

ULTIMATE NEW ZEALAND

ITINERARY





So much of Aotearoa New Zealand remains untouched. In the North, primeval rainforests contrast with ochre-red volcanos and stark lunar valleys. In the South, sheer granite fjords, turquoise lakes and sweeping tussock lands lie beneath the razor peaks of the Southern Alps. Join us to explore it in our uniquely Kiwi way.

Journey the length of the country with a small group, stepping out on multi-day hikes to backcountry huts and peaceful campsites. Closer to nature, further from the crowds. In between the six multi-day hikes, you'll stay in comfortable lodgings and head out on day walks, peruse small towns, cycle the Wilderness Trail, cruise or kayak Milford Sound, plunge into hot and cold streams and live like a Kiwi for a while.

This trip is shaped by the egalitarian culture of New Zealand's backcountry. Everyone pitches in and works as a team. The load is shared and so are the rewards; hearty meals and plenty of laughter make for time well spent. Our expert Kiwi guides show you the way, sharing stories and insights that bring the land to life.

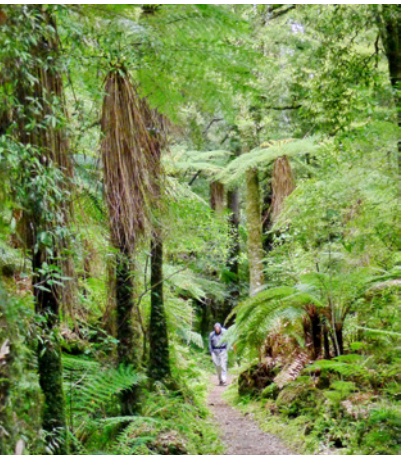
If you seek more than just highlights and are happy to meet nature on its terms, the Ultimate New Zealand is your trip. Prior multi-day hiking experience is not required, just good fitness and a love of the outdoors.

Choose to see Aotearoa Kiwi-style and find camaraderie, challenge and wild beauty. Could this be the adventure you've been looking for?

LENGTH	24 days	
GRADE	D (River crossings, some uneven terrain, you need to be reasonably fit and enthusiastic)	
START	7:00am, pick up zone outside Sky City, 20m from Sky Tower base, corner Victoria and Federal Streets, Auckland (Rotorua pickup by arrangement)	
FINISH	Queenstown	
ACCOMMODATION	Lodges, cabins, camping and backcountry huts	
INCLUDED ACTIVITIES	Wai-o-tapu Thermal Wonderland, domestic flight from the North to the South Island, Abel Tasman waka experience, cycling the West Coast Wilderness Trail and Milford Sound cruise	
OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Milford Sound kayaking - $139*, Mt Cook heli-hiking - from $899*	
DEPARTURES	2026 Nov: 4, 25 2027 Jan: 6 | Feb: 3, 24	2027 Nov: 10 | Dec: 1 2028 Jan: 5 | Feb: 2, 23
PRICE	**1 Jul 2026 - 30 Jun 2027** Adult NZD $13,200.00 Solo Hiker room upgrade (selected nights only)* NZD $825.00 Milford Sound sea kayaking (optional) NZD $139.00	**1 Jul 2027 - 30 Jun 2028** Adult NZD $13,600.00 Solo Hiker room upgrade (selected nights only)* NZD $800.00 Milford Sound sea kayaking (optional) NZD $139.00

ITINERARY









DAY 1 AUCKLAND - TARAWERA

Up to 10 km (6.2 miles), 3 hours hiking, elevation +480 m (1575 ft) -380 m (1,200 ft)
Meet your guide and fellow hikers at 7:00am in downtown Auckland and depart south toward Rotorua, with a café stop on route to fortify those who missed breakfast. Rotorua is renowned for its steaming thermal vents, bubbling mud-pools and stunning lakes. The area is also rich in Māori and early European history, including the violent 1886 Mt Tarawera eruption which buried a Māori village.

We'll arrive at Lake Tarawera, where we catch the noon water taxi to access the trail's midsection. Here, we hike alongside the clear waters of Lake Tarawera, enjoying the shade that towering tree ferns and ignimbrite cliffs offer. Along the way, you can take a dip in the lake at one of the small pumice beaches. The trail offers glimpses of the expansive wilderness of forests, lakes, and volcanoes in the distance.

Tonight we stay in open-plan log cabins. Together we prepare our evening meal and settle in for the night before the adventure ahead. During the evening or the following morning, we'll prepare our gear and pack our backpacks, ready for our two-day hike in the rainforest. *Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 TARAWERA - WHIRINAKI

15 km (9.3 miles), 5 hours hiking, elevation +650 m (2,100 ft) -430 m (1,400 ft)
After packing all our kit and driving east, into the rugged forest ranges of Te Urewera. This is the traditional home of the Tūhoe (Māori tribe) and one of the last places to have been reached by European settlers.

By late morning, we'll reach the Whirinaki Forest trail. This is a preserved remnant of the vast forests believed to have covered the supercontinent of Gondwana more than 150 million years ago. Our first hike follows the beautiful Whirinaki River through towering podocarp rainforest up to a forest clearing. Here, a simple kiwi-style backcountry hut stands beside the river. Tonight, we cook dinner together and with time for an evening fire and chat, ease into the wilderness at your pace with the choice to sleep in the hut or camp under the stars. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 WHIRINAKI

16 km (10 miles),7 hours hiking, elevation +450 m (1,480 ft) -700 m (2,300 ft)
This morning we continue a short distance up the main valley before crossing into a neighbouring river valley using a rougher, lesser-used stream trail. This is Whirinaki at its wildest, with towering forest and few visitors. We often spot whiō (blue ducks) and robins, and hear the distinctive call of the kākā (bush parrot), the route gives a real taste of New Zealand backcountry hiking.

We'll stop at a small backcountry hut for a relaxed lunch and a memorable splash down a river section before eventually rejoining the first section of valley we started from yesterday, completing the loop.

A 20-minute drive takes us to a cabin on a nearby rural property. Relax after a long day, enjoy a warm shower and unwind by the fire pit, sipping on a beer or wine. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 4 WHIRINAKI - WHAKAPAPA

Up to 3 km (2 miles), 1.5 hours hiking +/-55 m (180 ft)
We start the day with a drive to the Volcanic Plateau and its myriad natural wonders. Explore an extraordinary thermal park, bathe in a natural hot river and view the impressive Huka Falls. Feel the spray here as the mighty Waikato River, New Zealand's longest, plunges 11 metres into a stadium-like pool.

Later we arrive at Lake Taupō, the largest lake in New Zealand. Incredibly, this 600 square kilometre crater lake was formed in 186AD by the most powerful volcanic explosion in recorded history.

At Taupō, we grab our takeaway food and head to a lovely lake-side spot. Here we can relax on the unusual pumice beach and in summer enjoy an evening swim before continuing to our lodge accommodation near Whakapapa Village, Tongariro National Park. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



DAY 5 TONGARIRO NORTHERN CIRCUIT

Up to 15 km (9.5 miles), 6 hours hiking +/-300 m (1,000 ft)
Tongariro National Park is the oldest National Park in New Zealand and the fourth oldest in the world. In 1993, the park became a UNESCO mixed cultural and natural World Heritage Site. Most visitors experience the famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing, but few explore the more remote and drier east side of this remarkable volcanic landscape as we do. (Occasionally we hike the Tongariro Northern Circuit in reverse)

This morning, we'll sort out gear and pack our backpacks ready for our two nights away and late morning, we hike out the door. Heading east, we climb gently through open tussock country and across the saddle between Ruapehu and Ngāuruhoe. The views become increasingly dramatic as we enter the heart of the park. By late afternoon, we have descended to Waihohonu Hut, set beside a quiet stream among pockets of mountain beech forest. This is a wonderful place to relax, enjoy the alpine surroundings, and settle into life on the trail. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*





DAY 6 TONGARIRO NORTHERN CIRCUIT

8.5 km (5 miles), 3 hours hiking +650 m (2,100 ft) -350 m (1,150 ft)
Today's destination, Oturere Hut is a shorter distance, which gives ample time to explore. Depending on conditions and the group, we may take a more adventurous off-trail hike across ash-moraine ridges and below lava cliffs to a spring or a viewpoint above a remote lake (additional 2-4 hours), or visit the clear waters of Ohinepango Springs (40 min).

Enjoy the park's extraordinary landscape of active volcanoes and lava valleys in its three main peaks: Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngāuruhoe. Ngāuruhoe starred as Mount Doom in Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings films. We later traverse across this stony desert to an alpine hut situated on the edge of an old lava flow. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*















DAY 7 TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING

Up to 12 km (7.5 miles), 6 hours hiking, elevation +500 (1,600 ft) -800 m (2,600 ft)
Today, we hike through the moon-like valley of lava flows and ash fields before climbing steeply to the remarkable Emerald Lakes, which have graced the covers of many guidebooks. From here we join the spectacular Tongariro Alpine Crossing. The next few hours of hiking takes us through an unforgettable wonderland of lava valleys, steaming craters and brooding volcanoes before our final descent through bonsai-like alpine foliage and alongside mineral-infused streams. In good conditions, we have the option of climbing high on the volcanic peaks.

A short drive takes us back to our lodge in the heart of the National Park – the perfect place to relax with a beer and enjoy million-dollar volcanic views before dining in the alpine village. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 8 WHAKAPAPA - WELLINGTON

Driving south, we leave the volcanoes to descend through the beautiful river valleys of the Rangitikei and along the coast to Wellington, where we arrive mid-afternoon after a café break.

Wellington is so much more than just New Zealand's capital. It is also the nation's stylish hub for arts, culture, cafés and politics. Enclosed by hills and a harbour, this compact city has many attractions within easy walking distance. Includes breakfast. *Includes breakfast.*

DAY 9 WELLINGTON REST DAY

Enclosed by hills and a harbour, this compact city has many attractions within easy walking distance. Check out the vibrant city centre with museums, theatres, galleries and boutiques. It has been said that this pedestrian friendly city has more bars and restaurants per capita than New York and feels a bit like San Francisco. Take some time to soak in the creative vibes and check out the great craft beer and café scene during your visit. There are also some lovely city-bush-garden-hill top walks you can enjoy.

Craft the day to suit you; the National Museum of New Zealand (Te Papa), watching the political shenanigans of the 'Beehive' (Parliament House), bus-out to the wild south coast with views to the South Island, visit Weta workshops (book in advance to avoid any Orc-ward moments), the Maritime museum and the truly remarkable almost-in-the-city ecological restoration project 'Zealandia'. See our Blog "things to do in Wellington" for inspiration.

DAY 10 WELLINGTON - ABEL TASMAN

4.3 km (2.7 miles), 1.5-2 hours hiking, elevation +/-300 m (980 ft)
Regroup at reception to meet the shuttle to the airport for the short flight across Cook Strait to Nelson and the South Island. (Note: the transfer from Wellington accommodation to Nelson Airport is without a guide). You'll be met by your South Island guide at Nelson Airport, introduced to those joining the Ultimate South Island tour and head out of town around picturesque Tasman Bay to Kaiteriteri, the gateway to Abel Tasman National Park.

Your guide will advise you on how to pack light and smart as we ready ourselves for our next adventure - a two-night stay in the park. A boat cruise around the coast takes us to the beautiful Tonga Quarry. Enjoy a snack on the idyllic beach before starting our hike, following the Abel Tasman Coast Track south to Bark Bay where our tents and some gear were dropped by the boat. We pitch our tents and enjoy a delicious meal together before later falling asleep to the sound of waves lapping the shore. *Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 11 BARK BAY - ANCHORAGE

Up to 12.2 km (7.6 miles), 4 hours hiking, elevation +/-700 m (2,300 ft)
After a relaxed breakfast our departure from Bark Bay takes us through contrasting stands of manuka and luxuriant mixed forest, over a low saddle and across a high and airy suspension bridge above the Falls River.

Views open up to golden sand beaches on the descent to Torrent Bay where your guide may talk you into taking a side trip up to the Falls River cascades, a stunning swimming spot, or to Cleopatra's Pool, a must do and the perfect place for a refreshing swim. If you are feeling nimble you can join the guide for a boulder hop further up the valley here exploring idyllic pools and waterfalls.

We camp tonight at the bush-fringed and bright blue inlet of Anchorage. Relax, read a book and go for a swim before meeting in the evening to cook and eat together. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*





DAY 12 ANCHORAGE - MURCHISON

10 km (6.2 miles), 3 hours paddling
It's time to hit the water and explore the Abel Tasman's magical coastline by waka (Māori canoe).* After a short water taxi ride, you'll meet your waka guide for a traditional karakia (blessing) and learn the etiquette of joining a waka team. Then it's time to climb aboard and paddle. Depending on conditions, explore several coves on the mainland and the wildlife refuge of Adele Island to observe a breeding colony of New Zealand fur seals – beautiful animals that were almost hunted to extinction in the 1800s. Along the way be enlightened by stories of local Māori history and customs. Paddle into the beautiful Kaiteriteri beach at around midday, to reunite with your Hiking New Zealand guide waiting with the backpacks.



After a picnic lunch and a restock on supplies in Motueka we drive south to a private campsite near Murchison, overlooking the confluence of the Buller and Maruia rivers. Enjoy an organic meal that is home-cooked by our hosts. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

*Note: The waka experience requires a minimum of 6 people. With smaller groups we return to Kaiteriteri via water taxi.



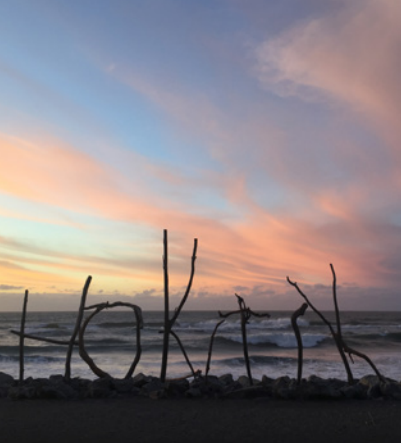
DAY 13 MURCHISON - BALLROOM OVERHANG

7.4 km (4.6 miles), 2.5-3 hours hiking, elevation +300 m (980 ft) -220 m (720 ft)
After driving through the Buller Gorge our first stop and experience of the wild West Coast is at Charleston. We take a short hike through lush West Coast bush checking out the dramatic headlands, wild waves and secluded bays.



Afterwards enjoy a picnic lunch and pack up for our next hike that takes us up a spectacular limestone river canyon in Paparoa National Park. Established in 1987, this park covers more than 30,000 hectares. Its attractions include mountains, canyons, caves, rivers, wilderness areas and coastlines. The first half of the trail is on a relatively flat well-formed track, while the second half involves multiple river crossings and sections where the riverbed itself is our route. Some boulders here can be slippery and good hiking shoes or boots are essential. Learn from your guide how to cross rivers safely, supporting each other by linking arms. We collect firewood along the way and set up camp under the massive Ballroom Overhang, a fluviatile cave.

For those that are keen on more hiking, join the guide and explore up a beautiful side canyon following the stream until it disappears into a cave. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*











DAY 14 BALLROOM OVERHANG - HOKITIKA

6.8 km (4.2 miles), 2.5 hours hiking, elevation +200 m (660 ft) -280 m (920 ft)
We hike back out through the canyon this morning after a leisurely start and head first to Punakaiki to check out the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes. Then it's down the coast to tonight's accommodation in Hokitika. A thriving goldrush town in the 1870s, it is now a great place to buy pounamu (greenstone), which was highly valued by early Māori for tools, jewellery and weapons.

Tonight's lodge accommodation is centrally located and just a short distance from the beach. Tuck into traditional Kiwi fish and chips on the beach or eat at one of the many cafés in this bustling little seaside town. On arrival in Hokitika, we get fitted out with bikes for tomorrow's ride. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 15 HOKITIKA - ARTHUR'S PASS

38.1 km (23.7 miles), 4 hours biking, elevation +610 m (2,000 ft) -670 m (2,200 ft)
Before meeting as a group grab breakfast at one of the great cafés in town. Today you get to cycle* the stunning West Coast Wilderness Trail between the Arahura River bridge and the historic township of Kumara.

Pedal your way through majestic native forest, cross crystal-clear rivers, and pass old reservoirs and water races which date back to the goldrush days. Today's ride is unguided, but the trail is very well marked, and our local partners will give you a very thorough briefing on riding the trail. The thoughtfully restored Theatre Royal Hotel in Kumara is the perfect place to celebrate our ride with a drink.

After the ride sit back and enjoy the mountain and rainforest landscapes as we turn east to drive into the Southern Alps and stay in the quaint mountain village of Arthur's Pass. Lodgings tonight are at a private hut with showers and electricity. We prepare dinner together and get ready for tomorrow's hiking adventure into Edwards Valley.
Includes lunch and dinner.
*E-bike upgrades are available on request for an additional cost

DAY 16 ARTHUR'S PASS - EDWARDS HUT

9.4 km (5.8 miles), 4-5 hours hiking, elevation +640 m (2,100 ft) -210 m (690 ft)
While not as well-known as some of the other National Parks visited on the tour, Arthur's Pass will awe you with its rugged peaks, wild rivers and adventurous hiking trails. Our overnight hike takes us up the Edwards River to the Edwards Hut which sits just above the bushline with a great view up this beautiful alpine valley.*

It is a challenging hike on a real 'kiwi-style' track. There are several river crossings and parts where you will need to use your hands for extra grip as the trail is rugged with steep slippery sections.

We either camp or stay in the hut depending on how many other hikers are there.
At nightfall listen out for the distinct call of our national bird, the kiwi. Roroa or great spotted kiwi are known to inhabit this area. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*
*Most departures will have two guides for this hike.

DAY 17 EDWARDS HUT - METHVEN

9.4 km (5.8 miles), 4-5 hours hiking, elevation +210 m (690 ft) -640 m (2,100 ft)
Make the most of being in this wonderfully remote alpine valley by joining an optional hike this morning to explore further up towards Falling Mountain, where the views of the surrounding peaks open up even more. After returning to the hut we pack up and hike back out to the road having lunch along the way.

Heading east away from the divide the scenery changes dramatically with the steep forested slopes of the west replaced with wide braided rivers, tussock grassland, mountains flanked with scree and the surreal limestone formations of Castle Hill.

We leave the main highway following an inland route past Lake Lyndon, through Rakaia Gorge and on to the village of Methven where we stay overnight.
Includes breakfast and lunch.



DAY 18 METHVEN - AORAKI/MT COOK

Up to 9.2 km (5.7 miles), 6 hours hiking, elevation +/-1,180 m (3,870 ft)
We spend the morning driving along the western margin of the Canterbury Plains and into the stunningly beautiful Mackenzie Country, an intermontane basin of huge glacial lakes and snow-capped mountains.



By late morning we arrive at Aoraki/Mt Cook village ready to maximise our afternoon with a hike with daypacks up to Sealy Tarns and possibly as far as Mueller Hut. Enjoy views across two valley glaciers to icefalls on Mount Sefton and Aoraki/Mt Cook. Towering moraine walls, glacial lakes and the frequent rumbling of distant avalanches are reminders of nature's sheer power in this dynamic landscape.

We return via the same track to our accommodation at a private hut, in awe of our position in the heart of the Southern Alps, surrounded by mountains of such commanding presence. With luck, we can watch the summit of Aoraki/Mt Cook turn from white to pink with the sun's last rays. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 19 AORAKI/MT COOK - LAKE HĀWEA

3.7 km (2.3 miles), 2 hours hiking, elevation +/-380 m (1,250 ft)
Enjoy a relaxed breakfast together with a postcard view of Aoraki/Mt Cook from our dining room window. There is the option today of joining a local operator for a guided heli-hike on the Tasman Glacier (from NZ$899).* A helicopter flight will take you onto the upper glacier where you'll attach crampons to your boots to explore ice formations and ice caves and no doubt marvel at the jagged landscape.



Those not heli-hiking can join the guide for a hike up the steep slopes of Sebastopol to the Red Tarns for more stunning views. If there is need to rest the legs today, either relax at the hut, take a walk on the valley floor or visit the information centre to learn more about the park's natural history and the feats of pioneering mountaineers. An alternative hike option for those wanting to stride out on their own today, is the spectacular Hooker Valley Track*, this trail starts from near the hut and meanders its way gently up the valley to the Hooker Glacier Lake, crossing 3 big suspension bridges along the way.

By mid-afternoon we re-unite with the heli-hikers and depart Aoraki/Mt Cook to continue our journey south through the Mackenzie Country and over Lindis Pass into the Central Otago region. We stay tonight near the shores of Lake Hāwea, a glacially formed lake over 35kms in length ringed by mountains.

Take the night off cooking and dine at a local restaurant. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

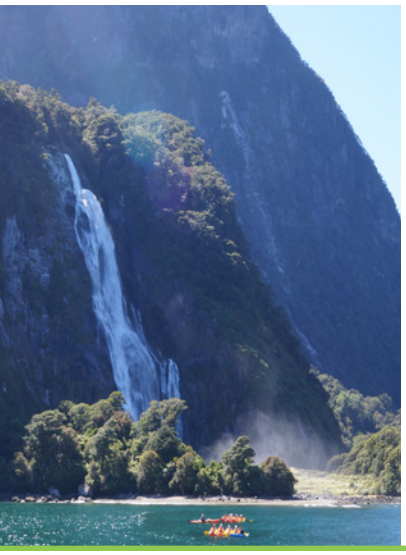












* Optional extra hike: 10.2 km (6.3 miles), 3 hours hiking, elevation +/-270 m (890 ft)
*Price correct at time of publishing.

DAY 20 LAKE HĀWEA - ASPIRING HUT

8.9 km (5.5 miles), 2.5 hours hiking, elevation +200 m (660 ft) -110 m (360 ft)
We drive to Wānaka township this morning to grab a coffee and take a wander around this vibrant lakeside resort town before heading on up the Matukituki Valley to the road end. Here we shoulder overnight packs and enjoy stunning alpine views as we hike across grassed flats to Aspiring Hut. Catch glimpses of the Matterhorn-like Mt Aspiring (3033m) between high peaks.

There is the option this afternoon of the steep yet well rewarded climb through beech forest to the bush line on the Cascade Saddle Track*. Cheeky and inquisitive kea (alpine parrots) may check out our group as we rest to take in the uninterrupted view across the upper Matukituki to Mt Aspiring and the Southern Alps, so we might need to keep a wary eye on our things (kea love shiny zips). *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner*

*Optional extra hike: 4.9 km (3 miles), 3 hours hiking, elevation +/-710 m (2,330 ft)

DAY 21 ASPIRING HUT - EGLINTON VALLEY

8.9 km (5.5 miles), 2.5 hours hiking, elevation +110 m (360 ft) -200 m (660 ft)
We start our return hike early this morning enjoying the pretty views and easy walking along the floor of this wide glacially formed valley. Once we are back in Wānaka recharge with a lakeside picnic and you may want to dive into the lake for a swim.

Next up is a remarkable drive over the Crown Range, offering breath-taking summit views of the Wakitipu Basin and lakes. By late afternoon, we're past Te Anau and well on our way to Milford Sound.

We camp for the next two nights at the beautiful Eglinton Valley campsite, relaxing and making the most of the welcome hot showers. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 22 EGLINTON VALLEY - MILFORD

2-hour cruise (or Milford kayaking option*),
7.2 km (4.5 miles), 3 hours hiking, elevation +/-490 m (1,610 ft)
This morning we drive beneath imposing granite cliffs and hanging valleys into the heart of Fiordland National Park. This amazing World Heritage Site is one of the largest national parks in the world, with its huge glacial lakes of Te Anau and Manapouri and spectacular fiords.

By mid-morning, we are at Milford and ready to join one of the world's great day-cruises. Our vessel takes us out to Anita Bay and the entrance to Milford Sound. Enjoy stunning views of cascading waterfalls and the iconic Mitre Peak, which soars 1722 metres above the sea. Keep your eyes peeled for dolphins, Fiordland crested penguins and New Zealand fur seals, which often play near the boat.

***Optional Activity - Guided Milford Sound Kayak trip**
Enjoy Milford Sound up close and personal in the quiet of the early morning, paddling beneath towering cliffs and waterfalls.

No kayaking experience is required. You just need to be comfortable in deep water and have a reasonable level of fitness, as you'll spend up to 3.5 hours on the water.

All equipment is provided, and your guide will give a full safety briefing and paddling instruction before you start.

The kayak trip does not explore the full length of Milford Sound, however you can instead take the Milford Sound cruise, which travels the entire length of the sound out to the Tasman Sea.

Add the Milford Sound Sea Kayaking option when booking your trip, space is limited. Cost: NZD$139 (Price correct at time of publishing).

Before returning to Eglinton Valley, we take a hike up to Key Summit. This is the final section of the famous Routeburn Track, which is another of New Zealand's Great Walks. An informative nature walk passes through a transition from forest to alpine vegetation and prolific birdlife, *and views over the Hollyford Valley to the Darran Mountains are spectacular. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 23 EGLINTON VALLEY - QUEENSTOWN

2 km (1.2 miles), 45 minutes hiking

After breakfast we take a short hike to check out a beautiful waterfall near our campsite, where you may want to soak up one last little bit of Fiordland by jumping under for a shower!

We then make our final drive to Queenstown arriving in the early afternoon.
The afternoon is free for you to use as you wish. Our lodge is within easy walking distance to town. We meet up in the early evening and head out to celebrate the great hikes and adventures we have had together over the last two weeks. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 24 QUEENSTOWN – TOUR ENDS

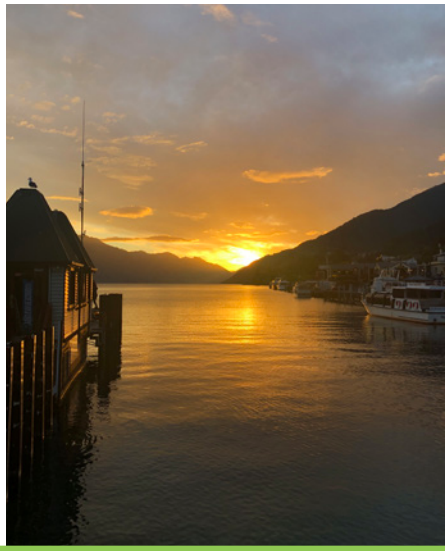
Your guide departs early this morning, marking the end of the tour. For those staying on in Queenstown you will be spoilt for choice of adventure activities to try. Queenstown is the adventure capital of New Zealand and is surrounded by stunning landscapes with superb hiking and cycling tracks. Don't hesitate to ask one of our helpful team for tips of great hikes to do in the area at the conclusion of your trip.











"EXPLORING THE MAGIC OF NEW ZEALAND"

Hiking New Zealand did an excellent job in taking us to places that I found to be very beautiful. There was a sense of magic in what we saw and experienced. The food and accommodations were very good for the price of the trip. The guides for both islands were very knowledgeable and were able to adapt to the diversity of the group and weather related conditions. They took us to many places that were away from any crowds. I highly recommend using Hiking New Zealand for those that want to get out and explore the beauty of New Zealand.

~ M. Toole - Trip Advisor, USA

"AN INCREDIBLE COUNTRY WITH A GREAT OUTFITTER"

It is hard to put in a few words how great this trip was for my wife and I. HNZ made all the arrangements once we were on the ground with them. They were professional, knowledgeable, friendly and a great group to travel and work with. When the storms took out the Mildford sound portion of our hike, they quickly adjusted our schedule for other great hikes. My wife and I have hiked in many parts of the world with other quality outfitters and this one ranks up with the best.

~ Mike. S - Trip Advisor

LIFE ON THE TRAIL

This is a facilitated adventure - we believe great trips/ adventures are a team effort. So we will need your help from time to time when it comes to cooking meals, sharing the load on hikes, and washing up - many hands make light work.

GRADE D

- Average of 4-5 hours physical activity per day, up to 8-9 hours on longer days.
- Pack weights of 10-12kgs* on some days (1,2, 5, 6 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19 and 20)
- Altitude gains of up to 800m.
- Some uneven track surfaces and river crossings.
- No multi-day hiking experience necessary.
- You need to be reasonably fit and enthusiastic and have good agility.
- Some tracks may be slippery or rough and there will be some off-track hiking and river crossings.

*Will vary depending on the weight of personal discretional items.



GUIDES AND SAFETY

An excellent guide can make the difference between a trip of a lifetime and just an ordinary trip. That is why we work hard to make sure we hire the best guides. 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' energy and dedication will ensure that your time with us is truly inspiring, a huge amount of fun and safe. Structuring breaks for the guide to rest is important to keep them fresh, focused and ready to give their best. Occasionally, we engage local experts to add value to experiences which your guide may or may not join. Also, there may be nights your guide stays in alternate nearby accommodation but rest assured you will be able to reach them if needed. Please be gentle with your guide - good guides are hard to find.

GROUP SIZE

This is a small group trip with a minimum of 4 hikers and a maximum of 11 hikers.

FOOD

As well as being the time to rest, refuel and recharge, meal times are also a great time to get to know your fellow travellers better, sit back and enjoy the amazing surroundings and enjoy some great food! Everybody has a turn with the preparation and cooking of meals: barbecues, salads, pancakes, curries, pasta, stir-fries, hangi...
Vegetarian meals are no problem. On the "wild nights" the group will usually eat pasta and rice meals (special "secret" recipes used). There is always a lot of hiking food - chocolate, nuts, raisins, biscuits. The vehicles carry a full range of cooking equipment including gas burners, woks, frying pans and billies (cooking pot). When you go on an overnight hike the group will carry a portable stove.

TRANSPORT

The average driving time per day varies, some times you are in the wilderness and won't see the vehicle for 2 or 3 days! On other days you might be in the vehicle for 2-3 hours or occasionally more. The driving time is a chance to rest and enjoy the fantastic scenery which is forever changing. You will travel in a 12 seat minibus towing a lockable trailer with camp equipment and your luggage. There will be a range of roads - sealed and unsealed. The guide will often stop the vehicle if there is a great photo opportunity or primo ice cream shop!

ACCOMMODATION

"Wild nights" vs nights in civilization:
Wild nights are the nights where you are truly in the wilderness, staying in backcountry huts or camping in locations that may be several hours walk from the nearest road or populated area, versus nights in civilisation where you may stay in cabins, lodges or camp by the vehicle at campsites. Some of these locations may still be relatively remote and in the wilderness but they can be reached by the vehicle.
*Accommodation is subject to availability, and an equivalent style of property could be used if the advertised property is no longer available. Single room upgrade for solo travellers is at accommodations where private rooms are available. This upgrade is limited to nights 8, 9, 14, 17 and 23.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Camping - During the "wild nights," you may camp under natural rock shelters, on remote beaches, or even sleep under the stars (single tent available on request). If the weather turns wet, stormy, or too cold, your guide may arrange alternative accommodation such as a lodge, cabin, or crib to keep you comfortable.

Huts - New Zealand has an extensive network of backcountry huts, and you will stay in these on several nights. Equipped with mattresses, running water, and an outdoor toilet, these huts are only accessible by foot and shared with other hikers. Meals are cooked on portable stoves. If you prefer, you also have the option of camping near the hut to experience the wild more closely.



Lodges - On some nights, you will stay in lodge-style accommodation, typically located near the start or end of a hike. These lodges feature multi-share or twin/double rooms, generally with shared bathroom facilities and offer a comfortable place to rest and recharge after a day of exploring.

Cabins - some nights may be spent in cabins at a campground. Usually you can put a tent up if you prefer a 'room' to yourself on these nights.



Bathroom facilities - On the wild nights there will be long drop (pit) toilets. There will be rivers or lakes nearby for a swim, and sometimes there are even natural hot pools! The Kiwi-style Hiking trips are set up so after a couple of nights of "roughing it" in the wilderness, you will stay somewhere where you can enjoy a shower and a few home comforts (including laundry facilities) before the next foray into the wild!
A very outdoor toilet - don't worry, just an actor!

ELEVATIONS

Track distances and elevations are approximate only. Advertised hiking routes may be amended by the guide for any reason (usually due to weather, or track conditions). The guide will notify clients in advance of day-to-day routes.



ADDITIONAL COSTS

Meals

Meals that are not included in the trip price are detailed at the bottom of each day's itinerary.

Optional activities

Milford sea kayaking (NZ$139*), Heli-hike (from NZ$899*)
*Prices and itinerary are subject to change.

All other activities are included in the price: Rotorua thermal park, natural hot pools, domestic flight between the North & South Island, Abel Tasman waka experience, cycling the West Coast Wilderness Trail and the Milford Sound cruise.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

For bookings made four or more months prior to the departure date, a 25% deposit 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

95 days or more prior to departrue date: Full refund less a $500 transferable deposit per person 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.

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HIKING New Zealand

PACKING LIST

Items shown in bold can be hired from us (see the rate table below).
Please arrange hire at least two weeks prior to your departure date.

CLOTHING - one set for walking, one set for evenings

WALKING CLOTHES: Several layers of wool, polypropylene and/or polar fleece will ensure you remain a comfortable temperature regardless of the weather. **No cotton shirts hiking/kayaking in the wet please!** Cotton gets cold when wet and is difficult to dry.

- ☐ Waterproof raincoat
- ☐ Thermal underwear (top and bottom, wool or polypropylene)
- ☐ Hiking boots or good hiking shoes
- ☐ Spare lightweight shoes or sandals
- ☐ Shorts or lightweight trousers (preferably quick-dry)
- ☐ Short-sleeved shirt x 2 (quick-dry, polypropylene or wool)
- ☐ Warm fleece/wool jersey (not cotton) x 2
- ☐ Socks (we suggest 3 pairs)
- ☐ Warm hat or balaclava
- ☐ Sunhat
- ☐ Gloves or mittens (wool or fleece)
- ☐ Togs (swimming costume)
- ☐ Towel (lightweight travel towels are great)

SPARE CLOTHING: Extra socks and polypropylene layers are always handy - ensure you have enough warm items. Comfortable clothes for non hiking days. Spare clothing can be left in the secure trailer when we are away on the hikes, so don't worry about the extra weight – ensure you have enough warm items. Note: there are only limited opportunities to do laundry during a tour, so quick drying clothing is an advantage. Weather can change rapidly in the locations we hike so layers of clothing is ideal.

EQUIPMENT

- ☐ **Backpack** (50 litres is adequate)
- ☐ Lightweight, compact **sleeping bag** (1–1.5 kg, 5°C (41°F) comfort, down preferred
- ☐ Flashlight/headlamp
- ☐ Drink bottle or camel back – 1 litre
- ☐ Small day pack
- ☐ Sunscreen and sunglasses
- ☐ Insect repellent (sandflies like foreign blood)
- ☐ Personal toiletries, medication and first aid
- ☐ **Walking Poles** (optional)
- ☐ Gaiters (optional)

HOW TO PACK

We recommend that you bring two bags on your trip, a hiking backpack with an internal frame (50 litres is adequate) for the overnight hikes, and a smaller day pack for the day hikes. We supply kit bags for the storage of your gear in the trailer when you are away on a multi day hike.

WE SUPPLY

- Pack-liner to keep things dry inside your backpack
- Kit bag to hold your spare gear when you are out hiking
- Emergency first aid kit
- Thermarests
- Plates, cutlery, mugs, pots, etc.
- Tents

Hire gear (NZ$)	5-7 days trip	8-11 days trip	12+ days trip
Backpack (approx 50 litres)	$50	$60	$80
Sleeping bag and liner	$50	$60	$80
Walking pole (per one pole)	$20	$20	$20

It's not always easy packing - feel free to drop us a line if you have any questions.

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IMPORTANT INFO

Here is a kickstart on a few things you need to know...

WHEN HIKING

• Stay together. If you get separated, stop and wait until your guide finds you.
• Wait at all track junctions, huts and hazards, as well as river crossings, for the rest of the group to catch up.
• Tell someone if you are heading off the track to use "the bathroom" in case you get lost! It happens! If lost - shout or whistle!
• Watch out for sunburn. Remember, NZ sun burns fast, wear a hat and sun block at all times until you are familiar with its strength.
• Drink plenty of water, it is safe to drink from most of the rivers and streams in the wilderness without treating the water, but do ask.
• Help and look out for each other on river crossings, bush bashing and rock scrambling.
• Ensure you have correct clothing - see 'packing' list.
• Snow slopes are extremely dangerous - guide leads on snow. No fooling around unless guide gives the OK.
• Wasps - be observant (especially in beech forests). If you see a nest back off SLOWLY, unless they start to sting you - then move like greased lightening.

CROSSING RIVERS

• River crossing accidents are a major cause of fatalities in the NZ wilderness so learning correct techniques from your guide is imperative.
• If wearing a rain-coat turn up and tuck under hip belt so pockets don't fill with water.
• You must wear boots when crossing rivers!
• To prevent the spread of Didymo (an invasive algae) boots, gaiters, socks etc. must be washed and treated before entering another waterway.

KAYAKING

• Always attend the safety briefing.
• Always take spare warm clothing in case the weather turns bad.
• Go to the toilet before you get into the kayak!
• Wrap valuables and cameras securely in bags or dry bags and close PROPERLY. Put adsorbent cloth/t-shirt with camera.
• Always stay together.
• Sun protection - the reflection off water doubles the intensity!

CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

• Always attend the safety briefing, know the meet times and 'back up' plans.
• High visibility clothes if there are road sections.
• Be aware if you are in the front or back of group (otherwise you might be chasing imaginary people).
• Stop to smell the roses - you might be wearing yellow, but its not the Tour de France!
• Helmets are compulsory in NZ.
• In NZ front and rear brakes are opposite to US and Europe.

SWIMMING & BEACHES

Many NZ beaches are too dangerous for swimming, in particular the West Coast beaches.

Where conditions are suitable...
• Talk to your guide before you go swimming and don't swim alone.
• Respect the sea - never turn your back on the sea and watch out for freak waves & rips.
• If you get into difficulty while swimming – raise one of your hands up above your head - stay calm.
• Be careful entering the sea or body surfing, there may be rocks below the water.
• For rescues, things that float are - sleeping mats, spare tyre, empty water bottles (jerry cans), thermarests and dry bags stuffed with clothing.
• Look for jellyfish and stingrays (check along water edge and don't swim if there are lots about).

HOT POOLS (NATURAL)

• Keep head above water at all times – water may contain amoebic meningitis.
• Watch out for boiling water/mud around and in the pool.
• Remove jewellery as it tends to turn green or black.

FIRES

• Observe all fire bans. Keep fires small, use only dead wood and completely put out with water before leaving and at night (includes wood burners in huts).
• Always have a bucket of water near fire to extinguish it and for burns (or stream/river nearby).
• Be careful when wearing synthetic clothing around fires. Sparks put holes in Gore-Tex and tents.
• Do not use axe without guide's okay - wear boots.

HYGIENE & TOILETS

• You'll get to a shower generally every 1-2 days, otherwise there are rivers to swim in and freshwater to wash with.
• Keep streams, lakes and rivers clean - when cleaning and washing, take water and wash well away from the water source (drain used water into soil to allow it to be filtered) - all soaps/detergents are harmful to water-life.
• Always use toilets when they are provided even though long-drops may be a bit rustic.
• In situations where there is no toilet, bury toilet waste. No 1's (pee) off the track - No 2's (poop) in 5-10 cm deep hole 50-100m from any water (lake, river or stream), bury toilet paper, cover up hole with soil/leaf litter. Please do not burn toilet paper.
• Sanitary pads/tampons are treated as rubbish - carried out by user.

ENVIRONMENTAL CARE

• Remove rubbish – pack it in, pack it out. Please help guide to separate rubbish, recycling and compost.
• Keep to the track where there is one – protect native plants and animals.
• Respect cultural heritage.
• Enjoy your visit - camp carefully and leave no trace of your visit. Will the next visitor know you have been there?

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER...

• Laundry facilities are limited while on trips (every 2-3 days).
• Hypothermia - make sure you have the correct clothing! Be prepared for any weather!
• Hire gear - use the supplied liner with sleeping bags, carry all hire gear in pack not tied to outside. Please don't overextend walking poles - they will snap! Please tell us if any repairs are required.
• Equipment – it is so easy to lose stuff in shared huts. Help us keep an eye on gear, thanks.
• Roads - remember kiwis drive on the left, look carefully when crossing the street for an ice-cream.
• Tipping - it is not expected in NZ to tip for service, but if you feel your guide has done an excellent job, tips will be accepted graciously.
• Wild food & berries - always ask before you eat, many are poisonous to us.

Thank you for reading. Have a wonderful trip.

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerso

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