



PRESS RELEASE



NEW ZEALAND ON TWO FEET

New ways to walk in 2014 as
Tourism New Zealand
unveils latest 'tramping
experiences'



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New Zealand has thousands of kilometres of walks to suit every level with one of the world's longest inter-connecting trails in the form of Te Araroa – The Long Pathway running 3,000km the length of both islands. The nine iconic multi-day 'Great Walks' including the Milford Track, which celebrated its 100 year anniversary in 2013 and Stewart Island's lesser known Rakiura Track allow walkers to see some of New Zealand's most awe inspiring scenery, whilst famous day walks such as the Tongariro Alpine Crossing offer the chance for visitors to immerse themselves in the wilderness.

For those seeking the latest way to explore New Zealand on two feet, Tourism New Zealand has rounded up some of the best new walking trails and packages for 2014.

Rotorua opens new Tarawera Trail to Hot Water Beach

Rotorua's newly opened Tarawera Trail is predicted to become one of the best walks in New Zealand. The 15km trail is the first of a proposed network involving the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Maori private landowners to connect the 14 Te Arawa lakes in the area. The one day walk (expected to take around five hours) leads to the popular Hot Water Beach of Te Rata Bay, making the geo-thermal beach on the edge of Lake Tarawera accessible for walkers and hikers for the first time. Highlights of the trail include waterfalls, native New Zealand forest, wildlife and free flowing streams, as walkers make their way through Katukutuku Bay, Hawaiki Bay and Te Hinau Bay. The lookout point at Rotomahana allows visitors to take in the beauty of the geothermal area, before descending into Te Rata Bay where boiling natural waters trickle down a small stream and into the lake and man-made rock pools, which allow visitors to bathe. Finish the trip with a water taxi back to

the Tarawera Landing or camp at Te Rata Bay near the Waimangu Volcanic Valley. The area is of special significance to the Tuhotangi, Ngati Rangitihi and Ngati Ninemihi Maori tribes and was dramatically changed by the devastating 1886 volcanic eruption of Mount Tarawera, which buried the Maori Village of Te Wairoa. www.doc.govt.nz

‘A Journey through Sacred Islands’ - New multi-day walk on Auckland’s islands

Launched in January 2014, the Haerenga (A Journey through Sacred Islands) multi-day walking trail now offers the chance to explore Auckland's largest and most diverse island sanctuaries of Rangitoto and Motutapu in the Hauraki Gulf –over a three-day adventure. Day one of the Haerenga will take in the summit of Rangitoto and explore the 600-year old volcanic landscapes. Day two will explore the completely contrasting cultural significance and ancient landscapes of Motutapu, the sacred island. Day three will be an opportunity to learn about the restoration of Motutapu, stroll through regenerating forest and support conservation work. The islands are home to many rare species (including Kiwis) and whilst just a short boat ride from Auckland, offer a unique wilderness experience. Walkers can opt to kayak back towards the city lights for an alternative end to their trip. www.doc.govt.nz

Exclusive high country hiking tours launched in Queenstown

One of New Zealand’s most famous and historic backcountry farms - Mt Nicholas High Country Station (Mt Nic) near Queenstown on the shores of Lake Wakitipu - is now open for visitors with the launch of a series of exclusive tours by operator Southern Discoveries, including new hiking experiences. The half-day high country walk explores the station including the landmarks of Lovers Leap, the spectacular Von River mouth, native forest and the original homestead site. Guests follow the lake- shore to the old bake house and walk up into the foothills of Mt Nicholas Station where they’re rewarded with spectacular uninterrupted views of the lake and surrounding mountains. The fully guided six-kilometre/two hour walk enables guests to soak up the peace and tranquillity of New Zealand’s remote backcountry. Mt Nic station is only accessible by water with new tours available on the Spirit of Queenstown catamaran. www.southerndiscoveries.co.nz

Heliworks and Alpine Adventures launch new heli-hike tour to ‘Middle Earth’

Leading Queenstown helicopter company Heliworks and luxury private guiding company, Alpine Adventures have launched an exclusive Middle Earth Waterfalls heli-hike soft adventure. The only operators permitted access to the Earnslaw Burn area, the hike offers access to one of the most dramatic locations featured in “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.” Local expert guide Mark Dewsbery meets clients at their accommodation in the morning and escorts them by private vehicle to the

Heliworks hangar at Queenstown airport to embark on the outback adventure. The flight takes them across Lake Wakatipu to the start of the bushline where the 5km hike through rolling high-country farm and golden tussock fields begins. The trip winds its way to the lake at the bottom of a steep valley where a hanging glacier on Mt Earnslaw, known as Earnslaw Burn, looms overhead. The melting glacier sends lines of cascading waterfalls tumbling down a formidable wall of rock all the way down to the valley floor. The three- four hour guided walk includes a gourmet picnic lunch and ample time to explore at the bottom of the falls. On the return trip passengers are treated to a dramatic finale as the helicopter ascends steeply along the waterfalls to come face to face with the hanging glacier more than 1000m above before returning over the Richardson Mountains and through Moonlight Saddle back to Queenstown. www.alpineadventures.co.nz

And for those for whom walking is not enough...

Inaugural Asics Aoraki Mt Cook Marathon - 13th April, 2014

New for 2014, the event offers runners the chance to tackle a variety of distances in one of the world's most beautiful national parks – the World Heritage site of Aoraki Mt Cook. Runners will compete under the gaze of New Zealand's highest peak Mount Cook in the world's first gold rated international dark sky reserve, with the course hugging the turquoise blue Lake Pukaki. www.activeqt.co.nz

Queenstown to host first 'bucket list' marathon - 22 November 2014

One of New Zealand's most picturesque regions is set to play host to one of the most spectacular marathons the world has ever seen when the inaugural Queenstown International Marathon takes place on 22 November 2014. Full, half, 10km and 3km events will form the 'Festival of running', all set against the backdrop of the world-renowned Crown and Remarkable mountain ranges. Runners will take in a route that covers the Queenstown lakes, historic gold mining area of Arrowtown and the Arrow River track as well as Lake Hayes, the fast-flowing 75 kilometre-long Shotover River and Lake Wakatipu, the longest lake in New Zealand, before ending in the buzzing resort of Queenstown.

www.queenstown-marathon.co.nz

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

For more information on New Zealand walks and hikes visit www.newzealand.com

For more information on New Zealand's nine 'Great Walks' visit

www.greatwalks.co.nz

UK Tour Operators offering hiking holiday packages include:

- Discover the World www.discover-the-world.co.uk
- Austravel www.austravel.com
- Ramblers Worldwide Holidays www.ramblersholidays.co.uk
- Travelbag www.travelbag.co.uk
- New Zealand In Depth
<http://www.newzealand-indepth.co.uk/>
- HF Holidays <http://www.hfholidays.co.uk>

New Zealand specialist hiking operators include:

- Ultimate Hikes www.ultimatehikes.co.nz
- New Zealand Trails www.newzealandtrails.com