

Welcome Aboard

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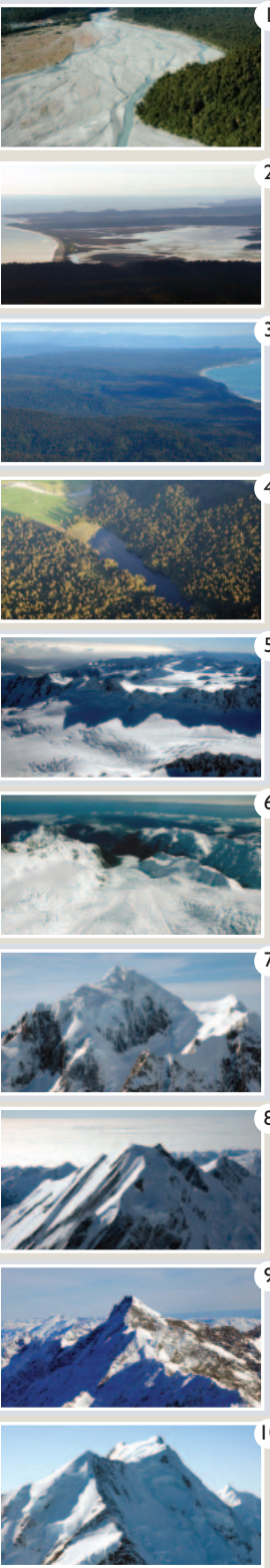


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Franz Josef • Lake Tekapo • Glentanner
ON BOARD FLIGHT GUIDE





1 Waiho River
This incredibly active silt-laden river drains the melting ice from the Franz Josef Glacier and runoff from the Callery Valley. The Waiho River has been aggrading at 300 mm/yr in recent times and is at present some 2 metres above the surrounding land.

2 Okarito Forest & Lagoon
The ancient dense Okarito rainforest is home to a small population of the rare Rowi (Okarito brown Kiwi). The population is under considerable threat from introduced animals such as rats and stoats that prey on the kiwi. To the North you can see the Okarito Lagoon, famous as a bird watchers' paradise. Thousands of native birds, including nearly every mainland species in New Zealand, visit or make their home on this lagoon. It is perhaps best known for the kotuku (white heron) which breed here. These are a sacred bird to the Maori people. Okarito is an historical gold mining town, at least 16,000 miners came to the area over one year (1864-65) hoping to line their pockets with glittering gold.

3 West Coast Rainforest
The Southern Alps stand like a fortress wall in the path of the moisture-laden westerly air flow rolling in off the Tasman Sea. Within a few kilometres of the ice-world of the glaciers is the temperate rainforest of Westland, sustained by up to 5 metres of rainfall annually. Of the 140 glaciers that make up the Westland National Park, Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers are the only two that penetrate the lower forest zones.

4 Lake Matheson & Cook River Flat
Famous for mirror views of Aoraki Mount Cook and Mount Tasman, Lake Matheson, with its incredibly scenic walking track, is a popular stop for many visitors. Lake Matheson fills the depression left behind 14,000 years ago by the retreating Fox Glacier.

5 Fox Glacier, Fritz Range & Franz Josef Glacier
The huge expanse of the Fox Neve is nearly 40 sq km in size and clearly visible are the numerous crevasses that line the surfaces around the top of the icefall. These crevasses are 100's of metres deep and form due to the movement of ice downhill under the influence of gravity.

6 Fox Glacier
Maori understanding of the alpine world was based on great myths to enable generations to commit to memory the unique landforms of the area. The Maori name for Fox Glacier, "Te Moeeka o Tuawe" was derived from an ancestor Tu Awe who fell to his death while exploring the area. The bed of the glacier was his final resting place and it is said that when his lover Hine Hukatere wept, the bed of the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers filled with her everlasting tears of ice.

7 Mt Tasman (11,475 feet / 3,497m)
Known as a classic ice-climb, Mt Tasman is New Zealand's second highest mountain. It was first climbed in January 1895 by Mathias Zurbriggen. The Balfour icefall and glacier descends off its western flanks.

8 Mt La Perouse (10,100 feet / 3,078m)
A beautiful peak dominated by its huge southern rock face. In 1948 La Perouse featured in one of the last big ground rescues (before the use of helicopters) – an injured climber successfully rescued from near the summit in an epic effort over 6 days!

9 Mt Sefton & Hooker Valley
The Hooker glacier is 11 kilometres in length and descends from the south western flanks of Mount Cook. This spectacular valley's close proximity to the Mount Cook village with great tracks makes it a very popular hiking area.

10 Aoraki/Mt Cook (12,316 feet / 3,754m)
'Aoraki' – the Cloud Piercer! New Zealand's highest mountain stands supreme with its snow and icefields spilling into the glaciers below. It was first climbed on Christmas Day 1894 by locals Tom Fyfe, George Graham and 19 yr old Jack Clarke. In 1991 a giant rock avalanche occurred on Mount Cook lowering the highest peak by 20m. An estimated 14million cubic metres of rock and debris travelled 7.3km from its source at an approximate speed of 400-600km/hr.



11 Tasman Glacier Lake
This lake formed in 1991 and has been growing ever since. The icebergs, which are clearly visible from the air, have taken about 500 years to travel from the neve at the top of the Tasman Glacier to where they appear today. Underneath this lake the ice is still over 200 metres thick.

12 Mackenzie Basin
Approximately 14,000 years ago the ice that covered this area from the last Ice Age began its retreat – today golden tussock and grasslands cover the glacial deposits that remain clearly visible from the air. Dramatic ice-carved landscape, subtle ever-changing hues, and air of exceptional purity – just some of what make the Mackenzie so special.

13 Tasman Glacier
20 kilometres long with ice up to 2,600'/800m deep, the Tasman is easily New Zealand's longest glacier. Moraine (rock & gravel scraped or fallen from the valley walls) covers the ice for much of its length. At its terminus is a glacial lake 150m deep and lined with ice, feeding into the huge braided Tasman River and then into Lake Pukaki.

14 The Murchison Glacier
16 kilometres long, the Murchison is New Zealand's second longest glacier. Flowing in parallel valleys, the Tasman and Murchison Glaciers are separated by the Malte Brun range, dominated by Mt Malte Brun at 10400' (3,170m).

15 The Godley Glaciers
Located at the headwaters of the mighty Godley River, you will see the isolated Classen and Godley Glaciers. At their bases are the large terminal lakes – frozen over during the winter months. In summer you can see icebergs floating in the lakes that have broken off the glaciers, melting to feed the Godley River.

16 Head of the Tasman Glacier
The mighty Tasman is the largest glacier in New Zealand, starting at Hochstetter Dome and flowing 29km down the Tasman Valley past Mt Cook. With 50 metres of annual snow fall covering a base of ice up to 800 metres deep, mountain huts and vast snowfields ensure the upper reaches of the glacier remain popular for skiing and climbing.

17 Franz Josef Neve
After crossing the Southern Alps (Main Divide) you will see the Westland National Park spread out below and on a clear day 300km of coastline. At the head of the glacier is the beautiful Geikie Snowfield, famous for high altitude cross country skiing. The snow and ice in the neve below is nearly 1000 metres deep. An annual rainfall of 15 metres, most of which falls as snow at this altitude, has been recorded in this area.

18 Franz Josef Glacier
Plummeting steeply westward, this magnificent glacier descends almost to the Tasman Sea at a recorded rate of up to 4 metres per day. It takes about five years for ice to flow from neve to terminal. Successive layers of snow are compressed into hard ice in the neve and the glacier begins to flow down-valley (because of gravity) like a 'river of ice'. The uneven valley floor and movement causes crevasses and pinnacles (seracs) to form.

19 Franz Josef Village
Carved into the native rainforest and located just 5 km away from the terminal face of the Franz Josef Glacier is the Franz Josef Village (population ~330). The village is named after the Franz Josef Glacier – itself named by Julius von Haast in honour of the Emperor of Austria. The village origins go back to the gold rush era in the late 1800's - today tourism keeps the village flourishing.

20 Lake Mapourika
On the final part of our descent you can see Lake Mapourika out to the North. It is the largest of the West Coast lakes, a glacial formation from the last ice age. Since the water from glacial melts no longer drains into the lake, it is filled with fresh rain water which runs through the surrounding forest floor collecting tannins, giving it its dark colour. The surface of this typically calm lake gives a wonderful reflection of the surrounding forest.

THE GRAND TRAVERSE