

New Zealand: Ultimate South Island

HIKE THE BEST OF THE "GREAT WALKS," PLUS MILFORD SOUND AND QUEENSTOWN



Wilderness Travel



New Zealand: Ultimate South Island

TRIP DATES

2024

January 6-20, 2024 Sold out
 January 20-February 3, 2024
 February 3-17, 2024
 February 10-24, 2024
 February 17-March 2, 2024
 March 2-16, 2024
 March 16-30, 2024
 November 10-24, 2024
 November 24-December 8, 2024

2025

January 5-19, 2025
 January 12-26, 2025
 January 19-February 2, 2025
 February 2-16, 2025
 February 9-23, 2025
 February 16-March 2, 2025
 March 2-16, 2025
 March 16-30, 2025

This journey brings you everything you could want to do on the South Island—that’s why we named it “ultimate” South Island! We hike four of the country’s Great Walks: the alpine Routeburn Track, plus the lush pathways of the Rakiura, Kepler, and Abel Tasman tracks, all protected in pristine national parks filled with soaring landscapes. We’ll also savor an overnight cruise in Milford Sound (the jewel of Fiordland National Park), hike and sea kayak in coastal paradise of Abel Tasman National Park, look for kiwis (the feathered kind) on remote Stewart Island, and sip wines in Central Otago. We’ve arranged three internal flights so we can easily get to the South Island’s most diverse settings.





Itinerary

TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length: 15 days
Arrive: Queenstown, New Zealand
Depart: Nelson, New Zealand
Lodging: 14 nights hotels, B and Bs, and lodges
Meals: All meals included except 2 dinners (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity: Hiking / Trekking, Walking
Trip Level: 1 2 3 4 5 6
 Moderate hiking, 3-6 hours a day on hiking days, optional sea kayaking (no previous experience necessary)

DAY 1 QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND

Welcome to Queenstown, a beautiful lakeside town surrounded by dramatic mountains and known as the “adventure capital” of New Zealand. Transfer on your own via taxi to the group hotel, where you will meet your Trip Leaders in the evening for a trip briefing and Welcome Dinner. Overnight at the Heritage Hotel...D

DAY 2 MOUNT CRICHTON LOOP / BOB'S COVE TRACK

We begin our hiking journey with a brisk climb through forest along the Mount Crichton Loop Track, with red beech, mountain beech, and manuka trees along the trail. We'll stop to visit the historic Sam Summers Hut and learn about the role gold mining has played in the settlement of the area, and at the top of the hike, we'll have a magnificent viewpoint overlooking Lake Wakatipu, New Zealand's longest lake (almost 50 miles). At hike's end, we enjoy a picnic lunch by this mountain-ringed lake. Our afternoon hike follows an easy lakeside trail known as the Twelve Mile Delta to Bob's Cove Track, offering lake views along with blooms of red rata flowers and discoveries of ancient marine sediments. The trail also brings shelter from the afternoon sun and rewards us with numerous swimming holes where we can cool off. Overnight at Headwaters Eco Lodge in Glenorchy...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 4-5 hours, 4.7 miles; Mount Crichton Loop Track elevation gain/loss 1,050 feet, Bob's Cove Track elevation gain/loss 400 feet
 Driving Details: Approximately 1 hour

DAY 3 ROUTEBURN TRACK

This morning in Mt. Aspiring National Park, we'll hike the Routeburn Track, once a route for Maori who were collecting greenstone (New Zealand's nephrite jade). Today it is one of New Zealand's "Great Walks." Our hike brings us across swing bridges above the crystal-clear jade waters of the Routeburn River as we follow a well-graded track through beech forest to Routeburn Flats. For hardy hikers wanting more of a challenge, there is an option to hike further up to the impressive cascades of Routeburn Falls. We return to our hotel in Glenorchy for overnight...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3-5 hours, 9.2 miles, elevation gain/loss 850 feet; optional hike to Routeburn Falls, 3 additional miles, total elevation gain 2,562 feet
Driving Details: Approximately 1.5 hours

DAY 4 FLY TO STEWART ISLAND / ULVA ISLAND WALK

As we drive along Lake Wakatipu and into the Southland plains this morning, we'll see some of the country's most productive farmlands. We'll board a small plane for a short flight to nearby Stewart Island. Te Punga o Te Waka a Maui, the original Maori name for Stewart Island, means "the anchor stone of Maui's canoe." The name refers to a Maori myth in which the demi-god Maui and his crew, in their canoe (the South Island), caught and raised up a great fish (the North Island). Today, Rakiura is the more commonly used

Maori name for this island, and it translates as "glowing skies" for the sunsets for which the island is famous.

In the afternoon, we take a water taxi to Ulva Island, predator-free and a bird enthusiast's paradise as it's one of the few offshore islands with a largely undisturbed podocarp forest. Dinner tonight is at the South Seas Hotel, where we'll rub shoulders with local fisherman and other characters that call the island home. Overnight at Stewart Island Lodge or one of the many beautiful holiday homes that dot the bay, all quiet sanctuaries nestled in native bush with expansive views of Halfmoon Bay out to the ocean...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours, 3 miles (slowed pace for birdwatching), elevation gain/loss 390 feet
Driving Details: Approximately 2.5 hours
Flight Time: 30 minutes

DAY 5 PORT WILLIAM/ RAKIURA NATIONAL PARK / RAKIURA TRACK

After a relaxed morning to enjoy the sleepy village of Halfmoon Bay, a water taxi brings us to Port William, an early Maori settlement site. From the 1800s on, it provided a harbor for whalers and sealers. In the 1870s, a group of Shetland Island immigrants attempted to establish farms and a fishery here. This scheme failed—all that remains are the eucalyptus (gum) trees they planted along the beachfront. Here we'll enjoy a hike on our second "Great Walk," the Rakiura Track,



passing through Maori Beach, where relics of early saw mills can still be seen. Our hike ends at Lee Bay, gateway to Rakiura National Park. This evening we have the option (at extra cost) to visit a private conservation area to search for the nocturnal and flightless Stewart Island kiwi. We return to Stewart Island Lodge or holiday homes for overnight...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 4 hours, 5.2 miles, elevation gain/loss 950 feet

DAY 6 THE SOUTH COAST / FIORDLAND AND THE KEPLER TRACK

We fly back over the Foveaux Strait to Invercargill this morning—views from the air are spectacular as we pass over the Titi islands where Maori still gather “mutton birds.” We’ll drive from Invercargill through Fiordland National Park to reach Te Anau, a picturesque town nestled on the edge of Lake Te Anau. Here we will hike our third “Great Walk,” the Kepler Track. We can choose between relatively gentle and serene hiking through red beech forest along the edge of the Waiau River and along Lake Te Anau, or make an optional (extra cost) alpine heli-hike.

For those who choose the heli-hike option, we board a helicopter for a quick flight across the lake to the Luxmore Hut, set right along the Kepler Track. Surrounded by the beauty of the Kepler Mountains, we follow one of the track's most scenic sections. We’ll head right to the summit of Mount

Luxmore (4,829'), and since we're up in the alpine zone above treeline, the views are fantastic. Our trail then leads downward through beech forest to the lake, where we meet a jetboat to take us to the township of Te Anau. Overnight at the Distinction Hotel overlooking Lake Te Anau and the Fiordland ranges, with dinner on your own...BL

Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours, 6 miles
Heli-Hiking Option: Approximately 4 hours, 5 miles, elevation gain/loss 2,800 feet
Driving Details: Approximately 2.5 hours
Flight Time: 20 minutes

DAY 7 FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK / MILFORD SOUND OVERNIGHT CRUISE

This morning we'll visit a wildlife park to see the flightless takahe, a rare species now restricted to the tussock grasslands of the Murchison Mountains of Fiordland. Until the 1940s, these unique birds, a species of rail, were thought to be extinct but were rediscovered in the Murchison Mountains. Then we drive to Milford Sound through upended land that was carved, tumbled, and jumbled by grinding glaciers during the last Ice Age. Along the way, we stop for a hike on the Routeburn Track to Key Summit in Fiordland National Park, the largest national park in New Zealand.

Arriving in Milford Sound in the late afternoon, we meet our “water-based bed-and-breakfast” at the dock, a comfortable





three-sailed cruising vessel with a design inspired by the traditional trading scow. After settling into our private cabins, we set out for an overnight cruise through this spectacular body of water. Set among the towering peaks of Fiordland National Park, Milford Sound is a deep watery chasm that flows to the Tasman Sea. It is one of the world's most spectacular meetings of mountain and sea, where 4,000-foot-high walls rise directly from the water's edge and waterfalls cascade down the cliff faces. We cruise past waterfalls and out to the edge of the Tasman Sea, and anchor for the night in sheltered Harrison Cove beneath towering Mount Pembroke. Before sunset, we can explore the fjord by kayak or tender craft, or simply relax on deck to enjoy the vistas, keeping our eyes out for dolphins who frequent these waters. To spend the night enveloped by the majesty of this environment is simply the best way to experience Milford Sound! Overnight in private cabins with en suite bathrooms...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours, 5 miles, elevation gain/loss 1,400 feet

Driving Details: 1.5 hours

DAY 8 FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK / GIBBSTON VINEYARDS

Awaking to the silence and serenity of Milford Sound, we have breakfast on board as we cruise through the fiord and enjoy the spectacular scenery in the early morning light.

After the ship returns to shore, we'll enjoy a number of short walks as we make our way along the Milford Highway. In the afternoon, we arrive at our vineyard cottages in Gibbston, set in the heart of Central Otago wine country. Overnight at the Kinross Cottages...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 2 hours

Driving Details: Approximately 3.5 hours

DAY 9 GIBBSTON WINE REGION / HISTORIC ARROWTOWN

This morning we hike along the shores of Lake Wakatipu, where a massive glacier once carved its way through the mountains. We'll spend the rest of the day exploring the wine region, sampling the pinot noir wines for which Central Otago is famous, and strolling the quaint streets of the historic gold mining town of Arrowtown. This evening, we gather for an al fresco dinner amid the vineyards at the Kinross Cottages...BLD

DAY 10 WANAKA / DIAMOND LAKE / ROCKY MOUNTAIN

A morning drive brings us to the pretty township of Wanaka and through the majestic Matukituki Valley, with stunning views of Mount Aspiring National Park. Declared a World Heritage Site, this immense alpine reserve is dominated by a pyramid-shaped peak of snow and ice that the Maori call



Tititeaor (“Upright Glistening Mountain”). At 9,961 feet, Mt. Aspiring towers above a sea of mighty peaks and more than 50 named glaciers. Hiking beside picturesque Diamond Lake, we’ll ascend Rocky Mountain. Around every corner on this trail, we are rewarded with increasingly spectacular views out over Lake Wanaka and into the heart of the Southern Alps until we finally reach the summit, where we’re greeted by a 360-degree panorama of mountains, glaciers, and green valleys. Overnight at the Edgewater Resort Hotel, right on the shores of sapphire-blue Lake Wanaka, with dinner on your own...BL

Hiking Details: Approximately 2.5 hours, 4.5 miles, elevation gain/loss 1,600 feet

Driving Details: Approximately 1.5 hours

DAY 11 MT. ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK / ROB ROY GLACIER TRACK OR MILLENNIUM TRACK

Today we have a choice between two of our favorite hikes: The Rob Roy Glacier or The Millennium Track. The Rob Roy Track is arguably one of the most challenging of our trip, with an elevation gain and loss of about 1,550 feet. It climbs a narrow gorge and follows a crystal-clear stream through a fern-filled beech forest. Emerging from the shade of the bush at the top of the trail, we enter an amphitheater of wonder, surrounded by a dramatic world of snowfields, hanging glaciers, sheer rock cliffs, and waterfalls, with a breathtaking view of the Rob Roy Glacier at the upper lookout. The

Millennium Track departs right from our lakeside hotel and meanders along the shores of beautiful Lake Wanaka. During the last Ice Age, a glacier filled the lake and carved its way through the surrounding mountains like a sculptor, leaving the masterpiece before us. Overnight at the Edgewater Resort... BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours, 4-6 miles, elevation gain/loss 1,550 feet

Driving Details: Approximately 1.5 hours

DAY 12 FLY TO NELSON / ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK HIKE

A flight brings us to the “city” of Nelson, known to have the best weather in New Zealand. From here we’ll drive along the coast to Marahau, where we set out for a scenic jaunt by water taxi to Abel Tasman National Park, a world of aquamarine waters, native forests, and magnificent coastal trails. Wading to shore from the boat, we’ll hike a coastal trail through mystical fern forests, past lagoons, and up into headlands, with fantastic coastal views all along the way. Our remote lodge, the Awaroa, is set in a 47-acre private reserve inside Abel Tasman National Park itself. Overnight at Awaroa Lodge...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 1 hour, 2 miles

Driving Details: Approximately 1 hour

Flight Details: Approximately 2.5-3 hours



Water Taxi: 1.5 hours

DAY 13 ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK / SEA KAYAKING

The mild climate, stunning beaches, impressive headlands, and ocean bays of Abel Tasman are a showcase for the stunning beauty of New Zealand. This park is also a renowned sea kayaking paradise, so we'll head out for a sea kayaking excursion this morning, with a picnic lunch, then hike the coastal trail back to the lodge or return by water taxi. Overnight at Awaroa Lodge...BLD

Sea Kayaking Details: Approximately 4 hours, no previous experience necessary

Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours, 6 miles, elevation gain/loss 900 feet

DAY 14 ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK / HIKE TO TOTARANUI BEACH

Our hike to the long, golden beach at Totaranui brings us along the picturesque Abel Tasman Coastal Track through a lush panorama of giant tree ferns and past aquamarine lagoons. We'll gather for our Farewell Dinner tonight. Overnight at Awaroa Lodge...BLD

Hiking Details: Approximately 3 hours, 5 miles, elevation gain/loss 1,400 feet

DAY 15 WATER TAXI TO MARAHAU / NELSON AIRPORT / DEPART

A transfer by water taxi brings us back to Marahau for a drive to the Nelson Airport. Depart on homeward-bound flights...B

Trip Details

DATE AND PRICING INFORMATION

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, valid through Spring 2024

\$10195 (10-12 members)

\$10695 (4-9 members)

Single supplement: \$2395

Internal airfare: \$265 (subject to change)

Call for 2025 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 2 dinners as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- A glass of wine or beer at dinner
- Land and boat 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 (kiwi spotting excursion and heli-hike on the Kepler Track), 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

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": www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/new-zealand/north-south-island-hike-araroa/extensions



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 \$3295.

Accommodations



HERITAGE HOTEL QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown, New Zealand

Day 1 (1 night)

The Heritage Hotel Queenstown is set in a quiet location on a hillside just above the town and offers panoramas of Lake Wakapitu and the majestic Remarkables Mountain Range. It's far enough away from the hustle and bustle of town but just a 20-minute walk into the town center. The guest service is friendly and efficient, and the main building holds a bar, restaurant, pool, spa, and sauna.



HEADWATERS ECO LODGE

Glenorchy, New Zealand

Days 2 to 3 (2 nights)

Surrounded by snow-capped mountains and lush landscaping, this net-zero eco retreat brings New Zealand's birdsong right into your room. Creatively appointed chalets feature fine linens, original artwork, and rustic décor. Each chalet includes an en-suite bathroom with a walk-in rain shower as well as an outdoor deck where you can relax under the stars after a day of hiking.



STEWART ISLAND LODGE

Oban, New Zealand

Days 4 to 5 (2 nights)

This secluded bed-and-breakfast is set on a hillside overlooking Halfmoon Bay. Six comfy rooms look out onto an expansive shared balcony and the communal guest lounge is a great place to gather and admire the postcard-perfect views of the bay. If you're an early riser, take a stroll around the gardens, home to native birds including the kaka. With a warm and friendly staff, the hospitality here is second to none.

Accommodations (cont'd)



TE ANAU DISTINCTION HOTEL

Te Anau, New Zealand

Day 6 (1 night)

With a lakefront location and extensive landscaped grounds, the Te Anau Distinction Hotel cascades along beautiful expanses of Te Anau's waterfront on the southern edge of the largest lake on the South Island. Indulge in picturesque scenery straight out of Middle Earth, unwind in the spa or heated swimming pool, or relax in the cozy rooms, each with outdoor access.



MILFORD MARINER

Milford Sound, New Zealand

Day 7 (1 night)

For our overnight cruise in spectacular Milford Sound, we have comfortable private cabins with en suite bathrooms on the 60-passenger Milford Mariner, a traditional-style motor vessel with staysail schooner-rigged sails. By choosing an overnight cruise rather than a day cruise, we get to explore the full length of this world-famous mountain fjord, experiencing its many moods as the light changes from day to night. Along the way, we keep an eye out for wildlife including penguins, dolphins, and seals, with options for exploring by small boat or by sit-on-top kayak with the onboard naturalists. The chef serves up delicious meals in the dining salon.



KINROSS COTTAGES & VINEYARD

Gibbston, New Zealand

Days 8 to 9 (2 nights)

These chalet-style duplex cottages are set on a 50-acre vineyard in the Gibbston Valley just a 20-minute drive from Queenstown. Here you'll soak up the pioneering history of the Kinross station and family, plus enjoy the romance of a working vineyard that grows Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Gewürztraminer grape varieties. Kinross offers comfortable studio and family cottages for up to 28 guests, each with bath or shower option, full kitchen, and super king or split twin beds.



EDGEWATER HOTEL

Wanaka, New Zealand

Days 10 to 11 (2 nights)

The Edgewater has a wonderful and peaceful lakefront location just outside the town of Wanaka (it's about a 20-minute walk to the town center). Guest rooms are spacious and comfortable, and sport spectacular lake views right from the balcony or patio. Hotel facilities include a day spa and sauna.



AWAROA LODGE

Kaiteriteri, Abel Tasman Nat'l Park, New Zealand

Days 12 to 14 (3 nights)

This lodge's spectacular location can't be beat—right on the pristine shores of Abel Tasman National Park and accessible only by water taxi, helicopter, or a day's hike on the park trails. Surrounded by aquamarine waterways and native forest, the Awaroa has well-appointed rooms and a cozy main lounge with a log fireplace. The restaurant has its own organic garden and serves farm-to-table Kiwi specialties, from Marlborough mussels to local lamb, paired with the finest New Zealand wines. Our hikes start right from the front door!

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 *New Zealand: Ultimate South Island* 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

Queenstown, New Zealand

Suggested Airport: Queenstown International Airport (ZQN)

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

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

Trip members are responsible for transferring from Queenstown International Airport to the Heritage Hotel. Taxi/Uber fare is approximately \$50-\$60 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 \$30 NZD for a single (\$40 NZD for 2 guests) and can be booked ahead of time at www.supershuttle.co.nz.

DEPARTURE

Nelson, New Zealand

Suggested Airport: Nelson Airport (NSN)

Suggested Date & Time: Day 15, after 12:00 pm

A complimentary transfer to the Nelson airport will be provided to all trip members on the last day of the trip. All trip members' flights must be scheduled to depart after 12:00 pm.

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 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in 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.

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.

Our Guides

MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

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.



CHRIS COCHRANE

Chris Cochrane hails from Sydney, Australia, where he spent four years training as a chef. After graduation, he traveled to New Zealand to further his career. Upon arrival in Queenstown, he realized his chosen path was not the one he really wanted and set out to retrain himself for a life in the “Great Outdoors.” His first task was to learn how to ski, followed by several years working as a ski patroller before moving on to heli-skiing. Chris has been a heli-skiing guide based in Queenstown for over 20 years, taking his clients to some of the remotest parts of New Zealand. His thirst for adventure is great, from Himalayan journeys to yacht racing, and he has tried most adventure sports (not always twice!). He has worked as a guide on the Routeburn Track for the last six years and looks forward to showing trip members his special blend of exotic South Island secrets.



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.



TONY MCCUTCHEON

Tony McCutcheon is a home-grown Kiwi, born and raised in Dunedin, New Zealand. He worked as a professional ski guide, and after 10 winters in the French and Swiss Alps, he is able to speak German (fluently, and with a Kiwi accent). “I’m so lucky to have been able to work in some of the world’s most beautiful mountain locations.” With all his years of travel, he loves nothing more than being back home in the South Island of New Zealand. “The amazing thing about New Zealand is its diversity and the spectacular light shows that Mother Nature provides for us all to enjoy.” He now lives in the heart of New Zealand’s adventure playground, Wanaka, with his wife and two children.



GORDAN RAYNOR

Gordon, a native Kiwi, is an active kayaker, and the sport has taken him and his family to many different parts of the world (he met his wife, Mary, on a kayaking and rafting rally in Russia in 1989). The two of them have coached whitewater and slalom kayaking to local kids for 20 years, many of whom have represented New Zealand internationally. He has advocated for the protection of Central Otago’s whitewater rivers for many years, and retired from full time practice as a lawyer at the end of 2019, which now allows him to pursue other interests that include ecological projects and travel to wild places. An experienced hiker, Gordon has an abiding love of New Zealand’s natural history.



MARY RAYNOR

Mary was born and raised in California. As a whitewater river guide, she was part of the USA’s women’s team to compete in an international peace exchange in Russia in 1989 where she met her husband, Gordon, from New Zealand. Mary is an early childhood teacher and continues to love all sorts of adventure sports, especially kayaking and mountain bike riding. Both she and her husband, Gordon, have a deep love of New Zealand’s natural history and are experienced hikers. She recently took the opportunity to travel the length of New Zealand to visit all sorts of special places, and continues to indulge in a few of her favorite domestic activities including knitting, crocheting, and cooking delicious meals.



IAN WILKINS

Ian Wilkins was raised in the Hutt Valley near Wellington, New Zealand, and spent his early years hiking through the Tararua mountains. As a veteran heli-ski guide, he knows the Southern Alps from many different angles and also spent several seasons guiding in Canada. After 10 years working in avalanche forecasting and control work on the Milford Track, Ian now spends his summers introducing travelers to the wonders of New Zealand’s natural world.

What the Trip is Like

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated a Level 3+ (Moderate) according to our trip grading system, with softer options available for anyone who prefers a gentler hike. You will need to be comfortable hiking 8 miles in a day, being on your feet for up to 5 hours a day. Trail conditions, weather, and the group's level of fitness can affect hiking times and pacing.

TERRAIN

Although you carry only a daypack, there are some steep ascents and descents and some sections that cross rough or rocky trails. On one or two occasions, our hiking routes cross an estuary or small stream, and you will get your shoes wet (bring some Tevas or shoes appropriate for walking through water).

GETTING IN SHAPE

For your own enjoyment, we recommend that you make a special effort to be in good physical condition for the trip. 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

The weather in New Zealand is notorious for changing throughout the day. Average temperatures in New Zealand's spring (September to November) typically range from the low to mid-60s. Crisp, sunny days can briskly change to cool temperatures and spring showers. Summer temperatures (December to February) are generally warm and pleasant with averages in the high 60s and low 70s and minimal rain, though it can get much colder in certain places and in the evenings. In autumn (March to May), long sunny days linger with temperatures still averaging in the mid-60s to low 70s, and you'll hardly notice that summer has officially ended. Although it is rare, we have even experienced snowfall in the mountains in mid-summer. The pressure systems travel west to east, so the Southern Alps have a noticeable "wet" and "dry" side. The west side gets the greatest amount of rain. Cold and snow are permanent fixtures on the highest peaks. On the east side, temperatures are a bit warmer. Since the weather in New Zealand is often variable, we may occasionally have to wait for it to change in order to participate in our planned activities or possibly change our activities altogether.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We stay a range of delightful accommodations along the way, including a lakeside alpine hotel, a charming bed-and-breakfast, vineyard cottages, an overnight aboard a boat, and a luxurious lodge accessible only by water taxi.

HIKING DETAILS BY DAY				DRIVING DETAILS
DAY	HOURS	MILES	ELEV. GAIN/LOSS	HOURS
1				
2	4-5 hours	4.7 miles	+1,050' & +/-400'	1 hour
3	3-5 hours	9.2 miles	+/-850' (total 2,562')	1.5 hours
4	3 hours	3 miles	+/-390'	2.5 hours, 30-minute flight
5	4 hours	5.2 miles	+/-950'	
6	3 hours	6 miles		2.5 hours, 20-minute flight
7	3 hours	5 miles	+/-1,400'	1.5 hours
8	2 hours			3.5 hours
9				
10	2.5 hours	4.5 miles	+/-1,600'	1.5 hours
11	3 hours	4-6 miles	+/-1,550'	1.5 hours
12	1 hour	2 miles		1 hour; 2.5-3 hour flight; 1.5 hours by water taxi
13	3 hours	6 miles	+/-900'	
14	3 hours	5 miles	+/-1,400'	

AVERAGE DAILY MAX/MIN °F												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Queenstown	71/49	70/48	66/46	59/40	52/35	46/30	46/30	50/32	55/36	59/40	64/43	68/47
Nelson	74/54	73/54	70/51	66/48	60/42	56/39	54/37	56/38	63/42	64/43	68/48	71/52
RAINFALL - INCHES												
Queenstown	3.2	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.6	3.0	2.5	2.4
Nelson	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.0	3.0

CUISINE

Most of the meals we eat on our journey will be very local and wonderfully fresh. With a thriving agricultural economy and thousands of miles of coastline, New Zealand offers a bountiful variety of ingredients, from abundant seafood to a famous lamb held in high esteem around the world. Local farm-grown produce is on most menus. Of course, New Zealand's wine is known around the world, from full-bodied pinot noirs to fruity sauvignon blancs, and artful craft beers are widely available.

TRANSPORTATION

Our vehicle touring is over good roads in a comfortable van or minibus. The trip includes three short internal flights, and is designed to make the most of our time exploring the diverse landscapes the South Island has to offer.

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.

ABOUT OUR NEW TRIPS

This is a new adventure for 2023-2024 and one that we are particularly excited about offering. However, as with all new departures, flexibility and a spirit of adventure are always appreciated! Activities are described in the itinerary but they can vary, sometimes considerably, depending on weather conditions, the group, and other factors.

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.

TOUCAN CLUB

We're proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business! The Wilderness Travel Toucan Club was established to reward our travelers for their loyalty. For details, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At 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

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.

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.



MEN'S T-SHIRT



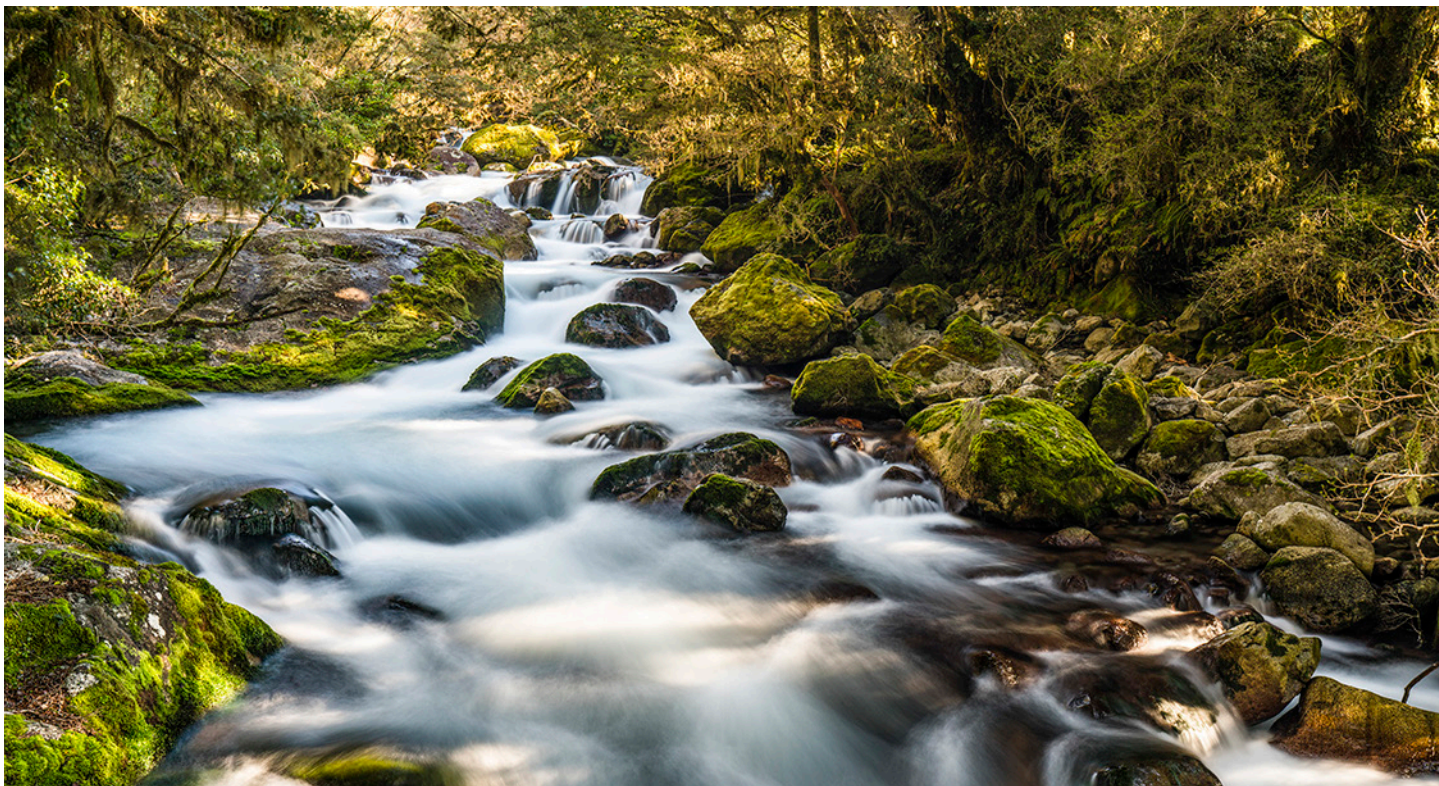
WOMEN'S T-SHIRT



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST
PLUS KLEAN KANTEEN 270Z WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 2021, 10-time winner
 Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveller*, 2021 & 2020
 Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row
 Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*, 2020
 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.

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1102 Ninth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710

800-368-2794 • 510-558-2488

www.wildernesstravel.com • info@wildernesstravel.com