



SOUTH ISLAND ADVENTURE

ITINERARY



We'll take you on an unforgettable journey exploring our mountains in Mount Cook National Park and Nelson Lakes National Park, walking the West Coast rainforest and coastlines, getting up close to glaciers in Franz Josef, cycling incredibly scenic trails such as the Queenstown Trail, hiking sections of our Great Walks, and even cruising on Milford Sound. You'll experience our unique culture and wildlife along the way, and enjoy the world's best wines at stunning vineyards. Each night, you'll stay in accommodations we have carefully hand-picked, in some of New Zealand's most spectacular settings. We've been fine-tuning this perennial favourite since 1996, and it's simply an incredible trip. You'll explore the most beautiful, famous and little-known places in the South Island with legendary hospitality and unsurpassed attention to detail on our 14-day South Island Adventure tour. Be prepared to leave a piece of your heart in Aotearoa New Zealand.

LENGTH	14 days	
GRADE	C (no outdoor experience required just reasonable fitness and enthusiasm)	
START	Rydgas Latimer Square, 30 Latimer Square, in Christchurch at 10:00am	
FINISH	Christchurch approximately 3:00pm	
DEPARTURES	<p>2026 September: 14, 28 October: 12, 26 November: 9, 16, 23 December: 7, 14, 21, 28</p> <p>2027 January: 4, 11, 18, 25 February: 1, 8, 15, 22 March: 1, 8, 15, 29 April: 12</p>	<p>2027 September: 13, 27 October: 11, 25 November: 8, 15, 22, 29 December: 6, 13, 20, 27</p> <p>2028 January: 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 February: 7, 14, 21, 28 March: 6, 13, 27 April: 10</p>
PRICE	<p>Adult NZD \$15,299.00 Single Supplement NZD \$3,000.00 * Tour prices are dynamic and will be confirmed upon your booking request.</p>	<p>Adult NZD \$16,099.00 Single Supplement NZD \$3,600.00 * Tour prices are dynamic and will be confirmed upon your booking request.</p>

"ABSOLUTELY AMAZING."

It was very well organized, guides Koru and Carrie were very knowledgeable about the areas we visited and it was great to get a feel for what New Zealand is all about. I loved staying in some of the smaller, less known areas, and the choices of hikes were fabulous and really highlighted the beautiful nature in New Zealand. We also lucked into some great weather, especially for it being so close to winter, and I knew I was seeing some amazing sights when both guides were out snapping pictures right alongside us! This was definitely a trip of a lifetime and one I will always look back on with a huge smile on my face. I would come back in a heartbeat!"

~ Jacqui S. - British Columbia, Canada

"COULDN'T HAVE BEEN BETTER"

The trip was a great way to see the range of different terrain of the South Island without having to worry about logistics like driving and finding trailheads on my own! With great fall weather and wonderful new hiking buddies, this was an unforgettable adventure! On top of that, my guides were so much fun and had lots of history and stories to share along the way. Couldn't have had a better trip.

~ Hannah G. - Massachusetts, United States

ITINERARY

DAY 1 ARRIVE - KAIKŌURA PENINSULA

0.5-1 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. You'll start your trip by travelling up the coast, stopping off at Gore Bay for a picnic lunch, and exploration of the rugged coast with its fresh air. You'll continue onto the seaside town of Kaikōura, passing weathered limestone cliffs, where we can walk to view fur seals basking on the rocks and playing in the eddies from a look-out point. This stretch of rugged coastline that was uplifted in the Kaikōura earthquake - it's amazing to see this brand new land! Today is a relaxed introduction to New Zealand. Depending on where you're coming from, you'll probably find jetlag is no big deal. 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. *Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 START MULTI-DAY OPTIONS

From Kaikōura, we'll travel along spectacular coastline for a couple of hours to Blenheim, a town in the Marlborough wine region. We'll have a picnic lunch before we head off for our various activities.

Active Option - Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking:

Saint Arnaud to Lakehead Hut, 11km/3-4 hours hiking

Your hike begins in the charming village of Saint Arnaud, on the edge of Nelson Lakes National Park. This is serious wilderness country, with incredible views and marvelous solitude. The park straddles the upper Southern Alps, an area composed of beech forests, big lakes and even bigger mountains. You'll hike the relatively gentle trail through the forest alongside Lake Rotoiti to Lakehead Hut and jetty. From here, we'll board a water taxi to take us back to St Arnaud, where you'll stay for the next couple of nights. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

Challenging Option - Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking:

Saint Arnaud to Lakehead Hut 11km/3-4 hours hiking

The Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking option begins in the charming village of Saint The Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking option begins in the charming village of Saint Arnaud, on the edge of Nelson Lakes National Park. This is serious wilderness country, with incredible views and marvelous solitude. The park straddles the upper Southern Alps, an area composed of beech forests, big lakes and even bigger mountains. You'll hike the relatively gentle trail through the forest alongside Lake Rotoiti to Lakehead Hut, a small mountain cabin at the head of the lake and our home for the night. 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. To protect this beautiful and fragile environment, we always keep our group sizes small and our exact route flexible. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 3 MULTI-DAY OPTIONS CONTINUE

Active Option - Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking: Coldwater Hut to Saint Arnaud 14km/4-5 hours hiking

After breakfast, you'll return by water taxi to the top end of the lake, and this time you'll arrive at Coldwater hut and jetty – just across the river from Lakehead hut. From here you'll follow the trail as it gently winds its way around Lake Rotoiti to Whisky Creek, and the beautiful Whisky Falls. Feel free to fill up your water bottles from Whisky Creek, but it IS only water, honest! After a picnic lunch on the lakeshore, you'll continue on to West Bay and loop back to St Arnaud for the evening. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

Challenging Option - Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking: Lakehead Hut to Angelus Hut 10km/6-8 hours

Today is an unforgettable day – the scenery gets better with each step! You'll follow the Travers River through beech forest, before heading up the Hukere Stream towards the ridgeline. This is a challenging hike, with an elevation gain of 1000 meters (3280 feet), but it's absolutely worth it. The Angelus Circuit has exceptional scenic diversity, so it provides a great reward for the efforts you put in. There's no rush and your guides will be there to encourage you the whole way. It's a tremendous feeling at the top when you reach Angelus Hut, nestled beside a gorgeous alpine lake. Many people tell us this hidden gem was the highlight of their New Zealand adventure, and a lot of Kiwis prefer the Angelus Circuit to better-known tracks. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

IMPORTANT: For guests participating in early season departures (i.e. September, October, and sometimes early November) access to Angelus Hut can be impeded due to the removal of the Hukere Stream bridge on the upper section of the Cascade Track, during the New Zealand winter months, to prevent possible avalanche damage. The reinstallation of the bridge depends on the amount of snow in the area and so in the event Angelus Hut cannot be accessed, we will either enjoy alternative hikes in the area and stay a second night at Lakehead Hut, or venture to Bushline Hut.

DAY 4 LAST DAY OF MULTI-DAY OPTIONS

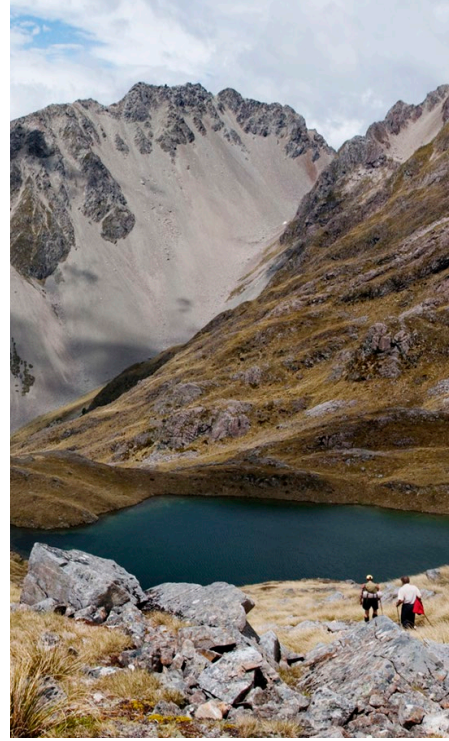
Active Option - Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking: Hike Roberts Ridge 10km/4-6 hours

After breakfast, don your hiking boots and set out for this morning's walk. You'll explore the beautiful peninsula track, stretching out into Lake Rotoiti, before making our way to the Pinchgut Track. This trail gives access to Mt. Robert, and Robert's Ridge, where the rest of the group will be approaching from the Angelus Circuit. You'll wind our way up the trail through the native beech trees and manuka scrub to Page 5 / 12 meet the group. Once we're back together we'll enjoy a picnic lunch, before carrying on to the West Coast. After regrouping in Saint Arnaud, we'll head across the Southern Alps to the West Coast – a dramatic and rugged coastline stretching 600 kilometers (372 miles), with a population of only 40,000 people. You'll mingle with the 'coasters' tonight in the seaside village of Punakaiki, exchanging tales of our adventures over dinner.

Challenging Option - Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking: Angelus Hut to Lake Rotoiti 11km/4-6 hours

Wake up on top of the world! After breakfast, you'll hike out along the barren Robert Ridge with dramatic views of Tasman Bay and the mountainous Kahurangi National Park in the distance. You'll descend below the tree line again into native beech forest completing our hike on the shores of Lake Rotoiti. Here, you'll meet up with the Rotoiti Circuit explorers and share stories of our adventures, before carrying on to the West Coast. After regrouping in Saint Arnaud, we'll head across the Southern Alps to the West Coast – a dramatic and rugged coastline stretching 600 kilometers (372 miles), with a population of only 40,000 people. You'll mingle with the 'coasters' tonight in the seaside village of Punakaiki, exchanging tales of our adventures over dinner.

Regroup (afternoon) Finish multi-day options *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

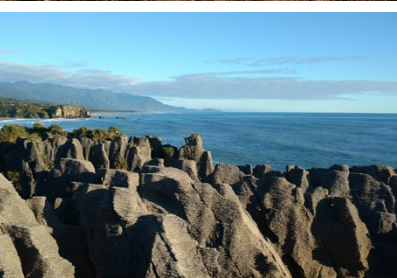




DAY 5 PUNAKAIKI RAINFOREST - HOKITIKA

6km/3 hours hiking

Spend the morning hiking the Inland Pack Track through temperate rainforest and limestone canyons, following in the footsteps of gold miners who established this trail over a century ago. While we're in Punakaiki, you'll also check out the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes – aptly named limestone formations that have been sculpted through the relentless pounding of the Tasman Sea. Traveling along the scenic coastline, we'll stretch our legs in Hokitika and check out local art galleries and pounamu-carving workshops (pounamu is Maori for jade), before carrying on 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 glacier country. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 6 OKARITO LAGOON

2-4 hours kayaking, 4.2km/1-2 hours hiking

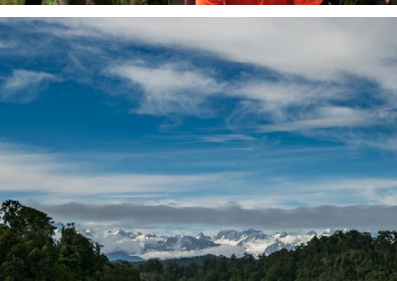
This morning we'll take a short journey over to Okarito, a little-known beach community on the coast. You'll take to the water in sea kayaks and glide along a picturesque lagoon, set against a stunning backdrop of snow-capped peaks. Okarito is home to the only native white heron colony in New Zealand,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



DAY 7 HIKE NEAR FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER

8km/5-6 hours or 12km/4-6 hours hiking

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 temperate rainforest to just 250 meters (820 feet) above sea level. We'll spend most of the day near Franz Josef Glacier hiking up through the forest to get incredible views of the ice. Wet weather can inhibit these hikes, so we may opt to hike around Lake Matheson and to the Blue Pools near Haast Pass instead. From Franz Josef, we'll travel down the coast through lush forest and then inland to Makarora, a small village bordering Mt. Aspiring National Park, with incredible views of the snow-capped mountains. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 8 HIKE ROCKY MOUNTAIN

7km/2-3 hours hiking

The landscape this morning changes rapidly from dense beech forest to semi-arid mountainous terrain. You'll hike the Rocky Mountain track today, a spectacular circuit through an area carved out by Ice Age glaciers, with native forest and shrubland. Enjoy lunch after your hike in Wanaka before 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. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



DAY 9 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, sidewalk cafés, stylish lounge bars, day spas and boutiques. You'll also find incredible optional activities here including horse trekking, a gondola, kayaking, fishing, winery tours, hang gliding, mountain biking, bungee jumping, jet boating and skydiving, as well as some great hiking opportunities. Or you can just soak up the atmosphere or lounge about reading a book. Your guides will happily share their favorite haunts and point you in the right direction for your free day today. *No meals included.*

DAY 10 KEPLER TRACK

9.5km/2-3 hours hiking

This morning we'll make our way around Lake Wakatipu, leaving behind the towering Remarkables, and head west to the small town of Te Anau, the gateway to Milford Sound. This afternoon we'll take a hike on the famous Kepler Track, one of New Zealand's Great Walks - we follow the track through mountain beech forest and along the Wainu River. It's an awesome hike with spectacular views! Tonight we'll stay on the edge of Lake Te Anau, enjoying the scenery and the delicious local fare. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 11 MILFORD SOUND CRUISE - HIKE KEY SUMMIT

2-3 hours cruise and 3.5km/3-4 hours hiking

It's an early start this morning as we set off for our largest and perhaps most spectacular national park, Fiordland. We'll take a short drive through the Homer Tunnel and emerge at the top of a spectacular glacier-carved valley for a memorable descent to the shore of Milford Sound. Rudyard Kipling rated this fiord as the eighth natural wonder of the world and it is truly breath-taking, with steep granite walls plunging over a thousand meters to the Tasman Sea and waterfalls cascading into deep inky water. We'll jump on board the first boat cruise of the day, where we'll have the water to ourselves, as we gaze in wonder at the waterfalls tumbling down enormous vertical rock faces all around and journey right out to the entrance of the fiord. We may be lucky enough to encounter the friendly fur seals and dolphins that are sometimes in the area. After the cruise, we'll enjoy a tasty lunch before heading out to explore more of Fiordland's wilderness on foot. We'll hike part of the Routeburn Track for unsurpassed views of the Hollyford Valley, as well as Lake Marian and Mt. Christina, before making our way back to Te Anau for the night. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 12 QUEENSTOWN TRAIL - LINDIS PASS

16km / 1.5 hours cycling

After an early breakfast, we'll head back through Queenstown and jump on e-bikes to cycle a portion of the Queenstown Trail, following the well-groomed trail along the Arrow River, crossing the Edgar Bridge. You'll have the opportunity to watch adrenaline junkies bungee jump off the famous Kawarau Gorge Suspension Bridge (the birthplace of bungee jumping!) before we carry on down the Gibbston Valley. We'll finish our ride with lunch at The Church Cellar Door & Café where you can sample the exquisite local wines of Central Otago - one of the world's most famous wine regions. After lunch, we'll continue north, driving through the tussock country of Lindis Pass to the Mackenzie Country Basin where we'll stay for our last two nights, with stunning views stretching across the Southern Alps. We stay in the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve, where light pollution is strictly controlled, so it's the ideal spot to stargaze! *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*





DAY 13 AORAKI MT COOK NATIONAL PARK

Mueller Ridge 7.2km/5-6 hours or Hooker Glacier 9km/3-4 hours hiking

Mt. Cook, named Aoraki or 'cloud piercer' by South Island Maori, is the highest mountain in New Zealand. Directly opposite the mountain, we'll set off on a stunning day hike to the main ridge above Mueller Glacier. It's a challenging hike, but you'll remember the view of the glacier and the surrounding peaks forever! The weather conditions are very important in this area, as it's a true alpine climate notorious for Page 8 / 12 sudden weather shifts. If we aren't able to do the Mueller Glacier hike, or you'd like to take it a little easier, there's an impressive hike up to a glacial lake (complete with icebergs!) at the base of the Hooker Glacier. Then you'll head back to your accommodation for the last night of your adventure, where we'll enjoy a celebratory dinner together and watch the sun set over the Southern Alps. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 14 DEPART FOR HOME

After breakfast you'll head to Christchurch, arriving in time for afternoon flights. We hope you'll leave refreshed and invigorated from the good food, exercise, rest, and great times you'll have had with us in New Zealand! If you're keen to extend your trip and see what the North Island has to offer (Maori culture, pristine beaches and geothermal areas) check out the 5-day North Island Adventure or the 8-day Ultimate North Island. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



"COULDN'T HAVE BEEN BETTER"

The trip was a great way to see the range of different terrain of the South Island without having to worry about logistics like driving and finding trailheads on my own! With great fall weather and wonderful new hiking buddies, this was an unforgettable adventure! On top of that, my guides were so much fun and had lots of history and stories to share along the way. Couldn't have had a better trip.

~ Hannah G - Massachusetts, USA



"AWESOME HIKE"

While this is a challenging track. The fact you don't need to pack cooking equipment and can buy dehydrated meals, snacks and beer wine etc at lodges makes it much more manageable. You get a comfy bed and porridge for breakfast. Hiking in style. First day includes a steep climb but views or enchanted forest make it worth while. At the end of day two you may be lucky enough to see or swim with hectors dolphins. Lodges and hosts are great with options to upgrade to own room. Thoroughly enjoyed all 3 days of hiking.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE C

- Up to 6 hrs of physical activity per day.
- At times carrying a backpack of 5-6kgs.
- Tracks generally in good condition.
- Altitude gains of up to 600m on harder days.
- No hiking experience necessary.
- Reasonable standard of fitness required.

You don't have to have any outdoor experience to take this trip and you don't need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy the rides available. There are plenty of active options, but if you'd rather just laze around one day, your guide can make this happen for you. You don't need to be young or really fit - but this trip has a lot of action at a reasonable pace, and is not designed for couch potatoes. Every one of the days on the trip will be unforgettable. Some physical preparation is recommended: brisk walking, jogging or cycling a couple of times a week during the month or so before you arrive to enable you to make the most of your trip.



GUIDES AND SAFETY

Experienced Kiwi guides are used who are well-versed in the local culture, flora and fauna, and history.

They are trained in Outdoor First Aid. You will have two guides on this trip to take good care of you - a Lead Guide who is in charge of your trip and does the driving and a Second Guide to assist the Lead Guide and make sure you're well fed.

FOOD

Almost all meals are included on the South Island Adventure (refer to itinerary for meals included). A wide variety of cuisine is used - sometimes you will dine out, and sometimes dine in. Breakfasts when there is an early start will generally consist of cereal, yoghurt, fruit, toast, coffee and juice. When there is more time, your guide will make pancakes and full cooked breakfasts. Lunches are usually picnic style - sandwiches, salad and fruit, or maybe a barbecue - in some beautiful spot. Dinners are usually two - or three - course meals, covering a range of styles. Vegetarians and people with particular dietary needs or preferences are easily catered for.

The second guides primary responsibility when not guiding is cooking up great meals. Their cooking skills will astound you, as you enjoy a traditional kiwi roast dinner at the shearer's quarters, or French toast and sugared bananas at Punakaiki. When the group eats out, there is no budget or restrictions on what to order. You may find the meals are a real highlight of your trip!

TRANSPORT

New Zealand is a small country - about 1000 miles from top to bottom, and only about 150 miles wide. This trip focuses on spending as little time as possible sitting in vehicles so that you can spend your time on outdoors-oriented adventure. The average driving time over the period of this trip is just over two hours a day, and as much time as possible is spent in the outdoors. Modern, comfortable minibuses are used. Make no mistake - this trip is not a typical bus tour! Vehicles are fitted with good stereo wsystems, and you will hear plenty of New Zealand music.



ACCOMMODATION

The bed & breakfasts, farmstays, lodges, motels, and the occasional mountain hut you will stay at have been carefully chosen because of their location and local flavour. Many clients have said that one of the highlights of their trip was meeting and getting to know the Kiwis who were their hosts around New Zealand. Somewhere comfortable to relax after the day's activities is important. You won't have to camp, although gear can be provided if you'd like to sleep under the stars. At times, alternative accommodation to the itinerary may be used.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

ADDITIONAL COSTS

- activities in Queenstown
- meals in Queenstown
- hiking option in on the Rotoiti Circuit

Price includes guides (two per group of 14 clients), transport, accommodation, sea kayaking in Okarito and a cruise on Milford Sound, all meals except in Queenstown where there are many restaurants for you to choose from.

Maximum 14 participants. 3-day options are subject to a minimum of 2 participants

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 (if you are doing the Nelson Lakes Backcountry hiking option; also available for hire)
- sleeping bag (if you are doing the Nelson Lakes Backcountry hiking option; also available for hire)
- day pack used for day trips
- hiking boots with ankle support (comfortable and worn in)
- trail runners/running shoes
- water sandals for river crossings
- waterproof jacket and trousers
- wool sweater/fleece: 1-2 medium-weight tops (not cotton)
- fleece/down jacket
- shirts/T-shirts 5-7 some cotton some quick dry
- long-sleeve shirts, 2-3 some cotton some quick dry
- lightweight trousers: 2-3 pairs
- shorts, 3-4 pairs, some cotton, some quick dry
- sun hat and sunglasses
- 5-7 pairs socks, some walking some casual
- underwear

- thermal underwear (polypropylene or similar, not cotton)
- pajamas/nightwear
- travel towel
- swimsuit
- warm hat and warm gloves
- water bottle
- torch/flashlight/headlamp
- camera
- toiletries
- personal first aid kit
- sun block
- insect repellent

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

Hiking poles, hiking gaiters, cycling gear, ear plugs, alarm clock, casual clothes, binoculars.