



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: US\$2799 + tax Child (15 and under): US\$1999+ 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 all ages. 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.

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, 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 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: *Glentanner 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: *Glentanner 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 bungy 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)

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)

Monday **Start Mt. Aspiring National Park and Wanaka options**

This morning we'll leave Queenstown and head over the Crown Range to Wanaka. 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 at Wanaka – a small alpine village on the shores of Lake Wanaka. After lunch, we head off for our various activities.

MT. ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK OPTION

Monday (continued) **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 **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!

- OR -

WANAKA OPTION

Monday (continued) **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 Lodge, Wanaka* (B,L,D)

Tuesday **Relax at 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 (continued) **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: *The Homestead, 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\$249 + 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 inter-active 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.

ACCOMMODATION: *Hokitika beachfront lodgings, Hokitika*

(B,L,D)

Saturday

Hike Castle Hill Basin

This morning, we'll head back through the Southern Alps, across the Otira viaduct, before arriving at the start of our last hike together. 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 head to Flock Hill Station – a stunning location for our final night together.

ACCOMMODATION: *Flock Hill Lodge, Flock Hill*

(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)

Important Information

ACCOMMODATIONS: The *Kea* family trip 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. In some places it's quite luxurious, but many of the other places we stay are off-the-beaten-track – and don't have many accommodation options – but are really, really spectacular. We think you'll love the places we stay!

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 so we can help make your trip as smooth as possible.

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 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.

FITNESS: You and your kids need to have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on the *Kea* family trip, but no more than the average family. This trip is all about family fun so the activities are suitable even for people with short

legs! If you're concerned about your fitness level, or whether your kids are up to it, have a chat with us so we can help you choose between the Kea family trip and our other trips.

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 and your kids. You don't need to have ever been in a kayak to enjoy kayaking Lake Mapourika or in a raft or jet boat to enjoy those activities either. All we ask is that you be in reasonable shape, and that everyone's keen to have fun in New Zealand's amazing outdoor playground. We guarantee you'll have an incredible time. 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 on this trip, we sometimes need to change a night stop. We try to make as few changes as possible but we might have to make slight changes to make sure your trip is as good as it can be.

INCLUDED: The trip fare is US\$2799 + 12.5% NZ government taxes for adults, and US\$1999 + tax for children (15 and under). We quote all prices in US dollars, so our families from all over the world can more easily relate prices to their own currencies. You can also join for shorter periods of time, at a pro-rated fare. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- All guiding services. We generally have two guides per trip, a Lead Guide/driver, and a Co-Guide who is responsible for meals and accommodations. This means we can really make sure your family has a great time! We operate with small groups, and we don't hesitate to offer a second departure when our trips start getting full.
- Comfortable accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organize accommodation for you if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- All your meals, except in Queenstown where we've found people prefer to check out the wide range of restaurants. Alcohol is generally not included, although we do spring for a few cold beers or wine for the parents here and there!
- All hiking, kayaking, jet boating, and rafting described in the itinerary, except optional extra activities, such as the heli hike in Franz Josef. 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 of the day. There are many optional activities available at extra cost, particularly in Queenstown. None of these activities are compulsory, and nor will your trip seem less awesome if you do the cheap or free options.

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!

We'll see you soon!

Itinerary valid through April 2010