

Tui



Hike Routeburn Track • Cycle Hawea to Wanaka • Sea kayak Milford Sound • Scenic mountain flight to Siberia Hut • Jet boat ride • Hike Mt. Aspiring National Park and Franz Josef Glacier

8 days: Christchurch–Queenstown

Fare: US\$2799 + tax

The Tui is our shortest South Island trip. It's an action-packed, adventure-oriented itinerary that works well if you are looking for an incredible adventure vacation but don't have a lot of time to see our country, or as part of a longer trip to New Zealand. You can fly from home on a Friday evening, sleep on the plane, and then be back at work by Monday, 10 days later. We always offer plenty of choices for activities, but remember; it's your vacation so nothing is compulsory! Anyone in reasonable shape can do the activities we offer. You'll see some great parts of New Zealand, but we won't pretend you're going to see it all. The Tui trip is about quality not quantity!

DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

SUNDAY

Arrive, hike in Arthur's Pass

The Tui trip starts in Christchurch, the main city and airport of the South Island. You'll need to be in Christchurch by around 9am. We'll meet you there and head to the Southern Alps for a hike in Arthur's Pass to Devils Punchbowl where we'll see an awesome 430-foot (131-metre) waterfall. We then head down the coast to the beautiful seaside village of Okarito, one of the best kept secrets of the West Coast that's all but untouched due to its location 10 miles down a one-way road from an obscure highway turnoff. There are no shops, no restaurants, no traffic and a population of only 31 people. Because of the action-packed nature of the Tui, we get much of the driving out of the way on the first day of the trip. As an option, you can miss out most of the first day's driving by meeting us this afternoon in the West Coast town of Hokitika, a short 30-minute flight from Christchurch, and we'll pick you up on the way through.

ACCOMMODATION: Okarito Beach House, Okarito (L,D)

Andrew: "As a young guide, I used to run up Alex Knob to keep in shape. It's my favourite 'keep-fit' spot in the country. The thick forest, tantalising glimpses of the glacier, and the unbelievable vista from the top mean this is one of my most memorable hikes – not an easy hike, necessarily, but definitely one for the top shelf."

MONDAY

Hike at Franz Josef Glacier

Just south of Okarito there are two formidable glaciers descending from the mountains to the sea. In terms of scenery, this place is off the charts, and we'll spend most of the day hiking at Franz Josef Glacier. We'll hike up through the rainforest to either Alex Knob or Roberts Point, both of which give great views of the terminal face, lower reaches and lateral moraines of Franz Josef Glacier. We only do these hikes in good weather, as the rocks get very slippery in the

rain. If it's raining, we'll do a shorter walk to a view of the terminal face of Fox Glacier and a hike around Lake Matheson.

HELI-HIKE OPTION

(add US\$350 + tax)

A less strenuous, but outrageously scenic option today is to heli-hike on Franz Josef Glacier itself. After being fitted with crampons, ice axes and so on, you'll board a modern turbine helicopter and fly towards the highest peaks of the Southern Alps, landing on the glacier at 4,000 feet (1300m) above sea level. Led by specialist glacier guides, you'll hike through the grand ice formations of the glacier, checking out its crevasses, seracs and tunnels – no previous experience required! The constant movement of the glacier means every day is different, so your guides will cut steps in the ice and make sure you make the most of the conditions. At the end of your hike on the ice, you'll take another helicopter ride out of the mountains and back to civilisation.

The heli-hike is extremely popular, so we offer advance reservations with the helicopter operators and guiding company. At the time of booking or up until one month before your trip, you can reserve a space on the heli-hike, and we'll make sure a spot is held for you. Or you can leave your decision until you're actually on your trip, and we'll get you a spot if it's available.

Heli-hikers generally return a little earlier, so we'll rendezvous at a local café, and head south. From Franz Josef, we head down the coast to Haast, an isolated West Coast hamlet, where we'll enjoy some local fare – venison pie!

ACCOMMODATION: World Heritage Heartland Hotel, Haast (B,L,D)

CUSTOMISE YOUR TRIP

At the time of booking, you have the choice of one of two different overnight options – a backpacking trip in Mt. Aspiring National Park, or an overnight stay in the small farming village of Makarora.

Each is wonderful in its own way, so we'll let you decide!

TUESDAY (morning)

Start Mt. Aspiring National Park options

This morning we'll drive to Makarora on the eastern side of Mt. Aspiring National Park. When you book, you have the option of choosing between two different overnight options – either a backpacking trip in Mt. Aspiring National Park, or an overnight stay in the small farming village of Makarora. After lunch, we head off on our various adventures:

OPTION I

Makarora Adventure option in Mt. Aspiring National Park

TUESDAY (afternoon)

Scenic flight, hike Siberia Valley, jet boat Wilkin River

If you prefer comfortable accommodation with modern amenities instead of a mountain hut for the night, then this is the option for you! You'll head out for a mind-blowing scenic flight into Mt. Aspiring National Park for a bird's eye view of the lower Southern Alps, landing in the remote Siberia Valley. From here you'll hike downstream along the Wilkin River, through beautiful silver beech (*Nothofagus menziesii*) forests to a jet boat rendezvous. Then it's a thrilling ride back to Makarora for dinner and perhaps a well-earned drink at the Makarora pub.

ACCOMMODATION: Makarora cottages, Makarora (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY (morning)

Hike on Mt Shrimpton

This morning we'll hike the Mt. Shrimpton track. It's a steep hike with a 2500 foot (750 metre) elevation gain, but the views from above the tree-line are well worth the effort. Alternatively you can have a relaxing morning, sleep in and spend your time soaking up the mountain views from your accommodation. We'll return mid morning, just in time to meet up with the rest of the group for lunch.

OPTION II

Siberia Valley Wilderness option in Mt. Aspiring National Park

TUESDAY (afternoon)

Scenic flight, hike Lake Crucible

If you like the idea of staying in one of New Zealand's most isolated mountain huts, then this option is for you! We'll start with a dramatic scenic flight alongside the snowy Southern Alps to the Siberia Valley airstrip. You can hike up the trail to Lake Crucible for great views of this glacial valley while dinner is whipped up back at the hut. Tonight you'll be served a candle-lit dinner in one of the most glorious places in the world. This is also one of the few backcountry huts where you can chat with a resident hut ranger from New Zealand's Department of Conservation. Rangers are often keen for a yarn around the camp fire, and can offer further insight into the flora and fauna of Mt. Aspiring National Park.

This is the only night on the *Tui* where your accommodation is basic, but it's a true Kiwi experience and a lot of fun. You don't have to carry

a very heavy pack – our guides are pretty tough and they'll carry the lion's share of the load. You'll be carrying a backpack, sleeping bag, a few spare clothes and some food – no need for any more than that, although we'll provide tents and so on if you'd prefer to camp out under the stars.

ACCOMMODATION: Siberia Hut, Mt. Aspiring National Park (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY (morning)

Hike Siberia Valley, jet boat

After an early start, we spend the morning hiking to The Forks, at the head of the Wilkin River, where we will be met by a jet boat for an exhilarating ride back to Makarora to meet up with the rest of the group for lunch.

WEDNESDAY (afternoon)

Finish Mt. Aspiring National Park options, cycle Hawea trail

After regrouping in Makarora, we'll have a picnic lunch before taking a beautiful drive through spectacular glacier-carved valleys to the town of Hawea. Here you'll be fitted with a 21-speed front-suspension

"We have traveled all over the world, and this was by far the best trip of our lives. We could never have put anything like this together on our own.

Absolutely wonderful!"

Jennifer and John Ridgley (Georgia, USA)

March 2009

Specialized mountain bike for a scenic bike ride along a part of the Te Araroa track to Wanaka. This gently undulating section of the track follows the crystal clear Hawea and Clutha Rivers through the rugged Central Otago landscape for 10 miles (17km) to the charming mountain town of Wanaka. From there, it's a short drive over the Cardrona Saddle to Queenstown, on the shores of Lake Wakatipu.

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments, Queenstown (B,L)

THURSDAY

Hike Ben Lomond or free day in Queenstown

Today you have two options – a full day hike or a free day to yourself – it's up to you! For those keen for a challenging alpine hike, we'll head up Ben Lomond Track after you've had breakfast. Ben Lomond, one of Queenstown's prominent peaks, was named by the early Scottish settlers in the area who were reminded of the highlands of their home country. We hike up through forested slopes that give way to alpine tussock-land leading us to the summit of Ben Lomond. From this vantage point you'll find yourself immersed in amazing views over Queenstown Bay and Lake Wakatipu, which are themselves dwarfed by the surrounding mountains such as Mt. Aspiring.

As an alternative, you can have a free day with no activities scheduled, although we'll certainly help with suggestions if you like. Queenstown, where ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND is based, is a great place to spend a couple of days. You'll find all the comforts of civilisation: massage therapists, restaurants, sidewalk cafés, window-shopping and adrenaline pumping activities! You'll also find some incredible optional activities here such as biking, hang gliding, hiking, white-water rafting, jet boating, skydiving, horse trekking, fishing and wine tours – it's all

here! Your guides can help you during the trip to book any of these optional activities. Queenstown is not a big place – the population is about 8000 – but there’s plenty to do! Or, you can do nothing and just soak up the atmosphere.

ACCOMMODATION: *Queenstown apartments, Queenstown*

FRIDAY

Hike Routeburn Track

This morning we head down to Te Anau for lunch, before continuing on to The Divide where we’ll hike part of the Routeburn Track. Located in the heart of Fiordland, our largest and arguably most spectacular national park, this hike gives us unsurpassed views of the Hollyford Valley, from mountains to sea, as well as Lake Marian and Mt. Christina. Then it’s a short drive through the Homer Tunnel, emerging at the top of a spectacular alpine road winding its way down to Milford Sound. The lush rainforest carpeting the lower slopes of the mountains gives way to the massively steep, glacier-carved slopes and waterfalls of the Darren Range. Milford Sound, rated the 8th Natural Wonder of the World by Rudyard Kipling, is breathtaking. Sheer rock walls plunge thousands of feet to the Tasman Sea and waterfalls cascade into the deep blue water. It’s basic accommodation tonight, but it’s the only place in town to stay and the location alone makes up for it!

ACCOMMODATION: *Milford Lodge, Milford Sound (B,L,D)*

SATURDAY

Sea kayak Milford Sound, explore Fiordland National Park

It’s an early start today. Most people see Milford Sound from the deck of a cruise ship, but we’ve got a better way – gliding along in a

“ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND was a trip of a lifetime, my first trip on my own and everything from the guides, scenery, activities to other guests exceeded all expectations. Next adventure, ACTIVE SOUTH AMERICA with the kids!”

Lesley Stopay (Barrie, Canada) November 2008

sea kayak, getting up close and personal with the sound while causing minimum disruption to the seals and dolphins that are very friendly and often eager to visit. This is an awesome trip, run by specialist kayak outfitters, and it’s equally suitable for beginners or experts. After your morning’s paddle, we’ll have lunch before continuing on to Lake Manapouri. Along the way we’ll spend more time exploring the Fiordland wilderness, checking out some of its more interesting residents like the Kea (*nestor notabilis*) New Zealand’s notoriously cheeky alpine parrot and the Kotukutuku (*fuchsia excorticata*) the world’s largest fuchsia.

ACCOMMODATION: *Lake Manapouri Inn, Manapouri (B,L,D)*

SUNDAY

Depart for home

Well, it’s almost time to go home. We’ll leave after breakfast for the two-hour drive to Queenstown, and arrive by late morning in time for the flights back to Christchurch or Auckland. This will have been a very exhilarating week, and you’ll be buzzing with excitement but feeling relaxed and refreshed as well! See the itinerary for the *Kauri* trip if you want to take a few more days to see the North Island. (B)

Specific Information – Tui

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 8–9am on the first Sunday, and departing from Queenstown any time after 12 noon on the last Sunday. Other flight times may also be possible including flying straight to Hokitika on the first day – if you are considering alternative flight times please let us know.

TRIP START: On the first day of the trip we can either pick you up from the Heartland Hotel Cotswold in Christchurch at 9.30am,

or at the Christchurch airport in front of the information desk at 10am. Another option is to meet us at the Hokitika airport that afternoon.

TRIP END: On the last day of the trip we can drop you off anywhere in central Queenstown in the late morning, or at the Queenstown airport in time for the flights above.

For information on accommodation, fitness and experience requirements and what’s included in the trip fare, see ‘General Information’ overleaf.



General Information

We've included trip-specific details in the Specific Information section at the end of each itinerary. This is also where you can find details on recommended flights, pick ups and drop offs.

ACCOMMODATION: We've chosen interesting and comfortable accommodations for all of our trips. Some places are quite civilised, but many of the other locations we visit are off-the-beaten-track – and don't have many accommodation options – but they are really, really spectacular. We think you'll love the places we stay! We prefer to stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments. Rooming is based on twin-share, although single room upgrades are available on request. As there's such a variety of accommodation on our trips, 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.

FITNESS: You must have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on our trips. 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 are not important, but our trips are not passive scenic tours of New Zealand. For example, a person in their 50s who hikes every couple of weeks will be happier than a 22-year-old couch potato. If you're concerned about your fitness level, have a chat with us so we can help you choose between our trips.

Our focus is on getting you out of the vehicle, out of stress-mode, and into the scenery.

EXPERIENCE: You don't need any outdoor experience at all to enjoy our trips. All our trips 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 on hikes and you don't have to have been kayaking or rafting to enjoy taking to the water. You don't even need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy some of the rides we have available. In fact we have so many options available that you don't need to ride at all if you'd rather hike, fish, or just laze around!

All we ask is that you be energetic, 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: Because of the off-the-beaten-path and non-commercial nature of some of our accommodation, we sometimes need to change a night stop. When we do this the daily activities don't change and we use accommodation of a similar level. We try

to make as few changes as possible, but we ask that you know we retain the flexibility to make sure your trip is as good as it can be.

INCLUDED: Your trip fare is quoted in US dollars so our guests from all over the world can more easily relate prices to their own currencies. The trip fare doesn't include air fares to or from the trip start and end points or NZ government taxes which are 15%. You can join most of our trips 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 accommodation. This means we can really make sure you have a great time! We operate with small groups and we are happy to offer a second departure when our trips start filling up.
- Comfortable accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organise pre- and post-trip accommodation for you if you let us know.
- Breakfast (B), lunch (L), and dinner (D), except during free time in places like Queenstown where we've found people prefer to check out the wide range of restaurants. Alcohol is not generally included, although we do spring for a few drinks here and there!
- All hiking, kayaking, cycling, rafting and caving described in the itineraries, except the optional extra activities. Optional activities are available at extra cost, particularly in Franz Josef and 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 on the day.
- None of these activities are compulsory, nor will your trip seem less awesome if you do the cheap or free options. Although some people enjoy sampling extra activities others prefer to focus more on the hiking, paddling and cycling, which is of course the reason you're coming to New Zealand in the first place!
- Transport during our trips, in a comfortable vehicle.

NOT INCLUDED: This is your holiday, and we are serious about not nickel-and-diming you! You'll have a few meals and drinks to cover, extra activities if you choose them, and you'll probably 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!

ITINERARY UPDATES: We update our itineraries each April so please check our website for the most up-to-date itineraries and pricing.

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