

Great Walks of New Zealand ★ 4.70 29 Reviews

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5 Days

14 People Max



In just five days, explore the Kepler, Routeburn and Milford Tracks on our Great Walks of New Zealand hiking tour.

Bask in your creature comforts and experience best-in-the-world hikes on our 5-day Great Walks of New Zealand hiking tour exploring the highlights and hidden gems of Fiordland. There's no doubt you'll be amazed by the vast landscapes you'll experience in a short amount of time while still enjoying comfortable accommodations and incredible food each evening. Starting and finishing in Queenstown, you'll hike three of New Zealand's Great Walks (Kepler Track, Routeburn Track, and Milford Track), and stay the night on the Fiordland Navigator in Doubtful Sound, enjoying top-notch service every step of the way. If you're short on time but keen to see the best of the South Island, our Great Walks of New Zealand hiking tour is for you.

Trip Highlights

Hiking - Ben Lomond over Queenstown

Hiking - Fiordland Great Walks

Plus ... - Cruise Milford Sound

Plus ... - Doubtful Sound Overnight cruise

Our Active Adventures Assurance

We value loyalty, and appreciate that it goes both ways. So when you book with us we'll make a few assurances to you so you can book with complete confidence, no matter what's happening in your life (or the world).





COVID-Ready Certified: Safe Travel for our Guests Travelling Overseas
Active Adventures has received the World Travel and Tourism Council's Safe Travels stamp, which guarantees you that we'll follow all ATTA and WTTC health and safety guidelines on all our trips. See how our small group, off-the-beaten-track adventures are perfect to start exploring again.

Great Walks of New Zealand ~ Itinerary

DAY 1

Overnight cruise in Doubtful Sound

For the first day of your trip, we'll meet you in Queenstown and head to Lake Manapouri where our journey into Doubtful Sound begins. We'll board a boat for the cruise across Lake Manapouri, before a drive over Wilmot Pass to Deep Cove where we'll board the Fiordland Navigator for our overnight cruise. Doubtful Sound is a large and remote wilderness area, where you'll have the opportunity to take a kayak out on the water or hop aboard the tender craft for a guided exploration of the fiord, and in the right season, you may catch a glimpse of the rare Fiordland crested penguin. Tonight, you'll sleep in a quad share room aboard the Fiordland Navigator, though there is the option to upgrade to a private ensuite room, if you prefer.

Fiordland Navigator, Doubtful Sound (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

DAY 2

Cruise in Doubtful Sound, hike Kepler Track

You'll wake in the middle of Doubtful Sound and after breakfast we'll retrace our journey back to Manapouri. From there we'll tick off the Kepler Track. Interestingly, the Kepler Track differs from the Routeburn and Milford Tracks in that it didn't actually evolve from a necessary Maori greenstone trail, but was custom-built for hiking. The section we'll hike today passes over the control gates at the outlet of Lake Te Anau and meanders through ancient beech and podocarp forest.

Distinction Hotel & Villas, Te Anau (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Hiking: 9.5 kilometers (6 miles), 2-3 hours, elevation +/- 50 meters (165 feet)

DAY 3

Hike Milford Track, cruise Milford Sound

It's worth getting up early to take a photo of Mitre Peak, quite possibly the most photographed mountain in New Zealand, but your challenge is to find a unique angle! We'll take a short boat ride across Milford Sound to hike from Sandfly Point to the Giant Gates waterfall, a spectacular section of the famed Milford Track. The forest here is lush and rich with mosses and ferns as we follow the Arthur River past Lake Ada. By hiking from the Milford Sound trailhead, we'll enjoy the track to ourselves, which is a luxury others seldom get. Once we return to the Milford wharf, we'll board a boat for a two-hour nature cruise to the head of this spectacular fiord. We'll then leave Milford Sound behind to hike some lesser-known tracks in eastern Fiordland before returning to Te Anau.

Distinction Hotel & Villas, Te Anau (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Hiking: 10 kilometers (6 miles), 3-4 hours, elevation +/- 300 meters (985 feet)

DAY 4

Hike Routeburn Track, Takahe Bird Park

This morning we'll drive to the Divide, where we'll hike part of the Routeburn Track, the third of the Great Walks you'll experience. We hike through beech forest, subalpine shrub land and picturesque alpine tarns, before reaching Key Summit. Here you'll be standing at the head of three different valleys (the Hollyford, Eglinton and Greenstone), with stunning views over the Great Divide, which separates west and east flowing rivers. Afterwards we'll head back to Te Anau and head for the Department of Conservation birdlife park. The center takes care of injured or aging birds which would struggle to survive in the wild - it's a great opportunity to see some of our rarest birds up close,

so don't forget your camera!

Distinction Hotel & Villas, Te Anau (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Hiking: 6.8 kilometers (4.2 miles), 3-4 hours, elevation +/-470meters (1540 feet)

DAY 5

Gondola ride, hike Ben Lomond

Today we'll drive back along the shores of Lake Wakatipu to Queenstown, and take a ride on the gondola to the top of a tree-covered rocky crag, known as Bob's Peak, to start our alpine hike. We pass through open alpine tussockland to the Ben Lomond saddle and will be rewarded with panoramic views of Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu, surrounded by the often snow-covered Southern Alps. For those keen to press on to the top, Ben Lomond's summit reveals views of Mt. Earnslaw and Mt. Aspiring, two of New Zealand's highest peaks, and even a glimpse of Aoraki/Mt. Cook on a clear day. We'll leave you refreshed and invigorated from the good food, exercise, rest, and great times you'll have had with us in New Zealand! If you're keen to extend your trip and see what the North Island has to offer (Maori culture, pristine beaches and geothermal areas) check out our 11-day Ultimate North Island Adventure (5-day options also available).

No Accommodation (Breakfast, Lunch)

Hiking: 8 kilometers (5 miles), 4-5 hours, elevation +/- 978 meters (3,208 feet)

Useful Info

Is tipping expected in New Zealand?

Tipping is neither required nor routinely expected in New Zealand, but it is appropriate for very good service. In New Zealand you don't usually tip in restaurants, or if you take a taxi, or get a haircut. Many of our guests do choose to tip our guides and we recommend USD\$20 per day, per guest, per guide. You are welcome to tip an equivalent amount in the local currency. There are plenty of ATM's and banks in the larger towns of New Zealand.

What additional activities are on offer in New Zealand?

You'll be participating in loads of amazing activities during your tour, however, you may be wondering what other cool stuff you can do before or after your trip to make the most of your time in New Zealand.

We've teamed up with the good folk at Everything Travel and you're welcome to book any pre or post-trip 'things to do' directly with them.

For trips starting and/or ending in the South Island, check out things to do before and/or after your trip [here](#).

For trips starting and/or ending in North Island, check out things to do before and/or after your trip [here](#).

Make sure any activities you book are before or after your trip only as your tour itself is already filled to the brim with the adventures we offer!

Where does the trip start?

On the first morning of the trip we will meet you at the [Heritage Hotel](#) at 7:30am for breakfast and a trip briefing. You are welcome to book your pre-trip stay at this hotel directly or any other hotel in Queenstown, though you must make your own way to the pick-up point at the pre-designated time.

Where does the trip end?

Your trip ends with a drop-off at either the Queenstown Airport (ZQN) in time for flights below or anywhere in central Queenstown around 5pm

What flights would you recommend?

Arrival: We recommend arriving in Queenstown at least the day before your trip starts. Many guests like to arrive a day or two early to accommodate potential flight delays and/or explore the city prior to your trip start.

Departure: Flying out on the last day of the trip, we recommend departing from Queenstown after 6pm. Earlier flight times will require a separate transfer booked at your own expense.

What accommodations do we stay at on this trip?

This trip is a wilderness hiking trip and while it's not designed to be a scenic tour of the South Island's luxury hotels, it features more creature comforts than some of our other trips and you'll certainly feel like you're hiking in style! You'll stay in some wonderful places in the remote locations we take you.

Laundry facilities will be available at almost all accommodations (except the Doubtful Sound overnight boat). Please check with reception on check-in, or we can do that for you.

How fit do I need to be?

As an [Activity Level 2](#) trip, you'll need a good level of fitness for the trip as it's one of our more adventurous trips. Typically, hikes range between two and five hours to complete, more, or less hiking is available depending on your multi-day option.

Please head to our [Fitness Guide](#) for great tips on how to prepare along with a workout plan!

Tell me about the Doubtful Sound overnight cruise?

On your Active Great Walks Discovery option we spend one night onboard the Navigator ship on the remote Doubtful Sound. It's a stunning environment and you'll probably be one of just a small group of people exploring this part of the country.

Rooming on the Navigator is in 4 person dorms with bunk - style beds and shared bathroom facilities. There is also the option to upgrade to a private room with ensuite bathroom for an additional cost. If you'd like a private room please let us know as soon as possible, as there are limited rooms available and they can only be requested on a first come, first served basis.

Please refer to the second page of your packing list for more information about how to pack for the overnight cruise, and come prepared with your overnight gear separate on day one.

How much luggage can I bring on this trip?

You are allowed one piece of luggage on your trip, plus a daypack. Your main piece of luggage should not exceed 50 pounds (23 kilograms) and can be anything from a duffle bag to a sports bag with wheels or a suitcase. You'll also want a good quality backpack sized 25-30 liters (2000 cubic inches) to use throughout the days.

How do rooming arrangements work?

Trip prices are based on shared arrangements (typically two guests per room), unless otherwise stated. For solo travelers, we'll pair you with another person of the same gender to share rooms and if there's no one suitable to share with, there's no forced single supplement. However, if you specifically request your own rooms, you can opt to pay the single supplement. Solo travelers who book within 90 days of departure, where there are no other solo travelers willing to share, will be required to pay the single supplement.

For Family Vacation bookings, families consisting of four guests traveling with children aged 17 and under will be automatically assigned one shared room. However, the following alternative rooming allocations are available:

Families consisting of four guests with all children aged 13 and above are welcome to opt for additional rooms as per advertised double occupancy adult rates.

Families consisting of four guests with at least one child aged 12 and under are automatically assigned a shared room. However, families can opt to pay the adult rates for all guests in their family to have an additional room.

The same principles apply for families consisting of more than four guests.

Rooming preferences are subject to availability and must be communicated in writing at time of booking. Automatic assignments as per this policy will be applied in the absence of any specification provided by guests. Any request for additional rooms during trips will be at guests' own expense and subject to rates made available by the accommodation provider at the time. All minors (guests aged 17 and under) must be accompanied by at least one adult.

What is not included?

Flights to and from trip start/end points

15% NZ Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Pre/Post Accommodation

Optional extra activities

Travel insurance

Gratuities for your guides

Trekking packs and sleeping bags (if applicable)

General Trip Information

You can find details on recommended flights and fitness, as well as trip start and end in the 'Useful Information' section above.

Accommodation

You'll love the interesting places we've discovered over the years. You'll visit really spectacular and off-the-beaten-track locations and stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges, apartments and hotels for the most part. Keep in mind the most remote locations have limited accommodation options, but 5-star scenery!

Included

- Our own highly experienced guides, driver, and cook, with you from start to finish
- Industry-leading Guest-to-Guide ratio (averaging 6:1)
- Your own 'Travel Wallet', an online space with everything required for your adventure
- Our knowledgeable Customer Service Team to answer your queries - just a phone call, email or chat away
- Customer Service pre-trip phone calls to ensure you're 'trip ready'
- All accommodations for the duration of your trip
- All meals except where indicated in the itinerary
- Unlimited snacks to keep you fueled
- All activities outlined in the itinerary
- All necessary equipment (well-maintained and safe) for activities, including Hiking Poles
- All park and other entry fees
- Transportation in our air-conditioned vans - safe, clean, modern, and comfortable!

Itinerary Updates

We update our itineraries regularly, so please check our website for the most up-to-date itineraries and pricing. We make every effort to ensure itineraries are updated as necessary, though changes may occur without prior notice due to unforeseen circumstances.

Transportation

Since New Zealand isn't quite small enough to simply walk everywhere and still see all the highlights in a limited amount of time, we travel in fuel-efficient 20-seat Toyota Coasters and our guides make the journey enjoyable. They'll introduce you to some local tunes as well as provide interesting commentary, and we pass the time on the road in a fun, social way, with New Zealand's ever-changing scenery providing a feast for the eyes. Our focus, as always, is getting you out of the vehicle and into the scenery.

Excluded

- International/Domestic Flights to and from the meeting point
- 15% NZ Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- Optional extra activities
- Travel insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Gear on packing list (optional to rent some equipment)
- Gratuities for your guides at the end of your fabulous trip

Outdoor Experience

Our trips allow you to make the most of the New Zealand backcountry, whether you're relatively new to hiking or a seasoned trekker. Our highly trained and experienced guides will be at your side, safely guiding you to magnificent places that you wouldn't get to on your own. The challenges are there, if you're looking for them. All we ask is that you're energetic and in reasonable shape and we guarantee you'll have an incredible time. You don't need to have kayaked before to enjoy paddling on the water and you don't need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy most of the rides we do. In fact, we have so many options available that you don't need to paddle or ride at all if you'd rather hike or just laze around!

We hold all relevant government licenses and permits, have an impeccable safety record, and are certified by [OutdoorsMark](#), New Zealand's leading outdoor safety auditors. So, with all the research, logistics, safety and hospitality taken care of, you can focus on the most important thing - making the most of your adventure!