

Ultimate South Island Adventure ★ 4.55 922 Reviews

## Ultimate South Island Adventure

14 Days

14 People Max



*Looking for a great, outdoorsy way to see New Zealand? Our signature trip, the Ultimate South Island Adventure, is the perfect hiking tour for you.*

We'll take you on an unforgettable journey exploring our mountains in Mount Cook National Park and Nelson Lakes National Park, walking the West Coast rainforest and coastlines, getting up close to glaciers in Franz Josef, cycling incredibly scenic trails such as the Alps to Ocean trail, hiking sections of our Great Walks, and even cruising on Milford Sound. You'll experience our unique culture and wildlife along the way. Each night, we'll stay in carefully hand-picked accommodations in some of New Zealand's most stunning settings. We've been fine-tuning this perennial favorite since 1996, and it's simply an incredible trip. You'll explore the most beautiful, famous and little-known places in the South Island with legendary hospitality and unsurpassed attention to detail on our 14-day Ultimate South Island Adventure tour. Be prepared to leave a piece of your heart in New Zealand.

### Trip Highlights

- Kayaking - Okarito Lagoon
- Biking - Alps 2 Ocean Trail in Mackenzie Basin
- Hiking - Routeburn Track
- Hiking - Kepler Track
- Hiking - Punakaiki
- Hiking - Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park
- Hiking - West Coast
- Hiking - Franz Josef Glacier (& heli-hike option)
- Hiking - Nelson Lakes Backcountry Option
- Hiking - Nelson Lakes Comfort Option
- Plus ... - Explore Queenstown
- Plus ... - Cruise Milford Sound

## *Pick Your Multi-Day Option!*

### Active Option: Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking

The Rotoiti Circuit will have you experience hiking in the Nelson Lakes National Park, from the comfort of a St Arnaud Lodge! You'll be heading out on day hikes so you'll only require a day pack for each day. The remainder of your gear will stay behind at your accommodation in St Arnaud.

### Challenging Option: Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking

The Angelus Circuit option is a remote one-way hike through the Nelson Lakes National Park wilderness area for three days and two nights. You'll be hiking a loop track from hut to hut carrying everything you need in your own backpack. While your guides carry the lion's share of the load, you'll still need to carry your own gear (sleeping bag, dry clothes and toiletries) and a portion of the group's food. Any excess gear is stored securely for you at the start of the trail.

### 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.

## *Ultimate South Island Adventure ~ Itinerary*

### DAY 1

#### Arrive, visit Gore Bay and explore Kaikoura

Most people leave the Northern Hemisphere on a Saturday evening, arriving in Auckland early Monday morning. You'll lose a day crossing the dateline - but you get it back on the way home! It's a short flight from Auckland to Christchurch on the South Island where we'll meet you. You'll start your trip by travelling up the coast, stopping off at Gore Bay for a picnic lunch, and exploration of the rugged coast with its fresh air. You'll continue onto the seaside town of Kaikoura, passing weathered limestone cliffs, where we can walk to view fur seals basking on the rocks and playing in the eddies from a look-out point. This stretch of rugged coastline that was uplifted in the Kaikoura earthquake - it's amazing to see this brand new land! Today is a relaxed introduction to New Zealand. Depending on where you're coming from, you'll probably find jetlag is no big deal. It's a 12 to 13 hour direct overnight flight from the West Coast of the USA to Auckland so you'll appreciate the gentle start to your New Zealand adventure.

#### **Sudima Kaikoura, Kaikoura (Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 0.5-1 hour

### DAY 2

#### Start of multi-day options

From Kaikoura, we'll travel along spectacular coastline for a couple of hours to Blenheim, a town in the Marlborough wine region. We'll visit Forrest Estate Winery to sample some of their fantastic wines and have a picnic lunch before we head off to St Arnaud.

### DAY 2 ACTIVE OPTION

#### Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking: Saint Arnaud to Lakehead Hut

Your hike begins in the charming village of Saint Arnaud, on the edge of Nelson Lakes National Park. This is serious wilderness country, with incredible views and marvelous solitude. The park straddles the upper Southern Alps, an area composed of beech forests, big lakes and even bigger mountains. You'll hike the relatively gentle trail through the forest alongside Lake Rotoiti to Lakehead Hut and jetty. From here, we'll board a water taxi to take us back to St Arnaud, where you'll stay for the next couple of nights.

#### **St. Arnaud lodgings, St Arnaud (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 11 kilometers (6.8 miles), 3-4 hours, elevation +/- 20 meters (65 feet)

### DAY 2 CHALLENGING OPTION

#### Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking: Saint Arnaud to Lakehead Hut

The Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking option begins in the charming village of Saint Arnaud, on the edge of Nelson Lakes National Park. This is serious wilderness country, with incredible views and marvelous solitude. The park straddles the upper Southern Alps, an area composed of beech forests, big lakes and even bigger mountains. You'll hike the relatively gentle trail through the forest alongside Lake Rotoiti to Lakehead Hut, a small mountain cabin at the head of the lake and our home for the night. Our guides are pretty tough and they'll carry the lion's share of the load. All you'll be carrying is a backpack with your sleeping bag, a few spare clothes, and a share of our food. To protect this beautiful and fragile environment, we always keep our group sizes small and our exact route flexible.

#### **Lakehead Hut, Nelson Lakes National Park (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 11 kilometers (6.8 miles), 3-4 hours, elevation +/- 20 meters (65 feet)

## DAY 3

Multi-day options continued

### DAY 3 ACTIVE OPTION

#### Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking: Coldwater Hut to Saint Arnaud

After breakfast, you'll return by water taxi to the top end of the lake, and this time you'll arrive at Coldwater hut and jetty - just across the river from Lakehead hut. From here you'll follow the trail as it gently winds its way around Lake Rotoiti to Whisky Creek, and the beautiful Whisky Falls. Feel free to fill up your water bottles from Whisky Creek, but it IS only water, honest! After a picnic lunch on the lakeshore, you'll continue on to West Bay and loop back to St Arnaud for the evening.

#### **St Arnaud lodgings, St. Arnaud (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 14 kilometers (8.7 miles), 4-5 hours, elevation +/- 90 meters (295 feet)

### DAY 3 CHALLENGING OPTION

#### Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking: Lakehead Hut to Angelus Hut

Today is an unforgettable day - the scenery gets better with each step! You'll follow the Travers River through beech forest, before heading up the Hukere Stream towards the ridgeline. This is a challenging hike, with an elevation gain of 1000 meters (3280 feet), but it's absolutely worth it. The Angelus Circuit has exceptional scenic diversity, so it provides a great reward for the efforts you put in. There's no rush and your guides will be there to encourage you the whole way. It's a tremendous feeling at the top when you reach Angelus Hut, nestled beside a gorgeous alpine lake. Many people tell us this hidden gem was the highlight of their New Zealand adventure, and a lot of Kiwis prefer the Angelus Circuit to better-known tracks.

#### **Angelus Hut, Nelson Lakes National Park (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 10 kilometers (6.2 miles), 6-8 hours, elevation + 1,050 meters (3,445 feet)

**Notes:** For guests participating in early season departures (i.e. September, October, and sometimes early November) access to Angelus Hut can be impeded due to the removal of the Hukere Stream bridge on the upper section of the Cascade Track, during the New Zealand winter months, to prevent possible avalanche damage. The reinstallation of the bridge depends on the amount of snow in the area and so in the event Angelus Hut cannot be accessed, we will enjoy alternative hikes in the area and stay a second night at Lakehead Hut, or venture to Bushline Hut.

## DAY 4

Multi-day options continued

### DAY 4 ACTIVE OPTION

## Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking: Hike Roberts Ridge

After breakfast, don your hiking boots and set out for this morning's walk. You'll explore the beautiful peninsula track, stretching out into Lake Rotoiti, before making our way to the Pinchgut Track. This trail gives access to Mt. Robert, and Robert's Ridge, where the rest of the group will be approaching from the Angelus Circuit. You'll wind our way up the trail through the native beech trees and manuka scrub to meet the group. Once we're back together we'll enjoy a picnic lunch, before carrying on to the West Coast. After regrouping in Saint Arnaud, we'll head across the Southern Alps to the West Coast – a dramatic and rugged coastline stretching 600 kilometers (372 miles), with a population of only 40,000 people. You'll mingle with the 'coasters' tonight in the seaside village of Punakaiki, exchanging tales of our adventures over dinner.

### **Scenic Hotel Punakaiki (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** Up to 10 kilometers (6.2 miles), elevation up to 400 meters (1,312 feet)

## DAY 4 CHALLENGING OPTION

### Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking: Angelus Hut to Lake Rotoiti

Wake up on top of the world! After breakfast, you'll hike out along the barren Robert Ridge with dramatic views of Tasman Bay and the mountainous Kahurangi National Park in the distance. You'll descend below the tree line again into native beech forest completing our hike on the shores of Lake Rotoiti. Here, you'll meet up with the Rotoiti Circuit explorers and share stories of our adventures, before carrying on to the West Coast. After regrouping in Saint Arnaud, we'll head across the Southern Alps to the West Coast – a dramatic and rugged coastline stretching 600 kilometers (372 miles), with a population of only 40,000 people. You'll mingle with the 'coasters' tonight in the seaside village of Punakaiki, exchanging tales of our adventures over dinner.

### **Scenic Hotel Punakaiki (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 11 kilometers (6.8 miles), 4-6 hours, elevation + 70 meters (230 feet) / - 840 meters (2,755 feet)

## DAY 5

### Hike Punakaiki Rainforest, explore Hokitika

Spend the morning hiking the Inland Pack Track through temperate rainforest and limestone canyons, following in the footsteps of gold miners who established this trail over a century ago. While we're in Punakaiki, you'll also check out the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes – aptly named limestone formations that have been sculpted through the relentless pounding of the Tasman Sea. Traveling along the scenic coastline, we'll stretch our legs in Hokitika and check out local art galleries and pounamu-carving workshops (pounamu is Maori for jade), before carrying on to the township of Franz Josef where we'll stay for the next couple of nights. Nestled in the rainforest-clad foothills of the Southern Alps, Franz Josef is the heart of New Zealand glacier country.

### **Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 6 kilometers (4 miles), 2-3 hours, elevation +/- 130 meters (425 feet)

## DAY 6

### Kayak Okarito Lagoon, hike coastal forest and beach

This morning we'll take a short journey over to Okarito, a little-known beach community on the coast. You'll take to the water in sea kayaks and glide along a picturesque lagoon, set against a stunning backdrop of snow-capped peaks. Okarito is home to the only native white heron colony in New Zealand, as well as a host of other interesting birds. Later we'll head back to Franz Josef where you'll have the option to take another walk or relax in the hot tub, before enjoying a traditional Kiwi roast dinner.

### **Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 4.2 kilometers (2.6 miles), 1-2 hours, elevation +/- 120 meters (394 feet)

**Kayaking:** 2-4 hours

## **DAY 7**

### **Hike near Franz Josef Glacier**

With some 140 glaciers making their way down from the Southern Alps, this area is fittingly known as glacier country. Few sights equal the spectacle of two of these giant frozen rivers (Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers) imperceptibly grinding their way down through temperate rainforest to just 250 meters (820 feet) above sea level. We'll spend most of the day near Franz Josef Glacier hiking up through the forest to get incredible views of the ice. Wet weather can inhibit these hikes, so we may opt to hike around Lake Matheson and to the Blue Pools near Haast Pass instead. From Franz Josef, we'll travel down the coast through lush forest and then inland to Makarora, a small village bordering Mt. Aspiring National Park, with incredible views of the snow-capped mountains.

### **Wonderland Lodge, Makarora (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** Hiking: Up to 17 kilometers (10.5 miles), 5-6 hours, elevation Up to +/- 1,100 meters (3,610 feet)

**Notes:** Optional Heli-hike (extra fee applies): An outrageously scenic alternative to this afternoon's hike is to heli-hike on Franz Josef Glacier itself. After being fitted with crampons, ice axes and so on, you'll board a modern turbine helicopter and fly towards the highest peaks of the Southern Alps, landing on the glacier at 1300 metres (4265 feet) above sea level. Led by specialist glacier guides, you'll hike through the grand ice formations of the glacier, checking out its crevasses, seracs and tunnels – no previous experience is required! The constant movement of the glacier means every day is different, so your guides will cut steps in the ice and make sure you make the most of the conditions. At the end of your hike on the ice, you'll take another helicopter ride out of the mountains and back to civilization. The heli-hike is extremely popular and must be reserved at time of booking only. Please note also there is a weight limit of 115kg (250 pounds).

## **DAY 8**

### **Hike Rocky Mountain**

The landscape this morning changes rapidly from dense beech forest to semi-arid mountainous terrain. You'll hike the Rocky Mountain track today, a spectacular circuit through an area carved out by Ice Age glaciers, with native forest and shrubland. Enjoy lunch after your hike in Wanaka before a short but dramatic journey over the Cardrona Saddle to Queenstown on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, our base for the next couple of days.

### **Heritage Hotel, Queenstown (Breakfast, Lunch)**

**Hiking:** 7 kilometers (4.5 miles), 2-3 hours, elevation +/- 375 meters (1,230 feet)

## **DAY 9**

### **Free day in Queenstown**

Queenstown is the adventure capital of New Zealand (if not the world!) and all the comforts of civilization are packed into this tiny resort town: restaurants galore, sidewalk cafés, stylish lounge bars, day spas and boutiques. You'll also find incredible optional activities here including horse trekking, a gondola, kayaking, fishing, winery tours, hang gliding, mountain biking, bungee jumping, jet boating and skydiving, as well as some great hiking opportunities. Or you can just soak up the atmosphere or lounge about reading a book. Your guides will happily share their favorite haunts and point you in the right direction for your free day today.

### **Heritage Hotel, Queenstown**

## DAY 10

### Hike Kepler Track

This morning we'll make our way around Lake Wakatipu, leaving behind the towering Remarkables, and head west to the small town of Te Anau, the gateway to Milford Sound. This afternoon we'll take a hike on the famous Kepler Track, one of New Zealand's Great Walks - we follow the track through mountain beech forest and along the Wainu River. It's an awesome hike with spectacular views! Tonight we'll stay on the edge of Lake Te Anau, enjoying the scenery and the delicious local fare.

#### **Matai Lodge, Te Anau (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

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

## DAY 11

### Milford Sound Cruise, hike Key Summit

It's an early start this morning as we set off for our largest and perhaps most spectacular national park, Fiordland. We'll take a short drive through the Homer Tunnel and emerge at the top of a spectacular glacier-carved valley for a memorable descent to the shore of Milford Sound. Rudyard Kipling rated this fiord as the eighth natural wonder of the world and it is truly breath-taking, with steep granite walls plunging over a thousand meters to the Tasman Sea and waterfalls cascading into deep inky water. We'll jump on board the first boat cruise of the day, where we'll have the water to ourselves, as we gaze in wonder at the waterfalls tumbling down enormous vertical rock faces all around and journey right out to the entrance of the fiord. We may be lucky enough to encounter the friendly fur seals and dolphins that are sometimes in the area. After the cruise, we'll enjoy a tasty lunch before heading out to explore more of Fiordland's wilderness on foot. We'll hike part of the Routeburn Track for unsurpassed views of the Hollyford Valley, as well as Lake Marian and Mt. Christina, before making our way back to Te Anau for the night.

#### **Matai Lodge, Te Anau (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** 3.4 kilometers (2 miles), 3-4 hours, elevation +/- 380 meters (1,246 feet)

## DAY 12

### Journey over Lindis Pass, bike the Alps to Ocean trail

After an early breakfast, we'll head back through Queenstown and head North, driving through the tussock-country of Lindis Pass to Lake Pukaki, where you'll hop on a bike and ride a portion of the Alps to Ocean Trail, following the well-groomed trail around the alpine lake with views across to the magnificent Aoraki Mount Cook, passing a range of native plants including Kowhai (with brilliant yellow flowers, popular with endemic Tui birds), flax and tussocks. The trail then cuts through farmland across the Mackenzie Country basin and we'll make our way back to Twizel. We'll bike straight to our accommodation for our last two nights, with stunning views stretching across the Southern Alps. We're in the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve, with light pollution strictly controlled in the area, so it's the ideal spot to stargaze!

#### **We use a variety of accommodation for stays in this region (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Biking:** 19 kilometers (11.8 miles), 2 hours

## DAY 13

### Hike Aoraki Mt. Cook National Park

Mt. Cook, named Aoraki or 'cloud piercer' by South Island Maori, is the highest mountain in New Zealand. Directly opposite the mountain,

we'll set off on a stunning day hike to the main ridge above Mueller Glacier. It's a challenging hike, but you'll remember the view of the glacier and the surrounding peaks forever! The weather conditions are very important in this area, as it's a true alpine climate notorious for sudden weather shifts. If we aren't able to do the Mueller Glacier hike, or you'd like to take it a little easier, there's an impressive hike up to a glacial lake (complete with icebergs!) at the base of the Hooker Glacier. Then you'll head back to your accommodation for the last night of your adventure, where we'll enjoy a celebratory dinner together and watch the sun set over the Southern Alps.

**We use a variety of accommodation for stays in this region (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)**

**Hiking:** Mueller Ridge Hike: 7.2 kilometers (4.4 miles), 5-6 hours, elevation +/- 975 meters (3,200 feet)

**Hiking:** Hooker Glacier Hike: 9 kilometers (5.6 miles), 3-4 hours, elevation +/- 100 meters (328 feet)

## DAY 14

### Depart for home

After breakfast you'll head to Christchurch, arriving in time for afternoon flights. We hope you'll leave 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)**



## 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, our two pick-up locations are [Rydgies Latimer Square Hotel](#) at 10:30am or the Christchurch airport (CHC) in front of the Help Desk (near door 7) at 11am. You are welcome to book your pre-trip stay at this hotel directly or any other hotel in Christchurch, though you must make your own way to one of the two pick-up points at the pre-designated times.

### Where does the trip end?

Your trip ends with a drop-off at either the Christchurch Airport (CHC) in time for flights below or anywhere in Central Christchurch around 3pm.

### What flights would you recommend?

**Arrival:** We recommend arriving in Christchurch by 10am. 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 Christchurch after 4pm. Earlier flight times will require a separate transfer booked at your own expense.

### Trip direction

Some departures for this trip run in the reverse direction, which means the stated itinerary will simply operate in reverse. Contact us, or check your Travel Wallet once booked, to get the specific itinerary for your trip.

## How fit do I need to be?

As an [Activity Level 3-4](#) trip, you'll need a good level of fitness for this 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 Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking

The Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking option is a remote one way hike through the Nelson Lakes National Park wilderness area for three days and two nights. You'll be hiking a loop track from hut to hut carrying everything you need in your own backpack. While your guides carry the lion's share of the load, you'll still need to carry your own gear (sleeping bag, dry clothes and toiletries) and a portion of the group's food. Any excess gear is stored securely for you at the start of the trail.

The first day is an undulating hike along the shores Lake Rotoiti to Lakehead Hut. The following morning we begin our most challenging day, starting out along the Travers River and then turning to hike beside Hukere Stream where the path takes you to more demanding sections with tangles of roots, to the end of the valley. After it's a steeper climb upto the ridgeline, on a rocky scree track. There's a total elevation gain of 1000 metres (3000 feet) and the views are worth it, with Angelus hut perched next to a beautiful alpine lake. After a hearty breakfast the next day it's a four to five hour hike out along the Roberts Ridge along a rocky trail, over boulders and some steep terrain before descending back through the trees to the road, where we'll meet up with the others - if there are others doing these options.

The average distance we cover on this hike is around 11 kilometres (7 miles) a day. While we must complete each day's hike to get to our home for the night, we can take as long as we need to get there.

While on the hiking option you'll be sleeping in Department of Conservation (DOC) owned mountain huts. These unique huts are open to the public and are warm, dry and comfortable. They're located in very remote areas (with amazing scenery) so they don't have private rooms, electricity, hot water, phones or flushing toilets - and the view from the outhouse is second to none! This really is New Zealand's wildest country and because it's not possible to book these huts, you'll meet and share the experience with other mountain adventurers and explorers.

## Tell me about the Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking

The Nelson Lakes Comfort Hiking will have you experience hiking in the Nelson Lakes National Park, from the comfort of a St Arnaud Lodge! You'll be heading out on day hikes so you'll only require a day pack for each day. The remainder of your gear will stay behind at your accommodation in St Arnaud.

On the first day you'll hike in to Lakehead Hut with the Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking group, before water taxiing back to St Arnaud. The next day you'll head back out on the lake, then continue hiking around the other side of the lake before staying a second night in St Arnaud. After waking up in St Arnaud the next morning, we'll head out to the Mount Robert carpark and hike to a viewpoint over Lake Rotoiti, just above the treeline, where we'll meet up with the Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking guests - if there are others doing this option. There's a total elevation gain of 400 metres (1,312 feet) and the views are worth it, looking out over Lake Rotoiti from a different perspective.

The average distance that we cover on this hike is around 11 kilometres (7 miles) a day.

### Tell me about the optional activities on this trip?

You have the option to take an exciting scenic helicopter flight to visit the upper reaches of the Franz Josef Glacier on the West Coast – an area usually only experienced mountaineers would get to see. No prior experience is required, everything you need is supplied, and as long as you can hike, you can heli-hike!

The three hour package includes a scenic helicopter flight (15 minutes one-way), a two-hour guided walk on and around the glacier and amazing panoramic views of the area. A good level of fitness is required and the following equipment is provided for you: glacier boots, socks, crampons, ice axe and a waterproof raincoat. You'll need to bring underlayers and this will be depend on the weather, along with sunglasses, sunscreen, some snacks and a small drink bottle.

Note; this is not a fast activity, as walking with a group and continually cutting steps in the ice can be time-consuming. This is however a unique experience. Also If you have (or have had) a heart condition, ACL Knee surgery or you exceed the weight limit of 115 kilograms (250 pounds), you may be refused this activity on arrival.

\*This activity MUST be booked at the time of booking.

### Will we encounter snow on this trip?

During bumper snow years the snow may stay on the mountains into October and November. If so, the New Zealand Department of Conservation (equivalent of the USA's National Park Service) will not allow us to travel over heavily snowed terrain for safety reasons and we heed their warnings. As a result, we may not be able to access some higher elevation hikes such as Mueller Ridge in Aoraki Mt. Cook National Park and Robert's Ridge in Nelson Lakes National Park - both at 1,500 metres (4500 feet) in our itinerary. Luckily, New Zealand is full of stunning hikes so we'll select an alternative hike that allows you to enjoy the snow-capped peaks from a safe distance.

### What accommodations do we stay at on this trip?

We've selected the accommodation on your trip for the stunning settings, unique character and adventuresome feel. We prefer to stay in quaint, comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments, some of which have private bathrooms and some shared bathrooms. You may be sharing a two bedroom apartment or bathroom with other group members at some stage. Some places are fairly basic – like the huts on the Nelson Lakes hiking option – and the true Kiwi experience makes it all worthwhile.

If you've selected a single supplement for your trip, the Nelson Lakes hiking option is not included as no single rooms are available in the huts, and the single supplement price takes this into account.

While there are laundry facilities at most locations, they may not be convenient or there may only be one machine to service your entire group. We recommend bringing enough clothing to only have to do laundry a couple of times during your trip. The best time will be during your two night stay in Queenstown (during your free day).

### 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.

If you've chosen the Nelson Lakes Backcountry Hiking option, you'll also require a good quality trekking pack with well-fitting shoulder and waist straps. Your pack should be 60 litre size (3500 cubic inches), large enough to fit your sleeping bag inside along with all your multi-day gear.

## 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

Rental gear

## 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
- 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!