



New Zealand: Hike, Cycle, and Paddle South Island

DURATION | 12 Days

TRIP LEVEL | High Energy

Trip Overview

Experience the breathtaking South Island of New Zealand, renowned for its rugged mountains, pristine lakes, and lush forests. Home to Aoraki/Mount Cook, stunning glaciers like Franz Josef and Fox, and the majestic Milford Sound — often called the eighth Wonder of the World — this region promises adventure and beauty. Meet your guide and fellow adventurers as you embark on this unforgettable journey, encouraging one another to step beyond comfort zones. Explore the Hollyford Track along the Hollyford River, hike through the stunning Matukituki Valley towards the Rob Roy Glacier, and navigate glacial lakes dotted with icebergs. E-bike through coastal landscapes in Abel Tasman National Park, paddle a traditional waka, and hike the famous Coastal Track. Your adventure culminates in Nelson, where a special farewell dinner celebrates the new friendships forged and the extraordinary experiences shared in this mesmerizing land.

Trip Highlights

- Experience an unforgettable hike through the stunning Matukituki Valley, where you'll wander through virgin beech forests and emerge into a breathtaking alpine basin.
- Discover the enchanting limestone outcrops of Castle Hill, a significant meeting place for early Māori.
- Cycle the scenic Great Taste Trail on e-bikes, sampling local wines along the way. Then, try your hand at paddling a traditional waka at Kaiteriteri and learn harakeke weaving skills from local women.

Map View



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Trip Itinerary



Day 1

Arrival in Queenstown

Arrive in Queenstown by 4 PM and settle into the Heritage Hotel. After checking in and relaxing, gather with your fellow travelers for a lively welcome dinner. Enjoy delicious food and drinks while sharing stories about your excitement for exploring New Zealand. This evening marks the beginning of your adventure, where you'll bond with other women ready to embrace the natural beauty and cultural richness that lies ahead.

Meals: dinner | Overnight: Heritage Hotel



Heritage Hotel

The Heritage Hotel in Queenstown is a ski lodge style building on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. The main lodge building holds leisure facilities, a bar and a restaurant which is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner

Amenities include: complimentary toiletries, refrigerator, safe, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning



Trip Itinerary



Day 2

Journey to Milford

Depart early for a scenic four-hour drive to Milford Sound. Here, you'll meet your guide for the Hollyford Track and board a helicopter for a breathtaking flight over the fjord. After landing at Martins Bay, enjoy a delicious lunch in a safari-style tent, then embark on a walk through a lush coastal forest alive with bird song. Look out for rare wildlife, including the Fiordland crested penguin, and return via jet boat for a delightful three-course dinner while reflecting on an incredible day. Today's Hike: 4 miles, 2-3 hours.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Martins Bay Lodge



Martins Bay Lodge

Located on the lowland flats near the mouth of the Hollyford River, this unique wilderness lodge is well-appointed with dining and lounge areas, open fires and drying rooms. The lodge runs on battery bank powered electricity, and conserves energy by turning off some electrical facilities overnight. However, lighting is available throughout the night, and 24-hour power is available in the lounge area.

Amenities include: lodge bedrooms are all ensuite with bedding, towels, hot water bottles, complimentary toiletries and hair dryer. There is no cell phone service at this lodge and limited access to internet.



Trip Itinerary



Day 3

Hollyford Valley Adventure

Wake up to the beautiful dawn chorus of native birds before enjoying a hearty breakfast. Then, board a jet boat for a captivating ride up Lake McKerrow to the Hollyford River, where the mountains rise dramatically. Start your 11-mile hike through the Hollyford Valley, carrying your main pack as you retrace the steps of early Māori explorers. Marvel at the native beech forest and tumbling waterfalls while learning about the rich ecology of the area. After a day filled with breathtaking scenery and historical insights, enjoy a hearty dinner at your accommodation in Te Anau. Today's Hike: 11 miles, 6-8 hours, elevation 143 m/470 feet.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Distinction Te Anau Hotel and Villas



Distinction Te Anau Hotel and Villas

Surrounded by extensive, colorful gardens and overlooking spectacular Lake Te Anau and the Fiordland ranges, this Hotel and Villa accommodation sets the tone for your stay in one of the world's most breathtaking regions.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi



Trip Itinerary



Day 4

Hiking Aspiring National Park

Depart Te Anau and enjoy a scenic three-hour drive to Wanaka. Indulge in a delightful picnic lunch by the shores of Lake Wanaka before continuing your journey to the afternoon hike. Embark on a hike up the majestic Matukituki Valley, taking in the stunning views and meandering through virgin beech forests. Reach the Rob Roy Glacier, where you'll be surrounded by breathtaking alpine scenery. Relax as you watch water cascade off the vertical rock walls, then retrace your steps back to the vehicle. Enjoy a dinner of your choice in Wanaka this evening. Today's Hike: 6 miles, 4-5 hours, elevation 398 m/1,305 feet.

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: Oakridge Resort Wanaka



Oakridge Resort Wanaka

Situated just 3 kilometers from New Zealand's 4th largest lake, this relaxing hotel is surrounded by beautiful nature and is a great starting point for outdoor activities. Among the fine facilities of Oakridge Resort Wanaka are heated pools with poolside bar and a day spa. The hotel also comes with an excellent restaurant serving creative New Zealand cuisine prepared with the best local ingredients.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, tea/coffee maker, cable/satellite TV, Wi-Fi



Trip Itinerary



Day 5

Aoraki/Mount Cook Exploration

Travel through the stunning Lindis Valley to the breathtaking region of Aoraki/Mt Cook. Once you arrive, make your way up the Tasman Valley toward the Tasman Glacier, New Zealand's longest glacier. Take a short walk through the glacial moraine before boarding a custom-built boat for a unique spin around the terminal lake, dotted with fascinating icebergs. Experience the raw power and delicate beauty of the glacier up close, gaining insight into its retreat and the environmental changes taking place. Today's Hike: 1-2 miles, 1 hour.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Hermitage Hotel



Hermitage Hotel

Since the late 1800's, the Hermitage has been an iconic hotel located in a world-class destination. Offering the facilities and services of a global chain while being local, the Hermitage provides breathtaking views of the surrounding landscapes and impeccable service.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, minibar, coffee / tea maker, electric kettle, safe, flatscreen TV, cable / satellite TV, Wi-Fi, air conditioning

Trip Itinerary



Day 6

Sealy Tarns Hike

Start your day with stunning views of the Mueller and Hooker Glacier terminal lakes before hiking up to Sealy Tarns. The trail rewards you with awe-inspiring views of Mt. Sefton, Mueller Glacier, and the expansive Hooker Valley. If you're feeling adventurous, join your guide for an extended hike to Mueller Ridge for even broader vistas of the surrounding alpine landscape. For those preferring a more leisurely day, explore the charming alpine village or visit the informative visitor center to learn about the national park's wonders.

Today's Hike: 3-5 miles, 4-6 hours, elevation Sealy Tarns: 516 m/1,692 feet, Mueller Ridge: 946 m/3,100 feet, walking poles recommended.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Hermitage Hotel



Trip Itinerary



Day 7

Scenic Drive to Methven

Before leaving Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, take in the morning views of the striking glaciers and lakes. Depart for a scenic drive through the McKenzie Basin to Lake Tekapo, where you can enjoy lunch by the shimmering blue waters. If you're up for it, take an optional hike to the summit of Mt. John for panoramic views of the breathtaking landscape. After lunch, transfer to Methven, known for its winter skiing and relaxed rural charm. Today's Hike: 3-9 miles, 4-6 hours, elevation 115 m/370 ft.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Ski Time Resort



Ski Time Resort

A comfortable lodge featuring a lounge, terrace, and garden.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, Wi-Fi

Trip Itinerary



Day 8

Castle Hill and West Coast

Embark on a 1.5-hour drive to the enchanting limestone outcrops at Kura Tawhiti (Castle Hill). This area, significant for early Māori, was dubbed the “Spiritual Centre of the Universe” by the Dalai Lama. Explore the captivating rock formations before continuing through Arthurs Pass, where you can hike to Punchbowl Falls or take the Centennial Hike if time allows. Arriving on the West Coast, hike the Inland Pack Track from the Punakaiki River to Pororari, surrounded by deep limestone canyons and lush Nikau Palms. Today’s Hike: 7 miles, 3-4 hours, elevation 293 m/960 feet.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki



Scenic Hotel Punakaiki

A breath-taking oceanfront sanctuary featuring modern and comfortable rooms, ocean views, and sounds of the Tasman Sea.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, hair dryer, coffee / tea maker, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi



Trip Itinerary



Day 9

Pancake Rocks to Nelson

Begin your day with a leisurely stroll through the world-famous Pancake Rocks, marveling at their unique geological formations. The paths lead you through stunning landscapes, showcasing nature's artistry. Afterward, drive to Murchison for a guided hike through lush forests adorned with majestic tree ferns, where you'll witness natural flames that have burned since the 1920s. Access this hidden gem through a privately owned deer farm, offering a unique perspective on New Zealand's natural wonders. Complete your journey to Nelson, where you'll enjoy dinner at your leisure, reflecting on the amazing experiences of the past days. Today's Hike: 2 miles, 3 hours.

Meals: breakfast, lunch | Overnight: Tides Hotel



Tides Hotel

Located just a few minutes' walk from Nelson's main shopping area, Tides Hotel is a stylish and contemporary hotel.

Amenities: complimentary toiletries, coffee / tea maker, bottled water, flatscreen TV, Wi-Fi

Trip Itinerary



Day 10

E-Biking Abel Tasman

After breakfast, take a short drive to Moutere, where your e-bike adventure on the Great Taste Trail begins. Ride through a patchwork of rural and coastal landscapes, passing sheep and cattle farms while soaking in spectacular views of the coastline. Stop in the charming town of Mapua for snacks and to explore local boutiques and galleries. A short ferry ride takes you to Rabbit Island, where the trail continues. Visit Seifried Winery for a tasting of local wines before being driven back to your accommodation in Nelson. Today's Cycling: 16 miles, 4 hours.

Meals: breakfast, dinner | Overnight: Tides Hotel

Trip Itinerary



Day 11

Paddling and Hiking

Experience the beauty of Abel Tasman National Park by paddling a waka (double-hulled canoe) at sunrise. After a traditional karakia (blessing), learn about waka etiquette before embarking on your journey with local hosts. Enjoy breakfast along the way and participate in traditional harakeke weaving with local women. After this enriching experience, take a water taxi further into the park for a scenic hike along the famous Abel Tasman Coastal Track from Bark Bay to the Falls River suspension bridge. Enjoy time for a swim before returning to Kaiteriteri and celebrating with a farewell dinner in Nelson. Today's Hike: 5 miles, 2-3 hours, elevation 200 m/650 ft.

Meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner | Overnight: Tides Hotel



Trip Itinerary



Day 12

Departure

On your final day, enjoy breakfast with your newfound friends before preparing for departure. There will be a group transfer to Nelson Airport, allowing you to bid farewell to your adventure companions. You can book your return flight any time after 12 PM, concluding your unforgettable journey through the stunning landscapes and rich culture of New Zealand. Take home cherished memories and new friendships as you head back to your daily life.

What's Included

What's Included

- Accommodations as per itinerary based on double occupancy
- All meals as listed in the itinerary
- All ground transportation
- Airport transfer on scheduled departure day
- Guided sightseeing and activities as indicated in the itinerary
- Tea, coffee, juice, and soda water at breakfast and lunch
- Entrance fees for sites listed in the itinerary
- Drinking water available in large jugs to refill personal bottles
- Snacks in vehicles
- Gratuities for hotel staff, luggage porters, and waitstaff

Not Included

- International airfare to and from New Zealand
- Airport transfer on arrival day
- Optional activities
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Soft drinks, tea, and coffee at dinner
- Alcoholic beverages (unless otherwise specified)
- Fees for passport, visas, immunizations, or travel insurance
- Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- Items of a personal nature
- Gratuities for guides

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

