



## Rimu

**Hike Aoraki/Mt.Cook National Park • Hike Routeburn Track • Franz Josef Glacier • Sea kayak Milford Sound and Okarito Lagoon • Wilderness backpacking in Nelson Lakes National Park, sea kayaking or biking Marlborough Sounds • Cycle Hollyford Valley and Manapouri • Hike West Coast beaches and rainforests • Queenstown • Snorkel with Seals**

**14 days: Christchurch – Christchurch**

**Fare: US\$3399 + tax**

*The Rimu is our signature New Zealand trip. It's our longest running trip, now entering its thirteenth year, with constant evolution to make it as good as we can possibly make it. We go to the most beautiful places in New Zealand – both famous and little-known – and if you only come here once in your life, you'll have seen the best we have to offer and missed very little! We snorkel to a seal colony; do an incredible multi-day guided backpacking, biking, or sea kayaking trip; take some of New Zealand's most stunning day hikes; and go sea kayaking and cycling in various parts of the South Island. We maintain plenty of options so we can make sure the trip suits all tastes and abilities, and we have two guides per trip to take extra good care of you. The Rimu is a great way to see New Zealand if you enjoy the outdoors and like a challenge. The accommodations vary – for over half the trip we have chosen accommodations of very comfortable standards (B&Bs, lodges, etc... ) and for the rest of the trip we stay in more rustic lodgings in order to be in the most beautiful and off-the-beaten-track places in New Zealand. The Rimu is simply an awesome trip.*

*Monday*

### **Arrive, snorkel with seals or hike seal colony in Kaikoura**

Most people leave the Northern Hemisphere on a Saturday evening, arriving in Auckland early Monday morning. You'll lose a day crossing the dateline – but you get it back on the way home! You'll immediately take a short flight to Christchurch in the South Island arriving by around 10am. We'll meet you there and travel up the coast to the seaside town of Kaikoura where you can snorkel with friendly New Zealand fur seals (*Arctocephalus forsteri*). You'll be supplied with a wetsuit, mask and snorkel, and have the chance to swim to within a couple of feet of seals as they cavort in the water. If you prefer not to snorkel, you can hike out to the scenic Kaikoura Peninsula past weather-sculpted limestone cliffs to watch another local seal colony bask on the rocks and play in the eddies, all from the comfort of dry land. Today is a relaxed introduction to New Zealand giving you the chance to recover from your flight. Depending on where you're coming from you'll probably find jetlag is no big deal. For instance, it's a 12-hour direct overnight flight from the West Coast of the USA to Auckland and there's only a 3-hour time difference between New Zealand and US Pacific time. If you're coming from further afield, you'll appreciate the gentle start to your New Zealand adventure.

**ACCOMMODATION:** *A cosy Bed & Breakfast, Kaikoura*

*(L,D)*

*Tuesday*

### **Visit vineyard, start multi-day options**

From Kaikoura we'll travel north for a couple of hours to Blenheim, in the Marlborough wine region, and visit Forrest Estate Winery to sample some of their fantastic wines and enjoy a picnic on the vineyard lawn. When you book, you have the choice of one of three multi-day options – a backpacking trip in Nelson Lakes National Park, a sea-kayaking trip in the Marlborough Sounds, or a mountain biking trip on the Queen Charlotte Track. The backpacking trip stays in mountain huts while the cyclists and sea kayakers stay in more conventional lodgings, with private rooms, hot tubs – depending on where we stay! Add US\$399 + tax for the sea kayaking or biking options. After lunch, we head off for our various activities:

### **HIKING OPTION IN NELSON LAKES NATIONAL PARK**

*Tuesday (continued)*      **Hike Angelus Circuit**

Our hike begins in the charming village of Saint Arnaud, on the edge of Nelson Lakes National Park. To keep our

group sizes down in this beautiful but fragile environment, we keep our exact route and group composition flexible. Occasionally overnight hiking is unavailable, so we will stay in Saint Arnaud and do day hikes into the national park instead. We'll hike the relatively gentle trail alongside Lake Rotoiti to Lakehead Hut, a small mountain cabin at the head of the lake. Nelson Lakes National Park straddles the upper Southern Alps, an area composed of beech forests, big lakes and even bigger mountains. It's a special place and in our opinion, vastly superior to its more famous neighbour, Abel Tasman National Park. This is serious wilderness country – no roads, no shops, no TVs – just incredible views and marvellous solitude. You don't have to carry a very heavy pack – our guides are pretty tough and they'll carry the lion's share of the load. All you'll be carrying is a backpack with your sleeping bag, a few spare clothes, and some food and we'll provide tents and so on if you'd like to camp under the stars.

ACCOMMODATION: Nelson Lakes National Park

(B,L,D)

**Wednesday Hike Angelus Circuit**

Today is an unforgettable day – the scenery gets better with each step! We walk along the Travers River through beech forest, before heading up the Hukere Stream towards the ridgeline. This is a steep hike, with an elevation gain of 3000 feet (1000m), but it's absolutely worth it. There is a gorgeous alpine lake at the top and we have plenty of experience in getting people to the top, whatever your fitness levels. If you're still keen for more, we'll scramble up a nearby peak to enjoy stunning views in every direction. If you prefer to relax with a cuppa, that's fine too! Many people tell us that the Angelus Circuit – still unspoiled and non-commercial – was the highlight of their New Zealand adventure, and a lot of Kiwis prefer this trip to some of New Zealand's better-known tracks. The Angelus Circuit has exceptional scenic diversity, so it provides a great return for the effort put in.

ACCOMMODATION: Nelson Lakes National Park

(B,L,D)

**Andrew:** *"This is my single favourite day of all the trips we offer. The hike up Hukere Stream has its challenges, but seeing the elated faces of people as they reach the top has always been one of my personal highlights as a guide. It's a magic spot and a great way to step outside your comfort zone in a safe, supported environment."*

**Thursday Hike Angelus Circuit**

This morning we'll wake up on top of the world. After breakfast, it's a four to five hour hike out along Robert Ridge with dramatic views of Tasman Bay and the mountainous Kahurangi National Park, before dropping below the treeline into native beech forest. It's a challenging walk, but it's worth every drop of sweat! We'll hook up with the kayakers and cyclists before carrying on to the West Coast.

- OR -

**SEA KAYAKING OPTION IN THE MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS**

[Add US\$399 + tax]

**Tuesday (continued) Kayak Marlborough Sounds**

After lunch you'll head to Anakiwa on the edge of Marlborough Sounds to begin three days of paddling. The waters are calm and isolated and surrounded by lush forest and rocky coastline. You'll be matched with a modern sea kayak and all the necessary safety equipment for paddling. You don't need any experience to do this option, but if you are an experienced sea kayaker, you won't be bored. After a thorough safety briefing, you'll head out with your guide for a gentle first day's paddle to your accommodation.

ACCOMMODATION: Lochmara Lodge, Queen Charlotte Sound

(B,L,D)

**Wednesday Kayak Marlborough Sounds**

Today is a full day of kayaking as you explore the secluded bays of the Marlborough Sounds. You can paddle at your own pace and we'll make sure you get as much or as little 'sea time' as you like! We'll check out the beaches and native forest that characterise the area and see all sorts of native birds. With a bit of luck, we'll be visited by

local dolphins, New Zealand fur seals and even penguins! You'll also have plenty of time to stop for short beach and forest walks along the way. After the day's activities, you can have a hot shower before enjoying a great dinner and a comfortable night's sleep.

ACCOMMODATION: *Lochmara Lodge, Queen Charlotte Sound*

(B,L,D)

*Thursday*                      **Kayak Marlborough Sounds**

We spend the morning paddling to our takeout point at Anakiwa. It's another chance to spot local wildlife before having lunch. After coming ashore we'll head to Saint Arnaud, where we hook up with the rest of the group before carrying on to the West Coast.

- OR -

**BIKING OPTION ON THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE TRACK**

[Add US\$399 + tax]

*Tuesday (continued)*            **Bike Queen Charlotte Track**

Another option is to bike the Queen Charlotte Track, rated one of the best mountain biking tracks in New Zealand, with road options available if you prefer a smoother ride. After lunch you'll head to Anakiwa on the edge of Queen Charlotte Sound, where you'll be fitted with a modern mountain bike for a gentle introductory ride. We have a lot of flexibility with this option, so this afternoon's ride will give your guide the chance to observe you in order to tailor the next two days to your level of experience. We offer a range of fantastic single track and road riding to suit your experience and interests. Biking on the road along Queen Charlotte Drive allows you to cover a greater distance and take in more of the Marlborough Sounds – it's your call! In the evening we'll enjoy an awesome dinner at a local lodge before the big day tomorrow.

ACCOMMODATION: *Tanglewood Lodge, Queen Charlotte Sound*

(B,L,D)

*Wednesday*                      **Bike Queen Charlotte Track**

Today is a big cycling day. You can head out as early as you like for amazing single track rides along the Queen Charlotte Track, with stunning views into the Queen Charlotte and Kenepuru Sounds. This area is well known for its native beech forests, secluded golden beaches and varied wildlife, so it's an amazing area to explore at handle bar level. If you prefer, you can bike on the road past sweeping coastal vistas and dense forest – the views are just as good whichever option you choose! There's also plenty of time on both options to stop for short beach and forest hikes along the way.

ACCOMMODATION: *Tanglewood Lodge, Queen Charlotte Sound*

(B,L,D)

*Thursday*                      **Bike Queen Charlotte Track**

We'll spend the morning biking back to Anakiwa, either by road or single track, where we'll have lunch. We'll then head to Saint Arnaud to rejoin the hikers and the kayakers and carry on to the West Coast.

*Thursday (continued)*            **Finish multi-day backpacking, sea kayaking or biking**

After regrouping in Saint Arnaud we'll head to the West Coast – 400 miles of gorgeous coastline with a population of only 40,000 people along its entire length. For dinner this evening, we'll stop at the tiny seaside settlement of Charleston to pick up the quintessential Kiwi dinner – fish and chips! If it's a fine evening, we'll enjoy our dinner on the beach before heading south along the stunning coastline towards the coastal village of Punakaiki.

ACCOMMODATION:    *West Coast lodgings, Punakaiki – comfortable and quiet*

(B,L,D)

*Friday*                                **Hike in Punakaiki Rainforest**

We'll spend most of the day in Punakaiki hiking among the limestone canyons and lush rainforest of the Inland Pack Track. Gold miners established this trail over a century ago, so there is a lot of pioneering history in the area. While we're in Punakaiki we'll also head to the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes – bizarre limestone formations that have been sculpted by the relentless pounding of the Tasman Sea to resemble giant stacks of pancakes. Then we'll head down the scenic coastal road to Hokitika to check out local art galleries and pounamu carving workshops ('pounamu' is Maori for jade) before carrying on to Okarito Lagoon. Okarito is a hidden gem that is all but untouched due to it being 10 miles down a one-way road from an obscure highway turnoff. With a population of only 31 people, there are no shops, no restaurants and no traffic – and watching the sun set over the Tasman Sea is definitely not to be missed!

**ACCOMMODATION:** *Okarito Beach House, Okarito – off-the-beaten-path, isolated and comfortable* (B,L,D)

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

You have a lot of options today. You can spend a relaxing day in this sleepy but beautiful beach town to recharge your batteries, or get out for awesome hiking and kayaking. Okarito is home to the only native white heron colony in New Zealand, as well as a host of other interesting birds including the Okarito brown kiwi. You can sea kayak on the lagoon with a backdrop of snow-capped mountains for a few hours, then hike through lush coastal forest to Three Mile Lagoon, and walk back along deserted beach next to crashing waves. Okarito is also a great spot just to hang out and enjoy a good book, or talk philosophy with some of the locals!

**ACCOMMODATION:** *Okarito Beach House, Okarito* (B,L,D)

*Sunday* **Hike at Franz Josef Glacier**

Just south of Okarito there are two formidable glaciers descending from the mountains to the sea. In terms of scenery, this place is off the charts, and we'll spend most of the day hiking at Franz Josef Glacier. We'll hike up through the rainforest to either Alex Knob or Roberts Point, both of which give great views of the terminal face, lower reaches and lateral moraines of Franz Josef Glacier. We only do these hikes in good weather, as the rocks get very slippery in the rain. If it's raining, we'll do a shorter walk to a view of the terminal face of Fox Glacier, hike around Lake Matheson and visit the Blue Pools near the Haast Pass.

*Heli-hike option (add US\$249 + tax)*

A less strenuous, but outrageously scenic option today 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 (1300m) 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.*

Heli-hikers generally return a little earlier, so we'll rendezvous at a local café before heading south. From Franz Josef it's about three hours down the coast to Makarora (pop. 30), a small farming village bordering Mt. Aspiring National Park. We'll stay at a beautifully landscaped, family-style homestead on the edge of the village with incredible views of the mountains right outside your window.

**ACCOMMODATION:** *The Homestead, Makarora – very comfortable and spacious* (B,L,D)

*Monday* **Mt. Aspiring National Park to Queenstown**

We'll head inland to Lake Wanaka for a hike overlooking the lake and surrounding mountains, then stop in Wanaka

township for lunch. From there, it's a short drive over Cardrona Saddle to Queenstown, on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND is based in Queenstown for a good reason – it's the adventure capital of New Zealand – and you'll find all the comforts of civilisation: massage therapists, restaurants, sidewalk cafés and window-shopping. You'll also find incredible optional activities here, including hang gliding, bungee jumping, jet boating, skydiving, horse trekking, fishing and winery tours. Many of our clients have noted how the *Rimu* caters very well to people with different interests and our time in Queenstown is a good example. For instance, keen mountain bikers can go single track riding in Skippers Canyon, famed through New Zealand for its mountain biking trails. There are also great hiking and kayaking opportunities here. Queenstown isn't a big place – the population is about 8000 – but there's plenty to do! Or you can do nothing and just soak up the atmosphere or lounge about reading a book.

ACCOMMODATION: *Queenstown apartments, Queenstown* (B,L)

**Tuesday Free day in Queenstown**

It's all up to you today – enjoy!

ACCOMMODATION: *Queenstown apartments, Queenstown*

**Wednesday Hike Routeburn Track, cycle Hollyford Valley**

This morning we head down to Te Anau for lunch, before continuing on to The Divide where we'll hike part of the Routeburn Track. This hike gives us unsurpassed views of the Hollyford Valley, from mountains to sea, as well as Lake Marian and Mt. Christina. When we get back to the trailhead, you'll be fitted with a 21-speed front-suspension *Specialized* mountain bike for a scenic ride through the Hollyford Valley. This remote and gently-rolling backcountry road is lined with unspoilt beech forest and surrounded by towering peaks – take your time or go as hard as you want – either way, this is a ride you'll never forget! We finish up with a short hike through the forest for views of Humboldt Falls, New Zealand's third largest waterfall. Then it's a short drive through the Homer Tunnel, emerging at the top of a spectacular alpine road winding its way down to Milford Sound. The lush rainforest carpeting the lower slopes of the mountains gives way to the massively steep, glacier-carved slopes and waterfalls of the Darren Range. Milford Sound, rated the 8th Natural Wonder of the World by Rudyard Kipling, is breathtaking. Sheer rock walls plunge thousands of feet to the Tasman Sea and waterfalls cascade into the deep blue water. It's basic accommodation tonight, but it's the only place in town to stay and the location alone makes up for it!

ACCOMMODATION: *Milford Lodge, Milford Sound* (B,L,D)

**Thursday Sea kayak Milford Sound, cycle to Lake Manapouri**

It's an early start today. Most people see Milford Sound from the deck of a cruise ship but we've got a better way – gliding along in a sea kayak causing minimum disruption to the seals and dolphins, which are very friendly and often eager to visit. This is an awesome trip, run by specialist kayak outfitters, and it's equally suitable for beginners or experts. After your morning's paddle, we'll have lunch before continuing on to Lake Te Anau. You'll have a chance to cycle along the peaceful country road that meanders its way through southern farmlands to Lake Manapouri Inn, beautifully located on the lake's edge. Again, if you prefer, you can skip the cycling and just enjoy the great views out over the lake and the surrounding mountains of Fiordland National Park.

ACCOMMODATION: *Lake Manapouri Inn, Manapouri* (B,L,D)

**Friday Explore high-country sheep farm**

Today we have a relaxed start and head back up the road to Queenstown, where you'll have a couple of hours to get some lunch, do any last minute shopping, send postcards home, or whatever you might need to do before heading back into the wilderness for the remainder of your trip. Then we'll drive up to Lake Pukaki, near Mt. Cook, where we stay on Duncan and Carol McKenzie's 60,000 acre high-country sheep farm, called Braemar Station. ('Station' is the New Zealand word for a big ranch.) While we're here, we stay in the shearers' quarters. It's not a 5-star hotel but many of our clients have told us this was one of their favourite places on the whole trip! The view out of the kitchen window in the morning will knock your socks off – the biggest mountains in New Zealand piercing the sky on the far side of a

gorgeous cobalt-blue lake. With no lights for miles around, the stars on a clear night are like nothing you've ever seen – just the place for your last couple of nights in New Zealand!

**ACCOMMODATION:** *Shearers' quarters, Braemar Station – the views are breathtaking!*

(B,D)

*Saturday*

### **Hike Aoraki/Mt. Cook National Park**

This morning it's an hour or so to Mt. Cook village, at the head of Lake Pukaki. Mt. Cook, known as Aoraki or 'cloud piercer' by the local Maori, is the highest mountain in New Zealand and we have a stunning and little-known day hike (weather permitting) to the main ridge above Mueller Glacier – directly opposite Mt. Cook. It's a tough slog up, but you'll remember the view of the Mueller Glacier and the surrounding peaks of the Main Divide forever! There are also other hiking options if you'd like to take it a little easier. The weather conditions are very important in this area, as it's a true alpine climate notorious for 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! Then we head back to the shearers' quarters for the last night of the *Rimu*. We'll enjoy a traditional Kiwi BBQ and a cold drink as we sit outside and watch the sun set over Mt. Cook.

**ACCOMMODATION:** *Shearers' quarters, Braemar Station*

(B,L,D)

*Sunday*

### **Depart for home**

This is the last day of your two-week trip around the South Island. See the itinerary for the *Kauri* trip if you want to take a few more days to see the North Island as well. We'll leave after breakfast for the three-hour drive to Christchurch, and arrive in the afternoon in time for the flights back to Auckland. International flights after 4pm are ideal, and we can make domestic flights as early as 2.30pm if we have 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. You'll be refreshed and invigorated from the good food, exercise, rest, and great times you'll have had with us in New Zealand!

(B,L)

## **Important Information**

**ACCOMMODATION:** The *Rimu* is an activity-oriented trip around the South Island. We've chosen interesting and comfortable accommodations throughout. Some places are quite luxurious, but many of the other places we stay 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! We prefer to stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments. Rooming is based on twin-share, although single rooms are available upon request. As there is such a variety of accommodations, some places have ensuite bathrooms and some 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 - 10.30am on Monday, and departing from Christchurch after 3–4pm 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 Christchurch domestic 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 at about 3pm.

**TRIP DIRECTION:** To keep our group sizes down, we run the *Rimu* in two different directions around the South Island – northbound (refers to the initial direction of travel from Christchurch) and southbound. This itinerary happens

to be written up in the northbound format. We also run the *Rimu* starting and ending in Queenstown. Whichever direction you take, you'll do all the activities we've mentioned, just in a different order. This trip is a product of many years of evolution and fine-tuning – it works well whichever way you do it!

**FITNESS:** You must have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on the *Rimu*. 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. 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 the *Rimu* 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! You don't have to carry a heavy pack. You don't need to have been in a sea kayak before to enjoy kayaking Okarito Lagoon or Milford Sound. You don't need to be a serious cyclist to enjoy 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 and in reasonable shape and you'll have an incredible time. The challenges are there though, if you're looking for them. For instance, on the second day of the backpacking trip we spend the day climbing to Lake Angelus. The views are incredible – and they get better the higher you go – so the fitter members of the party often push on to the top of the ridge for some unforgettable views of both sides of the South Island, while others enjoy just staying at the hut and admiring the view. We manage the level of commitment to suit your experience and we have an impeccable safety record. We hold all relevant government licenses and our staff are highly trained and experienced.

**FLEXIBILITY:** Because of the off-the-beaten-path and non-commercial nature of some of our accommodations on this trip, we sometimes need to change a night stop. For instance, every now and then the shearers' quarters at Braemar Station are required by the shearers. 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:** The trip fare is US\$3399 + 12.5% NZ government taxes. We quote all prices in US dollars, so our guests 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 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 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 not generally included, although we do spring for a few drinks here and there!
- All hiking, cycling, and kayaking described in the itinerary, except the optional extra activities. There are many optional activities available at extra cost, particularly in Franz Josef and Queenstown. None of these activities are compulsory, 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*