Discovering Our Planet Together



New Zealand Nature Explorer

A Small-Group Immersion in the Scenic Splendors of New Zealand's South Island

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Trip Details:

Days
12 Days / Oct–Mar

Price
From $14995 (+Air)

New Zealand Nature Explorer

A Small-Group Immersion in the Scenic Splendors of New Zealand's South Island

Among travelers who covet spectacular natural scenery, New Zealand is legendary. Our focus is the South Island, a land of topographic extremes, from seaside rainforests and sapphire lakes to ice-crowned peaks, active glaciers and frigid fjords. On a dramatic itinerary that winds from alpine heights to Pacific shores, we are immersed in nature at its showiest. Explore lush mountains and deep gorges in Fiordland National Park, fly over the waterfalls and peaks of Milford Sound by private helicopter, hike on remote Mou Waho Island in Lake Wanaka, and walk among towering ferns to wild Monro Beach. Within these diverse landscapes, we search for rare and intriguing creatures such as the flightless buff weka, yellow-eyed penguins and the famous brown kiwi. We also experience the hospitality New Zealanders are renowned for as we meet sheep farmers, learn about Maori culture, and find a bit of Scottish heritage in the South Pacific.

Trip Highlights

Remote & Intimate Lodgings in Nature

From secluded ecolodges, search for rare birds on rainforest hikes, paddle a kayak on a mountain lake, and stargaze beneath some of the darkest skies on Earth

A Rare Stay on Stewart Island

On little-visited Stewart Island, a Dark Sky Sanctuary, look for elusive kiwis on a guided night walk, and view breeding seabirds on a private boat excursion

Private Milford Sound Cruise & Scenic Helicopter Flight

Aboard our chartered boat, cruise this glacial-carved fjord where waterfalls plummet from sheer peaks, then fly over the sound and mountains to Queenstown

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



New Zealand Nature Explorer Itinerary

A Small-Group Immersion in the Scenic Splendors of New Zealand's South Island

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Dunedin / Otago Peninsula
Day 2	Catlins / Invercargill / Stewart Island
Day 3	Stewart Island / Ulva Island
Day 4	Stewart Island / Te Anau
Day 5	Fiordland National Park / Milford Sound / Wanaka
Day 6	Lake Wanaka
Day 7	Haast Pass / Lake Moeraki
Day 8	Lake Moeraki / Monro Beach
Day 9	Westland Tai Poutini National Park / Arthur's Pass
Day 10	Arthur's Pass
Day 11	Arthur's Pass / Christchurch
Day 12	Christchurch



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Day 1

Dunedin / Otago Peninsula

Begin on the Otago Peninsula among albatrosses and rare penguins

- Tour the Otago Peninsula with your Expedition Leader, watching for albatrosses offshore
- Visit a private conservation reserve for endangered yellow-eyed penguins
- Join your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers for a welcome dinner at Larnach Castle

Our New Zealand nature adventure starts in Dunedin. The town boomed during a series of gold rushes in the 19th century and today remains one of New Zealand's most important commercial centers. This afternoon, meet your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers before heading to the Otago Peninsula Eco Restoration Alliance, formerly known as Penguin Place, a private conservation reserve and rehabilitation center for endangered yellow-eyed penguins. The reserve was founded in 1985 when just eight breeding pairs inhabited the property. This penguin species, found only in New Zealand, is one of the rarest in the world and incredibly difficult to spot in the wild, with fewer than 300 remaining across the mainland and Stewart Island. We'll also look for northern royal albatross here. This evening, we gather for a welcome dinner at Larnach Castle, built in 1871.

Day 2

Catlins / Invercargill / Stewart Island

Reach remote Stewart Island and search for brown kiwis after dark

- Follow the little-visited Catlins coast, watching for sea lions, fur seals and Hector’s dolphins
- Fly to Stewart Island, 19 miles offshore within Rakiura National Park
- Search for elusive brown kiwis on a guided night walk through the rainforest

This morning we set off through the little-visited Catlins, a rugged coastal region that is one of the most sparsely populated areas of New Zealand. Hemmed by a rockbound shoreline, this windswept region holds lush woodlands, a petrified forest, hidden lakes and cascading waterfalls. Large tracts of rainforest are filled with native flora including tree ferns, rata, kahikatea, miro, kamaha and silver beech, while the coastline is defined by stark cliffs, sea caves, rock stacks and sandy bays. Wildlife is plentiful—keep an eye out for seabirds and forest-dwelling birds including tui, bellbird, fantail and native pigeon, plus New Zealand sea lions, fur seals and Hector's dolphins offshore.

Reaching Invercargill, New Zealand's southernmost city, we board a short flight this afternoon to idyllic Stewart Island, 19 miles offshore, where we spend two nights. Much of this rugged granite island lies within Rakiura National Park, whose Maori name means “Land of Glowing Skies.” Its rainforests shelter many native plants, which we discover on nature walks through the unique habitat. The island is a haven for birds, and we listen for the songs of parakeets, bellbirds, tui and kaka. And of course we'll hope to spy the elusive brown kiwi on a guided night walk—Stewart Island is one of the best places in New Zealand to seek them. And if we're very lucky, we might catch a glimpse of the aurora australis in the southern sky.

Day 3

Stewart Island / Ulva Island

Explore predator-free Ulva Island and its rare native birds

- Cruise by private boat among albatrosses, shearwaters, shags and penguins
- Walk through Ulva Island’s unlogged rainforest, free of introduced predators since 1997
- Look for South Island saddlebacks and other birds no longer found on New Zealand’s main islands

On a private boat excursion off Stewart Island this morning, view the multitudes of pelagic seabirds that live and breed in these coastal waters. We expect to see a great variety at close range—albatrosses, shearwaters, shags, skua and several penguin species including yellow-eyed, little and Fiordland crested. Take an intimate nature walk with a local naturalist who has worked closely with Stewart Island native and birder extraordinaire Ulva Goodwillie, the namesake of the Ulva Island sanctuary.

On Ulva, just a short boat ride away from neighboring Stewart Island, explore pristine trails and beaches, observing rare bird species that no longer exist on the main islands, such as the South Island saddleback. Ulva has been carefully managed to be free of invasive predators and pests since 1997, allowing native wildlife to flourish as it did prior to the arrival of introduced species. The small island has also never been logged, offering visitors an immersion in an untouched rainforest that provides shelter for Ulva's healthy bird population.

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Day 4

Stewart Island / Te Anau

Meet the flightless takahe on the edge of Fiordland

- Follow the Southern Scenic Route from New Zealand's south coast toward Fiordland
- Reach Te Anau beside the South Island's largest glacial lake
- Look for endangered takahe at a sanctuary central to the species' recovery

After a short flight back to the mainland from Stewart Island, continue this morning to Te Anau, a picturesque village on Lake Te Anau, the largest of New Zealand's southern glacial lakes, and the gateway to Fiordland National Park. Backdropped by the Kepler and Murchison ranges, most of Lake Te Anau lies within the boundaries of national park and the Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Site. This afternoon, visit Te Anau Bird Sanctuary to see the rare flightless takahe, an endemic bird with blue-black and olive-green plumage and a large red bill. The sanctuary is one of two that have been integral to the success of New Zealand's Takahe Recovery Program, which has pioneered conservation techniques to bring this endangered bird back from the very brink of extinction. As of 2023, about 500 are in existence. The sanctuary is also home to indigenous kaka (a mountain parrot species), parakeets, pateke (brown teal), tui, wood pigeon and more.

Day 5

Fiordland National Park / Milford Sound / Wanaka

Cruise Milford Sound and fly across the Southern Alps

- Board a private boat on Milford Sound, watching for fur seals, crested penguins and bottlenose dolphins
- Fly by private chartered helicopter over alpine lakes, ice fields and rainforest to secluded landings
- Watch a traditional Maori welcome and haka performance at your lakeside hotel in Wanaka

This morning, one of the world's most spectacular drives awaits: follow the winding Milford Road as we travel through Fiordland National Park to the sea. It's no wonder this mythical-looking land of pointed peaks and sheer rock walls, high waterfalls and drifting mists was chosen as one of the main settings for the film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Once we reach the head of the fjord that is Milford Sound, board a chartered boat for a private cruise around this glacier-carved wonderland. As we ply the steep-walled inlets that wind beneath a perpetual cap of snow and ice, watch ribbons of water plummet from above, and look for fur seals, crested penguins and bottlenose dolphins. If we're lucky, the mists will clear enough to reveal pyramid-shaped Mitre Peak rising two-thirds of a mile straight out of the sea. Our naturalist Expedition Leader, an expert on New Zealand wildlife and geography, interprets all we see.

After our cruise, board a chartered helicopter (weather conditions permitting) for a stunning flight over the Southern Alps to Queenstown. As we lift off, view Milford Sound from the air, with multiple waterfalls pouring down the near-vertical peaks surrounding the fjord. We'll get an aerial vantage on alpine lakes, ice fields and rainforests and make three secluded landings, which may include a remote west coast beach, a glacier and a lake.

From Queenstown it's less than hour to Wanaka, as more scenic drama unfolds with every bend in the road. En route, we stop at Arrowtown, a picturesque gold-mining town tucked within a river valley surrounded by mountains. Established in 1862, its heritage buildings line the town streets, including tiny miners' cottages. From here, we climb the Crown Range Road, New Zealand's highest paved highway. Once we pass the historic hamlet of Cardrona, site of the Central Otago Gold Rush of the 1860s, the vast blue expanse of Lake Wanaka comes into view, portal to Mount Aspiring National Park. The basin filled by Lake Wanaka was gouged out by the Wanaka Glacier, born high in the ice fields that crown the jagged peaks in the distance.

Once we're settled in at our lakeside hotel, a very special experience is in store: a local Maori welcome featuring a traditional Haka performance. This authentic encounter is designed to connect guests on a more personal level with the Indigenous heritage and present-day Maori culture of Aotearoa (New Zealand).

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Day 6

Lake Wanaka

Explore predator-free Mou Waho Island and its summit lake

- Cross Lake Wanaka by private boat to remote Mou Waho Island
- Look for flightless buff weka, absent from mainland New Zealand since 1920
- Hike to a lake atop the island for tea and views of the Southern Alps

Our day begins with a 3-hour private boat excursion on Lake Wanaka. Cruising into the sparkling waters, we quickly leave any sign of civilization behind, surrounded only by tawny hills rising on all sides, with higher peaks beyond. Step ashore on remote Mou Waho Island, a predator-free nature reserve that's home to the rare flightless buff weka—a curious, amiable bird that has been extinct on the mainland since 1920. A guided bush walk to the top of the island reveals a hidden lake on the summit, a photogenic spot where we'll enjoy a cup of tea with the panorama of the Southern Alps on display before us. Our tour of the island reveals an impressive conservation success story, as we find out how invasive species—including the weasel-like stoat—were eradicated to preserve the buff weka as well as the mountain stone weta, a prehistoric insect as big as a person's thumb.

Later this afternoon, enjoy a short hike to explore some of the Wanaka environs on foot – or choose to relax or wander the town on your own before dinner. After nightfall, step outside and look up: the Wanaka region has some of the darkest, starriest night skies on Earth.

Day 7

Haast Pass / Lake Moeraki

Cross Haast Pass from the Southern Alps to the West Coast

- Follow an old Maori trading route through moss-draped beech forest
- Walk to the Blue Pools and Thunder Creek Falls through West Coast rainforest
- Settle into Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki, a secluded ecolodge in this exceptionally scenic region

Leaving Wanaka's golden mountains behind, traverse moss-draped beech forest as we cross Haast Pass this afternoon into the heart of the West Coast glacier country. We stop to take in the view at the top of the pass, which is one of three main passages across the Southern Alps and was once an important Maori trading route. The lush scenery is glorious, and trails lead from the road's edge along turquoise streams into the rainforest to dramatic waterfalls, including Thunder Creek Falls where we stop for a nature walk to view the Haast River rushing between the steep mountainsides. Paralleling the river as we descend the pass, we ultimately reach the Tasman Sea and the windswept sand dunes of New Zealand's wild West Coast. Turning north, we follow the dramatic coastal route before cutting inland to Lake Moeraki for a two-night stay at a secluded wilderness lodge in this exceptionally scenic region, which remains lightly visited.

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Day 8

Lake Moeraki / Monro Beach

Paddle a glacial lake and walk through rainforest to the coast

- Kayak on Lake Moeraki within the Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area
- Walk among head-high tree ferns to remote Monro Beach, where penguin viewing may be possible on October and November departures
- Look for glowworms along a forest track near the lodge after dark

Lake Moeraki lies at the heart of a wild natural paradise in the Te Wahipounamu–South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Virtually unchanged since the Polynesians discovered New Zealand, this dramatic landscape has been shaped by successive glaciations into fjords, rocky coastlines, sheer cliffs, waterfalls, lakes, rivers and ancient forests. From our lodge base, explore the natural environs on locally guided excursions, including kayaking on Lake Moeraki and a walk on a lush trail among head-high tree ferns to the wild expanse of Monro Beach. Our hosts take us to meet New Zealand's endangered long-finned eel, a slow-growing, long-lived species that swims all the way to the deep ocean trenches near Tonga to breed. At night, we'll look for glowworms, whose bioluminescence is visible in secret locations along the forest track near the lodge.

October and November departures include a half-day private outing on a remote trail to a spectacular beach to see rare Tawaki penguins. Found only on the southwest coast and islands of New Zealand, they are also called Fiordland crested penguins and are the only penguins that live in the rainforest. About 2,000 pairs remain, with 10% of the population found along the shores of Lake Moeraki.

December to March departures spend a half-day exploring with a local naturalist. One option may include a walk within the local rainforest to see 1,000-year-old trees, including the world's most ephiphyte-laden tree with more than 100 species residing on it, plus unique ferns, orchids, mosses and birdlife otherwise missed by the casual observer. Or we may walk along the dramatic sea coast with its rock pillars, waterfalls and wave-sculpted driftwood, with a chance to find your own souvenir piece of greenstone on the beach. With luck, we might spot Hector's dolphins, the world's smallest marine dolphin that's endemic to New Zealand.

Day 9

Westland Tai Poutini National Park / Arthur's Pass

Travel from glacier country to the mountain forests of Arthur’s Pass

- Follow the West Coast past the Franz Josef and Fox glacier region
- Stop in Hokitika to learn about pounamu, the greenstone prized by Maori
- Visit the West Coast Wildlife Center to learn about conservation efforts for New Zealand’s rare wildlife

More of New Zealand’s magnificent scenery unfolds as we travel along the west coast into glacier country. Two World Heritage Site national parks, Aoraki Mount Cook and Westland Tai Poutini, encompass many of New Zealand's highest mountains, turquoise lakes, braided rivers and massive glaciers, including the Tasman, Franz Josef and Fox. Spawned in the ice fields of the Southern Alps, they wind down like frozen highways into primeval rainforest, almost reaching the ocean.

We stop at Hokitika, a historic river port born out of the 1860 gold rush. Today, the laid-back small town is known for an indigenous greenstone called pounamu, or New Zealand jade, prized by the Maori for its strength, durability and beauty, and used for weapons, tools and personal ornaments. Walk along the sandy beach where plentiful driftwood is formed into imaginative sculptures before continuing to Westland Tai Poutini National Park. Heading inland, our route traverses the Craigieburn Range, where endemic scree plants and giant weta insects thrive. Our destination is Arthur’s Pass Wilderness Lodge, a deluxe ecolodge set amid mountain beech forest and surrounding Arthur’s Pass National Park. Keep an eye out here for the kea, the endangered alpine parrot endemic to this part of New Zealand and often seen in this area.

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Day 10

Arthur's Pass

Explore a working merino station beneath the Southern Alps

- Watch sheepdogs work during a demonstration of daily life on a high-country merino station
- Kayak the calm waters of Lake Pearson between steep alpine slopes
- Hike with a naturalist among moss-covered beech trees and native moa shrubs, watching for endangered kea

Our lodge lies at the heart of a spectacular 4,000-acre property where half the land is dedicated to protecting rare plants and animals and the other half is a working sheep station, where some 3,000 sheep are raised for fine merino wool. During a full day of exploration, we learn about the region's natural history and agricultural heritage, gaining a firsthand look at sheep farming as we watch agile sheepdogs work, hand-feed tame sheep, and learn about shearing and the production of merino wool, renowned for its use in creating soft, fine-gauge garments, and enjoy a private kayaking excursion on Lake Pearson, a placid high-country lake tucked between steep mountainsides. There are also several options to hike forest trails around the lodge with a local naturalist, getting a close-up look at the mossy beech trees and unusual moa shrubs as you learn about the native ecosystem.

Day 11

Arthur's Pass / Christchurch

Walk the mountain forest before exploring Christchurch

- Take a final nature walk through the beech forest around Arthur's Pass
- Explore Christchurch and its remaining Victorian architecture
- Enjoy a farewell dinner hosted by a local family

On our final morning, take a last leisurely nature walk before departing for Christchurch. New Zealand's oldest city, Christchurch is noted for its British character and Victorian architecture, although much of the latter was lost in the devastating 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. A brief city tour includes a stop at Quake City, an exhibit about the natural and human dimensions of the disaster, from which the city is still recovering. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Day 12

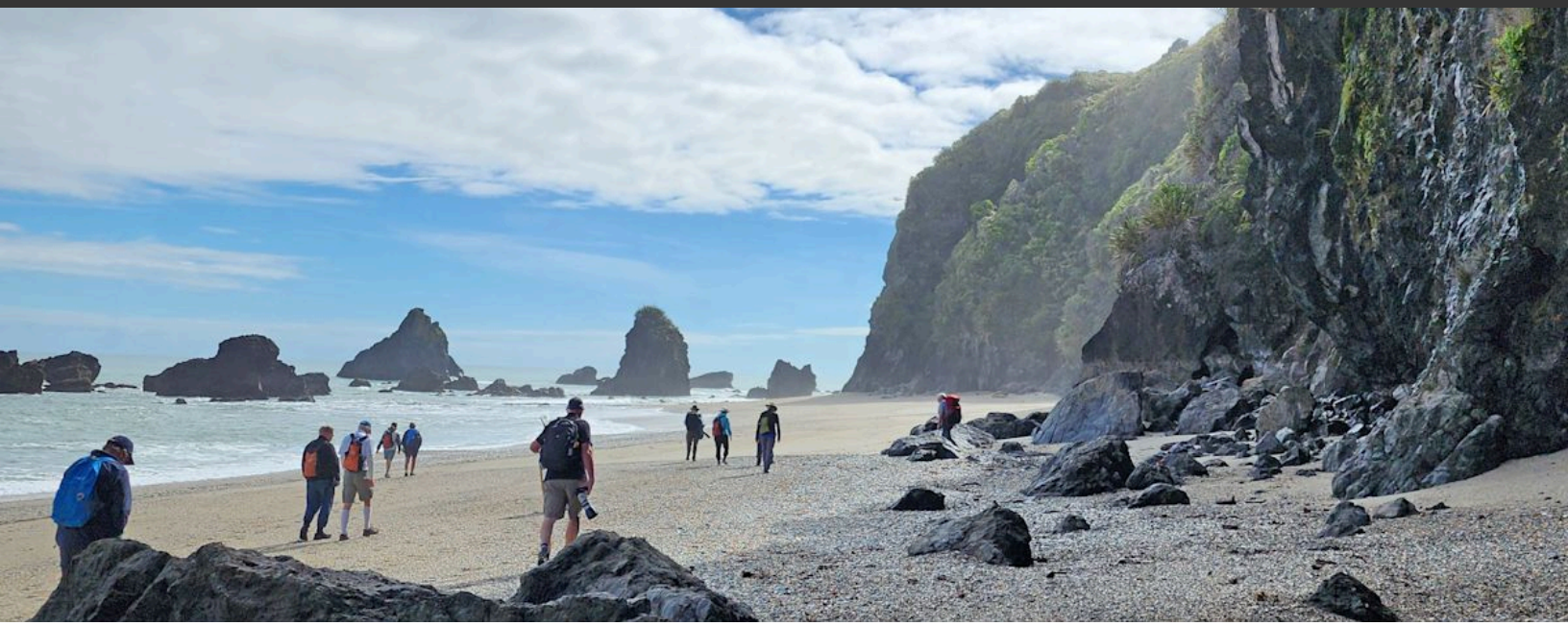
Christchurch

Depart from Christchurch after exploring New Zealand's South Island

- Transfer to Christchurch Airport for homeward flights or continue on one of our Australia adventures

Our New Zealand adventure draws to a close today. Transfer to the airport for flights home, or consider extending your trip by continuing on our Ultimate Australia Safari or Australia South adventure—ask an Adventure Specialist for details.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



New Zealand Nature Explorer Accommodations

A Small-Group Immersion in the Scenic Splendors of New Zealand's South Island



Larnach Castle

New Zealand's 1871 castle and its award-winning gardens with sweeping sea views are a beacon on the picturesque Otago Peninsula, with a dozen lodge rooms next to the historic stables.



Stewart Island Accommodation

On Stewart Island, where brown kiwi birds outnumber people, cozy accommodations near Halfmoon Bay offer coastal views, en suite bathrooms, Wi-Fi and kitchenettes in every room.



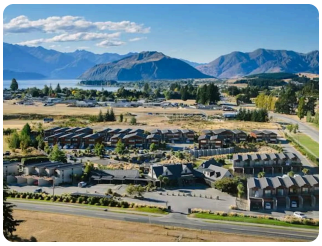
Distinction Te Anau

Overlooking Lake Te Anau and the Fiordland ranges, this recently renovated hotel offers contemporary rooms with plenty of amenities and private balconies with views of the lake.



Edgewater Resort

The only hotel located directly on the shore of Lake Wanaka, the Edgewater features rooms with private balconies or patios with lake and mountain views...plus outdoor hot tubs for a soak under the stars.



Oakridge Resort

The Oakridge Resort offers well-appointed mountain-view accommodations just a short hop from Lake Wanaka, with nine free-form heated swimming pools on the beautifully landscaped grounds.



Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki

At the forefront of nature conservation in this pristine region, this landmark ecolodge was created to demonstrate a sustainable alternative to logging, and today is part of a 6.7 million-acre World Heritage area of lowland rainforest.



Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass

In the heart of the Southern Alps, midway between Christchurch and the South Island's west coast, the lodge is surrounded by a 4,000-acre conservation reserve and high-country merino sheep station.



Distinction Christchurch Hotel

This newly renovated hotel on rejuvenated Cathedral Square in heart of Christchurch is a sanctuary within the city, combining an optimal location with sophistication, warmth and every amenity.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/australia-new-zealand-adventure-travel/new-zealand-explorer/accommodations.

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See More of Natural New Zealand, Farther off the Standard Track

New Zealand Nature Explorer

Most New Zealand tours focus on the same few popular highlights, like Milford Sound. While we'd never dream of skipping those notable draws, we take you farther into New Zealand's remote reaches, away from crowds, for a Down Under nature odyssey you'll have a hard time finding anywhere else. When you travel with us, you'll enjoy distinctive experiences like these:

1. **Fly by Small Plane to Stewart Island to Look for Rare Endemic Wildlife**
   Few travelers to New Zealand visit lushly forested Stewart Island. But we've included it, with the unusual opportunity to look for the endemic flightless brown kiwi bird on a guided night walk. This island is also a breeding and nesting site for one of the world's rarest birds: the Fiordland crested penguin.

2. **Visit the Isolated Nature Sanctuary of Ulva Island**
   Just minutes from Stewart Island lies wild Ulva Island, a predator-free environment for rare and endangered birds. Explore pristine trails and beaches, observing bird species that no longer exist on the main islands. Not on your standard itinerary!

3. **Fly by Private Helicopter over Milford Sound to Queenstown**
   Enjoy a stunning aerial view of Milford Sound and Fiordland National Park on a chartered helicopter flight, with landings at Tutuko Glacier and Quill Lake. Not only does this spectacular flight get you up into high-alpine terrain with unparalleled views of New Zealand's Southern Alps and myriad lakes, it also saves a winding 5-hour drive.

4. **Stargaze Under Some of Earth's Darkest Skies**
   In two places, we'll have a chance to experience some of the darkest skies on the planet. Look for glowworms and glittering stars on a guided night walk from Lake Moeraki Wilderness Lodge, located near (as the crow flies) Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve. We also take two night walks on Stewart Island, known as Rakiura in the Maori language, which means "Land of Glowing Skies." If we're lucky, we might even see the aurora australis on the southern horizon.

5. **A Small-Group Nature Experience from Beginning to End**
   Nat Hab has always been committed to the principle that nature is best experienced in small groups. You'll travel in a group of no more than 11 in a private mini-coach—no big tour buses for us. Few other companies come anywhere near our small numbers, which means you have more intimate and authentic experiences wherever we go.

6. **Visit a Working Sheep Farm—Not a Tourist Set-Up**
   It's often said that New Zealand has more sheep than people, and you'll want to get to know more about these famous residents. We visit an authentic working sheep farm to learn from our hosts about the role these animals have played in the country's history, and their current significance.

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7 **Small Chartered Boats for Private Wildlife Viewing**

Most companies send their groups on marine wildlife-watching excursions aboard larger commercial vessels shared with other passengers. With Nat Hab, you'll cruise on privately chartered small boats for a quiet, personal experience of nature, including on Milford Sound.

8 **Stay in Nature's Most Dramatic Locations**

No cookie-cutter chain hotels for us. Although they range from simple to luxurious, our lodgings place us in the most striking natural places New Zealand has to offer. Sleep in a lodge tucked into an open forest clearing and run by a family that traces its farming roots back to 1860. On the shores of Lake Wanaka, enjoy spectacular views of the lake and Southern Alps. In every case, we choose our accommodations for their authenticity, history, atmosphere and proximity to nature.

9 **Your Naturalist Expedition Leader Is a New Zealand Expert**

Nat Hab has earned an international reputation for employing the highest-quality Expedition Leaders in the industry. Our guides average 15 years of experience and training, with additional resources and access to WWF's top scientists. **Read our Expedition Leader bios** and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

10 **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding Nature Adventure**

Natural Habitat Adventures is proud to offer our exclusive guarantee that clearly states that we will meet the high expectations we set forth in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise for yourself!**

11 **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

12 **Natural Habitat Adventures is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our small-group nature adventures, World Wildlife Fund, the world's leading environmental conservation organization, has named Natural Habitat Adventures its worldwide travel partner—a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $14995 (+Air)

Group Size
Limited to 11 Travelers

New Zealand Nature Explorer Dates, Pricing & Info

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2026 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Nov 8 - Nov 19, 2026	**$14995** +internal air	
Nov 12 - Nov 23, 2026	**$14995** +internal air	
Dec 1 - Dec 12, 2026	**$14995** +internal air	
Dec 5 - Dec 16, 2026	**$14995** +internal air	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jan 16 - Jan 27, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Jan 20 - Jan 31, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Jan 24 - Feb 4, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Jan 28 - Feb 8, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Feb 2 - Feb 13, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Feb 11 - Feb 22, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Feb 14 - Feb 25, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Mar 1 - Mar 12, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Mar 12 - Mar 23, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Mar 19 - Mar 30, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Oct 2 - Oct 13, 2027	**$14995** +internal air	Women's Journey
Oct 8 - Oct 19, 2027	**$14995** +internal air	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Oct 14 - Oct 25, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Oct 20 - Oct 31, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Oct 27 - Nov 7, 2027	**$14995** +internal air	
Nov 3 - Nov 14, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Nov 9 - Nov 20, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Nov 15 - Nov 26, 2027	**$14995** +internal air	
Nov 22 - Dec 3, 2027	**$15495** +internal air	
Dec 2 - Dec 13, 2027	**$14995** +internal air	

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2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Jan 2 - Jan 13, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Jan 6 - Jan 17, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Jan 16 - Jan 27, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Jan 23 - Feb 3, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Jan 28 - Feb 8, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Jan 30 - Feb 10, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Feb 10 - Feb 21, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Feb 12 - Feb 23, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Feb 24 - Mar 6, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Feb 27 - Mar 9, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Mar 2 - Mar 13, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Mar 5 - Mar 16, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Mar 9 - Mar 20, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Mar 12 - Mar 23, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Mar 18 - Mar 29, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Oct 17 - Oct 28, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Oct 29 - Nov 9, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Nov 17 - Nov 28, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	
Nov 27 - Dec 8, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	

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Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Dec 2 - Dec 13, 2028	**From $15995** +internal air	

2029 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2029		
Jan 10 - Jan 21, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Jan 14 - Jan 25, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Jan 18 - Jan 29, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Jan 22 - Feb 2, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Jan 25 - Feb 5, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Jan 31 - Feb 11, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Feb 4 - Feb 15, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Feb 8 - Feb 19, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Feb 13 - Feb 24, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Feb 17 - Feb 28, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Feb 21 - Mar 4, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Feb 25 - Mar 8, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Mar 2 - Mar 13, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Mar 6 - Mar 17, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Mar 10 - Mar 21, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Mar 14 - Mar 25, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Mar 19 - Mar 30, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	

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Departure – Return Prices and dates not confirmed for 2029	Pricing	Notes
Oct 6 - Oct 17, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Oct 11 - Oct 22, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Oct 14 - Oct 25, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Oct 23 - Nov 3, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Oct 28 - Nov 8, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Oct 31 - Nov 11, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Nov 9 - Nov 20, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Nov 14 - Nov 25, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Nov 17 - Nov 28, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Nov 26 - Dec 7, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	
Dec 1 - Dec 12, 2029	**From $14995** +internal air	

See https://www.nathab.com/australia-new-zealand-adventure-travel/new-zealand-explorer/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

- **Trip price includes:** Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), local guides and lodge staff, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, private boat tour on Stewart Island, private boat tour in Milford Sound, private boat tour to Mou Waho Island, all kayaking equipment, some gratuities, airport transfers for those arriving by air on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

- **Internal air:** Flights from Invercargill to Stewart Island and back to Invercargill, and private scenic helicopter flight from Milford Sound to Queenstown, including scenic glacier and alpine lake landings, plus any additional taxes and fees on these flights (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

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Important Information About This Trip

The South Island of New Zealand is vast, and we attempt to take in as much of this beautiful land as possible without rushing, from mountain passes to ocean fjords. Our comprehensive exploration covers more than 900 miles, and the trip involves a fair amount of driving. These are scenic drives that we break up with activities and short stops. They're always worth the windshield time, allowing us to visit iconic nature destinations like Steward Island, Milford Sound, Lake Wanaka and the beautiful Wilderness Lodges at Lake Moeraki and Arthur's Pass. Our Expedition Leader knows the land and its flora and fauna intimately as well as its less-visited sites.

New Zealand's climate is quite complex and varied. Travelers should expect a cool, temperate climate on the South Island, with alpine conditions in the mountainous areas. Mountain chains extending the length of New Zealand provide a barrier for the prevailing westerly winds, dividing the country into dramatically different climate regions. The west coast of the South Island is the wettest area of New Zealand; thus, when traveling in this region, you should be prepared to encounter some rain. The areas just to the east of the mountains are the driest. Keep in mind you should be prepared for chilly wet weather.

Meals on your New Zealand adventure are generally satisfying and well-prepared, with an emphasis on fresh, local ingredients. You'll enjoy a variety of dining experiences, from lodge-cooked meals and casual barbecues to regional specialties served in scenic settings. That said, it's important to note that in remote areas—such as Stewart Island or along the West Coast—meal options can be limited due to location and access to supplies. In these settings, you can expect simple, wholesome meals that reflect what's locally available. Travel days may also include more straightforward meals like packed lunches or quick stops. While the overall quality is strong, we encourage guests to bring a flexible mindset and an appetite for variety—these meals are part of the authentic, off-the-beaten-path experience that makes this trip so memorable.

Accommodations on your New Zealand adventure are chosen not just for comfort, but for their location and connection to the surrounding environment. You'll stay in a mix of boutique hotels, historic properties, and remote wilderness lodges—places that immerse you in the landscapes, wildlife, and culture that make this journey so special. Because some of our destinations are intentionally remote (such as Stewart Island), amenities may be simpler. You might find that rooms are more rustic, with fewer modern conveniences, but they offer warmth, character, and often a deeper connection to place. These properties are selected for their proximity to nature, and while they may be simple, they are all a part of exploring New Zealand's wilder corners in a meaningful way.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

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Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins in Dunedin, New Zealand, and ends in Christchurch. **We recommend that you arrive at least one day prior to Day 1** to rest from your travels and adjust to the time difference. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials. Guests participating in the North Island pre-trip extension have an included pre-trip night in Dunedin and will join the full group at the start of the tour.

If you plan to arrive on Day 1, you must arrive in Dunedin by 12 pm in order to join your group for an afternoon tour of the Otago Peninsula to view royal albatross and yellow-eyed penguins.

You may depart Christchurch any time on the final day.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

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New Zealand Nature Explorer Extensions

A Small-Group Immersion in the Scenic Splendors of New Zealand's South Island



New Zealand North Island Pre-Trip Extension

The ideal complement to your South Island adventure, this sampler of North Island highlights includes Rotorua and the Coromandel Peninsula—explore mist-clad mountains, pristine beaches, waterfalls, geysers, mineral springs and Maori culture.

$3995 (+air)



Ultimate Australia Safari

A three-week nature extravaganza from Australia's tropical top to Tasmania down south, including the Great Barrier Reef and Outback. Eight national parks, seven private reserves and four World Heritage Sites!

$28495 (+air)



Australia South: Tasmania, Kangaroo Island & the Great Ocean Road

Discover the diverse landscapes and ecology of far-south Australia as we explore four national parks and a host of private nature reserves teeming with endemic and endangered wildlife.

$16995 (+air)

Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together

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