

active earth Adventures

HIKING New Zealand

GILLESPIE PASS ALPINE TRAVERSE

ITINERARY





A diverse and adventurous hike through the sheer mountain wilderness of Mt Aspiring National Park. The route follows a wild tumbling river, leading from temperate rainforest up to alpine meadows with a stunning backdrop of snow capped mountains and glaciers.

Once over the pass, a side-trip to Lake Crucible (a glacial lake at the foot of Mt Alba) adds to the incredible variety of this trip. At the completion of the hike you are met by a jet boat for a thrilling ride down the Wilkin River and back to civilisation.

LENGTH	4 days
GRADE	D (6-8 hrs walking over uneven terrain, some steep ascents)
PRE TRACK BRIEFING	Meet your guide in Wānaka at 4.30 pm the day before your departure to check your clothing and equipment and confirm final details.
START	8.00 am, Wānaka
FINISH	4.00 pm, Wānaka
DEPARTURES	December 2026: 3, 19 January 2027: 12 February 2027: 04, 12 March 2027: 16
PRICE	**1 Jul 2026 - 30 Jun 2027** NZD $1,925.00 per person (1 guide:4 hikers) NZD $2,190.00 per person (1 guide:3 hikers) NZD $2,900.00 per person (1 guide:2 hikers) NZD $4,850.00 (1 guide:1 hiker) If you book at the 1 person rate and an additional person joins you will be refunded any overpayment.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 WĀNAKA TO YOUNG VALLEY

18km (11 miles), 6-7 hours hiking, +/- 360m (1180 ft) elevation

We'll kick things off with an inroduction to your guide and doing a thorough gear check together and go over the latest weather forecast to make sure everyone's prepared. If you need any last-minute items, we'll help you sort those out and get everything packed into our vehicle for the journey ahead. You're welcome to leave any extra gear or valuables securely at the guide offices before we head off.

We drive about 45 minutes to the small village of Makarora, and take a jet boat up the Makarora River to the Young River confluence where the track begins. The Young Valley is a wonderland of dense native forest and high peaks. The trail steepens and climbs steadily to the tree line. Tonight we stay at Young Hut. Waterfalls, roaring canyons and beautiful temperate rainforest, a big day! *Includes lunch and dinner*

DAY 2 YOUNG VALLEY TO GILLESPIE SUMMIT

12km (7.5 miles) 6-8 hours hiking, +/- 1000m (3280 ft) elevation

The track winds its way up the valley sidewall under the awesome east face of Mount Awful. This is really an alpine paradise with towering mountains as your backdrop. 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. We then descend into Siberia Valley, finishing the day with an hour's walk along the river flats to Siberia Hut for the night. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner*

DAY 3 LAKE CRUCIBLE

12km (7.5m miles), 6-7 hours hiking, +/- 550m (1800ft) elevation

We leave our packs behind today and take a day trip to Lake Crucible. This unusual lake sits high above the Siberia Valley, nestled under Mt Alba. It is a steep climb through a forest, with a small river crossing, and finally an ascent through a snowgrass flat until we reach the lake. Surrounded by towering walls, Lake Crucible is a geographic wonder carved by the glaciers. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner*

DAY 4 SIBERIA VALLEY TO WĀNAKA

8km (5 miles), 3 hours hiking, +/- 300m (980 ft) elevation

The Siberia Valley is a hidden oasis. From your camp the gentle track takes you through ancient Beech forest and open river flats. Great views of Mount Awful and Mount Dreadful (the early explorers had fun with the names here), with the track taking us high above the Siberia Gorge and beautiful views back up the Valley, before winding down to the Wilkin River. Here, we meet the jet boat for a thrilling ride back to Makarora township, and drive back to Wānaka. *Includes breakfast and lunch*











LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE D CAPABALE OF:

- 1,000m ascent and descent in a day
- 6-8 hours of physical activity a day
- 4 consecutive days ascent and descent
- Carrying 8-12kg pack
- Some uneven track surfaces and river crossings.
- Multi-day trekking experience using huts or camping
- Comfortable in a range of adverse weather conditions

You need to be fit and have good balance. The prepared track is rough and sometimes wet. Sometimes the footing is unstable. Hikers need to be good on their feet and be comfortable on rough or slippery ground. Hikers should be able to maintain a slow but steady pace up hill for an hour between rest stops. There is plenty of time to rest, swim, and take photos.

GUIDES AND SAFETY

Guides are hand-picked, qualified to international standards, and there with you from your first day. You're paired with people that live and breathe guiding. Their mountaineering achievements are matched only with their level of passion for creating experiences for clients that linger in your soul long after the descent. They're there as you accomplish lifelong ambitions, reach new heights, and dig deep as you pursue the grittiest of adventure experiences. Overcome your limits, and discover the moments that lead to enduring achievement and pride of what you can accomplish.

FOOD

We put a lot of work into supplying you with wholesome meals with a variety of healthy and tasty ingredients and snacks catering to common preferences. Where possible, we provide fresh vegetables and real coffee. However, there will always be limitations when cooking in an alpine or wilderness environment. Meals like salads are limited or not possible to provide. Some trips are not recommended for people with very restrictive or complex dietary requirements. If you do have a restrictive eating regime we ask that you disclose this to us at the time of booking and we may ask you to provide us with an advance copy of what you would typically eat on a wilderness trip and the team will shop and cook accordingly.

TRANSPORT

You have an hour journey to Makarora before your hike starts.

ACCOMMODATION

You will stay in serviced Department of Conservation huts during your trip.

ADDITIONAL COSTS

There are no additional costs for this trip, however, if the group are required to stay longer due to adverse weather conditions, additional charges will be made to cover costs. Currently the cost is $500 per party per day + $100 per person per day.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Changes

Weather can be temperamental in our mountains and can impact on trips and planned itineraries and routes. If weather events require the guides to alter the original trip itinerary, every effort will be made to ensure the trip can be enjoyed as planned, and find another amazing alternative where weather is more favourable. If the trip cannot proceed, some costs that were not incurred may be refunded, such as a heli transfer, however other costs that are absorbed in planning and booking will not be refunded, such as guide costs. The guides may refund up to 50% off trips that do not proceed at all, or offer a credit on future trips. Any cancelled trips are assessed individually for refund options. If the group are required to stay longer due to adverse weather conditions, additional charges will be made to cover costs. Currently the cost is $500 per party per day + $100 per person per day.
Book one of our scheduled group departure dates or request a private departure. If there are no departures advertised, or the advertised dates don't work for you, request a date that works for you and us, and we'll advertise it for others to join as a group trip. If a scheduled group trip doesn't reach the minimum number of guests, you'll have the option to pay an additional fee to guarantee it goes ahead. This gives you flexibility and peace of mind, ensuring your adventure happens as planned. day.

Payment

For bookings made four or more months prior to the departure date, a deposit of NZD$1000 per person is required, with the remainder due 95 days before your trip. For bookings made within four months of the departure date, full payment is required at the time of booking.

Cancellations

45 days or more prior to departure date: Full refund, less $500 per person forfeited.
44 to 31 days: 50% of tour price forfeited.
30 days or less: 100% of the tour price forfeited..

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you have comprehensive travel insurance.

This trip is run in conjunction with another operator.

PACKING LIST

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

Please bring all your equipment to the scheduled pre-trip meeting.

Summer weather is usually quite warm however, you will be in a remote alpine location and winter type conditions can happen any time of year in New Zealand. Required clothing can vary somewhat according to the time of year or the current weather.

While parts of your trip are hut based, some huts can't be reserved and in some cases clients should expect to camp during peak times of the season. You will need to carry your own personal gear as well as some group fresh food. Many people prefer to use their own sleeping bag, pad and backpack. We recommend an inflatable sleeping mat, 60+ litre backpack and 2 season sleeping bag graded to 0° C (and liner). Lighter is OK for mid-summer. On most days there are unavoidable river and stream crossings, so it is likely your boots will get wet and stay wet.

- ☐ Inflatable sleeping mat – available to borrow
- ☐ Backpack (50+ litres) – available to borrow
- ☐ Sleeping bag (2 season, 0° C) & liner – available to borrow
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ Base layer (150-200g, merino or polypropylene, no cotton)
- ☐ Oasis LS Crewe)
- ☐ Top
- ☐ Leggings
- ☐ Mid layer top (fleece or windproof)
- ☐ Insulating jacket (fleece or synthetic fill)
- ☐ Waterproof jacket (eg Gore Tex® or similar)
- ☐ Overpants (waterproof as above) – available to borrow
- ☐ Lightweight, quick drying shorts or trousers
- ☐ Light collared trekking shirt or short sleeve t-shirt
- ☐ Sturdy, stiff ankle height trekking boots - your boots will get wet from river crossings
- ☐ Gaiters (recommended)
- ☐ 3-4 pairs of trekking socks (merino)
- ☐ Sunhat - cap
- ☐ Warm hat & neck gaiter (eg Buff®)
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Warm waterproof gloves
- ☐ Bowl & spoon (supplied)
- ☐ Personal toiletries and medication
- ☐ Packliner or dry bags
- ☐ Insect repellent - for sandflies
- ☐ Sun cream and lip cream
- ☐ Water bottle (at least 1 litre)
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Headtorch

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- ☐ Collapsible trekking poles (recommended) – available to borrow
- ☐ Light book or magazine
- ☐ Earplugs (handy for communal huts)
- ☐ Plastic cup for drinking from streams – available to borrow
- ☐ Lightweight hut or camp shoes (eg Crocs)

