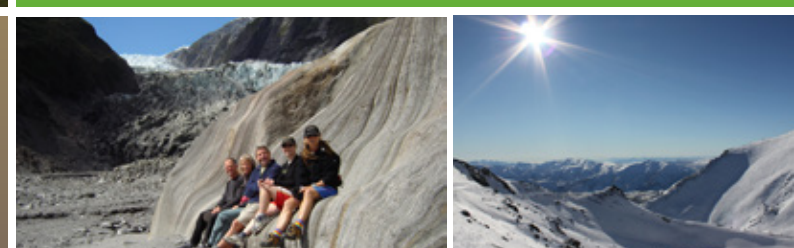




SOUTH ISLAND ADVENTURE (WINTER)

ITINERARY



Discover the South Island without the crowds on our 14-day New Zealand Winter Adventure hiking trip. To let you in on a secret, exploring the dramatic landscapes of the South Island during New Zealand’s winter months is largely underrated. Between May and September, ski fields come to life and mountains look spectacular covered in snow. However, trails once busy during the summer months are now exclusively yours and huts once packed full of keen hikers sit empty, waiting for a small group to enjoy their beauty. The New Zealand Winter Adventure has been crafted specifically for our mild winters. You’ll enjoy a sunrise cruise on Milford Sound, soak in hot pools under vibrant stars at Welcome Flats Hut on the Copland Track, hike the Kepler Track, Mt Aspiring National Park and under the towering mountains of Aoraki Mt Cook National Park. If you’re ready to see New Zealand in all its beauty, the New Zealand Winter Adventure is calling your name.

LENGTH	14 days	
GRADE	C (Track uneven in places)	
START	09:30am Merivale Manor in Christchurch or 10.00am Christchurch airport	
FINISH	Christchurch 3.00pm (approx.)	
DEPARTURES	2024 April 2024: 29, May 2024: 13, 27 June 2024: 10, 24 July 2024: 8, 22 August 2024: 5, 19 September 2024: 2	2025 April 2025: 28 May 2025: 12, 26 June 2025: 9, 23 July 2025: 7, 21 August 2025: 4, 18 September 2025: 1
PRICE	Adult NZ\$10,233.85* Single supplement NZ\$ 2,586.35*	*NZ\$ price at time of printing and will be reviewed 30 June 2024

“WORDS CAN’T EXPRESS THE AWESOMENESS OF THIS TRIP!”

I joined the group in Christchurch for the 10 day option, from the get go this trip was amazing. Not only were my fellow travel companions a blast to be with, the scenery breath taking, our guides Koru and Carrie were outstanding. The level of hospitality, attention to detail, local knowledge, and friendliness was amazing. It was awe inspiring to witness how hard Koru and Carrie worked to ensure every detail of our trip went smoothly.

~ Stephen Goo - California, United States, October 2018

“FABULOUS”

The scenery was simply breathtaking and the range of activities was very good. When weather intervened - inevitable in winter and on the west coast! - our guides had great alternatives up their sleeves and we were always kept up to date with plans and other ideas. They catered for the various needs and personalities in the group brilliantly and helped us bond as a cohesive team - I can't fault their professionalism and hard work throughout.

~ Bob Justham - China, August 2018

ITINERARY

DAY 1 ARRIVE TO CHRISTCHURCH, HIKE MT JOHN

8km/2-3 hours hiking

Most people leave the Northern Hemisphere on a Saturday evening, arriving in Auckland early Monday morning. You'll lose a day crossing the dateline – but you get it back on the way home! It's a short flight from Auckland to Christchurch on the South Island where we'll meet you. We then head to Lake Tekapo for a hike along the lakeshore before emerging above the treeline on Mt. John for breathtaking views of the lake and surrounding mountains. Then we'll carry on to the remote and beautiful Lake Ohau Lodge. The lodge is tucked in beside an alpine lake, with stunning views stretching across to Aoraki/Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps – the ideal spot to soak in the hot tub and star gaze! Today is a relaxed introduction to New Zealand. Depending on where you're coming from, you'll probably find jetlag is no big deal. For instance, it's a 12 to 13-hour direct overnight flight from the west coast of the USA to Auckland so you'll appreciate the gentle start to your New Zealand adventure. *Accommodation: Lake Ohau Lodge, Lake Ohau. Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 MT COOK NATIONAL PARK OR SKI AT OHAU SKI AREA

9km/2-3 hours hiking

After a late breakfast on the balcony overlooking Lake Ohau, we'll take an impressive hike at the head of Lake Pukaki, up the Hooker Valley to a glacial lake complete with icebergs! This is a great spot for lunch and on a clear day, the views of Aoraki/Mt. Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain, are stunning. We'll return to the lodge where we'll enjoy a sumptuous dinner. An option today is to spend the day skiing at the small and friendly Ohau Ski Area, one of the South Island's more remote backcountry ski fields (for approx. US\$125 including gear rental). *Accommodation: Lake Ohau Lodge. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 MT ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK

9km/3-5 hours hiking with a backpack

After leaving Wanaka, we'll venture up the Matukituki Valley and hike two to three hours into Mt. Aspiring National Park to reach our home for the evening – a spacious mountain hut nestled in a valley in the middle of nowhere. The track meanders past majestic peaks, fresh mountain streams, and natural beech forest. You'll be carrying a sleeping bag, a few spare clothes, and some food, so your pack won't weigh much more than a regular day pack. The scenery is off the charts with Mt. Aspiring rising 3033 meters (9951 feet) into the blue sky. It's amazing how far you'll feel from civilization after this relatively short walk! Tonight your guide will whip up dinner in the backcountry kitchen while you relax by the fire. *Accommodation: Mt Aspiring Hut (Mt Aspiring National Park). Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 4 MT. ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK AND BIKE WANAKA

9km/3-5 hours hiking with a backpack

We have a leisurely start today, enjoying breakfast and a cuppa while admiring the view, before hiking back to the trailhead. Along the way, we might encounter the cheeky kea – they're really inquisitive and like to get pretty close at times! After regrouping in Wanaka, we'll head out for a bike ride along the lakeshore, and then it's a short but dramatic journey over the Cardrona Saddle to Queenstown, on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, our base for the next couple of days! Accommodation: Heritage Hotel, Queenstown. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 5 FREE DAY IN QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown is the adventure capital of New Zealand (if not the world!) and all the comforts of civilization are packed into this tiny resort town: restaurants galore, stylish lounge bars, day spas, and boutiques. You'll also find incredible optional activities here, including horse trekking, a gondola, fishing, winery tours, a historic steamship, bungy jumping, jet boating, and skydiving as well as some great hiking opportunities. Or you can just soak up the atmosphere by the fire at one of the local cafés or pubs. Your guides will happily share their favorite haunts and point you in the right direction for your free day today. Alternatively, you can go skiing or snowboarding for the day at one of four nearby ski areas (approximate cost US\$150 for ski or snowboard hire, transport and lift pass – available as snow conditions suit, generally from June to September). Accommodation: Heritage Hotel, Queenstown. *No meals included.*

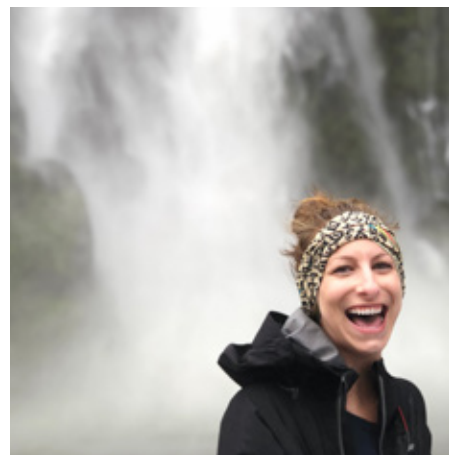
DAY 6 KEPLER TRACK - GLOW WORM CAVES

9.5km/2-3 hours hiking with a backpack

After breakfast, we'll travel to Lake Te Anau to hike the Kepler Track, one of New Zealand's 'Great Walks'. Unlike most of the other 'Great Walks', which evolved from Maori greenstone trails or pioneer exploration routes, the Kepler Track was custom-made, built for pleasure rather than necessity. The track has been carefully crafted to show walkers all the very best features of Fiordland, from the prolific bird life and tussock high country, to the huge mountain ranges and vast glacier-carved valleys. This evening we'll take a boat journey across Lake Te Anau to a glittering grotto of glow worms. These fascinating bugs light the way in a 200 metre system of caves, underground waterfalls, sculpted walls and swirling pools. From the darkness of the glow worm caves, we'll head back into the light of Te Anau where we'll stay the night. Accommodation: Matai Lodge, Te Anau. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 7 CRUISE MILFORD SOUND

This morning we'll head towards Milford Sound on one of the most dramatically scenic drives in the world. We'll pass through the Eglinton Valley, and wind our way through the mountains of Fiordland. Our drive takes us through the Homer Tunnel, an astounding feat of human engineering which must be seen to be believed. Once we arrive you'll have the opportunity to explore Milford Sound and hopefully spot some friendly fur seals and dolphins. We'll jump on board a boat cruise, where you'll gaze in wonder at the waterfalls tumbling down enormous vertical rock faces all around, and journey right out to the entrance of the fiord. This afternoon, we'll explore the Fiordland wilderness on foot to check out some of its endemic flora and fauna, like the kea (*Nestor notabilis*), New Zealand's notoriously cheeky and intelligent alpine parrot and the kotukutuku (*Fuchsia excorticata*), the world's largest fuchsia. Accommodation: Matai Lodge, Te Anau. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



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DAY 8 SCENIC JOURNEY TO THE WEST COAST

Today, we'll be making the scenic journey past beautiful rolling farmland and around the edge of Lake Wakatipu, leaving the dry-arid mountains behind us as we continue driving on the stunning road between Lake Wanaka and Hawea. There will be plenty of time for photo stops and we'll have some lunch on the way before continuing over the Haast Pass, down into impressively dense rain forest as we near the West coast – a long stretch of gorgeous, rugged coastline with a population of only 40,000 people. We'll mingle with the 'coasters' tonight in the tiny township of Haast, exchanging tales of our adventures at the local pub in front of a roaring fire. *Accommodation: Heartland World Heritage Hotel, Haast. Includes breakfast and dinner.*



DAY 9 COPLAND HOT POOLS - WESTLAND NATIONAL PARK

18km/6-7 hours hiking

Today we'll hike into a stunningly beautiful mountain basin, set directly underneath the towering peaks of the Southern Alps, with an awesome highlight – natural hot pools! It's a challenging six to seven-hour hike 17 kilometers (10 miles) up the Copland Valley with a gradual elevation gain, but it's absolutely worth it. Our guides are pretty tough and they'll carry the lion's share of the load. All you'll be carrying is a backpack with your sleeping bag, a few spare clothes, and a share of our food. Tonight, we stay in one of New Zealand's most spacious backcountry huts, a comfortable two-level building. One of the best things about hiking this track in winter is that we may well have the hut all to ourselves! While you soak in the natural hot pools your guide will whip up a hearty dinner. *Accommodation: Welcome Flat Hut, Westland National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 10 HIKE UP THE COPLAND VALLEY

Optional hiking

Today we'll hike further up the track for even more amazing scenery and views of multiple glaciers clinging to the top of the mountain valley. If you prefer, you can have a relaxing day at the hut – soak in the hot pools, enjoy the stunning scenery, or relax with a good book. Either way, the hot pools are without a doubt the star attraction here, closely followed by the dramatic scenery. *Accommodation: Welcome Flat Hut, Westland National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 11 HIKE OUT FROM COPLAND VALLEY

18km/6-7 hours hiking

An early start sees us on the track, a great time to be hiking with the fresh morning air and stillness. You'll be feeling sprightly today after a relaxing evening in the rejuvenating hot pools and with the slightly downhill gradient, you'll be in 'cruise mode' on the outward hike. Once back at the trailhead, we'll rest our bodies with a scenic journey up the coast to the township of Franz Josef where we'll stay for the next couple of nights. Nestled in the rainforest-clad foothills of the Southern Alps, Franz Josef is the heart of New Zealand's glacier country. *Accommodation: Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 12 KAYAK OKARITO LAGOON & FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER

2-4 hours kayaking and 4.2km/1-2 hour hiking

This morning we'll make a short journey over to Okarito, a little-known beach community on the coast. We'll take to the water in sea kayaks and glide along the picturesque lagoon, set against a stunning backdrop of snow-capped peaks. Okarito is home to the only native white heron colony in New Zealand, as well as a host of other interesting birds. Once back in Franz Josef, you'll have the option to take a hike or relax in the hot tub, before enjoying a traditional Kiwi roast dinner. *Accommodation: Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

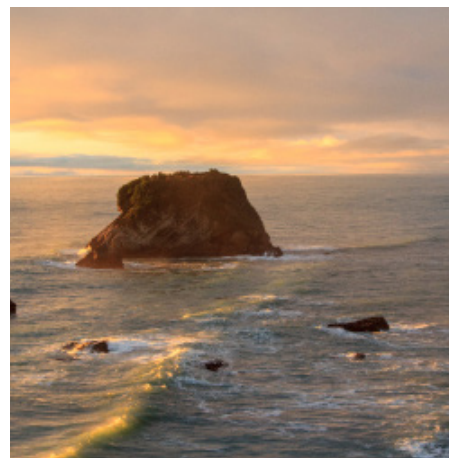
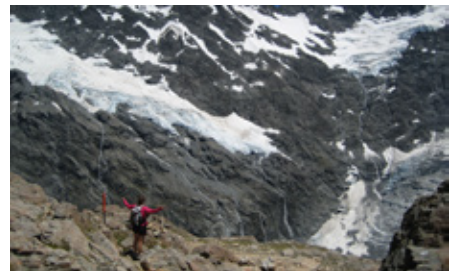


DAY 13 HIKE PUNAKAIKI RAINFOREST AND BEACHES

6km/2-3 hours hiking

This morning, we'll travel along the coast to check out local art galleries and a pounamu carving workshop (pounamu is Maori for jade) in Hokitika. After lunch, we carry on to Punakaiki, where we'll hike the Inland Pack Track through temperate rainforest and limestone canyons in the footsteps of the gold miners who established this trail over a century ago. While we're in Punakaiki, we'll also check out the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes – aptly named limestone formations that have been sculpted through relentless pounding by the Tasman Sea. Tonight we'll enjoy a celebratory dinner for the last night of your trip.

Accommodation: Scenic Hotel, Punakaiki. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.



DAY 14 DEPART FOR HOME

This is the last day of your two-week trip around the South Island. You'll leave after breakfast for the four-hour drive to Christchurch, and arrive early in the afternoon for flights back to Auckland. Any flight after 5pm is ideal. International flights from Auckland usually leave early evening, so if you're crossing the dateline you'll get home some time on Sunday, even though you left on Sunday evening! Flights to Europe, of course, take a little longer. Wherever you're travelling to, you'll go back refreshed and invigorated from the good food, exercise, rest and great times you'll have had in New Zealand! *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



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LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE C

You must have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself. You don't have to be young and extremely fit (but if you are you won't be bored) but you should be in the habit of doing at least some exercise. Age and experience is not important. You don't have to carry a heavy pack. You don't need to have sea kayaking experience. You don't need to be a serious skier to enjoy the slopes. There are many options available so you don't need to ski at all, if you'd rather hike, fish, or just laze around! It will help if you're energetic and in reasonable shape. The challenges are there though, if you're looking for them.

Typically, hikes range between three and six hours to complete.

We recommend you do some physical preparation: brisk walking, jogging or cycling a couple of times a week during the month or so before you arrive will enable you to make the most of your trip.

Experience

You don't have to have any outdoor experience at all to take this trip. It allows you to make the most of New Zealand's incredible outdoor environment. The experienced guides are highly trained, and will look after you! You neither need to have sea-kayaking experience to enjoy the paddle, nor need to be a serious skier to enjoy the slopes. In fact there are so many options available that you don't need to ski at all, if you'd rather hike, fish, or just laze around! It will help if you're energetic and in reasonable shape. The challenges are there though, if you're looking for them.

GUIDES AND SAFETY

Your experienced guides are highly trained, and will look after you! They manage the level of commitment to suit your experience and have an impeccable safety record. The guides hold all relevant government licenses and permits.



FOOD

Just about all your meals are included when you travel on this trip. You will be provided a wide variety of cuisine - sometimes the group dines out, and sometimes you dine in. Breakfasts when starting early generally consist of cereal, yoghurt, fruit, toast, coffee and juice. When you have more time, there will be pancakes and full cooked breakfasts. Lunches are usually picnic style - sandwiches, salad and fruit, or maybe a barbeque - in a beautiful spot. Dinners are usually two- or three-course meals, covering a range of styles. Vegetarians and people with particular dietary needs or preferences can easily be catered.

There are Second Guides, whose primary responsibility when they are not guiding is to cook up great meals. Their cooking skills will astound you.

TRANSPORT

There are modern, comfortable minibuses used for smaller groups, and purpose-built coaches for larger groups. For instance, often a spacious, quiet and comfortable 25-seater bus is used, even though there are only 10-14 people per trip. But make no mistake - these trips are not typical bus tours! The vehicles are fitted with good stereo systems, and the drivers love to play New Zealand music.



ACCOMMODATION

There are interesting and comfortable accommodations chosen throughout. Some places are quite luxurious, but many of the other places the emphasis is more on the amazing locations. You'll stay off-the-beaten-track and don't have many accommodation options, but the lodgings are really, really spectacular. Rooming is based on twin-share, although single rooms are available upon request. As there's such a variety of accommodations on this trip, some places will have en-suite bathrooms and some will have shared bathrooms, so you might be asked you to share a bathroom with other group members on occasion.

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

ADDITIONAL COSTS

- Personal items/souvenirs, etc.
- Meals in Queenstown
- Optional activities noted as additional in itinerary (Skiing approx per day)
- Queenstown activities
- Alcohol

Maximum 14 participants.
The trip can be joined for shorter periods of time for a pro-rata fare.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

You can pay in NZ dollars by credit card, or by direct transfer into our NZ dollar account.

Deposits

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. NZ\$500 of the deposit is non-refundable, but it can be transferred to any other departure date or trip in the future providing you request a transfer at least 90 days before your trip departure. Within 90 days of departure, this \$500 portion of the deposit will be forfeited.

Cancellations

In the event that it becomes necessary for you to cancel the trip, the following cancellation charges will apply:
More than 90 days prior to departure: \$500 cancellation fee.
90 days or less prior to departure: 100% of full ticket price (no refund)

Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.

This trip is run in conjunction with another operator.

PACKING LIST

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- large backpack and backpack liner for overnight hikes (available for hire)
- sleeping bag and sleeping sheet (available for hire)
- day pack about 30 litres
- hiking boots, sturdy with ankle support
- running shoes
- water sandal/shoes
- fleece or down jacket
- warm gloves and wool/fleece hat
- waterproof jacket with hood and trousers
- waterproof overtrousers
- 2 x wool or fleece sweaters and another fleece jacket
- 5 x long or short sleeve shirts or tops
- warm wool or fleece hat. Warm gloves with a thermal liner pair as well.
- long pants 2-3 pairs
- hiking shorts
- sun hat, sunglasses, sunblock
- 5 pairs warm socks

- two sets thermal underwear (polypropylene or similar, not cotton or silk)
- travel towel & toiletries
- sleepwear
- underwear
- swimsuit
- torch/flashlight/headlamp
- water bottle (at least 1 litre)
- camera & personal first aid kit

This clothing will keep you warm and comfortable during outdoor activities - cotton clothing is not suitable. You will also need other clothing and shoes for between activities i.e. evenings, travel.

Recommended items

Gaiters, walking poles (available for hire), insect repellent, ear plugs, bring own ski wear (but it is available for hire in Queenstown), alarm clock, reading materials.