

FIRST LIGHT TRAVEL



Your South Pacific Travel Specialists



Hiking New Zealand

- 2019 -



NEW ZEALAND UNCUT

ITINERARY



This is the complete New Zealand travel experience. Explore both islands as you weave your way from north to south. Go underground in the Waitomo glowworm caves, explore the geothermal area of Rotorua and hike the volcanoes of Tongariro National Park. Spend even more time hiking in the south: the Abel Tasman coast, Punakaiki's luscious green rainforests and the majestic Aoraki/Mount Cook. Finish your time in this magical country under the immense peaks of Mount Aspiring National Park before arriving in Queenstown. The day hikes and short walks have been specially selected to get you into the best and most diverse wilderness areas of New Zealand. From strenuous alpine hikes to strolls along the beach, choose the walks to suit you. We have chosen excellent quality hotels and lodges and all rooms have ensuite bathrooms. Every place we stay has something special to offer and your evenings will be just as enjoyable as your days spent outdoors. Wonderful meals are included giving you an opportunity to sample the local cuisine from the restaurants in the cities and towns we stay. If your time is short, choose one of the single island options - the Northern Portion or Southern Slice.

LENGTH	13 days
GRADE	B - Up to 4-5 hours physical activity per day
START	Auckland - 7:00am Heritage Hotel foyer, 35 Hobson Street, Central Auckland
FINISH	Queenstown - 5:00pm (approx.)
ACCOMMODATION	Hotels and Lodges
INCLUDED ACTIVITIES	Mitai Maori Village, Wai-o-tapu Thermal Wonderland, scenic flight from the North to the South Island, Abel Tasman boat cruise, Natural flames, Glacier boat trip
OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES	All activities outlined in itinerary are included in trip price.
DEPARTURES	2019 Oct: 31 Nov: 14, 28 2020 Jan: 23 Feb: 6, 20 Mar: 19

“HIGHLY RECOMMENDED”

My husband and I spent 2 weeks in NZ and took the Uncut Tour. We saw amazing scenery that we never would have seen had we not used a guide. Our guides were fun, organized and knowledgeable. We had about 10 people in our group from various countries and of various ages. Everyone got along and that added to the exceptional experience. The highlights of the trip were the breathtaking scenery and the hikes (sometimes challenging). The accommodations, food, travel and before trip communication were all top notch.

~ Jane W - March 2018, **Trip Advisor**

“FANTASTIC NZ UNCUT TOUR”

We just finished the 13 day uncut tour of North and South Islands. We had the most extraordinary experience! Our guides were absolutely wonderful, Kath and Rainier on the North Island, Martin and Eva on the South Island. We did amazing hikes, saw incredible views and had a lot of fun with the group. We had some bad weather on the North Island but Kath was always working on figuring out a good plan B. We were lucky with mostly beautiful weather on the South Island and the days with Martin and Eva were spectacular. Everything ran smoothly, and the trip really exceeded our expectations. We would absolutely do another trip with First Light Travel if we are lucky enough to return!

~ Sherdave5 - USA, February 2018, **Trip Advisor**

ITINERARY

DAY 1 AUCKLAND - WAITOMO CAVES - ROTORUA

1-2km/2 hours hiking

Meet your North Island guide and the rest of the group in the Heritage Hotel foyer at 7am before driving south through the classic patchwork green farming country alongside the Waikato River. Arriving at the Waitomo Caves area descend into the vaulted galleries of the Ruakuri Cave with its limestone formations and crystals. Be captivated by the thousands of tiny glowworms that cling to the cave ceiling and mimic a starlit night sky. Later we emerge into the sunshine and wander on a loop trail through an outstanding limestone canyon. We arrive in the volcanically active area of Rotorua late afternoon. Rotorua is also the centre of Maori cultural tourism in New Zealand and tonight we enjoy an evening meal and cultural performance. *Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Rotorua. Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 ROTORUA LAKES – LAKE TAUPO

8 km/5 hours hiking

Hike alongside the beautifully clear Lake Tarawera, enjoying the shade that towering tree ferns and ignimbrite cliffs offer. Plop into the water to cool off at any one of the tiny pumice beaches as you wait for the others to catch up. There are astonishing views all along this trail, giving glimpses of how expansive this massive wilderness of forest, lakes and volcanoes really is. In the afternoon we explore some of the amazing thermal areas located a little south of Rotorua. Wander along boardwalks that connect pools of bubbling mud, mineral-tainted hot pools and plumes of rising steam as you wonder at this unique area. Grab a cuppa before we drive toward the lakeside town of Taupo. At Huka Falls feel the power as the huge Waikato River gets pinched through a narrow rock corridor. Our accommodation is in Taupo. Relax with a drink and enjoy the views. *Accommodation: Beechtree Motel, Taupo. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 TONGARIRO

8 km/2-4 hours hiking

We drive around Lake Taupo's shores to New Zealand's first national park – Tongariro. Take a leisurely morning walk through stunning forest around the slopes of Mt Pihanga and to the mystical Lake Rotopounamu (Lake of Greenstone). The next two nights are spent in a hotel on the edge of the park, providing a great opportunity for you to explore the area at your leisure. Join the guide this afternoon for a great walk to Taranaki Falls, cascading 20 metres over a 15,000 year-old lava flow. Enjoy dinner with the group in the comfort of your hotel. *Accommodation: hotel at the gateway to Tongariro National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 4 TONGARIRO

23 km/6-8 hours hiking

Join the guide today for a full days walking on the famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing, regarded as one of the best day walks in the world. The well built track traverses up, steeply at times, to the craters of Mt Tongariro. Stop and admire the views of the Red Crater, Emerald Lakes and steaming vents that make this hike so iconic. After a sometimes long and physically challenging day celebrate your achievement at dinner with a bottle of fine New Zealand wine. Those who prefer a more restful day can find plenty to do at the village: Soda Springs walk, Taranaki Falls walk, or simply drink coffee and view the great exhibits at the Park Visitor Centre. Enjoy your second night in this village. *Accommodation: hotel at the gateway to Tongariro National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 5 TONGARIRO - WELLINGTON

Rest your legs this morning as we drive south through rolling green hill country to the capital city of Wellington. The tour finishes early afternoon in this buzzing wee city. Stroll along the fabulous waterfront and absorb some of New Zealand's history in the national museum - Te Papa, or simply get lost admiring the heritage houses along one of the many improbably steep streets. Nowhere is very far in Wellington. You are spoilt for choice for places to dine this evening, so take your pick. *Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Wellington. Includes breakfast.*



DAY 6 WELLINGTON - KAHURANGI NATIONAL PARK

8.5 km - 18.5 km/4-8 hours hiking

Before boarding your plane grab a fast breakfast at one of the groovy airport cafes. Enjoy your scenic flight over Cook Strait as you hop from the North to the South Island. Your southern guide will meet you at the Nelson airport. Sit back and enjoy the picturesque drive to Flora Saddle in Kahurangi National Park. On a well-formed track, we meander our way up to the bush-line and the Mt Arthur hut. Those feeling keen can venture further with the guide along the rugged marble ridgeline towards the summit of Mt Arthur. Alternatively, perch on a rock and soak in the view before reuniting with the group for the descent (usually via a different track). Tonight, we celebrate our arrival in the South Island by dining together in one of Nelson's fine restaurants. *Accommodation: Nelson hotel. Includes lunch and dinner.*



DAY 7 NELSON - ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK

11.7 km/4 hours hiking

After an early breakfast, we set off for Abel Tasman National Park. You will be amazed at how different the landscape is here to nearby Kahurangi National Park. Board a water taxi and cruise the coastline past golden sand beaches and rugged granite headlands into the heart of the National Park. Step ashore at Bark Bay and follow the famed Abel Tasman coastal track through native forests and along golden sand beaches. A well-formed trail leads us up and over a gentle ridge into Torrent Bay, where the lovely clear fresh waters of Cleopatra's Pool may tempt you to take a dip or for those more daring - a slide down the naturally formed hydro-slide! At Anchorage, we will meet the water taxi for a return journey to Kaiteriteri, a seaside village and gateway to this National Park, before heading back to Nelson. There is free time to do some more exploring in this vibrant and arty little town. *Accommodation: Nelson hotel. Includes breakfast and lunch.*



DAY 8 NELSON - PUNAKAIKI

6 km/3 hours hiking

On the way to the West Coast we stop for a remarkable hike to marvel at natural flames which have been burning since the 1920's. We access this phenomena with a local guide through a privately-owned working deer farm. Unlike the Eternal Flames of the Chimera in Turkey these flames are surrounded by lush tree ferns and beech forest. A cup of 'billy tea' and hot cakes prepared over the flames gives this experience a distinctly kiwi flavour. We continue our journey alongside the mighty Buller River as it cuts through the massive wilderness of the upper South Island, arriving on the coast at Westport. We take a short stroll at Cape Foulwind to view a colony of New Zealand fur seals playfully splashing around in the rock pools.

We then head south to catch the sunset at Punakaiki and visit a local pub for dinner. Take an evening stroll around the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes - we try to time our visit with high tides so we may leave the rocks until tomorrow if tide times are more favourable. *Accommodation: Punakaiki Resort, Punakaiki. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*





DAY 9 PUNAKAIKI TO METHVEN

11 km/3-4 hours hiking

Hike the Inland Pack Track from Punakaiki to Pororari. This historic route was once used by prospectors and miners to avoid the immense coastal cliffs while travelling the West Coast. Pass through deep limestone canyons, towering rainforests and groves of Nikau Palms. You may not be able to resist a speedy swim in one of the many deep clear pools you pass on the way! After the hike, we join a remarkable highway which takes us from the lush green rainforests of the West Coast and over the glaciated Southern Alps to the parched soft yellow savannahs of Canterbury. This is one of the most cleverly engineered roads in New Zealand. East of Arthurs Pass, stretch your legs and stroll around the enchanting limestone outcrops of Kura Tawhiti (Castle Hill). This area was an important meeting place and food gathering area for early Maori people. Interestingly it was also bestowed a "spiritual centre of the universe" by the Dalai Lama when he visited in 2002. Today it is a haven for rock climbers who climb and boulder on the multitude of rock forms. We then leave the highway and follow the back roads around Lake Lyndon and on to Methven, a ski town by winter and laid-back rural town the rest of the year. The Southern Alps form a spectacular backdrop. Wander in to the village for a meal at a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Methven Resort, Methven. Includes breakfast and lunch.



DAY 10 METHVEN - AORAKI/MOUNT COOK

5 km/3 hours hiking

Drive south following the edge of the Canterbury plains to Lake Tekapo, famous for its stunning turquoise waters and the quaint Church of the Good Shepherd, perched daintily by the lake. Hike up through wilding conifers and tussock grasslands to the summit of Mt John. Revel in the 360-degree views of the Patagonia-like landscape. The sweeping Mackenzie basin is a sparsely populated region in the rain shadow of the Southern Alps; tawny-brown drylands, braided riverbeds and startling glacial lakes extend to the horizon. On arrival at Mt Cook village we hike up to Red Tarns for magnificent views of Aoraki/Mount Cook and the surrounding alps. Relax here and enjoy the views before wandering back down arriving at the door of our accommodation, where we stay for the next two nights. *Accommodation: Aoraki/Mount Cook Lodge. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 11 AORAKI/MT COOK

5-8 km/4 hours hiking

Hike up to Sealy Tarns and enjoy the awesome views of Mt Sefton, Mueller Glacier and across the Hooker Valley to Aoraki/Mount Cook. If you're feeling energetic, join the guide for a further climb from the tarns up to the crest of Mueller Ridge for even wider views of this magnificent alpine landscape. Those not wanting to climb to Sealy or Mueller can take the flatter option and walk up the Hooker Valley (unguided), enjoying close up views of the Mueller and Hooker Glaciers on the way. *Accommodation: Aoraki/Mount Cook Lodge. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 12 AORAKI/MT COOK - WANAKA

2 km/1 hour hiking

Travel up the Tasman Valley towards the longest glacier in New Zealand, the Tasman Glacier. Take a short walk through the glacial moraine and board a custom-built boat for a unique spin around the terminal lake. Like most glaciers in the world the Tasman Glacier is retreating and the terminal lake increases in size every year. This dynamic environment is dotted with icebergs of all shapes and sizes from the collapsing terminal wall of the glacier. Our drive to Wanaka follows the Mackenzie country south before climbing over the tussock lands of the Lindis Pass into the southern lakes district. Wanaka is a lovely holiday town on the lake-side. *Accommodation: Edgewater Resort, Wanaka. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 13 WANAKA - QUEENSTOWN

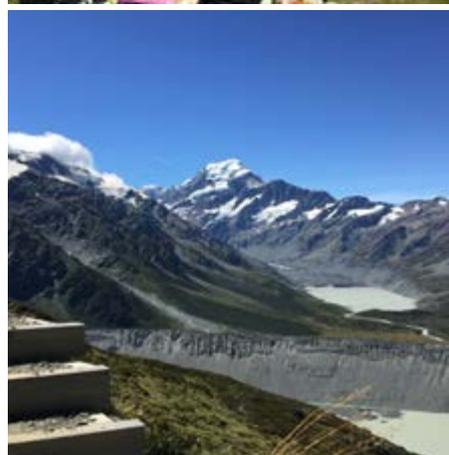
10 km/4 hours hiking

A beautiful drive alongside Lake Wanaka leads us to Aspiring National Park. We hike up the Matukituki Valley beneath some fine peaks before turning up the Rob Roy side stream and climbing abruptly to the bushline. This gorgeous trail through virgin beech forest emerges into a splendid alpine basin below the bulking mass of the Rob Roy Glacier. Watch water tumble off the glacier's snout as you relax and enjoy lunch. Keep an eye out for cheeky kea (alpine parrot). You probably won't need to look too hard as these curious birds normally call in when food is around (although it's important to never offer them any titbits and upset their natural foraging behaviour)! After the hike grab a drink and unwind on the lawn of the famous old drover's hotel at Cardrona, before we drive over the Crown Range and into the lively scene of Queenstown. Your tour finishes here in the late afternoon. *Includes breakfast and lunch.*

ADVENTURES FROM QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown is a beautiful town tucked under the mountains and beside the crystal clear Lake Wakatipu. There are a huge number of adventure activities on offer here. You might like to take a thrilling jet boat ride, face your fears on the highest bungey in New Zealand, or paddle peacefully down a river on an inflatable 'funyak'.

Many of New Zealand's famous Great Walks start within reach of Queenstown. The dramatic Hollyford Track in the heart of Fiordland National Park is a wonderful guided walk option. The unforgettable Milford Sound is a half-day drive from Queenstown. Steep cliffs and dense rainforest border this spectacular fiord that can be explored by boat. Whatever your preference, we can help you with any post-trip activities that you might like to add on to your New Zealand adventure. Talk to us and we can help you decide which options suit you best.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE B

- Up to 4-5 hours of physical activity per day
- At times carrying a backpack of 4-5kgs
- Tracks generally in good condition
- Altitude gains of up to 600m (2000ft) on harder days
- No hiking experience necessary

The full (optional) Tongariro Alpine Crossing on day 4 takes 6-8 hours and has an altitude gain of 750m.

GUIDES AND SAFETY

Our handpicked professionals come from a range of backgrounds. Each has extensive outdoor and hiking experience and a passion for New Zealand's wild and beautiful backcountry. Our guides are exactly that – they will guide you in the outdoors. Occasionally they might dash ahead to set up lunch or bring the bus around to meet you, but the rest of the day they are there for you. Expect a high level of care, knowledge and thoughtfulness. Our guides will ensure that your trip is truly inspiring, a huge amount of fun and safe. All guides are trained in Mountain Safety First Aid. All walks described in the itinerary are guided, however, the guide can suggest a number of shorter self-guided walks if you wish to do a little more or a little less walking on some of the days.



FOOD

Almost all of the meals are included on this tour, but when staying in the cities we let you do your own thing and try some of the excellent local restaurants (see "Additional Costs" section). Breakfast is usually (but not always) continental-style in the lodges and hotels. There are plenty of opportunities to graze the local cafes if you would prefer to explore in the morning. The lunches we prepare ourselves are often 'on the run' in picnic areas or on trails. Our guides usually set out lunch food for you and you simply help yourself. We provide healthy and wholesome food and include a lot of fresh produce. It is part of our philosophy to get everyone involved so there is a pretty good chance you may find yourself wielding a sharp knife or pushing the tea trolley around at lunchtime. Our customised trailers have a fold down table and cooking area that is perfect for preparing picnics at all those secret places we will take you. Included dinners are frequently in lodge restaurants (either set menu or a la carte), or in a restaurant in the town but occasionally somewhere out of the ordinary!



TRANSPORT

The average driving time per day varies; we have some days where we hardly drive at all. On a typical day we might be in the vehicle for 2-3 hours. But some days we will drive for longer. The driving time is a chance to rest and enjoy the fantastic scenery that is forever changing. We travel in a luxury minibus towing a custom-built trailer with food, equipment and your luggage. We carry a library box with some natural history reference books for you to peruse too. There will be a range of roads - sealed and unsealed. The guides are easily convinced to stop the vehicle if there is a great photo opportunity, vineyard or notable ice cream shop!



ACCOMMODATION

The New Zealand Uncut tour uses a range of hotels and quality lodges chosen for their good standards and wonderful locations. All rooms have ensuite bathrooms. Some lodges have units with two bedrooms per unit. Rooms are twin share or doubles. If you are travelling on your own you will be given a twin share room with a fellow traveller of the same gender. Single supplements are available on this tour. The New Zealand Uncut tour has been created for those that appreciate a high standard of accommodation after a good day of hiking.

LAUNDRY

Laundry facilities are available most nights, either as the hotel laundry service (additional charge) or as access to laundry facilities for hotel guests. Save up your NZ\$1 and \$2 coins as most washers and driers require these to operate. Laundry detergent is often available to purchase on-site.

CHARGING DEVICES

Devices such as cameras and cellphones can be charged throughout the tour - while travelling in the vehicle (bring along a charger adaptor) and during the hotel nights.

PACKING LIST

Items shown in bold can be hired from us.
Please arrange hire at least one week prior to your departure date.

What to take

New Zealand's weather is very changeable and cold weather can be experienced at any time of year, especially in the mountains. We recommend wearing lightweight and breathable fabrics while hiking. Merino or polypropylene underwear is great in cold weather and will still keep you warm when it gets wet, unlike cotton. Jeans are not suitable for hiking.

WALKING

- Hiking boots or shoes
- Daypack (25-30 litres)
- Drink bottle - 1L
- Waterproof raincoat (gore-tex or similar)**
- Warm fleece/wool jersey** (not cotton)
- Thermal underwear** (top and bottom, wool or polypropylene)
- Socks (we suggest 3 pairs)
- Warm hat or balaclava
- Long sleeve shirt (for sun protection)
- Shorts for hiking (or lightweight hiking trousers)
- Gloves or mittens (wool or fleece)

GENERAL

- Spare lightweight shoes or sandals
- Insect repellent (sandflies like foreign blood)
- Casual clothing for travel and evenings
- Dry bag for clothes/valuables

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

- Sunscreen, sunhat and sunglasses
- Rain trousers
- Camera
- Togs (swimming costume)
- Towel (lightweight travel towels are great)
- Walking poles**

SUPPLIED

- First Aid kit
- Drinking water
- Safety equipment
- Maps

Luggage

For the flight between Wellington and Nelson, the checked luggage allowance is 23kgs per person, with a carry-on luggage allowance of 7kg.

Equipment

We can offer quality hiking equipment for use on your tour at no additional charge. We are able to supply fleece jacket, thermal top and bottom, raincoat and walking poles. Requests for equipment must be made at least 5 days before the departure date.

ADDITIONAL COSTS

Meals

Meals that are included in the trip price are detailed above. Three evening meals are not included (Wellington, Nelson and Methven). One breakfast is not included (Wellington), as well as one lunch (en-route to Wellington). The typical cost for a restaurant main course in New Zealand is about \$28.

Optional activities

All activities outlined in itinerary are included in trip price.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

For bookings four or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 65 days prior to your trip. For bookings within four months of the departure, full payment is required.

Cancellations

More than 20 days prior to departure - 80% refund of full ticket price.

20 to 10 days prior to departure - 50% refund of full ticket price.

Less than 10 days prior to departure - NO REFUND.

Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.