

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



Walking in New Zealand (WZN 2015/16)



TOUR DURATION
20
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Trek Grade: Easy

tour Code: WZN

Tour Highlights - Walking in New Zealand

- ✓ Rotorua - Explore the geothermal landscape of the Maori heartlands
- ✓ Tongariro Crossing - Known as 'the greatest day walk in the world'
- ✓ Abel Tasman National Park - Discover this scenic coastal park on foot and by boat
- ✓ Fox Glacier - Walk to the terminal face of this spectacular glacier
- ✓ Wanaka - Enjoy walks around picturesque Wanaka
- ✓ Milford Sound - Boat trip along the tranquil fiord beneath towering mountains
- ✓ Te Anau - Visit this hiker's paradise and walk part of the Kepler Track
- ✓ Mount Cook - Discover the soaring landscapes of the Southern Alps

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 19 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 19 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

Start Point: Join tour: Auckland

End Point: Tour ends: Christchurch

Transport: Bus, Boat, Ferry

Countries: New Zealand

Walking in New Zealand

New Zealand is all about the great outdoors and this tour aims to bring you the best of what this compact, yet dramatic and varied country has to offer as you explore on foot. The North Island combines awesome natural beauty with a rich Maori heritage and the South Island is blessed with dramatic landscapes. Discover them both as you trek through volcanic landscapes, around picturesque lakes, next to impressive glaciers and along breathtaking coastlines.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Trek Grade: Easy

Suitable for most people in good health, these easy walks are predominantly on good paths, at low altitude and on undemanding terrain. Previous walking or trekking experience is not necessary.



Walking in New Zealand WZN



Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also drive the tour bus and lead most of the walks, as well as taking care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Auckland

Our tour starts in Auckland, New Zealand's largest and most diverse city. Surrounded by volcanoes and volcanic cones, beautiful beaches and rolling countryside, Auckland offers a great introduction to New Zealand.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 In Auckland. Visit to Rangitoto Island

Today clients joining the tour on the preferred flight arrive early in the morning. Other clients will have this morning to explore Auckland or relax after their journey. At midday we all meet for a briefing and then make a short city tour of Auckland on the way to the downtown harbour to take the ferry the short distance out to Rangitoto Island. This iconic volcanic is a great place for hiking and bird-watching and we take a gentle introductory walk on the island.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Travel south through Waikato region to volcanic Rotorua

After breakfast this morning, we depart Auckland and travel southwards through the Waikato Region to Rotorua, the North Island's most famous destination for overseas visitors and an important cultural centre. Visitors soon adapt to the distinctive sulphur smell, which comes from many vents to the underground thermal region. The region is known for its many geysers, steaming lakes and streams, and mud and hot mineral pools known for their curative properties. After we have checked into our hotel we have a free afternoon to relax, explore Rotorua town or take an optional walk in the area. Optional walks include around Blue Lake / Lake Tikitapu, (1.5 hrs, 5.5km), and a trail through the magnificent Redwood and Douglas Fir trees of Whakarewarewa Forest (1 hr, 3.4km). For those interested in walking the Tour Leader will recommend the most suitable walk for the weather and accompany the walkers. In the evening we get to experience a Maori 'hangi' dinner - cooked using heated rocks in a pit oven.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4 Visit to Waimangu Valley geothermal park. Lake walk

This morning we visit Waimangu Valley, a fascinating geothermal park of bubbling mud pools, hissing geysers and steaming lakes created in 1886 following the volcanic eruption of Mount Tarawera. We walk amongst the hot springs and steaming cliffs and to inferno Crater which erupts to 8m high, every 38days. Leaving Rotorua we travel through an important forested area via the picturesque Huka Falls to Lake Taupo, the largest lake in New Zealand. We then continue on to Lake Rotopounamu where we take a 5 kilometre (approximately 2 hour) walk through this beautiful area, a favourite of walkers, swimmers, tree lovers and birdwatchers. Later we drive to Tongariro National Park where there is a choice of several short walks. Our main walk today is approximately 2 hours and covers 5 kilometres on a marked trail.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Walk the iconic Tongariro Crossing

The 19.4 km Tongariro Alpine Crossing track passes over diverse and dramatic volcanic terrain and has been described as 'the greatest day walk in the world'. In the presence of active volcanoes we can experience some of Tongariro National Park's special gifts: a cold mountain spring, steam vents, an active crater, lava flows, magnificent views and emerald-coloured lakes, all combining to make this an enjoyable and memorable trip. We start hiking in the Mangatepopo Valley, then continue at a gentle gradient as the main track climbs alongside a stream and around the edges of old lava flows. The climb from the valley to Mangatepopo Saddle between Mount Ngauruhoe and Mount Tongariro is steep, but on a clear day, we may be rewarded with views of Mount Taranaki to the west. The track continues along a poled route across South Crater to a ridge leading up Red Crater from where we can get views of Mount Tongariro, which was used as Mount Doom in the Lord of the Rings films. From the highest point on the Tongariro Crossing, the summit of Red Crater (1886 metres), the track leads down to three water-filled explosion craters called the Emerald Lakes. Minerals that have leached from the surrounding thermal area are the cause of their dazzling greenish colour. Below Ketetahi Hut the track continues down through tussock slopes to the forest bushline. At two points the track passes over the tongue of a lava flow from Te Maari Crater and for a distance, travels alongside a stream containing minerals from Ketetahi Springs. We are accompanied by a local guide as today is a free day for the driver / guide. Other unguided optional walks are also available for those that do not wish to do the Tongariro Crossing. The Tongariro Crossing Walk takes approximately 8 hours and covers 19.4 kilometres. The terrain is unmade mountain paths NB This hike is not an 'Easy' grade walk but has been included because it is so special. This a proper Alpine Crossing with some steep climbs and requires a certain level of fitness, proper hiking boots and walking poles.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

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DAY 6 Explore Wellington

The tour continues southward through the fertile farmlands of Levin to Wellington (approximately 6 hours drive). New Zealand's capital lies partially on reclaimed land at the harbour and the steep hillsides adjacent to the Cook Strait. Wellington has been the capital city since 1865 and as such is also the country's political centre. We take a city sightseeing tour and drive to Mount Victoria from where we can enjoy a beautiful view over the city. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Cross the Cook Strait and Marlborough Sound to the South Island

This morning, we visit Te Papa Tongarewa, the modern National Museum, which gives a good insight into New Zealand history, Maori Culture and Pacific culture. More than 20 galleries house imaginative exhibitions and interactive experiences that explore New Zealand's unique natural environment, dynamic art heritage, fascinating history and the vitality of Maori culture. In the afternoon, we say farewell to the North Island and board the Interisland Ferry to cross Cook Strait and cruise through the scenic Marlborough Sounds, an area of 'drowned' valleys, which resulted from the geological sinking of a mountain range. Today the Sounds are a maze of deep channels, sheltered waterways and secluded bays, encompassed by verdant bush-clad hills. After an approximately three-hour journey often described as one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world we reach the idyllic harbour town of Picton.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Visit Motuara Island Bird Sanctuary. Walk along Queen Charlotte Track

This morning we board a water taxi and cruise to Motuara Island Bird Sanctuary (1 hour) where we enjoy a short walk (also 1 hour). Later we are dropped off at Resolution Bay to walk part of the Queen Charlotte track. This 67km coastal walking track stretches from historic Ship Cove to Anakiwa in the spectacular Marlborough Sounds, and enjoys a temperate climate which allows good year-round walking conditions. Today we are walking from Resolution Bay to Endeavour Inlet. The verdant, subtropical native bush is home to many of New Zealand's native birds. In the late afternoon, we reach Endeavour Inlet, and board the water taxi again to cruise back to Picton.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Explore Abel Tasman National Park by boat and on foot

After breakfast, we take the Queen Charlotte Drive between Picton and Havelock, one of New Zealand's most delightful scenic drives (approximately 1 hour 45 minutes). Winding past the Sounds' numerous bays, this bush-fringed road takes us to the head of Pelorus Sound and the seaside village of Havelock. Once a thriving gold-mining town, Havelock is New Zealand's primary producer of Greenshell mussels. We then take water taxi in Abel Tasman National Park from Keiteriteri to Onetahuti. We will pass several offshore islands that provide a protected habitat for native wildlife including Tonga Island famous for its seals. From Onetahuti we walk down to Bark Bay to meet for our return boat transfer. Our journey then takes us back to Nelson, the town with the most sunshine hours in the country. Many years ago New Zealand's first roadside cafe opened here and today the town is home to craftsmen and artists.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Fossils, fur seals and Pororari River Track

Our journey takes us inland through an unbelievably scenic region with excellent roads and minimal traffic. Rugged, green and wild, the West Coast was in the nineteenth century one of the busiest and richest areas, when gold drew men from all over the world. On the way to Westport we'll travel through Murchison, where we can learn about the massive earthquake of 1929. Try some fossicking (searching for and collecting materials from the land surface or by digging by hand at Lyell Creek, one of sixteen areas set aside in the South Island where anyone can freely enjoy fossicking for gold without a mining permit), before we navigate the awesome Buller Gorge. At Hawks Crag we'll drive under a spectacular overhang, where the road has been cut out of solid rock. Just past Westport is Cape Foulwind, where we will take the Tauranga Bay Seal Colony Walk (20 minutes) to have a close encounter with a colony of New Zealand Fur Seals in their natural habitat. From Westport, we journey to Punakaiki, where visit the famous Pancake Rocks with dramatic blow holes during high tides and take a walk along the Pororari River Track; this track follows a magnificent limestone gorge with two main features - a river with huge rocks in deep pools, and beautiful forest featuring subtle changes from sub-tropical to

temperate. The duration of the walk will depend on the weather and time available, but will be up to 3 hours. The Pororari River Track walk is approximately 2 -3 hours and covers up to 7 kms. The terrain is a riverside trail.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Walk to view point for Fox Glacier terminal face

Leaving Greymouth behind us, we pass the forgotten gold miners' towns of Hari Hari and Ross on our way down the West Coast to Westland National Park. The next stop, Hokitika, is known as New Zealand's Greenstone capital. Most of this precious stone is found in this region and then turned into beautiful pieces of jewellery. In the afternoon we reach the spectacular Southern Alps and the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers. If the weather is good we will get to see these spectacular ice rivers. There is nowhere else on earth where the glaciers descend down to an altitude of 280 metres above sea level and nearly touch the rain forest. We stop in the small township of Fox Glacier to take a short one-hour walk up to the Terminal Face. Weather and time permitting you may wish to take a helicopter ride over the glaciers. Our walk to the Terminal face takes approximately 1 hour.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Experience Gondwanaland. Drive to Wanaka

In the morning (weather permitting), we will go for a walk around Lake Matheson (approximately 1 hour 30 minutes), which could provide us with an excellent opportunity to take that perfect photo of Mount Cook with its mirrored reflection on the lake's calm water. We then continue our tour through Westland National Park, a World Heritage Park. The rainforest is very impressive and has subtropical character. Here we undertake a short bush walk (approximately 40 minutes) to reach the seldom-visited Monro beach, which once joined part of Gondwanaland. The Tour Leader will explain the different species of native trees, such as Rimu, Kahikatea and Beech. We continue driving via Haast Pass towards Wanaka, in Aspiring National Park, with breathtaking views of the surrounding snowy peaks and the glacier lakes Hawea and Wanaka. Today we walk a total of approximately 2hrs over 3.6 kms.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Free day to explore Wanaka

Wanaka is a hiker's paradise because of its beautiful environment. Mount Aspiring, often called the Matterhorn of New Zealand, dominates this area with its fascinating glaciers. Today is free for exploring.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 Discover Arrowtown Chinese Settlement. Take Queentown gondola ride

After breakfast, we traverse the Crown Range road and take the opportunity to visit the partially restored and well-interpreted Arrowtown Chinese Settlement. This is a quiet reminder and tribute to the contribution made by the Chinese goldminers and business people to the region's goldmining, cultural and business history. We then continue on to Queenstown, the Adventure Capital of New Zealand. In the afternoon, we take the Skyline Gondola up to admire the views before returning down to explore the town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Walk part of the Kepler Track

After breakfast, we make our way to Te Anau, known locally as 'the walking capital of the world'. Some of the most wild and dramatic scenery in New Zealand can be found in Fiordland, in the southwest corner of the South Island. Fiordland is one of the largest National Parks in the world and a World Heritage area. Here the power of nature stuns the enthralled visitor - from its waterfalls tumbling hundreds of metres into virgin, forested valleys and lonely fiords, to endless stretches of shimmering lakes and granite peaks. Today we walk part of the Kepler Track, one of the great walks of New Zealand.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 16 Boat cruise on Milford Sound. Walk to Key Summit

This morning we drive to the most accessible and best known of the fiords, Milford Sound. The Milford Road (between Te Anau and Milford Sound) is one of the finest alpine drives in the world. The scenery is exceptional, ranging from broad grassy flats, dense rainforest, and towering mountains through to glacial lakes and alpine herb fields. No other road in Fiordland offers such a diverse glimpse into New Zealand's alpine zone. We take a 1.5 hour boat trip on the Milford Sound, which is dominated by the mighty cone of the Mitre Peak, rising steeply up from the water. After lunch, we take a walk to Key Summit (approximately 3 hours), a half-day walk on the Routeburn Track. This walk is on an easy track and offers spectacular views of Fiordland National Park. Late this afternoon, we arrive back in Te Anau. Total walking: approximately 3hrs.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 17 Walking in the shadow of Mount Cook

After passing through the rocky Kawerau Gorge and Cromwell village, the road winds upward to Lindis Pass. The plains of the Mackenzie highland lie before us. On the left are the mountains of the Southern Alps that we will continuously see whilst we drive to Mount Cook National Park. Reaching Mount Cook village, we enjoy the unique environment of different alpine plants and flowers and the panoramic vista of New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki Mt Cook (3764m). Walks may include Blue Lakes, Tasman Glacier and Tasman Lake. Blessed with a marvellous view of the surrounding peaks we overnight in the National Park. There are different short walk available and one will be chosen by the Tour Leader depending on the weather. One of the regular walks is 1 hr and 40 minutes.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 18 Free day to explore

Today is free to explore the area or relax. There is plenty of hiking available for those that wish to do more walking. Walks include Mount Cook village, Hooker Valley and Lea Point. Please note that today us a free day for the driver / guide.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 19 Drive to Akaroa via Lake Tekapo

This morning we drive to the stunning turquoise Lake Tekapo, and visit the Church of Good Shepherd set on the shore surrounded by mountains. Built in the 1930's in memory of the local pioneers all the materials for the church were sourced from a within a five mile radius and the builders were instructed not to disturb the site so rocks , etc were incorporated into the walls. We then continue our drive to the French style village of Akaroa. The afternoon is left free to explore this quiet village and harbour sitting at the centre of an ancient volcano.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 20 Tour ends in Christchurch

The last morning is left free to relax in Akaroa. In the afternoon we drive to Christchurch for a short city tour. The tour ends at 13.00 in Christchurch.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 19 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

New Zealand

Lunch £: 14.00

Dinner £: 18.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

New Zealand

Bottle of Beer £: 3.00

Water £: 1.00

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Auckland - Sky tower NZ\$28; Revolving restaurant NZ\$70; Auckland War Memorial Museum NZ\$8

Wellington - Cable car NZ\$7; Zealandia NZ\$28 self guided / Night tour NZ\$75; Wellington Movie tour NZ\$55

Punakaiki - Paparoa National Park: River Kayak NZ\$40 for up to 2 hours and \$5 each following hour (per adult) Guided trips start from \$70 (per adult)

Fox Glacier / Mount Cook - Helicopter flights; NZ\$215-410

Wanaka - Jet Boat and Walk - NZ\$172.5; Jet Boat Walk and Helicopter NZ\$445

Christchurch - Lord of the Rings tour, visiting Mt Sunday (film set Edoras) NZ\$245; Antarctic Centre NZ\$25; Willow Bank Wildlife Reserve NZ\$25; Punting on the River Avon NZ\$25 plus Garden tour NZ\$39; Day tour to Akaroa from NZ\$115

Foreign Exchange

New Zealand

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in all main towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: All major credit cards are accepted at all locations.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices.

Local Currency: N.Z. Dollar.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: You can purchase New Zealand currency from home, otherwise we recommend £GBP or \$US.

Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities only.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

EXPLORE! The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

New Zealand: Visas are not required for UK, US, Canadian and Australian citizens.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

USA (If flights transit): According to US law, passengers will have to disembark, collect luggage and clear immigration before re-boarding for the onward flight.

Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). This applies if you enter the country by sea or by air on a carrier participating in the visa waiver scheme, holding a return/ onward ticket. The passport requirements are that it must be machine readable, and must contain a digital photograph of the holder and also an integrated circuit chip that stores biographic information.

All passengers travelling to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme must provide their details online no later than 72 hours prior to travel. British travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be detained and sent home.

When completing an application for transit you should enter the words 'In Transit' with your final destination location in the address line. Anyone applying for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ESTA) to travel under the Visa Waiver system will be charged a fee of 14USD (9GBP).

For more information, and to apply online, please visit the following website at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Once obtained, the application will be valid for a period of two years, or for the validity of your passport (whichever is shorter).

For more information about who is eligible for the VWP, or any other questions you may have regarding your eligibility, or machine readable passports, please contact your local consular office, or visit www.usembassy.org.uk

Vaccinations & Protection

New Zealand

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Trekking Details

This tour involves a series of day walks between 2 and 6 hours long. We have graded the tour as easy. The Tongariro Crossing day is a more difficult walk and will take approximately 8 hours but there are easier options available.

Climate

New Zealand

New Zealand's climate is maritime: mild and pleasant with abundant sunshine, high rainfall and a few extremes of heat and cold. However, settled weather cannot be counted on at any time of year - all seasons can be experienced in one day! Generally the summer months (Nov-April) are warmest and most pleasant, with least rainfall. In the Southern Alps temperatures can fluctuate dramatically. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Clothing

You will need lightweight clothing, but also warmer clothing. Good rain gear is essential as is warm upper body clothing. Fine Merino products can be purchased in New Zealand and are warmer than synthetics. Please note that most accommodation in New Zealand has laundry facilities - washing machines and driers - available for guest use, and hairdryers are available in most places. Bring swimwear too.

Equipment

Bring a torch, a water bottle and sunscreen. Due to increased exposure risk in New Zealand, we recommend a minimum of SPF 30+. Due to lack of ozone, burn times are drastically reduced and adequate protection is a vital part of your holiday. Walking poles are useful on some walks. The diminutive biting sandfly (a type of blackfly) can be particularly bad on the west coast of the South Island. While their bites do not carry any disease, they can be particularly irritating for some people. Good insect repellents need to be carried (best purchased in New Zealand, as these are specific for the New Zealand sandfly). A good effective mild analgesic is available to soothe any bites.

Footwear

Bring comfortable walking shoes/trekking trainers. Sandals and/or old training shoes are useful if you want to do any whitewater rafting.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. A backpack or soft holdall preferably with wheels may prove more convenient due to the variety of transport used on this tour. You will be required to carry your luggage to/from on/off coaches, trains and ferries.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

New Zealand

Population: 4,414,400

Size of Country: 268,021 sq km

Major Language: English

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: -12

Electric Supply & Plugs

New Zealand

3 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditions, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- [The Travel Foundation](#)
Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- [Tourism Concern](#)
Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety>

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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