

## WAY-DOWN-SOUTH ADVENTURE

### Hiking, Wildlife & Spectacular Scenery

(self-drive or private driver/guide)

#### Day 1 ~ Arrive in Auckland/Queenstown

Upon arrival at Auckland's international airport you will make your own way to the domestic terminal, for your flight to Queenstown. Upon arrival you'll be met by your driver and privately transferred to your accommodation. You'll have the rest of the day free to relax or explore the town on your own.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation*

#### Day 2 ~ Queenstown / Oamaru

Today you'll head to Oamaru (about 4 hour drive). En route you'll pass through the farmlands of Omarama, and the charming towns of Duntroon, Kurow and Otematata, giving you the chance to stretch your legs and explore. Travel up the Waitaki Valley guides by Benmore, Aviemore and Waitaki lakes and the Waitaki River.



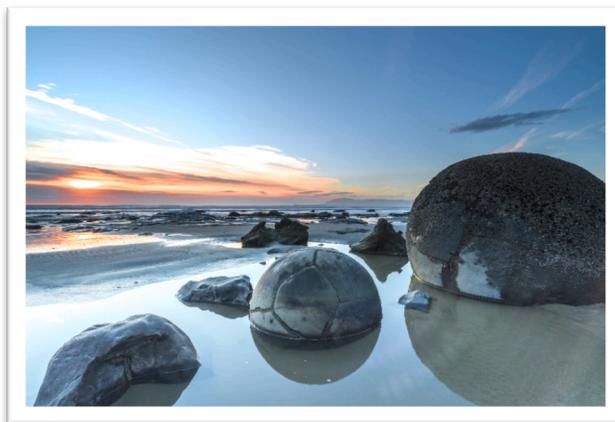
You'll have the rest of the day free to explore Oamaru. Elegant white stone buildings highlight Oamaru's rich heritage. Explore the Victorian precinct and fascinating steampunk museum, before heading to the city's lovely public gardens. In the evening, be sure to visit the harbour to see little blue penguins waddle

ashore for the night.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B)*

#### Day 3 ~ Oamaru / Dunedin

Rise early to capture the mysterious, spherical Moeraki Boulders at sunrise (if you're an avid photographer like me). Continue south to Dunedin enjoying the scenery en route. Dunedin is a heritage city with a youthful vibe and many grand examples of Victorian and Edwardian architecture, including New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle. Nearby, the Otago Peninsula is a natural haven for rare coastal wildlife like penguins, albatross, seals and sea lions.



*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B)*

#### **Day 4 ~ Dunedin/Wildlife tour**

A scenic drive to the far side of Mount Cargill offers sweeping views of the coast and Silverpeaks. Enjoy morning tea at The Sanctuary Café or examine the displays at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary Visitors Centre.

Explore Orokonui Ecosanctuary, a “mainland island” where rare birds and reptiles are protected by a predator proof fence and the forest flourishes in the absence of rats, stoats, possums and other pests. An extended guided tour of the sanctuary provides ample opportunity to get up close to the resident wildlife, which usually includes: the endangered takahe, the inquisitive South Island Kaka, New Zealand’s smallest bird, the Rifleman, our huge New Zealand pigeon, the Kereru, the cute Tomtit, the cheeky Fantails, the friendly South Island Robin, daring Wax Eyes, the vocal Tuis, tuneful Bell Birds, entire families of Brown Creepers, shy Fern Birds and others. Marvel at 500 year old rimu trees, other ancient podocarps, and prehistoric fern trees in this magical forest landscape.

After lunch you’ll explore a volcanic cave set on a stunning beach surrounded by rolling hills and distant mountains. A short walk around one of our picturesque wetlands enables close up viewing of wading birds. Finish your day with complimentary afternoon tea on a quiet beach followed by a gentle stroll to a sea cave (subject to tide) before the scenic drive back to Dunedin or Port Chalmers.

#### **Day 5 ~ Taieri Gorge Railway**

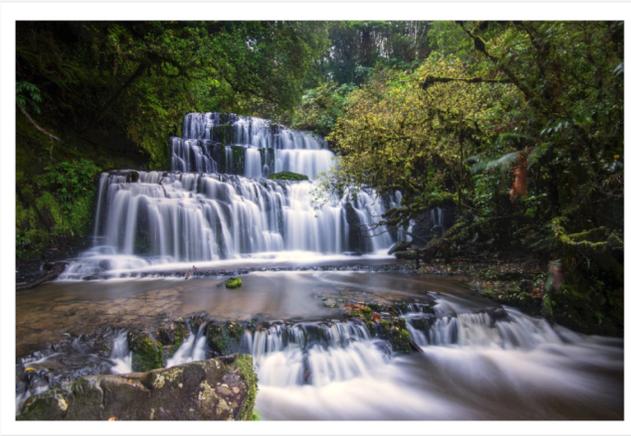
Today you’ll enjoy a scenic ride on the Taieri Gorge Railway. Ride the Taieri Gorge Railway on a 4-hour round-trip route from Dunedin to Pukerangi. The train steams through vivid South Island landscapes including the Taieri Plains and Taieri Gorge, stopping en route for photo ops plus a leg stretch in Pukerangi.

You’ll have the afternoon free to explore Dunedin on your own. Perhaps head out to Tunnel beach to catch the sunset.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B)*

#### **Day 6 ~ Dunedin/Invercargill**

Travel down the coast from Dunedin and explore the beautiful Catlins landscape. Wander the 5 minute path to Nugget Point lighthouse and marvel at the steep headland and rocky islets (The Nuggets). Enjoy amazing views along the coastline, visiting the famous Pūrākaunui Falls. Don't forget to look out for fur seals as they loll about, playing in rock pools and generally having fun.



Invercargill is New Zealand's southern most city and offers a wide range of activities.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B)*

#### **Day 7 ~ Invercargill / Stewart Island**

This morning you’ll catch your scenic flight to Stewart Island, affording you an aerial view of the untamed beauty of the island.

Seventy five percent of Stewart island is National Park, and most people come here for the hiking and birdwatching. The island has 280km of walking tracks suited to short waks, day walks and multi-day hikes.

It is a haven for brown kiwi or Tokoeka, which outnumber humans on the island and are active day and night. Blue penguins and the rare yellow-eyed penguins waddle among the rocks. Offshore on Ulva Island, you'll find a predator free bird sanctuary with dozens of native species.

The only settlement on the island is Halfmoon Bay, also known as Oban. Stewart Island Lodge is a great accommodation base to explore the township, Rakiura National Park and Ulva Island.

This afternoon you'll enjoy a Paterson Inlet Wildlife Cruise. Paterson Inlet is a vast, beautiful, unspoilt with a forest covered shoreline. Experience a leisurely, informative, small group cruise. View wildlife including penguins, cormorants and albatross. Each trip is different, along with the season and conditions on the day, so our wildlife encounters will vary from day to day. The cruise offers great photo opportunities.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B)*

### **Day 8 ~ Stewart Island**

Meet your guide at Golden Bay Wharf for your excursion to Ulva Island.

Enjoy a guided walk in the primeval rainforest. View ancient podocarp trees, lush tree ferns, delicate ground ferns, mosses and orchids in season. Learn about the practical and medicinal uses of trees and plants. Enjoy some lovely photo opportunities along the way.



Make frequent stops to view endemic and native birds at close range. You may hear kaka (native parrot), the bellbird's exquisite notes and the wonderfully varied calls of the tui. Watch lime-green parakeet flying amongst the treetops. Glimpse rare saddleback and yellowhead and try to spot New Zealand's smallest bird the rifleman. Occasionally a kiwi is seen wondering in the forest.

The full day tour includes an exclusive walk to The Snuggery - a tranquil bay on the southeastern shore of Ulva Island.

What to bring: Day pack, raincoat, warm clothing, warm hat and gloves, water bottle, snack, camera and binoculars. Wear sneakers or comfortable walking shoes.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B)*

### **Day 9 ~ Stewart Island/Te Anau**

Catch the early ferry from Stewart Island to Bluff. Perhaps enjoy the oysters that Bluff is famous for, before heading to Te Anau.

Your picturesque drive skirts the rugged south coast and the eastern boundary of Fiordland National Park.

Visit Te Hiko Southern Journey to learn about Riverton's bi-cultural past and stop over in Tuatapere for points of natural and historic interest, along with opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, trout fishing, hunting and boating.

Te Anau is the gateway to Fiordland National Park, you will find activities such as the glowworm caves, Milford and Doubtful sound cruises.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B)*

### **Day 10 ~ Te Anau / Milford Track**

This morning you will report to the roadside at the Fiordland Lodge gates where you will be collected for your small group hike. Today you'll hike The Milford Track, which traverses the heart of New Zealand's wild fiord country, and has long been described as "the finest walk in the world". You'll start your journey by crossing the lake by catamaran to join your specialist nature guide on a leisurely walk through rich beech forest and along the meandering Clinton River, observing birdlife and unique aspects of the valley (4-5 hours – approx. 7 miles return). You'll be delivered to the Fiordland Lodge gates after the hike.

An Alternative hike for today is the Kepler Track (ask for description)

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B, L)*

### **Day 11 ~ Milford Sound/Queenstown**

Fiordland National Park is famous for having perhaps New Zealand's most spectacular mountain and lake scenery, so prepare to take more photos than you ever have in a single day! This morning your private guide will drive you to Milford Sound along one of the world's most spectacular routes. You'll be treated to towering Mitre Peak, rugged alpine scenery, and a succession of cascading waterfalls, glaciers, sheer cliffs, and rainforests. Milford Sound itself is truly magnificent: almost-vertical cliffs rise 4,000 feet from the water's edge, tremendous waterfalls plunge (520 feet) through space to the sea below, and playful bottle-nosed dolphins and fur seals abound.



Departing from Milford Sound by water taxi, begin with a short boat ride to Sandfly Point. Here a walk meanders alongside the cascading Arthur River through lush rainforest to Giant Gate. This spectacular waterfall is best viewed from the large swing bridge spanning the river. From the ancient canopy trees towering above to the emerald-green ferns below and the birdsong that echoes through the trees, it is a unique World Heritage Area best explored by foot. Walking at an easy going pace in a small group, your knowledgeable, nature guide will point out

the native plants and birds inhabiting this lush environment, and share the track's stories, bringing the history of the area to life.

Return to Milford Sound Wharf where you'll cruise (2 ½ hours) through the fiords of Milford Sound aboard a small vessel with a naturalist guide. Conclude your day with a phenomenally scenic flight (twin engine plane) back to Queenstown, passing over a multitude of snowcapped peaks, glaciers, waterfalls, lakes and fiords. (If the flight is cancelled due to weather, then you will be transferred in a private car.)

Note: Your luggage cannot be taken on the flight so will be transferred by road to the lodge. Make sure that it is ready to be collected this morning before you depart.

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B, L)*

### **Day 12 ~ Hollyford track**

After breakfast at the lodge, you'll be privately transferred to Queenstown Airport.

Board the private helicopter and fly towards the North West, over the Shotover River, up the Moonlight river where you will land in a secluded valley on Ben Lomond High Country Station (ranch). Here, you can walk for approx 2-3 hours along a ridge, climbing easily towards Mt Gilbert, where the Helicopter awaits. The afternoon is spent flying through New Zealand's magnificent Southern Alps. Flying into the amazing Earnslaw burn, seeing spectacular ice shelves and many small glaciers before flying over the Fiordland and Mt Aspiring National Parks.

Then to a pristine West Coast beach and the Tasman Sea, to walk on the beautiful beaches of the wild and remote West Coast of the South Island - where the only access is by helicopter. Take the opportunity to see wild/bird-life first hand and prospect for Greenstone or Paua (abalone) shells, as you stroll along the beach. At the opposite end of the beach, meet the exclusive Helicopter and depart south over the famous Hollyford Valley to a private spot in the Humboldt Mountains for lunch.

After a gourmet lunch, head back to Queenstown via the Cecil Peak 'ledge' for photos to conclude the day. This is an exclusive privately guided heli-hike. The aim is to challenge you to the degree that makes for an experience that is enjoyable, unforgettable and a highlight of your visit to New Zealand.

*Note: an alternative hike is a portion of the Routeburn track.*

*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B, L)*

### **Day 13 ~ Mt. Aspiring National Park**

Today you'll enjoy a Dart River Wilderness Safari (shared). Enjoy a jetboat ride up the braided channels of the Dart River deep into the Mt Aspiring National Park learning about the flora, fauna and history of the area surrounded by majestic snow-capped mountains and pristine scenery (1 ½ hours). Enjoy a short walk (30 minutes) through the primitive native beech forest as well as a back-country drive (45 minutes) across the opposite side of the valley through Paradise where some of the locations that were used for the 'Lord of the Rings' movie trilogy can be seen.



*Select 4\* or 5\* accommodation (B, L)*

### **Day 14 ~ Queenstown/Auckland/Home**

Today you'll be privately transferred to the airport for your flight to Auckland. Here you'll connect with your international flight home. (B)

**End of Trip**

**(Code: B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)**

***Land Cost: CALL FOR QUOTE***