

Greenstone + Routeburn Tracks Grand Traverse Itinerary



6 Days
5 Nights



66 km
41 miles



Difficulty
Intermediate

Our walks include

- ✓ Transport to and from the Track ex Queenstown.
- ✓ Accommodation on track for five nights. One night is dormitory style, nights two - four are multishare rooms sleeping up to four people with shared bathroom facilities. Private rooms for two people with ensuite bathroom are available on the Routeburn section only (2 nights).
- ✓ All food while on track.
- ✓ 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 Greenstone and Routeburn Tracks combine a fully immersive guided walk from Lake Wakatipu to the Routeburn Valley. Your adventure starts in Queenstown, travelling by bus through Glenorchy around the side of Lake Wakatipu to the start of the Greenstone Track and your first full day of hiking.

The Track traverses through Beech Forest and crosses tussock valley's. Rest a day at Lake McKellar before joining the Routeburn Track. The walk is five days hiking, staying in private, purpose built accommodation along the track.

Your first three nights are in shared rooms, enjoying a more rustic lodge experience with a lodge host and guides providing great hospitality. Full staff lodges are on the Routeburn section with private rooms available.

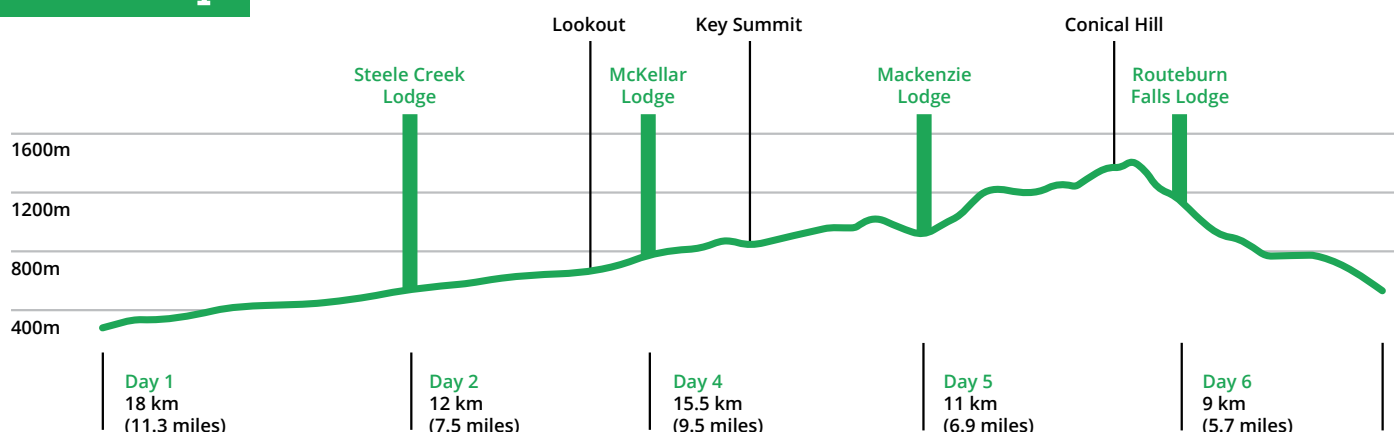
The walk requires good physical fitness and the capability to hike for up to 18km carrying around 7kgs, across uneven and often steep track.

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 | 18km (11.3 miles) Queenstown to Steele Creek Lodge

TRACK TERRAIN: The track gradually climbs throughout the day with both uphill and downhill sections. There are tree roots and some small rocky sections, as well as grasslands which may be muddy if wet.

The group meets at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown at 7.30am ready for departure. Your pack will be put under the bus and not available until you reach the start of the track, so it's a good idea to keep your water bottle, a warm layer, and your phone/camera to carry with you on the bus.

The bus will travel approximately one hour to Glenorchy where you will stop for a short toilet break, and have a chance to meet the people in your group. The bus will continue around Lake Wakatipu for another hour to the start of the walk at the Greenstone carpark.

At the carpark, 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 before you start walking and can check your pack and pole fittings. The front guide will then start the group off up the track. A guide 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 gradually climbs through the Beech forest so take your time. You will then drop down along the Caples River and cross a bridge bringing you to the end of the Caples Valley. From here the track picks up the Greenstone River and follows it

through the Beech forest. After about an hour and a half, you will stop for a morning break by the river.

From the break stop, you'll walk another hour and a half or so before emerging from the trees into rolling grassland. The lunch shelter is tucked in the treeline, where there is a toilet and hot drinks will be provided.

After lunch, you will cross a small stream where you can expect the water to be ankle to shin deep. Please follow the instructions of your guides when crossing - they will show you the safest way. On the other side, the track heads back into the trees and continues to gradually climb, with some ups and downs, crossing more tree roots sections as well as short rock fall areas that were created during a big flood in Fiordland in 2020.

In the afternoon, stop for a break at the track junction which marks about 12kms of the walk done. Take a short 5 minute side trip to a bridge overlooking a river gorge. The track continues on for another 30 minutes in the Beech forest before once again coming out to the Greenstone Valley. Mud and water may be present through the grassland track and a headwind is common on this section, so keep your windproof layer handy. Upon reaching a signpost directing you to Steele Creek Lodge, follow the top of the river terrace until you reach the lodge at the edge of the bush line.

On arrival at the lodge, you will be shown to your room by the lodge host, who will give you the evening's timing. Snacks and hot drinks will be available in the lounge and the bar will open later in the afternoon followed by dinner and a briefing about the day ahead.

Please note, Steele Creek Lodge is run mainly on solar power, so there is no drying room or the ability to charge devices. Accommodation is in dormitory style rooms and the lodge is more rustic than our other lodges.

Itinerary

Day 2 | 12km (7.5 miles)

Steele Creek Lodge to Lake McKellar Lodge

TRACK TERRAIN: The track continues to climb up and down through the Greenstone Valley to Lake McKellar Lodge. Track conditions vary throughout the day with the track crossing between open grasslands, and Beech forest. You'll encounter large tree roots and historic rock fall crossings. Depending on weather conditions, the open grasslands can range from dry grass to muddy puddles and swampy bog.

Your morning will start around 7:30am. Tea and coffee will be available. The hot water runs on gas so is available on waking. Provisions will be available for you to make your packed lunch for the day. A continental and cooked breakfast will follow. After breakfast, you will get yourself re-packed and meet your guides in the lounge ready to depart.

The walk starts back in the trees, crossing a one person bridge over Steele Creek. From here you will walk along the valley floor crossing moraines of the glacier responsible for carving out the valley. This section can be wet and muddy so take care. Make sure you follow the orange markers and stay on the track. Throughout the walk keep an eye out for the elusive Takahe, one of New Zealand's endangered native flightless birds. Breeding pairs were released into the valley in 2023 and are reportedly thriving.

About 4km after leaving Steele Creek, you'll cross another rock fall section and enter back into the trees. This is the morning break point and a good opportunity to adjust your layers, have some water and a snack and enjoy a rest.

The next section of the walk until lunch continues on through the trees crossing side stream beds, and rock fall sections. A short 20m climb marks the location of the lunch hut. It is hidden from view so your guides will instruct or show you how to find it. Hot drinks will be served at lunch and there is a toilet here.

The rest of the day continues in and out of the trees until you reach Lake McKellar Lodge. Continue to follow the orange track markers marking the route. There are stream beds to cross which are usually dry but can be wet if there has been rain. Stunning views can be seen up and down the valley. The afternoon break point is the last view of the

Greenstone, where you can rest and enjoy the view back down the valley towards Steele Creek. From here it is about another hour and a half to the lodge.

Just before you reach the lodge, you will see the neighbouring Department of Conservation hut. Turn right after crossing a small bridge, and follow the river up into the next clearing where you will find the lodge. Check in with your lodge host who will show you to your room and give you the rundown on the lodge and the evening's timings.

At Lake McKellar Lodge, the hot water also runs on gas so showers are available at any time, and there is a small generator that provides power for lights, heaters, the coffee machine and a drying room. The generator only runs in the evening and the mornings, however battery power operates night lights when the main generator is off. Devices can be charged while the generator is on, and there is a drying room but it has limited capacity.

You will be here for two nights so take your time to settle in. Snacks, tea and coffee will be available on arrival. The bar will open for drinks before dinner is served. During the evening, your guides will give you a briefing and explain your options for the following day.



Itinerary

Day 3 | Rest Day

Lake McKellar Lodge

Start your day with a continental and cooked breakfast. There is no need to make lunch today as it will be served in the lodge.

It is your choice how to spend your rest day. You are welcome to stay in the lodge, wander the surrounding area or relax by the lake. However there is also an option to do a half day walk.

Guided walk – The Lookout

The guides will take the group who choose to go, on a 3-4 hour walk to 'The Lookout'. This is around a two hour steep climb through the Beech forest behind the lodge to above the treeline where, on a clear day, you will be rewarded with views in both directions of the Greenstone Valley.

This walk is a scramble over big tree roots and steps, as you ascend approx. 500m up from the lodge. This walk will be taken slow and steady, with

rest breaks on the way up to accommodate the vertical incline and technical nature of the track.

Once above the tree line you will get your first experience of the alpine flora that you will see on the Routeburn Track. From the viewpoint, your guides will point out the valley you walked up, the lake and lodge below, and beyond towards where you will walk the following day.

Take your time walking down the track back to the lodge, taking in the views of the valley and mountains through the trees.

Lunch will be served in the lodge. The afternoon is unguided but you must leave your intentions with a guide or lodge host if you leave the lodge.

Tea and coffee will be available all day and a cheeseboard will come out in the afternoon prior to dinner. The evening will follow the previous night's schedule with dinner, and the guides briefing about the following day.



Itinerary

Day 4 | 15.5km (9.5 miles)

Lake McKellar Lodge to Lake Mackenzie Lodge

TRACK TERRAIN: The track becomes better maintained and more clearly defined once we enter into Fiordland National Park. It starts as a gradual incline, and is a mixture of rocks, tree roots and smooth underfoot and is generally less wet and muddy in comparison to the previous days. There are large rocks to navigate around Earland Falls and be aware that there is a steep and rocky downhill section before reaching the lodge. Care should be taken.

Your day begins with breakfast, and lunchmaking before you pack up ready for departure. On leaving the lodge you follow the track around Lake McKellar and enter the Fiordland National Park. Notice how the vegetation becomes denser as you get closer to the West Coast where the annual rainfall is around nine metres.

Soon after leaving the Lake we will reach the turnoff to the Caples Valley. Take a break here and look back down the valley for your last clear view of Lake McKellar. You will cross some small rocky sections, where in wet weather water may flow. The track gradually inclines until you reach Lake Howden and join up with the Routeburn Track.

From here you have the option of a side walk up to Key Summit, a beautiful alpine wetland with dramatic views of the surrounding mountains on a good day. It is an hour and a half return and takes you up 250 metres from Lake Howden. Leave your

pack at the shelter but make sure you have a warm layer and camera with you.

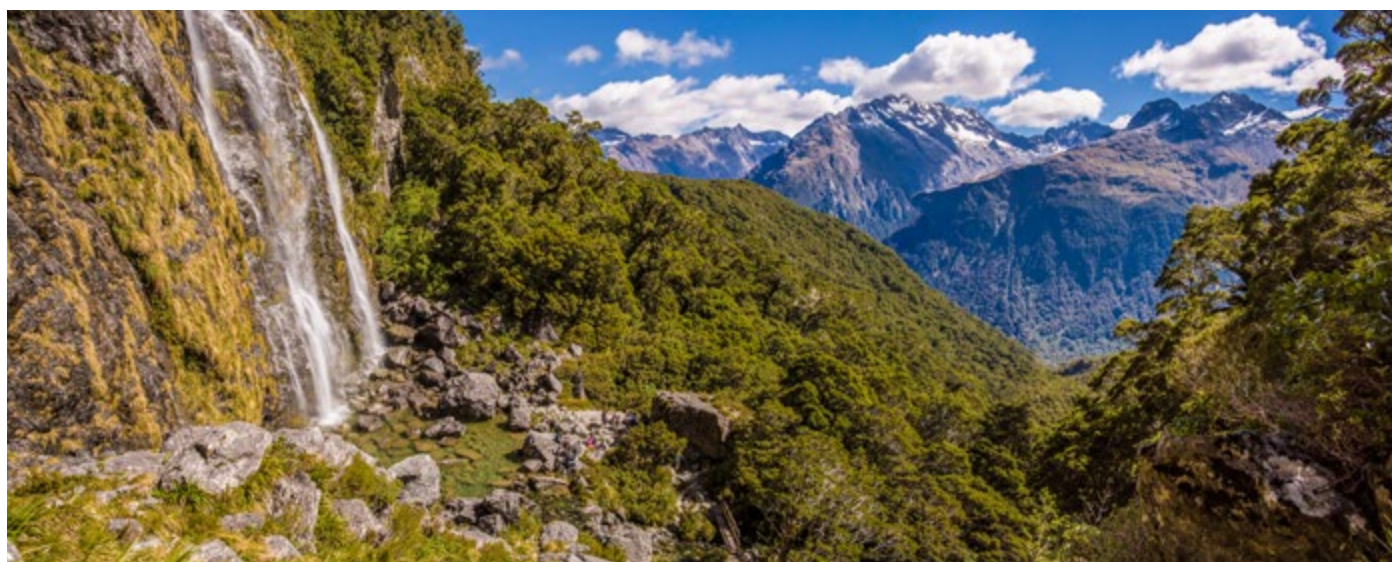
Lunch is at Lake Howden with hot drinks available. You can rest here if you prefer not to go up to Key Summit.

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 5 | 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 follow 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 door 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 6 | 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.

