

A person with long dark hair, wearing a red jacket and a backpack, is walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk. The boardwalk is made of light-colored wooden planks and winds through a field of tall, dry, yellowish-brown grass. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with significant snow cover under a blue sky with some clouds.

**WILD WOMEN**  
*expeditions*

**NEW ZEALAND HIKING ADVENTURE**  
**12 DAYS**

For more information please contact: [adventure@wildwomenexpeditions.com](mailto:adventure@wildwomenexpeditions.com) or call 1 (888) 993-1222.





# EXPERIENCE NEW ZEALAND

Each day on the South Island will be one giant bite of authentic New Zealand's remote landscape and glacial marvels—and you'll experience it on foot, pedalling and paddling!

You'll see other parts of the isle in the most dramatic way—by jet boat on the Dart River and on a seriously scenic flight into Mt. Aspiring! The hikes are challenging and unforgettable—check off biggies like the Devil's Punchbowl, Haast Pass, Routeburn, Kepler and the behemoth, Ben Lomond Track. These routes slice through glacier-scraped valleys, along snaking silver rivers and into the thick of beech and plum pine forests.

Visit two knock-out national parks on this 12-day adrenaline-infused adventure: Mount Aspiring and Fiordland. Birders will be bonkers for the endemics and remarkable species like the New Zealand fantails, kea parrots, swampheens and tomtits.

From the startling face of Franz Josef Glacier to the "Cloud Piercer" (Mount Cook), the torrents of waterfalls, skyscraper peaks and fictional teal Blue Pools will keep your head on a swivel.

In Queenstown, situated on Lake Wakatipu, sop up the backdrop of the Southern Alps. Queenstown is the hopping off point for bungee jumpers at the Kawarau Gorge Suspension bridge and jet boaters on the Shotover and Dart river—it's also a very cosmo base for exploring the region's coveted vineyards and historic gold mining towns.

Jump from biking the Milford Sound Bike Queenstown Trail and the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail (New Zealand's Longest) to hiking hidden pockets of wild to sea kayaking in the sanctuary of the Okarito Lagoon among the white heron rookery.

Come, explore New Zealand's South Island with Wild Women and feel the supernatural rush of this destination.

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To properly ramp up for this adventure-amplified trip, most Wild Women choose to arrive a day or two early to shake off the pesky grip of jetlag.

There are no scheduled activities today so take advantage of this slow-motion day to wander and reset. We'll rendezvous in the evening (in the hotel lobby of Sudima Hotel, where the Wild Women group is staying) for a trip orientation and icebreaker welcome

dinner. It's time to pinch yourself-you've arrived! Your New Zealand dreams are unfolding!

Note: When booking flights, please choose Christchurch International Airport (CHC).

Meals included: Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: March 2, 2024 - Merivale Manor | November 2, 2024 - Sudima Hotel



Today we'll travel from the east coast into the western granite folds of the Southern Alps (a 2 hour drive) to hike Devil's Punchbowl in Arthur's Pass. We'll slice through the erratic limestone boulders of Castle Hill Basin en route-an area that the Dalai Lama deemed one of the most spiritual places in the world.

The Punchbowl is an easy walk that slips through tall stands of native beech forest

to the pounding rush of the powerful 131m(430ft) waterfall. Be on high alert for the chicken-sized kiwis-though they are nocturnal. These comical-looking flightless, tailless endemics are the national icon (and unofficial emblem) of New Zealand. We'll also be in the company of the impressive cinnamon-breasted fantail and tomtits, a small species of bird with a distinct large head and short tail (also endemic to NZ!).



After the Punchbowl, we'll wind down the coast to Franz Josef. The town of Franz Josef is the nerve centre of New Zealand's glacier country and is located just 5km (3.1mi) from the famed glacier face.

Fun fact: Franz Josef Glacier (Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere) was first explored by local iwi. In 1865, geologist Julius von Haast named it after the fabulously mustachioed Austrian emperor.

We'll spend an extremely elemental night in the verdant subtropical rainforest in the foothills of the Southern Alps. The Rainforest Retreat strongly adheres to the sacred Tiaki Promise. Tiaki means to care for People and Place and this sustainably-minded property is committed to being a generational guardian. Extra bonus: there's a hot tub!

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef

The skinny on today's hike: 2 km (1.2 mi), 0.5-1 hour, elevation +/- 100m (330ft)

How much further? 3 to 4 hours (driving)



This morning we'll take a short journey over to Okarito (a 30-minute drive), a bijoux beach community on the coast. We'll slide tandem sea kayaks into the sheltered tidal lagoon and paddle towards the reflection of the snowy peaks mirrored in the water. This one hour, beginner-friendly activity is optional of course! For geology junkies, you'll appreciate learning about how this Southern Alps region is continuing to grow (in land mass, not population) due to

the movement of tectonic plates.

Okarito is home to the only native white heron colony in New Zealand. Their mating dance of the heron is an elaborate one—once a female is attracted, the pair preen each other and intertwine their long necks, wings and bill.

The herons (kōtuku) are symbolic and integral in Māori myth and folklore. The rarest species of kiwi, the Okarito kiwi or rowi, is also found near the town of Okarito in a kiwi sanctuary (one of two on the South Island). Under Operation Nest Egg, the Department of Conservation collects kiwi eggs from the wild and hatches them in captivity where they are raised in “crèche sites” until the juveniles are independent enough to be released into the wild.

After lunch we'll be hiking to the Franz Josef Glacier. With more than 140 glaciers inching their way down from the Southern Alps, this area is known best as glacier country.

Few sights rival the natural spectacle of Franz Josef and Fox Glacier's frozen rivers grinding their way down through the temperate rainforest to just 250m (820ft) above sea level. This hike will take us along the Waiho riverbed up into the valley to the jaw-dropper terminal face of the Franz Josef Glacier (\*if time permits).

From Franz Josef, we'll travel down the coast through the velvet forest and over the divide to a small mountain village called Makarora. Here, we'll kick back and taste some authentic local fare at the Wonderland Lodge where the surroundings are truly a wonder. Enjoy the bird soundtrack (chatty fantails and boisterous tūī ) and later, the star-speckled squid ink sky above our rustic chalets.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Wonderland Lodge, Makarora

The skinny on today's paddle: 1 hour

The skinny on today's hike to Franz Josef Glacier: 4.8 km (3 mi), 2-3 hours, elevation +/- 20 m (66ft).

Note: There will be two guides so if you wish to opt out of the hike, you may travel onward to the lodge instead.

How much further? 30 minutes (driving)



We'll be on the move early today, driving two hours to Makarora Village. Soon, we'll be buzzing and jangly from more than just a second cup of coffee after a 20-minute super scenic mind-blowing flight into Mt. Aspiring National Park. We'll have a true bird's eye view of the tarns and iced caps of the lower Southern Alps before landing in the remote Siberia Valley and its glacial ribbons.

Note: You will be guaranteed to have WET FEET today as the hike involves a river crossing. Due to the rocky nature of the river bottom it's not advisable to cross the river barefoot. You may wish to bring an additional pair of shoes for this hike or take it all in stride.

Finding our land legs, we'll hike downstream along the Wilkin River, through serene silver beech forests to our jet boat. It will be a thrilling 45-minute jet boat ride back on the glacial river to Makarora for dinner and a celebratory drink at the local pub. Tonight's sleep will be in the fun and rustic A-frame cottages of Wonderland Lodge.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Wonderland Lodge, Makarora

The skinny on today's hike: 9.5 km, +/-50 m, 2-3 hours

How much further? 20 minute flight, 45 minute jet boat, 2 hours driving



This morning, we'll head back towards the West Coast with a stop at the Haast Pass Lookout. The trail has a steady treadmill incline and doesn't offer any plateau until we reach the tip top. The views above the tree line are startling and worth every huff and puff.

On our way back to Makarora, we'll check out the iconic teal Blue Pools pocketed among the mature beech and podocarp

(plum pine) forest. These pools of fictional deep teal water and trout eventually flow into the Makarora River and encourage a reflective moment. Listen for the brilliant yellowhead (bird) in the canopy.

Alternatively, you can indulge in a sleep-in and spend the morning absorbing the mountain views. We'll regroup (early birds and sleepyheads) in Makarora for a picnic lunch before taking a gorgeous drive through the spectacular glacier-carved valleys. The landscape transitions rapidly from dense beech forests to semi-arid mountainous terrain.

In Wanaka, we'll take a short but dramatic journey over the Cardrona Saddle to Arrowtown, a small historic gold mining village established in the 1800s. If time permits, we'll elbow up to the bar of the Cardrona Hotel "home to over 150 years of good stories." Rumor has it that this historic hotel is the most photographed building in all of New Zealand. Early settlers floated beech wood down the river and lake over 100km (62 miles) to build the now-legendary bar back in 1863.

We'll hop on bikes and tear up a portion of the Queenstown Bike Trail. The trail is a well-packed surface and winds parallel to the Arrow River. We'll follow the Arrow Bridges Trail through to Morven Ferry Car Park or the famous Kawarau Bungy Bridge, depending on the group's pace and enthusiasm. For those who don't wish to participate in the ride, you can jump in the bus shuttle. You may also ride partway and take advantage of the shuttle at any point.

After our ride, we'll head on to the alpine town of Queenstown (a 10 minute drive) and Lake Wakatipu's captivating views. We'll be spending two nights at this lakefront hotel so you can unpack a little!

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Queenstown Heritage Hotel, Queenstown

The skinny on today's hiking options:

Haast Pass Hike: 3.5 km (2.2 mi), 1 hour return, elevation +/- 107m (351 ft)

Blue Pools Hike: 1.5 km (0.9 mi), 1 hour return, elevation +/- 54m (177 ft)

The skinny on today's pedal: 7.5-13 km (4.6-8.1mi), 1-2 hour, elevation +/- 127m (416 ft)

How much further? 90 minutes (driving) to Arrowtown via Wanaka

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Today our group can entertain two tempting options: a full day hike or a totally free day in Queenstown.

For those keen on the challenge of an alpine hike, we'll meet our guide at reception at 9AM to make tracks on the famed Ben Lomond Track. To save our quads a little, we'll take a short gondola ride up to Bob's Peak to the Ben Lomond trailhead, which hovers 450m (1,476ft)

above Queenstown. From the skyline, we'll split through alpine tussock-land towards the daunting summit or "saddle" of Ben Lomond. From this vantage point, we'll be spoiled with incredible views over Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu and the immensity of Mt. Aspiring.

For those who want to be free range chickens, there's lots to explore in Queenstown, the adventure capital of the world! This cosmo city has endless restaurants, sweet sidewalk cafés, modern lounge bars, day spas and boutique shops to pop in and out of. There are also optional activities that our guide can help arrange including horse trekking, kayaking, fishing, winery tours, hang gliding, mountain biking, bungee jumping, jet boating and skydiving.

Our guide can also help point you in the right direction with some info about their favourite hot spots for food and drink tonight. Dinner is NOT included today so you can follow your cravings and indulge as you wish. Our hotel is located less than 2km (1.2mi) from downtown Queenstown where there are several tempting options from empanadas to NZ beef burgers to craft beer, Indian and Thai menus.



Meals Included: Lunch (\*Note: a boxed lunch will be provided for the hikers, but if you choose a free day in Queenstown, your lunch will be independent.)

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Queenstown Heritage Hotel, Queenstown

The skinny on today's hike: 8km (5 mi), 4-5 hours, elevation +/- 978m (3,208ft)

How much further? A short gondola ride + hike or endless wandering in Queenstown!

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This morning we'll make our way (2.5 to 3 hours driving) around Lake Wakatipu, leaving behind the towering Remarkables (how great is that name?) to head west through the pastoral landscape to the small town of Te Anau, the gateway to Milford Sound in Fiordland National Park. This region is home to the stunning takahē (a flightless swamphen).

In the afternoon, we'll double-knot our hiking shoes and experience a section one of New Zealand's Great Walks– the famous 60km (37 mile) Kepler Track. We'll follow the trail through mountain beech forest and along the Waiau River–this is not a strenuous hike by any stretch.

Tonight, we'll stay on the edge of Lake Te Anau, and sop up the scenery and tantalizing local fare.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Matai Lodge, Te Anau

Hiking: 9.5 km(6 mi), 2-3 hours, elevation +/- 50m (165ft)

How much further: 2 hours and 15 minutes (driving) from Lake Wakatipu to Te Anau



It's an early bird start this morning as we set off for our largest and perhaps most spectacular national park, Fiordland.

After a short drive through Darran mountain range's 1.2 km (0.75 miles) long Homer Tunnel we'll emerge at the top of a spectacular glacier-carved valley for a memorable descent to the shore of Milford Sound (approximately 1.5 hours, driving).

Rudyard Kipling deemed this fiord as the eighth natural wonder of the world—the steep, 1000m tall (3,281ft) granite walls disappear into the depths of the Tasman Sea with snakes of waterfalls gushing over the vertical rock faces. Some boat captains insist their passengers try a “free glacial facial.” Just ask!

We'll jump on board the first boat cruise (90 minutes) of the day to avoid the crowds and journey out to the entrance of the fiord. We may be lucky enough to have an encounter with the curious fur seals and bottlenose dolphins that sometimes frequent the area. The Fiordland Crested penguin is a truly rare sighting as are whales but Mother Nature always has surprises up her sleeve.

After our sneakily educational boat excursion, we'll explore the Fiordland wilderness on foot again, with a hike to Key Summit on the famous 32km (20 mile) Routeburn Track. The panoramic views are indelible. On this tramping track we're also bound to encounter New Zealand's notoriously cheeky and hyper intelligent alpine parrot, the kea parrot. This hike is more physical due to the steep and quick elevation gain.

After this exhilarating out and back tramp, we'll head out of Milford Sound to spend our last night on the shores of Lake Te Anau.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Matai Lodge, Te Anau

The skinny on today's hike: 3.4 km (2 mi), 3-4 hours, elevation +/- 380m (1,246ft)

How much further? 1.5 hours (driving) from Fiordland NP to Milford Sound Shore, 1.5 hour cruise





After an early breakfast, we'll drive back through Queenstown and head north, cutting through the tussock-country of Lindis Pass to Lake Pukaki (a 2.5 hour drive). Here, we'll break up the drive and stretch our legs by biking a flat and beginner-friendly section of the well-groomed (gravel) Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail around the alpine lake with views across to the startling Aoraki Mount Cook. This 300km (190 mile) trail is New Zealand's

longest—it unspools from Mount Cook Village, through the magnificent Mackenzie Basin and down the Waitaki Valley to end at Oamaru by the Pacific Ocean. On this ride we'll learn more about the native plants of this area from a Maori perspective.

This supernatural ride is a colourful one, dotted with native plants like the brilliant yellow blooms of the Kowhai (it's a popular one with the endemic Tui birds), flax and tussocks. The trail then slices through farmland across the Mackenzie Country basin before we muscle our way back to Twizel. We'll bike straight to our accommodation for the last two nights where we'll have stunning views that stretch like open arms across the Southern Alps. We'll be sleeping in the cloak of the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve which means light pollution is strictly controlled in the area. This makes for even more stars to wish upon!

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's sweet sleep: Mackenzie Country Hotel

The skinny on today's pedal: 24 km(15 mi), 2-3 hours

How much further? 2.5 hours (driving) from Queenstown to Lindis Pass to Lake Pukaki



Mt. Cook (named Aoraki or 'Cloud Piercer' by South Island Maori), is the highest mountain in New Zealand—it has 23 peaks over 3,000m (9,843ft) high!

Directly opposite to the mountain, we'll set off on a stunning hike to the main ridge above Mueller Glacier through the Sealey Tarns and along Mueller Ridge to the famed Mueller Hut. It's a challenging route with formed rock stairs but the

glacier view and peaks will remain like a tattoo on your heart.

The weather conditions in this area are typical of an alpine climate and notorious for sudden shifts. If weather impacts this hike, we will opt for the Mueller Glacier hike, or depending on the group's interest, there's an easier and flatter (but still impressive) hike up to a glacial lake (complete with icebergs!) at the base of the Hooker Glacier.

After logging some unforgettable miles, we'll find easy inspiration at the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre at the Hermitage Hotel. This gallery tribute to one of the world's greatest explorers also houses the world's southern most digital dome planetarium.

Inspired by Hillary's achievements, we'll head back to our accommodation for a little pampering and a simmering sunset over the Southern Alps.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Mackenzie Country Hotel

The skinny on today's hikes:

Mueller Ridge Hike: 7.2 km (4.4 mi), 5-6 hours, elevation +/- 975m (3,200ft)

Hooker Glacier Hike: 9km(5.6 mi), 3-4 hours, elevation +/- 100m (328ft)





After breakfast, we'll make our way to Christchurch (a 4 hour drive), have lunch en route and check-in at the Scenic Hotel Cotswold. We can also stop at a salmon breeding farm and opt for hyper local fish on the "barbie" tonight if the group is game.

We will have a free afternoon to poke around Christchurch—you may wish to visit the Botanical Gardens, take a punt down

the River Avon, ride the vintage tram or take the cable car aboard a gondola.

Just a reminder—this is your last chance to try Jaffas, pineapple lumps and hokey pokey—vanilla-flavored ice cream with small lumps of honeycomb toffee dispersed throughout it. We'll swap pics, stories and laughs tonight over our last celebratory dinner together.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
 Tonight's sweet sleep: Scenic Hotel Cotswold  
 How much further? 4 hours (driving)



Invigorated and challenged from the hikes, paddles and pedals, it's time to unwind on the flight home. Hug your Wild Women crew tight and figure out when you'll walk together again!

You may book flights out of Christchurch International Airport (CHC) at any time today. The hotel staff can help arrange a taxi transfer to the airport (not included).

Meals included: Breakfast  
 Tonight's Sweet Sleep: In the window seat of the plane, on the way home!

## IS THIS TRIP RIGHT FOR ME?

This is an active, hiking adventure trip. We would like you to be comfortable with the following:

- Hiking over rough and uneven terrain for an average of 2-7 hours (4-13 km) per day with up to 1700m elevation gain and loss
- Kayaking (beginner-friendly) for 4-5 hours
- Being in and on the water, as there may be unexpected swims
- Not comfortable swimming in water? Please let us know!
- Physical Rating: Moderate - Challenging. Be prepared for strenuous physical activity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Professional Female Trip Guides
- Wilkin River jet boat ride
- Scenic flight into Mt Aspiring National Park
- Half-day Guided Sea Kayak Trip on Milford Sound
- Boat Trip into glowworm caves of Lake Te Anau
- Guided Hikes of famous tracks such as the Kepler Track, Routeburn Track, Ben Lomond Track and the Mueller Glacier Track
- 9 Nights Shared Accommodations
- Fresh Meals: 8 Breakfasts, 9 Lunches, 7 Dinners
- Local Transportation (Christchurch-Queenstown)
- Optional single private upgrade, subject to availability
- All applicable taxes are included in the trip price

## ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

Wild Women Expeditions and our local partners intend to adhere to the described itinerary. This is only a general guide to follow on your tour of the region. Our itineraries are subject to change, as we cannot predict the weather or other environmental conditions. We are continually striving to make improvements to all our trips based on feedback from Wild Women members, guides, partners, and other research. We reserve the right to alter itineraries based on the above at any time.

\*Itinerary version as of December 6, 2023