

Routeburn Track Itinerary



3 Days
2 Nights



32 km
20.1 miles



Difficulty
Intermediate

Our walks include

- ✓ Transport to and from the Track, pick up available in Te Anau - but drop off only to Queenstown.
- ✓ Accommodation on track for two nights in private rooms for two people with ensuite bathroom or multishare room sleeping up to 4 people with shared bathroom facilities.
- ✓ All food while on track + lunch on day one.
- ✓ Fully catered and staffed private lodges, with bars to purchase wine, beer and softdrinks.
- ✓ The company and safety of our experienced and well trained guides
- ✓ Full support of Queenstown based operations team with expert knowledge in safety to provide a fully immersive hiking experience.

You will bring

- ✓ Appropriate clothing and personal items.
- ✓ A reasonable level of fitness and strength
- ✓ A love of nature and a sense of adventure.

The Routeburn Track is a fully immersive guided walk across two National Parks. Your adventure starts in Queenstown, travelling by bus to Te Anau for a short stop and on down the picturesque Milford Road to the start of the track at the Divide.

The Track traverses dense Beech Forest and winds up and across alpine terrain before descending to the Routeburn Valley. The walk is three days hiking, staying in private, purpose built accommodation along the track.

The track crosses from Fiordland National Park to Mt Aspiring. Take a dip in the alpine lakes and, weather permitting enjoy the views on two very different side walks along the way.

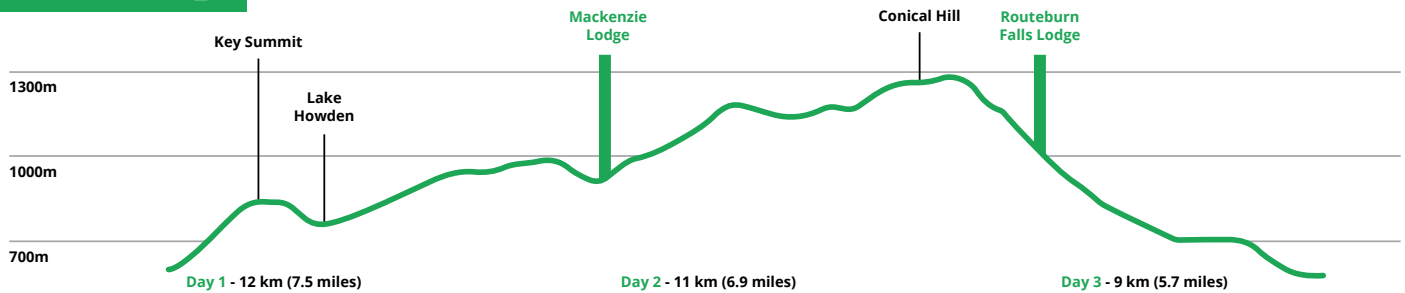
The walk requires good physical fitness and the capability to hike for up to 12km across uneven and often steep track, carrying around 7kgs in your backpack .

The following pages cover the daily itinerary of the guided walk starting on the day of departure. The walk departs from our Queenstown base and returns at about 4pm on the final day.

For booking and preparation information please visit our website.

www.ultimatehikes.co.nz.

Itinerary



Day 1 | 12km (7.5 miles) Queenstown to Mackenzie Lodge

TRACK TERRAIN: The track starts with a steady uphill followed by a downhill section to the lunch stop. In the afternoon the track continues a gradual climb to Earland Falls. There are large rocks to navigate around Earland Falls, and a steep and rocky downhill section before reaching the lodge. Care should be taken.

The group meets at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown at **6.15am** ready for departure. Your pack will be put under the bus and not available until you reach the Divide at the start of the track, so it's a good idea to keep your water bottle, a warm layer, your phone/camera, and some money to carry with you on the bus.

The bus will travel to Te Anau where morning tea is provided including tea and coffee, before travelling on to the start of the walk at the Divide. The drive to Te Anau is approximately two hours, with the stop of half an hour and the onward drive along the picturesque Milford Road to the Divide is approximately one hour.

At the Divide, 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 and can check your pack and pole fittings before you start walking. The front guide will then start the group off up the track. The rest of the guides 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 begins with a steady climb up through Silver Beech Forest so take your time to find your rhythm. After about an hour you will reach the turn off to Key Summit. A guide will be there and

depending on the weather conditions, will advise you to either go up to the summit or continue to Lake Howden.

Key Summit is an optional return walk (leave your pack at the turnoff) of about one hour up a zigzag track and back the same way. It is well worth the trip - at the top there is a boardwalk through wetlands and amazing 360-degree views of the surrounding mountains and valleys.

Back at the turn off, collect your pack, and it's a short though steep downhill walk over rocks and tree roots to Lake Howden where you will stop at the shelter for lunch and a hot drink.

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 2 | 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 follows 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 entrance 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 3 | 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.

The bus route into Queenstown comes from the opposite direction to the way you went out so we are unable to do any drop offs in Frankton or the airport.

