

mt ruapehu & the three rivers



trip highlights

Enjoy Heartland NZ cycleways through the Manawatu and Whanganui regions

Stay 2 nights in the quaint ski village of Ohakune on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu, an active volcano and the North Island's highest mountain

See the magical Whanganui River up close by bike, jetboat and canoe

Explore the fascinating history surrounding the mighty Whanganui, Whangaehu and Rangitikei Rivers as they flow from the Volcanic Plateau and Ruahine Ranges to the Tasman Sea

Enjoy the remoteness of Makoura Lodge, situated on a high country station owned by the McIntyre family for over 125 years



Trip Duration	6 days	Trip Code: MRR
Grade	Moderate	
Activities	Cycling, hiking, canoeing, jetboat	
Accommodation	5 nights lodge/motel	

Kia ora from Adventure South

Thank you for your interest in our Mt Ruapehu & the Three Rivers adventure. It's a superb adventure and we hope you can join us. Adventure South has been operating active holidays throughout New Zealand since 1992. Thanks to our experience we're confident to say that we offer the very best cycling, trekking and adventure travel itineraries available in New Zealand today.

There's simply no other collection of New Zealand itineraries that can match the geographic coverage, originality and overall quality of our active New Zealand adventure holidays. An Adventure South holiday aims to take you beyond the more popular and busy trails to provide you with a truly unique New Zealand wilderness experience.

We're here to show you that there are many, many more trails and cycling routes in our great country that are the new frontiers in adventure tourism - beautiful, scenic, and without the crowds. We aim to explore these delicate environments in a sustainable manner to ensure we leave as little impact as possible from our visit. We'd be honoured to introduce you to the wide variety of natural wonders that New Zealand is famous for. Go forth, go south - join us on this amazing small group, value packed adventure!

why travel with Adventure South?

"Small Groups, Great Guides, Superb Holidays."

This comment encapsulates an Adventure South active holiday in New Zealand. The phrase was not born from a long and tortuous strategic planning process, it came from a client review! We could not have said it any better. Our client feedback also confirms that what helps make our holidays different are the quality of our professional guides. They share their humour, compassion and wilderness experience to ensure that you have a great vacation and the right degree of personal challenge.

On an Adventure South tour you can also expect the right, proven equipment is provided for your tour; the food is delicious, plentiful and can be catered to your dietary requests; your guides are all First Aid trained; that the itinerary you have chosen has been carefully crafted from decades of personal experience in the New Zealand wilderness, not from a guide book recommendation.



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If you are travelling alone, we will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveler of the same gender and if we cannot 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. Please refer to our website for the additional cost.

You will need to arrive into Taupo at the latest, the night before the start of the trip. At the end of the final day, you will be dropped back to Taupo; please plan to stay overnight if you're traveling on by plane and book your departure flight no earlier than the following day. You will need to make your own accommodation arrangements in Taupo for the night before the trip and the night of the last day.

trip dates

2026 18 Oct - 23 Oct

2027 31 Jan - 05 Feb
10 Apr - 15 Apr

important notes

HS - Holiday Season
H - High Season

the trip

Explore untouched hinterland and stunning back country rides on this remarkable tour exploring the Manawatu/Whanganui region in the Lower North Island. The region is dominated by the Volcanic Plateau, an active volcanic and thermal area including the North Island's 3 active peaks, Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe. We'll also experience the 'spine' of mountain ranges running through the middle of the central North Island, with gentle rolling farmland on both sides coupled with mystical native forests and fast flowing rivers, which run from the Volcanic Plateau and Mountain spine out to the Tasman Sea.

Our journey begins in the shadow of the highest mountain in the North Island, Mt Ruapehu, following a delightful back country cycle route traversing quiet valleys and the Volcanic Plateau to the ski town of Ohakune on the slopes of the active volcano.

2 nights staying on the Volcanic Plateau provides opportunity to spend a full day adventuring in the Whanganui National Park, exploring the River by jet boat and canoe through gorges and amongst native bush. We follow our on-water adventure with a cycle alongside the River on a delightful back country road finishing in the coastal town of Whanganui.

From here we head into the hidden gem of the Manawatu region for 2 days to ride past soaring cliffs and lush farmland against the dramatic backdrop of the Ruahine Range.

Starting and finishing our trip in the town of Taupo, on the edge of the lake of the same name, provides opportunity to extend your holiday and spend a couple of days exploring New Zealand's largest lake and surrounding adventure playground.

about your leader/escort

Our guides are one of our biggest assets and we pride ourselves on their level of quality and high standards. You will have two experienced members of our guiding team. You'll know you're in safe hands as all of our guides are certified in first aid and CPR and many of them are trained bike mechanics. They come from all walks of life but our guides have a common desire to give you the best possible experience, fun and lots of fond memories to take home with you.

at a glance

DAY 1	BRIEFING; BIKE FIT; TAIHAPE TO OHAKUNE HEARTLAND RIDE : UPTO 53KM, 909M
DAY 2	OHAKUNE - WHANGANUI RIVER ADVENTURE
DAY 3	CYCLING THE WHANGANUI RIVER ROAD : UPTO 54KM, 727M
DAY 4	WHANGANUI TO HUNTERVILLE : CYCLE UPTO 73KM, 1145M
DAY 5	MANAWATU CYCLEWAY (HEARTLAND RIDE)
DAY 6	MANAWATU TO TAUPO : UPTO 60KM/ 876M CYCLE ON MANAWATU CYCLE

what's included

- Tasty breakfasts (x5), lunches (x3), dinners (x3) catered to all dietary requirements
- 5 nights comfortable motel/lodge accommodation on twin share basis
- Whanganui Jetboat & canoe River Adventure
- Transport pick up from and drop off to one central Taupo location
- Pre departure information kit to help you plan and prepare
- Concession fees paid to the Department of Conservation

what's not included

- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- All beverages (other than breakfast or trailside)
- Bike Hire (available to rent)
- International or domestic flights and taxes



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fast facts

Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:

Expert local leader

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

responsible travel

We all have a responsibility to minimise the impact we have on the environment and communities we visit when we travel.

Since our beginnings this has been a cornerstone of our company.

The New Zealand travel industry has become a world leader in developing an external audit process which monitors tourism businesses based on quality, safety and sustainable experiences.

We're very proud to have received a Gold Qualmark rating, having met standards designed to protect what makes New Zealand unique and special.

Being responsible when we travel isn't about a single process or project but rather a way of thinking and then doing.

We started this journey many years ago and although we are not perfect, we are striving to continually learn and improve.

trip grading

- Airport Arrival and departure transfers
- Water bottle (help us save the environment and bring your own bike drink bottle)
- Personal expenses (eg. phone calls, internet, laundry, shopping etc)
- Travel insurance

detailed itinerary

DAY 1 Briefing; Bike Fit; Taihape to Ohakune Heartland Ride : Upto 53km, 909m

Welcome to Aotearoa New Zealand and your North Island Adventure!

Meeting at a central location in Taupo, we'll start with a short tour briefing, load up and head off to Taihape, the Gumboot Capital of New Zealand (taking approx 2.5 hours).

After a bike fitting, safety briefing and a picture by the gigantic iron Gumboot, we head off on our first ride to the ski village of Ohakune, also known as the Carrot Capital of New Zealand.....

The ride traverses quiet valleys and the Volcanic Plateau following a series of backroads, both sealed and gravel, with the main attraction of the ride being the delightful landscape. On a clear day the views of the active volcano, Mt Ruapehu, are outstanding as we approach Ohakune.

Ohakune's claim to being the Carrot Capital reflects the importance of market gardening in the area, but perhaps of more interest is its proximity to Tongariro National Park and the skifields on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu.

On arrival, we'll settle into our accommodation before enjoying our first group dinner

Cycle : Taihape to Ohakune Heartland Ride : Up to 51km, +819m, 39% gravel

meals: D

DAY 2 Ohakune - Whanganui River Adventure

The Whanganui National Park is a special place which was created to protect the upper reaches of the Whanganui River. Once an important transport route for both Maori and early European settlers, the river flows from Tongariro National Park to the Tasman Sea through wild lowland forests.

Today's excursion on the Whanganui River will be a truly memorable excursion. A short transfer to Pipiriki and we start our adventure with a 55 minute jet boat journey upriver 32 kms to the Mangapurua Landing, through an area of spectacular natural features with deep river gorges covered with lush native vegetation. From the drop off, it's an easy grade 40 minute walk following in the footsteps of the early pioneers along the old roadway to the "BRIDGE TO NOWHERE" . Here you will stop for lunch on this historical monument of a bygone era and learn the history from your local guide.

The next part of your adventure is an easy grade canoe back down the Whanganui River to Pipiriki, through a landscape of remote hills and bush clad valleys. We'll pass through the scenic gorge of the Manganui o te Ao River and the Ngaporo and Autapu rapids should provide some 'gentle' excitement. More exotic trees and farmland, an eel weir and the Paparua rapid follow before reaching the boat ramp below Pipiriki village. A short transfer back to Ohakune for a second night.

Cycle : No cycling today - jetboat and canoeing

meals: B,L

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Moderate

The trip is graded moderate. You will need a good level of fitness and we suggest 2-3 hours of cycling three times a week for the three months leading up to your trip. You will need to be able to cycle 50-60km each day for the Standard itinerary, and as much as 90km on the longest day of the Avid itinerary. The on-road sections will have low to moderate traffic levels on back-roads.

Riders need to be confident riding with some traffic. Ebikes are suitable if ridden appropriately and battery life is managed (i.e. not on turbo the whole time, and in the correct chain ring for climbing hills). The tour is fully supported and if at any stage you feel like having a rest from cycling you will be able to ride in the support vehicle.

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 trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

DAY 3 Cycling the Whanganui River Road : Upto 54km, 727m

Today we're back on our bikes to complete our adventure in the Whanganui National Park. We head back to Pipiriki and ride south along the Whanganui River Road, a fully sealed road but gently undulating with a couple of challenging ascents near the start and finish.

The effort, however, is well worth it, not least of all for the elevated views along the river, but also for the many Maori and European heritage sites along the way. Between them, they tell quite the story of New Zealand's early settlement, beginning with early Maori for whom the river was a primary highway.

Major landmarks include Hiruharama (Jerusalem), a Catholic Church and convent built at the end of the nineteenth century and the restored Kawana Flour Mill, built in 1854.

We finish the day in the picturesque riverside city of Whanganui, one of the first cities to be founded in NZ. Dinner at your leisure tonight with plenty of options.

Cycle : Back country roads, 100% asphalt

Standard : Pipiriki to Upokongaro 62km, +955m

Avid : Pipiriki to Whanganui 72km, +1140m

meals: B,L

DAY 4 Whanganui to Hunterville : Cycle Upto 73km, 1145m

Mainly following quiet country roads through farmland, the Three Rivers Heartland Ride connects arty Whanganui and the rural hub of Hunterville, making for a picturesque journey passing through heartland Rangitikei. The Three Rivers route traces historic stock routes as it winds its way north to the Volcanic Plateau. Highlights include Whanganui's quirky Durie Hill elevator, tunnel and tower; and pretty rural scenes.

From Hunterville it's about an hour's transfer to Makoura Lodge, located on a high country station on a remarkable slice of rural New Zealand's landscape. The property has been owned by the McIntyre family since 1896 and our hosts are the 5th generation on the property.

Cycle Options : Back country roads

Standard : 62km, 890m, 100% asphalt

Avid : 73km, +1140m, 25% gravel

meals: B,D

DAY 5 Manawatu Cycleway (Heartland Ride)

This morning we enjoy a delightful ride mostly on the Manawatu Cycleway. This area is rich in native bush and lush farmland and there are some amazing photo opportunities as you wind your way down into the Pohangina Valley and follow alongside the Pohangina River on the western flank of the Ruahine Ranges.

Head down past the historic Komako St Bartholomew's Church, a beautiful building that has served as a place of worship for around 100 years.

We'll enjoy a picnic lunch in the rural village of Kimbolton, renowned for its world class gardens and quaint country charm and also pass through Apiti, known as the gateway to the Ruahine Ranges.

We return to Makoura Lodge for a 2nd night, with our final group dinner to be enjoyed.

Cycle Options : Back country roads

Standard : 53km, 733m, 16% gravel

Avid : 85km, +1183m, 21% gravel

meals: B,L,D

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DAY 6 Manawatu to Taupo : Upto 60km/ 876m Cycle on Manawatu Cycle

Today we stay off the beaten track on another scenic and often surprising journey through rural Manawatu, full of natural wonders and local history.

We wind our way up the Mangawharariki Valley, following deep sided Papa cliffs with wide ranging views to the Ruahine Ranges and vistas of snow covered Ruapehu in the distance.

The ride includes stunning climbs and descents overlooking the Kawhatau River and meanders through pretty valleys and native bush.

This will be a memorable final ride, after which we have a 2hr 30 min drive back to Taupo, where you will be dropped in a central location early evening.

Cycle Options : Back country roads

Standard : 60km, 876m, 27% gravel

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

cycling

We believe that cycling is one of the best ways to see a country. Our cycling trips have been well researched to take you on the best routes which blend tranquil secondary roads with gravel backcountry roads and some designated cycle trails. On the route you will see incredible scenery and landscapes, view the well known sights, eat delicious food, stay at unique accommodation and meet the locals.

You will be an experienced road cyclist, gravel biker or mountain biker wanting to ride longer distances. Stronger riders can challenge themselves by cycling the whole route whereas recreational cyclists can still enjoy these tours using the support vehicle to transport riders to the best cycling sections. Distances are usually around 60-120km per day with significant elevation gain, so you will be used to riding hills, have a good level of fitness and riding skill.

We have two different styles of bikes available for hire, or you are welcome to bring your own bike. We have a new fleet of Avanti Grandurance 3 gravel bikes for hire. With carbon forks, 22-speed gearing, hydraulic disc brakes and proven Shimano GRX componentry they offer a fast, safe and comfortable ride. We also offer quality Sinch eBikes to provide people who might need a little pedalling assistance the opportunity to enjoy our cycling holidays. Our eBikes provide around 80kms of pedal assistance before requiring a recharge, you would need to be able ride conservatively to be able to complete the full ride on longer days. Riders will need the fitness and skills to not continually use the 'boost mode'.

Please see our website for the cost of bike hire, all our rental bikes can be fitted with flat pedals or MTB SPD pedals. We can fit your own pedals and seat if you have a favourite. Our gravel bikes do not have rear racks, but a seat post mounted rack or a handlebar bag can be provided if you require one to carry any personal items. A bicycle helmet will be supplied with all bike rentals. All equipment and luggage will be carried by the support vehicle.

These cycling journeys are not designed to be a marathon event and no one needs to feel under pressure to ride, everyone is able to ride at their own pace. If at some time you do not wish to ride, the vehicle is available for you and your bike, although there may be some sections where the vehicle is not present. Remember that cycling involves some physical exertion and some pre trip preparation will help towards making your cycle tour a more enjoyable experience. Cycling, of course, is an active pursuit and to maximise your own personal protection in case of a tumble or fall, the wearing of a bicycle helmet is compulsory at all times while cycling. Fluro cycle vests and/or brightly coloured cycle jerseys are highly recommended to increase your visibility, one can be supplied if you do not have one of your own.

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country information

Stretching North to South for over 2000 km, and split into two main islands - the North and the South Islands - New Zealand is a country of diverse landforms. From the Pacific Island beaches and rolling farmlands in the north, to the volcanic plateau and then onto the soaring mountains within view of the sea in the south, and the sub-Antarctic islands that dot the South Island coastline, the contrasts are many.

The South Island is the 12th largest island in the world. The west coast is dominated by the Southern Alps, which contain more mountains than the European Alps altogether, and home to New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki Mount Cook (3754m / 12,316 ft). The Main Divide, the chain of peaks that forms the backbone of the Alps from Arthur's Pass to Fiordland, splits the South Island into east and west. Several ice ages, and the fact that two continental plates are sliding past each other forming the Southern Alps, means that the scenery is as rugged as the New Zealand fauna and flora is unique. The largest city in the South Island is Christchurch.

The North Island is the smaller of the two main islands of New Zealand. Its northern location means it enjoys a warmer, more temperate climate than much of the South Island, and is much more vastly populated. The centre of the island is primarily a volcanic landscape with vast forests, volcanic peaks, and picturesque lakes. The eastern side of the island is covered with vineyards. Auckland, also known as the 'City of Sails', is the largest city of New Zealand and found on the North Island.

With a population of 4.0 million people, the wilderness areas of New Zealand are many as most 'Kiwis' now live in an urban situation near the coast. The Maori are the indigenous people of the land and they named it Aotearoa 'Land of the Long White Cloud' upon their arrival 1000 years ago. Europeans settled in the early 1800s and the country is alive today with a market driven economy and a blend of European and Asia/Pacific influences to create a buoyant South Pacific culture.

climate

As a general rule, November to April are the most ideal months for travelling in New Zealand's stunning outdoors. One of the most important things travellers need to know about the New Zealand climate is that it's a maritime climate, as opposed to the continental climate typical of larger landmasses.

Thanks to its position in the path of the 'Roaring 40s' and mountainous terrain, New Zealand's weather can frequently change with amazing rapidity. Because the weather can change so unexpectedly you should be prepared for sudden changes in temperature and weather conditions. This basically means having a good waterproof jacket and some warm clothing. You don't need to bring your winter wardrobe but a good fleece or jumper are a must.

Northland is located in what is often referred to by New Zealanders as the Far North, or, because of its mild climate, the "Winterless North." The region of Northland has a sub-tropical oceanic climate with warm humid summers, warm dry autumns and mild wet winters. Due to its latitude and low elevation, Northland has the country's highest average annual temperature. However, as with other parts of New Zealand, climate conditions are variable. In summer, temperatures range from 22 °C to 26 °C, occasionally rising above 30°C.

a typical day

Each day will be different but you can expect to make the most of every daylight hour! Cycling will obviously be the main feature of every day and there are 2 ride options on most days. Whilst technically relatively easy there are hills and gravel terrain to keep you focused and the stunning scenery will be a great distraction. Breakfasts will be at your accommodation or a nearby cafe, packed lunches at scenic spots along the way and dinners in local restaurants.

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dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

accommodation on the trip

The accommodation for this trip is of a good standard and has been carefully selected to provide comfort and great hospitality in the best locations possible. The accommodation is on a twin share or double room basis with ensuite facilities. If you wish to reserve a room to yourself a single supplement is available at extra cost. Please note: although every endeavour is made to stay at the accommodation detailed in the itinerary, occasionally, due to seasonal shortages, we need to use other accommodation of a similar standard.

pre and post tour accommodation

You will need to stay overnight in Taupo the night before before the start of the tour. We would advise choosing a central location as the pick up location will be close to the town centre. If you would like some help booking pre/post tour accommodation speak to our staff as they can help with different suggestions.

joining instructions

On the first day of the tour, you will meet your guides and fellow travelers at a central city location in Taupo, at a time to be advised. Please be dressed to cycle and have any items you may need during the day in a day bag, including any personal saddles or pedals you would like fitting to any hire bikes. If you miss your flight or are unable to reach the meeting point on time, please call us at the Adventure South NZ office (Free phone in NZ 0800 00 11 66 or 03 942 1222).

equipment provided

HYBRID BIKE (Additional Charge)

Our new fleet of Avanti Discovery hybrid mountain bikes combines the best characteristics of a hybrid bike and a mountain bike to give you a great ride and comfort on gravel and asphalt back country roads. This bike has a more upright riding style meaning you can still take in the amazing scenery you'll encounter along the way.

These bikes have 29" wheels, suspension forks and suspension seat posts to iron out the bumps and hydraulic disc brakes give responsive braking.

They are also available in a low rise, also known as a step through bike frame, please specify on your booking form.

GRAVEL BIKE (Additional Charge)

On gravel cycling tours our gravel bikes provide the ultimate cycling experience. The drop handle bars offer multi hand positions. Our bikes have wider 32mm tyres and disc brakes which are safer and better suited to NZ road conditions. They have a relaxed geometry and wide range



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rear cassette to suit people with varying levels of cycling experience and for longer cycle touring routes.

ELECTRIC BIKE (Additional Charge)

Our Sinch e-Bikes are perfect for cyclists that may require a little assistance on their travels. Pedalling our e-Bikes is easier on knees and joints than riding a traditional bike. They provide up to 100kms of pedal assistance before requiring recharging. Very simple to operate and they provide people with varying levels of cycling experience, health and fitness levels the opportunity to enjoy our cycling holidays.

ACCESSORIES

Bikes can be fitted with flat pedals or MTB SPD pedals. A bicycle helmet will be included with your bike rental, along with a 15L saddle bag for personal items you might need in the day.

what you carry

The tour is fully supported so you won't have to carry anything! If hiring one of our bikes it will have a small rear saddle bag with enough space to put an extra layer, your camera, wallet, phone etc. We recommend you pack your luggage in a soft sports bag for easy stowing in the trailer/vehicle. Please keep your luggage to a minimum.

equipment required

A hybrid or gravel bike is recommended and both are available to hire. If bringing your own bike, please ensure it has been recently serviced and is in good mechanical order with new brake pads, sealant if tubeless and ideally new tyres. Your guides will carry bike tools and basic repair equipment, but please bring any spare parts that are specific to your bike such as inner tubes, brake pads, hangars and spokes. Ebikes are also acceptable but likely only suitable for the Standard itinerary unless the battery is well managed. A good quality helmet is also recommended. A comprehensive gear list will be provided closer to the date of departure.

protecting the environment

In a world where more and more rubbish is produced every year we are trying to do our little bit to help the planet. We encourage you to please bring your own water bottle. If you are a keen coffee or tea drinker you might like to bring your own reusable cup, as there are a few opportunities along the tour to get take-away drinks. Also if you think you might do some shopping, it could be useful to carry small foldable reusable shopping bags to reduce the need for plastic bags.

how to book

To book an Adventure South holiday, you can book directly online or you will need to complete a booking form (found at the back of our brochure). You can also download a copy from www.adventuresouth.co.nz/Contact/How-to-Book. On completion, please fax, scan/email or post the form to Adventure South or your nearest World Expeditions office, along with your non-refundable deposit. If you're coming from outside New Zealand contact your nearest World Expeditions office or travel agent for assistance with your travel arrangements including flights, travel insurance and additional accommodation or just for some information in your time zone.

ADVENTURE SOUTH CONTACT DETAILS

Toll Free from New Zealand: 0800 00 11 66

Toll Free from Australia: 1800 10 70 60

Toll Free from the USA: 866 479 9827

All other countries please dial: +64 3 9421 222

Australian Travel Agents: 1300 904 454



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Email: info@adventuresouth.co.nz

WORLD EXPEDITIONS WORLDWIDE OFFICES

UK: Toll free within UK 0800 0744 135 or + 44 (0)20 8545 9030

North America: Toll free 1800 567 2216 or 613 241 2700

Australia: 1300 904 454