Sail the Abel Tasman
- ▶ Eco Boat Tour (full day)

Abel Tasman... you beauty. Lush forests, golden sandy beaches, sheltered bays, and jaw-dropping views... not to mention the local seals, dolphins and bird life.

You might like to hike part of the Abel Tasman Coast Track – one of New Zealand’s nine Great Walks – or paddle a kayak to Split Apple Rock. You could jump, slide, abseil, float and zipline your way through the park on an awesome canyoning adventure.

Fancy a relaxing day instead? Choose yourself a golden beach and make yourself at home.



## DAY 13 - ABEL TASMAN TO WELLINGTON

### INCLUDED

- ▶ Breakfast
- ▶ Paddle a Waka (war canoe)
- ▶ Visit Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve
- ▶ Cook Strait Ferry Crossing to Wellington

Today is the last day of your tour!

You'll start things off by learning to paddle a traditional waka (Māori war canoe). Experience a karakia (blessing for protection), and learn tikanga (waka etiquette) all while getting out on the water to enjoy this unique included activity.

Our road trip continues along the northern edge of the South Island this afternoon. We'll make a quick stop at Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve (a film location for *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*) and make our way through Havelock as we wind our way towards Picton to catch the afternoon ferry to Wellington.

As the lights of Picton Harbour fade into the night, relax on board together for a chilled evening.

The tour officially finishes at 8pm today in Wellington, but your accommodation tonight is included.





## FAQ's

### WHERE DOES THE TOUR START AND END?

This tour starts in Wellington at 8am on Day 1 and wraps up at 8pm on the evening of Day 13 in Wellington, but your final night of accommodation is included, and there's plenty of options to transfer to Auckland the next day if required.

Most customers stay with us the night before the tour starts, which means a super relaxed start to your Haka experience. You can choose to do this as you build your tour online.

### CAN I BOOK EXTRA ACCOMMODATION?

Yes - you can book extra accommodation in Auckland before the tour or in Wellington/Auckland after the tour.

### DO YOU VISIT MILFORD SOUND ON THIS TOUR?

We offer an optional trip to the wonderful Milford Sound while in Queenstown. There are a few different options for the excursion, which you can view online.

### WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES ON THIS TOUR?

Everyone has their own favourites, but in general we find that these are the most popular:

- ▶ Canyon Swinging in Queenstown
- ▶ Extreme Jet Boating in Queenstown
- ▶ Nevis Bungy in Queenstown
- ▶ Skydiving over The Remarkables

Please be aware that your Haka guide will fit your activities in the best way possible depending on what activities are selected - so they may take place on different days or times than those listed on this itinerary.

### I AM TRAVELLING ALONE - CAN I JOIN THIS TOUR?

Yes! Around 70% of our guests are solo so you can absolutely join this, or any other of our tours. There are no single person supplements.

### HOW MUCH SHOULD I BUDGET PER DAY FOR FOOD AND WHAT FOOD IS INCLUDED?

Your guide will supply a continental breakfast each morning of your tour. This will consist of cereal, toast, tea, coffee and juice. And we take any special requests also.

Lunches and dinners are at your own expense. Our guides know the best places in each town and city depending on your budget and what you are after, and they will point these out on the way into each location.

Some nights the tour group may choose to cook a meal together. You will head to a supermarket to get everything and then cook as a group at the hostel.

Whoever joins in splits the cost, and it usually works out to be about NZ\$10 per person. A fun, social and cheap dinner.

Likewise the tour group and guide often head out to a local pub for a beer and a meal. Meals can range from NZ\$15 upwards. In summer it's not uncommon to have a BBQ washed down with a few drinks.



## FAQ's

### DO YOU CATER FOR VEGETARIANS/VEGANS?

Yes - we often have vegetarian/vegan guests and all cafes and restaurants in New Zealand offer these options. If you can't see any on the menu just ask, as most places will happily prepare something for you.

### HOW FAR IN ADVANCE SHOULD I MAKE A BOOKING?

We recommend booking as soon as you know you can travel, and have decided on which tour you would like to go on. Some of our tours can be quite popular so it's best to secure your spot as soon as possible. Your spot can be booked with just a \$99 deposit and full balance is due 45 days prior to departure. You can log into your account at any time up until 45 days prior to pay off part of your tour balance, add activities and customise your tour.

### WHAT AGES IS THIS TOUR FOR?

We have guests that are in their late teens to their 60s but the average age is around 25-45. More important than age is attitude - we have found over the years that if you have a thirst for adventure then age is no barrier.

Please do keep in mind though that a reasonable level of fitness is required - we can talk you through any specifics. The minimum age of joining a tour is 18 years old.

Sometimes the group may head out to a bar where everyone needs to be 18 years old, and New Zealand has strict alcohol policies.

### CAN I UPGRADE MY ACCOMMODATION?

If you would prefer to have your own room while on tour, it is a good idea to upgrade. Most private rooms will have an ensuite bathroom attached; however in some locations you will have a private room with shared bathroom facilities due to the hostel layout. You can read more information about our accommodation upgrades online.