

Wilderness Lodges of New Zealand

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WILDERNESS LODGE® LAKE MOERAKI

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WILDERNESS LODGE® ARTHUR'S PASS

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WILDERNESS LODGE ARTHUR'S PASS TO WILDERNESS LODGE LAKE MOERAKI

Trip notes for your journey

This is a journey of 340km (about 200 miles) involving 5 to 6 hours of driving time with great scenery and interesting places to stop along the way. Key features along the route include: the ascent to Arthur's Pass through the dramatic cleft of the Otira Gorge; and alpine herb fields and shrub lands across the summit of the pass itself, the West Coast town of Hokitika, glistening snowy mountains; wild glacier rivers; the famous Fox and Franz Josef glaciers and beautiful rainforest from the mountains to the sea and Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki.

Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass to Arthur's Pass Village (16km – 20 mins)

At the bottom of our gravel driveway turn left on to State Hwy 73. **Remember to drive on the left.** Use caution crossing the long one lane bridge over the Waimakariri River, but enjoy the views of this expansive valley and the Bealey River entering on your right. 15 minutes from the Lodge is the small alpine village of **Arthur's Pass**. This is the last petrol stop for the next 96km but is very expensive petrol. The National Park Visitor Centre has great displays about natural history and also about the National Park and the Train tunnel construction and Cobb & Co stagecoach days.

Arthur's Pass Village to Hokitika (96km – 1¼ hours)

Once you leave the village the road winds its way to the summit of Arthur's Pass (920m) and on to the dramatic Otira Gorge and Otira Viaduct. Have a brief stop at "Death's Corner" and check out the 440 m long, NZ\$25 million Otira Viaduct. This feat of engineering was opened in November 1999. Travel down through the West Coast rainforest and past rough farmland, the scene of gold mining in the 1860-70 periods.

Kumara Township, 82km from the Wilderness Lodge was a big gold mining centre and the Kumara main street on the left hand side is home to 'The Woodworker' (Carey and Lynne Dillon), a wonderful photographer. Ask Reception to phone ahead if you would like to visit and look at Carey's magnificent nature photographs.

Once through the village of Kumara, continue another 6 kms and you will end up at Kumara Junction; take the first exit from this roundabout and you will begin your journey south along the Tasman Sea towards Hokitika. (Greymouth, the largest town on the West Coast is 19 kms north from the Kumara Junction)

The former goldfield's town of Hokitika has cafes, craft-shops, jade (pounamu) factories, 2 banks, a pharmacy and a bookshop specialising in new and second-hand West Coast books. There are 2 petrol stations on the main highway.

Hokitika to Franz Josef (130km – 2 hours)

25 km south of Hokitika is the historic gold mining town of Ross with a walkway through the bush, passing historic mining sites, waterways and tunnels. 65 km south in Pukekura is the 'Bushman's Centre' with its giant sand fly. The Centre has tame wild pigs, possums, a Bushman's museum, gold mining, sawmilling and Wild Foods café.

The driving from this point on is generally flat, through forest and farm land with a short climb just after the village of Hari Hari. (85 kms. South) As you enter Hari Hari keep an eye out for 'The Willows', a small cottage on the right hand side of the road that specializes in hand spun knit wear, possum fur and woollen goods.

Once over Mt Hercules, is the village of Whataroa (118 kms South), the home of The White Heron Sanctuary which offers tours from September to February on the Waitangiroto River. Another attraction along the way is the picturesque, coastal settlement of Okarito. The turn off is 18kms North of Franz Josef or at 126 kms South. It is 13 kms in to the settlement, but is a good opportunity for a visit to a rugged West Coast beach and a shanty like collection of houses.

Franz Josef is a tourist center; you can have a scenic helicopter flight, visit the Glacier or just a break and coffee or lunch. At both Franz Josef and Fox Glacier, access roads into the glacier valleys take less than ten minutes to drive, followed by a walk of about 30 minutes to the terminal faces of the glaciers themselves. Take the time to enjoy the amazing scenery and lush vegetation. **It is worth the drive up to the Franz Josef car park to look at the glacier from Sentinel Rock Viewpoint accessed directly on a 5 minute long path from the car park.**

Franz Josef to Fox Glacier (14km – 30 mins)

A extraordinarily winding road climbs and descends through forest three times as it crosses the forested moraine hills between these two famous West Coast glacier villages. This road is following the line of the Alpine Fault, the collision point of the Indo-Australian and Pacific Continental Plates. Beyond Fox Glacier township is another short drive to the car park area for a closer look and walk close to the Fox Glacier terminal face.

Fox Glacier to Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki (84kms – 1¼ hrs)

A lovely, fast straight road through the forest, crossing three turbulent glacial rivers – The Fox, Cook and Karangarua. At the Karangarua River is the start of the famous historic track up the Copland Valley. It is 6 hours walk to Welcome Flat thermal pools and 2 days tough mountaineering over Copland Pass to Mt Cook Village.

The easy drive south of Fox Glacier follows beneath avenues of tall forest and farm land and pops out to the seacoast at Bruce Bay (45 km). Although the sandflies are ferocious here, it is a great stop to see the power of the Tasman Sea and fossick for brilliant white quartz beach pebbles. There are very few people on this stretch of wilderness. 70 km south of Fox Glacier at the Paringa River is the 'Salmon Farm' where Quinnot/King salmon are raised in ponds.

Wilderness Lodge Lake Moeraki – the end of the journey



Fantail