



GRAND TRAILS OF THE SOUTH

ITINERARY



This is a fully guided small group tour offering what are some of the best outdoor experiences in the most amazing locations New Zealand has to offer. Hiking on New Zealand's best trails, overnight experiences in stunning surroundings and once in a lifetime activities, all with the comforts of home and the full support of our professional team.

Easygoing activity in the outdoors is a great way to stay fit, while enjoying the beauty of nature with fun, friendly folks just like you, who are looking for memorable active experiences in the best of the great New Zealand outdoors without sacrificing comfort.

LENGTH	13 days
GRADE	B: 4-5 hours physical activity on some days
START	Christchurch – 8.30am, Sudima Hotel, 47 Salisbury St, Christchurch City or Christchurch Airport 9.00am
FINISH	Christchurch
DEPARTURES	2023 October 2023: 31 November 2023: 14, 28 2024 January 2024: 9, 23 February 2024: 6, 20 March 2024: 5
PRICE	Christchurch to Christchurch (13 days) - NZ\$14,499* Single supplement - NZ\$2,595*

*Prices correct at time of publishing. Please contact us for current pricing.

“ACTIVE BUT NOT OVERWHELMING”

We truly loved this trip. The agenda was perfect - it covered all the highlights of the South Island. The guides are very helpful and attentive. Traveling in a small group is so much better than a large bus experience.

~ Michael and Karen A., United States

“WOW”

This is truly a unique trip with amazing scenery, first class accommodations and food, combined with diversity of fun physical activities (hiking, boating, kayaking, helicopters, and cave tubing. Wow!). Our guides were fantastic and made this already amazing trip extra special.

~ Jack and Maureen L., United States

ITINERARY

DAY 1 ARTHUR'S PASS NATIONAL PARK

4km/3-4 hours hiking

After meeting your guide and fellow travellers, we set off from Christchurch for the impressive Canterbury High Country. We'll dust off any cobwebs with a refreshing but relaxed hike in beautiful Arthur's Pass National Park, before continuing to the remote West Coast where we'll stop in Punakaiki, home of the aptly named Pancake Rocks. After a delicious meal, you'll spend the night in comfortable accommodation with the sound of crashing waves lulling you to sleep.

Breathe in the fresh mountain air as we stretch our legs in one of New Zealand's incredibly scenic National Parks. The majestic Southern Alps run like a backbone down the South Island, dividing it east and west into two distinct regions, with Arthur's Pass serving as its gateway. This afternoon we'll follow a flowing river to its source, the cascading water of the dramatic Devils Punchbowl Falls. With views up to Mount Rolleston and the permanent glaciers that carve their way down the mountain faces, this hike is a perfect introduction to your small group walking tour and New Zealand's beauty.

Accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki. Includes lunch and dinner.

DAY 2 PAPAROA NATIONAL PARK - PUNAKAIKI

2-2.5 hours hiking

Today we'll discover one of New Zealand's most untouched areas. With its towering limestone cliffs and lush vegetation, this area feels like something straight out of Jurassic Park. Today we'll hike a fantastic track through Paparoa National Park, as well as check out the blowholes and limestone formations of the Pancake Rocks. This afternoon you have the option to explore the national park further on the Cave Creek trail. Or if you'd prefer, take a relaxing stroll along Punakaiki Beach – be sure to keep an eye out for pods of Hector's dolphins playing in the waves!

Limestone and eons of time are responsible for most of Paparoa National Park's impressive landscape. For thousands of years, water ran over the relatively soft rock forming a topography known as karst. Characterized by deep river canyons, sculpted mountain ridges and an extensive network of caves and sinkholes, Paparoa's landscape is covered in a lush layer of thick green rainforest. We'll hike on the Porarari Track this morning through Paparoa National Park, a visually rich area made up of dense sub-tropical forest and limestone cliff gorges. You'll also have the chance to check out an interesting geographical phenomenon in the town of Punakaiki – the curious looking but aptly named Pancake Rocks. The surge of the incoming sea is forced into chambers creating a geyser-like explosion through rock blowholes. The unusual limestone formations, overlaid with soft mud and clay, have been forged over millions of years by the immense pressure of the sea, wind and rain, creating the pancake effect we see today. Tonight we stay in Punakaiki again. *Accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 WEST COAST - OKARITO LAGOON

2-2.5 hours kayaking

It's an enjoyable journey this morning as we travel down the coast to the tiny township of Okarito. Along the way, there's panoramic views of the Southern Alps, virgin West Coast rainforest and rugged Tasman Sea coastline. Home to New Zealand's largest coastal lagoon, the best way to appreciate Okarito is by kayak. Accompanied by specialist local guides, enjoy the majestic views and abundant birdlife. If you'd like to head out walking this afternoon, there's a fantastic trail on our doorstep providing elevated views of the coastline. We'll overnight in the nearby township of Franz Josef Glacier.

Gliding across the waters of Okarito Lagoon in a kayak is undoubtedly the most peaceful way to enjoy this spectacular coastal wetland. Okarito is known for its outstanding



population of birdlife, over 70 species of birds have been recorded here. The lagoon is a common feeding ground for kotuku (white heron) and royal spoonbill, both of which breed in the nearby Waitangiroto Nature Reserve. Quietly paddling around this tranquil waterway, with the mighty Southern Alps as our backdrop, you'll have the best chance of observing the birdlife in their natural habitat, without disturbing them. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 4 GLACIER COUNTY - MT ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK

2-3 hours hiking

Keep your camera handy today to capture the picture-perfect views of Lake Matheson and Franz Josef Glacier's terminal face, as we enjoy our morning hike together in Glacier Country. We then continue along the West Coast to our third National Park of the trip, Mount Aspiring. You'll sleep soundly tonight in the relaxed lakeside town of Wanaka.

At 12 kilometres (7.4 miles) in length, Franz Josef Glacier is the largest and most accessible of the West Coast glaciers. The terminal valley itself is a testament to the sheer force of nature. The valleys and lakes around the Franz Josef township are remnants of the ice age and provide some excellent hiking trails for us today. We'll hike to terminal face of Franz Josef Glacier, as well as stretching our legs on the Lake Matheson track. The reflections in the water of our highest peak Aoraki/Mount Cook are outstanding! As we make our way down the coast and inland, the stunning views continue. Once over the Haast Pass, the landscape changes dramatically as we head into the mountains. Linking the West Coast to Central Otago, this pass was used by early Maori on Pounamu (jade) gathering expeditions. We follow the Haast River into Mount Aspiring National Park and the Wanaka Lakes area to continue our luxury walking tour of New Zealand. *Accommodation: Edgewater Resort. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 5 LAKE WANAKA - MOU WAHO ISLAND

2.5 hours hiking

This morning we'll cruise across picturesque Lake Wanaka to the tiny island wildlife sanctuary of Mou Waho. Guided by an experienced ecologist, we'll explore one of the most magical spots on the South Island. In the afternoon we'll take in more breath-taking views as we make our way over the Crown Range to the alpine resort town of Queenstown, where we'll stay for the next three nights.

Close to the centre of Lake Wanaka is Mou Waho Island Nature Reserve, accessible by a 35-minute boat ride. Accompanied by our favourite eco warrior and long-time local guide, we'll walk a well-formed track that gently climbs through native bush to the top of Tyrwhitt Peak. Just before the top we come to Arethusa Pool, a small lake on the island, with yet more islands in it – very intriguing. From our vantage point there's a sweeping 360-degree view of Lake Wanaka and the surrounding mountains and valleys. On a hot day, there's nothing like a refreshing dip in the cool clean waters of the lake.

Our afternoon drive takes us through the Cardrona Valley and over the Crown Range, down into the Wakatipu Basin. Prepare to be wowed as we wind our way down the mountain road and towards the bustling hub of Queenstown on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. *Accommodation: Queenstown Ramada Central. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 6 THE ROUTEBURN TRACK

16km/6-7 hours hiking

This morning we travel to Glenorchy at the top of the lake following the shoreline road - a journey regularly voted one of the best drives in the world. And you can't help but see why, the views are captivating. We have the whole day to wend our way on the Routeburn Track, one of New Zealand's nine 'Great Walks'. There are different



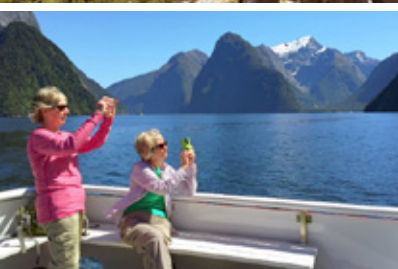


options available depending on how far you'd like to hike. We'll head back at the end of the day for our next night in Queenstown.

Today will be one of the hiking highlights of the trip, as we walk a section of the famous Routeburn Track. Once on the trail your guides will lead you through lush beech forest (Lord of the Rings fans might spot some familiar landscapes from the movies around here). The track meanders alongside the clear waters of the river and down into the meadows of Routeburn Flats – the perfect spot for a picnic lunch.

As with all our hikes, there's lots of flexibility. If you want to push yourself and really get your pulse pumping, or you'd rather just enjoy a relaxed hike on the flat trail, there are options to suit. No matter what you decide, the views will be equally magnificent.

Accommodation: Queenstown Ramada Central. Includes breakfast and lunch.



DAY 7 EXPLORE QUEENSTOWN

Today you'll be spoilt for choice in the 'Adventure Capital of the World', Queenstown. A world-class mountain resort nestled on the shores of the sleeping giant, Lake Wakatipu. The activity options here are endless; on land, water and even in the air – relaxing also permitted, of course!

There's something for everyone, from adrenalin activities like bungy jumping and jet boat rides, to more gentle pursuits such as wine tasting, a round of golf or a spa treatment. Famous as a winter ski destination, Queenstown is equally magnificent in spring, summer and autumn. Today is yours to make the most of what Queenstown has to offer, your guides will be able to point you in the right direction to ensure you do. After a day spent soaking it all up, you'll enjoy a third night in your Queenstown lakeside accommodation.

Accommodation: Queenstown Ramada Central. Includes breakfast.



DAY 8 FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK - HOLLYFORD TRACK

Today is the day that you'll forevermore recall the moment someone mentions New Zealand. Moody and dramatic, Milford Sound is simply stunning and offers what is surely the most spectacular fiord scenery in the southern hemisphere. We'll start our morning with an extraordinary drive through diverse landscapes with incredible views. The Eglington Valley, our first glimpse of the Hollyford, the Divide and the Homer Tunnel are just some of the highlights on this journey. You'll get a chance to explore the Milford Sound fore-shore before we are whisked away in a helicopter to Martins Bay.

Flying over Milford Sound you'll see massive vertical granite walls rising from the sea and waterfalls cascading either side as you fly into stunning Martins Bay for your exclusive group experience. We'll then hike to the Long Reef seal colony where we can view the New Zealand fur seals at close quarters. If we are lucky, we may even catch a glimpse of the rare Fiordland crested penguin. Then we'll jump onboard a jetboat for an exhilarating end to our day and a short ride to tonight's exclusive accommodation nestled in the wilderness. On arrival, we'll be greeted by our wonderful lodge hosts who will be preparing an incredible three-course meal for us to indulge in. After you dine, our host will tell you all about your serene surroundings and the exciting day ahead of you tomorrow.

Accommodation: Martins Bay Lodge. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.



DAY 9 HOLLYFORD TRACK

19km/5-6 hours hiking

Regarded by many as New Zealand's most beautiful wilderness valley, this is the perfect setting for another incredible walking experience. Our Fiordland Experience continues today with a jetboat across Lake McKerrrow and up the Hollyford River before your expert Hollyford guide leads you off on your day's hiking through the World Heritage beauty of the Hollyford Track.

The Hollyford Track is the only major track in Fiordland that is consistently at a low altitude, undulating gently through native forests, beside picturesque lakes and roaring waterfalls as we shadow the swift, clear waters of the Hollyford River. Naturally spectacular, this valley has an unparalleled diversity of vegetation and wildlife with 1,000-year-old



giant rimu trees, ancient beech forest, intricate ferns, crimson southern rata, and emerald mosses and lichens of the under-story. Our private Hollyford Expert is on hand to point out that each precious piece of nature completely enriches the experience. We'll spend the day walking out of the valley along the beautiful Hollyford Track. This evening, we'll return to civilisation, spending the night in Te Anau
Accommodation: Distinction Te Anau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

DAY 10 DOUBTFUL SOUND CRUISE

Today we'll journey across Lake Manapouri, over the breathtaking Wilmot Pass and into the heart of Fiordland National Park. Spanning a staggering 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the head of the fiord to the Tasman Sea, Doubtful Sound is the deepest of New Zealand's 14 fiords and one of the most spectacular. Doubtful Sound is known as Patea to the Maori people - meaning 'place of silence'. On your nature cruise of the fiord, you'll find silence amongst a dramatic landscape with echoing birdsong or cascading waterfalls the only sound to break the stillness. With no road to the fiord, the experience of getting to Doubtful Sound is an adventure in itself. We'll firstly board a boat to cruise across the peaceful Lake Manapouri before crossing Wilmot Pass and descending into Doubtful Sound where we'll take our nature cruise. This is your chance to learn more about the unique Fiordland environment from your Doubtful Sound nature guide on board while enjoying the sights, sounds and wildlife of the fiord. This evening we'll retire to our hotel for some delicious kai (the Maori word for food) and a well-earned rest. *Accommodation: Distinction Te Anau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 11 MACKENZIE COUNTRY - AORAKI/MT COOK

After a relaxed start this morning, we'll make our way to the gorgeous mountain setting of Gibbston Valley, where we'll enjoy a selection of locally-produced wines and a leisurely lunch. This afternoon we'll journey to the heart of the Southern Alps, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, an area of vast snow-covered mountains and glacier-fed lakes. We'll then stay the night in our most famous mountain hotel, the Hermitage at Mount Cook.

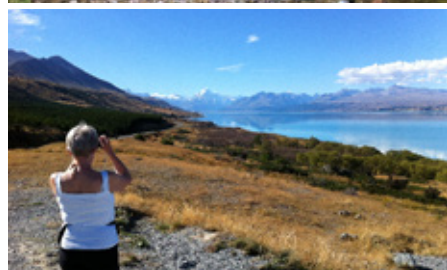
This National Park is truly a jewel in New Zealand's crown. Named in honour of our highest peak, the majestic mountains tower above bright turquoise lakes surrounded by vast fields of golden tussock. With a settlement population of less than 100 people and building restrictions enforced, Aoraki/Mount Cook offers not only a feast for the eyes, but a rare tranquillity that soothes the soul. *Accommodation: Hermitage Hotel. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 12 AORAKI/MT COOK NATIONAL PARK

Hike 3 hours

The last full day on your New Zealand luxury walking tour will be one of the most unforgettable. Home to not only our highest and most sacred mountain, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park boasts a further 19 peaks topping over 3000 metres. After a scenic glacier boat tour this morning, options this afternoon include hiking, exploring the village or a glacier heli-hike for truly mind-blowing views. Whichever option you choose you won't be disappointed. After a full day of activities, we'll meet up and return to the Hermitage Hotel for our final dinner together and a chance to trade stories from the day. Your last night of the trip will be a memorable evening as you look back on your adventure and the places you've travelled.

Some of New Zealand's best alpine hikes are found here. Surrounded by the peaks where Edmund Hillary honed his mountaineering skills before successfully summiting Mount Everest with Tenzing Norgay in 1953, you'll want to explore for yourself. Mount Cook, or Aoraki "the Cloud Piercer" as named by the Maori people, stands proudly at its heart raising up to the imposing height of 3724 metres (over 12,000ft).





The glacier boat cruise this morning takes us across the terminal lake to the ancient ice face of the Tasman Glacier, affording us incredible up-close views – keep your camera at the ready!

Option 1: Walk the Hooker Valley Track

This is one of the South Island's most popular trails in glacier country. When you look down from the impressive swing bridges down to the rushing river below that leads you all the way to an alpine lake complete with icebergs, you'll understand why. For flower lovers, the Hooker Valley is one of the best places to see Mount Cook lilies in season.

Option 2: Free time around Mt Cook Village

Today is a great opportunity to explore on your own. Visit the museum and planetarium in the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, take some short walks or just soak in the views with a coffee and a book. *Accommodation: Hermitage Hotel. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 13 TEKAPO, DEPART CHRISTCHURCH

Enjoy your final taste of the incredible Mackenzie Country scenery as we make our way back to the city of Christchurch. The unreal colours of Lakes Pukaki and Tekapo contrast against our highest peaks in the distance, creating the perfect backdrop for photos you'll treasure in years to come. After 13 days of extraordinary experiences, adventures, friendship and fun, we'll say our goodbyes with drop-offs at Christchurch airport or your city accommodation. You'll leave feeling refreshed and satisfied in the knowledge that you've made the very most of your time in New Zealand. *Includes breakfast and lunch*



**For logistical reasons, we may make small changes to our itineraries or accommodation from time to time.*



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE B

- Up to 4-5 hours of physical activity per day
- At times carrying a backpack of 4-5kgs
- Tracks generally in good condition
- Altitude gains of up to 600m (2000ft) on harder days
- No hiking experience necessary
- Reasonable standard of fitness required



GUIDES AND SAFETY

Your guides will be two of our hand-picked, experienced and passionate Kiwis with a wide array of life experiences. From spotting native wildlife to bringing the past alive with stories from the land, from adjusting gear on hikes to providing that little extra encouragement during the last mile, the connections you make with your guides will last a lot longer than the duration of this tour.

FOOD

Over the last few years a real food culture has developed in New Zealand and introducing you to this side of our country is just as important as the stunning outdoors. All breakfasts and lunches are included in the tour, as are most dinners. On a few nights dinner is not included to give you a chance to explore for yourself or relax in your room after your day's activity. Breakfasts are at your accommodation before heading off for the day's activity. Healthy Kiwi breakfasts are accompanied by lots of fresh fruit. Lunches are either in the best little cafes or restaurants en route or a wholesome packed lunch is prepared to last you all day on your activity. Dinners are in fabulous local restaurants using the best regional produce.

Generally, as long as we have advanced notice we can cater for any special dietary requirements you may have. If you have any concerns please don't hesitate to contact us.

TRANSPORT

The type of transport on your tour depends on the size of the group, but for a typical group of 12 guests a late model 18 seater coach is used so there's plenty of room for everyone.

Being such a compact country, it's possible to drive for just a few hours and be in a totally different environment, that's the beauty of New Zealand. You will never spend all day on a coach, on days you are travelling from one destination to the next we generally spend half a day maximum on the road and the other half day enjoying outdoor activity. Some of the roads we travel on will match any in the world for scenery; we always have time to make plenty of photo stops.



ACCOMMODATION

Even though you visit some remote wilderness areas, there is no compromise on comfort. All the accommodation offers very good service, a friendly atmosphere and are clean and comfortable. All rooms have private facilities* and hairdryers are available in most locations. They are generally of a 4 star tourist class hotel, motel or lodge and all have Internet access**

*Martins Bay Wilderness Lodge

Set amidst spectacular scenery our well-appointed private lodge at Martins Bay is exclusively for our groups use. It has comfortable beds in twin rooms, duvets and pillows are supplied – no sleeping bags or dorm rooms here. Separate mens and women's bathrooms with hot showers and flushing toilets are available right next to your room - fresh towels, soap, shampoo and conditioner are supplied. There is a state of the art drying room that guarantees your morning gets off to a warm and dry start.

**Satellite phone and email access available in case of emergency.

In some remote locations where no other alternatives are available we may use a 3 star lodge or a fully serviced remote lodge. These will be clearly noted in your itinerary.

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

ADDITIONAL COSTS

Bring some pocket money for souvenirs and a few extras here and there. Some evening meals.

Optional Activities - glacier helihike.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

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

Cancellations

61 days or more before departure: your choice of either a transfer to a different departure date (subject to our date changes provision below), or cancellation fee of 15% of the trip cost.

60 to 31 days prior to departure - 50% cancellation fee

30 days or less prior to departure - NO REFUND

After scheduled departure date - NO REFUND

Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.

Disclaimer

DISCHARGE OF LIABILITY

You acknowledge that the nature of travel and activities undertaken while travelling is adventurous and that as such tours and activities undertaken may involve a significant amount of personal risk. These include injury, disease, loss or damage to property, inconvenience, and discomfort. You further acknowledge that you are fully aware of the risks of injury associated with your participation in these various activities and agree to voluntarily assume such risk of injury.

It is a fundamental condition of this contract between us and you that to the extent permitted by law you discharge us (including but not limited to our directors, employees, contractors, suppliers and agents) from any liability for any damage, death or injury to person or property whatsoever arising out of or incidental to your tour, whether or not such damage or personal injury is caused or contributed to by us. You also agree to make no claim against us arising out of the tour and further agree that no third party may make a claim through you or on your behalf.

This trip is run in conjunction with another operator.

PACKING LIST

New Zealand's weather is changeable and extremely cold weather can be experienced at any time of year, especially in the mountains. Huts/camps vary in altitude from sea level to over 1000 metres. It is necessary to have warm clothing. Jeans are not suitable for hiking.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- ☐ A good waterproof rain jacket and pants (Gore-tex or similar)
- ☐ Polar Tec or similar windproof fleece jacket / sweater
- ☐ Non-cotton base layers (top and bottom); choose fabrics such as polypropylene, Capilene or Thermax. We use and recommend Merino wool.
- ☐ 1 pair hiking boots or strong walking shoes (waterproof, with ankle support)
- ☐ 2 pairs thick walking socks
- ☐ Short sleeved shirts
- ☐ Long sleeved shirts
- ☐ Warm hat and gloves
- ☐ Sunhat / cap / sunglasses
- ☐ Lightweight, quick dry long pants (or shorts if you prefer)
- ☐ Mid sized backpack
- ☐ Water bottle or camelback
- ☐ Dry bag for clothes / valuables
- ☐ Walking poles (supplied free of charge)

General clothing

- ☐ 1 pair jeans or other casual trousers
- ☐ 2 pairs shorts (or a skirt)
- ☐ 3-4 Shirts (think layering for colder days; quick-dry clothes are best)
- ☐ 2 button up front long sleeve shirts
- ☐ 1 sleep shirt & sleep shorts (or whatever you sleep in)
- ☐ 1 light sweat shirt or long-sleeve t-shirt
- ☐ 1 swimming suit
- ☐ underwear
- ☐ 4-5 pairs socks both thin and thick
- ☐ 1 pair sport sandals (like Teva's)
- ☐ 1 or 2 changes of smart casual clothing for restaurant dining
- ☐ Sunscreen and lip balm
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Camera and binoculars