

Stewart Island Track

“Picture yourself in the Southern most island of New Zealand wandering under a stadium of stars to try your luck at native kiwi spotting”.

Background

Stewart Island offers the best chance most people will ever have to see New Zealand's national bird, the kiwi, in its natural environment. Rest assured not many New Zealanders can make that claim.

Many centuries ago Maori came by canoe to the island to harvest shellfish and mutton birds, traditions still carried out today by local iwi. They named the island Rakiura - 'Land of the Glowing Skies' as it is renowned for lingering summer sunsets and the Aurora Australis or Southern Lights.



Our five day guided walk takes a nice loop across Stewart Island. Starting in the southern city of Invercargill we travel by light plane to Mason Bay on the West Coast of Stewart Island. Then walk and water taxi our way across the island to Halfmoon Bay. A visit to the stunning open sanctuary Ulva Island, sea kayaking in Paterson Inlet and some time to explore Halfmoon Bay before flying back to the mainland and Invercargill.



under the stars with a kiwi

Itinerary

DAY 1: Arrive in Invercargill

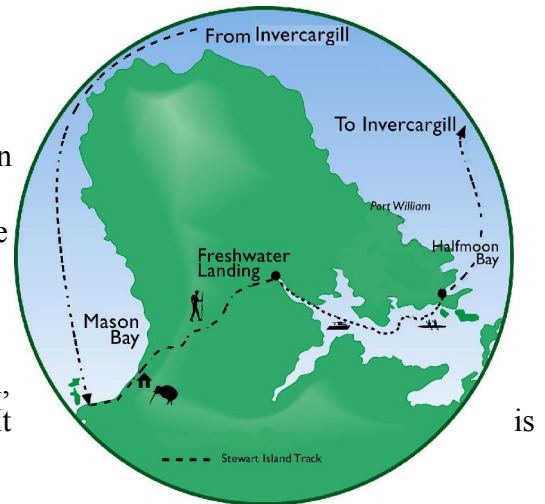
Stay in the historic Victoria Railway Hotel In Invercargill. Pre track briefing and evening meal starts at 6:00 pm. Rental cars and any excess luggage can be left at the hotel. Invercargill is 170km from Queenstown and 190km from Te Anau. Daily shuttles depart 7.30am. We are happy to arrange transfers on your behalf.

DAY 2: Invercargill, Mason Bay

Walk 4 hours / 10km

Departure time changes with the tide (literally !) Fly by light plane from Invercargill airport to Mason Bay passing Codfish Island, an important Kakapo sanctuary. Landing on Mason Bay beach we take some time to explore this isolated wonderland walking to the Mason Bay Hut, the one night where we “rough it” camping alongside the Mason Bay Hut.

This evening we will see if we can spot one of the local residents, a kiwi. Stewart Island Kiwi, or Tokoeka in Maori, are unique in that they are sometimes seen during the day. It is estimated that about a third of New Zealand’s Kiwi live on Stewart Island so this is one of the best places to see one in the wild.



DAY 3: Mason Bay, Freshwater, Halfmoon Bay

Walk 4 hours / 14km

An easy (flat) walk across the Island to Freshwater. Some muddy sections so don't wear white sandshoes!. Massive sand dunes, head high tussock and Manuka trees house many native birds, including kiwi's and robins.

At Freshwater Landing we meet the water taxi for a half hour ride down Freshwater River and across Paterson Inlet to Halfmoon Bay. Tonight we stay in a classic Southland "crib" or holiday home with power and a shower! Dinner is generally fresh Salmon caught that day.

DAY 4: Paterson Inlet, Ulva Island

Sea kayak 3 hours, walk 3 hours

Today we explore Paterson Inlet by sea kayak, water taxi and foot.

In the morning (this can alter depending on the weather) we take to the sea kayaks. After a thorough briefing from our sea kayak guide we explore Paterson Inlet and this new marine reserve with the chance to see seals, shags and little blue penguins.

In the afternoon we visit Ulva Island, an open sanctuary playing an important role in the conservation of threatened species. Birds we may see include the weka, kaka, kakariki, kukupa, mohua and tieke. This is our second night in Halfmoon Bay.

DAY 5: Halfmoon Bay, Invercargill

Time to explore Halfmoon Bay. Try one of many short walks, visit a local craft gallery, or just soak up the island ambience. In the afternoon (generally the 1:30pm flight) we fly to Invercargill for the completion of our journey. Many customers chose to stay an extra night or two on Stewart Island or back in Invercargill.

Accommodation

In Invercargill we stay at the Victoria Railway Hotel. At Mason Bay we stay in a public DOC hut which is comfortable and clean. Toilets are outside and no showers. Sleep in a bunk room or if you prefer spend a night under the stars in a tent (yes we have air mattresses and warm sleeping bags). In Halfmoon Bay we normally stay at the Rakiura Lodge. Accommodation is based on double or share twin. Linen is provided. Carry only your own personal items.

Weather

Is unpredictable. Extreme conditions can develop at any time. Be prepared for cold and wet weather and have warm waterproof equipment. It makes it even nicer when it is warm and sunny☺

Equipment

We will provide all camping, cooking and kayaking equipment, sleeping bags and maps. You provide and carry a pack, personal and hiking equipment. We have packs and wet weather gear available if required but please advise in advance.

What to Bring

A good pair of comfortable walking boots or shoes is essential. Some people find walking sticks helpful. The following list provides a guide for your packing;

Pair of shorts, trousers	Favourite boots or walking shoes
Thick woollen or fleece top	Pair of light shoes or sandals
Thermal long johns and shirt	Pack with waterproof liner
Socks, underwear and handkerchief	Small personal torch, water bottle
Small towel or flannel	Personal medicine, toilet bag
Warm hat and light gloves	Insect repellent, sunblock
Waterproof coat with hood	Camera and film

Prices

The package includes 4 nights accommodation, all meals, transport, sea kayaking, hut and guiding fees, all equipment and maps. The trips are usually 4 – 6 people with a maximum of 6.

Price - NZ\$1 795

Valid to November 2010

Children 10 - 14 subtract NZ\$150. Single supplement NZ\$50 per night.

Prices are per person and include GST

For bookings and information;
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Guaranteed departure dates – Day 1

2009 / 2010	
Nov 2009	4, 17
Dec 2009	2, 5, 17
Jan 2010	4, 14, 18, 30
Feb 2010	3, 13, 17, 28
Mar 2010	2, 14, 20, 31
Apr 2010	15