

# NEW ZEALAND

DETAILED ITINERARY

LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

Jul 04/25



Spectacular natural wonders, cosmopolitan cities, friendly people, a comfortable climate...all elements of the perfect travel destination - New Zealand. On this active trip, explore caves, geothermal areas and glaciers. Go whale watching, visit a working sheep farm, and learn about the fascinating Maori culture.

On the North Island, travel to Waitomo and the fairy tale glowworm caves and explore the Cave of the Spirit "Te Ana o te Atua". Experience the boiling mud pools at Te Whakarewarewa geothermal valley, and enjoy breathtaking scenery around Lake Taupo and Tongariro National Park.

We return back to Auckland and fly to Christchurch in the South Island. We'll have a scenic boat ride through the Waiau Canyon followed by a soak in the hot pools. We'll ride the historical Earnslaw steamship and enjoy a whale watching excursion, as well

## FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 land days • Maximum 13 travelers • Start in Auckland, finish in Queenstown • All meals included • Includes 1 internal flight • Geothermal mud pools and geysers • Glowworm caves and Maori culture • Christchurch's garden city
- Historic steamship and working sheep farm
- Milford Sound cruise & Milford Track Walk
- Whale watching • Turquoise blue glacial hikes and soak in mineral hot pools • Visit to the 'Lord of the Rings' Hobbiton movie set

## DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

**Feb 05 - Feb 20, 2026 - \$8995 USD**

**Activity Level: 3**

**Comfort Level:** Some long drives

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable accommodations with private bathrooms.

**ELDERTREKS**



**SMALL GROUP  
EXOTIC ADVENTURES  
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS**

as marvel at the peaks and glaciers of Mount Cook. We end our trip with a cruise and 2 overnights in Te Anau, near Milford Sound.

This 16 day off-the-beaten-track itinerary offers the very best of New Zealand's natural wonders, while encompassing the 'must see' highlights.

## DAY 1 ARRIVE IN AUCKLAND

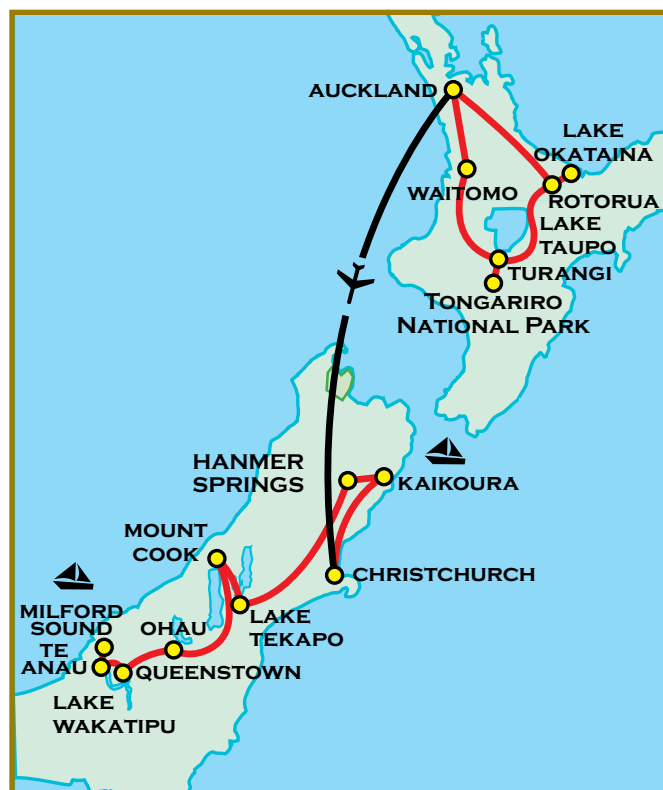
Upon arrival into Auckland, you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. Auckland is built on an isthmus and is surrounded by water on both sides. Consequently, boating is a common hobby here and Auckland is fondly referred to as the 'City of Sails'. Tonight, you'll meet your guides and the rest of your group with a welcome dinner as we prepare for our adventures ahead!

Overnight in Auckland.

## DAY 2 KARANGAHAKE GORGE WINDOWS WALK, TO ROTORUA

We depart Auckland in the morning and head south along the Hauraki Plains and through a small town of Paeroa, famed for its natural spring waters. We'll hike along the Karangahake Gorge – an area steeped in mining history, which we'll learn about as we walk on old mining tram lines and through purpose built gold mining tunnels. Afterwards, experience the real Middle-Earth with a visit to the Hobbiton movie set, the bucolic setting for The Shire that featured in the Peter Jackson directed films, The Lord of the Rings and the Hobbit Trilogies. The tour starts with a drive through the picturesque 1,250 acre sheep farm with spectacular views across to the Kaimai Ranges. Afterwards we'll drive to Rotorua, considered the heartland of New Zealand's Maori culture and the spiritual home of New Zealand's tangata whenua (original people of the land). Rotorua is also famed for its geothermal activity – which you can distinctly smell as you arrive into the town!

Overnight in Rotorua.



Auckland





### **DAY 3 LAKE OKATAINA, MAORI PA SITE, TE PUIA THERMAL WONDERLAND AND MUD POOLS**

Lake Okataina is one of the many beautiful Rotorua lakes and we'll spend the morning visiting the stunning lake and wandering along its shores. This area was traditionally inhabited by the local Maori people and those who'd like a walk can walk to explore the remnants of a 'pa' site – where a traditional village once stood. Later this afternoon we will journey to Te Puia and the Whakarewarewa geothermal valley – a place of gushing waters, steaming vents, boiling mud pools and impressive geysers. Tonight you'll enjoy a cultural performance by members of the Te Arawa tribe and share a traditional feast. A hangi, as it's known, is prepared by wrapping food and burying it in the earth to cook over hot stones. This healthy cooking method is similar to steaming and imparts a wonderful flavor.

Overnight in Rotorua.

### **DAY 4 HUKA FALLS NEAR TAUPO, HIKE LAKE ROTOPOUNAMU**

This morning we'll head south to our largest inland body of water, Lake Taupo. Draining from the lake is the Waikato River, which starts its journey through a tight cataract and spectacular chute – Huka Falls. We'll explore the trail to the falls and have lunch at a local cafe on the Taupo waterfront. After lunch we'll travel south around Lake Taupo past many rivers popular with fly fishing, so we may see some anglers trying their luck! For those who are keen, we'll then walk some of the loop track around a crater lake, Lake Rotopounamu in Tongariro National Park. Lava flows, active craters, hot springs, lakes, forest, tussock and alpine herbfields make up many of the scenic attractions to the park.

Overnight in the Ruapehu region.

## **DAY 5 TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK - TARANAKI FALLS WALK & SILICA RAPIDS**

Wide open arid volcanic landscapes, picture perfect volcanic peaks, waterfalls and clear flowing waters; it's no wonder this is a World Heritage Site! We begin with the Taranaki Falls loop which traverses varied landscape with a large waterfall tumbling over the edge of large lava flow which erupted 15,000 years ago. We will walk a distance of 5km/3 miles around the loop.

Later we will take the Silica Rapids walk, which follows a cascading stream through mountain beech forest to the creamy white terraces carved out from thousands of years of volcanic activity. The Silika Rapids loop is an easy 7km loop that will take us 2.5 hrs around. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure before our dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Turangi.

## **DAY 6 WAITOMO CAVES AND GLOW-WORMS, RETURN TO AUCKLAND**

Today we'll get to explore below the surface, as we head to the spectacular Waitomo Caves. We will take a walk through Ruakuri Cave, among stalagmites

and stalagmites, to learn more about the geological significance of the area and unique to New Zealand. Then we'll hop into a boat to glide silently through the starry wonderland of the Glowworm Grotto, with amazing commentary from our local guides. We'll enjoy lunch at a charming farmhouse and afterwards we'll head back to Auckland to catch our breath before heading to the South Island.

Overnight in Auckland.

## **DAY 7 FLY TO CHRISTCHURCH, WALKING TOUR**

After breakfast we fly to Christchurch. Often referred to as the Garden City, Christchurch features many majestic trees and extensive parks and gardens, the most notable of which is expansive Hagley Park in the heart of the city. Bordering the park you will find the botanical gardens and the Gothic revival building which houses the Canterbury Museum. The Avon River gently winds its way around these inner city landmarks and out through sprawling suburbs to the Pacific Ocean. We'll begin with a visit to the International Antarctic Center to learn about the amazing feats of the early explorers, what is currently happening now with Antarctic



Cave - Glowworms



research, and see some delightful penguins! We'll enjoy lunch in the botanical gardens and afterwards enjoy a walking tour of Christchurch. Learn all about the 2011 earthquake that shook the city and how it's been rebuilt.

Overnight in Christchurch.

## **DAY 8 HEAD NORTH TO KAIKOURA, WHALE WATCHING TOUR**

Today we'll travel up the coast to the seaside town of Kaikoura, which received its name from an early Maori explorer and translates as kai (to eat) and koura (crayfish). Today Kaikoura maintains its fishing heritage. After lunch we'll board our boat for a whale watch\*. We may encounter New Zealand fur seals, pods of dusky dolphins and the endangered wandering albatross. We may also see migrating humpback whales, pilot whales, blue whales and southern right whales. Kaikoura often hosts the world's largest dolphin, the orca, and is home to the world's smallest and rarest, the Hector's. Kaikoura also attracts the largest concentration and variety of seabirds on mainland New Zealand including 13 species of albatross, 14 varieties of petrels and 7 types of shearwater.

\*For anyone not wishing to take part in whale watch-

ing, there may be an opportunity to enjoy a kayaking or bird watching cruise instead (depending on availability).  
Overnight in Kaikoura.

## **DAY 9 HANMER SPRINGS FOREST, SCENIC JET BOAT AND SOAK IN MINERAL WATERS**

After breakfast we'll head inland on a scenic road past Mt. Lyford to the mountain village of Hanmer Springs, set in a breathtaking natural landscape and surrounded by forests and mountains. Hanmer Springs is a well-known spot for its thermal hot springs. Upon arrival we'll hop into a jet boat to take us down river to the Waiau Gorge to see the steep canyon walls and rugged cliff faces. Experience the thrill of travelling across just centimetres of water or rotating through a 360° spin, famous features of the amazing jetboat technology, first invented in New Zealand! This afternoon, we'll take the Conical Hill Walk to the lookout 200 meters above Hanmer Spring Village (duration 1 hour.)

This evening you can soak, relax and take in the view of the snow capped mountains and forests of the Southern Alps in the thermal pools. There are nine open-air thermal pools, three sulphur pools and four private thermal pools, as well as a sauna/steam room. The mineral spas are great for soaking after a day of walk-



Tekapo Church of the Good Shepherd

ing and, if you want a bit of extra pampering, you can arrange a massage after your soak.

Overnight in Hanmer Springs.

---

## **DAY 10 PEEL FOREST, EXPLORE LAKE TEKAPO**

This morning we'll head south again to Peel Forest for a 1 hour walk amongst ancient podocarp trees and many varieties of ferns. After lunch, we'll travel inland towards Aoraki Mt. Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain, and Lake Tekapo – an unreal turquoise-blue colored glacial lake. We'll visit the 'Church of the Good Shepherd' on the shores of the lake – easily one of the most scenic locations for a church you'll ever come across! Tonight, the wide open spaces, regular clear evenings and lack of artificial light provides us with the perfect opportunity to gaze at the Southern Hemisphere's constellations, including the Southern Cross.

Overnight in Lake Tekapo.

---

## **DAY 11 EXPLORE AORAKI/MT. COOK, SIR EDMUND HILLARY CENTRE**

The highest mountain in New Zealand, Mt. Cook was first named Aoraki or 'cloud piercer' by South Island Maori. This region was Sir Edmund Hillary's training ground as he prepared for his and Tenzing Norgay's famous summit of Mt. Everest in 1953. A range of short walks (up to an hour in duration) are possible from Mount Cook village, including the Glencoe Walk & Governor's Bush Walk. These tracks are surrounded by peaks, glaciers, native vegetation and mountain streams, and provide excellent views of Aoraki/Mt. Cook on a fine day. We can also spend some time exploring the visitor's center at Mt. Cook village which has an amazing museum about the climbing history of the mountain and its geology. Enjoy lunch at an alpine restaurant which offers spectacular views of Aoraki Mount Cook from every seat. We will also

visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Centre, built as a tribute to one of the world's greatest explorers and which showcases the Aoraki Mount Cook region.

Overnight in Twizel.

---

## **DAY 12 QUEENSTOWN, RIDE THE HISTORICAL EARNSLAW STEAMSHIP**

Today we'll journey to the excitement of the adventure capital of New Zealand – Queenstown. This small resort town packs in a lot of adventure including bungee jumping, jet boating, skydiving, mountain biking and hiking opportunities, as well as great local cafés, bars, and restaurants. This afternoon we'll hop onto the historic steamship the T.S.S Earnslaw, which has been cruising lake Wakatipu for over 125 years! It will take us to the working sheep station, Walter Peak, where we'll experience life on a working sheep farm where we will enjoy a BBQ



*The facial tattoo on this carved figure is known as a "Moko". Moko is designed to display ancestral and tribal messages that apply to the wearer's family. This carving would have been created to commemorate an ancestor.*



lunch. Once back in Queenstown we'll visit 'The Winery' where we'll have a chance to taste the delicious local pinot noir wines grown in this area.

Overnight in Queenstown.

---

## **DAY 13 EXPLORE FIORDLAND, OVERNIGHT IN TE ANAU**

This morning, we set off for our largest and perhaps most spectacular national park, Fiordland. Our journey will last from 3-5 hours. Departing from the Divide shelter, the walk ascends through lush, temperate rainforest on a well maintained track. The steady climb takes approximately 2 hours at a leisurely pace and provides an excellent opportunity to learn about the natural and human heritage of Fiordland. Gaining an elevation of 400 metres, emerge from the forest into the alpine environment, with panoramic views of high snowy peaks, alpine lakes, and deep bush clad valleys. On a fine day lunch is on the summit amidst the alpine tarns, and in unfavourable conditions in the shelter of a nearby tramping hut. After lunch steps are retraced to the Divide Shelter.

After our hike, we will drive approximately 1 hour to Te Anau for our overnight. The name Te Anau is probably more correctly rendered in its original Maori form - Te Ana-au - which means 'Cave of the Swirling

Water'. Beautifully located on the shores of the South Island's largest lake, Lake Te Anau, and with the majestic Southern Alps panorama as a backdrop, the small town is a haven for outdoor and nature enthusiasts. It is considered the gateway to Fiordland National Park, Milford Sound, as well as some of New Zealand's best hiking tracks, such as the Milford, Kepler, and Routeburn Tracks.

Overnight in Te Anau.

---

## **DAY 14 MILFORD TRACK GUIDED WALK AND MILFORD SOUND CRUISE**

Our day begins with a short boat ride to Sandfly Point. An easy 11 kilometre round trip walk alongside the cascading Arthur River, then Lake Ada, on a well maintained track takes us to our destination, Giant Gate. This scenic waterfall is best viewed from the large swing bridge. At this point we return, walking under ancient temperate rainforest surrounded by an array of ferns, mosses and lichens in vibrant shades of green. Learn about the fascinating human heritage of the track. On completion of the walk an opportunity is made for photos at the sign marking the end the track, festooned with the boots of walkers that have made it to the end of the walk, not a single step further. We will rejoin the boat for our transfer back to Milford.

This afternoon, enjoy Milford Sound's awe-inspiring scenery from the comfort of a small boat cruise, as we



sit back and relax. Cruise the length of the fiord and experience the beauty of Milford Sound in all its grandeur. Listen to the informative commentary from the skipper, view the iconic Mitre Peak and get up close to the mighty Stirling Falls. With limited numbers, we are rewarded with an intimate experience of Milford Sound and unobstructed photo opportunities from the outdoor viewing decks. Keep an eye out for the seals basking in the sun or maybe even a pod of dolphins visiting! There is so much to see, and is a perfect way to round off the day.

Some fitness required, easy walking. 50 metre vertical gain, 11 km walk. Walking time 4 hours.

Overnight in Te Anau

## **DAY 15 RETURN TO QUEENSTOWN**

This morning we'll enjoy a scenic drive towards Queenstown, via the small and picturesque towns of Mossburn and Kingston. We'll stop along the way for lunch and to stretch our legs. Tonight, we'll walk to a local restaurant and celebrate our two weeks of adventure with a farewell dinner together with our new friends.

---

## **DAY 16 DEPART QUEENSTOWN**

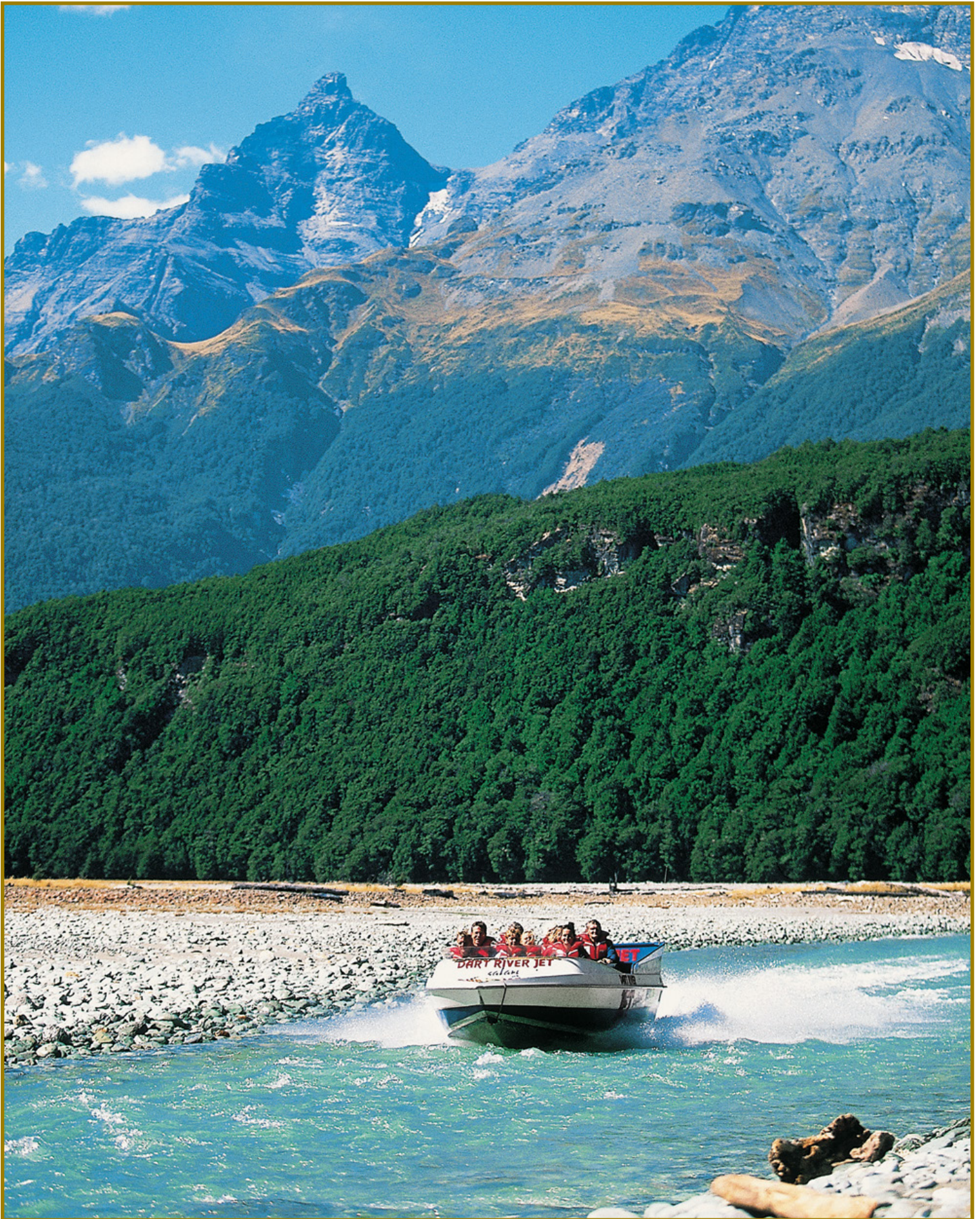
We transfer to the airport for our international flights homeward today.













## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

This group is limited to 13 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

### 2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (portage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

### 3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

### 4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, national parks and reserves, and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is also very educational to meet the local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and learn about their local customs.

### 5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transportation is included in the land price of the trip. This includes minibus, coach, ferry, kayak, zodiac/raft and jet boat.

### 6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We always stay in good accommodations, where rooms have a private bath or shower.

### 7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

The climate is moderate: expect day time highs of around 80°F-85°F (26°C-29°C), during the summer months and night time lows of around 50°F (10°C). The weather can vary between plenty of sunshine and typical coastal rainy days.

### 8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land price is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

### 9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

*\*Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

### 10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after receiving your booking deposit for the trip.

### 11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with lunch on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local foods prepared in a wide range of settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best.

### 12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

### 13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked on the tour.

