

the best day-walks on **STEWART ISLAND**

27 January – 4 February 2027



Stewart Island, or Rakiura, offers a rare glimpse into New Zealand as it once was. For travellers seeking a break from the commercialised pulse of the mainland, this island provides a profound sense of isolation and raw natural beauty that is increasingly hard to find.

The island's most compelling feature is its status as a Dark Sky Sanctuary. Because there is almost no light pollution, the celestial displays are breathtaking. This is tied to its Māori name, Rakiura, which translates to "Glowing Skies"—a nod to both the vibrant sunsets and the ethereal Aurora Australis (Southern Lights) that frequently dance across the horizon.

For nature lovers, the island is a sanctuary for birdlife. It is one of the few places in the country where you can see the Southern Tokoeka (kiwi) in its natural habitat, often even during daylight hours. The surrounding waters and ancient podocarp forests are teeming with native species, from the playful Kākā to the rare Yellow-eyed Penguin.

The beauty of Stewart Island is remarkably accessible through its network of short walks. You don't need to tackle the three-day Rakiura Track to experience the magic. There are many fabulous ambles within easy reach of the main settlement.

Ultimately, Stewart Island is worth visiting because it forces you to slow down. Whether you are trekking through the ferns or enjoying fresh Blue Cod at a local pub, the island's "unspoiled" character leaves a lasting impression. It is a place where nature remains the main attraction.

DATES		Wednesday 27 Jan to Thursday 4 Feb 2027	
DATE REGISTRATIONS CLOSE		1 November 2026	
STARTING POINT		Invercargill	Wed 6.00 p.m.
Participants should reach Invercargill on Wednesday 27 Jan in time for the initial briefing at 6 p.m.			
FINISHING POINT		Invercargill	Thurs 8.00 a.m.
Participants may leave Invercargill any time after breakfast on Thursday 4 Feb			
COST		6+pax \$1750pp, 5pax \$1850pp, 4pax \$1950pp	
PRICE INCLUDES: Ferry fares to and from the island. 8 nights motel accommodation in Invercargill and Oban (Wed to Thurs). Breakfasts (continental). The services of an experienced guide.		PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE: Flights to and from Invercargill. Transport Invercargill to Bluff. Optional excursions (see below). Lunches and dinners. Travel insurance.	
DAY	POSSIBLE WALKS		
All times given are for a return (out and back) walk, a loop walk, or a linear walk. All walks are Easy to Moderate unless stated otherwise.			
Day 1 Thurs 28 Jan	<p><i>Bus or shuttle Invercargill to Bluff (own expense) Catamaran ferry (1h) departs Bluff 9.45 a.m.</i></p> <p>Upon arrival in Oban we find our accommodation and settle in.</p> <p>Afternoon: Ulva Island: We visit this unique wildlife sanctuary, famous for native birds. Own expense for water taxi. Several walking trails which vary in length.</p>		
Days 2-6 Friday 29 Jan Sat 30 Jan Sun 31 Jan Mon 1 Feb Tues 2 Feb	<p>Walks selected from the following:</p> <p>Short Walks: Golden Bay – Deep Bay (2h) Bathing Beach (30m) Observation Rock (30m) Fuchsia and Raroa Walks (1h) Moturau Moana (1h) Lonneker’s Beach-Ringaringa Beach-Evening Cove (1h30m) Fern Gully (2h) Oban Cemetery (45m)</p> <p>Longer Walks: Coast to Coast (commercial option) (about \$340pp). Fly to Masons Bay. Walk from there to Freshwater Hut (15km,3-4h). Water taxi back to Oban. Full day. Own expense.</p> <p>Water taxi to Port William and walk back to Lee Bay (12km, 4-5h, (own expense)</p> <p>Maori Beach (3-4h return)</p> <p>Horseshoe Point (3-4h)</p> <p>Garden Mound-Little River-Big Bay (4-5h)</p>		

	<p>Kaipipi Bay (3h)</p> <p>Ryans Creek (3h30m)</p> <p>Golden Bay-Deep Bay-Ringaranga-Wohler's Monument-Peterson Hill (2-3h)</p> <p>Harrold Bay and Ackers Point Lighthouse (2-3h)</p>
<p>Day 7 Wednesday 3 Feb</p>	<p>A further short walk selected from those above. Ferry (1h) departs Oban 3 p.m. (1h)</p> <p>Bluff Area <i>Walks selected from:</i> Bluff Hill Lookout (5m), Topuni Track from summit to Stirling Point (1h), Summit-Millennium Track-Foveaux Walkway to Stirling Point (2h), Greenpoint Domain (30m).</p> <p>Farewell Dinner in Invercargill.</p>



Ackers Cottage



Butterfield Beach

FOOTSTEPS WALKING AND TRAVEL CLUB OF AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Booking Conditions for excursions within New Zealand

1. Participants agree to all terms and conditions by signing the Registration Form.
2. Phillip Donnell and *Footsteps Walking and Travel Club* are not responsible or liable for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may arise from weather, defect in any vehicle, vessel or aircraft, or through the acts or default of any person or company engaged in carrying out any of the arrangements of the trip. Everyone participates entirely at their own risk. The separate waiver form must be completed.
3. We reserve the right to cancel the trip if minimum numbers don't eventuate. In such an event, all monies paid will be refunded. The minimum number for any given trip is four participants.
4. *Footsteps* reserves the right to make any modifications to the trip that may be necessary. The walks undertaken each day are determined by group consensus, but as far as possible we endeavour to meet your personal preferences and aspirations.
5. Registrations should be made *as early as possible* in order to obtain optimal outcomes. Once we reach "critical mass" the trip moves from "orange light" status to "green light" status and the earlier that happens the better because people can then book flights and make arrangements with confidence.
6. Registrations are accepted in good faith on a first comer's basis on receipt of the Registration Form. A deposit of \$250 per person is paid at the time of registration. The balance is paid *one month* prior to the trip's commencement date.
7. Our preferred method of payment is internet banking to Kiwibank 38-9002-0435674-03 (*Footsteps*: PJ Donnell/Katrina Tulip). Please write your surname and the name of the trip (=geographical area) in the reference box.
8. The final decision on whether a trip will proceed is made *two months* prior to its projected commencement date, or *earlier if the minimum number is met*. If booking transport/flights to and from the trip, it is recommended that you wait until after the trip is confirmed to proceed, or have travel insurance cover, or are able to change flight bookings to another timeframe. All participants will be informed *immediately* if a trip becomes viable *ahead of time*.
9. Cancellations. If you need to cancel your registration for any reason, you must advise *Footsteps* in writing as soon as possible. An email is acceptable, a phone call alone is not.
It will be appreciated that any trip requires bookings to be made on behalf of each participant, and the closer we get to a trip's commencement, the more difficult it becomes to alter these and thereby recover costs, usually because the availability of alternatives shrinks, or because of the policies imposed by our suppliers. That is why we need a buffer, but we endeavour to keep cancellation fees to a bare minimum. Under "normal" conditions, cancellations up to 60 days prior incur a \$50 cancellation fee. For 59-30 days prior, \$100 is deducted. For 29-15 days prior, \$150 is deducted. After 14 days prior, you lose your deposit of \$250. However, every case is determined on its merits and these fees may be modified or waived. If you find a suitable replacement person, the cancellation fees will be waived.
10. Personal travel insurance is highly recommended.

Registration and waiver forms are below...

FOOTSTEPS WALKING AND TRAVEL CLUB OF AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND
Trip Registration Form (for excursions within New Zealand)

Complete and send this (and the Waiver form) to our postal address (see base of page) or scan and email. The deposit required is \$250 per person. Our preferred payment method is internet banking into Kiwibank Footsteps P J Donnell/Katrina Tulip 38-9002-0435674-03 (with covering email please, or your surname/name of trip in reference column).

Trip(s) for which you are registering:

Trip Dates:

Your full name(s) and please underline or highlight your preferred first name(s)

Postal address

Day phone

Night phone

Mobile

Email

Date(s) of birth

Are you comfortable in close contact with like-minded travellers with all the give and take needed for harmony? Please extend your answers overleaf or on separate paper, or by email.

Specify any dietary requirements, allergies or medical conditions

Contact person in NZ for any emergencies : name, address, contact phone numbers, email and the relationship to you. In the event of any emergency, this is the sole person you are authorizing us to liaise with

I/We have read the trip information and booking conditions. I / We enclose the deposit of \$250pp. I / We agree to pay the remainder of trip costs by the due date (one month before the trip commences). Signed and dated by each person registering:

Send to : Footsteps Walking and Travel Club, 3/B Te Arawa Place, Welcome Bay, Tauranga 3112. Email: footstepsanz@gmail.com (scanned forms are acceptable).

FOOTSTEPS WALKING and TRAVEL CLUB OF AOTEAROA / NEW ZEALAND

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY FORM

PROVIDER: Footsteps Walking and Travel Club (Phillip John Donnell)(“Footsteps”)

PARTICIPANT:

(“the Participant”)

I, the Participant, release and forever discharge and hold harmless Footsteps from all and any liability, claims, demands and damages, of whatsoever kind or nature, whether foreseeable or otherwise, either at law or in equity, which arise or may arise from the services and activities provided and arranged by Footsteps.

I understand and acknowledge that this Release and Waiver discharges Footsteps from any liability or claim that I may have against Footsteps in respect of personal injury, illness, medical treatment, death, property loss or damage, and otherwise howsoever, resulting from the services and activities provided and arranged by Footsteps. I hereby waive all such rights and remedies.

I accept that I participate in the services and activities entirely at my own risk.

I acknowledge and accept that this Release and Waiver:

- (a) Extends to and covers all contractors, agents, volunteers and employees of Footsteps; and
- (b) Binds the executors, administrators, successors, attorneys and assigns of both parties.

Signed by the Participant:

Date:
