



# Wild West Coast

**Explore West Coast beaches and rainforests • Multi-day hike to Copland Hot Pools • Hike to Fox Glacier and in Mt. Cook National Parks • Sea Kayak Okarito Lagoon • Multi-day hike in Mt. Aspiring National Park • Adventure in Queenstown**

**8 days: Christchurch - Queenstown**

**Fare: US\$2,199 + tax**

*Winter is one of the best times to be in New Zealand! Our maritime climate ensures we have mild winters suitable for outdoor adventures (the typical day temperature is about 45-60°F or 8-15°C) and the Wild West Coast trip is well adapted to suit the cooler conditions. You'll do two multi-day guided backpacking trips to alpine hot pools, glaciers and remote snowfields. You'll have plenty of options and we can make sure the trip suits you down to the ground! You'll be staying in a variety of accommodations, from B&Bs and lodges to our more rustic lodgings in order to be in the most beautiful, isolated, and off-the-beaten-track places in New Zealand. The Wild West Coast is simply an amazing way to explore New Zealand while you're down for the Rugby World Cup.*

## **Day 1 Arrive, hike Castle Hill**

We'll head towards the West Coast of the South Island to Castle Hill in the Kuru Tawhiti Conservation Area located in the heart of the snow-capped Southern Alps. We'll take our first hike here – a gentle one-hour stroll among imposing limestone tors which were once a meeting place for Moa hunters of the Ngai Tahu Maori tribe. The Dalai Lama visited this area in 2002, and described it as the 'Spiritual Center of the Universe'!

After lunch we'll head through to Greymouth and up the coastal road to the gorgeous seaside village of Punakaiki. We'll make sure your first day is relaxing and undemanding, so you can recover from your flight (or the big game!) and enjoy the fresh New Zealand air. You'll be the right way round in no time!

**ACCOMMODATION:** *Paparoa Park Motels, Punakaiki*

*(L,D)*

## **Day 2 Hike Punakaiki rainforest and beaches**

We'll take most of the day in Punakaiki to hike among the limestone canyons and lush rainforest of the Inland Pack Track. We start at a classic 'submergence' – where the river suddenly dries up mid-stream and goes underground for a mile or so before resurfacing at Cave Creek. The rainforest in this area is unbelievably lush, and the limestone canyons and distant hazy mountains of Paparoa National Park make this an awesome day hike. The trail was originally established by gold miners over a century ago, so there's plenty of history in the area as well. We'll check out Punakaiki's famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes, which are a sight to be seen. Finally we'll leave in the afternoon to drive down the scenic coastal road and stop at Hokitika to check out the local art galleries and pounamu carving workshops ('pounamu' is Maori for jade) so you can stock up on gifts for your loved ones at home if you like! Then we'll carry on to Okarito Lagoon, a gem of the West Coast that is all but untouched due to it being 10 miles down a one-way road from an obscure highway turnoff. There are no shops, no restaurants and no traffic here – and a population of only 31 people! We stay at the Okarito Beach House, and you'll love this place. There's plenty to do here so we'll stay two nights – this is real Kiwi living.

**ACCOMMODATION:** *Okarito Beach House, Okarito – off-the-beaten-path and very cosy*

*(B,L,D)*

Day 3

### **Kayak Okarito Lagoon, hike beach and forest**

You've got a lot of options in Okarito. You can spend a relaxing day in this sleepy but beautiful beach town to recharge your batteries, or get out hiking and kayaking and exploring the area. Okarito Lagoon is home to the only native white heron colony in New Zealand, as well as lots of other amazing birdlife - including the Okarito Brown kiwi. You can sea kayak on the lagoon with a backdrop of snow-capped mountains for a few hours, then spend the rest of the day hiking along the beach or in coastal rainforest.

ACCOMMODATION: Okarito Beach House

(B,L,D)

Day 4

### **Hike to Copland Hot Pools, Westland National Park**

We are very privileged to be able to do this hike today - we'll walk into a stunningly beautiful mountain basin, set directly underneath the towering peaks of the Southern Alps, with an awesome accoutrement – reliable natural hot pools! It's a challenging six to seven hour hike (17km/10 miles) up the Copland Valley with a gradual 1,000 foot elevation gain, but it's worth it to have all of tomorrow to take side hikes, soak in the hot pools and enjoy your alpine surroundings. You don't have to carry a heavy pack – our guides are pretty tough and they'll carry the lion's share of the load. You'll be carrying a sleeping bag, a few spare clothes, and some food – no need for any more than that. Once we reach the hot pools, we stay in one of New Zealand's most modern and spacious backcountry huts. It's a hut in name only – it's a comfortable two-storied building (a palace compared to many New Zealand huts) and one of the best things about hiking this track in winter is we'll most likely have it all to ourselves!

ACCOMMODATION: Welcome Flat Hut, Westland National Park

(B,L,D)

Day 5

### **Hike to Douglas Rock and soak in the hot pools**

Today we will hike further up the track towards Douglas Rock for more amazing scenery and views of multiple glaciers clinging to the top of the mountain valley. If you prefer, you can have a relaxing day at the hut – soak in the hot pools, enjoy the stunning scenery, or even just hang out with a book. Either way, the hot pools are without a doubt the star attraction here; closely followed by the spectacular meals we'll be serving up!

ACCOMMODATION: Welcome Flat Hut, Westland National Park

(B,L,D)

**Andrew (ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND founder):** *“The natural hot pools are a fabulous reward for the hike up to the hut - and a well deserved soak for tired bodies. One time I snuck a bottle of champagne into my pack, and surprised my friends in the evening as they relaxed in the hot pools under the stars - the look on their faces was classic!”*

Day 6

### **Hike Copland Valley and relax in Makarora**

An early start sees us on the track and walking back to the trailhead. It's a little quicker this time, being slightly downhill, and we'll be back by mid-afternoon. Then we'll drive south to Haast for a sumptuous meal, before continuing on to the hamlet of Makarora, on the edge of Mt. Aspiring National Park. Here we stay in a comfortable family-style homestead, where you can sprawl by the fire with a glass of mulled wine (or hot chocolate!), before heading into the backcountry again tomorrow.

ACCOMMODATION: The Homestead, Makarora – very comfortable and spacious

(B,L,D)

## **OR SKIING/SNOWBOARDING OPTION IN WANAKA**

**(on offer as snow conditions suit, generally June-Oct)**

Day 7

### **Skiing or snowboarding**

Today you have the option to take in one of the best ski field views in the world from Treble Cone. With challenging ski terrain, there is a comfortable sunny café with which to soak up an amazing view of the glacial lake at the foot of the mountain, Lake Wanaka.

You can bring your own gear, or you can rent gear down here (about US\$40 per day) with lift passes approximately US\$60 a day extra. Conditions vary throughout the season, but you can expect good skiing and riding, on and off-piste, with plenty of chairlifts and scenery that will blow you away!

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Wanaka Lodge. Wanaka

(B,L,D)

Day 8

### Cardrona Valley, arrive Queenstown

From Wanaka we cross the Cardrona Saddle before dropping into Queenstown, a stunning town set in a basin on the edge of Lake Wakatipu and surrounded by snowy peaks, where your trip ends. If you have more time before the next match, it's a great place to spend a few days, and you'll find all sorts of options to pique your interest!

ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND is based in Queenstown for a good reason – not only is it the adventure capital of the world but you'll find all the comforts of civilisation: massage therapists, restaurants, sidewalk cafés, amazing shopping, and adrenaline-pumping activities! You'll find incredible optional activities here, such as bungy jumping, jet boating, skydiving, horse trekking, fishing, hang gliding and winery tours. Many of our clients have noted that *Wild West Coast* caters very well to people with quite different interests and our time in Queenstown is a good example. For instance, there are hiking, biking and kayaking opportunities galore in this region. Also, being winter you can go skiing or snowboarding for the day at one of Queenstown's nearby ski areas (approximate cost US\$100 for ski or snowboard hire, transport and lift pass – available as snow conditions suit, generally from June to September).

(B)

## Important Information

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** The *Wild West Coast* is an activity-oriented trip around the South Island. We've chosen interesting and comfortable accommodations throughout. Some places are quite luxurious, and others are off-the-beaten-track and don't have many accommodation options, but they are really, really spectacular. Our clients often say a real highlight of the trip is meeting their New Zealand hosts and we think you'll love the places we stay! Rooming is twin-share, although single rooms are available upon request. As there's such a variety of accommodations on this trip, 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.

**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 about 9 - 10am on Monday, and departing from Queenstown on Sunday afternoon. If your flights don't fit in with this, no worries – give us a call and we'll work it out.

**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 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 Queenstown airport in time for afternoon flights or let us know if you'd like to stay for a few extra days in Queenstown.

**FITNESS:** You'll need to have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on this trip. That said, 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 is of no importance. For instance, an enthusiastic active person in their 50s will be much happier than a 22-year-old couch potato.

**EXPERIENCE:** You don't need any outdoor experience at all to enjoy this, or any of our trips! They are designed to 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. You don't need to have been in a sea kayak to enjoy kayaking Okarito Lagoon. All we ask is that you be energetic and 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:** The off-the-beaten-path and non-commercial nature of some of our accommodations on this trip means we sometimes need to change a night stop here or there. But we try to make as few changes as possible.

**INCLUDED:** The trip fare is US\$2199 + 12.5% NZ government taxes. We quote all prices in US dollars, so you can easily relate prices to your own currency. 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 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 you have 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 accommodations for the entire period you are with us. We can also organise accommodations for you if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- All your meals.
- All hiking and kayaking described in the itinerary. There are optional activities available at extra cost, particularly in Queenstown.

**NOT INCLUDED:** This is your holiday and we are serious about not nickel-and-diming you! You'll have drinks to cover, extra activities if you choose them, and you may 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 December 2011*