



Fault-line Adventure



Tour Summary

Tour name: Fault-line Adventure

Days: 08 days

Tour Highlights

New Zealand did not become one of the most diverse and dramatic landforms on earth by accident. Where New Zealand is situated happens to be right over a collision zone of two of the largest slabs of the earth's crust forming a fault-line. Over millions of years this collision has created the Southern Alps which are the backbone of the south island. During this 8 day adventure, we actually cross over the fault-line twice, once when we cross the alps near Arthur's Pass and again on day 6 on our way to Haast Pass. Don't worry if you are a bit confused by plate movement, collision zones and fault-lines because you are guaranteed to love the amazing play ground that it has created for us, and you will see it from so many different perspective's whether it be hiking through deep limestone canyons, kayaking across pristine lagoons, jetboating down the Wilkin River or from the air in a helicopter above the mountains of Mt Aspiring National park. This is a trip of a lifetime, the perfect combination of adventure and incredible scenery with quality character accommodation to relax in at the end of the day.

Hiking and Fitness

Grade: Medium

No previous hiking experience is required, but you need to be reasonably fit and enthusiastic. We will be taking you into real wilderness areas so at times the tracks will be slippery, rough and we will need to cross rivers.

The itinerary is flexible enough to provide time to relax or to present you with challenges. We recommend you do some physical preparation: brisk walking, jogging or cycling a couple of times a week during the month or so before you arrive as this will enable you to make the most of your trip.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1. Saturday. Tour begins Christchurch - 3 hours hiking / 1 hour cave exploring

Our tour begins in Christchurch, which is also known as the Garden City. After a briefing from your guide we are soon heading across the Canterbury Plains towards the Southern Alps which form the backbone of the South Island. Our adventure begins in earnest when we arrive at Cave Stream Scenic Reserve. After exploring this bizarre yet beautiful landscape of limestone bluffs and outcrops we follow Cave Stream through an amazing subterranean canyon. Enjoy a picnic lunch once we are above ground again and then it's a short drive through to the Arthur's Pass Chalet where we spend the night. There is time in the afternoon for an optional hike up Avalanche Peak. Alternatively, explore this quaint little alpine village and relax in the spa at the Chalet. Enjoy a delicious 3-course meal served at the Chalet restaurant.

Day 2. Sunday. Arthur's Pass - 2 hours hiking

This morning there is the opportunity to go on a hike to nearby waterfalls or have a relaxing morning at the Chalet before we drive through to Lake Brunner (crossing the faultline) for a picnic lunch and a swim. In the afternoon we take a hike along the wild and windswept West Coast near Punakaiki, exploring remote beaches and sea caves that were used by early Maori. At high tide we check out the famous Pancake Rocks, 30 million year old towers of limestone with spectacular blowholes. Accommodation tonight is nestled in the bush with spectacular views over the Tasman Sea.

Day 3. Monday. Punakaiki, Paparoa National Park - 7 – 8 hours hiking

Today we hike one of the most beautiful day hikes in New Zealand. We are dropped off at Bullock Creek at an old abandoned farm. From here we follow the Inland Pack Track through luxuriant lowland rainforest, stopping for lunch on the banks of Fossil Creek. There is time to relax and feel dwarfed by the towering rimu and kahikatea trees, some over 50 metres tall and hundreds of years old. After lunch we continue on until we meet the Fox River Canyon. We follow this deep canyon crossing the river several times (learn river-crossing techniques) until we are met by the minibus on the coastal road. Return to our accommodation. Visit the local pub for dinner.

Day 4. Tuesday. Okarito, South Westland World Heritage Area - 4 hours kayaking

We drive south today making a brief stop at Hokitika where we stock up on supplies. This town was once known as Capital of the Goldfields. It has become a major centre for pounamu (jade or greenstone) which was prized by the Maori for making jewellery, tools and lethal weapons. We continue on to Okarito, where the rainforest meets the sea. A historic gold-rush town, it is now a sleepy collection of seaside cottages with a permanent population of about 25. Here, we take sea kayaks and paddle out over the Okarito Lagoon, New Zealand's largest unmodified wetland. We explore the river delta, which takes us right into the rainforest. A great variety of bird-life can be seen from tui's and bellbirds in the forest, to kotuku (white herons) and spoonbills on the lagoon. Spend the afternoon/early evening on the beach learning how to prepare a hangi (an underground Maori earth oven). Enjoy the hangi feast sitting around a beach fire, before making a short drive to Franz Josef where we stay the night.

Day 5. Wednesday. Franz Josef Glacier - 4 hours hiking

Today we take a hike on the near-by Franz Josef Glacier, one of the most dynamic glaciers in the world and one of the few places where you will see a glacier descending into the rainforest. Enjoy a half-day hike onto Franz Josef Glacier with seracs, crevasses and ice caves. After we return from the hike we drive on to the town of Fox Glacier. Either have a relaxing afternoon at our local B&B accommodation or join the guide for a hike up to the terminal face of the Fox glacier. Tonight you get the opportunity to sample local cuisine at a restaurant of your choice.

Day 6. Thursday. Haast Pass - 1 hours hiking

We start the day with a leisurely hike around Lake Matheson – on a clear day the Southern Alps are perfectly reflected on the lake – a photographers paradise. We then continue south stopping at a local salmon farm to “pick up dinner.” Today we cross back over the “fault-line”(Southern Alps) to the eastern side and stay in Makarora. Take an afternoon hike or relax at the spacious homestead. Enjoy a delicious meal of fresh salmon.

Day 7. Friday. Mount Aspiring National Park - 5 hours hiking

We start the day by boarding a helicopter for an extraordinary flight around the ice carved mountains and glaciers of the World Heritage, Mount Aspiring National Park. We land in the remote Siberia Valley. Home tonight is a classic backcountry hut that we will share with other hikers. You can either spend the day relaxing on the porch gazing at the mountains or go on an exhilarating hike up to Lake Crucible, a gorgeous alpine lake set amongst huge snow capped mountains.

Day 8: Saturday. Tour ends in Queenstown - 3 hours hiking

We spend the morning hiking down to the Forks where we meet the jetboat, which will take us on a spectacular journey down the Wilkin River back to Makarora. We drive through to Wanaka, to a local vineyard for a celebratory wine and then it's just a short drive over the Crown Range into the alpine resort town of Queenstown. Here the trip concludes after 8 days of spectacular hikes, peaceful kayaking, exhilarating helicopter and jetboat trips coupled with relaxing accommodation.

The trip concludes in Queenstown. You may wish to take advantage of a free shuttle return to Christchurch on Day 9 or you can stay in Queenstown to enjoy the endless activities this town offers. Should you wish to take advantage of the free return to Christchurch on Day 9 please make this known on booking.