



Pacific Island Adventures - New Zealand and Vanuatu

Islands of magic, volcanoes and glaciers ...

Trip Length: 28 days / 27 nights

26 March to 22 April 2018

Maximum 9 guests



Included meals marked each day. B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

Join us as we tramp in New Zealand and trek in Vanuatu. Several exciting and invigorating day walks will get you pumping, and stunning sections of two of New Zealand's 'Great Walks' are on the radar. Vanuatu will captivate you as it plays host to multi-day walks on beautiful Malekula and Ambrym islands.

We'll start on New Zealand's North Island for an adventure around the Tongariro Circuit, the 'Ring of Fire', before hopping down to the South Island for adventures along the Abel Tasman Coastal Track. Then it's on to Vanuatu to explore some of its eighty-plus remote and rugged islands. There's overnight hiking to the top of one of the archipelago's many volcanoes; deserted beaches to comb; the ancient culture of the Melanesian people to absorb, and of course snorkeling along the reefs.

This will truly be an adventure in paradise - and the islands are on our doorstep!

Day 1. Monday 26 March (9 April) Auckland — Waitomo — Whakapapa (L,D)

Hiking 2-3 hours, Easy, 100 m elevation gain, hotel accommodation

Our guides collect us from our hotel in the morning and we drive two hours south to Waitomo for a short walk through a lush, forested limestone canyon. After a picnic lunch, we drive to Tongariro National Park where we'll see the late afternoon light glancing off volcanic peaks as we walk through tussock lands of the Taranaki Falls Loop Trail. Our accommodation is right inside the national park. Dinner is at the restaurant in the hotel.

Day 2. Tuesday 27 March (10 April) Tongariro Northern Circuit (B,L,D)

Hiking 5-6 hours, * Grade D, 300 m elevation gain, hut accommodation

The first couple of hours are spent packing and sorting our gear before we wander out the door and straight onto the trail. We hike gently up to a low saddle before descending to a wonderful spacious hut (deviating up to Tama Lake if time allows). We help to cook up a good hiking meal in the hut kitchen.



Emerald Lakes - Tongariro Circuit

Day 3. Wednesday 28 March (11 April) Tongariro Northern Circuit (B,L,D)

Hiking 4-6 hours, * Grade D, 400 m elevation gain, hut accommodation

Roll out of your bunk, grab a quick breakfast and head off to see the excellent Ohinepango Springs (45 min return) and the original 100-year-old national park hut (15 min return). In the afternoon we traverse under the flanks of the perfect volcanic cone of Mt Ngauruhoe (2291 m). We may make an off-track side trip to a remote turquoise-blue lake for lunch. Frequent puffs of steam, or even smoke, can be seen spiralling out of the craters of the nearby volcanoes. We return to the track (and our packs) before continuing to Oturere Hut (1500 m) in the late afternoon. This hut is basic (and usually busy), but is perched in a winning location



Day 4. Thursday 29 March (12 April) Tongariro to Lake Taupo (B,L,D)

Hiking 7-9 hours, * Grade D, 400 m elevation gain, hotel / lodge accommodation

The track follows the Oturere Valley, winding through the contorted lava mounds that jut out of the sandy valley floor. Climbing up past Emerald Lakes to 1900 m gives us a view into the vent of Red Crater. This startling crater with its stratum of red ochre and charcoal greys last erupted in the early 1900s. If weather allows we may also climb one of the other volcanoes. The descent to the western side of the national park leads down past the lava flows of the 1954 Ngauruhoe eruption and into the now tranquil Mangatepopo Valley. The first group will be taken back to the same accommodation as Day 1, in Whakapapa. The second group will drive an hour north to Lake Taupo, in the caldera of Taupo Volcano, the largest lake by surface area in New Zealand, and bunk down at our lakeside lodge.

Lake Taupo

Day 5. Friday 30 March (13 April) Rotorua to Fairlie (B)

Hiking 2 hours, Easy, short hike, cottage / cabin accommodation

A ninety-minute drive gets us to Rotorua. On route we visit the remarkable Waiotapu geothermal area and take a stroll for around for ninety-minutes. Cafe lunch is at the airport (own cost) before catching an afternoon flight to Christchurch. Arrive mid-afternoon and meet our South Island based guide before driving south across the Canterbury Plains towards the vast and mountainous country of the MacKenzie district. Stay in the quaint South Canterbury village of Fairlie. Depending on arrival time in Christchurch, there may be time for a short walk in the Peel Forest (near Geraldine) en route. Dine out tonight in local restaurant.

Day 6. Saturday 31 March (14 April) Fairlie to Mt Cook (Aoraki) (B,L,D)

Hiking 6-8 hours, * Grade D, 600 - 1000 m elevation gain, lodge accommodation

Depart early for Aoraki to maximise our time among the grandeur of the Southern Alps! Hike up the "Stairway to Heaven" to the Sealy Tarns. Spectacular views across to New Zealand's highest peak Aoraki (3,724 m) and Mt Sefton and the Footstool. Those feeling keen for an extra challenge can continue with the guide up the Mueller Ridge and on to Mueller hut before descending the same way. Accommodation is at Aoraki / Mt Cook village.

Day 7. Sunday 1 April (15 April) Aoraki / Mt Cook to Mount Aspiring National Park (B,L,D)

Hiking 2-3 hours, * Grade D, 150 m elevation gain, hut accommodation

Visit the Tasman Valley this morning and wander among the terminal moraines of New Zealand's longest glacier. From a high point take in the views of Tasman Lake which did not exist 50 years ago, but grows every year as the glacier recedes. Drive over Lindis Pass to Wanaka and continue up the Matukituki Valley to Mount Aspiring National Park. This park offers superb tramping opportunities, lush forests, pristine rivers, lakes and ice-carved peaks and glaciers. Hike into the palatial Mount Aspiring hut for the night and enjoy a night in the wilderness.

Mt Cook from Sealy Seat



Day 8. Monday 2 April (16 April) Aspiring Hut to Makarora (B,L)

Hiking 5 hours, * Grade D, 400 m elevation gain, cabin accommodation

Hike up Rob Roy Valley (we leave our packs near the confluence with the Matukituki River and Rob Roy Stream). Follow a scenic trail through virgin beech forest before it emerges into a splendid alpine basin below the bulking mass of the Rob Roy Glacier. Watch water tumble off the glacier's snout as you relax and enjoy lunch. After the hike there is time to take a wander around the lakeside town of Wanaka before we drive to Makarora, our accommodation for the night and the last settlement before the road crosses Haast Pass and descends to the West Coast.

Day 9. Tuesday 3 April (17 April) Makarora to Fox Glacier (B,L)

Hiking 2-3 hours, Easy, short hike, 100 - 200 m elevation gain, cabin accommodation

There is a lot to see on this incredible drive this morning as we head north through South Westland World Heritage area. Start the day off with a one-hour hike along an old Bridal Path that takes you to Haast Pass, before hopping back in the vehicle. The gates of Haast and Ship Creek are just a couple of places we will stop and check out on the way. On arrival in Fox Glacier we will assess the weather and choose an afternoon hike accordingly, either coastal or up the valley to view the glacier, depending on the conditions. Tonight we stay in cabins at Fox Glacier village.

Day 10. Wednesday 4 April (18 April) Fox Glacier to Hokitika (B,L)

Hiking 5 hours, * Grade D, 350 m elevation gain, lodge accommodation

Today's hike takes us up the Waiho Valley to a spectacular viewpoint of the Franz Josef Glacier. It's a rugged track at times, but the scenery, sheer rock walls and glaciers make it well worthwhile. The track crosses a suspension bridge and several side streams. After the hike drive north to Hokitika, once described as 'the most rising place on earth', circa 1860, now a laidback and friendly seaside town.

Day 11. Thursday 5 April (19 April) Hokitika to Punakaiki (B,L,D)

Hiking 5-6 hours, * Grade D, 150 m elevation gain, cottage / cabin accommodation

Follow the coast this morning on the drive to Punakaiki and Paparoa National Park. Hike the Inland Pack Track, an historic road built for horses and bullocks to avoid the high cliffs that today's road climbs over. Hike through luxurious Podocarp forest, groves of Nikau palms and deep limestone canyons. Our accommodation tonight is nestled in the rainforest. We'll fall asleep to the sound of the pounding Tasman Sea.



Paparoa National Park

Day 12. Friday 6 April (20 April) Punakaiki to Abel Tasman National Park (B,L,D)

Hiking 2 hours, Easy, 50 m elevation gain, tent accommodation

Driving north, we stop at Cape Foulwind where we'll hike a coastal path taking us past a seal colony and several offshore islands that are important nesting sites for sea birds. Climbing to a lighthouse there are great views looking out to sea and back to the mountains of Paparoa National Park. After the hike drive up the very scenic Buller Gorge and eventually on to the northern coast at Kaiteriteri, gateway to the Abel Tasman National Park. Board a water taxi and take a one-hour cruise along the coast to Tonga Quarry. Splash ashore here onto the golden sand and follow the coastal path to tonight's campsite at Bark Bay, where the guide and tents have been dropped. Enjoy a delicious camp dinner in this amazing setting and fall asleep to the sound of waves lapping the shore.

Day 13. Saturday 7 April (21 April) Bark Bay to Anchorage (B,L,D)

Hiking 4 hours, Easy, 150 m elevation gain, tent accommodation

Today offers another opportunity to hike in this magical national park and wander along the sheltered coastline marveling at the crystal clear waters and stunning scenery of this marine reserve. The hike from Bark Bay takes us through glades of Manuka, over a low saddle and across a 47 m suspension bridge at Falls River. The optional side trip to Cleopatra's Pool is a must and a perfect place for a swim on a warm summer's day. Tonight's campsite is at Anchorage, a stunning bush-fringed bright blue inlet. Time to take another swim or read a book before helping to prepare and enjoying another delicious evening meal together.

Day 14. Sunday 8 April (22 April) Anchorage to Nelson (B,L)

Hiking 4 hours, * Grade D, 100 m elevation gain, * hotel accommodation

Have a sleep in or join the guide for a stroll out to Te Pukatea Bay and Pitt Head, the site of an old Maori Pa. Then back to camp and maybe a swim before leaving behind the beautiful Anchorage Bay. It's a gentle ramble over a saddle, through lush beech forest with large Kanuka trees. We'll pass through several picturesque bays before eventually emerging at the estuary. Finish walking the track by crossing the Marahau Causeway where we will meet our vehicle. After a picnic lunch it is on to Nelson where our guided tour in New Zealand ends. This vibrant and arty little city offers a great climate and is decked with galleries, restaurants and friendly people.

Day 15. Monday 9 April (23 April) Departure day

Group transfer to Nelson airport for flight to Port Vila.

* Grade: D

- Average of 4-5 hours physical activity per day, up to 7 hours on the longest day.
- Altitude gains of up to 800 m.
- Some uneven track surfaces and river crossings.
- No multi-day hiking experience necessary.
- You need to be reasonably fit and enthusiastic, and have good agility.
- Terrain mostly tracks. Some may be slippery or rough; some off-track hiking and river crossings.
- Note –on the overnight hikes your backpack (with sleeping bag, food and equipment etc) will weigh approximately 10 - 12 kg

What's Included in New Zealand

- Local guides
- All road transport
- Camping gear (tents, sleeping mats, all cookware and camp kitchen implements)
- All accommodation as listed on a twin share basis (3 nights hotel / lodge, 5 nights cottage / cabin, 3 nights national park huts, 2 nights tents)
(Some huts are in high demand and no hut booking is guaranteed until the trip is confirmed, any variation will be supplied at time of confirmation.)
- Meals as listed (B,L,D)
- All national park entry fees, permits and camping fees
- Trail snacks

What's Not Included in New Zealand

- International flights from Australia to New Zealand, and New Zealand to Vanuatu
- Domestic flight from Rotorua to Christchurch
- Any lodging prior to or after the tour dates, * including Day 14 in Nelson.
- Requested single supplement cost
- Meals other than those listed (We help carry the food and prepare dinner in the huts and campgrounds.)
- All personal trekking equipment (including backpacks, sleeping bags, liners and pillows)
- Personal bottled water
- Compulsory Travel and Accident Insurance
- Cash for extra expenses, personal alcohol, tips for guides and other services.



Sunset in Tongariro National Park

Day 15. Monday 9 April (23 April) Arrive in Vanuatu from New Zealand, *hotel accommodation

Transfer from Port Vila Airport to our hotel and prepare for the Vanuatu leg of our trip.

Day 16. Tuesday 10 April (24 April) Port Vila to Norsup, Malekula Island - Small Nambas Tour (L,D)

Tour duration 2 (plus) hours, easy, bungalow accommodation

From Port Vila we will fly to Norsup, Malekula Island, arriving at 8 am. We will be met and taken to our bungalows. In the afternoon we will be transferred to the Small Nambas territory at Rano, a community of sharing, dancing and singing. After a welcoming ceremony to the hypnotising beat of the tam-tams, and presentation of salu-salu to us, the honoured guests, we'll witness the colour, movement, energy and life of the Namagi dancers. The Namagi is an important ceremony. We'll see the men's wind dance, a tale of sea journeys, killing and retribution; the women's flower dance, performed during the time of preparation for the Namagi, and the men's dance, giving thanks and honour to the dead chief. We'll see the ancient way of making fire; how these people make food bowls, toys, baskets, mats and thatched roofing; discover the meaning of their sand drawings, and all



Small Nambas Dancers

this before we taste their traditional food and refreshments. After they call the spirits into the nalnal (war club), and the men and women dance together offering the best wishes to the new chief, we can get caught up in the rhythm and excitement and join in the public dancing.

This tour is a unique opportunity to discover the fascinating culture and traditions of the Nemi Gortien Ser (Spirit of Unity) people. Then it's back to our bungalows.

(We will be able to store excess gear at the bungalows while on our four-day walk.)

Day 17. Wednesday 11 April (25 April) Man Bush Trail (B, L, D)

Drive time 2 hours, four day hike, strenuous, local housing and bush shelter accommodation

We will be driven in a truck down the east coast, from Norsup to Unua where we'll start our guided trek through the jungle interior of Vanuatu's fabled Malekula Island. From the coast we'll walk across the mountainous interior to the west. Our Man Bush guide will introduce us to bush-life and stories, and we will be welcomed into villages still practicing many ancient customs. Porters will carry our personal sleeping bags, mats and belongings.

Note: Sections of the trail pass through rugged bush country and through rivers. You will need suitable footwear for river crossings, preferably boots or hiking sandals that you won't have to change at every crossing. Hiking times are approximate and will depend on the ability of the group. Elevation gains have not been confirmed for the Vanuatu section of the trip.

Unua to Lanvo, hiking 5 hours, local house accommodation

We'll hear stories of local customs as we climb up the ridge to a picturesque elevation.

Day 18. Thursday 12 April (26 April) (B, L, D)

Lanvo to Mt Laimbele, hiking 6 hours, bush shelter accommodation

Today we walk through beautiful forest and up to Mt Laimbele, where we may see the awesome glow from the volcanoes of Ambrym. (The bush shelter is a handmade bush hut and we will be sleeping on a mat on the ground.)



View from Mt Laimbele

Day 19. Friday 13 April (27 April) (B, L, D)**Mt Laimbele to Lebongbong, hiking 6 hours, guesthouse accommodation**

Keep an eye out for the birdlife, and we may even spot some wild cattle as we follow the undulating ridgeline to the village, one of the last hill tribe villages in the area. We reach our guesthouse in the afternoon ready to enjoy some special, seasonal Man Bush food. Nesowong is a dish made from bush banana, water taro and coconut milk.

Day 20. Saturday 14 April (28 April) (B, L, D)**Lebongbong to Lawa, hiking 8 hours, guesthouse accommodation**

Highlights today include visits to a cave, nakamal (a traditional meeting place in Vanuatu, used for gatherings, ceremonies and drinking kava), and a waterfall. Big banyan trees feature along the trail. We'll complete our trek at the village of Lawa where we can swim, shower, relax on the beach and watch the sunset.

Day 21. Sunday 15 April (29 April) (B, L, D)**Norsup, bungalow accommodation**

A travel day today where we'll transfer by boat up the west coast of Malekula to Lambubu Jetty, then by truck back to our bungalows at Norsup.

Day 22. Monday 16 April (30 April) (B, L, D)**Nanwut Day Tour on Uri Island, full day, bungalow accommodation**

Our guide will meet us at the local Lakatoro wharf and take us across to Uri Island, a great place to relax. There's the white coral-sand beach and beach-side hammocks, or we can go snorkeling, and paddling in traditional outrigger canoes. We will see the locals weaving pandanus into baskets and mats. As an optional activity you may want to visit the world-renowned Uri Marine Park to see the marine life. It will be late when we get back to our bungalows at Norsup.

Day 23. Tuesday 17 April (1 May) (B, L, D)**Norsup to Ambrym Island, guesthouse accommodation**

We transfer to the airport for our 12 noon flight to Port Vato, Ambrym Island.

Day 24. Wednesday 18 April (2 May) (B, L, D)**Volcano Cross Over Trek, Ambrym Island**

Our walk takes us from Port Vato, across the volcanic ash plane to visit Mt Benbow and Mt Marum volcanoes. A highlight of the trek is staying a night at East Camp to see the volcanoes' glow in the night sky. Porters will carry packs, personal sleeping bags, mats and tents.

Hiking 5 hours to West Camp (720 m), 3 hours to Mt Benbow (1020 m), strenuous, tent accommodation

Note: Hiking times are approximate and will depend on the ability of the group.

After a 50 minute drive from our accommodation in Craig Cove we reach Port Vato, the start of our trek. Then it's an easy walk through local gardens, coconut trees, and forest before coming to a large, dry river bed with hard black sand (flat but without shade). We follow this to the base of large cliff. After lunch there is steep climb along the river bed to a walking track leading uphill through the forest. We then follow the narrow river through spectacular scenery (we may get our feet wet), to a short, steep, sandy dune that leads to the ash plain and West Camp. From here we have views of the vast ash plain and volcanic scenery. If time allows we will walk across the open ash plain, where sparse moss-like vegetation grows, and past scoria left from lava flows of a previous eruption. Then it's up a steep, narrow ridge to the edge of the main crater of Mt Benbow. We retrace our steps to camp and set up while our local guide prepares dinner.

Day 25. Thursday 19 April (3 May) (B, L, D)**Hiking 2 hours to Mt Marum Volcano (950 m), Hiking 45 minutes to East Camp, tent accommodation**

We begin with an easy walk across the ash plain through a desert-like landscape of sparse green mosses and grasses. If the weather is fine we'll have spectacular views of Mt Benbow and Mt Marum billowing plumes of smoke. After passing 'rivers of scoria', lava flows from previous eruptions, we'll walk around a newly created volcanic landscape of fresh lava flows and a hot water lake before arriving at East Camp for the night. Here, we can enjoy the crimson glow of Mt Marum.

Day 26. Friday 20 April (4 May) (B, L, D)**East Camp to Endu Village, bungalow accommodation****Hiking 5 hours**

An undulating walk across mountainous terrain leads us to an old ash plain, spotted with bushes and grass. Before entering the fern forest ahead, look behind - the view to Mt Marum is stunning! After following a bush trail it is time to say good bye to Marum, but not before one last volcano photo, framed by tree branches! From here there is a 2 hr descent. The last half an hour is the steepest. We finally arrive at a beautiful beach where we can safely swim and taste the local organic fruit. After walking along the soft, sandy beach, we'll follow a flat track through forest until we reach Endu Village.

Meet the locals at Endu Village



Day 27. Saturday 21 April (5 May) (B, L, D)

Endu Cultural Tour

Tour duration approximately 1 hour, bungalow accommodation

This interesting and enlightening tour is an opportunity to discover the fascinating culture of South-East Ambrym. After a traditional welcome from the village warriors, we will watch the energetic dancing, accompanied by ancient chanting and singing. Demonstrations of traditional skills like trapping and snaring wild bush game, help us understand how these people have lived. We'll watch women cook in their traditional style, learn about the men's carving techniques, and even how to make some local medicine.

Day 28. Sunday 22 April (6 May) (B)

Transfer to Ulei Airport and fly back to Port Vila. Tour ends.

What's Included in Vanuatu

- Local guides
- All vehicle and boat transport
- Camping gear (bush shelters, tents, all cookware and camp kitchen implements)
- All accommodation as listed on a twin share basis (9 x nights bungalow or local house, 3 x nights tents)
- Meals as listed (B,L,D)
- All national park entry fees, permits and camping fees

What's Not Included in Vanuatu

- International flights from New Zealand to Port Vila and Port Vila to your next destination.
- Internal flights from Port Vila to Malekula, Malekula to Ambrym, Ambrym to Port Vila
- Airport transfers, Day 15, 16, 23 and 28
- Any accommodation prior to or after the tour dates, * including Day 15 in Port Vila
- Requested single supplement cost
- All personal trekking equipment (including backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping mats, liners and pillows)
- Meals other than those listed
- Trail snacks
- Personal bottled water
- Compulsory Travel and Accident Insurance
- Cash for extra expenses, personal alcohol, tips for guides and other services.

Other General Information

There are no ATMs in Malekula or Ambrym islands

Minor changes may be made along the way due to factors such as weather conditions, road or park closures, or permits being unavailable. This is left to the discretion of our on-the-ground guides and leaders.



Take A Walk Publications and Adventures Pty Ltd

PO Box 66, Camp Hill, Qld 4152 Australia

07 3843 3930

0417 611 810

info@takeawalk.com.au

www.takeawalk.com.au