



# Alpine Explorer

**Multi-Day Sea Kayak/Cycle in Manapouri and Milford Sound • Optional Skiing/Snowboarding at Ohau, Wanaka and Queenstown • Hike in Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park • Multi-day hike in Mt. Aspiring National Park • Adventure in Queenstown**

**8 days: Christchurch - Queenstown**  
**Fare: US\$2,199 + tax**

**5 days: Christchurch - Queenstown**  
**Fare: US\$1,999 + tax**

*Winter is one of the best times to be in New Zealand! Our maritime climate ensures we have mild winters suitable for outdoor adventures (the typical day temperature is about 45-60°F or 8-15°C) and the Alpine Explorer trip is well adapted to suit the cooler conditions. You'll do some of the best day hikes in the country and head out sea kayaking and biking near Milford Sound, or if you prefer, a couple of days skiing or snowboarding in the mountains surrounding Queenstown. You'll have plenty of options and we can make sure the trip suits you down to the ground – whatever it is you like to do! You'll be staying in a variety of accommodations, from B&Bs and lodges to our more rustic lodgings in order to be in the most beautiful, isolated, and off-the-beaten-track places in New Zealand. The Alpine Explorer is simply an awesome way to explore New Zealand while you're down for the Rugby World Cup.*

## **Day 1 Arrive, hike Mt. John**

We'll head south out of Christchurch for a hike towards the glacial lakes of the South Island, stopping en-route at Mt. John for our first hike. First we'll walk along the shores of Lake Tekapo then head uphill through fragrant wilding pine, before emerging above the treeline for breathtaking views of the lake and surrounding mountains. Then we'll drive to the remote and beautiful Lake Ohau Lodge, near Mt. Cook. The views of Lake Ohau, Glen Mary Glacier, Mt. Cook and the Lake Ohau Range are spectacular, so you'll see why this is one of our favourite winter hideaways! The stars here are amazing too, as there is no artificial light for miles in any direction. You'll have the rest of the afternoon to relax at the lodge or head out for another short walk to explore your surroundings. We'll make sure your first day is relaxing and undemanding, so you can recover from your flight (or the big game!) and enjoy the fresh New Zealand air. You'll be the right way round in no time!

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Ohau Lodge, Lake Ohau

(L,D)

## **Day 2 Hike Aoraki/Mt. Cook National Park or ski at Ohau Ski Area**

We'll have a leisurely start today. After a late breakfast on the balcony overlooking Lake Ohau, it's a short drive to Mt. Cook village, at the head of Lake Pukaki. Here we'll take an impressive hike up the Hooker Valley to a glacial lake complete with icebergs. This is a great spot for lunch and on a clear day the views of Mt. Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain, are stunning. Then we'll return to Lake Ohau where we'll enjoy a sumptuous dinner. Another option today is to spend the day skiing at the small and friendly Ohau Ski Area, one of the South Island's more remote backcountry ski fields. (Skiing option approx. US\$100.)

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Ohau Lodge, Lake Ohau

(B,L,D)

## **Day 3 Hike Mt. Aspiring National Park**

Today we start a spectacular multi-day hike that is well suited to winter conditions, due to the sheer beauty and unpopulated nature of the area at this time of year. It is a gentle valley walk of less than three hours, but we have a great side hike to Rob Roy Glacier on the way to the hut, which is considered one of the best day hikes in the South Island. The trail passes tumbling rivers, towering snowfields, and huge mountain peaks straight from the set of *The Lord of the Rings*! We hike up a narrow glacial valley, coming out of the forest in a dramatic alpine cirque, with incredible views of the Southern Alps. When we arrive at the hut, you can continue further up the valley or simply head for the fireside and relax. Mt. Aspiring Hut is a spacious and modern mountain lodge, albeit in the middle of nowhere, with floor to ceiling windows that perfectly frame Mt. Aspiring – one of New Zealand's tallest peaks at nearly 10,000 feet – at the head of

the valley. We limit numbers on this hike to minimise our impact on the area. If you prefer not to stay in the hut, we offer an alternative option, staying at the more luxurious Lake Wanaka Lodge and take in some day hikes around the local area, or just relaxing and enjoying Wanaka's laid-back, small town atmosphere! It's up to you.

ACCOMMODATION: *Mt. Aspiring Hut, Mt. Aspiring National Park*

(B,L,D)

#### Day 4 **Hike Mt. Aspiring National Park**

We have a leisurely start today, enjoying a healthy breakfast and admiring the views, before hiking back out to the trailhead. From here we have a short drive to Wanaka, where we'll meet up with the rest of the group. Then we'll cross the Cardrona Saddle and drop into Queenstown, a stunning town set in a basin on the edge of Lake Wakatipu and surrounded by snowy peaks. It's a great place to spend a couple of days, and you'll find all sorts of options to pique your interest!

ACCOMMODATION: *Queenstown apartments, Queenstown*

(B,L)

#### Day 5 **Free day in Queenstown**

ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND is based in Queenstown for a good reason – not only is it the adventure capital of the world but you'll find all the comforts of civilisation: massage therapists, restaurants, sidewalk cafés, amazing shopping, and adrenaline-pumping activities! You'll find incredible optional activities here, such as bungy jumping, jet boating, skydiving, horse trekking, fishing, hang gliding and winery tours. Many of our clients have noted that Alpine Explorer caters very well to people with quite different interests and our time in Queenstown is a good example. For instance, there are hiking, biking and kayaking opportunities galore in this region. Also, being winter you can go skiing or snowboarding for the day at one of Queenstown's nearby ski areas (approximate cost US\$100 for ski or snowboard hire, transport and lift pass – available as snow conditions suit, generally from June to September). Or you can just soak up the atmosphere if you prefer!

ACCOMMODATION: *Queenstown apartments, Queenstown*

(B, D)

#### Day 6 **Start multi-day options**

When you book, you have the choice of a multi-day cycling and kayaking option in Fiordland National Park or a skiing/snowboarding option in and around Queenstown. Each is wonderful in its own way, so we'll let you decide! After breakfast together, we head off for our various activities:

### **CYCLING AND KAYAKING OPTION IN MANAPOURI AND MILFORD SOUND**

*(continued)*

Today is a cycling day, for the keen cyclists among us! You'll be fitted with a 21-speed front-suspension *Specialized* mountain bike for a spectacular ride near Queenstown, or if you prefer not to cycle, you can spend the day doing any number of the extra Queenstown offerings. We'll do one of the many cycling tracks in the area, and it's guaranteed to suit all levels of ability. At the end of the day, we have a two-hour drive to Lake Manapouri, which will be the base for our sea kayaking adventure to Milford Sound. We'll stay at Lake Manapouri Inn, with amazing views over the lake and the surrounding mountains of Fiordland National Park.

ACCOMMODATION: *Lake Manapouri Inn, Manapouri*

(B,L,D)

#### Day 7 **Sea kayak Milford Sound**

The day starts very early as we head towards Milford Sound. Milford was rated the 8th Natural Wonder of the World by Rudyard Kipling and it's easy to see why. Sheer granite walls plunge thousands of feet into calm indigo water, broken only by the reflection of the towering snowy peaks that border the sound. Most people see Milford Sound from the deck of a cruise boat, but we've got a better way – gliding along in a sea kayak, causing minimum disruption to the seals and dolphins that are very friendly and often eager to visit if they're in the area. This is an awesome trip, run by specialist kayak outfitters and suitable for beginners or experts. When you finish your paddle we'll head back to Lake Manapouri, arriving by mid afternoon for a BBQ dinner.

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Manapouri Inn, Manapouri

(B,L,D)

Day 8 **Cycle near Lake Manapouri**

This morning, cyclists will have another opportunity to stretch their legs, biking through the peaceful rolling farmland surrounding Te Anau. The earlier you set out, the more ground you'll cover. The rest of the group can enjoy a late-morning start and we'll pick up cyclists on our way to Queenstown where the trip ends.

(B)

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- OR -

Day 6

**OR SKIING/SNOWBOARDING OPTION IN QUEENSTOWN**

(on offer as snow conditions suit, generally June-Oct)

(continued)

With Coronet Peak, the Remarkables, Treble Cone and Cardrona ski areas all within an hour and a half of Queenstown, there are plenty of skiing and snowboarding options for novices and experts alike, and being locals we'll be happy to point you to the best of them! If you want to brush up on your skills, or if you're relatively new to the sport, private lessons are a great option (private lessons are about US\$75-80 per person per hour), although not essential. You can bring your own gear, or you can rent gear down here (gear hire is about US\$40 per day). Conditions vary throughout the season, but you can expect good skiing and riding, on and off-piste, with plenty of chairlifts and scenery that will blow you away! If you want to go skiing, but you don't want to miss out on Milford Sound, you can also use today or tomorrow to take a day trip to the world famous Fiordland National Park. Let us know if you would like to organise a day trip to Milford and we'll be happy to arrange this for you.

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments

(B)

Day 7 **Skiing or snowboarding**

Now that you've got your ski-legs, today is the day to really carve it up – have fun out there!

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments

(B)

Day 8 **Skiing or snowboarding**

Today is your last day skiing before immersing yourself in atmosphere of the Rugby World Cup in Queenstown, or fly and drive to your next game and destination.

(B)

## Important Information

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Alpine Explorer is an activity-oriented trip around the South Island. We've chosen interesting and comfortable accommodations throughout. Some places are quite luxurious, and others are off-the-beaten-track and don't have many accommodation options, but they are really, really spectacular. Our clients often say a real highlight of the trip is meeting their New Zealand hosts and we think you'll love the places we stay! Rooming is twin-share, although single rooms are available upon request. As there's such a variety of accommodations on this trip, some places will have ensuite bathrooms and some will have shared bathrooms, so we may ask you to share a bathroom with other group members on occasion.

**RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS:** If you're flying in on the first day of the trip, or out on the last day, we recommend arriving in Christchurch by about 9 - 10am on Monday, and departing from Queenstown after 3 - 4pm on Sunday. If your flights don't fit in with this, no worries – give us a call and we'll work it out.

**TRIP START:** On the first day of the trip we can pick you up from the Holiday Inn City Centre in Christchurch at 10.30am, or at the Christchurch airport in front of the information desk at 11am.

**TRIP END:** On the last day of the trip we can drop you off at the Queenstown airport in time for afternoon flights.

**FITNESS:** You'll need to have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on this trip. That said, you don't have to be young and extremely fit (although if you are, you won't be bored) but you should be in the habit of doing at least some exercise. Age and experience is of no importance. For instance, an enthusiastic active person in their 50s will be much happier than a 22-year-old couch potato.

**EXPERIENCE:** You don't need any outdoor experience at all to enjoy this, or any of our trips! They are designed to allow you to make the most of New Zealand's incredible environment. Our experienced guides are highly trained, and will look after you! You don't have to carry a heavy pack. You don't need to have been in a sea kayak to enjoy kayaking Milford Sound. You don't need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy some of the rides we have on offer. In fact we have so many options available that you don't need to ride at all, if you'd rather hike, explore or just relax! All we ask is that you be energetic and in reasonable shape - and we guarantee you'll have an incredible time. The challenges are there though, if you're looking for them. We manage the level of commitment to suit your experience and we have an impeccable safety record. We hold all relevant government licenses and permits.

**FLEXIBILITY:** The off-the-beaten-path and non-commercial nature of some of our accommodations on this trip means we sometimes need to change a night stop here or there. But we try to make as few changes as possible.

**INCLUDED:** The trip fare is US\$2199 + 12.5% NZ government taxes. We quote all prices in US dollars, so you can easily relate prices to your own currency. You can also join for shorter periods of time, at a pro-rated fare. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- All guiding services. We have two guides per trip, a lead guide/driver and a co-guide who is responsible for meals and accommodations. This means we can really make sure you have a great time! We operate with small groups and we don't hesitate to offer a second departure when our trips start getting full.
- Comfortable accommodations for the entire period you are with us. We can also organise accommodations for you if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- All your meals, except in Queenstown where we've found people prefer to check out the wide range of restaurants on offer.
- All hiking, cycling, and kayaking described in the itinerary, except optional extra activities, such as skiing at Lake Ohau or activities on your free day in Queenstown. We have estimated the rates for optional extra activities operated by local activity operators in US dollars, including all required equipment, but these rates may vary according to the USD/NZD exchange rate of the day. There are many optional activities available at extra cost, particularly in Queenstown. None of these activities are compulsory, and nor will your trip seem less awesome if you do the cheap or free options. Although some people enjoy sampling hang gliding, bungee jumping, jet boating, skydiving, and so on, others prefer to focus more on the hiking, paddling and cycling, it's up to you.

**NOT INCLUDED:** This is your holiday and we are serious about not nickel-and-dime you! You'll have a few meals and drinks to cover, extra activities if you choose them, and you may feel like tipping your guides at the end of a fabulous time, but you won't be pulling out your wallet every few minutes on your ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND trip!

**We'll see you soon!**

*Itinerary valid through December 2011*