



DARK SKIES. UNFORGETTABLE NIGHTS.

NZ GUIDED TOURS

TRADE MANUAL SOUTHERN SKIES EXPERIENCE

Follow the trail. Find your southern sky.

INTRODUCING NZ'S ONLY

SOUTHERN SKIES STAR TRAIL

PRIVATE ASTRONOMY, ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY & STARGAZING



Introduction from Rachel

Profile

Our CEO is Professional Guide and Photographer Rachel Gillespie who owns NZ Travel Adventure and lives between North Canterbury and Kaikōura. Rachel has been a guide and photographer for many years, starting her career in Kaikōura, then the Mackenzie Country and has returned to Kaikōura and Canterbury in recent years with the love of the town where the mountains meet the sea and the magic of the dark skies. We also offer guided walking tours for groups.

We are available year round with the autumn & winter months the best for the night sky viewing. Stargazing is available in several locations on our star trail. Rachel takes mostly private tours.

We also guide the summer season with Cruise New Zealand contracts with various ships in Kaikōura and Timaru with a team of contract guides including Rachel's family - headed up by Shona Gillespie who has over 30 years experience in the outdoors. Our Kaikoura brand is Kaikoura Stargazing.

Our family has grown up in the outdoors so we have many stories to share of the magic of the land, now with three generations of the family involved in the business this is often a real gem that customers love about coming out with us, people born on the land.

We pride ourselves in the integrity our business holds and the tours we offer.
All images in the manual are the work of our guides



Rachel Gillespie



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www.southernskiesexperience.co.nz

About the Star Trail

New Zealand's dark skies are among the finest in the world — and we know them intimately. Our star trail spans four remarkable regions: the coastal ranges of Kaikōura, the remote wilderness of the West Coast, the dark skies of Canterbury, and the rolling landscapes of Waikato — and the trail is still growing.

Whether you want to simply lie back and lose yourself in the Milky Way, hear the ancient stories written in our skies, or learn to capture the night through your own lens — we have a tour that's made for you. Follow the trail. Find your southern sky.

All of our guides are local professional stargazing trained or astrophotographers. Our website also has an education component and daily weather updates built in.

Check more on profiles on our website for regions we are currently running with our 4 experts and assistant guides, all tours have two guides

Kaikoura Stargazing - James Moffat Astronomer & Guide, & Rachel Gillespie

West Coast Stargazing - Kassandra Lynne, Professional Photographer

Waikato Stargazing - Meghan Maloney, Professional Photographer

Canterbury Stargazing - Rachel Gillespie & Jessica Gillespie Guides

<https://southernskiesexperience.co.nz/about/>



Book a tour, if the weather is not favourable clients can transfer to one of our other locations along the trail, our aim is to ensure they get to see the dark skies on their holiday adventure.

Some customers like to go stargazing at more than one location also.

Full refund is otherwise given.



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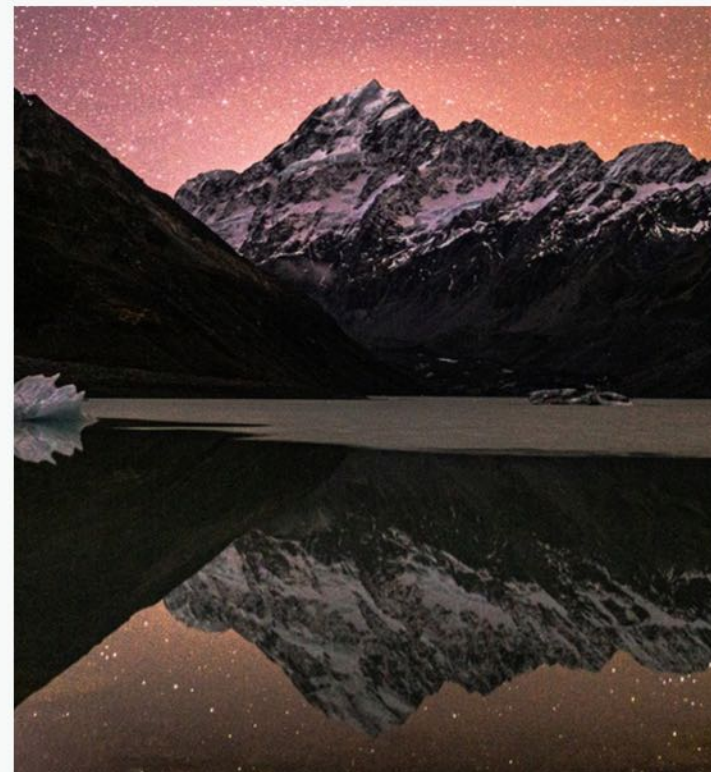
Guided Tours & Stars

We are a South Island company and take bespoke guided tours and photography workshops as well as the product below

Head office is at our Kaikōura Base - with tours in all regions listed. Southern Skies Experience is our star trail.

AS A GROUP WE HOLD A DOC LICENCE FOR 130 SOUTH ISLAND TRACKS, INCLUDING FIORDLAND, WEST COAST, CAITLINS, QUEENSTOWN LAKES, NORTH ISLAND FOR BESPOKE TOURS

- Guided Walking Tours - Kaikōura and Hooker/Tasman Valley
- Astrophotography Private Tours in dark sky areas - various
- Stargazing Dinner (Groups) and Picnic - 2 options
- Stargazing Experience all regions



Our mission is to take you to the most beautiful spots in town, and share the local story



Guided Walks & Stars

Health & Safety

The safety of our customers and guides is utmost of importance

A risk disclosure document is required and available as a PDF

We have a commercial licence to guide on 130 South Island Department of Conservation locations under our sister company Southern Photography Adventures Limited

We are Qualmark Silver accredited

Transport is included in some of our tours

Weather permitting for night tours



Kaikōura International Dark Sky Sanctuary + Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve



Stargazing Experiences

Kaikōura Base - Kaikoura Dark Sky Sanctuary

West Coast, Reefton Greymouth & Hokitika Bases

Waikato Base - Cambridge & Rotorua

Canterbury Base - all Canterbury incl Aoraki & Tekapo

Queenstown & Central Otago - TBA

- Detailed product pages follow

Stargazing Tour - Stargazing Guide
Duration: 90min-2 hours - Group size 4-12 pax
Naked eye stargazing & astro selfie

Stargazing Dinner KAI PŌ - Chef & Stargazing
Duration: 4-5 hours - Group size 12-24 pax
Star viewing talk & astro selfie image

Private Astrophotography Adventure
Duration: 4-6 hours - Group size 2-8 pax
Astrophotography Tuition & Photography

Stargazing Picnic KAI WAHO
Duration: 2 hours - Minimum 2 pax
Star viewing talk & astro selfie, platter



Private Tour



Stargazing Manakau Lodge



KAI WAHO - NIGHT SKY
STARGRAZING PICNIC & WORLD CLASS NIGHT SKIES



KAI PŌ - KAIKŌURA
OUTDOOR DINING & WORLD CLASS NIGHT SKIES

Guided Walks

Kaikoura ONLY

We have several bespoke options available for our customers, please enquire for your quoted itinerary.

Below are the published walks we are offering as group tours.

We have a 1:10 guide ratio or 2:25 for larger groups.

Prices for heli flights are quoted at the time of booking and no commission is added onto these flight costs.

Our guided walks can also include a photography component for those interested and have their own camera as an add on.

- Detailed product pages follow

Half Day Guided Walk - incl refreshments
Duration: 4 hours - Group size 4-24 pax
Kaikōura, Hooker Valley, Lake Tekapo

Full Day Guided Walk & Photos incl Lunch
Duration: 7-8 hours - Minimum 3 pax - 24
Kaikōura, Hooker Valley, Lake Tekapo

Private Heli Flight & Guided Walk
Duration: 4-6 hours - Group size 2-4 pax
Kaikōura, Aoraki Mt Cook, Lake Tekapo



Photography Tours

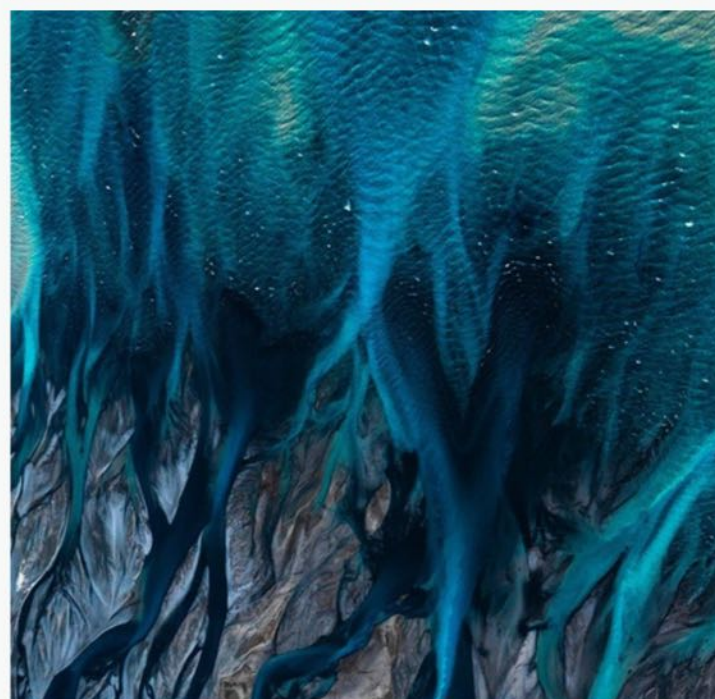
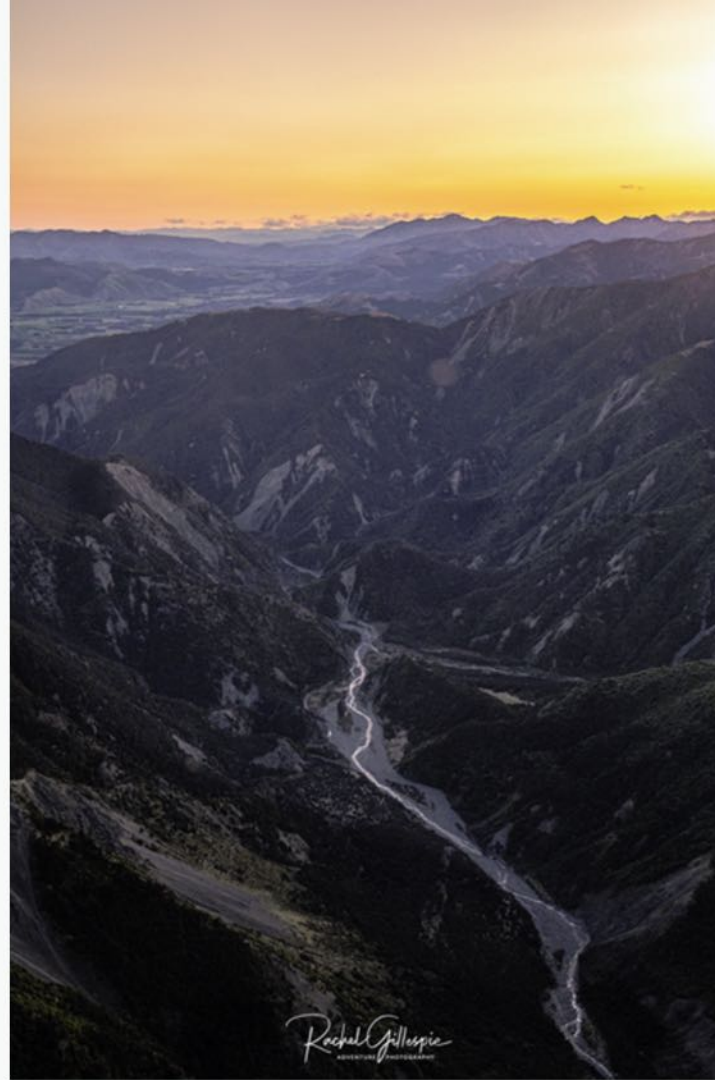
Photography workshop day or multi day adventures Kaikōura and many locations NZ wide

We specialise in 4-10 day workshop tours
4 day tours Kaikōura and Mackenzie
10 day tours South Island options

Your hosts Professional Photographers Rachel Gillespie or Meghan Maloney

Helicopter or small plane Photography Flights Kaikōura and Lake Tekapo/Aoraki Mount Cook, Queenstown, Fiordland

Rachel Gillespie
PHOTOGRAPHY



Multi Day Photography Workshop + Flights
Duration: up to 10 days - Group size 4-12 pax
Kaikōura, Aoraki, Fiordland, West Coast

Full Day Private Photography Tuition
Duration: 8 hours
Kaikōura, Aoraki Mt Cook, Lake Tekapo



GUIDED WALKS, NIGHT SKY TOURS & STARGRAZING

DETAILED PRODUCT INFO

TRADE MANUAL SOUTH ISLAND



Stargazing Kaikōura

Kaikōura Base - Kaikōura Dark Sky Sanctuary & Town

TOUR 1A

Our night time private experiences can be tailored to suit any customers level of knowledge and/or astrophotography

Naked Eye Stargazing, telescope, small group

Stories of our land and sky

Chair, blanket, refreshments

A star selfie professional image

Option to make a photo with your own camera

note Milky Way Galaxy visible New Moon Phase March-Oct

Half/Full Moon (quite light less stars visible)

up to 2 hours, option to leave after 90 minutes if not wanting to make a photo, transport available from shop

Every clear night, booking required in advance



Private Land Kaikōura Peninsula Site



Manakau Lodge Site



Fyffe Historical House Site

Stargazing Tour

Duration: 90min-2 hours - Group size 4-12 pax

Naked eye stargazing, telescope & astro selfie

Astrophotographer Guide

GROUP TOUR

Transfer on the trail if cloudy night available

Shop in town

38 West End meeting location



Stargazing West Coast

West Coast, South Island Base - Kassandra Lynne

TOUR 1A

Our night time private experiences can be tailored to suit any customers level of knowledge and/or astrophotography

Naked Eye Stargazing, small group

Stories of our land and sky

Chair, blanket, refreshments

A star selfie professional image

Option to make a photo with your own camera

note Milky Way Galaxy visible New Moon Phase March-Oct

Half/Full Moon (quite light less stars visible)

up to 2 hours, option to leave after 90 minutes if not wanting to make a photo

Every clear night, booking required in advance



Stargazing Tour

Duration: 90min-2 hours - Group size 4-12 pax

Naked eye stargazing & astro selfie

Astrophotographer Guide

GROUP TOUR

Transfer on the trail if cloudy night available

Te Aka Treehouses site



Stargazing Waikato

Waikato, North Island Base - Meghan Maloney

TOUR 1A

Our night time private experiences can be tailored to suit any customers level of knowledge and/or astrophotography

Naked Eye Stargazing, small group

Stories of our land and sky

Chair, blanket, refreshments

A star selfie professional image

Option to make a photo with your own camera

note Milky Way Galaxy visible New Moon Phase March-Oct

Half/Full Moon (quite light less stars visible)

up to 2 hours, option to leave after 90 minutes if not wanting to make a photo

Every clear night, booking required in advance



Magellanic Cloud Galaxies from our site



Stargazing Tour

Duration: 90min-2 hours - Group size 4-12 pax

Naked eye stargazing & astro selfie

Astrophotographer Guide

GROUP TOUR

Transfer on the trail if cloudy night available



Stargazing Canterbury

Canterbury, Christchurch, Aoraki, Tekapo Region

TOUR 1A

Our night time private experiences can be tailored to suit any customers level of knowledge and/or astrophotography

Naked Eye Stargazing, small group

Stories of our land and sky

Chair, blanket, refreshments

A star selfie professional image

Option to make a photo with your own camera

note Milky Way Galaxy visible New Moon Phase March-Oct

Half/Full Moon (quite light less stars visible)

up to 2 hours, option to leave after 90 minutes if not wanting to make a photo

Every clear night, booking required in advance



Stargazing Tour

Duration: 90min-2 hours - Group size 4-12 pax

Naked eye stargazing & astro selfie

Astrophotographer Guide

GROUP TOUR

Transfer on the trail if cloudy night available



Stargazing Picnic

All Bases - Groups or Private - MOST POPULAR TOUR 1B - PLUS KAI WAHO PICNIC PLATTER

Our night time private experiences can be tailored to suit any customers level of knowledge and/or astrophotography

Naked Eye Stargazing, small group

Stories of our land and sky

Chair, blanket, food platter

A star selfie professional image

Option to make a photo with your own camera

note Milky Way Galaxy visible New Moon Phase March-Oct

Half/Full Moon (quite light less stars visible)

up to 2 hours

Group Prices and Private prices are on the pricelist

Every clear night, booking required in advance

Stargazing Picnic KAI WAHO

Duration: 2 hours - Minimum 2 pax

Star viewing talk & astro selfie, platter

Astrophotographer Guide

GROUP TOUR

Lake Tekapo and Aoraki Option available on request



Kaikōura
STARGAZING & ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY

Stargazing Dinner

**Kaikōura Base - Kaikoura Dark Sky Sanctuary & Town
TOUR 2 - STARGRAZING DINNER - MANAKAU LODGE**

5 STAR DINNER OUTDOORS

Executive Chef dinner, some drinks included under the Night Sky plus stargazing with Pro Astrophotographer on our team for an incredible experience, all year round.

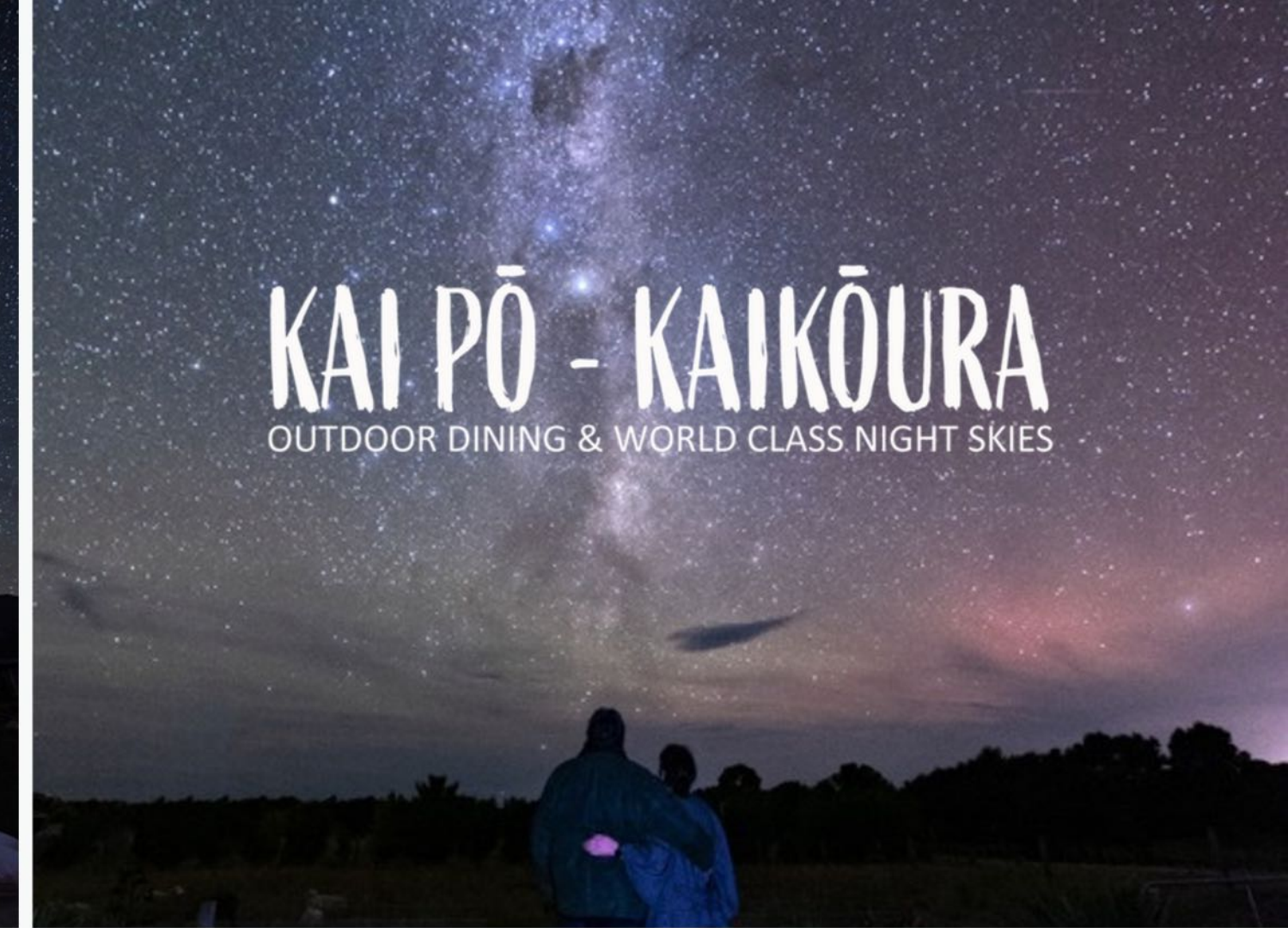
Advanced booking required

Private booking option available for minimum rate

Other regions available by enquiry.



Manakau Lodge Site



KAI PŌ - KAIKŌURA
OUTDOOR DINING & WORLD CLASS NIGHT SKIES



Stargazing Dinner KAI PŌ - Chef & Stargazing
Duration: 4-5 hours - Group size 12-24 pax
Star viewing talk & astro selfie image

Astrophotographer Guide
GROUP TOUR

Lake Tekapo and Twizel Option available on request



Astrophotography Adventure

TOUR 3 - NEW ZEALAND WIDE

South Island many locations available - please enquire
Private Astrophotography Tour taking Photos of the Night Sky
New Moon Phase 5 days either side (dark) Stars Milky Way is
visible from March-Oct for darkest skies
OR Half/Full Moon Photo Experience

This is with one of our Pro Photographer Team or one of our
photographers at this level may be substituted for certain
dates and regions

We also run the EcoZip Kaikōura Starflight with Gavin Oliver

Advanced booking required

Astrophotography Adventure

Duration: 4-6 hours - Group size 2-8 pax
Astrophotography Tuition & Photography

Astrophotographer Guide

GROUP TOUR

Kaikoura base, Mackenzie and New Zealand available



Starflight Kaikōura





Exclusive Lodge Private

PRIVATE LUXURY TOUR AT A DARK SKY ACCOMODATION TOUR 4

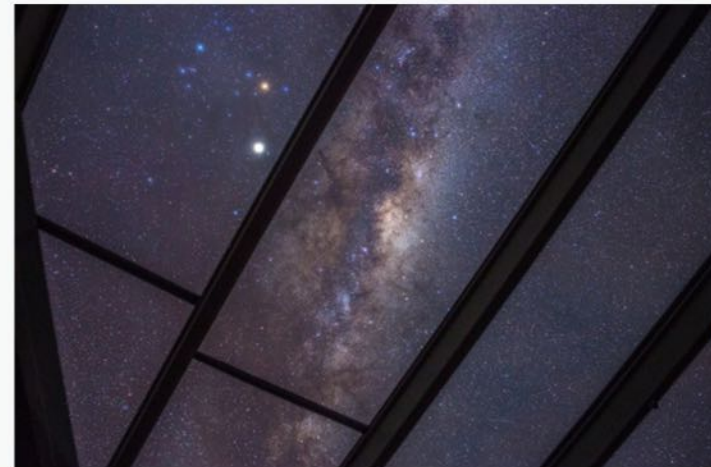
Private in house tours are available at your lodge if it is based in a dark enough region with one of our top guides in the comfort of your stay without having to leave the property.

Please enquire for more private information or refer to our pricing document. Private Astronomer can be hired for this.

Places like Lakestone Lodge, Hapuku Lodge and Lindis Lodge have been past customers

Stargazing, Astronomy & Astrophotography options

Please contact us for forward booking as these are limited.





Astrophotography Full Night

TOUR 5 - EXCLUSIVE TUITION

Private Full Night Guided Tours Astrophotography Tuition
South Island - multi-days available - Enquiry for more detail

Up to 8 hours plus 2 hours processing next day or multi day

Option to change locations due to weather

This is with Pro Photographer Rachel Gillespie or one of our photographers at this level may be substituted for certain dates and regions

Advanced booking required

Astrophotography FULL NIGHT

Duration: 8 hours - Group size 1-2 pax
Astrophotography Tuition & Photography

Astrophotographer Guide

PRIVATE TOUR

South Island available





Guided Group Walks

TOUR 6 - HALF DAY GUIDED WALK - not exclusive

KAIKOURA, HOOKER VALLEY/ TASMAN VALLEY

Includes tea or coffee
A light snack
Guided walk and history talk

TOUR 6 - HALF FULL GUIDED WALK - not exclusive

KAIKOURA, HOOKER VALLEY/ TASMAN VALLEY

Includes tea or coffee
A light snack
Guided walk and history talk

Half Day Guided Walk - incl refreshments
Duration: 4 hours - Group size 5-24 pax
Kaikōura, Hooker Valley, Lake Tekapo

Full Day Guided Walk & Photos incl Lunch
Duration: 7-8 hours - Minimum 4 pax - 24
Kaikōura, Hooker Valley, Lake Tekapo

Professional Walking Guides
GROUP TOUR





Guided Private Day Walk

- **TOUR 7 - Private Full day Guided Tours Walking, HeliHike option and/or Photography Tuition - Exclusive Private**
- **South Island - multi-days available**

Goodie Bags

Refreshments / Lunch

Option to change locations due to weather

Bespoke itinerary

Can include heli flight additional cost with South Pacific Heli

At Kaikoura this walk half or full day can be pickup at Hapuku Lodge and Treehouses as a helihike option with dropoff on private Kaikoura Peninsula Site or pickup at the Kaikoura Airport site - itinerary on request available



Full Day Guided Walk & Photos incl Lunch

Duration: 7-8 hours - Minimum 1-2 pax

South Island

Professional Walking Guide

PRIVATE TOUR



Kaikoura Half Day Hike

TOUR 8 - Kaikōura Half Day Hike - Medium Fitness or more Half day Private Guided Walk

Drop off point South Bay Reserve beside Maui the Maori Archway and toilets. Guided walk around Kaikoura starting from South Bay Reserve, over the hill through tree track and up to the Kaikoura lookout point. Down Dempsey's Track and along the beachfront to Fyffe Historical House for a short viewing and historical story telling. Walk to Point Kean Seal Colony to finish if fitness (medium) allows, or pickup at Jimmy Armers Beach where you will see the old whale bone remnants

Morning tea included along the way in gourmet snackbox with a juice

Pickup Point Kean - transfers not included



Full Day Guided Walk & Photos incl Lunch

Duration: 4-5 hours - Minimum 1-2 pax

South Island

Professional Walking Guide

PRIVATE TOUR

Add on HeliHike



THANK YOU WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORK WITH YOU

HAPPY TRAVELS