

## Pre Walk Information Booklet

# Grand Traverse Guided Walk Greenstone and Routeburn Tracks

## Prior to arrival

**Thank you for booking a guided walk with Ultimate Hikes.**

### Insurance

We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** you arrange to take out your own personal travel insurance to cover your walk and related costs if you are not able to start or complete your adventure.

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency on the track, a medical evacuation by air will be carried out by New Zealand emergency services, which might be at your own cost.

### Health and Safety

The health and safety of our walkers and team is at the forefront of our operation. Ultimate Hikes has long been a voluntary member of active adventure programmes and we regularly seek out audits to review our health and safety practices.

Our guides are trained in first aid and go through an extensive pre-season training programme in mountain safety. You are required to adhere to any instructions they give you at all times.

Guides and lodge staff are in constant touch with each other, the lodges and the Queenstown base by radio.

For the safety and consideration of others, walkers must sign a waiver to confirm they are not ill or been in contact with someone who is, within 48 hours of departing and should consult a staff member if they feel unwell on track.

Each person is responsible for their physical capability to complete the walk and should actively commit to fitness training prior to departure.

Each person is responsible for bringing and wearing appropriate clothing while walking. Please see the section below on equipment you must bring and the checklist.

## Please read all the information in this booklet carefully.

The Greenstone and Routeburn Tracks traverse mountainous and remote terrain and preparation is key to your safety and enjoyment.

**If you are the main contact for a group or family, you are responsible for ensuring every person on your booking has read and understood the information below.**

### Adventure activity

Before starting a hike with Ultimate Hikes, you should be aware that hiking on New Zealand's Great Walks and tracks involves risks that include natural hazards such as flood, rockfall, landslip, earthquake and avalanche. Unpredictable weather including high winds, snow and heavy rain can occur at any time. The tracks are uneven, rocky and steep in places. Ultimate Hikes takes every reasonable precaution to eliminate or minimise the risks you could be exposed to, but natural hazards can be unpredictable and should they occur, they could result in injury and even death.

You are required to adhere to any instructions given to you at all times. Failure to comply with any instruction could result in you being unable to continue and/or being removed from the activity. You are also responsible for all children in your care doing the same.

[You can read our risk management strategy here](#)

## Fitness requirements

To enjoy your walk you must be able to carry a medium sized backpack (weighing 5-7kgs) for 6 to 9 hours over 10-18km of mountain track each day.

The track surface varies from rough terrain broken up by large rocks and tree roots to well-formed paths. Training on uneven ground with poles is strongly recommended along with core strength exercise to support balance on rough terrain. We recommend you wear hiking boots, which provide firm ankle support.

If you are not a regular walker, you should begin walking regularly at least 6-8 weeks before your departure carrying a pack and including hills and/or staircases. You should also be prepared to walk in windy and rainy weather. Walking through surface and even running water is probable in heavy rain.

To maximise your enjoyment we encourage you to set your own pace while walking the track, there is no need to keep up with the fastest walkers. There is always a guide at the back of the group.

[Click here for more information](#)

## Cancellation policy

All cancellations must be made in writing and sent to [info@ultimatehikes.co.nz](mailto:info@ultimatehikes.co.nz) or Ultimate Hikes Reservations, PO Box 259 Queenstown NZ, 9348.

Cancellation fees for all Multi Day Walks are charged on the following basis per person:

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Outside 90 days from date of walk departure:  
NZ\$100 per person

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Between 89-60 days from date of walk departure:  
NZ\$200 per person

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Between 59-31 days from date of walk departure:  
50% of full fare

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Within 30 days of date of walk departure:  
100% of full fare

The date and customer name, for which the walk has been booked, once confirmed by the Operator providing the services and activities described, is non-transferable.

[See Terms and Conditions for more information](#)

Our cancellation policy applies to all walkers and is non-negotiable.

## Excess luggage

We recommend you leave any excess luggage at your pre and post accommodation.

We can store excess luggage at our centre in Queenstown for an additional fee. There is no need to book this – just bring it with you on the day of your departure.

## Vehicle parking

Check with the accommodation you have booked if you can leave it there otherwise there are some options in Queenstown.

[Click here for more information](#)

## Solo travellers

Walking is a great opportunity to meet like-minded individuals from around the world. Please note however that we cannot always guarantee same sex shared rooms.

## Equipment & what you will carry

You will carry your own pack from lodge to lodge. We do not transport packs.

### Clothing requirements:

For your safety and comfort while hiking, you must wear fabrics that are warm and quick drying such as merino wool, polypropylene, thermal, micro fleece and polar fleece. **Cotton, silk and denim is not recommended for physical activity as when it gets wet, the fabric retains the moisture next to your skin which will make you cold and expose you to the risk of hypothermia.**

Please follow our recommended [equipment list](#) to ensure you are prepared for the unpredictable environment we hike in. A checklist is included in this booklet

### Pack & pack liner

You can supply your own or we can provide a 40L backpack for you. This can be collected at the pre-track briefing or from the Ultimate Hikes Centre. A photo of the pack can be viewed on this link [What to Bring](#). A pack liner can be collected at the briefing. The pack is likely to weigh between 5-7 kg (10-14lbs) full, if you follow our recommended [equipment list](#).

Please note that because of weight restrictions on our coaches, excess luggage and suitcases cannot be transported.

# Lodges and accommodation

The maximum number of people per departure is 24.

## Power

Power in the lodges is driven by generators. They are turned on in the morning (timings depend on lodges) and all are turned off at 10pm. There is no power from 10pm until the morning. Nightlights operate on small batteries charged during the day.

Steele Creek Lodge is run mainly on solar power, so there is no drying room or the ability to charge devices. Accommodation is in dormitory style rooms and the lodge is more rustic than our other lodges.

Electrical devices can be charged in NZ power sockets while the generators are running.

There is no internet access in the lodges or along the track.

**CPAP machines:** We are unable to power CPAP machines on the Greenstone section of the walk (first three nights). In the lodges on the Routeburn Track, we are able to supply 600W power points to two private rooms for a CPAP Machine to run machines through the night. You must have booked a private room and contact us in advance of your arrival to be allocated the room - they are subject to availability. There is no power source for CPAP machines in multishare rooms on the Greenstone or Routeburn Track.

**Clothes washing/drying:** All lodges except Steele Creek Lodge have facilities for washing clothes by hand, soap and drying rooms.

**Bathrooms/toilets:** All bathrooms have flush toilets and hot showers, with soap, shampoo, conditioner towels and hairdryers provided.

Please flush only toilet paper in the flush toilets – any other products will block and/or contaminate the natural breakdown system in the septic tanks. Covered rubbish bins are provided in all bathrooms for any other products including and specifically for sanitary product and wipes. All other rubbish should be disposed of in bins provided.

**Shared rooms:** Up to 4 people share bunk rooms with separate shared bathroom facilities, except for the first night which is dormitory style. A sleep sheet must be used and carried with you. We can provide one but we recommend you bring your own. Duvets, pillows and blankets are provided.

We have one room that can sleep 5 people on the Routeburn section only. Please request this at time of booking as it is subject to availability.

**Private rooms** have a queen bed or two king single beds and ensuite bathroom. All linen is provided. There is no private room option on the Greenstone section of the track and sleepsheets must be carried.

## Lounge and dining

Smoking and vaping is strictly prohibited in all Lodges and Ultimate Hikes facilities. Please ask at lodges where the designated smoking area is.

## Meals provided

Day 1	Lunch, dinner
Day 2-5	Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Day 6	Breakfast, lunch

### Breakfast

Selection of cereals, toast, fruit, cooked options, juice, hot drinks.

### Lunch

Selection of breads, sandwich fillings, salad, fruit, snacks.

### Dinner

Set menu at Steele Creek and McKellar lodges. In the Routeburn Track lodges the main course has a choice of 3 options.

Vegetarian options are included in all our menus.

We will notify where no dairy or gluten is added.

If you have specific food allergies or dietary requirements, please contact us to discuss them. We will endeavour to cater for general requirements but we are unable to cater for strict diet plans or specific food requests due to the extremely isolated and challenging environment we operate in.

A selection of New Zealand wine, beer and soft drinks are available for purchase at the lodges.

An explanation of meals and timings is provided in the itinerary section.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY** and comfort while hiking, you must wear fabrics that are warm and quick drying such as merino wool, polypropylene, thermal, micro fleece and polar fleece.

Cotton, silk and denim is not recommended for physical activity as when it gets wet, the fabric retains the moisture next to your skin which will make you cold and expose you to the risk of hypothermia.

## Equipment checklist

### Required to walk

Walking boots or sturdy hiking shoes

Base layer - wool, polypropylene, or thermal (top and bottom)

Fleece or merino wool jacket.  
An ideal outer layer in cold weather

Waterproof raincoat  
*we can provide, see below.*

Long-sleeved wool, polypropylene, or thermal top

T-shirt. wool, polypropylene, or thermal. **Avoid cotton**

Sunhat (with peak or brim) and wool/fleece hat

Warm gloves - wool, polypropylene,

Shorts/walking trousers  
**(not jeans or lycra/cotton leggings)**

Three pairs of hiking socks - merino wool or thermal

Sunscreen, insect repellent

Water bottle or bladder (1 litre capacity)

### Optional but recommended

Walking poles – highly recommended  
*(you can rent a pair from the UHC)*

Waterproof over trousers

Gaiters

Swimwear & lightweight towel

Spare laces. Just in case

Sealable plastic bags

Reusable lunchbox – we can supply but more environmentally friendly.

Essential equipment you need to bring on your multiday guided walk.

### In the lodge

Shirt or long sleeved top

Sweater/jersey

Lightweight trousers

Lightweight shoes – with a hard sole.

Nightwear

Personal toiletries  
*(soap, shampoo and conditioner are provided)*

Change of underwear

### Extras/useful items

Credit/debit card *(for purchases and to settle bar bills at the end of your walk).*

Foot fleece/second skin

Strapping tape

Lip balm

### You can collect from us

Backpack & Liner  
(weighs approx 2kg empty)

PVC Waterproof raincoat with hood  
(weighs approx 500gms)

Sleep sheet *(for shared rooms only)* – jersey cotton sleeping bag shape  
(weighs approx 350 grams).  
*We recommend you bring a light silk sleeping bag liner that takes up less room in your pack.*

Many items can be purchased at the Ultimate Hikes Centre.

## On track

Your guides will accompany you every day and will provide current weather and track conditions. There is always a guide at the back of the group, near the front, and in the middle of the groups. They will show you interesting aspects of the track, provide general knowledge and are trained in weather and safety protocols. You must adhere to any requests or instructions made by the guides.

You are encouraged to walk at your own pace in your own time (unless advised otherwise). Parts of the track can be uneven, wet or rocky – take your time.

Please keep all rubbish with you and dispose of it in the lodges.

Sandflies are common along the track. We recommend you wear insect repellent each day.

All of our lodges have flush toilets. There are flush toilets at the Department of Conservation huts. Toilets along the track and at all our lunch shelters and huts are kiwi long drops. Toilet paper is provided. If you need a toilet stop between these dedicated spaces please leave your pack on the track. Make sure you are 50 metres from any water sources and bury your waste.

The unpredictable nature of the weather in this region means that snow, high winds and heavy rain can occur at any time of the year. It is therefore very important to be prepared for all weather conditions, and carry the appropriate clothing at all times

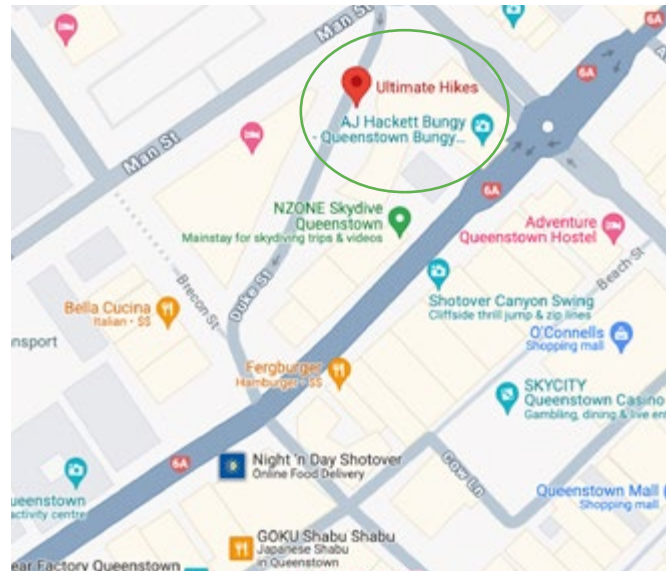
### Pre-track briefing

Please check in at **12.45pm** on the day prior to your walk for a group pre-track briefing. The briefing is held at the Ultimate Hikes Centre, Ground Floor, The Station Building, Duke Street Entrance, Queenstown.

If you are unable to make it to the pre track briefing please advise our reservations team closer to the time of your departure, to ensure you have all the up to date information required for your walk.

At check in you will complete your registration form to confirm your dietary and medical information and emergency contact details.

You will be able to pick up any gear you need to borrow from us or purchase any items you may need from our shop. Our customer service staff will



Ultimate Hikes Centre Location (Queenstown)

also give you an overview of what to expect while you are on track.

### Day of departure

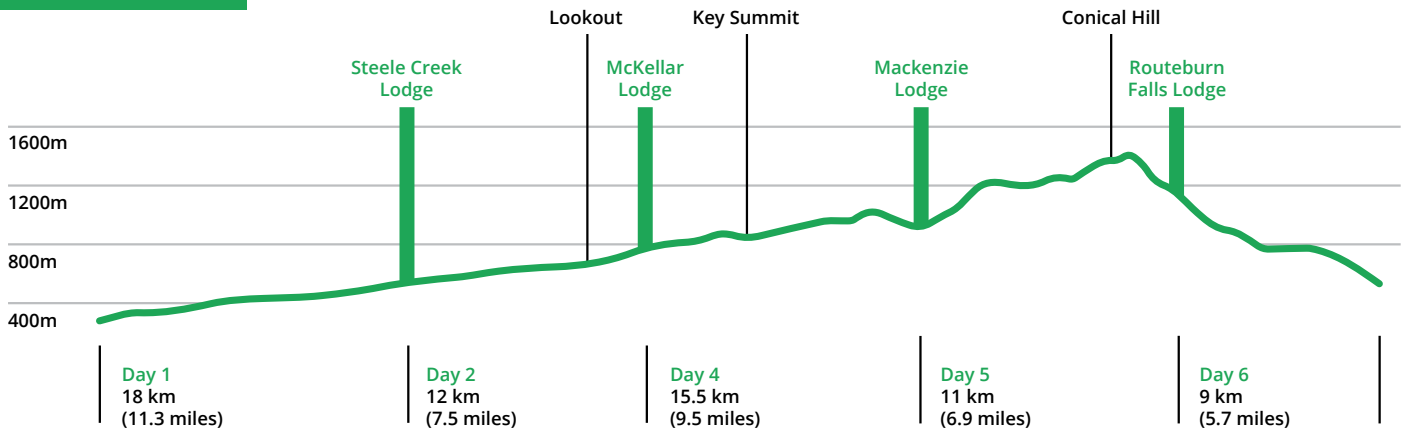
Please check in at the Ultimate Hikes Centre at **7.30am** on the day of departure.

There is no collection from accommodation. Please ensure you have breakfast before arrival as food and beverages cannot be consumed on the coach.

### Return time

The coach returns to Queenstown on the final day at approximately **4.00pm**. You will be dropped off at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown. Arrival times may vary due to weather, road and traffic conditions.

# Itinerary



## Day 1 | 18km (11.3 miles) Queenstown to Steele Creek Lodge

**TRACK TERRAIN:** The track gradually climbs throughout the day with both uphill and downhill sections. There are tree roots and some small rocky sections, as well as grasslands which may be muddy if wet.

The group meets at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown at 7.30am ready for departure. Your pack will be put under the bus and not available until you reach the start of the track, so it's a good idea to keep your water bottle, a warm layer, and your phone/camera to carry with you on the bus.

The bus will travel approximately one hour to Glenorchy where you will stop for a short toilet break, and have a chance to meet the people in your group. The bus will continue around Lake Wakatipu for another hour to the start of the walk at the Greenstone carpark.

At the carpark, you will collect your pack, and the guides will allocate packed lunches – if you have provided a dietary request, be sure to advise them so you collect the right lunch for you.

The guides will give you an update of the track and weather conditions before you start walking and can check your pack and pole fittings. The front guide will then start the group off up the track. A guide will walk within the middle of the group and there will always be a guide at the rear of the group. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask the nearest guide, or stop to wait for the guide behind you.

The track gradually climbs through the Beech forest so take your time. You will then drop down along the Caples River and cross a bridge bringing you to the end of the Caples Valley. From here the track picks up the Greenstone River and follows it

through the Beech forest. After about an hour and a half, you will stop for a morning break by the river.

From the break stop, you'll walk another hour and a half or so before emerging from the trees into rolling grassland. The lunch shelter is tucked in the treeline, where there is a toilet and hot drinks will be provided.

After lunch, you will cross a small stream where you can expect the water to be ankle to shin deep. Please follow the instructions of your guides when crossing - they will show you the safest way. On the other side, the track heads back into the trees and continues to gradually climb, with some ups and downs, crossing more tree roots sections as well as short rock fall areas that were created during a big flood in Fiordland in 2020.

In the afternoon, stop for a break at the track junction which marks about 12kms of the walk done. Take a short 5 minute side trip to a bridge overlooking a river gorge. The track continues on for another 30 minutes in the Beech forest before once again coming out to the Greenstone Valley. Mud and water may be present through the grassland track and a headwind is common on this section, so keep your windproof layer handy. Upon reaching a signpost directing you to Steele Creek Lodge, follow the top of the river terrace until you reach the lodge at the edge of the bush line.

On arrival at the lodge, you will be shown to your room by the lodge host, who will give you the evening's timing. Snacks and hot drinks will be available in the lounge and the bar will open later in the afternoon followed by dinner and a briefing about the day ahead.

**Please note,** Steele Creek Lodge is run mainly on solar power, so there is no drying room or the ability to charge devices. Accommodation is in dormitory style rooms and the lodge is more rustic than our other lodges.

## Itinerary

### Day 2 | 12km (7.5 miles) Steele Creek Lodge to Lake McKellar Lodge

**TRACK TERRAIN:** The track continues to climb up and down through the Greenstone Valley to Lake McKellar Lodge. Track conditions vary throughout the day with the track crossing between open grasslands, and Beech forest. You'll encounter large tree roots and historic rock fall crossings. Depending on weather conditions, the open grasslands can range from dry grass to muddy puddles and swampy bog.

Your morning will start around 7:30am. Tea and coffee will be available. The hot water runs on gas so is available on waking. Provisions will be available for you to make your packed lunch for the day. A continental and cooked breakfast will follow. After breakfast, you will get yourself re-packed and meet your guides in the lounge ready to depart.

The walk starts back in the trees, crossing a one person bridge over Steele Creek. From here you will walk along the valley floor crossing moraines of the glacier responsible for carving out the valley. This section can be wet and muddy so take care. Make sure you follow the orange markers and stay on the track. Throughout the walk keep an eye out for the elusive Takahe, one of New Zealand's endangered native flightless birds. Breeding pairs were released into the valley in 2023 and are reportedly thriving.

About 4km after leaving Steele Creek, you'll cross another rock fall section and enter back into the trees. This is the morning break point and a good opportunity to adjust your layers, have some water and a snack and enjoy a rest.

The next section of the walk until lunch continues on through the trees crossing side stream beds, and rock fall sections. A short 20m climb marks the location of the lunch hut. It is hidden from view so your guides will instruct or show you how to find it. Hot drinks will be served at lunch and there is a toilet here.

The rest of the day continues in and out of the trees until you reach Lake McKellar Lodge. Continue to follow the orange track markers marking the route. There are stream beds to cross which are usually dry but can be wet if there has been rain. Stunning views can be seen up and down the valley. The afternoon break point is the last view of the

Greenstone, where you can rest and enjoy the view back down the valley towards Steele Creek. From here it is about another hour and a half to the lodge.

Just before you reach the lodge, you will see the neighbouring Department of Conservation hut. Turn right after crossing a small bridge, and follow the river up into the next clearing where you will find the lodge. Check in with your lodge host who will show you to your room and give you the rundown on the lodge and the evening's timings.

At Lake McKellar Lodge, the hot water also runs on gas so showers are available at any time, and there is a small generator that provides power for lights, heaters, the coffee machine and a drying room. The generator only runs in the evening and the mornings, however battery power operates night lights when the main generator is off. Devices can be charged while the generator is on, and there is a drying room but it has limited capacity.

You will be here for two nights so take your time to settle in. Snacks, tea and coffee will be available on arrival. The bar will open for drinks before dinner is served. During the evening, your guides will give you a briefing and explain your options for the following day.



# Itinerary

## Day 3 | Rest Day Lake McKellar Lodge

Start your day with a continental and cooked breakfast. There is no need to make lunch today as it will be served in the lodge.

It is your choice how to spend your rest day. You are welcome to stay in the lodge, wander the surrounding area or relax by the lake. However there is also an option to do a half day walk.

### Guided walk – The Lookout

The guides will take the group who choose to go, on a 3-4 hour walk to 'The Lookout'. This is around a two hour steep climb through the Beech forest behind the lodge to above the treeline where, on a clear day, you will be rewarded with views in both directions of the Greenstone Valley.

This walk is a scramble over big tree roots and steps, as you ascend approx. 500m up from the lodge. This walk will be taken slow and steady, with

rest breaks on the way up to accommodate the vertical incline and technical nature of the track.

Once above the tree line you will get your first experience of the alpine flora that you will see on the Routeburn Track. From the viewpoint, your guides will point out the valley you walked up, the lake and lodge below, and beyond towards where you will walk the following day.

Take your time walking down the track back to the lodge, taking in the views of the valley and mountains through the trees.

Lunch will be served in the lodge. The afternoon is unguided but you must leave your intentions with a guide or lodge host if you leave the lodge.

Tea and coffee will be available all day and a cheeseboard will come out in the afternoon prior to dinner. The evening will follow the previous night's schedule with dinner, and the guides briefing about the following day.





## Itinerary

### Day 4 | 15.5km (9.5 miles)

#### Lake McKellar Lodge to Lake Mackenzie Lodge

**TRACK TERRAIN:** The track becomes better maintained and more clearly defined once we enter into Fiordland National Park. It starts as a gradual incline, and is a mixture of rocks, tree roots and smooth underfoot and is generally less wet and muddy in comparison to the previous days. There are large rocks to navigate around Earland Falls and be aware that there is a steep and rocky downhill section before reaching the lodge. Care should be taken.

Your day begins with breakfast, and lunchmaking before you pack up ready for departure. On leaving the lodge you follow the track around Lake McKellar and enter the Fiordland National Park. Notice how the vegetation becomes denser as you get closer to the West Coast where the annual rainfall is around nine metres.

Soon after leaving the Lake we will reach the turnoff to the Caples Valley. Take a break here and look back down the valley for your last clear view of Lake McKellar. You will cross some small rocky sections, where in wet weather water may flow. The track gradually inclines until you reach Lake Howden and join up with the Routeburn Track.

From here you have the option of a side walk up to Key Summit, a beautiful alpine wetland with dramatic views of the surrounding mountains on a good day. It is an hour and a half return and takes you up 250 metres from Lake Howden. Leave your

pack at the shelter but make sure you have a warm layer and camera with you.

Lunch is at Lake Howden with hot drinks available. You can rest here if you prefer not to go up to Key Summit.

After lunch, the track steadily climbs to Earland Falls – about 3.5kms. Stop for a break at the base pool. From the falls it is another 5kms to the lodge. The track traverses around the mountain side to the Orchard. Beyond, you'll climb for a short section before descending to Mackenzie Lodge. The descent is steep with large steps down across rocks and tree roots. At the bottom you will emerge from the trees into the Hebe garden and see Mackenzie Lodge ahead of you.

Take the entrance to the right off the track and a warm welcome will await you at the lodge entrance. Your host will offer a cold drink and a snack before showing you to your room and pointing out the lodge facilities.

If you have time and the inclination, you can walk a few minutes further along the track to Lake Mackenzie to view it in the afternoon light and take a swim in the icy fresh water.

After a hot shower, you can rinse your hiking clothes and hang them in the drying room before relaxing in the lodge for afternoon tea. The bar will open late afternoon with pre dinner snacks followed by a three course meal and a briefing on the following day. Generators will turn off at 10.00pm. Nightlights will operate in rooms and corridors.



## Itinerary

### Day 5 | 11km (6.9 miles) Lake Mackenzie to Routeburn Falls Lodge

**TRACK TERRAIN:** Uneven and steep ascent from Lake Mackenzie with a series of zig zags up the side of the hill to Ocean Peak Corner. The track then is quite narrow but mostly flat across the mountain side – rising again around the Harris Saddle and Lake Harris before descending into the valley with some boardwalks and steps. This is the most exposed day on the track and can be windy and cold in wet weather.

Generators will turn on to start your day in the morning. Please check the timing in each lodge as it can differ slightly. Hot water in the bathrooms will take about 15 minutes to heat up. Once the generators have turned on, lunch making preparations are set up in the lounge. Each person can choose from a variety of fillings to make sandwiches, wraps or salads. There is also a selection of snacks, home baking and fruit to choose from. Please ensure you pack enough food to sustain you through the day.

A continental breakfast, tea and coffee will also be available in the dining room and a cooked breakfast will follow. Once you have completed lunch making and breakfast, and re-packed your pack, your guides will be waiting for you outside the main entrance to the lodge.

Once everyone is ready the guides will take you down to Lake Mackenzie for a group photo. Bring everything with you because the track continues past Lake Mackenzie and rises up through ancient Beech Forest emerging out of the treeline for stunning views of the lake below. The ascent to the treeline is rocky with tree roots and is steep in places. It is also narrow so please let people behind you go through when you can. At the treeline the track zig zags across the mountain until it rounds the top and spreads out to Ocean Peak Corner.

Take a break here, have a snack and enjoy the view. On a clear day you'll have a full panorama of the Darran Mountains across the Hollyford Valley, to the distant Tasman Sea at Martin's Bay.

When you are ready the track drops down and follow along the mountain face. This is true alpine terrain - ask your guides to point out the native flora, including mountain daisies, buttercups, gentians and edelweiss.

The track traverses the Hollyford Face for about 4.5km, approximately 2 hours. There are few water sources along this section and none at the lunch stop. Your guides will advise where to fill up with water. The track rounds the corner from the face and crosses a stream. Ahead is a short but steep staircase. At the top you will wind around some alpine tarns and arrive at the Harris Shelter. A welcome sight with hot drinks available.

Relax inside the shelter or on the surrounding deck and enjoy your lunch. Weather permitting there is an option to take a side walk behind the shelter to Conical Hill. This is a scramble up a steep front. There is a plateau overlooking Lake Harris two thirds of the way up – stop here or continue up to the panorama views out to Martins Bay on the West Coast. This walk takes about an hour and a half to two hours round trip and is a very steep scramble up and down. Check with a guide if you are unsure about going up.

After lunch, the track continues around Lake Harris and reaches the highest point. This section of track is narrow with some drop offs, keep to the hillside and wait for a guide if you are nervous of heights. From the highpoint the track descends into the upper basins of the Routeburn Valley skirting the Routeburn Falls. The track is graded with boardwalks and some wide steps. As the Routeburn river reaches the Falls, the track will wind down a rocky section that can be slippery in the rain. Hold on to the handrails and make your way down to the lodge nestled in the trees. A host will be waiting to greet you at the door and the schedule for the afternoon/ evening will be similar to the previous one.

Routeburn Falls Lodge has a tree hut quality with external walkways and a water source running underneath.



## Itinerary

### Day 6 | 9km (5.7 miles)

#### Routeburn Falls to Queenstown

**TRACK TERRAIN:** Starts with a rocky descent then mostly wide and smooth with some rocky patches.

When you are ready to leave the lodge, meet at the front entrance. The track descends a steep rocky section with some big steps down before widening out to a broad track. You'll cross some small bridges and an open section formed by a tree avalanche in 1994 that affords an amazing view of Routeburn Flats below.

Steep downhills are over when you reach the valley floor. A guide will be at the junction and will encourage you to leave your pack there and turn left along the track for about 5 mins to Routeburn Flats and the DOC hut. Use the bathroom here and wander out to the pasture of the Flats where you'll pick up the Routeburn River again.

Returning to your pack, the track continues through Red Beech Forest shadowing the river. About 4kms along the track you will reach Forge Flat – head down to the river and if the weather is in your favour stop for lunch. Check with your guide for the river conditions if you are keen to brave the icy fresh turquoise water.

It is an easy walk from here to the end of the track so take your time, listen for native birds in the valley and enjoy this last part of your journey through native forest with the beauty of the river flowing down the ravine below. Take the detour loop track to a nature walk that has panels about the natural history of this vast forest. Shortly afterwards you cross a large suspension bridge and arrive at the Routeburn Shelter and the end of the Routeburn Track.

The coach will be waiting and the driver will assist the guides in collecting the equipment you may have borrowed – change your shoes if you want to and keep things you'll want with you for the drive back to Queenstown. Once everyone has arrived the bus will take the group to the village of Glenorchy – about 30 mins where you can purchase a celebratory drink at the pub. The drive from Glenorchy to Queenstown is another hour along the side of Lake Wakatipu and arrives back at the Ultimate Hikes Centre.



# Track Map

