



ASPIRING ALPINE ADVENTURE

ITINERARY



Welcome to the sheer mountains and pure forests of Mt Aspiring National Park. Fly into and explore a remote mountainous area, trek out of the wilderness, then jetboat back to civilisation. Wild tumbling rivers, alpine meadowlands, glacier circs and meltwater lakes with magnificent snow summits above. This trip takes you to faraway places where you will see few others. Stay in backcountry huts or camp. Day hikes as well as one full-pack carry on Day 3. This trip departs from Wanaka which is an easy shuttle ride from Queenstown Airport.

LENGTH	4 days
GRADE	D (mostly day packs 2-7 hours, 1 day carrying 10kg pack over day 8 hours walking over uneven terrain)
PRE TRACK BRIEFING	6pm the day prior, Wanaka, for a full gear check and any updates. We will notify you of location
START	Wanaka at 8.00 from your accommodation
FINISH	Wanaka 2.00 pm
DEPARTURES	Dates on demand, please enquire
PRICE	Adult (min 4 people) from NZD \$3,000.00 per person, please enquire

“ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL”

Dan was awesome. He gave us the right level of information and insights, while still giving us space to enjoy our time away as a family. It was great that we discussed plans as a group and adjusted the itinerary based on the weather and how we were feeling.

OLIVIA SPRATT AND FAMILY, April 2021

“BEST DECISION”

Booking this tour was one of the best travel decisions I have made. I did the North and South and was pleased with both. It was three weeks full of hiking and other awesome activities that kept you busy and a great way to see the country. We had a different guide for each of the islands and I don't think we could have had better guides.

CHIARA R, January, Trip Advisor

ITINERARY

DAY 1 UPPER WILKIN - WATERFALLFLAT

6-7 hours hiking

Depart Wanaka township and drive north beside Lakes Hawea and Wanaka to the tiny settlement of Makarora. Here we jump into a helicopter for the jaunt into the heart of Mount Aspiring National Park. Our flight snakes us above the Wilkin Valley with spectacular views across to the ice-carved peaks and hanging valleys on each side. We are dropped on the tussocks of the upper river flats, just 40 minutes hiking from Top Forks huts - our base for the next two days.

Later, after leaving our full packs at the hut, we follow a trans-alpine trek route as far up as Waterfall face. The trail is rugged and steep and the sights spectacular, including a view down into Snow Bridge Gorge, named for the snow and icy debris that fly off Mt Betsy Jane and bridge the gorge each winter. We return from the upper alpine basin via the same track to the hut. The hut is basic but has the essentials - bunks, mattresses, and a cosy fireplace. There is also the option of camping nearby, which is lovely in summer. *Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 ALPINE LAKES

1-6 hours hiking

Leaving the last river flats behind we climb through tangled beech forest before breaking out above the tree line at Lake Diana (really just a large tarn). Crossing under the icy lake Lucidus we slip east of the moraine walls and pick our way up the rugged (and rewarding) route to Lake Castalia - the source of the Wilkin River. In summer ice cleaves off the exposed seracs high above, and sporadic surface avalanches flow down the bluffs at the lake's head.

These lakes and the shear mountains that ring this valley were named by legendary explorer Charlie Douglas who clearly had a fondness for Greek mythology. Half-brothers Pollux and Castor are peaks side by side, and their mother Leda commands the North. Mt Apollo and Mt Mercury hang shear and imposing over Lakes Lucidus and Castalia. You can walk as little or as long as you like today. We return to the hut in the late afternoon. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 TOP FORKS - KERIN FORKS HUT

6-8 hours hiking

We now leave the upper Wilkin alpine zone and follow the river back. This trail undulates a little but eventually drops 300m in altitude by day's end. We need to carry our full packs and the track is challenging with numerous side stream crossings too, but we have all day to do this, and a great guide to assist! Most of the open flats and braided sections of river are passed by Jumboland near the midpoint. From here the forests thicken and the mountain flanks press the river more tightly. Home for the night, and our pick up point for the morning jet boat, is the spacious Kerin Forks hut sitting high on a terrace with great valley views - and excellent indoor-outdoor flow! *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 4 KERIN FORKS - MAKARORA

1 hour hiking

Enjoy a cuppa on the hut veranda before wandering down to the river's edge for the jet-boat pickup. You sure have earned this effortless and enjoyable 30 minute jet boat ride. Zooming down the vast braided Wilkin River back to civilisation saves 6 hours, a scenic ride but a rather tedious hike. Once back in Makarora we grab some lunch at the local hotel then we usually have time to drive a 10 minutes up the valley to view the astounding Blue Pools confluence (a 20 minute stroll) before returning, and driving to Wanaka. Those who stay in Wanaka usually head out and have a fun farewell meal together. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE D

- 5-9 hours physical activity per day.
- Pack weights of 10-12kgs on some days.
- Altitude gains of up to 800m.
- Some uneven track surfaces and river crossings.
- No multi-day hiking experience necessary.
- Agility and fitness required.

To enjoy the Aspiring Alpine Adventure you need to be enthusiastic and keen. The prepared track is rough and sometimes wet. Sometimes the footing is unstable, and hikers need to be good on their feet and be comfortable on rough or slippery ground. While it can be slippery you will not encounter deep mud. Hikers should be able to maintain a slow but steady pace up hill for an hour between rest stops. You will only carry your own gear plus a sleeping bag (no tent or food). Each day walking is designed to be flexible except for the last day to meet the jetboat. There is plenty of time to rest, swim, and take photos.

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 sit back and enjoy the amazing surroundings and enjoy some great food! Everybody has a turn with the preparation and cooking of meals: salads, pancakes, curries, pasta, stir-fries. 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

You are transported for about 45 minutes hour to Makarora to the start of your hike, before taking a fixed wing or helicopter flight into Top Forks Hut.

ACCOMMODATION

"Wild nights" vs nights in civilization: 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.



ADDITIONAL COSTS

Hire gear if anything needed.

If the party requires extraction from the mountains at the end of the trip for any reason, a fee will be discussed for the helicopter extraction. The cost will be divided between the trip participants. Minimum 4 participants.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Changes

Please note this is a backcountry wilderness trip where the weather and/or river conditions may mean the itinerary needs to be executed in a different order. Occasionally we may be forced to do different hikes altogether.

Payment

For bookings 4 or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 95 days prior to your trip. For bookings within 4 months of the departure, full payment is required.

Cancellations

95 days or more prior to departure – 80% refund of the deposit paid OR your full deposit is transferable to a future trip booked directly with Hiking New Zealand
94 to 21 days prior to departure – 80% refund of the full ticket price
20 to 11 days prior to departure – 50% refund of the full ticket price
10 days or less prior to departure – NO REFUND.

PACKING LIST

Items shown in bold can be hired from us
Please arrange hire at least two weeks 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)
- 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, that can fit inside your larger pack for the hike to Kerin Forks Hut on Day 3. We supply kit bags for the storage of your gear in the trailer when you are away on the 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

Hire gear (NZ\$)	5-7 days trip	8-11 days trip	12+ days trip
Backpack (60 litres)	\$50	\$60	\$80
Sleeping bag and liner	\$50	\$60	\$80
Walking pole (per one pole)	\$20	\$20	\$20

It's not always easy packing - feel free to drop us a line if you have any questions.