

# Hiker's Journey to New Zealand

FROM SOUTH TO NORTH ISLAND ON THE BEST TRAILS OF THE TE ARAROA



Wilderness Travel



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## TRIP DATES

**2025**

November 12-23, 2025

**2026**

January 7-18, 2026

February 4-15, 2026

The 1,900-mile-long Te Araroa Trail (Maori for “Long Pathway”) traverses New Zealand from the bottom of the South Island to the top of the North Island—it takes hardy “through-hikers” about three months to hike this entire route. For our own Te Araroa adventure, we’ve selected some of the best sections on both the islands, including the lush Queen Charlotte Track, the panoramic “Stairway to Heaven” staircases above the Kapiti Coast, and the memorable Tongariro Alpine Crossing, the best one-day hike in New Zealand. Many delights await along the way, including swimming with dusky dolphins, jetboating on the Whanganui River, sampling superb cuisine and wines, and enjoying New Zealand’s friendly culture.





## Itinerary

### TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

**Length:** 12 days  
**Arrive:** Christchurch, New Zealand  
**Depart:** Taupo, New Zealand  
**Lodging:** 11 nights hotels and lodges  
**Meals:** All meals included except 1 dinner (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)  
**Activity:** Hiking / Trekking, Walking  
**Trip Level:** 1 2 3 ④ 5 6  
 Strenuous hiking, 2-8 hours a day on hiking days, some steep ascents and descents, many sections that cross rough or rocky trails.

### DAY 1 CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Welcome to Christchurch, set between the mountains of the Southern Alps and the Pacific Ocean. The largest city on the South Island, it's considered the most English of New Zealand's cities, with flat-bottomed punts gliding on the Avon River and cycling paths hugging the riverbank. Travel by taxi (on your own) to the group hotel, and we'll gather for a trip orientation and Welcome Dinner tonight. Overnight at the Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square...D

### DAY 2 COASTAL TRAIN / SWIM WITH DUSKY DOLPHINS / KAIKOURA COAST

This morning we board the Coastal Pacific train for a scenic ride to the enchanting Kaikoura Coast, inhabited by the Maori for the last 900 years. The original Maori name for Kaikoura was Te Koha O Marokura ("The Gift of Marokura"), named for Marokura, a god who shaped the area with a magical sword. On arrival, we board a boat and head out into the bay to swim with some of Kaikoura's famous local personalities—the playful wild dusky dolphins. With wetsuit, mask, snorkel, and fins (provided), we enter the world of these amazing marine creatures. Overnight at the Sudima Kaikoura Hotel in Kaikoura...BLD

Train Travel: Approximately 3 hours

Snorkeling Details: Approximately 1 hour plus boat ride out and back

### DAY 3 PICTON / SHIP COVE HIKE / QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK / MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS

Another ride on the Coastal Pacific train brings us to the town of Picton, gateway to the Marlborough Sounds. Here we take a water taxi to Ship Cove, a small bay in the Marlborough Sounds, to start our hike. Captain James Cook anchored the HMS

Endeavour here in January 1770 to replenish supplies during his voyages of discovery into the South Pacific. Cook named the bay Ship Cove and returned to it on four subsequent occasions in 1773, 1774, and 1777, mostly to rest his crews and refurbish and provision his ships. We'll hike through beech forest and across high ridges as we make our way to a lookout point with views of both inner and outer Queen Charlotte Sound. In 2014, Ship Cove was renamed Meretoto/ Ship Cove to recognize its original Maori name. We'll have a pack lunch en route and an overnight at Furneaux Lodge, set in a remote location right in Endeavour Inlet...BLD

Train Travel: 3 hours

Water Taxi: 1 hour

Hiking Details: Approximately 5 hours, 9.5 miles, 2,100 feet ascent/descent

#### **DAY 4 CAMP BAY HIKE / QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK / MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS**

We cross Endeavour Inlet by water taxi to sheltered Camp Bay, where we start our hike on the Queen Charlotte Track. We'll take a beautiful path that circles back to our lodge by way of a shoreline trail through a native forest brimming with birdlife. The coastal views are stunning along Marlborough Sounds, and we'll see the richness of New Zealand's lush native forest. With a strong commitment to the environment, New Zealand has undertaken intensive programs to eliminate non-native species (possums, rats, etc.) from its forests. The

result has been a dramatic increase in the native birdlife of the area, and we should hear wonderful birdsong along the trail. The non-native species also took a toll on the native vegetation, which is now regenerating and benefitting the native bird species. Overnight at Furneaux Lodge...BLD

Water Taxi Details: 20 minutes

Hiking Details: Approximately 4 hours, 7 miles, 600 feet ascent/descent

#### **DAY 5 BOAT TO CAMP BAY / PORTAGE HOTEL**

Traveling by boat from Furneaux Lodge to Camp Bay, we set out for a full day's hike with a pack lunch en route. Our trail climbs up to Kenepuru Saddle and follows an undulating ridge that separates Queen Charlotte Sound from Kenepuru Sound. The views are absolutely magnificent. After our hike, we transfer to the Portage Hotel, perfectly placed near the Queen Charlotte Track. For those who don't want to do this long but beautiful hike, there are options for sea kayaking and paddle boarding at the lodge. Dinner and overnight at the Portage Hotel...BLD

Hiking Details: 9 hours, 16 miles, 3,750 feet ascent/descent

#### **DAY 6 QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK / PICTON**

After breakfast at the lodge, we'll have two hiking options. The first is a full-day hike on the Queen Charlotte Track from our lodge to the coastal village of Anakiwa. We'll enjoy stunning coastal views en route and pass through private



farmlands as well as national conservation land. For a shorter hiking option today, we'll offer a coastal hike from Mistletoe Bay to Anakiwa. Whichever hike you choose, you'll enjoy a picnic lunch on the trail. Dinner and overnight in Picton at the Picton Waterfront Apartments, where guests will share two-bedroom apartments...BLD

Water Taxi Details: Approximately 30 minutes

Hiking Details: Approximately 7 hours, 13.6 miles, 3,750 feet ascent/descent (strenuous option); 3.5 hours, 7.5 miles, 300 feet ascent/descent (moderate option)

#### **DAY 7 WELLINGTON / TE PAPA / ZEALANDIA**

A short flight brings us to Wellington, an engaging city wedged between the turbulent Cook Strait and Wellington Harbor, where brightly colored sails glide across the water. "Welly," as it is locally known, is backed by hills that restrict it to a compact center, with historic and modern buildings spilling down to the waterfront. We walk to the fascinating Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum, with its state-of-the-art technology, collection of Maori artifacts, and rotating exhibits on New Zealand's colorful history. After lunch at a waterfront restaurant, a shuttle brings us to downtown Wellington for a two-hour birdwatching excursion in Zealandia, an ecosanctuary in the heart of the city featuring rare birds including hihi, kākāriki, and takahē. Dinner is on your own this evening. The Trip Leader is happy to make recommendations so you can choose among many options

and go as local or fancy as you like. Overnight at the Sofitel Wellington...BL

Flight Details: 30 minutes

Walking Details: Approximately 2 hours

#### **DAY 8 STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN / TE ARAROA TRAIL**

Today's hike is on the Escarpment Track, better known as the Stairway to Heaven for its nearly 1,200 stairs! The trail winds high above the Kapiti coastline through narrow pathways, across ridgelines, up and down staircases, and traverses two swing bridges. It's a fantastic section of the Te Araroa Trail and we'll have a pack lunch en route and sweeping views of Kapiti Island from high above. In the late afternoon, we drive to the small town of Ohakune at the southern end of Tongariro National Park. Dinner and overnight at the Powderhorn Chateau...BLD

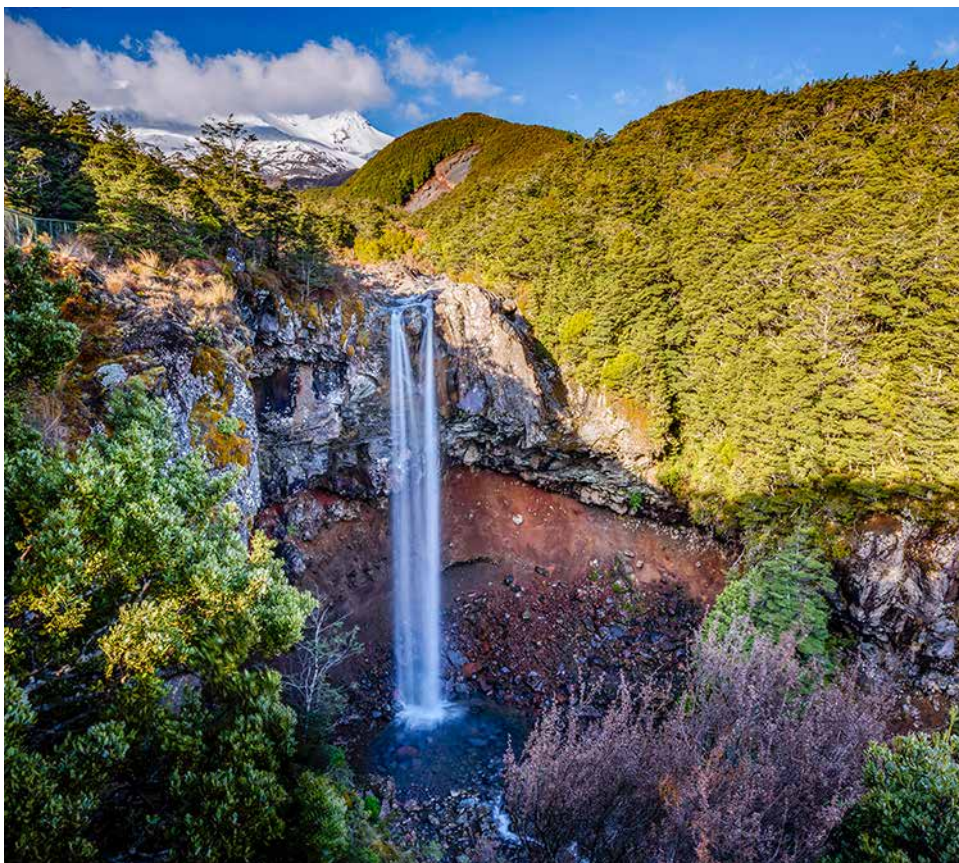
Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours, 8 miles, 1,500 feet ascent/descent

Drive Details: Approximately 3.5 hours

#### **DAY 9 WHANGANUI NATIONAL PARK / BRIDGE TO NOWHERE / CANOE THE WHANGANUI RIVER**

In 1917, New Zealand's government opened the Whanganui Valley for settlement by soldiers returning from the Great War, and about 35 holdings were developed. Bridging the Mangapurua Stream in this valley was a problem, and a





timber bridge was built to give the settlers access. A better bridge, known as “The Bridge to Nowhere,” was opened in 1936. After a major flood in January 1942, maintenance funds declined and the whole Whanganui Valley was officially closed. Today we’ll hear the stories of this abandoned farmland, now regenerating back to its natural podocarp forest as Whanganui National Park, with reminders of the families who once lived here.

We begin with a drive to the tiny riverside settlement of Pipiriki, southern gateway to Wanganui National Park, and take a jetboat upriver about 15 miles through spectacular deep river gorges lush with tree ferns and native vegetation to “The Bridge to Nowhere.” Pristine native bush cloaks the banks and there are deep gorges covered with ferns, caves, rapids, and other unique scenery. From the bridge, we hike up an easy grade for about an hour, following in the footsteps of the early pioneers. After a lunch stop near the bridge, we journey by jet boat back down the Whanganui River and board our canoes for a five-mile paddle back to our starting point.

In addition to being spectacular, the Te Awa o Whanganui (Whanganui River) has a fascinating distinction. As of March 2017, it is the first river that has been granted the same legal rights as a human being. The local Maori tribe of Whanganui

fought for 140 years for the recognition of their sacred river as an ancestor. The river’s new status means if someone abuses or harms it, the law now sees no differentiation between a person and the river because they are one and the same. The river must be treated as a living entity. Overnight at the Powderhorn Chateau...BLD

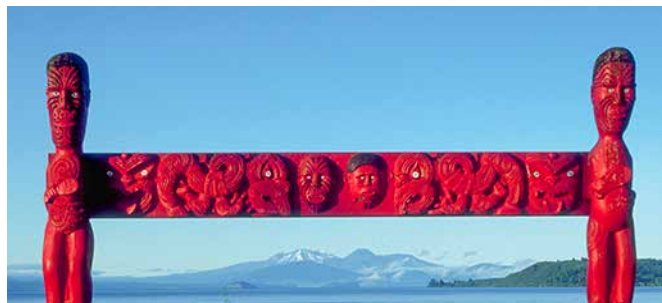
Driving Time: Approximately 2 hours

Hiking Details: Approximately 1 hour, 2 miles, 600 feet ascent/descent

Canoeing Details: Approximately 2 hours

### DAY 10 TONGARIRO ALPINE CROSSING

In Tongariro National Park, New Zealand’s oldest national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, we’ll set out for an amazing hike known as the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. This challenging full-day hike brings us across a volcanic landscape of steaming vents, glacial valleys, vivid crater lakes, and ancient lava flows, and the views are stunning throughout the day. We’ll start with a hike up the Mangatepopo Valley to the saddle between Mt. Tongariro and Mt. Ngauruhoe, continue our hike through the South Crater, then hike up again to the Red Crater, the highest point on the crossing. Our descent brings us down volcanic scree into cool, green forests and past beautiful Emerald Lake and Blue Lake to the roadhead. Be



prepared for a long and challenging day out—but the splendor of this trail makes it worthwhile. For those who don't want to make the crossing, the Trip Leaders will offer easier hikes to Taranaki Falls or Lake Rotopounamu. Overnight at the Reef Resort in Taupo...BLD

Driving Time: Approximately 1 hour

Tongariro Hiking Details: Approximately 7-8 hours, 12 miles, 2,510 feet ascent/3,690 feet descent

### DAY 11 LAKE TAUPO / HUKA FALLS

After yesterday's big hike, we enjoy a relaxed morning at our lakeside resort on the shores of Lake Taupo. We'll take a leisurely walk along the banks of the river to the spectacular

cascade of Huka Falls then head to nearby thermal pools, where we can soak our tired bodies in the warm geothermal waters. We'll also visit the Aratiatia Rapids to see water release from the dam, transforming a peaceful gully into raging rapids. We gather for our Farewell Dinner tonight. Overnight at the Reef Resort in Taupo...BLD

Driving Time: Approximately 15 minutes

Hiking Details: Options 1.5-3.5 hours, 4+ miles, 574 feet ascent/descent

### DAY 12 TAUPO

Depart via the Taupo airport...B

# Pricing

## TRIP COST

**Prices are per person, valid through Spring 2026**

\$8,895 (10-12 members)

\$9,295 (4-9 members)

Single supplement: \$1,695

*Please contact us for future years' pricing*

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

## CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

## TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders and local guides
- Accommodations as noted
- All meals included except 1 dinner as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- A glass of wine or beer at dinner
- Land transportation as noted
- Airport or hotel transfer on the last day of the trip

## TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, any meals not specified after each itinerary day, airport departure taxes, optional activities, optional tipping or gratuities to leaders or staff, additional hotel nights that may be necessitated by airline schedule changes or other factors, pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas, and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic drinks, laundry, etc.).

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$600

90 days prior to departure: Balance

## CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Up to 91 days prior to departure: No charge!

61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost

46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost

45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details:

[www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance)

# Extend Your Adventure

To help you make the most of your adventure, we've created several exciting trip extensions. For detailed information, including full itineraries and complete pricing, please visit our webpage and click on "Extend Your Trip": <https://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/new-zealand-north-south-te-araroa-hiking-tour/>



## AUCKLAND AND THE ISLANDS OF THE HAURAKI GULF EXTENSION

Considered to be some of the best cruising grounds in the world, the islands of the Hauraki gulf lie within close proximity to Auckland, but offer experiences that are a world away from bustling city life. You'll explore this diverse range of islands as well as Auckland's vibrant waterfront on this five-day extension before or after one of our New Zealand adventures. Based from your Auckland waterfront hotel and accompanied by one of our fantastic Trip Leaders, visit the Auckland War Memorial Museum, sample some of the city's fabulous "kai moana," or seafood, at lovely restaurants, and take day trips by ferry to three distinct islands. Spend a day on Tiritiri Matangi, a wildlife sanctuary and successful conservation story with prolific birdlife, climb to the top of Rangitoto, a volcanic island that juts dramatically from the sea, and walk along gorgeous sandy beaches on Waiheke Island, a haven for artists and winemakers.

*5 days. From \$2,995.*

# Lodging



## NOVOTEL CHRISTCHURCH CATHEDRAL SQUARE

*Christchurch, New Zealand*

*Day 1 (1 night)*

Right in the center of Christchurch's Cathedral Square, this modern hotel is an easy walk to all the local shops and restaurants as well as the popular Riverside Market. There is a restaurant, bar/lounge, and fitness center.



## SUDIMA KAIKOURA

*Kaikoura, New Zealand*

*Day 2 (1 night)*

The brand new Sudima Kaikōura is a lovely hotel located within a one-minute walk to the beach and center of town. Guest rooms have comfortable beds, large bathrooms, and lots of natural light thanks to the big windows overlooking the beach or town. The hotel has a nice restaurant and if you have time, take a dip in the outdoor pool or just relax in the hotel lounge next to the fireplace.



## FURNEAUX LODGE

*Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand*

*Days 3 to 4 (2 nights)*

Located at the head of Endeavour Inlet in the Marlborough Sounds, the family owned and operated Furneaux Lodge is a beautiful oasis overlooking lush lawns rolling down to the sea. Cozy one-bedroom guest rooms feature king-sized or two twin beds and a private deck or patio. Lodge amenities include a large hot tub and waterfront hammocks where you can relax and enjoy the views.

# Lodging



## THE PORTAGE HOTEL

*Marlborough Sounds, New Zealand*

*Day 5 (1 night)*

Based near the Queen Charlotte Track at the top of the Marlborough Sounds stands the lovely Portage Hotel. The Tui Terrace guest rooms overlook tranquil Kenepuru Sounds and have spacious decks, nice bathrooms, and either king or two twin beds. The hotel restaurant offers hearty meals seasoned with herbs from their own garden, and there is a pool if you wish to take a dip after a day's hike.



## PICTON WATERFRONT APARTMENTS

*Picton, New Zealand*

*Day 6 (1 night)*

The Picton Waterfront Apartments offer spacious, modern one- to four-bedroom apartments in the heart of the village. They offer stunning views of Picton Harbor from their own private balconies, with Picton's cafes and bars just a two-minute walk away. Each apartment has a fully equipped kitchen and laundry facilities. Please note: guests will share two-bedroom, two-bath apartments.



## SOFITEL WELLINGTON

*Wellington, New Zealand*

*Day 7 (1 night)*

Set in the downtown area, Sofitel Wellington offers a wonderful stay with nice rooms, spacious bathrooms, and amenities like complimentary WiFi and in-room coffee and tea. If you have time and want to explore, the hotel is a short walk to the waterfront and its many delights.

# Lodging



## POWDERHORN CHATEAU

*Ohakune, New Zealand*

*Days 8 to 9 (2 nights)*

The name may spark images of wintertime activities, but Powderhorn Chateau is equally wonderful in the summer. Set in the Ruapehu region, the hotel pays homage to its ski-lodge legacy, with cabin-like wood accents, a wonderful restaurant named after Switzerland's famous peak (The Matterhorn), and has amazing access to outdoor activities. Guest rooms are nice and clean, and there is plenty of space to relax in the lounge or at the Matterhorn grill (perhaps near their fire with a drink in hand).



## THE REEF RESORT

*Taupo, New Zealand*

*Days 10 to 11 (2 nights)*

Set on the lakefront of Lake Taupo, The Reef Resort is a welcome place to stay while hiking the Te Araroa trail through Tongariro National Park. Guest rooms are clean and modern, and most come with breathtaking views of the lake or surrounding mountains. Amenities include a heated outdoor pool and hot tub filled with naturally heated geothermal water. The staff is super friendly and helpful and will make you feel most welcome.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Hiker's Journey to New Zealand* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

# Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

If you have booked extra services before or after the trip, an Extra Services Confirmation will be sent with your Final Documents.

## ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Christchurch, New Zealand

**Suggested Airport:** Christchurch Airport (CHC)

**Suggested Date & Time:** Day 1, anytime before 2:30 pm

**Meeting Place:** You will meet your Trip Leader in the lobby of the Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square Hotel for an orientation meeting and welcome dinner at 5:30 pm on Day 1.

Trip members are responsible for transferring from Christchurch Airport to the Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square Hotel. Taxi/Uber fare is approximately \$30-\$40 NZD. Service by shared shuttle is also available from the airport outside the terminal building (easy to recognize mini-vans usually painted with bright colors). The fare for a shuttle is approximately \$25 NZD for a single (\$30 NZD for 2 guests) and can be booked ahead of time at [www.supershuttle.co.nz](http://www.supershuttle.co.nz).

## DEPARTURE

Taupo, New Zealand

**Suggested Airport:** Taupo Airport (TUO)

**Suggested Date & Time:** Day 12. Flights from Taupo depart in the morning and late afternoon to Auckland for connection with international flights to the West Coast of the US.

The group will be transferred to Taupo airport early in the morning on the last day of the trip, in time to check in for domestic flights departing at 8:00 am or later.

## INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from New Zealand. There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 970-818-8459 in the US or Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found at [www.exitotravel.com](http://www.exitotravel.com).

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one or possibly two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

**Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip.** Once tickets are purchased, please forward a copy of your email flight confirmation from the airline. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

# Trip Leaders

Our New Zealand Trip Leaders are the best and most experienced guides in the country, with a gift for bringing history and culture to life. Their long-term friendships with locals and deep knowledge and insights give you the privilege of an authentic insider's perspective as they introduce you to the welcoming people and natural beauty of this wonderful part of the world.



## WILLIAM FULLER

William is a New Zealander through and through. He has lived in the Bay of Islands or Bay of Plenty regions his entire life, and loves exploring all this country has to offer. He earned a degree in Mathematics from Auckland University, and was a primary school teacher for 35 years (including being a principal). He has walked the North Island section of the Te Araroa trail in 2015, and is also a keen kayaker of both oceans and lakes. William's interest in Te Reo Māori (Māori language) allows him to translate many of the place names in New Zealand, and assists greatly in identifying local birds and plants.



## JON IMHOOF

Jon Imhoof has a degree in Anthropology from the University of Hawaii, where he first began leading hiking and sailing trips in the 1980s. He moved to Queenstown, New Zealand, in 1989, and has since been an innovator in adventure tourism, starting the first river-surfing company in the world in Queenstown, and then also on the Zambezi River in Southern Africa. Jon began leading our hiking trips in New Zealand, and guides our snorkeling and swimming with whales journeys in Tonga, as well as our exploration of the islands of Vanuatu. He loves to show off his adopted homeland of New Zealand. Jon lives in Gibbston, a world renowned pinot noir growing area outside of Queenstown, with his wife Ali and enjoys surfing, kayaking, kitesurfing, scuba diving, mountain biking, and just about anything else outdoors.



## ZAC IMHOOF

Born and raised in Tahuna (Queenstown), New Zealand's adventure capital, Zac thrives in the outdoors and is the perfect travel companion on our New Zealand adventures. As the son of beloved WT Trip Leader Jon Imhoof, Zac takes to any adventure like a fish to water and has spent most of his life snowboarding, surfing, climbing, and biking. Zac is right at home in the New Zealand bush and will enlighten you with his knowledge of food foraging, medicinal plants, and traditional uses of plants for weaving baskets, braiding rope, or carving. He has also been fortunate enough to sail around Australia and the South Pacific, becoming well-versed in the ways of the Pacific Ocean and the many cultures that thrive there. Outside of leading trips, Zac started two community-based projects in Ōtautahi (Christchurch), where he helps people be more sustainable through repairing worn goods and upcycling plastic items.

# Trip Leaders



## PETER BERSANI

We always love a good expat story and Peter Bersani is no exception. Originally from Boston, Massachusetts, Peter has made his adopted home in the adventurous country of New Zealand for more than 25 years. An avid skier, hiker, and mountain biker, he loves exploring the many trails throughout Queenstown and the South Island, and his background as a chef and winemaker also makes him quite the connoisseur for local flavors. He enjoys a good quality craft beer and is eager to share his favorite places to eat and drink in the area. When not leading trips, you can often find Peter behind the wheel of his classic Alfa Romeo cruising the back roads of Central Otago.



## MATT SIRKIS

Born with a passion for wild places, Matty grew up exploring the high desert of Southern California, balancing mountain wanderings with surfing adventures on the coast. Now he splits his time between the dramatic landscapes of New Zealand and the wild expanse of Alaska. Armed with a degree in Outdoor Education, he has led environmental sailing expeditions in the Salish Sea, guided wilderness therapy trips in the Olympic Mountains, and shares the wonders of whales and hiking in Southeast Alaska. When not on the trail or water, Matty develops environmental stewardship programs and helps companies embrace sustainable practices. A passionate forager and hunter, he even brews his own spruce tip beer each spring!



## MALIA STAUFFER

Originally from Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i, Malia's love for the natural world runs as deep as the ocean she grew up next to. Chasing endless summers, she splits her time between the scenic wonders of Aotearoa (the Maori name for New Zealand) and Southeast Alaska. Malia holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Strategic and Environmental Communications and Sustainability. Alongside her guiding career, she has worked in digital communications for mission-driven companies, startups, and climate-tech nonprofits, aiming to amplify positive impact across diverse sectors. Her commitment to Kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the environment) is at the heart of her guiding style—she believes connecting with nature is essential for the well-being of both people and the planet. A trip with Malia is a chance to live a little more in tune with the wild.

# What to Expect

## WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated Level 4, Moderate to Strenuous according to our trip grading system, and is for people who enjoy a real hiking challenge.

## TERRAIN

The Te Araroa Trail from the tip of the North Island to the very bottom of the South Island connects some of the country's iconic hiking trails, such as the Tongariro Crossing, but often follows paths that range from flat and paved roads to barely discernible routes through nearly impenetrable bush and steep climbs of extended duration. We have selected hikes that are within the description of a "Level 4" Wilderness Travel trip, but we also sample the incredible diversity of the Te Araroa Trail. Although you carry only a daypack, there are some steep ascents and descents and many sections that cross rough or rocky trails. Many trails are not "groomed" but follow the natural contours of the land and are therefore uneven. We will no doubt experience every conceivable type of weather on this trip, so it's best to be prepared.

## GETTING IN SHAPE

We strongly urge you to train for your trip, as your enjoyment will be highly dependent on your level of fitness. The best training for a hike is to hike, especially over hills or rough terrain. Next best are running, swimming, bicycling, or other cardiovascular exercise. Stair climbing machines are excellent preparation for hiking uphill. Your feet should also be well prepared—make sure your hiking boots are sturdy, comfortable, and thoroughly broken-in.

## WEATHER

Temperatures on the North and South islands in midsummer are generally warm and pleasant with averages in the high 60s and low 70s and minimal rain, but it can get much colder. Since the weather in New Zealand is often variable so we may occasionally have to wait for it to change in order to participate in our planned activities or change our activities to suit the weather. In such a case, we may rearrange the daily itinerary to accommodate the weather conditions. Note: On the Tongariro Crossing (Day 10), you will be hiking in alpine conditions, so be sure to bring the recommended clothing layers.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

We spend our nights in small, picturesque inns, full of Kiwi charm and ambiance. The rooms are not always of uniform or international size. Our leaders do their best to assign rooms in a fair way so that all participants experience an equal advantage throughout the trip as a whole. Single rooms can be requested but are not always available, due to the limited space in the hotels. If you prefer a single room, please make your request as early as possible.

## CUISINE

One of the highlights of this trip is the chance to enjoy the fresh local food New Zealand is famous for. We'll be close to the source of much of the food we eat, experiencing a variety of dining experiences, most of which will also be memorable for the location and the company. Most lunches will be either a picnic or packed lunch on the trail.

HIKING DETAILS BY DAY				DRIVING DETAILS
DAY	HOURS	MILES	ELEV. GAIN/LOSS	HOURS
1				
2	1 hour snorkeling			3 hours by train
3	5 hours	9.5 miles	+/-2,100'	3 hours by train, 1 hour by water taxi
4	4 hours	7 miles	+/-600'	20 minutes by water taxi
5	8 hours	14 miles	+/-3,750'	
6	3.5-7 hours	7.5-13.6 miles	+/-300-3,750'	30 minutes by water taxi
7	2 hours			
8	3 hours	8 miles	+/-1,500'	3.5 hours
9	1 hour 2 hours canoeing	2 miles	+/-600'	2 hours
10	7-8 hours	12 miles	+2,510'/-3,690'	1 hour
11	1.5-3.5 hours	4+ miles	+574'	15 minutes

AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Kaikoura	69/55	68/55	66/53	61/50	58/47	54/43	57/42	53/43	57/45	60/47	63/50	66/53
Taupo	75/52	74/53	70/50	65/44	59/41	54/38	53/36	55/37	59/41	63/44	67/47	71/51
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Kaikoura	2.0	2.4	3.7	3.2	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.2
Taupo	3.7	3.9	2.4	3.7	4.8	4.9	4.3	4.4	3.9	4.2	3.8	3.1

## TRANSPORTATION

Our van will transport the group's luggage, so you only need to carry a daypack for items you need during the day (rain gear, sweater, camera, water bottle, etc.). Trip members are always free to skip a day's hike and travel to the next destination in the support vehicle (or remain at the hotel if we are not transferring that day).

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Pacific Manager or email us at [pacific@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:pacific@wildernesstravel.com).

## REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com), you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

# Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts



T-SHIRT FRONT



T-SHIRT BACK



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST  
+ KLEEN KANTEEN 27OZ WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at [www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan).

Here's how it works:

## YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

## YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel stainless steel water bottle by Klean Kanteen and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$100 value).

## YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$130 value).

## YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

## FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

*Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.*

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.

# Travel Notes



### WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

**Best Travel Specialists in the World:** *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

**World's Best Tour Operators:** *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

**Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips:** *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *USA Today*

**Trip of the Year:** *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

**50 Tours of a Lifetime:** *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

Revised: April 3, 2025 2:24 PM