

Kea family trip



Wildlife Reserve and Kiwi Viewing • Jet Boat the Rakaia Gorge • Hike Aoraki/Mt. Cook National Park and South Westland World Heritage Area • Raft near Queenstown • Hike Mt. Aspiring National Park and Franz Josef Glacier • Kayak Lake Mapourika • Visit Beaches and Rainforest of the West Coast

13 days: Christchurch–Christchurch

Adult fare: US\$3499 + tax

Child fare (15 and under): US\$2699 + tax

Over the years we've entertained lots of families here in New Zealand. So we've designed our family trips to be a bit different to our regular adventure trips. The Kea is specially designed so that parents, teenagers and children enjoy a range of activities together while still giving parents the chance to get away on their own every now and then, while our specialist Kea guides entertain the kids! The itinerary is flexible so we can make adjustments on the road, the accommodations are family friendly and the meals are designed to suit everyone. We venture into several national parks including a memorable overnight hike in Mt. Aspiring National Park – a big hit with people of all ages! We also explore spectacular glaciers, go jet boating on one of the largest braided river systems in New Zealand, raft down a river gorge, kayak a remote West Coast lake and much more. We maintain plenty of options for all ages and parents are often pleasantly surprised when their teenagers and younger children enjoy the trip at least as much as they do! Our family guides have lots of experience guiding children and adults alike – such as Christiaan (or Lofty as he is more affectionately known) who has been teaching kayaking, climbing and team building skills to Kiwi kids for years and is now one of our main Kea guides. New Zealand is a safe destination, and the Kea family trip is an awesome adventure for the whole family. To enjoy all the activities children should be nine years or older, but with notice we can often take families with younger children too.

DAY-TO-DAY ITINERARY

TUESDAY

Arrive, wildlife reserve and kiwi viewing

Most people leave the Northern Hemisphere on a Sunday evening, arriving in Auckland early Tuesday morning. You'll lose a day crossing the dateline – but you get it back on the way home! You'll take a short flight to Christchurch in the South Island arriving by around 10am, and we'll meet your family either in central Christchurch or at the airport. Our first port of call is Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, where you'll get a great introduction to the wildlife of a country that has been isolated from the rest of the world for over 80 million years! You'll experience many of New Zealand's creatures first hand – Willowbank is unique in that you can enter a lot of the animal enclosures and even pat some of the more friendly critters! You can see tuatara lizards, the elusive kiwi, wallabies (small kangaroos), and of course the namesake of our trip – the kea – our cheeky mountain parrot. After an afternoon exploring, we'll head south and inland to Methven.

ACCOMMODATION: Methven Lodge, Methven (L,D)

WEDNESDAY

Jet boat the Rakaia Gorge and star-gazing

After a hearty breakfast and relaxed start to the morning, we have an adventure planned that will knock your socks off! You'll head out on a thrilling jet boat ride through the winding Rakaia Gorge. Jet boats are fast and manoeuvrable and were originally invented by New Zealander William Hamilton, to navigate our narrow shallow rivers. You'll be jetting down rapids, braided river sections and through shallow water less than a foot deep in places. This fun, yet safe, activity is suitable for the whole family. From Methven, we'll travel a short distance south to Peel Forest to hike through ancient podocarp forest dense with many varieties of ferns. The fern is New

"We embarked on our trip with an open mind and were treated to a holiday of a lifetime. New Zealand is a beautiful and fantastic place to visit with awe inspiring scenery, superb national parks, lots of activities and opportunities to push your senses to the limit. Our trip with Active exceeded expectation on all fronts. Alice & Pieke, our guides, made the trip extra special. Thank you."

Howard Family (Kent, UK) December 2008

Zealand's national symbol worn by many of our athletes, including our famous rugby team – the All Blacks. After lunch, we'll travel inland to Mt. Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain, and Lake Pukaki – an unworldly turquoise-blue coloured glacial lake. In less than 48 hours we've travelled from New Zealand's second largest city into the heart of the wilderness. Tonight, the wide open spaces, regular clear evenings and lack of artificial light gives us the perfect opportunity to gaze at the Southern Hemisphere's constellations, including the Southern Cross and Orion's Belt. Lofty particularly enjoys teaching the kids a bit of basic southern astronomy, and he'll really bring the sky alive.

ACCOMMODATION: Mt. Cook lodgings, Mt. Cook (B,L,D)

THURSDAY

Hike Aoraki/Mt. Cook National Park

This morning we'll take a short drive to Mt. Cook village at the head of Lake Pukaki. We have a few hikes to choose from in this area and our favourite is the stunning and little-known day hike (weather permitting) to the main ridge above Mueller Glacier. It's a tough slog, but it's a real achievement for the whole family to share and you'll remember the view of the Mueller Glacier and the surrounding peaks of the Main Divide forever! Of course, nothing's mandatory and we always have plenty of options, so there are easier hikes available too. The weather conditions are very important in this area, as it is a

true alpine climate that sometimes has sudden weather shifts. If we aren't able to do the Mueller hike, we'll take an impressive hike up the Hooker Valley to a glacial lake at the base of Hooker Glacier, complete with icebergs!

ACCOMMODATION: Mt. Cook lodgings, Mt. Cook (B,L,D)

FRIDAY

Rafting near Queenstown

Today we'll head through the mountains to Queenstown. We'll stop along the way for the best ice creams in the whole of New Zealand – you'll soon find out why! We'll then continue on through fruit orchards and vineyards before arriving in Queenstown for a family rafting trip in Skippers Canyon. Set in a deep, beautiful, rose-lined schist gorge, it's a spectacular trip – perfect for the whole family. We'll have the next few days in Queenstown, so you'll have plenty of time to wander about and explore while you're here, and you'll find all sorts of options to keep you and the kids busy.

The Kea trip operates year around, with minor changes for the New Zealand winter. From June to September, rather than rafting we continue on to Queenstown and jump aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw steamship for a cruise across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak Station. At Walter Peak you'll have a chance to learn about farming and what life was like for the pioneers on this remote station. The views back across Lake Wakatipu to Queenstown are amazing too.

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments, Queenstown (B,L)

SATURDAY

Free day in Queenstown

ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND is based in Queenstown for a good reason – it's the adventure capital of New Zealand! You'll find all the comforts of civilisation here, and plenty of family entertainment: lakeside walks, a gondola, luge rides, restaurants and cinemas. There are plenty of things to keep you and your kids occupied! Queenstown is not a big place – the population is about 8000 – so if you want to take it easy it's the perfect place to relax and soak up the atmosphere. There are also some more adventurous activities such as bungee jumping, horse trekking, skydiving and fishing – it's all here!

A great winter option (July to September) is to spend a couple of days skiing or snowboarding at one of four local ski areas: Coronet Peak, the Remarkables, Cardrona or Treble Cone. If you would like to go skiing while you are here, let us know and we will be happy to organise this for you! (Skiing option includes transport, lift pass and equipment rental and is about US\$100 a day for an adult, slightly less for children).

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments, Queenstown (B)

"We had the best time! Our guides were outstanding, the activities were diverse and suited to the whole family, the accommodations were clean and located on the off-beaten track, the views were breathtakingly spectacular, each days' activities were new and exciting. We have already recommended the trip to friends here at home and we'd love to do another Active New Zealand trip"

Curtis Family (BC, Canada) February 2008

SUNDAY

Explore Queenstown

Today you can check out more of the amazing scenery and history of the area with your guide, or you can do your own thing with your family. This is also a great chance for parents to have some time on their own while we look after the kids. We'll take a short drive to the historic village of Arrowtown and explore an old Chinese goldmining area. Chinese immigrants travelled to New Zealand during the gold rush, and like many New Zealand pioneering stories, theirs is one of adversity and adaptation. You can try your hand at gold panning – in 2006 a man found a gold nugget worth \$15,000 in this area, so you never know your luck! After lunch, we have a couple of options including a hike up Queenstown Hill, cycling around the lake front or even a game of frisbee golf in the Queenstown Botanical Gardens.

ACCOMMODATION: Queenstown apartments, Queenstown (B,L)

CUSTOMISE YOUR TRIP

At the time of booking, you can choose one of two different overnight options – a backpacking trip in Mt. Aspiring National Park, or an overnight stay at Wanaka – a small alpine village on the shores of Lake Wanaka. Each is wonderful in its own way, so we'll let you decide!

MONDAY (morning)

Start Mt. Aspiring National Park and Wanaka options

This morning we'll leave Queenstown and head over the Crown Range to Wanaka. After lunch, we head off for our various activities.

OPTION I

Hike Mt. Aspiring National Park

MONDAY (afternoon)

Overnight hike in Mt. Aspiring National Park

After leaving Wanaka we'll venture up the Matukituki Valley and hike two to three hours into Mt. Aspiring National Park, to reach our home for the evening – a mountain hut nestled in the valley. The track meanders through a World Heritage Area with majestic peaks, fresh mountain streams and natural beech forest. Everyone will carry a pack, but it won't weigh much more than a regular day pack. You'll be carrying a sleeping bag, a few spare clothes and some food – no need for any more than that, and we can provide tents and camping gear if you want to camp under the stars. Mt. Aspiring Hut is a spacious mountain hut, albeit in the middle of nowhere, and the scenery is off the charts with Mt. Aspiring looming 10,000 feet above you. For such a short walk, it's amazing how far you'll feel from civilisation! Your guide will whip up dinner in the backcountry kitchen, while you and the kids relax in front of the fireplace and play cards or tell tall stories! To minimise our impact on this beautiful but fragile environment, we limit availability on this option.

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

TUESDAY (morning)

Hike to trailhead

We have a leisurely start today, enjoying breakfast and a cuppa while

admiring the view, before hiking back to the trailhead. Along the way we might encounter the cheeky kea again – this time in its natural habitat – and though we don't feed them, you'll find they come really close in the hope you'll throw some chocolate their way!

OPTION II Explore Wanaka

MONDAY (afternoon)

Explore Wanaka

Wanaka is a charming country town set on the edge of our fourth largest lake and surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains. There are great walking trails and biking tracks in the area, jet boating or a visit to the famed Fighter Pilots Museum, home to an amazing collection of old fighter planes. Your time in Wanaka is also a great chance to just soak up the atmosphere, whether you're skipping stones on the lake's edge or relaxing by the fire at the lodge.

ACCOMMODATION: Wanaka hotel, Wanaka (B)

TUESDAY (morning)

Explore Wanaka

After a relaxed breakfast you'll have the morning to do your own thing before meeting up with the rest of the group.

TUESDAY (afternoon)

Delve into Puzzling World

After regrouping at Wanaka we'll head to Puzzling World for a run around one of the world's largest modern mazes with over a mile of passageways. Kids of all ages really enjoy trying to beat our wily guides through the labyrinth! Tonight we spend the evening in a lovely family-style homestead in Makarora, and share stories about our experiences over the last couple of days.

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

Andrew: "Puzzling World is a little less active than the other activities on this trip, but it's always a big hit. I've seen kids of all ages have a wicked time here and it's great fun making it to one of the platforms then 'helping' the others by giving them wrong directions!"

WEDNESDAY

Explore West Coast forests and beaches, discover glow worms

This morning we'll travel over Haast Pass to the wild West Coast, stopping on a deserted West Coast beach to stretch our legs and look out for friendly dolphins that often pass by this area. A little further north takes us to Lake Matheson for a short walk where you will be rewarded with awesome vistas of the Southern Alps stretching away to Mt. Cook in the distance. This afternoon we'll get settled into our accommodations in Franz Josef, where we'll be staying for the next two nights. After dark we can head out with flashlights for a short night walk to look for the native glow worm – and to listen for some of New Zealand's nocturnal birdlife, such as the Morepork.

ACCOMMODATION: Franz Josef lodgings, Franz Josef (B,L,D)

THURSDAY

Kayak Lake Mapourika, explore Franz Josef Glacier

It's an early start this morning for our kayaking trip on Lake Mapourika. This ancient lake was formed during the last ice age and its tranquility provides a great introduction to kayaking. This is an awesome trip, run by specialist kayak outfitters, and it's equally suitable for beginners and experts. After lunch, we'll take a hike up to the terminal face of Franz Josef Glacier for breathtaking views. Franz Josef Glacier is one of the steepest and fastest moving glaciers in the world, and is unique in that it descends right down through the lush rainforest, almost to sea-level, from its névé high in the Southern Alps.

HELI-HIKE OPTION

(add US\$299 + tax)

An outrageously scenic option today after your kayaking 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 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.

After we've finished our various activities, we'll rendezvous at our accommodations for the night.

ACCOMMODATION: Franz Josef lodgings, Franz Josef (B,L,D)

FRIDAY

Bushman's Centre and free time in Hokitika

Today we'll head further up the coast to the Bushman's Centre – a 'living museum' that combines an interactive history of the West Coast's early settlers with the chance to introduce the kids to brush-tail possums. We'll then continue to Hokitika, where you can spend a little time checking out the local art galleries and pounamu carving workshops ('pounamu' is Maori for jade). The beach here is also a great place for playing games or making sculptures out of the driftwood and rocks washed up on the sand. Then we'll head back through the Southern Alps, across the Otira viaduct, to Flock Hill Station – a stunning location for our final two nights together.

ACCOMMODATION: Flock Hill Lodge, Arthur's Pass (B,L,D)

SATURDAY

Hike Castle Hill Basin

This morning we'll head up to the top of Flock Hill near Cave Stream in the Southern Alps, a superb viewpoint for the nearby Craigieburn

and Torlesse Ranges. It's a bit of a climb, but it's worth every step as we arrive at an eerie limestone landscape where much of the movie 'Narnia – the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' was filmed. This afternoon, we're off to Castle Hill. This natural labyrinth is popular with local rock climbers and was named a 'spiritual centre of the universe' by the Dalai Lama a few years ago. For the kids, it's the ultimate hide-and-seek spot!.

ACCOMMODATION Flock Hill Lodge, Arthur's Pass (B,L,D)

SUNDAY

Farm show, depart for home

In the morning we'll head to the small farming community of Springfield at the foothills of the mountains, where we'll check out a working New Zealand high-country sheep farm. We'll watch

highly trained huntaway dogs rounding up stock and see a live sheep shearing demonstration. All the kids (young and old!) will have the chance to join in and give sheep shearing a go.

Then it's onto Christchurch, where we started our adventure 13 days ago. We'll arrive by lunchtime, so any international flights after 2pm are ideal, and we can make 1pm domestic flights with a little notice. International flights from Auckland usually leave early evening, so if you're heading back to North America, you'll get home some time on Sunday, even though you left on Sunday evening! Flights back to Europe, of course, take a little longer. Your family will be refreshed, invigorated, and have lasting memories of the exercise, adventures, great food, rest and fun times you'll have had with us in New Zealand! (B,L)

Specific Information – Kea

ACCOMMODATION: The Kea is an activity-oriented trip around the South Island. We've chosen interesting, comfortable and family-friendly accommodations throughout. Where possible we will provide accommodation with two bedrooms for your family.

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 approximately 9–10am on Tuesday, and departing from Christchurch after 1–2pm on Sunday. Other flight times may also be possible – 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 Holiday Inn City Centre in Christchurch at 10.30am, or at the domestic terminal at 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 Christchurch airport in time for the flights above, or anywhere in central Christchurch in mid-afternoon.

TRIP DIRECTION: To keep our group sizes down, we run the Kea in two different directions around the South Island – southbound and northbound (refers to initial direction of travel from Christchurch). This itinerary happens to be written up in the southbound format. Whichever trip you take, you'll do all the activities we've mentioned, just in a different order. The Kea is a product of many years of evolution and fine-tuning – it works well whichever direction you go.

For more 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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