



Cooking on the Milford and Routeburn Tracks

Thank you for your interest in working for Ultimate Hikes.

Annually we recruit around 150 staff for our summer hiking season. Most of them are based on the Milford, Routeburn or Greenstone Tracks.

Ultimate Hikes are guardians of the environment we operate in. We are leaders in the safety and education of visitors to the region and we are responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of the people who live and work there on our behalf.

We take this commitment very seriously and pledge that everything we do will be in keeping with our own Tiaki Promise - caring for people and place.

The team in each lodge includes:

- Lodge Manager
- Relieve Lodge Manager/Lodge attendant
- Lodge Attendants
- Lodge Chefs and Cooks

Chef/Cook Duties

Lodge Chefs/Cooks are responsible for food preparation at the lodge for walkers and staff. Trained chefs are not necessarily required, but successful applicants will need to be able to consistently produce good quality meals according to the set menu whilst displaying the highest standards of food hygiene. Most importantly, you must love making good food!

Whether you are a professional chef or a great cook – there is opportunity to show leadership and mentoring and/or to learn new skills in a commercial kitchen.

There are two Cooks at each of our lodges on the Milford and Routeburn Tracks. They provide our walkers with the following meals:

Breakfast continental and a cooked breakfast, generally buffet style.

Lunch walkers make their own lunch in the morning with salad and sandwich ingredients prepped by the cooks. Some baking is also required to add to lunch options and for afternoon tea.

Afternoon tea home baking such as scones, muffins etc – for walker arrival to the lodge.

Pre-dinner nibbles usually a cheese platter set out on the bar prior to dinner.

Dinner Three courses - a starter, main and dessert. There are three choices of main, a red meat, fish/chicken, and a vegetarian dish.

Dinner orders are provided the night before including any special dietary requirements.

Walker menus are set and remain the same for the whole season.

Supplies are ordered once a week. Having a stable menu allows you to quickly learn what to order. Each week a lodge would have around five tons of supplies delivered, including food, diesel, and gas. All waste, including sewage is flown out from the lodges.

Our lodges are isolated, so resupply of lodges is limited outside of set supply days.

Staff meals

You will also be providing staff with their meals. These are where you can be a little more creative.

Breakfast and lunch are help yourself meals, and dinner is usually served prior to the walker dinner.

Guides also have breakfast and dinner in the kitchen, so there will be around twelve staff for meals on the Milford Track and around nine on the Routeburn Track.

Kitchens

Our kitchens are commercial kitchens with ovens, gas hobs, dishwashers etc. We have walk-in freezers and chillers as well as smaller freezers and refrigerators in the kitchens for day use. All appliances are on generated power which operates from between 6.00 - 7.30am until 10.00pm daily.

Food Safety

As with any commercial kitchen, the Cooks operate under a food safety programme and are responsible for ensuring that accurate records are kept.

Who will I be working with in the kitchen?

While there are two cooks at each lodge they are not always on duty together. Lodge Attendants will help with breakfast duty and some of the prep. At service, lodge staff will be assisting you to plate, and guides will serve.

On the Routeburn Track, if both cooks are in the lodge one of them will assist with general housekeeping or hosting duties.

Hours

Staff are paid a daily rate and the number of hours worked in a day may vary, but on average you'll be working around 8 - 9 hours.

Uniforms

We provide you with a uniform. We have staff laundry facilities. Some of our Cooks prefer to use their own chef clothing.

Knives

Most of our Cooks prefer to use their own knives. If you do not have knives, we have them available, they just may not be to the same standard as you would have if using your own.

Accommodation on track

Lodge based staff pay a nominal charge for food and lodging on track. This amount is charged on a weekly basis excluding weeks off track.

All staff have their own room and share bathroom facilities within the staff quarters. We can (within reason) transport most personal items to lodges.

Accommodation on leave is not provided.

Days off

On the Milford Track, you will be living at the lodge for around 4-5 weeks at a time, with regular days off. This is when you can explore your surroundings - there are great locations near each lodge to relax in nature and most provide a refreshing swimming spot!

You will also be rostered for a week off track every month or so.

On the Routeburn Track you will be living at the Lodge for two weeks with one week off.

Rosters are set at the start of the season. Requests to change may be considered but consent is not guaranteed.

Where will I be working and how will I get there?

The lodge you will be assigned to is based on getting the best possible team on each track. We will however take any preference that you may have into account.

You will generally be at the same lodge all season. Most lodges are remote, and you may need to walk in and out on your weeks off.

Communication while on track (phones and internet)

Personal communication is limited while you are on track. There is no cellphone reception. The internet is via satellite and available on lodge computers only. You can send and receive emails, and check your Facebook page etc, but you can't download large files or use video based apps like facetime. Mail and packages can be sent to the UH office for delivery to you on track.