

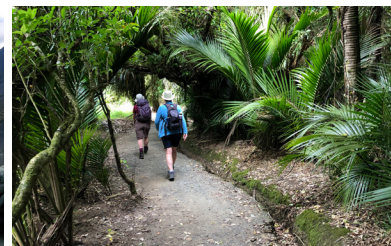


active earth
Adventures

HIKING
New Zealand

SOUTHERN SLICE

ITINERARY



Immerse yourself in the uniquely diverse natural landscapes of the South Island. From the postcard perfect coastline of Abel Tasman National Park, to the equally distinctive lush green rainforests of Punakaiki, and the majestic alpine world of Aoraki/Mt Cook and Mt Aspiring National Parks. Cap off your time in this stunning southern island amongst the lakes and fiords in the vertiginous wilderness of Fiordland before finishing in Queenstown - the adventure capital. All the while enjoying your creature comforts with great dining and quality accommodation.

This is the last 10 days of the New Zealand Uncut.

LENGTH	10 days
GRADE	B - Up to 4-5 hours physical activity per day
START	Nelson – 4:00pm Tides Hotel, 66 Trafalgar Street
FINISH	Queenstown – 5:00pm (approx.)
ACCOMMODATION	Hotels and Lodges
INCLUDED ACTIVITIES	Abel Tasman boat cruise, Natural Flames, Glacier boat trip and Milford Sound cruise
OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES	All activities outlined in itinerary are included in trip price.
DEPARTURES	2024 Nov: 26 2025 Jan: 5 Feb: 4, 18 Mar: 18 Apr: 6
PRICE	NZ\$8,800.00 per person NZ\$1,800.00 (optional) single supplement

“SECOND TIME, JUST AS LUCKY!”

We were lucky from start to finish with the weather and credit our guide, Dan, with knowing which way the wind would be blowing! We found the inclines of the Southern Alps more challenging than we anticipated but eventually we found a way to catch our breath while stopping to admire the amazing scenery. Dan kept us informed with his knowledge of geological formations and tracks and entertained us with stories related directly, or tangentially to the area. Leaving the planning and logistics to Hiking New Zealand made this a true holiday for us.

~Bytown – Canada, April, **Trip Advisor**

“EXCELLENT IN EVERY WAY!”

Luxury accommodation, meals and service with spectacular itinerary and first class guides (two per minibus). Challenging walks and exciting excursions without white knuckle experiences, and there is always an easier option if required. Every day is filled with activities or travelling and suites solos, families and groups of moderate or better walking abilities. Worth every penny, enjoyed every minute.

~ February, **Trip Advisor**



ITINERARY

DAY 1 NELSON

2.5km/1 hours hiking

Meet your guides and other walkers joining the tour in the Tides Hotel foyer at 4pm. There will be opportunity for a guided hike up Botanical Hill, also known as the "Centre of New Zealand" to enjoy sweeping views of Tasman Bay and Nelson City, or an alternative option to independently explore this lively town suggested by your guides.

Later we celebrate the start of our South Island tour by dining together in one of Nelson's fine restaurants. *Accommodation: Tides Hotel, Nelson. Includes dinner*

DAY 2 NELSON - ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK

12km/4 hours hiking

After an early breakfast, we set off for Abel Tasman National Park. At the beach resort of Kaiteriteri, board a water taxi and cruise the coastline past golden sand beaches, rugged granite headlands and bush clad islands.

Step ashore at Bark Bay and follow the famed Abel Tasman Coast Track through native forests and past cascading streams. A well-formed trail leads us up and over gentle ridges to Torrent Bay, where the lovely clear fresh waters of Cleopatra's Pool may tempt you to take a dip or for those more daring - a slide down the naturally formed hydro-slide!

At Anchorage, we will meet the water taxi for a return journey to Kaiteriteri before heading back to Nelson in the late afternoon.

There is an opportunity to further explore this vibrant and arty little town this evening with the many great restaurant dining options. *Accommodation: Tides Hotel. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 NELSON - PUNAKAIKI

up to 8km/3 hours hiking

On the way to the West Coast we stop for a remarkable hike to marvel at natural flames which have been burning since the 1920's. We access this phenomena with a local guide through a privately-owned working deer farm. Unlike the Eternal Flames of the Chimera in Turkey these flames are surrounded by lush tree ferns and beech forest. A cup of 'billy tea' and hot cakes prepared over the flames gives this experience a distinctly 'kiwi' flavour.

Our journey resumes alongside the mighty Buller River as it cuts its way through the massive wilderness of the upper South Island to the coast at Westport. We take the opportunity to explore a piece of spectacular to catch the sunset at Punakaiki and visit a local pub for dinner. Take an evening stroll around the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes - we try to time our visit with high tide so we may leave the rocks until tomorrow if tide times are more favourable. *Accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 4 PUNAKAIKI TO METHVEN

up to 10km/3 hours hiking

Hike the Inland Pack Track from the Pororari to the Punakaiki River. This historic route once used by prospectors and miners to avoid immense coastal cliffs while travelling the West Coast now forms part of our newest Great Walk, the Paparoa Track. Pass through deep limestone canyons and towering rainforest with groves of tropical nikau palms. You may not be able to resist a speedy swim in one of the many deep clear pools you pass on the way!



After the hike, we join a remarkable highway which takes us from the lush green rainforests of the West Coast and over the glaciated Southern Alps to the parched soft yellow tussock grasslands of the eastern high country. This is one of the most cleverly engineered roads in New Zealand.

East of Arthur's Pass, stretch your legs and stroll around the enchanting limestone outcrops of Kura Tawhiti (Castle Hill). This area was an important meeting place and food gathering area for early Maori people. Interestingly it was named "Spiritual Centre of the Universe" by the Dalai Lama when he visited in 2002. Today it is a haven for rock climbers who climb and boulder on the multitude of rock forms.

We then leave the highway and follow the back roads around Lake Lyndon and on to Methven, a ski town by winter and laid-back rural town the rest of the year. The Southern Alps form a spectacular backdrop. *Accommodation: Ski Time, Methven. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 5 METHVEN - AORAKI/MOUNT COOK

up to 5km/3 hours hiking

We continue south, at first following the edge of the extensive Canterbury Plains then up into the intermontane Mackenzie Basin to Lake Tekapo, famous for its stunning turquoise waters and the quaint Church of the Good Shepherd, perched daintily by the lake. During a picnic lunch revel in broad views of the Patagonia-like landscape. The sweeping Mackenzie "Country" is a sparsely populated region in the rain shadow of the Southern Alps; tawny-brown drylands, braided riverbeds and startling glacial lakes extend to distant mountains.

On arrival at Mount Cook village we hike in Governors Bush and on up to Red Tarns for magnificent elevated views of Aoraki/Mt Cook and the surrounding alps. Relax here to enjoy the views before wandering back down to arrive at the door of our accommodation, where we stay for the next two nights. *Accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 6 AORAKI/MT COOK

up to 10km/4 hours hiking

Hike up to Sealy Tarns and enjoy the awesome views of Mt Sefton, Mueller Glacier and up the Hooker Valley to Aoraki/Mt Cook. If you're feeling energetic, join the guide for an extended climb above the tarns to the crest of Mueller Ridge for even wider views of this spectacular alpine landscape. Those wanting an easier alternative to the Sealy Tarns climb can explore the valley floor independently, taking the walk up the Hooker Valley for views of the Mueller and Hooker Glacier terminal lakes and the towering south face of Aoraki/Mt Cook, or learn more about the wonders of the national park in the world-class visitor centre. *Accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 7 AORAKI/MT COOK - WANAKA

3km/1 hour hiking

Travel up the Tasman Valley towards the Tasman Glacier, the longest glacier in New Zealand. Take a short walk through glacial moraine and board a custom-built boat for a unique spin around the terminal lake. Like most glaciers in the world the Tasman Glacier is retreating and the terminal lake increases in size every year. This dynamic environment is dotted with icebergs of all shapes and sizes from the collapsing terminal face of the glacier.





Our drive to Wanaka follows the Mackenzie Country south before climbing over the tussock lands of the Lindis Pass into the southern lakes district of Central Otago. We can sample the wine and learn something of the sustainable natural winemaking practised at an award winning vineyard in this burgeoning wine region, or simply enjoy a walk among the vines. Wanaka is a lovely lake-side holiday town. *Accommodation: Oakridge Resort, Wanaka. Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 8 WANAKA - TE ANAU

7km/3 hours hiking

A beautiful drive alongside Lake Wanaka leads us toward the peaks of Aspiring National Park. We hike in the lower Matukituki Valley on the Diamond Lake walk and on up Rocky Mountain, a distinctive glacially sculpted "roche moutonnee" (rock sheep) for spectacular views over the lake, and to the Southern Alps and Mount Aspiring/Tititea. This area has several hike options, from the gentle Diamond Lake circuit to the more energetic Rocky Mountain summit climb.

After the hike and lunch we drive over the Crown Range and along the shores of Lake Wakatipu and through to Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park. Time to relax in the afternoon or take a stroll along the beautiful lakeshore with stunning view across the water of the vast Fiordland wilderness. *Accommodation: Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas, Te Anau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

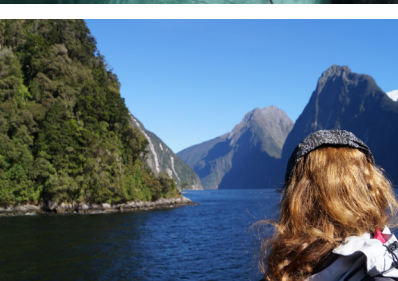


DAY 9 TE ANAU - MILFORD SOUND

7km/3 hours hiking

Our day excursion takes us through the stunning Fiordland mountains to Milford Sound, one of New Zealand's most iconic visitor destinations. We stop at The Divide to walk a section of the Routeburn Track to Key Summit for panoramic views of the Humboldt and Darran Mountains. Easier short walks, and the preferred option if cloud is likely to rob Key Summit of views, are located below in the Hollyford Valley.

The topography will leave you spell bound as we continue on to Milford Sound and experience the true magnificence of the fiord, cruising between glaciated mountains under sheer cliffs which plummet hundreds of metres into deep dark waters. Enjoy wonderful views of mile-high Mitre Peak and Lady Bowen Falls as you keep an eye out for marine wildlife. You may spot dusky dolphins, New Zealand fur seals and if you're lucky the rare Fiordland crested penguin. We return to Te Anau in the afternoon. *Accommodation: Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas, Te Anau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 10 TE ANAU - QUEENSTOWN

10km/3 hours hiking

This morning we hike part of the famed Kepler Track onto the shores of Lake Manapouri, described as the 'loveliest of all lakes' for its array of small islands, bush fringed beaches and coves, and mountain backdrop. From here, the southern extent of our journey, we then backtrack northwards towards the lively scene of Queenstown. In the wine country, on the outskirts of Queenstown, we celebrate our adventures together with lunch out at a fine local restaurant. Enjoy some fine local food and wine before arriving in Queenstown in the late afternoon where the tour concludes. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

*Due to difficulties with the size of the vehicle combination and accessibility of many accommodations, drop off locations are at the guide's discretion and may be limited to the airport and one central Queenstown location.



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

GUIDES AND SAFETY

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. Our guides are exactly that – they will guide you in the outdoors. Occasionally they might dash ahead to set up lunch or bring the minibus around to meet you, but the rest of the day they are there for you. Expect a high level of care, knowledge and thoughtfulness. Our guides will ensure that your trip is truly inspiring, a huge amount of fun and safe. All walks described in the itinerary are guided, however, the guide can suggest a number of shorter self-guided walks if you wish to do a little more or a little less walking on some of the days.



FOOD

Almost all of the meals are included on this tour, but when staying in the cities we let you do your own thing and try some of the excellent local restaurants (see "Additional Costs" section). There are plenty of opportunities to graze the local cafes if you would prefer to explore in the morning. Our guides usually set out lunch food for you and you simply help yourself. We provide healthy and wholesome food and include a lot of fresh produce. Our customised trailers have a fold down table and cooking area that is perfect for preparing picnics at all those secret places we will take you. Included dinners are frequently in lodge restaurants (either set menu or a la carte), or in a restaurant in the town but occasionally somewhere out of the ordinary!



TRANSPORT

The average driving time per day varies; we have some days where we hardly drive at all. On a typical day we might be in the vehicle for 2-3 hours. But some days we will drive for longer. The driving time is a chance to rest and enjoy the fantastic scenery that is forever changing. We travel in a luxury minibus towing a lockable trailer with food, equipment and your luggage. There will be a range of roads - sealed and unsealed. The guides are easily convinced to stop the vehicle if there is a great photo opportunity, vineyard or notable ice cream shop!



ACCOMMODATION

The Southern Slice uses a range of well appointed hotels and quality lodges chosen for their wonderful locations. All rooms have ensuite bathrooms. Some lodges have units with two bedrooms per unit. Rooms are twin share or doubles. If you are travelling on your own you will be given a twin share room with a fellow traveller of the same gender. Single supplements are available on this tour. The Southern Slice has been created for those that appreciate a high standard of accommodation after a good day of hiking. Please note accommodation is subject to availability, and an equivalent style of property could be used if the advertised property is no longer available.

LAUNDRY

Laundry facilities are available most nights, either as the hotel laundry service (additional charge) or as access to laundry facilities for hotel guests.

CHARGING DEVICES

Devices such as cameras and cellphones can be charged throughout the tour - while travelling in the vehicle (bring along a charger adaptor) and during the hotel nights.

PACKING LIST

What to take

New Zealand's weather is very changeable and cold weather can be experienced at any time of year, especially in the mountains. We recommend wearing lightweight and breathable fabrics while hiking. Merino or polypropylene underwear is great in cold weather and will still keep you warm when it gets wet, unlike cotton. Jeans are not suitable for hiking.

WALKING

- ☐ Hiking boots or shoes
- ☐ Daypack (25-30 litres)
- ☐ Drink bottle – 1L
- ☐ Waterproof raincoat (gore-tex or similar)
- ☐ Warm fleece/wool jersey (not cotton)
- ☐ Thermal underwear (top and bottom, wool or polypropylene)
- ☐ Socks (we suggest 3 pairs)
- ☐ Warm hat or balaclava
- ☐ Long sleeve shirt (for sun protection)
- ☐ Shorts for hiking (or lightweight hiking trousers)
- ☐ Gloves or mittens (wool or fleece)

GENERAL

- ☐ Spare lightweight shoes or sandals
- ☐ Insect repellent (sandflies like foreign blood)
- ☐ Casual clothing for travel and evenings
- ☐ Dry bag for clothes/valuables

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

- ☐ Sunscreen, sunhat and sunglasses
- ☐ Rain trousers
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Togs (swimming costume)
- ☐ Towel (lightweight travel towels are great)

SUPPLIED

- ☐ First Aid kit
- ☐ Drinking water
- ☐ Safety equipment
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Walking Poles



ADDITIONAL COSTS

Meals

Meals that are included in the trip price are detailed above. One evening meals are not included (Wanaka). The typical cost for a restaurant main course in New Zealand is about \$35.

Optional activities

All activities outlined in itinerary are included in trip price.

DIRECT BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

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

Cancellations

95 days or more: Full refund less \$500 transferable deposit to future departure.

94 to 35 days: 50% of tour price forfeited.

34 days or less: 100% of tour price forfeited.

The tour price is all-inclusive. There will be no partial refunds or credits for unused services within a tour. Any unpaid forfeited amount may be pursued as a debt.

Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.