

New Zealand

A 6-week self-drive itinerary for day hikers and overnight backpackers (or trampers) who enjoy natural wonders.

See our trip photographs on www.photoseek.com

**Tom & Carol Dempsey traveled
Monday Feb 12 - Tuesday March 27, 2007**

Include some "Lord of the Rings" (LOTR) motion picture locations; plus some hand-dyed fabric outlets for quilters.

Money: as of March 2007

*** An ATM card is the most economical way to exchange money.
1 US Dollar = **1.4** New Zealand Dollar
1 New Zealand Dollar, NZD = **0.72** US Dollar, USD
In almost all cases, the 12.5 percent Goods and Service Tax, **GST, is included** in listed prices, and **no tip is expected.**

Sample flights:

- Depart **Seattle 1:25pm February 12** to SF United#587. Depart SF 7:00pm on Air New Zealand #7 and arrive 13.25 hours later in Auckland (AKL) 5:15am on **February 14**. Depart 6:40am on ANZ #303 to arrive at **Christchurch (CHC) 8:00am**.
- Depart **Auckland 7:45pm March 27** to San Francisco on ANZ#6 (12 hour flight), arrive in Los Angeles 12:40pm. Depart 4:05pm United #854 to **Seatac arrival 6:44pm Mar 27**

Airline notes: Air NZ has the biggest domestic network. Qantas, operated by Jetconnect on main trunk and principal tourist routes (Auckland AKL -Rotorua ROT-Wellington-Christchurch CHC-Queenstown ZQN)

Car rental:

We highly recommend this special inexpensive one-way rental from Christchurch to Auckland:

www.scotties.co.nz:

- **US\$23/day** relocation special driving from **Christchurch to Auckland.**
- **Convert ~US\$851 cash to NZ dollars to get car**
- **Scotties Rent-A-Car & Abell Rentals**, NZ affiliates for Advantage RAC USA, contact **Allan Scott, 189 Blenheim Rd. Christchurch.** Ph ++64+3 348 2002, Fax ++64 +3 348 2046. cars@scotties.co.nz
- **Annie Scott**, Scotties New Zealand, **27 New North Road, Eden Tce, Auckland.** Tel: ++64 9 3033912, Fax:++64 9 6302624.
- Talk live on **Skype** - call 'scottiescars' or 'nzscotties' **9-4pm ...**

Itinerary 44 days (42 days in NZ)

***must do **do *maybe do

South Island Itinerary 30 days:

- **Fly Seattle to Christchurch.** Scotties rental car.
- **** Arthur's Pass NP:** Day hike Avalanche Peak 1 day
- *** Geraldine:** ~2 days
 - **** Peel Forest Park:** Big Tree Walk, DOC cabins.
 - *** LOTR's Edoras:** Rangitata River, Mt. Potts Station
- ***** Mount Cook,** day hikes ~2 days
- **** Oamaru & Dunedin: 1 day** (4.5 hrs from Mt. Cook)
 - ***** Moeraki Boulders:** Forty kilometres south of Oamaru on SH1
 - *** Yellow-eye** (larger) & blue (small) penguins.
- *** The Catlins 0.5 day**
- ***** Hump Ridge Track 3 days**
- **Queenstown:**
 - ***** Routeburn Track 1-3 days**
 - **** Glenorchy: Rees-Dart Track 5 days**
- ***** Makarora:** 1-3 days = flight-see, 2 nights **Top Forks Hut** or **Siberia Hut**, 2 long day hikes, & 3 hrs with packs to jet-boat, **Aspiring NP**
- **** Wanaka:** 3 days = 2 nights **Aspiring Hut**, hike **French Ridge.** or
- *****Rob Roy Valley** easy day hike, spectacular
- **West Coast: 2 days**
 - *** Waiaototo River Jet boat Haast to Mt. Aspiring**
 - ***** Lake Matheson** walk, glaciers, Mt Cook sunset
 - ***** Pancake Rocks**
 - **Buller Gorge**
- **Nelson area:**
 - **** Nelson Lakes NP:** day hike **Robert Ridge** or **overnight Angelus Hut ~1-2 days**
 - *** Kayak & hike Abel Tasman NP 3 days**
 - ****Queen Charlotte Track / Nydia Track**
- **Picton Ferry: 0.5 day**

North Island Itinerary 12 days:

- **** Wellington** 1 day: Te Papa Museum, Mt. Victoria.
- **** Putangirua Pinnacles Scenic Reserve**
- ***** Egmont/Taranaki:** Pouakai Track 2-3 days
- Drive 5-6hrs / 250k to Tongariro.
- ***** Tongariro Northern Circuit** 3 days, or 1-day **Crossing**
- **** Mount Ruapehu** crater day hike (maybe closed: lahar risk)
- Drive 3.5 hrs / 190k
- ***** Rotorua / Taupo area** 1-2 days
- Drive 1.5 hrs / 86k
- **** Napier: Shine's Falls** 2hrs
- **** Whakatane: White Island** boat/walk 6 hours; 1 day, or
- ***** Lake Waikaremoana, Urewera NP ~2 days drive+ hike**
- Drive 5 hrs / 304k Whakatane to Auckland
- **** Otorohanga Kiwi House:** see daytime active kiwis
- **** Auckland Museum**

More car rental companies:

- www.carrentalexpress.com
- www.acerentalcars.co.nz – Queenstown, cheap

Cars are easier & cheaper to drive than campers. For a campervan rental, must book well in advance; prices 5/22/06:

- Sleepervan - smaller van with camping equipment. Check relocation deals.
- www.fetchcampervanhirenewzealand.co.nz: Feb 1-28 2007: 28 days @ NZD \$122.12 per day Total: NZD \$3419.36 Rates include: Automatic Transmission. Unlimited kilometres, No extra driver fees, Living equipment, Customer Care 24 hrs roadserviceline helpline (tollfree), 12.5% GST.
- www.backpackercampervans.com
- www.kiwivans.com

New Zealand Lodging:

*** **Motorcamp standard cabins** are about NZ\$30-40 per night.

Book a day or two before you arrive anytime in Feb – March.

*** **Shopping is closed in small towns** from **Saturday lunchtime thru Monday morning**; but **larger towns open on Sundays**.

2007 Holidays:

Schools start **Wednesday February 7**. Schools close in 2007 on:

- **Feb 6** Tuesday: Waitangi Day National Holiday.
- 6 April: Good Friday
- 9-10 April Monday – Tuesday: Easter
- 25 April Wednesday: Anzac Day
- 4 June Monday: Queen's Birthday
- 22 October Monday: Labour Day

Recommended Books: *Lonely Planet: New Zealand* 13th Edition released November 2006. *Tramping NZ* 5th Edition Nov 2002; *Kiwi Tracks*

Good web site for travel research: www.frommers.com

Bring to New Zealand:

- All visitors to New Zealand need a **passport** which must be valid for at least **three months beyond the time you intend to stay**. USA citizens can stay **3 months** by default permit.
- **Swim suits** (Abel Tasman) & wettable shoes/sandals
- Best quality rain gear, multiple plastic bags & pack liners, 2 sleeping bags, stove, cooking pots, lexan spoon/fork/knife, **water filter**, backpacks (no tent required), small thermos, collapsible cooler, trekking poles, water shoes (*Cloggins*) with arch support for stream crossings / bogs, sunscreen
- **Water-proof camera housing for pocket camera Canon SD700 IS**
- DEET helps against **sandflies**. DEET is not a “repellent”—it just inhibits biting, by blocking receptor sites in insect sensors, but insects may still land on you. **Sandflies prefer shady forest, out of the hot sun, near running water**, particularly in mountain valleys on the West Coast. Luckily they are **inactive at night / dark**. As long as you **keep moving** you can avoid slow-moving sandflies; but as soon as you stop moving, you must use clothing to keep them off. “Fiordland insects are most active from December to early February.”

Buying camping stove fuel in NZ: *Due to luggage delayed two days in Christchurch, we bought a tiny new MSR stove that attaches to a propane canister, lighter weight than our older MSR white gas stove. [What is called white gas or Coleman Fuel in United States is called: Pegasol, Callite, Britolite, Shellite or Fuelite in NZ]*

New Zealand Weather Forecasts

www.metservice.com

Tramping (Hiking) Track Bookings & Planning:

- <http://www.doc.govt.nz> check for DOC Hut cancellations
 - www.trekwatch.net: free instant e-mail notification updated every 5 minutes with Hut cancellations on **Routeburn/Tasman/Kepler/Milford Tracks**.
- DOC Visitor Centres nationwide book huts. **You must book ahead** in peak season for the **Routeburn, Abel Tasman Coast Track, Milford, Kepler, & Heaphy**.
 1. A “**Path**” is level, well-graded, often wheelchair-ok.
 2. “**Walking tracks**” & “**tramping tracks**” (often marked with red & white or orange flashes on trees) are more arduous.
 3. A “**Route**” requires considerable tramping experience to cope with ill-defined trail, often above bushline.
- ❖ **Great Walk (GW) Huts** (require separate **Great Walk Hut Pass** & reservations) and **Serviced Huts (SV)** both have **wardens, mattresses, toilets, water**. **Standard Huts** don't have wardens; we won't be in any Standard Huts this trip.
- ❖ **Cookers** are provided peak season only on the **Tongariro Northern Circuit, Routeburn, Kepler & Milford Tracks, plus Aspiring Hut**.
- ❖ Bookings are **not required for the Tongariro Northern Circuit, Whanganui Journey, or Rakiura Track** (Stewart Island), where bunks are allocated on a **first-come, first-served** basis, just like **non-Great-Walk tracks**.
- ❖ For **Serviced & Standard Huts**, buy “**Hut Tickets**” in \$5 units. We will use >NZ\$70+ in qualified huts, so **we might choose the “Backcountry Hut Pass” NZ\$90**, thus saving trips to park offices & allowing extra rainy-day stays. The **Backcountry Hut Pass** covers these 6+ serviced (SV) huts:
 - **Pouakai Hut** SV 1 night \$10 (plus Holly Hut?)
 - 4 nights **Rees-Dart Track** SV Huts \$10 (**Shelter Rock, Dart x 2, Daleys Flat**)
 - 1-2 nights **Top Forks** or **Siberia Hut** SV \$10 (+**Young Hut?**)
 - 1-2 nights **Aspiring Hut** SVA (Serviced Alpine). (**French Ridge Hut** adds \$20 on a separate system, NZAC.)

[Hut Pass is not valid at Tongariro Northern Circuit; Abel Tasman Coast Trek, Routeburn, Milford, Kepler, Heaphy; Alpine Huts in Mt Cook NP (Mueller) & Westland NP; & NZAC huts (French Ridge) in Aspiring & Westland NP.]

***must do / **do / *maybe do

South Island

Christchurch:

- Take the “back road” instead of Highway 1 in/out.
- Feb 3–14: “Garden City Festival”
- **Arts Centre - Craft market** on weekends. Gothic revivalist building built 1874; restaurants, food stalls, shops, galleries. 10 min walk west from Cathedral Square along Worcester St.
- **Akaroa, Banks Peninsula:**
Eastern Bays Scenic Mail Run: “One adventure that shouldn't be missed (tel. 03/304-7873, or call visitor center, in the old post office building, 80 Rue Lavaud, tel./fax 03/304-8600; www.akaroa.com). Join mailman Gerry Trott and his wife, Anita, who make this 120km (74-mile), **4-hour journey** around some pretty hair-raising **Banks Peninsula** roads every day. They deliver mail, papers, and freight to the isolated farms and communities of the peninsula, and they'll take up to **eight passengers** along for the ride. They'll even stop to let you take photos -- and believe me, you'll want to. Ever heard of a mailman who stops to offer a picnic of tea and scones at a picturesque beach along the way? Departs **Akaroa** visitor center Mon-Sat **9am**. NZ\$38; reservations essential the day before travel”. - ** Frommers.com

**** Castle Hill:** “*The Chronicles of Narnia*” movie climaxed here. The Christ Church Cathedral front is made from Castle Hill limestone.

- * **Scenic boulders:** 60-70 km from Christchurch, through Sheffield & Springfield, 10 km after Porter's Pass look for thousands of **large boulders** on the left, the “Homestead”. Park next to pine trees, walk five minutes. Another 5 km is Cave Stream carpark (see Flock Hill & Dry Valley).
- **** Avoca House Bed & Breakfast** (\$120 double): **** Hand dyed fabrics, Jan Blythe**, please ring ahead Phone +64 (0)3 318 7620. avocahouse.com On **Hwy 73**, 15km east of Porters Pass; and 2 km past Kura Tawhiti DoC Reserve (Castle Hill Rocks). Follow the main tar-sealed road into **Castle Hill Village: Trelissick Loop** turns **left** 100m inside the gates. At the first “T” intersection, turn **left** into **Torlesse Place**. Avoca House is at very end of cul-de-sac. Parking around back of Avoca House, take the lower drive (right-hand-side) and pull in beside the garage OR: pull into the grassy pull off just off the left-hand drive (by the tussocks). **1 hour from Christchurch airport** / 2 hours to **Greymouth & Hokitika**.

**** Arthurs Pass NP:**

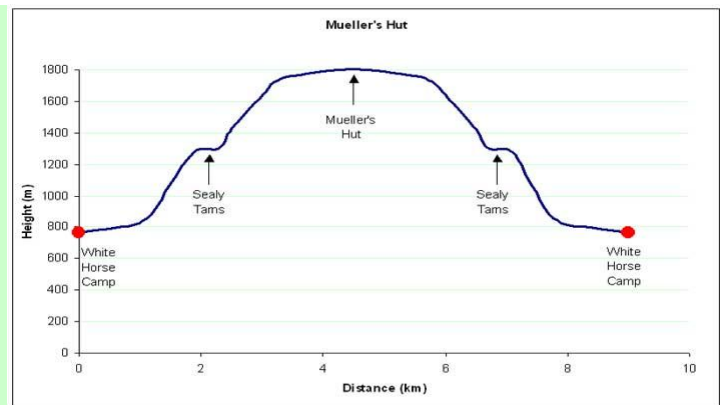
- **** Day hike Avalanche Peak 1 day training hike** (hike at beginning or end of a southern loop on South Island)

* **Geraldine:** ~2 days

- **** Peel Forest Park:** magnificent podocarp (conifer) forest, Big Tree Walk, picturesque waterfalls. 22k north off SH72. DOC campground cabins. Pleasant day hiking in earshot of enchanting bird songs. LP p577.
- * The location of fictional **Edoras** seen in the “Lord of the Rings” (LOTR) movies is at **Mt. Potts Station, Rangitata River Valley & Gorge**, in **Ashburton**'s high country.
 - **LOTR** tours of Rangitata Valley: contact Wilderness Adventures, run by owners Andre & Kirsty Russell, Main Street, Geraldine, e-mail: info@4x4newzealand.co.nz, web: www.4x4newzealand.co.nz, Phone: +64 03 6937254 [info updated as of June 2008]
 - **Mt Sunday**, a sheer-sided hill in the middle of an expansive plain in the Rangitata River valley, was the set for Edoras, fortress city of the Rohan people in *LOTR*.
 - **Erewhon Station** is at the end of the “shingle”/gravel road: “*www.lifewellspent.com 2005: A woman and her husband are caretaker and cook for the station & they love company. They showed us the trail through the station down to the river & encouraged us to take the walk. lovely ... with the Southern Alps backdrop... new owners are running it like an old-time station, using Clydesdale horses to plough fields, etc.*”

*** **Mount Cook National Park (Aoraki):**

- **** Hooker Valley** 1-4 hours: “Dayhike up the moon-like terrain, at the base of Mt. Cook, to the terminus of the Hooker Glacier. Superb views of New Zealand's highest peaks..” - nztravelers
- **** Red Tarns Track** 2-3 hours RT: “spectacular panorama of valley & Mt Cook & other peaks.” > higher to **Mount Sebastopol**, stunning views of Mount Cook & Lake Pukaki.



Mueller's Hut / Sealy Tarns (day hike or overnight):

- Overall climb is 3420ft / 1040m. Start=765m, hut= 1805m.
- **Mueller's SVA Hut has cookers;** NZ\$35 pay Aoraki/Mount Cook visit centre (Backcountry Hut Pass not accepted here).



Ball Shelter (1,020m) & Ball Pass:

- **Ball Shelter:** Along old Ball Hut Road (foot access only) from **Blue Lakes car park**, Aoraki / Mount Cook National Park. 6 beds. Water supply, Mountain radio, Toilet. Perched on the edge of the Tasman Glacier moraine wall. Good views of Tasman Glacier & Malte Brun Range opposite. Aoraki / Mount Cook is hidden from Ball Shelter.
- **Caroline Priv Hut:** 6 hrs one way from Blue Lakes car park.
- **Ball Pass:** A demanding **3 day trek**. NZ\$725.00 per person. A challenging crossing of Mount Cook Range between Hooker & Tasman Glaciers just 5km south of Aoraki. Follows Ball Ridge, viewing Caroline Face of Mount Cook, & overlooks Tasman Glacier. **Guided hikers** spend **two nights** at **fully refurbished Caroline Hut** at 1830m/6000ft. Breathtaking views of Mount Cook. Rich alpine flora & unique bird life. Moderate snow & glacier travel - cross snow slopes safely using crampons & ice-axe. If necessary your guide will belay you on a rope for steep snow descent. All equipment provided. **Ball Pass Trek** is a good alternative to the **Copland Pass Track** (only accessible to experienced mountaineers). (04) 939 9323; after hours mobile: 027 440-8304 www.nzadventure.com/ball_pass.html

***must do / **do / *maybe do

Oamaru:

- **** Moeraki Boulders**
- **** Shirley Goodwin**, owner of **Tillia Dyes & Fabrics**. **Dyeing2Design** summer fabric sale. **Tillia House B&B**, \$70 queen, shared bath, coast view, deck, small charge for internet or laundry. Dinner \$20pp arranged in advance. **\$25/hr dyeing tuition**. info@tillia.co.nz, 10 Arun St, South Hill, Oamaru, ph: 03-434-5758, fx 03-434-5759.
- *** Oamaru Harbour Blue Penguin Colony:** \$17 eve; "Behind Scenes Tour" \$10 (view nests 11, 12, 7pm); both=\$22.50.
- *** Yellow Eyed Penguin Colony**, Bushy Beach Road, Bushy Beach: The rare yellow-eyed penguins are much larger than blue penguins.

Dunedin:

- Christchurch to Dunedin, 4.75 hrs, 365k / 228 miles
- historic homes
- albatross, seal colonies
- *** 2-hour tour of yellow eyed penguins**, 20 min from Dunedin

* Otago Peninsula:

- *** Sandfly Bay:** where the rare yellow-eyed penguins can be **observed freely** (without a fee) from hides in the sand-dunes as they return to burrows in **early evening** from sea.
- **Royal Albatross Centre:** daily tours 9am to dusk
 - Colony viewing from observatory.
 - Allow half a day for the total experience - an hour's drive each way from Dunedin and two hours at Unique Taiaoroa.
 - Prior bookings essential - Telephone +64 3 478-0499 or email reservations@albatross.org.nz

** The Catlins

- *"wild, natural New Zealand at its unspoiled best."* - Frommers.com *** best natural NZ attractions.
- *** Nugget Point** lighthouse with seals, seal lions, **penguins**. *"Lovely walk, sweeping ocean views, and craggy rock formations."* *"blissful solitude...wild, windswept"* -Frommers Best *** NZ Views.
- *** Purakaunui Falls, 20m.** *"Very rural, with decrepit barns, sheep, lush rolling hills. Falls are an exquisite 15 minute rainforest walk – towering old-growth kauri trees, tree ferns, and lush foliage. The falls descend in several tiers, pretty spectacular - well worth it."*
- *** Jack's blowhole** at high tide; a large sea cave has collapsed to leave a deep ocean-filled hole in the middle of a field. At the northern end of **Waipati Beach** you can walk to a series of **tall sea caves** - these caves are **accessible two hours either side of low tide**.

Ulva Island **, Stewart Island:

- **** Ulva Island:** Best time to see native birds is early in the morning during springtime. *"Tucked into Stewart Island's Paterson Inlet, tiny Ulva Island will leave you speechless with its incredible native bird life, wall-to-wall feathers and they're not afraid of humans. Take a camera; you'll need evidence once you start telling friends back home about it – *** Frommers.com best natural NZ attractions.*
- Book a few days ahead the **\$50 ferry** Bluff > Oban, on Stewart Island, 3x daily, 1-hour crossing often rough water. **\$20 water taxi** to Ulva Island RT from Golden Bay Wharf, 10 minute walk from Oban.



*** Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track: 3 days

Hump Ridge dominates the landscape from Lake Hauroko to Te Wae Wae Bay at south-eastern end of **Fiordland National Park** (Southwest New Zealand World Heritage Area). **43 k circuit**, starts and finishes at western end of Te Waewae Bay. Coastal, bush and sub alpine scenery wrapped in one track. Views of the South Coast, Lake Poteriteri, Lake Hauroko and mountain ranges deep in Fiordland National Park. Surreal sandstone towers peering down on 13 marine coastal terraces in the Waitutu Forest and across Lake Poteriteri to rugged mountain ranges in Fiordland.

- daily Track Transport from Tuatapere to the Track Burn reducing days 1 and 3 by 6 km
- online or one call easy booking toll-free **0800 486 774**
- option to upgrade at Okaka and Port Craig to twin single or double beds or a self contained cabin with en suite.
- the chance to see hectors dolphins in Te Waewae Bay
- marine terraces with pristine beech & podocarp forests.
- stunning alpine backdrops and settings
- moonscapes of tors and tarns
- sunrises, sunsets and scenery to die for
- The historic viaduct at Percy Burn (36 m high, 125 m long) is the largest surviving wooden viaduct in the world.
- huts and facilities set new standards; helipacking & helilifts

Freedom Walk- 2 nights from \$90, for the keen independent trumper with their own transport. Includes two nights on the track at Okaka Hut and Port Craig Village. Optional extras:

- **Track transport** from Tuatapere to the end of the road / Rarakau (\$20 one way) and **from Rarakau to the start of the track (\$30pp one way)**. **Round trip fee from Tuatapere is \$80** (saves \$20).
- backpacker accommodation in **Tuatapere**: Shooters Backpackers \$24. Five Mountains Backpackers \$22.
- heli packing (max **15kg**, 1 persons pack) - \$50 per sector or \$135 for the full circuit (3 sectors)

- **Freedom Plus Lite** = 3 nights from \$345pp, hot showers, first day Helipack; **Freedom Plus** = 3 nights from \$445pp

DAY 1: - Arrive at Tuatapere

Report to the Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track Office (31 Orawia Rd) for pre-track briefing and to uplift hut passes.

DAY 2: Tuatapere, Track Burn, Okaka Hut

Walk 5 - 7 hours / 13km (+add 2 hours / 6km if walking from end of the road at Rarakau / Bluecliffs)

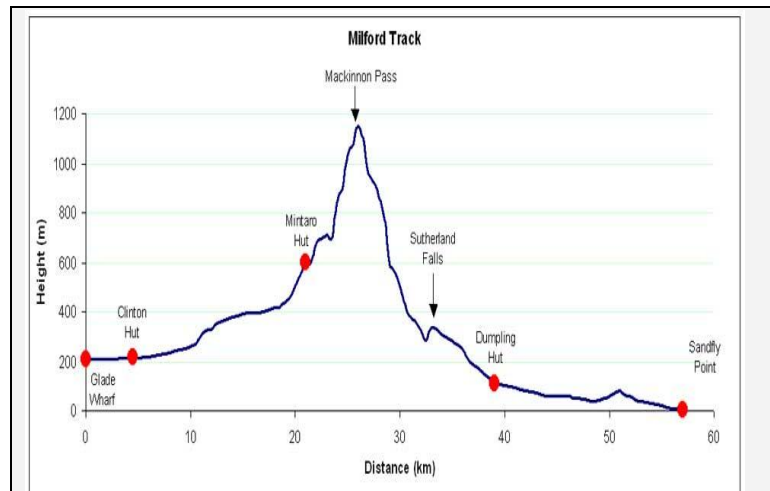
Depart Tuatapere 7.30am for the bus trip to the start of the walking track. Follow the coast before heading inland at Flat Creek. Climbing steadily up the Hump Ridge, bush gives way to sub alpine tussock grasses and finally Okaka Hut (890m).

DAY 3: Okaka Hut, Percy Burn Viaduct, Port Craig Village

Walk 7 - 9 hours / 19km Traversing along the Hump Ridge past sandstone tors and mountain tarns. Then descending through Mountain Beech to the South Coast track near the Edwin Burn viaduct. An old logging tramway leads across the massive Percy Burn Viaduct, the highest remaining wooden viaduct in the world to Port Craig Village.

DAY 4: Port Craig Village, Track Burn, Tuatapere

Walk 3 - 5 hours / 11km (+add 2 hours / 6km if walking to Bluecliffs) Explore this pioneering village before walking coastal tracks and the beach back to the end of the track. Chance to see rare Hector dolphin. Shuttle departs Track Burn at 2.00pm for Tuatapere and completion.



* **Milford Track** (32 mi / 53.5 km; **US\$156pp / NZ\$260pp**)

- Hike **4 days** from Lake Te Anau to Milford Sound. The chance of completing a crossing without getting seriously rained on are less than 1 in 50. Must book 4-6 months in advance. Voracious sandflies.
- NZ\$120 per person for huts three night package
 NZ\$17.00 Bus Te Anau to Te Anau Downs
 NZ\$55.00 Boat Te Anau Downs to Glade Wharf 1.5 hour
 NZ\$28.20 Boat Sandfly Point to Milford Sound 20 min trip
 [NZ\$50.00 optional Milford boat tour, 1 hour 40 minute trip]
 NZ\$40.00 Bus Milford Sound to Te Anau/Downs 93k, 1.5 hr

* **Manapouri: Doubtful Sound sea-kayaking**

Experience the quiet and serenity of Fiordland's second largest fiord, Maori name Patea, "place of silence". Cross western arm of **Lake Manapouri** by boat, to 22 km road link over a 600m pass to Deep Cove on **Doubtful Sound**. (*Alternative to Milford Sound*)

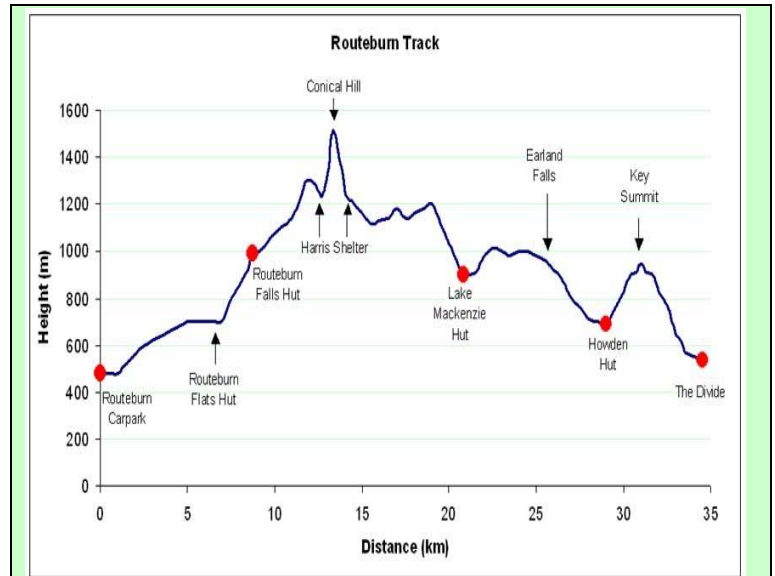
* **Te Anau, Homer Tunnel, & Milford Sound**

Travel times: Queenstown / Arrowtown / Routeburn

- Queenstown to Glenorchy - 48km, 40 mins
- Glenorchy to Routeburn Shelter - 25km, 30 mins (unsealed road)
- Queenstown to Te Anau - 197km, 2 hours
- Te Anau to Divide - 85km, 1.5 hours
- Divide to Milford Sound - 35km, 30 mins
- Te Anau to Invercargill, 1hr 45 mins
- Queenstown to Invercargill, 181k / 113 miles - 2hrs 15 mins
- Queenstown or Te Anau to Dunedin, 3.5 hours
- Queenstown to Christchurch, 6 hours
- Queenstown to Haast, 3 hours, 242k
- Queenstown to Greymouth, 7:15 hours, 564k
- Te Anau to Christchurch, 8 hours

Queenstown / Glenorchy:

- Lake Tekapo to Queenstown = 4.5 hrs, 362k / 226 miles



*** **Routeburn Track: 1–3 days**

- **Weather: Routeburn, Dart & western half of Greenstone & Caples Tracks** receive ~5000mm rain, and snow possible any time > 1000m elevation. Much drier areas = the lower **Rees, Matukituki & Wilkin** valleys ~1500mm rain.
- **DOC Hut Reservations:** <http://www.doc.govt.nz> - check for DOC Hut cancellations, or call (03) 249 8514 for Routeburn, Milford, or Kepler.
www.trekwatch.net : free instant e-mail notification updated every 5 minutes with DOC Hut cancellations
- *** **24k / 14 miles, 3400 ft to Harris Saddle, or 26k / ~16 miles, 4000 ft round trip to Conical Hill**, starting from **Routeburn Carpark**. Stay 1-2 nights preferably in **Routeburn Falls Hut** (8k in); or **Flats Hut is easiest to book spontaneously like we did**.
 - [33km walk normally one direction Routeburn > Divide]
 - NZ\$40pp/night, must book huts ahead. Booking office for Routeburn/Milford: **Fiordland Visitor Centre, Te Anau**, email: greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz Ph +64 3 249-8514
 - 5000 mm rain per year
 - From **Routeburn Shelter to Routeburn Flats Hut** (7km; **2–3 hours**; 250m ascent).
 - **Routeburn Flats Hut to Routeburn Falls Hut** (2km; **1–1.5 hours**; 300m ascent).
 - Harris Saddle (**2–3 hours**, 1277m elev). Look for chamois.
 - *** **Conical Hill side hike**: (1515m; 2km return; **1+ hours**; 240m steep rocky ascent) for glorious panorama of snow-capped Darran Range on opposite side of Hollyford Valley, see down Hollyford Valley to Martin's Bay and Tasman Sea.
 - **Routeburn Falls Hut to McKenzie Hut** (11km; 4–7hr; 300m ascent, 250m descent)
 - **Lake McKenzie Hut to Howden Hut** (8km; 3–4hr; 400m descent). **Howden Hut to The Divide** (2.5km; 1hr–1hr 30min; 50m net descent)

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Queenstown / Glenorchy area lodging:

Three quiet towns as **alternatives to Queenstown:**

1. **Arrowtown:** quiet, charming, old gold-mining town: *RG:*
 - **Arrowtown Holiday Park** 11 Suffolk St tel & fax 03/442 1876. Marginally the handiest and largest of the town's two campsites with showers and laundry available to non-guests (\$3 each) and a tennis court. Tent/powered sites \$10, standard cabins under \$50 per room, tourist flats \$50–90.
 - **Hippo Hideaway** 24 McMillan Rd, Arthurs Point tel 03/442 5785, half way between Queenstown and Arrowtown. A simple, friendly little get-away-from-it-all bolt hole. You'll need your own transport and to take some food, but otherwise it's ideal. Dorms under \$25 per person, rooms under \$50 per room–\$50–70.
 - **Royal Oak Hotel** 46 Buckingham St tel 03/442 1700. Old hotel in the centre of town with the cheapest beds in town in simple rooms sharing facilities, along with some singles. Under \$25 per person–\$50–70.

Kinloch and Glenorchy are two quiet lodging options at the end of Lake Wakitipu:

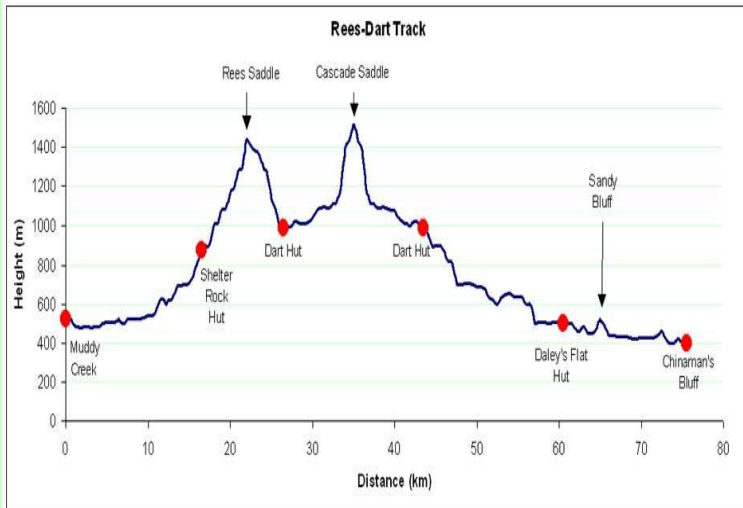
2. * **Kinloch Lodge:** peaceful lodge/hostel 1.5 hours from Queenstown. self-catering kitchen has pots, pans, mugs, plates, cutlery. Gas station in Glenorchy <5pm. \$69 double, \$100 ensuite. Telephone: +64 3 442 4900 reservations@kinlochlodge.co.nz
3. * **Glenorchy:** *from Rough Guide online:*
 - **Glenorchy Holiday Park & Backpackers** Oban St tel 03/442 7178, glenpark@queenstown.co.nz. Well-organized campsite, the cheapest place in town, bunks, basic double or twin cabins and a self-contained unit. Non-residents shower for \$3. Dorms <\$25 per person, **cabins <\$50**, villa \$70–90.
 - **Glenorchy Hotel** cnr Mull St & Argyll St tel 03/442 9902, glenorchy.hotel@xtra.co.nz. Good backpacker-style dorms, with communal kitchen and lounge, are hidden behind this hotel. From November to April, plain double rooms – but with great views up the Dart Valley – are also available. Dorms without bedding under \$25 per person, rooms \$50–90.
 - **Glen Roydon Outdoor Lodge** cnr Mull St & Argyll St tel & fax 03/442 9968. Good modern rooms with a nod to ski-lodge style, all sharing the comfortable guest lounge with its open fire, TV and videos. \$90–120.
 - **Mt Earnslaw Motels** 87/89 Oban St tel 03/442 6993, www.earnslaw.bizland.com. Well-kept, clean and spacious cabin-style units with a comfortable and homey feel run by very friendly and helpful people. Glenorchy's only motel, right in heart of town. \$90–120.
 - **Glenorchy Café** - good food

Rees-Dart Track & other Transport by Kinloch Lodge (except Wednesday afternoons) call 03 442 4900:

- **Glenorchy to Rees \$19**, 09:30-10:00 Departs from Glenorchy Info centre.
- **Dart to Glenorchy \$25** 13:45-14:30 Departs from Chinaman's Bluff
- Boat Kinloch to Glenorchy \$7, 09:00-09:15
- Boat Kinloch to Glenorchy \$7, 14:30-14:45
- Boat Glenorchy to Kinloch \$7, 14:45-15:00
- Queenstown to Glenorchy \$18, 12:30-13:30 Departs "Info and Track Office" in Shotover Street.
- Glenorchy to Queenstown \$18, 10:30-11:25 Departs from Glenorchy Info centre then with "Info and Track centre", dropping off in Shotover Street.

Backpacker Express Shuttle Bus \$18, Glenorchy ph:3 442 9939
 Depart Glenorchy 9.30am
 Arrive Rees (Muddy Creek) 10.00am
 Arrive Glenorchy 10.30am

*****must do / **do / *maybe do**



** Rees-Dart Track Circuit: 5 days

- 45.6 miles / 76k from Muddy Creek to Chinaman's Bluff, with Cascade Saddle, minus 9k if jet boat out = 40 miles / 67k
- Optional 4wd Backpacker Express to near 6km beyond the Muddy Creek car park, and close to the simple Twenty-five Mile Hut; & optional jet boat NZ\$50 saves ~11 miles.
- Base = Glenorchy, Kinloch, or Queenstown.
- **Must carry stove/cooker & lights.** No reservations required but must buy back country hut tickets or *Annual Hut Pass* in advance from DOC.
- Ascend partly rural landscapes of Rees Valley, some boggy ground/wet shoes, descend more pristine & wild Dart Valley.

(Should we reverse the following route to put the jetboat & floodable flats first during good weather? How is the steepness of Rees Saddle descending southwards?)

1. 7 hours Muddy Creek to Shelter Rock Hut, 1650 feet up; new roomy bunkrooms.
2. 5-7 hours Shelter Rock Hut to Dart Hut (20 bunks, "ultra modern") over Rees Saddle 2300 ft up, 1900 feet down.
3. *** **Cascade Saddle:** Side trip 12 miles / 19k / 8-hours from Dart Hut [from Aspiring Hut in the next valley, the Saddle & Pylon are too steep & slippery going down]
4. **Dart Hut to Daleys Flat Hut** 6-8 hours
5. **Daleys Flat Hut to Sandy Bluff** to catch 10:30am jetboat, 7km; 2hr-2hr 30min; 100m ascent, 110m descent.
 - Dart River 5000mm rain/year; lower Rees=1500mm/year. Side creeks between Dart and Daley's Flat huts can become impassable in heavy rain
 - "Rees-Dart Track: **Cascade Saddle** was quite possibly the trekking highlight of my three month stay in NZ. Hike up a **terrific glacial valley, nearly to the foot of Dart Glacier**, then ascend the **Saddle** (Sloping on one side, shear cliff on the other, with waterfalls leaping into valley below) for the most **breathtaking view of Mt. Aspiring**."

Excellent **Rees-Dart Track** description From Rough Guide:

- **Day 1:** The standard approach to the Rees-Dart Track is to walk up the Rees and down the Dart, an anticlockwise circuit which leaves open the option of finishing off with either a Fun Yak or a jetboat ride. The track from **Muddy Creek car park to Shelter Rock Hut** (16km; 6-8hr; 450m ascent) follows a 4WD track across grass and gravel flats on the left bank of the braided lower Rees and requires a **couple of foot-soaking stream crossings**. You can save yourself the trouble (and a couple of hours hiking) by getting **Backpacker Express** to drop at the end of the 4WD track, 6km beyond the Muddy Creek car park, and close to the simple **Twenty-five Mile Hut**, which is owned by Otago Tramping Club but can be used (pay \$3 to the DOC in Glenorchy). Press on across Twenty-five Mile Creek and over more river flats for another hour or so, with Hunter Creek and the peaks of the Forbes Mountains straight ahead. Just past the confluence of Hunter Creek, the Rees valley steepens appreciably and becomes cloaked in beech forests. Soon after, the track crosses a swingbridge to the right bank and climbs above river level, eventually coming out on the grassy flats of Clarke Slip. The track is bush-bound again up to just below the tree line, where it passes the site of the old Shelter Rock Hut then continues for a kilometre until you hit tussock country. One final crossing of the Rees River, now a large stream, takes you back to the left bank and the new Shelter Rock Hut (\$10; 20 bunks).
- **Day 2 & 3:** from **Shelter Rock Hut to Dart Hut** (7km; 4-6hr; 500m ascent, 500m descent), is the shortest but one of the toughest, scaling the 1447m Rees Saddle. Stick to the left bank of the Rees over sub-alpine scrub and gravel banks for a couple of kilometres before crossing the river and gradually climbing up to a tussock basin and the saddle. Descend rapidly and then more steadily across snow grass following the left bank of Snowy Creek, which churns down a narrow gorge to your right. A kilometre or so later the track crosses a swingbridge to the right bank, commencing a loose and rocky descent past a long series of cascades to another crossing of Snowy Creek, just above its confluence with the Dart River. Grassy areas on the right bank provide camping spots and the **Dart Hut** (\$10; 20 bunks) sits on the left bank; this is the pinch point for Rees-Dart accommodation, with tramper numbers swelled by those staying **two nights** to explore the **Cascade Saddle** route on **Day 3**.
- **Day 4:** The track from **Dart Hut to Daleys Flat Hut** (16km; 6-8hr; 430m descent) initially climbs high above the river and stays there for 3km, passing through beech forest before dropping to Cattle Flat, 5km of grassed alluvial ridges traced by a winding and energy-sapping but easy-to-follow route. At the end of Cattle Flat the track returns to the bush and runs roughly parallel to the river until it reaches the beautiful grassy expanse of Quinns Flat (perfect in the late afternoon light), where the track turns inland. Within half an hour you reach the sandfly-ridden **Daleys Flat Hut** (\$10; 20 bunks), redeemed by its pleasant location on the edge of a clearing.
- **Day 5:** **Trampers planning to pick up a jetboat or Fun Yak to Glenorchy at 10.30am will need to leave around 8am for the Daleys Flat Hut to Sandy Bluff section** (7km; 2hr-2hr 30min; 100m ascent, 110m descent). The walk skips through the bush for around 4km until Dredge Flat, where you make your own track, looking for markers on the left that indicate where you re-enter the bush. The track then climbs steeply up Sandy Bluff to reach a belvedere high above the river before dropping down to river level and the **jetboat pick-up point**.
- If you are determined to walk all the way, you'll find the section from **Sandy Bluff to Chinaman's Bluff** (12km; 3hr; negligible descent) fairly easy, crossing the flats south of Sandy Bluff and following the river to Chinaman's Bluff. Pick-ups from here can be arranged, though you can continue on foot from **Chinaman's Bluff to Paradise car park** (6km; 2hr; negligible descent) through Dan's Paddock & along either the 4WD track or a more direct walking track.

Makarora Lodging: (1 hour from Haast; 45 min to Wanaka)

- **Makarora Wilderness Resort:** www.makarora.co.nz Catch Flightseeing/Siberia plane from here. Backpacker double \$49, shared kitchen. Cabin double from \$69, private kitchen, shared bath. Self-Contained Chalets from NZ\$95, double bed, kitchen, microwave, fridge/freezer. Backpackers doubles NZ\$49 with shared kitchen. (03) 443 8372, 8am-8pm, serves as regional booking centre.

Wanaka:

(4.2 hrs to Franz Josef; 5 hours Christchurch)

- ⇒ * **Mount Roy Track:** 5-6 hours return day hike. A 5 minute drive or 6km bike from Wanaka, right at base of Mount Roy; little shade, bring water. Magnificent panoramic views of Lake Wanaka, Mount Aspiring, mountains and glaciers.
- ⇒ * **Diamond Lake Track (half day hike):** car park 18km west of Wanaka on the Mount Aspiring Road (hike 7km; 2.5-3hr RT; 400m ascent) “*From Rocky Hill, fantastic 360-degree views of Southern Alps, Matukituki River delta, Lake Wanaka, & an outstanding view of Mt. Aspiring*” - www.nztravelers.com
- **Lakeland Adventures, booking agent & pick-up point** 99 Ardmore Street, tel 03/443 8174 & 0800/684 468

Wanaka Lodging:

- **Fern Lodge:** Downtown at 122 Brownston Street, Wanaka, Phone: 03 443 7480, Reservations: 0800 55 55 56, Motel 2 persons \$80-\$95. Email: info@fernlodge.co.nz, www.fernlodge.co.nz

Campgrounds from Rough Guide online:

- **Glendhu Bay Motor Camp** Mount Aspiring Rd, 15km west of Wanaka tel 03/443 7243, glendhucamp@xtra.co.nz. Popular lakeshore family campsite, fabulous views to Mount Aspiring, boat-launching, canoe & bike rental. Cabins under \$50 per room.
- **Outlet Motor Camp** Lake Outlet Rd, 6km from Wanaka tel 03/442 7478, fax 443 7471. Beautifully sited where Lake Wanaka becomes the Clutha River, for strolls along lake or river. On-site vans < \$50.
- **Top 10 Pleasant Lodge Holiday Park** 217 Mount Aspiring Rd, 3km west of Wanaka tel & fax 03/443 7360, www.nzsouth.co.nz/pleasantlodge. Sprawling, family-oriented site. Cabins under \$50 per room, apartments \$50-70, motel \$70-90.
- **Wanaka Lake View Holiday Park** 212 Brownston St tel 03/443 7883, fax 443 9086. The most convenient of the campsites, ten minutes' walk from central Wanaka; rooms in a new lodge with bathrooms & kitchen under same roof. Lodge & cabins \$50-90, tourist flats \$70-90.

Hostels from RG:

- **Bullock Creek Lodge** 46 Brownston St tel & fax 443 1265, bullockcreeklodge@clear.net.nz. Former motel turned into a first-rate hostel with en-suite and TVs; doubles. Comfy spacious cooking and lounge area with a deck having afternoon sun, and also a fully self-contained apartment. Beds under \$25 per person, rooms under \$50 per room, apartment \$50-70.
- **Cliffords** 21 Brownston St tel & fax 3/443 6560, peterwilliamson@bigfoot.com. Cheapest beds in town. Fairly functional backpacker double rooms with sheets provided, a communal lounge, kitchen and bathroom. Located at the back of a large town hotel of the same name. Rooms under \$50 per room.
- **Matterhorn South** Small appealing hostel in town centre; doubles under \$50; log fire.
- **Mountainview Backpackers** 71 Brownston St tel & fax 03/443 9010, www.mountainview@madmail.com. New, small fairly cozy hostel with cheery doubles with free continental breakfast & home-made

bread. Free storage, barbecue and free use of basic bikes. Under \$50 per room.

- **Purple Cow** 94 Brownston St tel 0800/772 277, stay@purplecow.co.nz. Large spacious hostel in former hotel, plenty of doubles (some en suite). fabulous lake view, big picture windows, table tennis in large lounge. Bike rental (\$18 a day), kayak rental (\$40 a day), frequent bargain barbecues in the evening and **Internet access**. Rooms under \$50 per room-\$50-70.
- **Wanaka Bakpaka** 117 Lakeside Rd tel 03/443 7837, wanakabakpaka@xtra.co.nz. Low-key hostel five minutes' walk from town; great lake and mountain views, peaceful atmosphere, summer barbecues and rental of canoes (\$18 a day), sea kayaks (\$24 a day) and bikes (\$25 a day). Cabins & dorms under \$25 per person, rooms under \$50 per room-\$50-70.
- **YHA** 181 Upton St tel & fax 03/443 7405, yhawanka@yha.org.nz. Decent hostel ten minutes' walk from the centre with small dorms, cheap bike rental (\$25 per day), and a good garden. Rooms under \$50 per room-\$50-70.

B&B, & Motel from RG:

- **Tirohanga** 102 Lismore St tel 03/443 8302, tiro-hanga@xtra.co.nz. Friendly **homestay** with stupendous views across the lake to Mount Roy. Modest twin room, or self-contained unit, and eat a light breakfast with the family. Evening meals available. \$90-120.
- **Wanaka Motel** 73 Helwick St tel & fax 03/443 7545. Spacious two-bedroom units with huge lounges, a full-size kitchen and all mod cons. \$70-90.

***must do / **do / *maybe do

*** Aspiring Hut–French Ridge Hut: 3 days

- From Raspberry car park, 5.5 miles / 9k / 2-3 hours to **Aspiring Hut** (modern/great view; has **cookers**, heating, lighting, mattresses 38 bunks in 3 rooms; \$20 SVA). Mark Rosen: *“Aspiring Hut to French Ridge is a half-day hike. It's very steep and rooty. I go without problems from Raspberry Creek Carpark to French Ridge in a day. It's well worthwhile to go for a scramble above the hut up to the end of the Quarterdeck Glacier - an easy scramble following the ridge crest, and there are cairns too. The views are great from the hut, and even better from the end of the Quarterdeck, and it's less than an hour one way.”*
- French Ridge Hut** = 5-6 hours grunt of a hike, with spectacular view = 2 hours from Aspiring Hut to Pearl Flat then 3 hours up French Ridge through steep bush and open tussock. *“A steep forest track claws skywards over tree roots and short rock steps: If you can get over this, you'll have done the hardest part of the climb.”* A rock viewpoint is above the forest, then track incline relents allowing for magnificent views of Gloomy Gorge & Mt. Avalanche.
 - French Ridge hut** = “West Matukituki NZAC hut”, pay \$20.00 fees at Wanaka Visitor Centre; 20 bunks; lighting & mattresses; no heating & **no cookers**.
- Return to Raspberry car park on third day.

Options:

 - **** Rob Roy Valley day hike 3-4 hrs RT** side trip.
 - **3 days RT trek to Liverpool Hut** (4 bunks, 4-5 hours from Aspiring Hut): **majestic views of Mt Aspiring/Tititea** & surrounding peaks. Slippery in snow.

Option: Cascade Saddle Route (very steep; 4-6 days):

- The Pylon is the halfway point (4-5 hours) between **Aspiring Hut and Dart Hut** (8-10 hours total). It is much more difficult to go down to Aspiring Hut than it is to go up, which discourages day hiking from Aspiring Hut, like Dave & Rebecca did. A gully immediately below the Pylon on east side of the ridge can hold snow until late in season. From Pylon to Cascade Saddle you must ford several side streams where water rises quickly when raining or especially with afternoon snow melt.

*** Wilkin River's Top Forks Hut, or Siberia Hut 2-3 days (or 1-4)

- **Flightsee** 25 min to hut, hike 1-3 days & jet boat or fly out.
- *“Siberia is in a lovely location, and the day-hike up to Lake Crucible and back is a gem. You usually have the option of a stand-by back-flight from Siberia to Makarora - from about 8.30am to 1 or 2pm. Last year this cost \$30; but your chances depend on the weather and the number of people wanting to do the Siberia Experience (i.e. fly to Siberia, walk to Kerin Forks and jetboat to Makarora).”* – Mark Rosen

** Flightseeing companies:

- Southern Alps Air, Makarora: NZ\$160 per person one way to Siberia Valley & Hut (we did this in 2007)
- **Wanaka Flightseeing** (\$185–295pp; tel 03/443 8770, info@flightseeing.co.nz) over Mt Aspiring or Milford Sound. Early bird discount \$35 for early morning departures 0800-105-105 - LP
- **Aspiring Air** (tel 0800 100 943, www.nzflights.com; \$90–\$295pp), over anything from Wanaka to Mt Cook.

Plan A Wilkin (moderate): flight-see in, hike **2-3 days**, jet-boat or fly out. (The mountain scenery excels over Siberia Hut.)

- Fly to spectacular **Top Forks Hut**, upper **Wilkin River**.
- Day hike past Lake Diana to awesome **Lakes Lucidus & Castalia** beneath **Mts Castor & Pollux**. “many river crossings are on the lakes walk, and if there has been heavy rain that walk is impossible” – Mark Rosen
- Hike 10 miles down flats to **Kerin Forks Hut** & jet boat out (requires pre-booking jet boat from Makarora), *or fly out from Top Forks Hut to save 6 hours of walking.*

Plan B Siberia (moderate): flight-see in, hike **3 days**, jet-boat out

*** Moderate 3-days @Siberia Hut:

- Fly to **Siberia Hut**, **Flightseeing** on the way. Day hike **Lake Crucible**, 7.2 miles / 12k / 7hrs, 880m up/down. Snow fields drop straight into scenic lake. **Night #1 @ Siberia Hut**.
- Day hike **Gillespie Pass**, “one of the great view points of the Southern Alps” 8-10 hours RT, 550m up? **Night #2 Siberia**.
- Hike with full packs just **3 hours, 6k, 650m down to Kerin Forks Hut**, where we **jet-boat out for NZ\$60 pp** “river taxi” to Makarora with www.wilkinriverjets.co.nz (or add 4hours to walk out + ford Makarora River).

Plan C Siberia (easiest/one day): “**The Siberia Experience**”:

- **fly in & jetboat out in one day**, NZ\$238 pp (US\$143pp). NZ\$190 for 40-minute “Aspiring Plus Glaciers” flight. Flights depart from **Makarora** or **Wanaka**. See: www.siberiaexperience.co.nz

Plan D Siberia: Wilkin-Young Valleys Circuit: 3-4 days
Difficult 3-4 day circuit, uncrowded; with jet-boat at start & end:

- Young Hut** (beautiful setting, view of Mt Awful 2202m framed by valley walls) \$10 SV. **6-8 hrs 650m ascent**, start by **wading across Makarora River** (jetboat across if high water, NZ\$25 www.wilkinriverjets.co.nz).
- Siberia Hut** 2 nights x \$10 SV. Hike via scenic **Gellespie Pass**, “one of the great view points of the Southern Alps”, **550m up/down, 6-7 hrs**, slippery grass descent when wet. **** Lake Crucible** day hike on third day 7.2 miles / 12k / 7hrs, 880m up/down. Or side trip ~4-5 hrs from Young-to-Siberia day.
- Kerin Forks Hut** \$10 SV; **6k / 3 hours, 650m down** to hut, where we **jet-boat out** or add 4hours to walk out + ford Makarora River.

West Coast:

Haast: distances to:

	HRS	KMS
Lake Moeraki	0:30	30
Jackson Bay	0:45	51
Wanaka	1:50	151
Queenstown	3:00	242
Fox Glacier	1:30	118
Franz Josef	1:55	143
Hari Hari	2:45	204
Hokitika	3:45	282
Greymouth	4:15	322
Christchurch	6:45	536

** Waiatoto River wilderness adventures:

- ** Jet boat ride from the ocean up the remote Waiatoto River to the base of 10,000-ft. Mt. Aspiring and back, through South West World Heritage Area - Te Wahi pounamu.** "This full morning activity is a wilderness experience that you'll never forget!" - www.nztravelers.com Contact Roger Crow of **River Safaris Co:** daily 10am, 1pm, 4pm from Waiatoto River Bridge. **Allow 2.5 hrs.** Minimum 2 adults. **NZ\$125 pp** (2007). Mobile Phone: 025 291 3953; Freephone: 0800 865 382. Address: The Red Barn, Haast Junction.
- Heliventures & Waiatoto River Safaris Combo Packages:** Allow **4 hours. NZ\$585.00 per person** (minimum 3 persons). Alpine landing included. Departing from our Haast base we climb to see 10,000ft Mt Aspiring, Lower Volta Glacier, Therma Glacier, & Mt Aspiring Glacier Lake. Return via Glacier Dome, Mt Taurus, Canon Peak & rugged Waiatoto River Valley to meet **Waiatoto River Safaris - the world's only mountain to sea eco-jetboat adventure.** Truly remote, untouched wilderness. Maori history & legends. Relax as you journey up this spectacular glacial valley. Pause for photos and commentary on the jet boat climb up river. At the top of the river leave the boat, stretch your legs at the forest edge, before departing for an exhilarating return journey. Heliventures Ltd, Corner Marks Road and State Highway 6, Haast, Phone +64 3 7500 866; Free Phone 0800 7500 866; www.heliventures.co.nz
- ** Waiatoto Two-Day Heli-Rafting NZ\$850/person; one of the great rafting trips of the world.** Incredible Mt. Aspiring views + Class 4 rafting. www.riverswild.co.nz

 - Knights Point**, mildly scenic ocean view, 26k north of Haast

*** Fox Glacier: day hikes

Franz Josef Glacier, Westland NP:

- *** **Lake Matheson**
- Franz Josef to Westport 4 hours, 278k / 173 miles
- Franz Josef to Nelson 7.4 hours via Punakaiki, 7hr via H7.

*** Paparoa NP:

- Inland Pack Track** (Punakaiki to Fox River mouth, 28 km), but just do the highlights: walk in from Fox River mouth, visiting the 200m long **Upper Fox Cave** on the way, stay at The Ballroom overnight and have a pleasant afternoon or following morning exploring Dilemma Creek, unencumbered by a heavy pack.
- *** **Punakaiki Rocks, Pancake Rocks**

Murchison: 2 hrs from Nelson, 4 hrs from Christchurch

- Buller Gorge Swing Bridge:** longest (110m) in NZ, located 14k west of Murchison. \$5. Short walks; 1929 quake. LP p493
- NZ Kayak School**, at **22 Grey St**, is 5 min walk from a **supermarket (open 9am-7pm)** everyday, does not take credit cards). **Murchison** has no banks or ATM's, but has two pubs, tea rooms & cafes. **Internet access:** at the Library, Beechwoods cafe, Commercial Tavern, & Rivers Cafe.

Kayak contact:

- Pam Weiss**, with husband **Mick Hopkinson**, together run nzkayakschool.com. **Mick:** "is originally from Britain where he raced kayak slalom for ten years. Mick was in a small team that made **first descents of the river Inn in Switzerland and Austria, the Blue Nile in Ethiopia and the Dudh Khosi in Nepal;** also in the **Karakorum Kayak expedition, The Karnali expedition and the "Taming the Lion" team** which made the **first descent of many of the huge rapids on the river Indus in Baltistan.** More recently he has been getting his thrills in the **backblocks of Wyoming and on the heli trips on the West coast of New Zealand.**"
- NZ Kayak School, 22 Grey St**, contact: Janette Kear: **03-352-5786, nzkayakschool@compuserve.com** "Offers budget, bunkhouse style accommodation with communal kitchen facilities, washing machine, drying room, and is the ideal place to warm up for your tour. **Murchison is the kayak capital of the South Island and is in one of the best intermediate boating areas in the world - the Buller river catchment.** Within 20 minutes of the school are 14 great river runs on the **Buller River** and its tributaries, the **Matiri, the Mangles, the Matakitaki, and the Maruia**, ranging from class 1 to class 4. The rivers are mostly rain fed and run year round. Also heli kayak **Hokitika**, 2 hrs to southwest."

Lewis Pass:

- * **Maruia Springs Thermal Resort** (\$15 Rock Pool; (03) 523-8840 8am - 9pm; enquiries@maruiasprings.co.nz) – Wilderness Travel stays here. 5.8km west of Lewis Pass; 2.5 hours from Nelson or Christchurch. \$169 studio with Continental Breakfast, Rock pool & Japanese bath house. \$65pp for 50-min massage. **Special M-Th \$329 for 2:** Executive Room Accommodation, 3 course Dinner, 45 minutes private spa, 30 min Foot or Body massage for both of you, cooked breakfast, late check out. (Watch out for sand flies in the area.)
- Boyle River trek** with a swing bridge.

Kaikoura: 2.8 hours north of Christchurch; 3.5 hrs Nelson

- A coastal fishing center. Mountain hikes; seal colony walk, fishing boats, whale/dolphin-watching cruise.
- Kaikoura Wilderness Walkway** "is known for its dramatic diversity over a relatively short distance; over two days and a total of 17kms, through stands of **Manuka and Kanuka**, untouched **Beech forests** and **pristine, ancient Totara forest.** birdlife – rifleman, warbler, tomtit, falcon, pipit, NZ robin, white-eye, fantail, kereru, kingfisher. chamois and deer. black-eyed gecko and Kaikoura scree weta; one of only two nesting colonies in the world of the rare **Hutton's Shearwater seabird.**"

Northern tip of South Island:

* Nelson Lakes NP:

- 2 pristinely beautiful glacial lakes fringed by beech & flax, mountains, hint of Fiordland, without crowds
- * **Lake Rotoroa**: “Short Loop Track”: 25 minutes, a botanist’s delight
- ** Day hiking **Robert Ridge** may be good **1-day option**
- **3 days**: **St. Arnaud**: excellent **3-day tramp** south on eastern shore of **Lake Rotoiti** to **Lake Head Hut**, **Cascade Track** to **Angelus Hut** on beautiful alpine **Lake Angelus**. Back along spectacular **Robert Ridge** to **Mt Robert car park**, which is 7k road walk back to St Arnaud.

Nelson:

- * **Cable Bay Walkway**: “An exceedingly beautiful day hike in the hills north of Nelson includes walking along the top of the ocean side cliffs in meadows and forests, and dropping down to the secluded beach at Cable Bay for a swim. Cable Bay Kayaks in the afternoon. An elegant dinner at Tealcot.” - www.nztravelers.com

* Abel Tasman National Park:

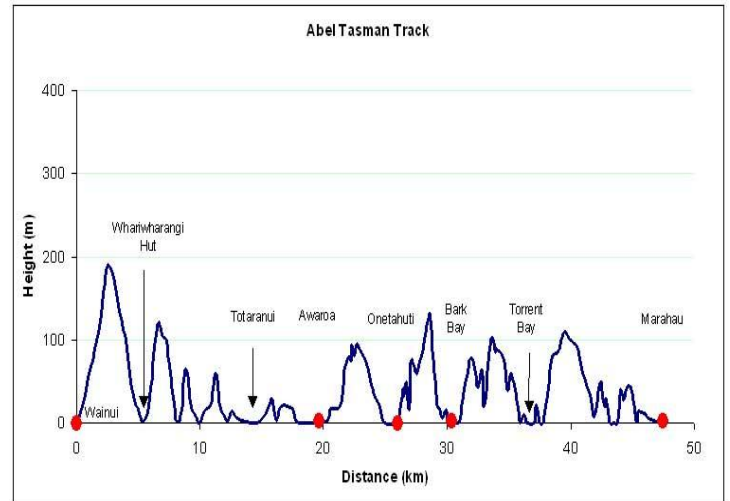
- *This whole park is recovering from logging & ranching done 30 years ago, but has another 100 years left to re-grow the forest to appear more like a wilderness. The water & beaches are pretty, but popular, & accessible by noisy motorboats. We hiked north of Totoranui, which was pleasant, but Hump Ridge Track’s beach is much wilder.* - Tom
- Nelson to **Marahau** 1.1 hrs / 70k. Can hire boat taxis to transport luggage or us or both.
- 2.5 hours / 100k from **Marahau** to **Totoranui** or **Wainui** on **Abel Tasman Track** (which are ~3 hrs from Nelson)
- Nelson to **Christchurch** 6.5 hrs / 420k; to **Kaikoura** 2.8 hrs

* Sea Kayak the remote Abel Tasman Coast:

- [Kaiteriteri Kayaks](http://www.kaiteriteri.co.nz), Kaiteriteri. (03) 527-8383 / 0800 252-925 Explore the **most isolated and spectacular part of the Abel Tasman**, arches, coves and incredible rock formations between **Mutton Cove** and **Totoranui beach**. At least two beach stops including one sea kayaker-only hideaway. One way paddling allows for easier paddling. Let the water taxi do all the hard work ! **Two Scenic water taxi rides.**
 - ** “Soul Food” 9 hrs guided = **NZD\$190pp Meet at Totoranui** or Mutton Cove & **finish at Totoranui**, or **NZD\$250 start & finish at Kaiteriteri base**. **Check in 7.45 am, Briefing 25 minutes**, No experience necessary, **Paddling**: Approx 8kms, **Group size**: 2 minimum – 8 maximum; **Return**: Back to Kaiteriteri by 4.30pm. Includes: A top quality double kayak, life jackets, paddles, neoprene spray skirts, paddle jackets, dry bags for cameras. Lunch, hot chocolate, tea or fresh ground coffee. Explores the remote northern area of the National Park from **Separation Point to Mutton Cove**. - www.seakayak.co.nz
 - * **Three Day Guided Tour**, 20k of paddling, some time for track walking **NZ\$540pp**. 2-8 people. 7.45 am check in. Fully catered.
 - * **Custom overnight**

- **Cancel**: 20 - 5 days = 50%, then 100% unless resold

- **Alternative**: Marahau Sea Kayaks. All trips are south of Totoranui Beach. Freephone: 0800 80 80 18,



* Abel Tasman Track:

- **DOC Hut reservations**: (03) 546 8210
- **Wet shoes / sneakers** preferred due to many beaches. Easy.
- Subtropical climate 72-55°, dry with only 0.2” rain Jan/Feb/M.
- Must reserve all huts NZ\$25pp (US\$15pp). Ph +64 3 546 8210 email: greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz
- By road 2.5 hrs to drive between **Totoranui** or **Wainui** and **Marahau** (approx. 100 km) - narrow, winding and unsealed in places. **Water taxi** takes about 1.25 hours to travel between Totoranui and Marahau.
- DOC provides carparks at Marahau, Totoranui, Wainui and Awaroa roadends, at driver’s risk – don’t leave anything attractive in car. Secure pay parking at Marahau businesses.
- Abel Tasman NP Highlights = **Onetahuti beach; beautiful coastal forest & golden beaches**; “Most beautiful part is the northern section from **Totoranui** northwards to **Whariwharangi Hut to Wainui**.”:
- * **Totoranui Beach Camp**: has car access, where many walkers start (southwards) or end (northwards) their Abel Tasman experience. **North of Totoranui = Superb isolated coastal & forest scenery**, which you can **day hike in 4.5 hrs (with shuttle) or 6 hrs (on foot) RT**:
 - Hike from **Totoranui to Whariwharangi Hut** (3 hours, 4.5 miles/7.5 km), a restored farm homestead with 20 bunks. headed for the boat launch area to cross the tidal flats. Take Puketea Trail, heading inland towards the Coast Trail.
 - Hike from **Whariwharangi to Wainui** Carpark (1.5 hours, 5.5 km), or return **Whariwharangi to Totoranui** in 3 hours via Gibbs Hill (1329 ft/405m) on a waterless track.
- **Marahau to Totoranui = 24 miles/38k, 4 days, usually return by boat. Must carry cooker**; no cooking facilities; no lighting. Bunkrooms are communal with platform bunks and mattresses; flush toilets. Bring **water filter** in case DOC filters fail. ***Luggage can be freighted by water taxi among huts & campsites**. Don’t leave valuables in left luggage.

- Drop-off points are **crowded** at Anchorage, Torrent Bay, Bark Bay, Onetahuti, Awaroa & Totaranui **9:30-10:30** and **3:30-5pm**. For fewer people, start at **Totaranui** & go north.
- Consult a tide timetable when planning your trip: **Onetahuti estuary** can only be crossed within 3 hours either side of low tide. **Awaroa estuary** can only be crossed within 1 hour 30 minutes before and 2 hours after low tide. **3-4 meter tides**.
- **“Inland Track”**: not popular, huts hold 4. BackHut Pass.

Nearby Lodging:

- **The Barn**, in **Marahau**, Double \$40 in 2004. No frills. (03) 527-8043. Cafe on the corner, overlooking ocean.
- The **Yellow House Hostel** in **St. Arnaud** (03) 521-1887, \$34 double in 2004

** Queen Charlotte Track

- **day hike beautiful historic wilderness at Ship Cove via boat round trip from Picton**

or

** Nydia Track

- **Duncan Bay day hike, from your car, or shuttle**

Picton:

Ferries:

- **Scenic ferry**: Through the Marlborough Sounds and across Cook Strait. The fast ferry takes ~ 2 hours; & the cruise-style ferry takes 3 hours. Both with vehicles. Highlights: beautiful inlets, coves of the Sounds, Cook’s Lookout, Tory Channel, Red Rocks seal colony.
- www.bluebridge.co.nz **0800 844 844** cheaper; & “can usually book a few days in advance with no penalty.” - Scotties
- www.interislander.co.nz **0800 802 802 M-F 8-8 S-Sun 8-6.**

Take the coastal back road from Nelson to Picton:

- **Frommer’s Best *** NZ Drives: Queen Charlotte Sound**: “scenic loop on narrow winding road from Picton to the little fishing village of **Havelock** (return to Picton on the main highway). Stop and admire the **bush-clad Sounds** and the **boats**, and indulge in **fresh local green-lipped mussels** at **The Mussel Boys restaurant**, in **Havelock**.”

North Island

Wellington ***

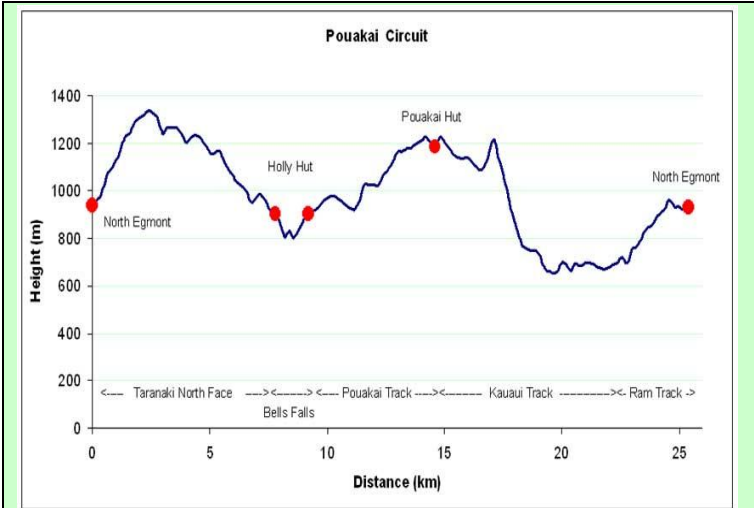
- ***** Mount Victoria viewpoint**: climb (Southern Walkway), bus (#20 from Courtenay Place, M-F) or drive. **Has better views than the cable car.**
 - **Lord of the Rings LOTR**: “just before you get up to Mount Victoria, when you are on Alexander Road, there is a car park to the left. A steep path drops into trees, where the scene *Get off the road* was filmed.”
- ***** Te Papa Museum, a new national symbol**: “*NZ’s finest museum.*” – LP. “*One of the largest national museums in the world, this giant new edifice on Wellington’s waterfront is said to be 5 years ahead of anything else like it. Truly bicultural, it’s a magical place where art and artifacts meet technological brilliance, creating riveting displays and interactive playthings for all ages.*” – Frommers best*** NZ.
- **** The Beehive**: architectural symbol of the country, & **Parliament House** neogothic
- **** Karori Wildlife Sanctuary**: “*fabulous! ...a must-see in Wellington.... safe haven for native wildlife...the only mainland populations of little spotted kiwi, tuatara ... over 18km of tracks through lovely native forest ... I hear their night tours are fabulous - see & hear kiwi—within minutes of Wellington’s wonderful downtown area*” – a igougo user
- **Brunch: Chocolate Fish café**, LP page 420: take Oriental Pde around Evans Bay 13k, East of Welly, to Scorching Bay.

Martinborough LOTR:

- **Frommers.com Best *** NZ Drives**: from the Capital to Mellow Martinborough: Once you’ve left the motorways behind, you’ll be up and over the winding Rimutaka Hill Road in little more than 40 minutes. Then it’s downhill all the way to Martinborough’s **enchanted pocket of prize-winning wineries**; idyllic vineyard settings; stroll through pretty little **Martinborough Village, with cute shops**.
- **LOTR: Hutt River** (where hobbits launched their boats numerous times) and **Kaitoke Regional Park**, home to scenes from Rivendell and the Fords of Isen.
- **** Putangirua Pinnacles Scenic Reserve** (seen in **LOTR**) is 13 km along Cape Palliser Road from the Lake Ferry turn-off, approximately one hour’s drive from **Martinborough**. The turn-off and campsite are 500 metres past the Department of Conservation caretaker’s residence. Three hiking routes lead to the Pinnacles; **2-3 hours** round trip:
 1. Walk up streambed to where the Pinnacles tower overhead (watch for falling rocks, especially after heavy rain & in strong winds)
 2. Either take the easily graded bush walk that starts approximately 10 minutes along streambed from carpark
 3. Or take the more direct loop track from near the stream junction up to the lookout.
 4. For a longer walk, with excellent views of Palliser Bay and Lake Onoke, continue uphill from the lookout to a bulldozed track. It returns you to the coast 300 metres from the Pinnacles road entrance. Allow **3-4 hours** for the return trip.

*** Egmont NP / Mt Taranaki:

- North Egmont is one of **rainiest places** in NZ: 7000mm/year
- Taranaki schools **Holiday: Monday 12 March**
- Mt Taranaki:** Easy summit hike; most climbed in NZ.
- New Plymouth:** nice **Te Henui Walkway** through town park



*** Pouakai Track (15.6 miles/ 26k; see chart):

- 2-3 day loop from North Egmont Visitor Center. Spectacular views. Starts at 930m; highest track point 1310m on flank of Taranaki; lowest point 640m Kaiuau River. Huts \$10; get NZ Hut Pass. Bring a **stove/cooker**. Optionally stay at Holly Hut makes 2 nights total.
- North Egmont Visitor Centre to Holly Hut: 3 hours:** From the Camphouse, the well formed track steadily climbs through montane forest, and sub-alpine scrub. Some excellent scenic views of the Ahukawakawa wetland and upper slopes of Mt Taranaki as track gradually descends to Holly Hut.
- Holly Hut to Pouakai Hut: 2-3 hours.** The Ahukawakawa track crosses an extensive wetland, then crosses Stony River, ascends the ridge, through sub-alpine and mountain cedar to join with the Pouakai and Mangorei track junction and a short descent to Pouakai Hut.
- Pouakai Hut to North Egmont Visitor Centre: 5 hours:** "From Pouakai Hut heading east, you pass the tarns on your left and experience **amazing views** down into the Ahukawakawa swamp and up to the Mountain." From Pouakai Hut, the Pouakai track traverses open tussock lands and sub-alpine forest to top of Henry Peak. Descend into mixed kamahi forest to Kaiuau shelter, helpful if Kaiuau stream is flooded and can't be crossed. After crossing, traverse some deep gullies before swingbridge over Waiwhakahiho River. You can then take the shorter track to Kaiuau car park on Egmont Road or follow the Ram Track up to the North Egmont Visitor Centre.

*** Tongariro NP:

New Zealand's **oldest national park** is a dual **World Heritage area**, with important Maori cultural and spiritual associations as well as its outstanding volcanic features.

Whakapapa Visitor Center is open 8am - 6pm.

Whakapapa Lodging: (also can stay all nearby towns)

- Skotel** - hotel style facilities, restaurant, **self contained chalets** and **backpackers** facilities. *Tom & Carol stayed in the motel and highly recommend the comfortable Skotel. Self-catering kitchen available for all.*
- Whakapapa Holiday Park** nestled in mountain beech forest

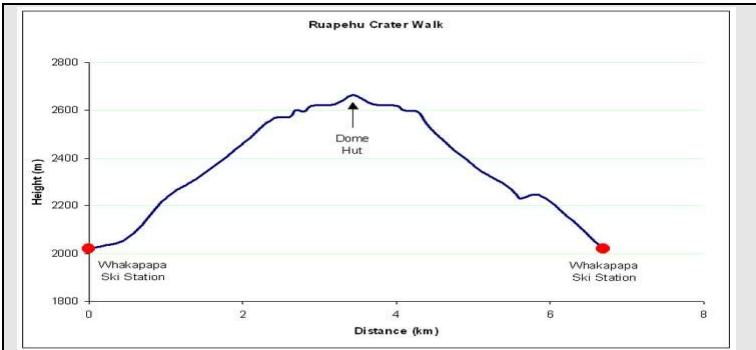
Tongariro NP Weather:

There is no wet or dry season or month in the park. The weather pattern is highly unpredictable and rain and snow can fall at any time of the year. Winds funnel around the volcanoes' upper faces bringing heavy rainfall to all sides of the summits. This flow of air is accelerated through **Tama Saddle**, between **Ruapehu** and **Ngauruhoe**. As the **north westerly winds** gather speed through here, they have a significant drying effect on **Rangipo Desert** on the far side. While the prevailing wind is westerly Ruapehu is exposed to all winds. **Winds from the west to the north west bring the rain** but carry only light falls of snow. **Southerly and easterly winds tend to be colder and drier, bringing snow rather than rain.** When the prevailing westerlies and north westerlies are forced to rise over the volcanoes, rainfall is increased. At least half the days in the year bring rain to the western and northern parts of the park. Most months have high rainfall. **Whakapapa Village receives around 2200mm of rain** per year. In the south at **Ohakune about 1250mm** fall, with over **1500mm falling on Rangipo** annually. Whakapapa Village frosts can occur year round; temperatures average 13 °C with a maximum temperature of 25°C and a mid-winter minimum of -10°C. Frost-free growing season at Whakapapa Village is 120 days, but is less than 90 days in the Desert Road area. Frost is a significant feature of the eastern "desert" quarter of the park. In winter the snow level extends down to an average of 1500 metres, and often even lower. In **summer, the craters of Ngauruhoe & Tongariro retain some snow**, and **Ruapehu has some permanent glaciers & snowfields.**

Invasives: Lodge-pole pine, heather, broom, deer, possums, goats, pigs

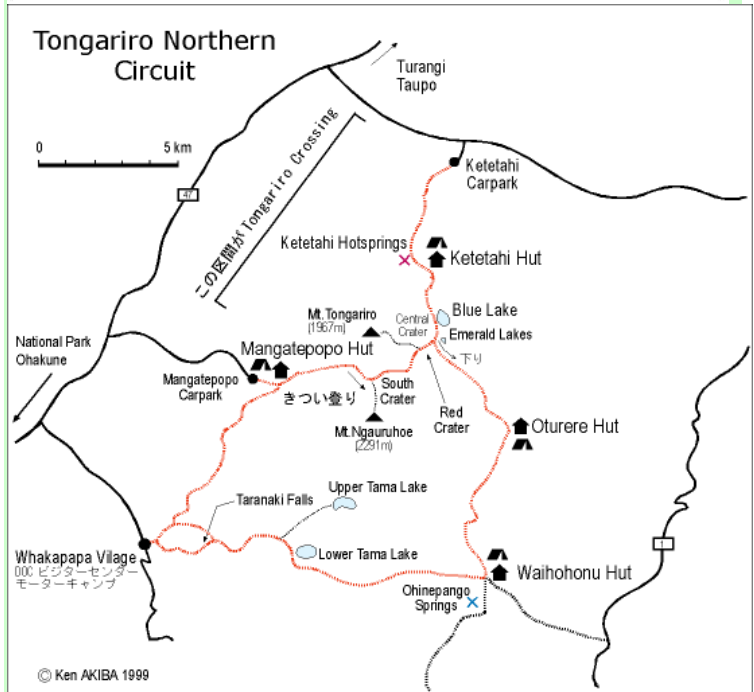
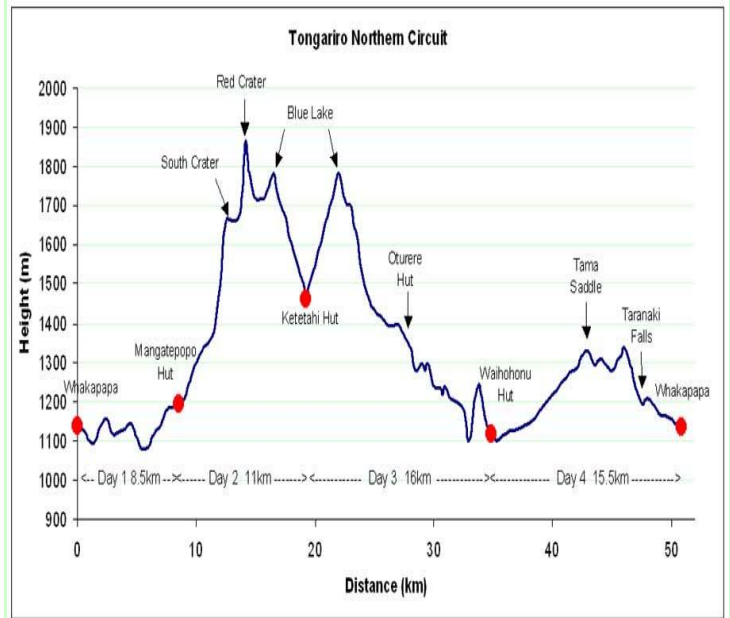
Lord of the Rings (LOTR) locations:

- The maze of razor sharp rocks, cliffs & ravines of **Eryn Muil** is behind Aorangi Lodge up Bruce road on **Mt Ruapehu**. **Tukino Ski area = Mordor**, slopes of **Mt Doom**.
- Mt Ruapehu's Whakapapa Ski area = Mordor**, Gorgorath Plains, **Eryn Muil**
- Mt Ngauruhoe** was digitally altered to appear as **Mt Doom**.



*** **Mount Ruapehu (2797m) Crater Climb**

- **Highest mountain in North Island;** an active volcano:
- **Eruptions in 1995 and 1996** from Mt Ruapehu emptied Crater Lake, which has refilled. **Lahar danger** exists downstream.
- *Ruapehu: The crater lake many years ago used to be swimmable. After volcanic activity it has become quite acidic and there are periodic changes in the lake level. In 1953 a lahar took out a rail bridge resulting in 151 lives lost – look for ‘Tangiwai disaster’ – there will be a display in Te Papa about it. A section of the main highway is in the path of the lahars (which occurred in March 18, 2007, while we were away in Palmerston North) and the park is well set up for rapid closure and early warnings. -Tom*
- **Short 4.2 miles, 2200 feet (7k, 650m) climb,** “a relatively easy scramble up a jumble of lava boulders and scree.” From **Whakapapa ski field**, ride two chairlifts, 2020 metres above sea level to the **Knoll Ridge Chalet**. Then follow up the **knoll ridge T-bar line**, and continue up the valley above the last t-bar pylon. At this point a **narrow foot track zigzagging up the face** and onto the dome ridge. Follow the razorback Dome Ridge to Dome Shelter 2660m - narrow & steep in places & watch out for ice. **Glorious panorama** of the summit plateau of Ruapehu; a broad black gravel and ice filled bowl, rimmed by the dark silhouettes of the other crater high points. Views across North Island; as far west as Taranaki 130 km away, and 120 km across to east coast mountains & Pacific Ocean.



*** **Tongariro Northern Circuit 3-4 days**

- *Tongariro National Park Northern Circuit* actually goes around **Ngauruhoe**. Leave your vehicle at Whakapapa Village or Turangi and arrange shuttle.
- “no reservations required”; buy hut passes at Whakapapa Visitor Centre Ph: 07 892 3729, Fax: 07 892 3814 email: whakapapavc@doc.govt.nz
- 2-3 nights, 3-4-day trek around Mt Ngauruhoe, including much of the Tongariro Crossing, if you start at **Mangatepopo** & finishing at **Whakapapa Village**.

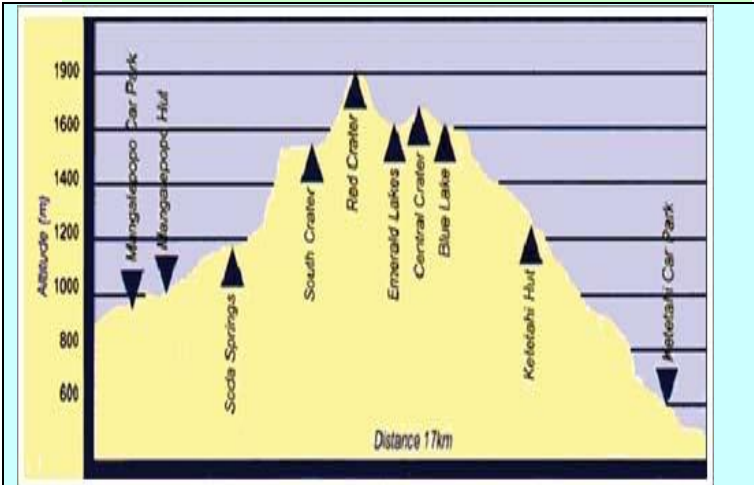
*** **Recommended circuit** (25 miles/42.5k = 51k - 8.5k):
3 days, 2 nights (*don't reverse route: due to too many people hiking against you; & worse when going down Devils Staircase:*

1. **Day 1: Mangatepopo trailhead to Ketetahi Hut 5 - 7 hours, 10km.** As of 2004, the private **Ketetahi Hot Springs** are off-limits to hikers.

- a. Mangatepopo Rd, to Devil's Staircase, which is moderately difficult ("worse going down"); 300m steep climb up jumble of basalt blocks to saddle between Tongariro / Ngauruhoe
- b. South Crater to **Ketetahi Hut** . Side trips:
 - i. climb ***Tongariro sidetrip**, easy, 2 hrs
 - ii. climb ****Ngauruhoe sidetrip** hard 3 hr:

* **Mt Ngauruhoe summit climb (scramble 3 hours side trip):**

- "Ngauruhoe is steep, the footing terrible & the scramble near impossible in high wind. If the weather is good, if you are a strong, confident hiker, **climbing Ngauruhoe could be the highlight of your trip.**"
 - **Or day hike Ngauruhoe from road:** A poled route leads from Mangatepopo road end ("this can also be done part of the **Tongariro Crossing** if you really want to immerse yourself in **Mordor**"). At the saddle between Ngauruhoe and Tongariro the route is not marked but you climb up the old lava flow. Be aware of the falling rocks dislodged by other climbers Avoid entering inner crater, where volcanic fumaroles may emit overpowering gases. Descend via the red scoria, then on loose scree to either side of ridge.
2. **Day 2: Ketetahi to Waihohonu Hut 7-8 hours, 15k.** 300m ascent from Ketetahi Hut to Blue Lake. Descent from Emerald Lakes is moderately difficult. (Can add a day: Ketetahi Hut to Oturere Hut, 4 - 5 hours, 8km; then 3 hrs / 7k next day).
 3. **Day 3: Waihohonu to Whakapapa Village**
 - a. Short option: Walking from **Waihohonu Hut to road** saves 4 miles / 7k, but you need transport
 - NZ\$30-35pp huts with cookers, 23-29 bunks, no lights
 - Highest point=1886m on Red Crater. Lowest point=1120m at Waihohonu Stream. Most trampers start at **Whakapapa**, 1140m.



*** **Tongariro Crossing** (long day hike; see table above)

- "Best one day walk in NZ", but hiking **at least two days on the Northern Circuit (see below) is twice as great.** Overnight circuit hikers have more time to climb & enjoy a volcano.
- 7-8 hours / 10.2 miles, 3400 feet up, 4300 feet down (17km), one way from **Mangatepopo** to **Ketetahi Car Park**. "Tongariro Crossing Track Transport leaves daily, weather permitting, from **National Park Village**. Your accommodation host will arrange for the Tongariro Crossing Transport Shuttle to pick you up and deliver you back."

Taupo:

*** **Hidden Valley Orakei Korako Geysersland Resort:**

- "Possibly the best thermal area in NZ."-LP p308 ***
- A pocket wonderland of geysers, hot springs, boiling mud, and the majestic **Aladdin's Cave** on the shores of **Lake Ohakuri**. Allow 1+ hours. This little valley of **incredible beauty** is preserved by its isolation and inaccessibility -- **it can only be reached by boat (no extra charge)**, cross at any time. 8am - 4:30pm. **NZ\$26**; 25 min north of Taupo 23k on SH 1, turn at sign, on Tutukao Road then 14k. Or 45 minutes south of Rotorua: Turn off on State Highway 5, just after Golden Springs at Mihi Bridge, tel. 07/378-3131; www.orakeikorako.co.nz - Frommers.com 11/06.
- * **Huka Falls Scenic Reserve:** Huka Falls on Waikato River pretty blue water in a raging cascade; tons of tourists; 4k north of Taupo – Walkway along river; or see from carpark.

Maoritanga, is a term which embodies **Maori** lifestyle & culture. **Maoritanga** has remained very much alive, and in the last 20 years has seen a dramatic resurgence. Maori make up over 10% of New Zealand's population, & Maori-Pakeha marriage since the early 1800's has left a complex inter-racial pool.

*** **Rotorua:** (3 hrs from Auckland Airport)

- **Frommer's Best NZ Drives:** "From the stately redwood forest on edge of town, past **Blue and Green lakes to Buried Village and Lake Tarawera** and back, you'll squeal with delight at a dozen different things; lots of picnic spots, but the **Landing Café at Lake Tarawera** is also a good bet."

*** **Hangi feast** (pronounced nasally as "hungi")

& **Haka ceremonial dance:**

1. *** **Tamaki Maori Village & Realm of Tane** 6-9pm & 8-11pm, phone 0800/476-864. St Hwy 5, 20 min. north of Taupo. **Hangi & concert NZ\$90-NZ\$93 includes hotel pickup**; Realm of Tane = NZ\$30-NZ\$33. Frommer's Best*** Maori experiences: "This family company has taken top honors NZ Tourism Awards. The re-created, presettlement Maori village, **15 minutes outside Rotorua**, presents tribal life as it used to be. Carving, weaving, moko (tattooing), singing, dancing, chanting, and cooking are all part of the living-village experience. **At night**, you can enjoy **one of the best Maori performances and genuine hangi meals in Rotorua**. The Realm of Tane, in Rotorua itself, is a blend of guided tour, character theater, and storytelling on a series of indoor sets. 1-hour show (at noon, 1:30, 3, and 4:30pm), tells the story of Maori migration to New Zealand. It is an ideal scene setter or follow-up to the village experience."
2. **Royal Lakeside Novotel:** "the best Maori hangi and performance within Rotorua. It includes a steam-cooked hangi, poi dance, haka dance, traditional songs and games,

and an excellent audiovisual presentation spanning 150 years of Rotorua's history". - Frommer's Best*** Maori experiences

3. **Whakarewarewa** thermal village 8:30-5 daily, entrance price \$23 includes a guided tour of the village, access to mud pools and hot thermal lakes, and a performance of traditional Maori song & dance at 11.15am and 2.00pm. Hangi meals 12-2:30 daily. 5 minutes south of Rotorua City, located on Southern end of Tryon St, signposted on Fenton and Sala Streets. *"The village experience is not 'owned' by any particular organisation or individual rather it is a way of life, a legacy passed down through the generations which continues today."*

Rotorua Thermal areas reviewed by Frommers.com 11/06:

- **Kuirau Park** = Rotorua geothermal action for **free**: off Pukuatua and Ranolf streets, site of the huge spontaneous eruption in 2000, and you can still see the **dead trees and white ash** in the cordoned-off area. Steaming vents everywhere. Stay out at night.
- **** Waimangu Volcanic Valley** Open daily 8:30am - 5pm, NZ\$30. 20 min south of Rotorua, (tel. 07/366-6137; www.waimangu.com). Created on June 10, 1886, by Mount Tarawera's impressive blowout, **Waimangu is the only hydrothermal system in the world wholly formed in historic times as a result of a volcanic eruption**. Walk through the valley's many features, the best 75% fall during the first 45 minutes of the 1 1/2-hour walk: **** Frying Pan Lake, the world's largest hot-water spring, and the impossibly turquoise Inferno Crater** -- a mysterious lake where the level rises and falls on a regular 38-day cycle. Skip the boat cruise, and head 10 minutes farther south to:
- ***** Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland** - (tel. 07/366-6333; www.geyserland.co.nz), a much more intensive & colorful geothermal exhibition. A **photographer's paradise**. Daily 8:30am - 5pm, allow 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Most of best attractions are within the shorter (30- to 40-min.) walk. The best features here are the reliable **Lady Knox Geyser**, which performs around 10:15am daily (not quite natural - it is primed to blow); the spectacular **Champagne Pool**; **New Zealand's largest bubbling mud pool**; and the **vivid green Devil's Bath** -- the greener the water, the higher the arsenic content. NZ\$23. **Opal Pool** also.
- *** Hell's Gate & Wai Ora Spa** (9am - 8:30pm daily NZ\$25, tel. 07/345-3151; www.hellsgate.co.nz) is 15km (9 miles) northeast of Rotorua on State Highway 30 to Whakatane. This Maori-owned reserve is steeped in culture, and its 8 hectares (20 acres) of thermal activity are different every day -- magnificent in the rain. Reputedly the fiercest of the thermal valleys, it features hot-water lakes, **sulfur formations, Rotorua's only mud volcano, and the largest boiling whirlpool in New Zealand**. Spa experiences, massage & mud baths: Hell's Gate Mud Bath & Spa is NZ\$70.

**** White Island / Whakaari, in the Bay of Plenty, boat from Whakatane, 1 day**

New Zealand's most active volcano, rumbling, smoking, steaming 50k offshore from **Whakatane**. 321 m above sea level, the peak of a much larger submarine mountain 1600 m above the seafloor. *"Unforgettable experience"*; good photography: Sulphur encrusted fumaroles; corroded remains of sulphur mine; gannet colony. Privately owned. Boats land on beach, except in rough seas, when you get refund. Sometimes see dolphins.

- **NZ\$150pp** 0800 733 529 **Book 1 week in advance** www.whiteislandadventures.co.nz full refund if cannot land. 6 hour marine experience, including 1.5-2 hours on volcano with guide, includes refreshments and lunch. Bring swim suit.
- *"interesting volcanic activity periodically. Regular big boats out to White – fantastic on a nice day. I'm determined to dive out there – waters are so clear."* – Richard Burr

Whakatane lodging:

- www.holidayparks.co.nz/awakeri
- www.holidayparks.co.nz/whakatane
- www.crestwood-homestay.co.nz double=\$90 shared bath; \$NZ120 priv bath, no cooking, but has fridge; buy meals

***** Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk: 1-2 days**

- **Very scenic 120k windy gravel road** Highway 38 through **Whirinaki Forest Park**, where you hike in dense big trees.
- **At Lake Waikaremoana, day hike** or trek the best view from **Panekiri Range**. Very popular. Must book ahead if staying in Great Walk huts, \$20/night.
- **4.75 hrs / 376k from Rotorua**, through the Kaingaroa Forest (one of world's largest pine plantations), followed by native forest of Whirinaki and Urewera Ranges.
- **4 hrs from Taupo**: Taupo > Napier 1.75 hrs, 139k / 87 miles > Waikaremoana 2.25 hrs, 181k / 113miles

Napier:

- **** Shine's Fall** on Boundary Stream, **"one of the finest waterfalls on North Island"**, plunges **58m** from a sandstone bluff. **Easy walk 4k (2 hours) RT** from Heays Access Road [or one way 8k (3-4 hours) from Pohokura Road to Heays Access Road]. Located **60k north of Napier**.
- **Craftlands** fabric, 226 Emerson St, M-F9-5, Sat 9:30-2:30.

Gisborne: (4hrs from Rotorua via H2)

- “Chardonnay Capital of New Zealand”
- * **Eastwoodhill Arboretum: One of the most magical places in NZ.** Internationally renowned, 35km (22 miles) 20 minutes west of Gisborne...an extraordinary testament to one man's passion for trees. This magnificent 70-hectare (173-acre) woodland park was the life's work of William Douglas Cook, who began planting the bare site in 1910. Now more than 3,500 species of 750 tree genera, making it the **largest arboretum in New Zealand.** The arboretum is a haven for scientists, **photographers, & garden enthusiasts.** Allow at least 1.5 hours; have a picnic under the maples. Daily 9am - 5pm; NZ\$8, 2392 Wharekopae Rd., Ngatapa (tel. 06/863-9003; www.eastwoodhill.org.nz) – **Frommers.com** *** best NZ gardens
- **Rere Rock Slide & Falls:** 50 kilometres from Gisborne on Wharekopae Road — heading toward Eastwoodhill Arboretum —natural rock slide in Wharekopae River.

East Cape Road: 1-2 days

- Gisborne > 2.3 hrs Te Araroa > 3.3 hrs Whakatane > 3.2 hrs Gisborne
- ** “*Take the East Cape Road: Journey back in time as you travel the last remote outreaches of the Pacific Coast Highway. It's a feast of living Maori culture, stunning coastline, empty beaches, stockmen herding sheep on horseback, wild horses, and roaming stock (drive carefully) -- the first place in the world to see the morning sun.*” - **Frommers.com** *** **Best Offbeat Experiences**
- * **Hicks Bay** view: “*Stop at the high point above Hicks Bay before you descend into Te Araroa to see New Zealand's largest pohutukawa tree and the East Cape Lighthouse. Resting awhile, high up between the two bays, see if you can imagine Captain Cook's expression when he first sighted the area, and his relief to be leaving again after a tragic Maori massacre in which one European was killed and eaten on his wedding night.*” – **Frommers.com** *** **Best Views in NZ**

Matamata (east of **Hamilton**), **LOTR: Hobbiton**

(Drive 150k / 2.3 hrs from Whakatane. 210k/3.5 hrs to Auckland.

**** Otorohanga Kiwi House & Native Bird Park:**

- 50k south of **Hamilton** (2.5 hours/180k from Auckland) good place to see native birds. Reversed day/night lets you see kiwis active during the day (one of few places in NZ)
- *** **Waitomo Glowworm Caves**

Hamilton:

- Grandmother's Garden, fabric, 1042 Gordonton Rd, RD1

Auckland:

- ** **the Auckland Museum** is a good alternative to Wellington's Te Papa museum.
- *For an excellent Pacific experience, definitely visit the **Otara Market** Newbury Street, Otara (tel. 09/274-0830), held Saturday from 6am to noon. It's the **largest Polynesian market in the world**, with larger-than-life personalities, exotic foods and smells, **wonderful tapa cloth, flax mats and baskets, and bone carvings.** - *Frommers.com**
- Weather: Rains 8 days per month in summer.
- * **Sky Tower** 328m, highest in Southern Hemisphere, NZ\$18+3, **late afternoon photo light**
- **Great Barrier Island Trek:** \$100 ferry RT; cheaper if drive to Coromandel Peninsula ferry. Hot Springs, Kauri trees.