

In **2026/2027**, this tour is run with a slightly revised route. The change affects the order of travel only, while all highlights, walking locations, and included services remain the same.

NNQ – Queen Charlotte, Nydia Track, Nelson Lakes

8-Day Guided Hiking Tour, South Island, New Zealand

This tour combines hiking in some of our favourite regions in the South Island. We begin on one of Aotearoa's best-known walkways, the Queen Charlotte Track, before continuing into the remote Marlborough Sounds for two nights in a unique nature retreat. We finish inland with a day walk in Nelson Lakes National Park, surrounded by mountain scenery.

Day 1: Christchurch – Picton

Pick up in Christchurch between 10:00 and 10:30 am. Today is a travel day as we make our way north to Picton, our base for the first part of the tour. We stop in Kaikoura to stretch our legs on the Kaikoura Peninsula Walkway before continuing north. We arrive in Picton in the afternoon. In the evening, we introduce ourselves and talk about the journey ahead.

Driving: approx. 340 km, about 5 hours.

Meals: D

Day 2: Queen Charlotte Track – Anakiwa to Mistletoe Bay

A short drive takes us to Anakiwa where we begin our first hike on the Queen Charlotte Track. The track starts gently through mature beech forest before climbing onto an old bridle path above the water. The walking is well formed and unhurried, allowing time to settle into the rhythm of the track. We are picked up by water taxi at Mistletoe Bay and transferred back to Anakiwa before returning to Picton.

Driving: approx. 25 km, about 45 minutes.

Hiking: approx. 13 km, 4 hours.

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 3: Queen Charlotte Track – Ship Cove to Furneaux Lodge

We travel by water taxi to Ship Cove and take time to explore this historic site before setting off. The track climbs steadily through largely unmodified forest to a saddle with views over both the inner and outer Queen Charlotte Sound, before descending through bush into Endeavour Inlet. There might be some time to relax and enjoy being at Furneaux Lodge before our water taxi returns us to Picton.

Hiking: approx. 17 km, 5 hours.

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 4: Picton – Havelock – Nydia Bay (Tramline Walk)

We drive to Havelock and take a water taxi into Pelorus Sound and across to Nydia Bay. We spend two nights at a unique On-the-Track Lodge, staying in yurts or twin-room chalets. A short 15-minute walk leads from the jetty to the lodge.

In the afternoon, we enjoy the Tramline Walk, climbing gently from sea level into lush punga forest, following old tramline routes once used for timber milling. There is time to unwind at the lodge, with kayaks available for a gentle paddle.

Driving: approx. 60 km, 50 minutes to 1 hour.

Hiking: approx. 3 km, 1.5 hours.

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 5: Nydia Track – Hiking Day to Nydia Saddle

Today we head south on the Nydia Track, climbing steadily through regenerating native bush and untouched forest. We cross streams on bridges and may see giant freshwater eels resting in clear pools below. Damp sections underfoot are common.

After reaching Nydia Saddle, we return to the lodge for a relaxed afternoon and another shared dinner.

Hiking: approx. 13 km, 5–6 hours.

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 6: Nydia Track – Kaiuma Saddle – St Arnaud

We hike north on the Nydia Track, beginning with farmland sections before climbing through beech forest. Today includes several stream crossings and muddy sections, adding to the backcountry feel of the walk.

From Kaiuma Bay we are transferred back to Havelock and continue by road to St Arnaud in the Nelson Lakes region.

Driving: approx. 125 km, 1 hour 45 minutes to 2 hours.

Hiking: approx. 12 km, 5 hours.

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 7: Nelson Lakes National Park – Mount Robert Circuit

Our final hiking day takes place in Nelson Lakes National Park on the Mount Robert Circuit. The track climbs steadily through beech forest before opening into alpine terrain, offering views over Lake Rotoiti and the surrounding mountain ranges. We descend via Paddy's Track, enjoying changing perspectives across the range.

Hiking: approx. 9 km, 4–5 hours.

Meals: B, L, D, S

Day 8: St Arnaud – Christchurch

We return to Christchurch via Lewis Pass, one of the South Island's most scenic inland routes, with time for comfort stops along the way. Arrival is expected between 4:00 and 5:00 pm.

Driving: approx. 350 km, about 5 hours.

Meals: B

B-Breakfast L-Lunch D-Dinner S-Snack

Tour Grading

 Nelson Lakes, Nydia Track & Queen Charlotte Track – Grade 3 (Moderate)

This tour is graded as **Moderate** – but don't let that worry you!

The **tracks are all well-formed** and easy to follow, with just the occasional muddy or uneven section. It's the **length of the walks (around 4–5 hours per day)** and a few **gentle climbs** that put it into this category.

 Queen Charlotte Track: ~200m on Day 1, ~400m on Day 2

 Nydia Track: ~350m elevation gain each day

 Mt Robert Circuit: ~550m elevation

 Our recommendation:

Perfect if you're in **good health, enjoy walking, and are used to being on your feet a bit longer**. You don't need hiking experience – just a **reasonable level of fitness** and a **love for the outdoors**. We'd love to say it's easy – and for many it is! – but we prefer to be honest so you can feel confident and well-prepared.

You can find more about how we grade our tours here:

→ [Our Hiking Track Grading System explained](#)