



WEST COAST WILDERNESS

ITINERARY



A unique opportunity to be totally immersed in pristine wilderness. Hike through lush rainforest in a limestone canyon, wade across crystal clear rivers, explore hidden caves and gaze at the stars as you sleep under a giant rock overhang. Marvel at the ice carved landscape, towering seracs and deep crevasses on a hike up to the terminal face of Fox Glacier. From your kayak look for the regal kotuku (white heron) as you paddle the tranquil Okarito Lagoon.

LENGTH	11 days
GRADE	D - River crossings, some uneven terrain, you need to be reasonably fit and enthusiastic
START	Nelson - 8:00am i-Site Visitor Centre, corner Halifax and Trafalgar Streets
FINISH	Queenstown - 6.00pm (approx.)
ACCOMMODATION	Backcountry huts, Cabins, Camping
PRICE	Group rates on request

This is a sample itinerary of what we can offer for custom groups. If you have a group of four or more, we can craft a trip that suits your group.

“FANTASTIC GUIDES”

All the guides were fantastic. I enjoyed that they took the time on the hike and shared their knowledge of the plants/wildlife and culture - history of the land and its people.

~ Brendan G - November

“GREAT SCENERY!”

My favourite part of the trip was the people I met and the hike through NZ. Great scenery!

~ Julianna - USA, April

ITINERARY

DAY 1 NELSON - KAHURANGI

11km/4 hours hiking

Meet up with your guide and the rest of the crew in central Nelson before escaping to the hills via the scenic Motueka region. The first hike begins after lunch from Flora Saddle. Leaving the vehicle behind we'll ascend through virgin beech forest and up onto the sprawling tablelands of New Zealand's second largest national park - Kahurangi. An old gold mining area, the initial track climbs up pack trails and above a stream where native blue duck reside. Emerging onto the tussock covered tablelands gives panoramic views of the surrounding peaks and a sense of true wilderness. We spend the night getting to know each other in an old gold miners rock shelter, staring at the stars and trying to spot Morepork (native owl) in the campfire light. *Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 KAHURANGI - MURCHISON

15 km/7 hours hiking

Leaving the rock shelter early, we head across the tablelands once more and spend time exploring the geologic marvels of the area. This is a karst landscape - made up of limestone and marble - with large sinkholes and an intricate system of caves beneath the surface. Here your guide will describe the forces that have shaped it into its current state. Next we walk up Gordon's Pyramid (1489m) and spend time soaking up some of the best views that the park has to offer. We usually stop for lunch in the sun, amongst the rocks on the slopes of Mt. Arthur, before walking back to the van. Enjoy the picturesque drive south - with ice cream in hand - through one of New Zealand's most diverse agricultural areas, the Tapawera Valley. Accommodation tonight is at a private campsite and cottage, which is superbly located looking over the confluence of the Buller and Maruia Rivers. A scrumptious dinner with organic ingredients is prepared by our hosts. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 MURCHISON - PAPAROA NATIONAL PARK

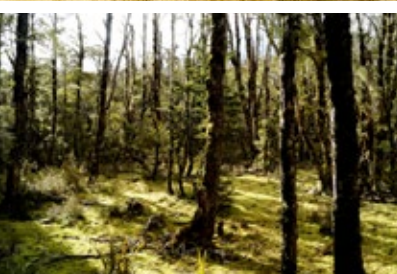
8 km/4 hours hiking

The day begins with a relaxing drive toward the West Coast along the mighty Buller River. On the drive we get our first glimpse of New Zealand's impressive Podocarp forest. Arriving at the coast, your guide will drop you at the top of the relaxing coastal walk to Cape Foulwind (aptly named by Captain Cook - the seals are a bit smelly!). They then meet you at the seal colony near Tauranga Bay before driving along the scenic West Coast en route to one of the country's best-kept secrets - Paparoa National Park. Walking up the Fox River, the group will learn the unique Kiwi art of river crossing. This will come in handy in order to reach the campsite under tonight's accommodation - the Ballroom Overhang - a massive fluvatile cave. Crank up the campfire and settle in for the night. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 4 PAPAROA NATIONAL PARK - PUNAKAIKI

12 km/6 hours hiking

Heading out from the Ballroom, we wander along quaint rivers, channelled though towering limestone cliffs covered in lush native rainforest. The scenery in this area is truly breath taking, and unparalleled in the South Island. Take the opportunity to explore nearby caves, have a swim, and study the stalactites. Leaving the rivers behind, walk along an old inland pack-track that winds its way through tranquil native forest before emerging at the road end where our van awaits. A short drive gets us to the small tourist town of Punakaikai. Grab a coffee and wander through the geologic phenomenon that is the Pancake Rocks



– scientists still cannot agree on how they formed. If the tide is right, you will get to witness the magnificent blowholes in action. Tonight we stay near the coast and dine at a local pub for dinner. A saunter down to the beach to view the sunset is highly recommended. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 5 PUNAKAIKI - OKARITO

5 km/2 hours hiking

If you're not too busy sleeping in, take the opportunity this morning to explore the rugged coast around Punakaiki, rich in Maori history. The picturesque scenery continues as we drive south along the coast toward Greymouth, where we stock up on supplies. The drive continues in the afternoon through the quirky towns of the West Coast, each loaded with history and stories. Our home for the next two nights is the sleepy little village of Okarito. After pitching tents in the quaint campground, feel free to stretch your legs before dinner along Okarito's wild beach. *Includes breakfast and dinner.*

DAY 6 OKARITO

10 km/4 hours kayaking

If Start the day by exploring the areas main attraction – the exceptional Okarito Lagoon. Here you can observe some of New Zealand's famous native birds, including white herons and tui, all from the comfort of your sea kayak. Paddle up secluded river channels where 60m native Kahikatea trees tower above you, and admire the snow-capped Southern Alps in the distance. After lunch, feel free to walk one of the easy tracks nearby that wind through coastal rainforest and up to great viewpoints, walk along the beach, or simply relax around camp. Dinner tonight is cooked underground in a hangi, a traditional Maori method of cooking. This process is enjoyed by the whole group, from preparation to consumption! Let the night take hold with a bonfire on the beach. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 7 FOX GLACIER

10 km/4 hours hiking

This morning we make the short drive to the tourist village of Fox Glacier. One of the only glaciers in the world that descends into rainforest. Join the guide for a hike up through the rainforest to a spectacular viewpoint of the glacier, then afterwards hike up to the terminal face of the glacier itself, a chance to see close up the effects rapidly advancing and retreating glaciers have had on this amazing landscape. If you want to get onto the ice, take the option of a guided heli hike with a local guiding company. Get kitted out with crampons for your boots before flying up onto the mid section of the glacier. Marvel at the ice carved landscape, towering seracs and deep crevasses. This is an incredibly unique alpine experience with incredible views (and photo opportunities) of some of New Zealand's highest mountain peaks. In the afternoon we hike around Lake Matheson, the mountains and rainforest are often mirrored in the waters of the lake, so have your camera ready. Tonight we stay in comfortable cabins near the start of the Copland Track. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 8 WELCOME FLAT

18km/7 hours hiking

This morning we begin our three-day sojourn up the Copland Valley. The track meanders along the glacially fed Copland River, over side streams and through ancient podocarp forest. Enjoy a picnic lunch beside the river and try to spot endangered blue duck swimming in the rapids. The walk finishes at the salubrious Welcome Flat Hut. Explorers named this area Welcome Flat thanks to the natural hot pools nearby. After dinner slip into one of the pools and soak away the days efforts while admiring the jagged peaks of the Sierra Range. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*





DAY 9 WELCOME FLAT

8 km/4 hours hiking

Today you can choose to relax around the hut, take a short walk on your own up the valley or join the guide for an exploration up one of the stunning side streams above the hut. Boulder hopping up the stream, you will eventually reach a brilliant alpine waterfall where the bold can have a shower, or swim in the pool below. Have a picnic lunch as you dry out on the rocks and enjoy the views of the valley below. On a clear day the top of New Zealand's highest mountain – Aoraki/Mt Cook is clearly visible to the east. Descend back down the stream to the hut, and ease back into the hot pools whenever you fancy. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 10 COPLAND VALLEY

18 km/6 hours hiking

Today we wander out of the Copland Valley and drive south once more, stopping at a local salmon farm to grab a coffee at their café and pick up our dinner! We also pull into Knights Point for the great cliff top views and Ships Creek, where the native Hector's Dolphin can sometimes be seen from the beach. The last night is spent camping in the remote town of Haast. Here we enjoy a fresh salmon dinner, cooked on the fire, before heading down to the local pub. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 11 TOUR ENDS IN QUEENSTOWN

3-8 km/2-5 hours hiking

Finally it's time to leave the rugged West Coast and turn inland, driving over the dramatic Haast Pass, one of the last mountain routes to be opened in New Zealand. This road also borders the edge of Mt. Aspiring National Park and takes us between the edges of Lake Wanaka and Lake Hawea. We stop along the way to hike up past Diamond Lake to Rocky Mountain – a huge rock massif shaped by glaciers thousands of years ago. The summit offers stunning views of Lake Wanaka, its islands and the surrounding peaks. After our hike, we pull into a secluded bay on the shores of Lake Wanaka for lunch and one last swim. The road conveniently passes the historical Cardrona Pub where we enjoy a drink in the garden bar before we drive over the steep and stunning Crown Range and into the electric atmosphere of Queenstown. Get glammed up and hit the town for a group dinner somewhere special. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

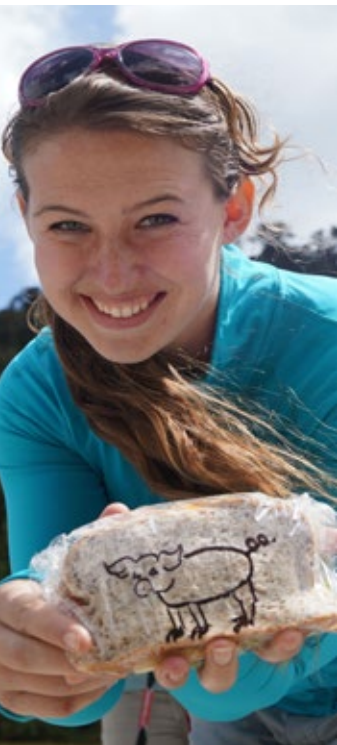
GRADE D

- 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.
- 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.
- Terrain mostly tracks. Some may be slippery or rough; some off-track hiking and river crossings.



GUIDES AND SAFETY

An excellent guide can make the difference between a trip of a lifetime and just an ordinary trip. 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. The guides will ensure that your trip is truly inspiring, a huge amount of fun and safe. All guides are trained in Mountain Safety First Aid.



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 days you are in the wilderness and won't see the vehicle! On other days you might be in the vehicle for 2-3 hrs. 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 custom-built trailer with camp equipment and your luggage. They are also equipped with a range of natural history reference books. 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:

The kiwi-style hiking offers a combination of "wild nights", which is 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 civilization where you may stay in cabins, lodges or camp by the vehicle at Department of Conservation campsites.

Some of these locations may still be relatively remote and in the wilderness but they can be reached by the vehicle.

Camping - You will camp in a range of campsites, on the "wild nights" you may camp under natural rock shelters, on remote beaches or even sleep out under the stars! On the non-"wild nights" you will camp near the vehicle in Department of Conservation campsites. If the weather is not great for camping, eg very wet, stormy or cold conditions your guide will seek out alternative accommodation, eg lodge, cabin or



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Huts - New Zealand has an excellent network of backcountry huts and you will stay in huts on several nights. They are equipped with mattresses, running water and an outside toilet. Cooking is done on a portable stove. Huts are only accessible on foot and shared with other hikers. You also have the option of camping near the hut if that is your



Lodges - You will stay in lodge type accommodation on some of the nights, the lodges are often conveniently located near the start or end of a hike and have multi-share and sometimes twin/double rooms.



Cabins/Cribs - some nights may be spent in private cribs (summer house) or cabins at a campground. Staying in the cribs is a real authentic New Zealand experience and you may even start to feel like a kiwi on holiday!



Bathroom facilities - on the wild nights there will be long drop (pit) toilets. There will be rivers or lakes nearby for washing, and sometimes there are even natural hot pools! The safaris 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!

* Just kidding! (the toilets have walls)



ADDITIONAL COSTS

Meals

Meals that are included in the trip price are detailed in the itinerary. Two evening meals, one breakfast and one lunch are not included in this trip.

Optional activities

Okarito kayaking (*NZ\$125), Heli Hike (*NZ\$699)

Optional activities are paid for during the trip.

*Prices are correct at time of publishing.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

For bookings four or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 95 days prior to your trip. For bookings within four months of the departure, full payment is required.

Cancellations

95 days or more prior to departure – 80% refund of the deposit paid OR your full deposit is transferable to a future trip booked directly with Hiking New Zealand

94 to 21 days prior to departure – 80% refund of the full ticket price

20 to 11 days prior to departure – 50% refund of the full ticket price

10 days or less prior to departure – NO REFUND.

Travel Insurance

It is recommended that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.

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HIKING
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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.

- Raincoat (goretex or similar)
- 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** (minimum 60 litres)
- Sleeping bag** (minimum 3 season, preferably down, lightweight)
- 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 (at least 60 litres in capacity) 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 (60 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.

IMPORTANT INFO

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

WHEN HIKING

- Stay together. Wait if you have not seen the group for 10 minutes.
 - Wait at all track junctions, huts, or river crossings for everyone to catch up.
 - If you get separated, stop and wait until your guide finds you.
 - 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 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.
 - Hiking tracks in NZ can be quite muddy and sometimes rough with tree roots and rocks. But this is part of the fun.
 - Snow slopes are extremely dangerous - guide leads on snow.
- No fooling around unless guide gives the OK.

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 your pack has a quick-release hip belt keep it fastened (to prevent the pack riding over your head if you end up swimming). Chest straps and other hip belts should be undone.
- Wear shorts not long pants. 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 dried 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.

CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

- Always attend the safety briefing, know the meet times and 'back up' plans.
- High visibility clothes if 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.

CAVING

- Does your torch/headlamp have good batteries - carry spares if you need.
- If you want to take a camera, make sure that it is wrapped securely in plastic bags or dry bags.
- Go to the toilet beforehand.
- Talk to guide if you are nervous about caving beforehand.
- Cave formations take thousands of years to form - please don't touch them unless your guide okays it.

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 - even when beach walking.
- If you get into difficulty while swimming - raise one of your hands up above your head - stay calm.

- Be careful entering the sea. Don't run into the sea - 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 - (check along water edge and don't swim if there are lots about) - treat with vinegar

HOT POOLS (NATURAL)

- Keep head above water at all times - water may contain amoebic meningitis.
- Watch out for boiling water/mud hazards 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 mostly every 1-2 days, otherwise there are rivers to have a wash in.
- 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.
- Laundry facilities are limited while on trips (every 2-3 days).
- 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 - ask guide for sanitary rubbish bags.

ENVIRONMENTAL CARE

- Correct hygiene and toilet practices are essential to keep water supplies (rivers, lakes) safe to drink.
- 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...

- Hypothermia - make sure you wear & carry the correct clothing!
- Fitness - hiking all day with a backpack on is hard work, get fit before you come on a kiwi-style trip. If you are fit enough you will be able to take part in all the hikes.
- Hire gear - use the supplied liner with sleeping bags, carry all hire gear in pack not tied to outside. 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.
- 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.

Thank you for reading. Have a wonderful trip.

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