

The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.

tour highlights

- Experience high country life
 - Unsurpassed hospitality
 - Home cooked meals
 - Soaring landscapes
 - Snow capped ranges
 - Open tussock tundras
- Experienced attentive guide

tours run

Tours run: November - April (Tuesdays weekly)

tour cost

2019 / 2020

Starting in Christchurch: NZD\$1895

options & supplements

Single Supplement: NZD\$395

fast facts

Custom Groups: Options are available for this tour*

Tuatara Tours does not require single travellers pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

We suggest flying in the night before the tour departs, however if you plan to fly into Christchurch on the morning of the tour then you need to have landed and be in arrivals by 8:30am. Your guide will then come and collect you as the tour is leaving town. We don't recommend catching flights on the same day as the tour departs or finishes.

*Please enquire for further information



the tour

The Mesopotamia High Country Walk is an awe-inspiring four day fully guided walking tour, which includes Mesopotamia High Country Station and the spectacular Peel Forest Scenic Reserve. You will be captivated by the grandeur of soaring landscapes, snow-capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock-covered tundra. Be inspired by stories of hardship and survival, explore the land New Zealand's pioneers fought to tame, and enjoy the peace and isolation of one of this country's most iconic high country farms- the true Middle Earth.

terrain/access

The Mesopotamia High Country Walk takes you across Mesopotamia High Country Station, a privately owned, family run farm originally established by the English writer Samuel Butler in 1860 and purchased by the current family in 1945. This is not a public trail; we walk over farm tracks, paddocks and tussock lands as we explore the farm. Walks can include some hill climbs, small stream or creek crossings and walking on varied and uneven terrain, so is classified moderate.

at a glance

DAY 1 CHRISTCHURCH TO MESOPOTAMIA STATION

DAY 2 MESOPOTAMIA STATION

DAY 3 MESOPOTAMIA, PEEL FOREST, MT SOMERS

DAY 4 MT SOMERS, HAKATERE, CHRISTCHURCH



Activities:

Accommodation: Walking
Farm Cottages
& Lodge

Trip Duration: 4 Days, 3 Nights
Grade: Moderate

The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.



frequently asked questions

What do I carry while on my tour and what happens to the rest of my luggage?

On a walking, cycling or kayak tour your extra luggage will be transported for you each day to your accommodation that night. All you need to have with you is your daypack with your lunch, clothing requirements, camera and incidentals. For cyclists, this can be left in the support vehicle while you are cycling as this is always close by for ready access. Please ensure the luggage you are sending on ahead is limited to one item and is packed in an easily transported overnight bag or suitcase.

On a hiking tour where huts and lodges are less accessible by vehicle, you may be asked to carry your own luggage for some or all of the days of the tour, please refer to your itinerary for details. For this reason we recommend you pack as lightly as possible and carry only the items suggested on your gear check list. For any of our tours, we recommend the use of a waterproof pack liner to keep your personal items as dry as possible.

Do I really need thermals and a fleece, even in summer?

Yes, as some of the areas visited can be exposed, and New Zealand weather can be notoriously changeable, you must be prepared for all weather conditions.

what's included

- Accommodation
 - Double or twin share, if single room accommodation is requested, an additional fee per person is payable to cover the private room cost for the duration of the walk.
 - Nights 1 and 2: Farm Cottages on Mesopotamia Station. Originally housing farm workers, the cottages now host hunters, tramping parties and family groups. Each cottage has 3 bedrooms, a communal lounge and kitchen, and a shared bathroom. Basic but comfortable high country accommodation in keeping with the location and feel of the tour.
 - Night 3: Private stand-alone studio chalets with ensuite bathrooms, in a quiet rural setting. Restaurant and bar on site.
- Food
 - You will enjoy great local cuisine; continental breakfasts and hearty packed lunches during the day, and either restaurant meals or wholesome home-cooked fare prepared by your host/ hostess in the evenings. If you have any dietary issues or food allergies, we are happy to cater for these, please advise the office of details when you make your booking. Alcohol is not included in the tour cost, but is available for purchase on night 3. You are welcome to bring a small amount with you for personal consumption on the other nights if you prefer.
- Luggage
 - Tuatara Tours transports all your luggage for the duration of the tour.
 - All you carry is a small day pack with your personal gear, drink and lunch. We do the rest
- Tour Kit Bag - Exclusive to Tuatara Tours
 - To ensure you get the very best out of your journey with the least of fuss, we provide you with a calico kit bag full of useful goodies.
 - This will be given to you at the start of your tour.
- Safety and Risk Management
 - To ensure maximum safety for all, our guides are certified first aiders and fully qualified drivers. Tuatara Tours operate under a Safety and Risk Management Plan which is regularly audited and approved by a qualified and independent auditor.
- An experienced guide
- All transport
- Access and Concession fees paid to the Department of Conservation
- NZ Goods and Service Tax (GST)





The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.

frequently asked questions

How many people are in each group?

Typically, we take a maximum of twelve people on each tour. We feel this gives you the best opportunity to gain as much from your experience as possible and keeps the feel of each tour relaxed and friendly. We are happy to discuss options for groups of more than twelve with you.

Can I come on my own?

Yes. If you are happy to share a room, we can pair you with another tour member of the same sex, otherwise on some of our tours you can request a single room to yourself. Please note, there is an additional single supplement fee for single room accommodation if requested and not all private rooms will have ensuite bathroom.

How fit do I need to be?

The main purpose of a guided tour is to enjoy your surroundings and learn from your local guide, it's not a race, however the more you can prepare for a tour, the better the experience will be for you. As a general guideline we suggest the following activity level guide for our tours.

Easy: An average level of fitness, Walk 7km, Bike 15km on well-formed tracks and roads with very little incline.

Mild: An average level of fitness, Walk 12km, Bike 25km on well-formed tracks and roads with average incline.

Moderate: An above average level of fitness, Walk 20km, Bike 45km on formed tracks and roads with some average to steep inclines at times.

Challenging: An above average level of fitness, Walk 20+ km , Bike 50+km on partially formed tracks and roads, some off-road , some steep inclines, some easy river and creek crossings.



itinerary

Day 1 Christchurch to Mesopotamia Station 8km of Walking

After meeting your fellow walkers and your guide for the next four days, you depart Christchurch and enjoy a scenic drive out across the Canterbury Plains to Mesopotamia High Country Station, situated at the headwaters of the mighty Rangitata River.

The drive takes approximately 2 hours and on arrival at Mesopotamia High Country Station you will collect your packed lunch and your walking gear and head out for today's walk, a journey across "The Brabazon", one of the large blocks of farmland on the Mesopotamia property. Your walk takes you up and back into the hills behind the Mesopotamia Homestead, with stunning views back down the Rangitata River Valley, over the surrounding mountain ranges and on to the Southern Alps in the distance. You will enjoy your picnic lunch beside one of the many small streams or on a comfortable tussock cushion as you take in the view.

After lunch, you continue to explore Mesopotamia Station. Keep your eyes peeled for a variety of small sub alpine plants, birds and butterflies, and if luck is on your side, a sighting of a deer in the wild.

Returning late afternoon to the cottages, you will have time to freshen up before a hearty home cooked dinner prepared by your hostess and a relaxing evening in front of the fire with your fellow walkers.

Day 2 Mesopotamia Station 16km of Walking

After breakfast we head out to continue exploring Mesopotamia Station. Today's walk concentrates on the trails around the homestead, and along the top terraces of the station, with a backdrop of the majestic "Two Thumbs' mountain range of the Southern Alps. From here you can admire the views that attracted the writer Samuel Butler to the region, and which was the inspiration for his satirical novel "Erewhon".

Mesopotamia Station covers an area of 25,000 acres and is home to over 11,000 merino sheep, 3,000 farmed deer and 500 beef cattle. The circular route today will take you from your accommodation, through the game park where you are likely to see magnificent fallow deer, red deer, chamois, thar and elk, and back to the cottages mid-afternoon, where you can relax until dinner. For those keen to explore further, the farm outbuildings, the local school house and the site of Butler's house all make for interesting historical landmarks.

You will again be accommodated in the cottages of the Mesopotamia Station.





The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.

frequently asked questions

Some tips for training:

Undertake your training using the clothing and footwear you intend to complete the tour in, this will give you the opportunity to make sure they will be suitable for the purpose and to break in your foot wear so as to avoid any discomfort. Train with your pack or day pack on so you get used to bearing the weight and include a variety of terrain in your training including hills and off road. As much as we'd like to we can't guarantee fine weather on your tour so don't hesitate to get outdoors and train on the rainy days as well.

What will the weather be like?

New Zealand is known to have four seasons in a day so you should always be prepared for sudden changes in weather or temperature and have the appropriate gear with you at all times. Rain can be expected at any time throughout the year.

Spring (September-November) and Autumn (March-May) are generally cooler months for experiencing the outdoors with temperatures averaging 15-25 degrees during the day.

Summer (December-February) is usually warmer with averages of 20-30 degrees and longer sunshine hours due to daylight saving. As New Zealand has very little air pollution, UV rays are strong during the summer months and a good sunscreen and a hat are recommended for outdoor activities during the heat of the day.



itinerary cont'd

Day 3 Mesopotamia, Peel Forest, Mt Somers 9km of Walking

After breakfast we take a short walk to the final resting place of Dr Andrew Sinclair, botanist and Colonial Secretary to the New Zealand Government. Dr Sinclair was travelling with his good friend, the geologist Julius Von Haast, when he was swept away and drowned in the flooded Rangitata River, beside which he now lies.

Mid-morning we prepare to leave Mesopotamia Station and drive to Peel Forest, where you will walk the trails of the Peel Forest Scenic Reserve. Many of the original settlers of the region are buried in the small stone church that the original owner of Mt Peel Station, J.B A Acland, gifted to the community. We make a short stop at the church on our journey through to Peel Forest this morning.

Your walk today takes you on a journey through the Reserve, with its canopy of towering podocarps, rich in bird life. The Reserve has 500 hectares of virgin native forest, with several totara trees said to be around 1000 years old. Its mild moist climate is also ideal for ferns and around 36% of all native ferns grown in New Zealand are found in this area. You will be refreshed by the sound of birdsong and the fresh, cool air of the forest.

This evening we relax and dine at a comfortable country lodge and chalets in Mt Somers

Day 4 Mt Somers, Hakatere, Christchurch 16km of Walking

Today is our last day in the High Country, and our longest day of walking. After an early breakfast in your chalet, we journey by coach to the head of Lake Clearwater, travelling up the northern side of the Rangitata River Valley. Originally Butler's Mesopotamia Station stretched over both sides of the river and today we explore the area at the top of the river, referred to more commonly these days as Middle Earth. Our walk takes us out from Lake Clearwater, up into a tussock covered mountain valley to the shoreline of Mystery Lake, where we picnic beside the lake. Keep your eyes peeled for brown trout, the lake is a well-kept secret for local fisher folk.

Returning from Mystery Lake we follow the ridgeline down above the Potts River, with amazing views of the valley below, a fantastic panorama back over Mesopotamia Station and the area we have travelled over the last 4 days.

Your return to Christchurch is around 7pm so if you are considering flying home today, please make sure you book a late evening flight to ensure you have plenty of time to spare.





The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.

responsible travel

None of us could deny the benefits of travel in broadening our horizons and our way of thinking about the world we all share; travel breaks down barriers and provides valuable insights into other ways of life, it challenges us to step outside our comfort zone and to learn from those around us.

Our responsibility as participants in this journey is to acknowledge our impact on the environment and the communities in which we travel and to consider our individual contribution now and for the benefit of future generations.

We are Qualmark endorsed; New Zealand tourism's official benchmark for environmental standards and quality control. Wherever possible our company utilises local products and services, we support conservation efforts to preserve our natural and cultural heritage and we respect and care for the unique environment we travel in. Make your commitment to responsible travel with us.

trip grading

To determine the grade of a particular adventure we consider a number of factors.

These include the condition of the terrain, the altitude, the number of pass crossings and the length of the trip.

The Mesopotamia High Country Walk is graded moderate. An above average level of fitness, Walk 20km, Bike 45km on formed tracks and roads with some average to steep inclines at times.

adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are mentally flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise.

If you are uncertain about your suitability for this tour, speak with us and we can help guide you in the right direction

pre and post tour accommodation

If you would like some help booking pre/post tour accommodation we can help

Contact us at

- ▶ New Zealand: 0800 377 378
- ▶ Australia: 1 800 044 633
- ▶ World: +64 3 962 3280
- ▶ Email: info@tuataratours.co.nz
- ▶ Web: www.tuataratours.co.nz

what's not included

- ▶ pre and post tour accommodation
- ▶ alcoholic drinks with meals
- ▶ personal expenses
- ▶ gratuities, tipping is not expected in NZ but gratefully received. It is at your discretion whether or not to reward for excellent service

custom tours

▶ We Can Customise Existing Tours To Suit.

You may want to spend an extra day or you may want to add kayaking to your tour!

▶ We Can Design A New Tour Just For You.

We have years of experience in creating custom-made tours for groups, so if you are planning a tour for your friends, family, club, corporate workplace....Contact us now.





The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.

have you considered?

New Zealand Walking Tours

The Akaroa Walk
 The Franz Josef Trail
 The Mesopotamia High Country Walk
 The Queen Charlotte Walk
 The West Coast Trail
 The Kaikoura Trail
 The Kenepuru Trail
 The Hump Ridge Track Walk
 The Coromandel Explorer Walk
 The Tongariro Crossing Walk
 The Lake Waikaremoana Walk
 The Abel Tasman Walk - 3 Days
 The Abel Tasman Walk - 5 Days
 The Abel Tasman Walk/Kayak - 3 Days
 The Abel Tasman Walk/Kayak - 5 Days

New Zealand Hiking Tours

The Heaphy Track
 The Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk
 The Stewart Island Track
 The Tongariro Crossing Walk

New Zealand Cycling Tours

The Hanmer Cycle Trail
 The Kaikoura Trail
 The Kenepuru Trail
 The Tekapo Canal Trail
 The Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail
 The Molesworth Cycle Trail
 The Westland Wilderness Cycle Trail
 The Otago Rail Trail

Japan Walking Tours

All of these tours and more available at
www.tuataratours.co.nz



pre tour checklist

Please ensure you have the following compulsory items for your walk:
 Gear will be checked prior to departure.

- Medium size day pack with waterproof liner
- Waterproof rain jacket with hood
- Boots or sturdy walking shoes, preferably with ankle support
- Woollen (merino) or polypro thermals (top and bottom)
- Polar fleece jacket or top
- Warm hat and gloves-fleece or woollen
- Pair of shorts / long trousers (preferably quick-dry fabric, no jeans)
- Woollen or thermal socks-three or four pairs

The following are highly recommended but not compulsory:

- Walking poles (we have these available if you need them)
- Waterproof over trousers
- Gaiters
- Swimsuit
- Sun hat and sun glasses
- Spare boot laces
- Pair of light shoes or sandals for the evening
- A change of clothing for the evening
- Sunscreen, insect repellent
- Personal first aid items-including blister block or foot fleece
- Personal toiletries
- Small torch
- Camera
- Water bottle (we supply you with one bottle, but you may wish to bring another.)

We do not recommend you walk in cotton garments, jeans or silk. These fabrics take much longer to dry after perspiration or wet weather and you may feel damp and cold, even inside the best raincoat.

Plan around three layers of clothing, your inner or core layer which should be wool (merino) or polypro to trap warmth against the skin, a middle layer, and a top waterproof layer to protect from rain and wind.





The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.

Tuatara Tours - experienced and innovative!

Tuatara Tours is an experienced and innovative walking and cycling adventure company, based in the South Island of New Zealand. The vision at Tuatara Tours is to encourage as many people as possible to be involved in fun, adventure and the outdoors. We ourselves walk, run, mountain bike, road bike and occasionally participate in multi-sport adventure races... to the best of our ability. We are not champions – but we are out there! We understand the outdoors and we revel in the country, people and climate that we work with

our team is here to provide the best experience - high quality tours

We only have one world and we have to share it with each other. Much of the attraction for our clients is to experience unspoiled and un-crowded landscapes. It is our challenge to ensure that in this sharing of the experience, we minimise where possible, the impact of our business.

Through the introduction of strict environmental guidelines, we minimise our impact on the environment we live and work in.

subscribe to our newsletter

Our newsletter will be emailed to you monthly on the first working day of every month.

- latest trips
- travel advice
- events & attractions
- and more!

Go to www.tuataratours.co.nz and click the free subscription button.

how to book

Go to www.tuataratours.co.nz and click the enquiry button and submit your booking request using the form provided.

We enjoy talking to people about their travel interests. So feel free to contact us directly if you'd rather not fill out a form.

- ▶ New Zealand: 0800 377 378
- ▶ Australia: 1 800 044 633
- ▶ World: +64 3 962 3280
- ▶ Email: info@tuataratours.co.nz
- ▶ Web: www.tuataratours.co.nz





The Mesopotamia High Country Walk



Experience soaring landscapes, snow capped mountain ranges and wide open tussock covered tundras.

Tuatara Conservation

Tuatara Tours are proud to be actively involved in Tuatara Conservation.

Tuatara Tours has formally adopted "BP" a male juvenile tuatara who resides at Orana Park in Christchurch and is part of the conservation programme to ensure the safe future of these amazing reptiles.



country information

Culture

New Zealand has a diverse multi-cultural population, the majority of whom are of British descent. New Zealand's indigenous Maori make up around 14 percent of the population. The culture of its indigenous Maori people affects the language, the arts, and even the accents of all New Zealanders.

New Zealanders embrace new technology and culture, but they also have a background of quiet but rugged individualism, self-reliance and a passion for invention. Many New Zealanders travel extensively and thrive on learning and experiencing other cultures. They are renowned for their openness, ingenuity and "easy-going" nature.

Environment

Fourteen spectacular national parks preserve New Zealand's natural heritage enshrining a huge variety of landscapes, vegetation and wildlife, New Zealand encompasses rich farmland, mountains, rivers and unsurpassed scenery. The country is slightly bigger than the UK in size. Three-quarters of the population live in the North Island with more than a third of New Zealand's population living in the largest city, Auckland.

The South Island - with its lakes, fiords and spectacular outdoor scenery is the most popular destination for tourists. The gateway to the South Island is Christchurch - a city of approximately 340,000 people.

Recreation

New Zealand's stunning landscapes, lush forests, amazing wildlife and pleasant climate make it a haven for many outdoor activities, and a great place to relax and enjoy life. New Zealanders love the outdoors, especially tramping, camping, skiing and snowboarding. Sailing, surfing and swimming are also favourite pursuits. New Zealand's sports and recreation facilities are inexpensive, abundant and very accessible.



The Mesopotamia High Country Walk

4 Days of Walking



Southern Alps

Lake Tekapo

Brabazon

Mesopotamia

Mystery Lake

Lake Clearwater

Rangitata Gorge

Peel Forest

Staveley

Rakaia River

