

# The Tekapo Expedition New Zealand

## (Base to Lake)

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### Itinerary

This information sheet highlights specific information about the Tekapo Explorer itself. Please also read our general information sheet on the Alpine Horse Safari rides which contains general information on the riding, area and horses.

Please note that the following itinerary is an example for the ride. The actual route and the overnight stops may vary from ride to ride depending on local and weather conditions and will be confirmed to you on arrival.

This safari travels through some famous high country stations and crosses some of the largest rivers in the South Island of New Zealand. The trip is very popular with guests wanting to ride the longest, most adventurous alpine horse trip available in New Zealand.



**Day before the ride starts:** You are collected from Christchurch between 2pm and 4 pm and transferred to the horse base at Waitohi Downs.

Meet the rest of the group and then you can relax in the garden and recover from your journey or sit with an afternoon cup of coffee looking out over the fields that make up part of Waitohi Downs.

Later be transferred to your homestay for dinner. That evening pack your swags. You will probably repack it several times before getting it right. You will be

amazed at what you decide to leave behind when you work out what you really need for the next couple of weeks.

**1 November:** Everyone is eager to mount their horses and set off from base at Waitohi Downs to begin your exhilarating adventure. Riding through hill country, up the banks of the Hurunui River to emerge onto the Lake Sumner Road passing through scenic Maori Gully, fording the Seaward River and riding up the south branch to reach Eskhead Station. Tonight you amp in the comfortable shearers quarters equipped with electricity and hot showers to ease those weary bones. Sometimes the horses are ridden further on to Deep Creek and then the riders transfer back to the shearers quarters.

Approx. 6 hours riding



**2 November:** Morning dawns and everyone is eager to start riding. Have breakfast, roll your swag, catch your horse and get ready to go, winding your way up the south branch to Deep Creek Hut. After a brief stop to boil the billy, start the two hour climb up the steep Riding Spur to the top of the Dampier Range, boundary between Eskhead and Mt White Station. Sidle down to the lunch stop by the picturesque small tarn nestled in the golden tussocks. Following down Andersons Spur, cross the Esk River, and continue across vast open flat until you reach Maternity Gully that runs into Ant Stream. About 1 Km upstream is the Anna Hut, your bed for the night. There are only eight

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bunks in this hut, so tents are required. Cooking over the open fire a delicious meal is prepared to satisfy hungry riders.

Approx. 6 hours riding

**3 November:** Breaking camp at 8-30 am you leave the Anna Hut and head for the shearers quarters at Mt White Station or possibly Pakiti. On the way, ride around Main Range, pass Big and Little Flora, viewing Lochinvar country, crossing Nigger Stream to the lunch stop at Nigger Hill Hut. Across the Esk River is the Puketeraki Range, a vast expanse of country with ridges on it like Pig Spur, Anna Spur, Broadleaf Spur and The Parkees, The Limestone and to the south Chest Peak. Continuing on around Mt White, arrive high up on a ridge where you see your accommodation for the night. Tonight you have the luxury of electricity and hot showers.

Approx. 6 hours riding

**4 November:** Once you are all packed, depart from the Mt White Quarters, riding the vast developed flats, heading for the Waimakariri River at the mouth of the Esk. Your first major river crossing! Once across you are on Flock Hill Station. Ride on over flat and downey country and have lunch before crossing the Tranz Alpine Railway Line. Head in on the 4WD track to the Flock Hill Backpackers where you stay the night. Spoilt again with hot showers and electricity.

Approx. 6 hours riding



**5 November:** An easy day today with the packhorses unloaded, leave Flock Hill Backpackers and ride round the rugged eroded mountain called Constitution and get a glimpse of the Coleridge Pass, that you cross the next day. Descending down to Broken River ride up the Porter River, crossing the Christchurch Arthur Pass

Highway and heading up to the Porter Heights Ski Field Accommodation. A water wheel supplies the electricity and hot water for the showers.

Approx. 6 hours riding

**6 November:** Leaving your comfortable quarters ride up the Porter River and over Coleridge Pass on the end of Craigieburn Range, viewing the headwaters of the Rakaia River, Mt Arrowsmith, Mt Algidus, Mt Hutt and the turquoise coloured waters of Lake Coleridge. Descend down the steep south side of Coleridge Pass where you break for lunch at the boundary of Lake Coleridge and Ryton Stations. Continue riding through and cross the Ryton River, passing Lake Catherine to the junction of the Harper and Avoca Rivers where you cross over to Glenthorne Station and camp at the Retreat Hut, your accommodation for the next two nights. Gas electrics and shower.

Approx. 7 hours riding

**7 November:** This is your rest day where you can catch up with washing, go for a hike up to Lake Lillian, view the Pinnacles, about an hours walk up the Harper River or be like the horses and just relax in the sun and enjoy the time off.

No riding



**8 November Day 9:** Today has you packing up, ready to move out, regretful and sad to be leaving this peaceful oasis, but keen to view new country. Follow down the west side of the Harper River to the Wilberforce River. Once across you are on Mt Aldigus Station, made famous by the books written by Mona Anderson (A River Rules My Life.) Stop for lunch and then head to the Mathias River. Once across you are on Manuka Point Station where you camp in the

Shearers Quarters and tents are also used. Electricity and shower.

Approx. 6 hours riding

**9 November:** Swags rolled and packhorses loaded, ride out to cross the mighty Rakaia River, approximately 5 kms of braided riverbed to cross, that takes about one hour. Ride south up Lake Stream, with Lake Heron country to the west, Glenfalloch to the east and the Ashburton Gorge to the south. Your accommodation tonight is at Mt Arrowsmith. Electricity and shower.

Approx. 7 hours riding

**10 November:** Riding round Lake Heron on Mt Arrowsmith country, you may see trout leaping in the lake as you head for the Ashburton River and cross over to Haketere Station, thousands of acres of vast tussock covered country. Passing Lake Clearwater and viewing snowcapped peaks of the Two Thumb Range you emerge out on the road at the Potts River cutting. As you ride down to the Rangitata River and then across it, you can see Mesopotamia Station homestead in the far distance. Your accommodation for the night is in the Cook House Shearers Quarters. Electricity and shower.

Approx. 8 hours riding

**11 November:** The going gets tougher as you ride up Scour Creek and follow the old pack-track past the Felt Hut, up over Bullock Bow Saddle on the Sinclair Range and descend down into Bush Stream, where your camp for the night is at the Royal Hut, once visited by Princess Anne and Prince Charles. Tents need to be used as bunk beds are limited. No showers or electricity.

Approx. 7 hours riding

**12 November:** Final day of riding dawns and the toughest climb ahead. Riding up the Two Thumb range through Stag Saddle, 1924m (6314ft) where magnificent views can be seen, (weather permitting) of Lake Tekapo, Lake Benmore, Lake Pukaki, also Mt Cook, Mt Tasman and all the high tops can be seen from this vantage point. From here descend down for

about four hours until you reach Mt Gerald Station Quarters, your accommodation for the night. Electricity and shower.

Approx. 7 hours riding



The horses are washed and brushed and turned out into a 60 acre red and white clover paddock saved for them. This will be their home until they return in ten days time with a new group, to start the ride back to Waitohi Downs.

**13 November:** Time to say goodbye to the horses, then transfer up to Waitohi Downs. Stopping for a picnic lunch along the way. Tonight many a story will be told around the dinner table recounting the adventures of the past few days. Then a real bed to sleep in!

**Day after the ride ends:** A leisurely morning with no swag to roll, pack up your things into your suitcase and say your goodbyes.

Transfer back to Christchurch in time for your flight or for your onward arrangements.

Note on Accommodation: Please be aware that you are riding through and staying on high country working farms. The accommodation will therefore be comfortable, but basic. Rooms may be shared with others on the ride and there are limited or no washing and loo facilities