

CULTURAL WALKING ADVENTURE

New Zealand

Auckland, Mt. Cook & Queenstown

CLASSIC JOURNEYS

THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



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*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

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TRAVEL + LEISURE

Rotorua, Mount Cook, Queenstown & More

New Zealand will take your breath away. If the snow-capped peaks don't do it, then the sheer cultivated beauty of Waiheke Island will. You're as likely to gasp at the thrill of sailing on an America's Cup yacht as at the chill splendor of Tasman Glacier Lake where icebergs surround your boat. As we divide our time between New Zealand's two main islands, Classic Journeys will introduce you to a land you would not find on your own. We'll visit Rotorua. You'll sip wine at a renowned vineyard in a setting you could easily mistake for the Napa Valley. Our local guide also arranges for naturalists, historians and expert specialists in glacier walking and jet boating. As you sample the green lip mussels...learn about Maori folklore and culture...and walk the swing bridge across the wild Hooker River, you'll appreciate New Zealand as the most scenically diverse and unstoppably fun destination anywhere.

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

What's Included

- All breakfasts, 4 lunches and 6 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip, handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

→ INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

→ PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

Terrain

Easy to moderate

CLASSIC JOURNEYS ITINERARIES MAY BE SUBJECT TO SLIGHT CHANGES, HOTEL SUBSTITUTIONS, AND OTHER MODIFICATIONS.

DAY 1 »

Auckland / Rotorua

As soon as you arrive in Auckland, you'll begin to understand why it's nicknamed the "city of sails" and why sailing is such an important part of the history and culture of the country. For more than 150 years, New Zealanders have sailed competitively, using vessels that have ranged from magnificent kauri keelers to handcrafted dinghies. In the 1980s, Kiwi yacht designers gained prominence on the global stage. And from 1995 to 2021, they hoisted the trophy in four out of the seven America's Cup regattas. Immerse yourself in the sailing culture as you board a sleek America's Cup yacht for an exhilarating ride. Along with your expert local guide, you can participate as a crew member or sit back and enjoy the sail. Either way, you'll enjoy the stories shared by the crew and the incredible views of the skyline.

After lunch, make your way to Rotorua for a visit to Hamurana Springs Nature Reserve. Enjoy walking through forested footpaths and spotting wildlife in their natural habitat in this pristine and preserved park. Stroll along the trails and over the clear-water springs on footbridges, pausing at scenic overlooks along the way.

Tonight, experience the majestic and magical redwoods during a memorable tree walk. Stroll across the eco-suspended bridges and platforms, which were intricately designed to honor and accentuate the stunning natural environment. High above the forest floor, encountering redwoods over 230 feet tall, this is an experience you'll remember long after you've returned home.

MEALS: L, D

OVERNIGHT: ROTORUA

DAY 2 »

Rotorua

Today you'll experience an authentic introduction to Māori culture, gaining important insight into their rich heritage. Begin with a warm welcome from your hosts and a short bush walk to view ancient rock carvings. Listen to stories of their local history while sipping on warm Kawakawa tea together. For lunch, you'll get up close to hangi (a Māori method of cooking food using heated rocks buried in a pit oven) before savoring a lunch of traditional dishes. Get the opportunity to see a Haka demonstration and join a weaving workshop, finding out first-hand the origins of these ancient traditions.

After lunch, you'll discover Waiotapu, which is Māori for "sacred waters". Here, sculptured out of volcanic activity and thousands of years in the making, is a thermal wonderland that experts consider to be New Zealand's most colorful and diverse geothermal site. Enjoy walking through a uniquely natural landscape and exploring one of the most extensive geothermal systems in New Zealand, on foot at eye level.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: ROTORUA

DAY 3 »

Lake Tekapo / Mount Cook

Following breakfast, take a short flight to the South Island and head to Mount Cook. En route, stretch your legs at Lake Tekapo, one of the most iconic sites in New Zealand and a prized shot for photographers. Get your camera ready to capture the mirror-smooth water, wildflowers along the shore, and the jagged ring of mountains that embraces it.

Your home for the next two nights is in Aoraki Mount Hood National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Area. The highest mountain in New Zealand, Mount Cook is the king of the snow-capped Southern Alps and just one of the park's 23 peaks that are more than 9,000 feet in height. Marvel at the nighttime views since you are staying in the country's only International Dark Sky Preserve. You'll want to make time each night after dinner for some incredible stargazing.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: MOUNT COOK

DAY 4 »

Mount Cook

Mythically scaled. Mind-blowing. Stupendous. It's hard to find the adjectives that come close to describing the scene you'll wake up to this morning. After a hearty breakfast, begin your explorations with a ride into the Tasman Valley for a scenic alpine walk that leads to a lake cluttered with icebergs. Leave land behind and hop into a boat to get up close to the icebergs, which were calved by the receding Tasman glacier. The islands of aquamarine ice are unlike anything you've ever seen.

Following a gourmet picnic lunch, head out for a once-in-a-lifetime walk on a stretch of the Hooker Valley Track that begins right on the grounds of your perfectly-sited hotel. Sharp-edged and snow-capped, the mountains give new meaning to the word awesome. Your walk is curated so that even though you've got mountains around, you strike out on groomed gravel trails and stretches of boardwalk that protect the nearby bogs. Swing bridges bring you across the Hooker River where the water is a pearly blue surge of fresh melt from the surrounding glaciers. Sir Edmund Hillary trained for his ascent of Mt. Everest here on Mount Cook, and along the path, you'll see a memorial that pays tribute to the many other climbers who were lost on its challenging peaks.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: MOUNT COOK

DAY 5 »

Arrowtown / Queenstown

From the vast solitude of the mountains to a town filled with centuries of human history. Located in a glacial basin that was a longtime hunting ground of the Māori people, gold was found here in Arrowtown in 1862. The rush began and as many as 15,000 prospectors crowded the valley. The rush cooled, but their historic settlement remains, and you'll get an up-close look at that chapter in the South Island's history. Of course, you'll also head to the river to pan for gold, as nuggets still turn up!

Later, get ready for a sweet introduction to the wonderful world of bees and beekeeping. Put on your bee suit and slip on your gloves as you join an experienced local Kiwi beekeeper to open and work an active hive. You'll get the opportunity to hold a frame covered in hundreds of busy bees to discover the inner workings of these amazing colonies and learn about their importance to our global food chain. Next, make your own honey by removing the 'capping' from your frame to expose the delicious honey underneath and spinning your frame in a powered extractor. Watch through the clear lid to see your honey fly out under the centrifugal force and pour out of the 'honey gate' and then sample some afterward.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: QUEENSTOWN

DAY 6 »

Queenstown

In the morning you'll experience the Māori performance at the top of the Skyline Gondola. It's a fun way to learn about the Māori myths and legends and to see the fierce Haka war dance complete with foot-stamping, body slapping, protruding tongues and chants.

Later, you'll explore the picturesque vineyards of a local winery on foot at eye level. Gain insight into the wine-making process and pause to sip some of the acclaimed varietals, including the exceptional Central Otago wines. This is the southernmost wine-making region in the world, and your hosts will share stories of the industrious winemakers who have carved out a life in this scenic wine producing valley.

MEALS: B, L, D

OVERNIGHT: QUEENSTOWN

DAY 7 »

Dart River / Mt. Aspiring

This morning, join your guide for a walk to Queenstown Hill for panoramic views of the area. As you ascend along the winding trail, you'll make your way along forested footpaths and into open clearings. Enjoy pausing at these vantage points for views of Lake Wakatipu and the charming town of Queenstown below.

After, trade footpaths for braided rivers as you explore the Dart River on a jet boat safari. Piloted by experienced guides, you'll go for a water-skimming journey on the beautifully braided rivers into the heart of Mt. Aspiring National Park. Step ashore for a walk through an ancient beech forest as your guides share Maori folklore and stories of early settlers. Returning to Queenstown, enjoy some downtime before a dinner of local specialties.

In the afternoon, you'll head out to Glenorchy and the Wakatipu Basin that appear in "The Lord of the Rings". Nearby is the birthplace of bungee jumping on the historic suspension bridge that soars across Kawarau Gorge. If you're up for making the leap, just let your guide know and they'll help you make arrangements with the professional bungee jumpers.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: QUEENSTOWN

DAY 8 »

Departure

After breakfast, you'll part company in Queenstown.

MEALS: B

OVERNIGHT: NONE

Tour Hotels



[Pullman Hotel Rotorua](#)

Pullman Rotorua is an upscale hotel located in the city with views of the beautiful surrounding scenery. Enjoy a comfortable stay with modern amenities and warm hospitality.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



[The Hermitage Hotel](#)

Originally built in 1884, the Hermitage is located deep within Aoraki Mount Hood National Park. Expansive windows bring the outside into the contemporary style rooms. And you're only steps from some of the most magnificent scenery on earth.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



[St. Moritz Queenstown](#)

Built in the style of an elegant alpine residence, this luxurious property offers wonderful views of Lake Wakatipu and The Remarkables Mountains. Guest rooms are decorated with understated elegance. The hotel also offers a gym, sauna and hot tub garden.

NIGHTS: 3 nights

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Lobby of Sofitel Auckland Hotel**
START CITY: **Auckland**
START TIME: **10:00 AM**

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **Lobby of St. Moritz Queenstown Hotel**
END CITY: **Queenstown**
END TIME: **9:00 AM**