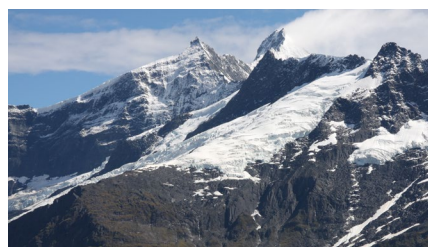




GILLESPIE & RABBIT PASSES ALPINE TRAVERSE

ITINERARY



The Gillespie/Rabbit Passes trip is widely regarded as New Zealand's hardest guided hiking tour. Following the main divide of the South Island this route has exceptional views of the highest peaks, including Mount Aspiring. Even though this trek is challenging, there is plenty of time to relax and enjoy the breathtaking scenery. No heavy packs needed, accommodation is a combination of Department of Conservation Huts and pre-placed campsites. You only carry your own personal items and a sleeping bag for the first two nights but no food or tents or camping equipment.

LENGTH	8 days
GRADE	E (Steep, rugged, untracked terrain with snow slopes)
PRE TRACK BRIEFING	The guide will meet you the day before departure, 4.30 pm, at 58 McDougall Street, Wanaka to do a full gear check and finalise last minute details.
START	Wanaka at 8.30 am
FINISH	Wanaka by 5.00 pm
DEPARTURES	December 2020: 16, 29 January 2021: 24 February 2021: 14 March 2021: 14 Join a scheduled departure or if the dates don't match please get in touch with your preferred dates and we'll see what we can do (minimum of two people).
PRICE	Adult (3 - 4 people) NZ\$3,450 Adult (2 people) NZ\$4,950

"WE BLOODY LOVED IT"

It was all great. The scenery, the huts, the conversations, the grandeur, the isolation, the changing weather, the quiet, the snow on the peaks, and George was pretty bloody excellent (we did let him win 500 though). We are a group of 2 dads and 2 23yo sons and it was a once in a lifetime chance to do something like this in some of the best scenery in the world.

~ Roy, January 2017

"MAGNIFICENT"

I had many highlights, but leaving the Young Valley and climbing into the cloud enshrouding Gillespie Pass, where upon it rapidly drifted away, opening up spectacular 360 degree views.

~ Stephen & Sandy - Canberra, Australia, January 2013

ITINERARY

DAY 1 WANAKA TO YOUNG VALLEY

7 hours hiking/650m ascent

You'll be picked up from your accommodation and will then depart for the Young Valley. If the rivers are high then jet boat access to the start of the track is provided. The Young Valley is a wonderland of dense native forest and high peaks. The trail steepens and climbs steadily to tree line. 650m ascent.



DAY 2 YOUNG VALLEY AND OVER GILLESPIE PASS

6 hours hiking/climbing with 550m ascent, 550m descent

The track winds its way up the valley sidewall under the awesome east face of Mount Awful. This is really an alpine paradise. The track climbs steeply alongside a rock bluff onto a snow grass spur that after 3 to 4 hours, leads to the pass. The climbing ends at Gillespie Pass and one of the great view points of the Southern Alps. From here there's an impressive view, with Mount Alba dominating the skyline. After a short downhill you walk through the forest to reach your camp next to Gillespie Stream.



DAY 3 SIBERIA VALLEY TO THE WILKIN RIVER

5 hours hiking/650m descent

It is all down hill today. The track meanders through the beautiful Siberia Valley and then plunges steeply to the Wilkin River where your mountain hut awaits. Here the group is resupplied by jet boat so fresh vegetables are back on the menu! From here on sleeping bags are supplied at the campsites so you no longer need to carry sleeping bag and sleeping mat. 650m descent.



DAY 4 WILKIN RIVER TO TOP FORKS HUT

7 hours hiking/300m ascent

Following the Wilkin River the track gradually rises until reaching the Top Forks. This area is one of New Zealand's treasures with outstanding native bush and hanging glaciers. The track alternates between forest and open river flats. Top Forks Hut has a wood burning stove and views that are hard to believe.

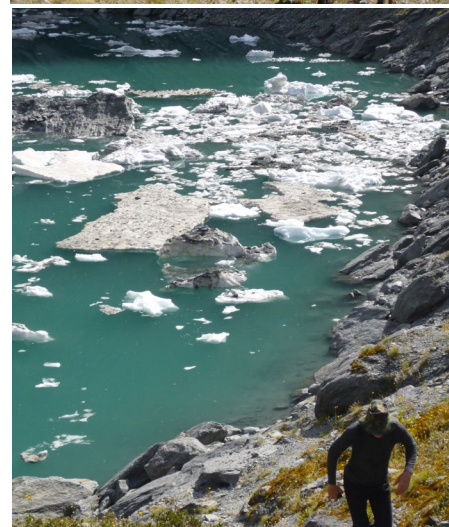


DAY 5 DAY TRIP TO LAKE CASTALIA

7 hours hiking with 500 ascent, 500m descent

Leave your packs behind for a day trip to Lake Castalia. The track is rugged with plenty of stream crossings and boulder scrambling. Some may prefer a shorter day or just a rest day to swim and admire the world class views.

Note: if the weather forecast is good your guide may decide it is of benefit to head over Rabbit Pass early on this day rather than wait for the next. In this case you may spend an extra day at Pickelhaub or Aspiring Discovery Camp, or you may head out of the Aspiring National Park a day early. The last day would then be a day walk from Wanaka.





DAY 6 UP WATERFALL FACE AND OVER RABBIT PASS

9-11 hours hiking with 900m ascent, 650m descent

An early start gets you up to Waterfall Flat. It is not hard to imagine where it gets its name with torrents of water pouring off the surrounding cliffs. The improbable scramble up the Waterfall Face leads to Rabbit Pass. You will be clipped into a fixed handline for 60 meters to give you confidence on the trickiest part of the route. A long descent through native herb gardens is a magical end to an exhilarating day. Pickelhaub Camp is an expedition type setup with a cook tent, table and chairs with smaller four person tents to sleep in. 900m ascent 650 descent.



DAY 7 DOWN EAST MATUKITUKI VALLEY TO ASPIRING CAMP

7 - 8 hours hiking with 100 descent, 400m ascent

Waking to the sound of icefalls off the towering Mt. Pickelhaub, you have a leisurely breakfast before heading down the East Matukituki Valley. Even with no track the going is easy through this isolated scenic valley. Once you come to the magnificent Bledisloe Gorge the climbing begins again. This is a big climb and many find this more challenging physically than the technical crossing of Rabbit Pass the day before. From open river flats, through ancient forest and up to the alpine, this is a day that has it all. You camp at our incomparable Aspiring Camp.



DAY 8 ASPIRING CAMP TO WANAKA

5 hours hiking with 500 descent

It is the last day of the trek, and we all know what that means, that's right: pancakes, whipped cream and blueberry jam. The trail down to the valley floor winds through tall beech with Mt. Aspiring dominating the view. Gradually the track opens out into farm land just before you meet out waiting transport back to civilization and a hot shower.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE E

- Up to 8-9hrs physical activity each day.
- Altitude gains of 900 to 1000m.
- Some exposure to heights.
- Hiking experience necessary.
- High level of fitness required

To enjoy your Gillespie/Rabbit Passes trek you need to be fit and have good balance. The track is rugged, steep, and exposed. Sometimes the footing is unstable scree and you will wade through many rivers and side streams. Hikers should be able to maintain a slow but steady pace up hill for an hour between rest stops. This trip is appropriate for people with good balance and are comfortable with heights. You will carry a pack with your own personal items, clothing, lunch and snacks each day, and a sleeping bag and mat for the first three days. Each day's walking is designed to be 5-9 hours long (not including rests).

GUIDES AND SAFETY

The mountain & ski guiding team are qualified through the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association. The NZMGA are affiliated to the International Federation of Mountain Guides Association who governs mountain guiding worldwide. The specialist trekking guides are 'hand-picked' from within the industry, in light of their qualifications, knowledge, experience level and communication skills. Some of them have NZMGA qualifications, others have rock climbing, ski patrol and outdoor leadership qualifications. All have strong first-aid skills and a wealth of local experience on the routes guided.

FOOD

Energy snacks and nutritious meals are an essential ingredient in helping you perform to your highest standard. Good wholesome meals are provided and plenty of it. Specific dietary requirements are catered for. Please inquire at booking.

TRANSPORT

You have an hour journey to Makarora before you hike starts. If the river is in flood then cross the river with a jet boat.

ACCOMMODATION

You stay at mixture of Department of Conservation mountain huts and pre-placed camp sites. During busy times (typically Christmas/ New Year holiday period) in the less remote areas of the hike such as Gillespie Pass, there are camping options available if DOC huts are crowded. Sit back in the door of your private tent while a good wholesome meal is prepared, (no freeze dried food here!). Everything is supplied for you so all you need to do is relax and enjoy this alpine paradise.

ADDITIONAL COSTS

Hire gear if anything needed.

If your party is unable to egress from the mountains at the end of your trip for any reason, a fee of NZ\$550 plus expenses (including but not limited to hut & park fees) per extra day is applicable to your party, and is divided between the trip participants.

As described, the Gillespie Rabbit Passes 8 day is NZ's hardest guided trek. Even people who have hiked extensively at altitude in Nepal or South America are often surprised at the toughness of the NZ backcountry. We rely on our clients to make a realistic assessment of their endurance levels and tolerance for heights. Should, however clients find that they have underestimated the difficulty of this hike, there are 2 places to exit the trip, the first by jet boat on Day 3 or Day 4 by helicopter before travelling over Rabbit Pass into the remote East Matukituki valley. Please note that should clients be required to leave this trip early, the costs of jet boat or helicopter exit and additional transport to and from Wanaka will be to the clients account. There are no refunds if you fail to complete the trip.

On the Rabbit Pass route in particular, if your guide determines that it is not safe to cross, an alternative hiking route will be utilised and all costs relating to a jetboat exit from the mountains are included. Should the group wish to use a helicopter to exit the mountains a surcharge ranging between \$210 - \$430 divided equally between each person in the group is payable.

Minimum 2 participants, maximum 5 participants

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Changes

Please note that this itinerary is a sample only and the actual itinerary may vary at the discretion of your guide. Weather, conditions and personal ability and needs may make changes necessary or advantageous to the participants.

Payment

For bookings 4 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 4 months of the departure, full payment is required.

Cancellations

Over 60 days before tour: \$200 per person cancellation fee
Between 60 days and 30 days before tour: 50% of total trip fee as a cancellation fee

Between 29 days and 15 days: 75% of total trip fee as a cancellation fee

15 days or less before tour: - NO REFUND.

No refund for any services not utilised after tour has started.

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Travel Insurance

Injuries are covered by the New Zealand Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC). ACC pays for the majority of costs incurred in evacuation and treatment of injured people. They do not cover you in case of illness. We recommend that you have travel insurance that will cover you in being repatriated to your home country. Most standard travel insurance policies that cover lost deposit or cancellation fees will cover you in case you are somehow prevented from participating in the trip.

Medical Conditions

When you book you must notify us of any medical condition, medical history, or medications that you are on. In particular, asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, anti-depressants, allergies to wasp/bee stings and food allergies.

This trip is run in conjunction with another operator.

PACKING LIST

You will only carry a pack with your own clothing and gear and a sleeping bag for the first 2 nights of the trip. All you need is appropriate clothing, a good pair of walking shoes or hiking boots (and a spirit of adventure with a good dose of endurance for this trip!!).

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

□ Body

Base layer - Thermal Top and bottom 150-190 weight

Insulating layer

1. Light 200-300 weight

2. Heavy 300+ weight

Waterproof layer

1. Jacket

2. Overpants

Lightweight quick drying shorts or pants and shirt for warm weather

□ Feet

Sturdy hiking boots (broken in hopefully),

Gaiters (optional)

3 pairs warm trekking socks

□ Hands

Windproof warm gloves or mittens

□ Head

Warm hat which covers ears

Sun hat

Sun glasses

Sun cream and lip cream

□ Accessories

50 litre back pack

Sleeping bag (at least 2-season, 0 deg C) and liner

Pack liner or large plastic bag

Inflatable sleeping mat

Bowl & spoon (cups are supplied)

Insect repellent

Personal toiletries and medication

Camera

Headtorch or flashlight

Toilet paper

Water bottle (at least one litre)

Hire gear	Price per day (NZ\$)
Backpack (40-50 litres)	\$10
Jacket/Waterproof Shell	\$10
Over Trousers/Waterproof Shell	\$10
Walking Poles (pair)	\$15
Sleeping Bag and liner	\$10
Inflatable sleeping mat	\$10