



SOUTH ISLAND ADVENTURE (WINTER)

ITINERARY



The Winter South Island Adventure is well adapted to suit the cooler conditions. Enjoy two incredible multi-day guided backpacking trips to alpine hot pools, glaciers and remote snowfields. Take on some of the best day hikes in the country and head out for unforgettable sea kayaking, boat cruise and biking. There are plenty of options to suit everyone. Winter is one of the best times to hike in New Zealand as the tracks are quiet, and with snow-capped mountains, it's a beautiful time of year to explore. New Zealand's maritime climate ensures we have mild winters suitable for outdoor pursuits (typical day temperature is about 45-60°F or 8-15°C). The accommodations vary – for over half the trip you will stay in accommodations of comfortable standards (B&Bs, lodges, etc.) and for the rest of the trip, more rustic accommodations have been chosen in order to be in the most beautiful places in New Zealand.

LENGTH	13 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	2024-2025 May 2025: 12 June 2025: 9	2025-2026 July 2025: 7 August 2025: 4 September 2025: 1
PRICE	2024: Adult NZ\$10,999.00* Single supplement NZ\$ 2,800.00* 2025: Adult NZ\$11,499.00* Single supplement NZ\$ 2,800.00* *Tour prices are dynamic and will be confirmed upon your booking request.	

“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

“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

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 (gear rental not included). *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 Wānaka, 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

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 Wānaka, 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.*

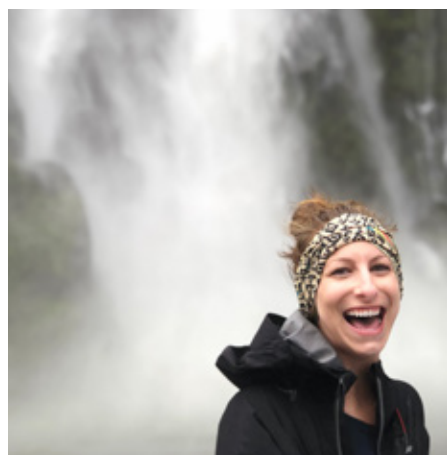
DAY 7 CRUISE MILFORD SOUND

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.

DAY 8 SCENIC JOURNEY TO THE WEST COAST

This morning, you'll journey past beautiful rolling farmland and around the edge of Lake Wakatipu back to Queenstown. You'll have a couple of hours to spare here to catch up on some shopping, grab a coffee or head off on a local hike - your guides will have plenty of suggestions. Lunch today is an opportunity for you to explore more of the outstanding food scene in Queenstown by yourselves - ask your guides about their favourite places to eat! Afterwards you'll head through the stunning Southern Lakes district and over the Haast Pass to the West Coast - a long stretch of gorgeous, rugged coastline with a population of only 40,000 people. You'll mingle with the 'coasters' tonight in the tiny township of Haast, exchanging tales of your adventures at the local pub in front of a roaring fire. *Accommodation: Heartland World Heritage Hotel, Haast. Includes breakfast and dinner.*



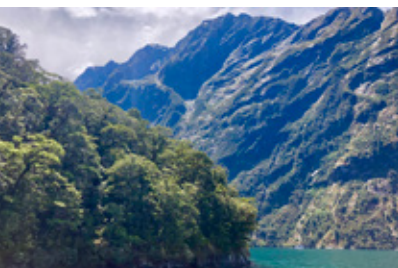


DAY 9 WESTLAND NATIONAL PARK

6.4km/2-3 hours hiking

This morning, we'll journey up the wild West Coast, stopping on a deserted beach to stretch our legs and keep an eye out for friendly dolphins passing by.

We'll make our way to Fox Glacier where we'll walk along the South Side Walkway to view a glimpse of the 13-kilometre glacier, located in Westland Tai Poutini National Park. The track follows the south bank of the Fox River through ancient podocarp rainforest, making its way gently up the valley crossing ancient glacial moraine surfaces. The track winds gently downhill through the rainforest before encountering a view point of Fox Glacier (Te Moeka o Tuawe). *Accommodation: Heartland Hotel, Fox Glacier. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 10 HIKE LAKE MATHESON AND LAKE GAULT

2.8km/1 hour hiking

We'll head toward the coast and enjoy a short loop walk around Lake Matheson where you'll be rewarded with awesome vistas of the Southern Alps. As we head back toward the carpark, we'll branch off and walk toward Lake Gault, another small glacial lake surrounded by vegetation. On a still day, the peaks are perfectly reflected on the surface of Lake Gault, so we may opt to walk Lake Gault first as the best time for this is in the morning!

After our excursion, we'll make our way further north to Franz Josef, where we'll spend two days exploring the area. With some 140 glaciers making their way down from the Southern Alps, this area is fittingly known as glacier country. Few sights equal the spectacle of two of these giant frozen rivers (Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers) imperceptibly grinding their way down through the temperate rainforest to just 820 feet (250 meters) above sea level. *Accommodation: Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef Glacier. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 11 KAYAK OKARITO LAGOON

2-4 hours kayaking and 4.2km/1-2 hours 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 dinner on your own. *Accommodation: Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef. Includes breakfast and lunch.*



DAY 12 HIKE PUNAKAIKI RAINFOREST AND BEACHES

6km/2-3 hour hiking

This morning, we'll travel along the coast to check out local art galleries and a pounamu carving workshop (pounamu is Māori 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: Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 13 DEPART FOR HOME

We'll leave after breakfast for the beautiful journey over Arthurs Pass to Christchurch. This is the last day of your trip, and we'll leave you refreshed and invigorated from the good food, exercise, rest, and great times you'll have had with us in New Zealand's winter landscape. *Accommodation: Scenic Hotel, Punakaiki. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

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.



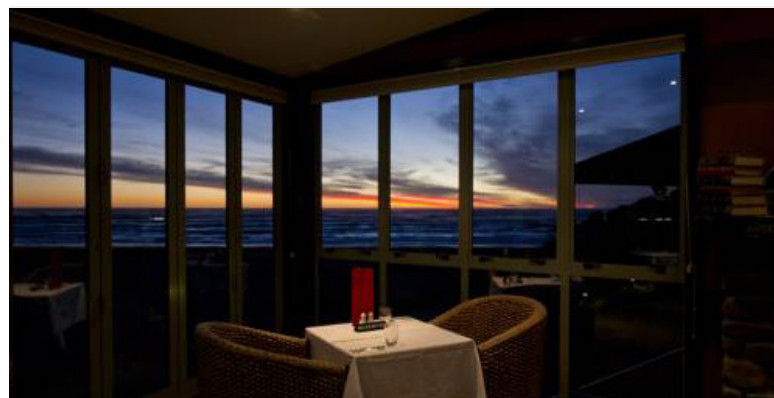
FOOD

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.

Pay in full - non-refundable rates (10%)

You may choose to pay your full tour price at the time of booking. Non-refundable rate discounts require full payment at the time of booking, and your booking is non-refundable. This discount only applies to bookings that are scheduled to depart no later than 180 days from the date of payment and the 'cancellation and Refund (By You) and Change of Trip or Departure' terms and conditions do not apply. If you change or cancel your trip, no refunds will apply. This discount cannot be combined with any other offers. We highly recommend that you purchase Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR) insurance.

Deposits

For bookings, 4 or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 130 days prior to your trip. For bookings within 4 months of the departure, full payment is required. This deposit is non-transferable and non-refundable. However, provided you cancel your booking 121 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date, your deposit (less any applicable cancellation fee) will be held as a credit for you for up to 24 months.

Cancellations

121 days or more: 100% of payments already made by you, less your deposit will be refunded. A cancellation fee of 10% of the full booking value will be deducted from your deposit and the balance of your deposit will be held as a credit for you.

120-91 days: 50% of tour price forfeited.

90-0 days: 100% of tour price forfeited.

On booking request, you will be sent the full terms and conditions which you must review and acknowledge that you have reviewed the booking conditions associated with this and understand and accept this agreement.

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.