

Walking New Zealand - South Island Explorer

Trip Code: NZS

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike the Routeburn Track & Cruise Milford Sound
- Ride the Legendary TranzAlpine Railway
- Stargaze from a Remote Mountain Hut

- Walk, Taste & Discover with a Kai Safari
- Hike to Sealy Tarns with Views of Aoraki / Mount Cook

AT A GLANCE

- Join at Christchurch

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This two-week trip focuses on the best of New Zealand's South Island – combining scenic day hikes, unique cultural experiences, and time in some of the country's most striking landscapes. Starting in Christchurch, we explore the coastline and surrounding hills before boarding the TranzAlpine train across the Southern Alps.

From Punakaiki's limestone formations and rainforest trails to the glacier region around Fox Glacier, we travel south through the rugged West Coast. Along the way, we meet local Māori hosts, learn about pounamu (greenstone), and share a home-cooked meal with long-time residents.

The journey includes sections of the country's Great Walks – the Paparoa, Kepler and Routeburn Tracks – as well as time in Wanaka, a cruise on Milford Sound, and hiking beneath Aoraki/Mount Cook. We finish with two nights at a remote hut above Lake Tekapo, in one of the world's best locations for stargazing.

This is a well-paced and varied trip that gets beyond the usual tourist spots and offers a deeper look at the places, people, and stories of Te Waipounamu – the South Island of New Zealand.

Is this holiday for you?

This adventure is designed for active travellers who enjoy exploring on foot and want to go beyond the typical tourist routes. We've included a varied mix of short walks, longer day hikes, and a two-night backcountry hut stay – with walking times ranging from 2 to 6 hours. Some of the hikes follow well-formed tracks, while others involve unmarked terrain, including tussock grasslands, scree slopes, and moderate ascents without a clear path underfoot.

You'll need to be confident walking on uneven ground and comfortable with uphill sections. While this isn't a technical trekking holiday, a good level of fitness will help you get the most out of the experience. The sense of remoteness and wilderness is a key feature of this trip – particularly on our overnight hike to Rex Simpson Hut, where you'll carry your overnight gear in a daypack (bedding is provided at the hut, and main luggage is left behind).

We travel in a comfortable vehicle and keep drive times reasonable, with plenty of opportunities to stop, stretch our legs, and enjoy the scenery. Two experienced driver-guides help ensure a smooth pace throughout the trip. While most of the walks are included, many are optional – and there are a few shorter or rest days to allow for flexibility and personal choice. This trip suits walkers who are looking for a rewarding, varied, and immersive way to experience New Zealand's South Island.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- 2 Professional and qualified Tour Leader/Drivers
- A single timed transfer from airport to hotel in Christchurch on Day 1
- A single timed transfer to the airport in Christchurch on Day 15
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All transport required by the itinerary
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned except where specified as 'optional' National Park entrance fees

What's not Included

- Travel Insurance
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

General Information

Passport & Visas

From 1 October 2019, travellers must have an NZeTA (New Zealand Travel Authority) to travel to New Zealand. From July 2019 you can request your NZeTA via the Immigration New Zealand mobile app or the Immigration New Zealand website (www.immigration.govt.nz/nzeta). The app is fast, easy to use, and the most affordable option. The cost of the ETA is NZD\$9 for requests made via the mobile app and NZD\$12 for requests made via the Immigration NZ website. You will be asked to pay your International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL) of NZD\$35 (Aug 2019) at the same time. ETA requests will take between 5-10 minutes to complete. Once issued, an ETA is valid for up to two years and can be used for multiple visits to NZ.

Currency

The unit of currency in New Zealand is the New Zealand Dollar.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking for up to 7 hours. Hill walking is the best training, but running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

We run our New Zealand trekking trips during the Southern Hemisphere spring and summer period of November through to March. At this time of year, we can expect temperatures of between 20°C and 25°C during the day, falling to between 10°C and 15°C at night. Surrounded by warm oceans, New Zealand has a maritime climate and does experience rainfall throughout the year. In the South Island, the West Coast receives far more rain than the east of the island, which lies in the rain shadow of the mountains.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

New and Improved Itinerary! We've revamped this 2-week New Zealand tour to include key Great Walks and take you beyond the usual tourist spots, offering a closer look at the landscapes, people, and stories of Te Waipounamu (south Island).

Please Note This document was downloaded on 03/07/2025 and the trip is subject to change