

## New Zealand – The Best Bits 2 – 2020



- 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan.** Depart UK
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan.** In transit
- 24<sup>th</sup> Jan.** Arrive Auckland. Transfer to accommodation – Poenamo Hotel, 31 Northcote Road, Northcote, Auckland in a combination of double and twin rooms.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Jan.** In Auckland – Day visit to Waiheke Island. Taking the minibus on the ferry, we cross the Hauraki Gulf. Waiheke Island in where many Aucklanders aspire to live for its wonderful sun-soaked beaches and vineyards. We will catch the earliest acceptable ferry in order to spend as much time as possible on the island. Bring your swimmers. O/N Poenamo Hotel.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Jan.** After checking out of the hotel, we head into town to visit the Sky Tower, providing us with a panoramic view over the city, the Hauraki Gulf and beyond. Afterwards, we will head north, on a 329km, four hour journey, out of the city to 90 Mile Beach, a long beach (88km) all the way up the finger of land leading up to Cape Reinga. Check into our double or twin room accommodation – Ahipara Bay Motel, 22 Reef View Rd, Ahipara 0410, New Zealand.
- 27<sup>th</sup> Jan.** In the morning we will explore the beach and dunes on quad bikes hired from Ahipara Adventures. We will spend a couple of hours out on the beach.



*90 Mile Beach*

After lunch we will drive 120km up to New Zealand's most northerly point, Cape Reinga, where the seas clash. On our return we will try to fit in a visit to Waipoua Forest where we will find ancient Kauri trees. Kauri are among the world's mightiest trees, growing to over 50 m tall, with trunk girths up to 16 m, and living for over 2,000 years. We will return to our accommodation - Ahipara Bay Motel

**28<sup>th</sup> Jan.** After checking out of our accommodation we will drive 114km across the peninsula to the Bay of Islands where we will take an afternoon cruise, perhaps one that will allow us to swim with dolphins. O/N at Bounty Motel, 42 Selwyn Road, Paihia



*Bay of Islands*

**29<sup>th</sup> Jan.** Today we leave Northland behind as we drive 416km, over 5½ hours, back to Auckland and through the other side to Whitianga on the Coromandal Peninsula. On our way we will have an opportunity to stretch our legs, and just before we reach our destination, providing the tides are right, we will visit Hot Water Beach, where thermal uprisings mix with the cooler ocean waters. Our accommodation will be at Beachside Resort Whitianga.

**30<sup>th</sup> Jan.** In the morning we will drive the short distance to Otama Beach, a stunning, deserted beach for swimming and some relaxation. We will return to Whitianga for lunch before heading out to sea on a boat trip that takes in Cathedral Cove and other fascinating coastal features. This area is a marine reserve and we will have an opportunity to go snorkelling in the warm waters, observing many different fish at close quarters. O/N Beachside Resort



*Cathedral Cove*



**31<sup>st</sup> Jan.**

Drive to Rotorua. (230km – 3 hours) Rotorua is the thermal capital of New Zealand with a wide variety of thermal features within easy reach. We are likely to arrive in good time, which will allow us to visit some of the thermal activity or visit Skyline Rotorua, where we can gain panoramic views over the whole of Rotorua and enjoy some fun on the luge. Afterwards we will check into our accommodation, Rotorua YHA, where double, twin and single rooms are available. In the evening we will visit the Matai Maori Village for a cultural experience and a Hangi, a traditionally cooked feast.

**1<sup>st</sup> Feb.**



*Bubbling mud pools*

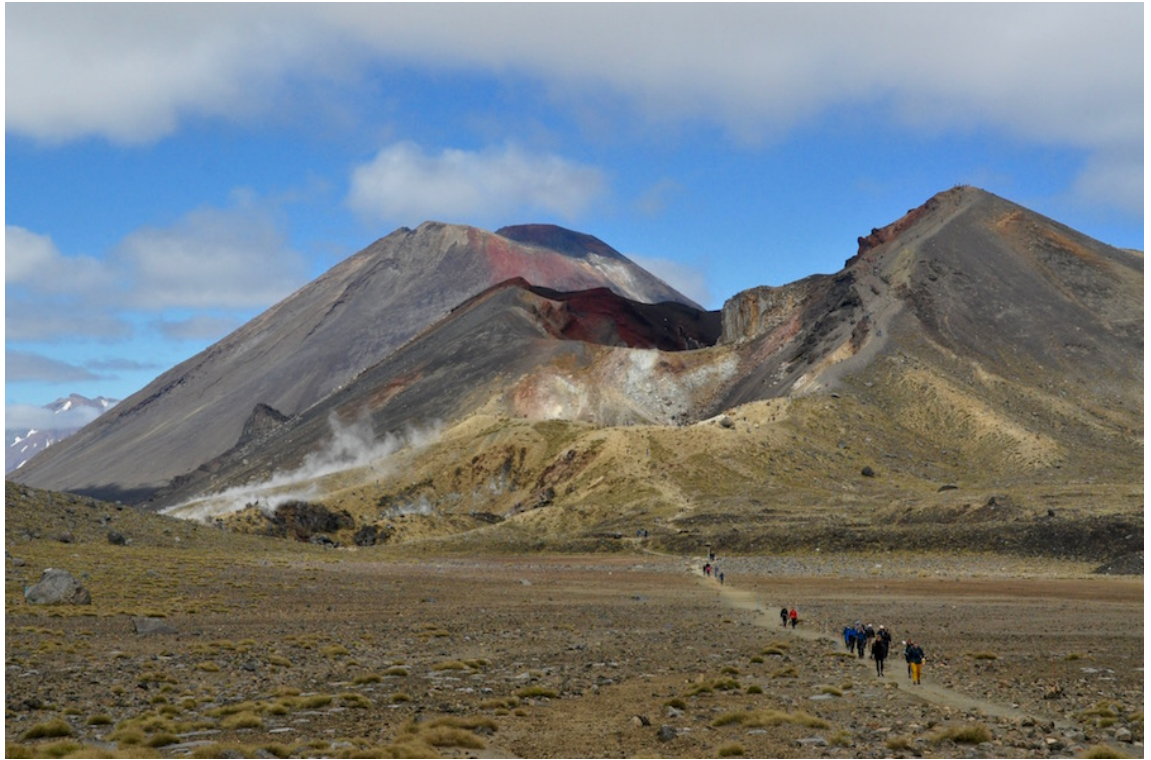
Today we drive from Rotorua to National Park (181km - 2¼ hours) There are plenty of attractions to break up the journey. Before leaving Rotorua we will visit Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley where the highlight is the Pohutu Geyser, which erupts at regular intervals. From there we will travel a little way to visit Wai-O-Tapu, another thermal park with some fascinating features. Nearby, mud pools, full of gloopy mud, bubble away.

Just before reaching Taupo, we will visit the Huka Falls. Taupo, is on the shore of Lake Taupo and if we have enough time, we will explore the town and lake a little. The scenery is distinctly volcanic and we will be passing the Tongariro massif as we drive to National Park where we will be staying in the National Park YHA and Climbing Wall, which has double, twin and single accommodation.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Feb.**

Today we walk the Tongariro Crossing, one of the world's great one-day walks. It is 19km (12 miles) of stunning volcanic scenery, not to be missed. In the morning a bus will pick us up from the hostel and transport us to the starting point of the walk. It starts quite gently on a good path through alpine scrub. After 3km we begin to climb, and as we do so, the vegetation decreases until there is nothing but volcanic rock and dust. After the first climb we cross an old crater, now a plateau, with the jumbled peak of Tongariro on our left and the magnificent Mt. Ngauruhoe (Mount Doom in the Lord of the Rings films). Another climb takes us to the high point of the walk, on the edge of the Red Crater. It is magnificent. The descent, steep to begin with, takes us passed the Emerald Lake, a thermally active area and the Blue Lake, before making the long descent to the other end, where a bus will pick us up and return us to our accommodation. O/N National Park YHA





*The Tongariro Crossing – Mount Doom and the Red Crater*

If the Tongariro Crossing is not for you, the minibus can take you on an excursion back to Taupo where there are a great many alternative, less active, activities – Taupo Maori carvings, Craters of the Moon Geothermal Park, Taupo DeBretts Hot Springs, Lava Glass - Glassblowing Studio, Sculpture Garden, Art Gallery, Café to name but a few.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb.** Drive to Napier. (235km – 3 hours) Napier was destroyed by an earthquake in 1931 and much of the rebuilding was done in the Art Deco style, a fact that is celebrated today as it is described as the Art Deco capital of the world. We will immerse ourselves in Art Deco by staying at the Napier Art Deco Masonic Hotel. In the afternoon we can take advantage of the fact that Napier is also a centre for classic cars, giving us the opportunity to take a journey in style that includes wine tasting, chocolate tasting and sightseeing all in one package.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Feb.** In Napier. On this day we will be able to explore the area and the attractions that Napier has to offer, with, perhaps, a little wine tasting. It is also an opportunity to relax in opulent surroundings where we can recharge our batteries after several days on the move. O/N Art Deco Masonic Hotel
- 5<sup>th</sup> Feb.** Drive to Wellington (322km - 4½ hours) This journey will give us the opportunity to explore Hastings and Palmerston North before reaching the capital, Wellington, where we will check into the Thorndon Hotel before venturing out to explore the city. We will probably veer towards the waterfront and Cuba Street where the liveliest scenes are.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Feb.** A further day to enjoy Wellington. Top of the list will be a visit to Te Papa Museum, on the waterfront. This is a fabulous museum telling you everything about New Zealand, from its geological birth, the uniqueness of its flora and fauna, Maori history and culture and the introduction of immigrants. If we are lucky, we may be able to arrange a 'behind the scenes' tour with one of the curators. The waterfront is alive with activity and a good place to linger or to dine in one of the many restaurants overlooking the harbour. Other attractions include the Beehive (parliament building), the botanical gardens, Zealandia or a boat trip out to Matiu-Somes Island. O/N Thorndon Hotel





*Slack-lining on the Wellington waterfront*

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

We leave North Island by taking the early morning ferry across Cook Strait to Picton at the head of Queen Charlotte Sound. The Marlborough Sounds are a stunning area and we could spend days exploring them. However, one of the best ways to see them is from the air, so in the afternoon we will take a 45 minute scenic flight over the sounds. O/N at Aldan Lodge Motel



*Marlborough Sounds*

**8<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Drive to Marahau in the Abel Tasman National Park via Nelson. After an hour or so in Nelson, we will conclude our journey to Marahau. In the late afternoon we will visit Split Apple Rock Bay, named after a split rock sitting on a reef in the bay. Here we will be able to relax on the golden sand and swim in the warm waters. O/N Eden's Edge Lodge, Abel Tasman



**9<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

A Day of sea kayaking. After a period of instruction, we will be able to explore in double kayaks. The coast of the Abel Tasman National Park is indented with some stunning bays with golden beaches. Just off shore are islands, inhabited by seals, and the area is a marine reserve. A leisurely active day [and for those who do not wish to kayak, they can take either a half-day or full-day boat trip that can explore even further afield.](#) O/N Eden's edge Lodge, Abel Tasman



*One of the many beaches you can call at*

**10<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

In the morning we leave Abel Tasman and drive to Kaikoura (336km – 4½hrs) on the east coast. The route takes us along the Wairau Valley, renowned for its good wine. It may be a good idea to break the journey at one of the wineries where we can pick up some lunch and do some tasting.

Kaikoura was severely damaged by the 2017 earthquake but its whale watching trips have ensured that it has recovered quickly from the economic shock. There is not a lot to Kaikoura but, having checked into our accommodation, we will be able to explore the waterfront and headland, often frequented by some very tame seals.

O/N White Morph Suites, Kaikoura

**11<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

In the morning, we will embark on a trip where we are virtually guaranteed to see sperm whales, that feed on the abundant supply of food produced by the unique geological conditions. We will almost certainly also see dolphins.



Afterwards, we will drive south (180km - 2½hours), eventually reaching Christchurch, victim of the 2011 earthquake. We will spend two or three hours visiting the sights of Christchurch before moving on to Akaroa (Banks Peninsula) (80km - 1¼hours). Akaroa is an ancient volcano, the crater of which has been



flooded by the sea. It is stunningly beautiful, surrounded by the old crater walls. The steep, outer walls slope down to the sea. Akaroa has a very French feel to it with many art and craft shops as well as some excellent restaurants.

We will check into our accommodation, Akaroa Waterfront Motel

**12<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

The sheltered waters of Akaroa are home to the world's smallest species of dolphin, Hector's Dolphin. We will take a boat trip out into the flooded crater and sail towards the opening to the open sea. We should encounter some of these beautiful marine mammals, but then the encounter becomes even more special, because we will have been supplied with wetsuits so that we can enter the water and swim with them.

In the other half of the day we can explore more of the area, perhaps visiting one of the beaches on the outer edge of the peninsula. O/N Akaroa



*Akaroa*

**13<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Giving ourselves a break from the sea, we travel inland to Lake Tekapo where we will visit the Chapel of the Good Shepherd with incredible views beyond the altar. The turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo are surrounded by mountains and beyond the far end we are looking across to the Mt Cook Range.



The Chapel of the Good Shepherd is still a working chapel and has become one of the top places in New Zealand to get married, simply because of the uninterrupted view through the window behind the altar.

The Lake Tekapo area is a night sky reserve, so, in the evening we will go on a Mt. John Observatory Tour. Here you will be able to gaze up at the night sky without any light pollution, and be told what you can see. Then, we will have access to a



**14<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

number of powerful telescopes, which will allow us to look deeper into space, and take pictures of what we can see. O/N The Chalet Boutique Motel, Tekapo  
After a leisurely breakfast, we will drive to Lake Pukaki. This is just a short drive of less than an hour, unless we find the need to stop because of the amazing views. However, we can drive further up the shore of the lake, and beyond, to Mount Cook village, situated a short distance from the Tasman Glacier. In clear conditions, we should be able to see amazing views of Mt. Cook. If those views are amazing, we might want to get a bit closer by taking a scenic flight up to it. O/N at The Lakes Motel, Twizel.



*Tasman Glacier and Mt. Cook*

**15<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Drive to Wanaka (144km - 1¾hours) on the shores of the lake by the same name. On the way we will take a short detour to visit the Omarama clay cliffs. These are amazing features, much more than you would expect from the description. These otherworldly formations are made up of layers of gravel and silt, originally formed by the flow from ancient glaciers over a million years ago.



On arrival in Wamaka we will use the rest of the day to explore the area. O/N at Brookvale Motel, Wanaka

**16<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Wanaka is in a most stunning location and we are spoilt for what to do. Rest assured, we will find a stunning location for a walk. Possibly the Rob Roy Track, which leads up to the Rob Roy Glacier. This is a relatively easy, 10km walk that takes you into some stunning scenery, including the high peaks of the Mt. Aspiring National Park. [For anybody not wanting to walk there are a number of other options available, from cruising on the lake, vineyard visits with wine tasting, to Puzzling World.](#) O/N at Brookvale Motel, Wanaka

**17<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Drive to Queenstown. (67km – 1hr 10mins) This is a short journey and we should be in Queenstown by mid morning. Queenstown is the adventure capital of New Zealand and it has a huge variety of activities available from a sedate cruise on



18<sup>th</sup> Feb.

Lake Wakatipu to jet boating and bungy jumping. The day will be yours to choose the level of activity you would like. O/N Lakeside YHA

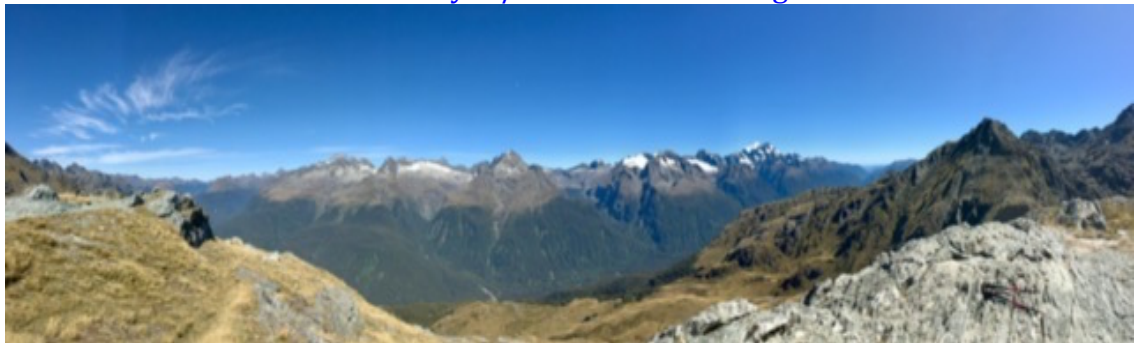
**For the next three days we have a choice of activity. For those who would like to do one of the great walks of New Zealand, we can embark upon the three-day trek of the Routeburn Track. For these three days we will need to carry everything we need, including food, as there are no provisions en route. For the two nights we will be sleeping in communal huts with bunks. The alternative activity involves a little more driving, but includes an overnight on board a boat in Doubtful Sound.**



Trek Group - Drive down to the Routeburn Shelter (71km – 1hr 10mins) There we will be dropped off for the trek. This first day we are largely walking through beech forest with a carpet of lush moss covering the forest floor. We are never far from the rushing water of the Routeburn. After about a couple of hours, we will pass the Routeburn Flats hut. From here the path

is a little steeper as it climbs for a further hour up to the Routeburn Falls Hut, where we will be staying overnight. Despite spending most of our walking time in the forest, there is plenty to attract our attention and delay our progress. The forest population of Black Robins is thriving and this extremely tame bird is likely to jump on to your boot, mistaking your laces for worms.

[For those not trekking, the minibus will return to Queenstown to pick you up, giving you a little more time to explore this vibrant town. Having collected you, you will then drive to Te Anau \(172km – 2hours\). You can then enjoy this lakeside town for the remainder of the day. O/N at Lakefront Lodge](#)



19<sup>th</sup> Feb.

Trek from Routeburn Falls to Lake Mackenzie Hut. Out of the forest, you are now on the open hillside, a mixture of grassland, alpine plants and rocky outcrops. This is the home of the Kea, a very mischievous parrot like bird. Hopefully, they will entertain us along the way. Gaining height, Lake Harris comes into view, dark and brooding, surrounded by rocky peaks. Above the lake is Harris Saddle, the high point of the trek and the boundary between Mt. Aspiring National Park and Fiordland National Park. Here there are huts for you to shelter in, if needed, but more importantly for you to leave your rucksack in while you take the detour up Conical Hill, that rises steeply behind the huts. Don't be put off by steeply; the views from the summit are outstanding and well worth the effort. Having descended and picked up your sack, there is a long traverse around the hill before beginning the descent to Lake Mackenzie and the hut. If you arrive in good time, it is a great place to relax in the sun on the lakeshore, and, perhaps, have a refreshing swim.

[In late morning, a coach will pick you up and take you to Doubtful Sound for your overnight cruise. Accommodation on board is in double or twin, en-suite cabins. At 421 metres deep, Doubtful is the deepest of the fiords and is long and winding](#)

with three distinct 'arms' and several outstanding waterfalls. Sometimes called 'the Sound of Silence', there is a cloistered serenity within Doubtful Sound that contrasts with Milford Sound. The fiord is rich in flora and fauna, New Zealand Fur Seals and Fiordland Crested Penguins can be seen on many of the small islets at the entrance of the fiord. Once underway, the cruise will take you the full length of the fiord to the Tasman Sea. It will be an opportunity to relax and enjoy this stunning location. If you are feeling at all active, you may want to take a kayak on to the water (your cruise boat carries them) or try your hand at a spot of fishing. Whatever you choose, you will have a fantastic time and the food is sumptuous.

**20<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

Conclude the trek but en route take the detour to climb Key Summit for more memorable views. There is no huge rush today, so we can enjoy the vistas from the Orchard, the 174m Earland Falls, particularly spectacular in wetter conditions. We will also have time to take a break at the Howden Hut Lake if the weather permits. We will need to aim to get to the Divide by about 2.30 in order to link up with the doubtful Sound group who will join us with the minibus.

Having come ashore, the Doubtful Sound group will be taken by bus to Te Anau, where they will be able to pick up our minibus and drive down to the Routeburn Divide where the two groups will be re-united.

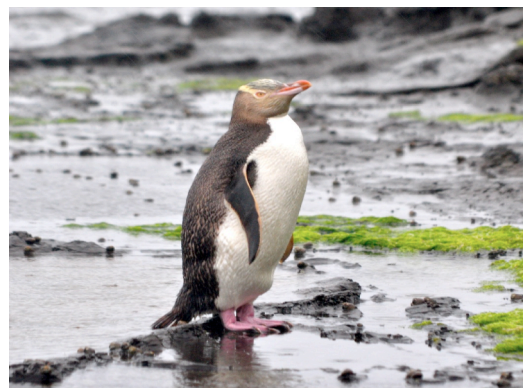


*Milford Sound*

We will all then drive to Milford Sound for the 4.30 cruise. This lasts a couple of hours and, like the Doubtful Sound cruise, takes us to the Tasman Sea. Milford Sound has numerous spectacular waterfalls, the more so in wetter conditions. Afterwards we will drive back to Te Anau for the night at Lakefront Lodge.

**21<sup>st</sup> Feb.**

Drive to Invercargill (158km – 2hrs), the southern most city in New Zealand, and then begin our journey along the Catlin coast. This coast has a number of fascinating features from petrified forests, Nugget Point, Cathedral Caves, Yellow eyed penguin colonies and sea lions. Along this coast solitary males





hang out, lounging on the beaches. Inland there are tropical forests, waterfalls and much more. O/N Hilltop Accommodation Catlins, 77 Tahakopa Valley Rd, Papatowai 9586, New Zealand

- 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb.** Drive from Papatawai to the Otago Peninsula (150km – 2hrs). The journey will take much longer as we will have many temptations to stop along the way for scenic views and wildlife encounters. The Otago Peninsula, despite its proximity to Dunedin, is alive with marine wildlife and home to the world's only mainland Royal Albatross colony. We will visit the colony, marvel at the flight patterns of these majestic birds and get close to adults sitting on their nests. We will also make an evening visit to watch the Blue Penguins return after a day's fishing. Overnight at Portobello Motel



*Allen's Bay*

- 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb.** Otago Peninsula – There is so much here to see and enjoy. There are so many different bird species. We have already seen the albatross, but there are spoonbills, kittiwake, oystercatchers and many more. We will spend the morning at Allen's Bay, a beach frequented by female sea lions and their pups. It is a beautiful beach with pups sheltering and sleeping in the dunes while their mother's fish. It is a true delight to watch them return and shuffle their way up the beach. Another beach, Sandfly Beach, is home to a colony of Yellow Eyed Penguins. There is nothing more pleasurable than to relax on a beach watching the penguins go about their daily routine. O/N Portobello Motel
- 24<sup>th</sup> Feb.** Our final day. We will spend a little time in Dunedin before taking a flight from Dunedin to Auckland in order to connect with our international flights home.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Feb.** Arrive UK



*Lake Harris on the Routeburn Track*





*Nugget Point, Catlins*



*Kea*



*Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown*

### **Accommodation**

This itinerary provides hotel and motel accommodation with the occasional YHA, or, in the case of the Routeburn trek, bunkhouse accommodation. In each case, where couples are concerned, I will provide double accommodation and facilities. Twin options are available for single travellers unless they specifically request to have single accommodation. There may have to be a single supplement, but I will try to keep this to a minimum.

### **Transport**

We will have a 12-seat minibus with a luggage compartment at the back for the duration of the trip. As the group size is limited to a maximum of 8, we will have plenty of space to spread out. At the moment, I am the only designated driver. If we split the group at any point in the itinerary, we may need to consider adding a second driver to the insurance. I would not want to rely too heavily on that second driver as it is their holiday and they do not necessarily want the responsibility.

### **Activities**

All activities in the itinerary are booked in advance. If there is an activity that you do not wish to participate in, you need to let me know at the time of registering for this trip. Financial adjustments can be made to compensate for none participation.



**What does it cost?**

**£4000**

**This includes:**

All internal travel arrangements.

Vehicle hire and fuel,

Flight from Dunedin to Auckland.

All accommodation *(Please note that wherever possible the accommodation mentioned in the itinerary will be the one that is booked. If, for some reason, I am not able to book that particular accommodation, similar, or better accommodation will be sought.)*

All activities

An 80litre and a 65litre Adventure Guide kit bag

**It does not include:**

International airfares (At the time of writing the best deal was Singapore Airlines from Heathrow - £719)

Any meals, unless included as part of the accommodation

Any activities undertaken that are not on the itinerary

Insurance

Personal expenditure

**Timetable to departure**

**June 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 - Registrations submitted with a £1000 deposit so the booking process can begin.**

**September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 – Second instalment of £2000**

**December 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 Final instalment of £1000**

Following the final payment I will provide a kit list and I will also send out a Pre-Trek questionnaire for you to complete and return.