

SKIING NEW ZEALAND 2003

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Here is a list of things that I need to know from each of you **as soon as possible**:

1. Is there anyone else you know that would like to go? If so that's no hassle but please get them to answer the following questions as well **as soon as possible**.
2. Can you take about 7-8 days off in August?
3. Can you or do you prefer to take off mid-week – i.e. starting Tue/Wed?
 - o Internet bookings I don't think make much of a difference on departure date, but when I see a travel agent, could make a bit of a difference.
4. Do you mind taking Freedom Air considering their flight times?
5. Do you mind flying to Christchurch and going for the scenic drive?
6. Which accomodation do you prefer given the options? or are there other ones you may know about?
7. Any other things you want to let me know about or ask me questions about.

I will collate all of these and try to decide as soon as possible what is best. I will get a closer costing as soon as everyone who wants to go states their opinion. It's kinda funny how doing this stuff generally works out cheaper than quotes that tour operators have given me.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Important things to note

- ❑ On currency conversion, I have been using a rate of AUD\$0.90 per NZ\$1.
- ❑ Prices (as far as I know) are GST inclusive. If someone knows of any other taxes that I may have missed out please let me know.
- ❑ The final cost is dependent on what everyone wants to do, and how many people are going to go in the end.

2.2 Skiing in New Zealand

There are many places in New Zealand to ski, but for the most part, I think that Queenstown on the Southern Island will be the ski place of choice. Since we will probably have a group of some sort, then the lifestyle that Queenstown supports will be most suitable for all of us as there will be something to do for everyone.

There will be two mountains that we will be able to ski from Queenstown. It should be noted that there are no resorts that are located on the mountain, implying that we will need to have some form of transport to the ones that we are interested in going. The descriptions of the two mountains are provided below. There is also Mt Hutt, which apparently is as close to Queenstown as The Remarkables, but seems pretty far on the map. I have included its stats as well for completeness.

Table 1: Comparison of the Queenstown mountain ranges

	Coronet Peak	The Remarkables	Mt Hutt
Beginner's Terrain	20%	30%	25%
Intermediate Terrain	45%	40%	50%
Advanced Terrain	35%	30%	25%
Operating Hours	9am to 4pm	9am to 4pm	9am to 4pm
Longest Run	1.8km	1.5km	2.0km
Distance from Queenstown	25 minutes (18 km)	45 minutes (22km)	25 minutes (26km)
Night Skiing	Mid July to late Sept (Fridays and Saturdays 4pm – 10pm)	-	-

The other mountains on the southern island (in particular Cadrona and Treble Cone) are a little further away from Queenstown and are probably ones that we can go without.

Thoughts: We will probably have a rental van and select the mountain that we want for the day. My suggestion is to hit 'The Remarkables' for the first two days as a warm up to skiing. It's a good place for people to learn and its slopes are more catered for that level. The next few days we can try Coronet Peak and/or split to whichever one is more suitable.

2.3 Value Tours

I had a look at the value tours, and there doesn't seem to be many good values. Things to note with many of the packaged tours:

- ❑ The ticket they normally bundle can normally be used on multi-mountains. Whilst this is convenient, you also generally pay a premium for this type of ticket. It is my opinion that when we get there, we can buy them for each day/week depending on where we want.
- ❑ If you want tickets, you normally plan for them in advance. I'm not sure if everyone will want to ski for the entire period we are there. More likely there will be at least one day

where you may not want to. Therefore it will work out better if we just buy the ticket when we get there.

- Packages you see advertised normally cover the flight, accommodation and the car hire. All other things, they can organise but I have seen that the prices are generally the same (and usually quoted in \$AUD).

3 TOUR DETAILS

3.1 Introduction

This section will discuss each of the major factors that we need to consider on our ski trip. These include:

- ❑ When to go (Time Period)
- ❑ How to get there (Flights + Transportation)
- ❑ Where to Stay (Accommodation)
- ❑ What to Do (Ski Lift passes, equipment rental).

3.2 Time Period

Good coverage of snow on the mountains normally begins at the end of May. Mid June is when the ski season starts and goes until sometime in October. School holidays (high school) start in the last week of June and the first two weeks of July. University holidays cover this period, with some universities extending either side (UQ, for example, starts its second semester Jul 28).

Peak times are considered to be from the end of June to the end of August. This means that the flights to and from New Zealand will be most expensive during the months of July and August.

Thoughts: Early of mid august will give us the best skiing and lifestyle when we are over there. Going in August means that we will be paying the same amount of money, as if we were in July, but the crowds on the slopes will be much less.

3.3 Flights

There are two options for flying into Queenstown for skiing. The first option entails **flying from Brisbane into Queenstown direct**. The second option involves **flying from Brisbane to Christchurch and driving to Queenstown**.

3.3.1 Option A: Fly to Queenstown

This option involves flying to Queenstown directly. There are a limited number of flights from Brisbane, and they are starting to get pretty full. The airport is none too far from the centre of the city, but tickets return can be quite expensive.

3.3.2 Option B: Flying to Christchurch and driving to Queenstown

This option involves flying to Christchurch and driving down to Queenstown. This option works out cheaper (especially if we fly Freedom Air), but it does mean that we complete a 6½ hours drive to get to Queenstown. To check out the drive, visit this website:

<http://www.nzscenicroute.com/>.

Table 2: Comparison of Costs

	Queenstown	Christchurch
Cost	\$853	\$753.9 ¹ (-11.6%) or \$512.10 (-40%) ²
Drive to Queenstown City	10 minutes	

¹ According to Qantas (5 Aug to 12 Aug) for 6 people.

² According to Freedom Air (6 Aug to 13 Aug) for 6 people.

I think that Option B will work out to be better. I'm told that the drive is along a brilliantly scenic route and would let us see more of New Zealand. I think we will end up renting a van or something because we will need in Queenstown, so there won't be much more of an expense.

It will also let us effectively use up one of our days in New Zealand. For example, if we were to go to Queenstown direct, we would waste half our day, getting the rental, picking up equipment, tickets, checking into our lodging and we wouldn't be able to get a full-day of skiing in anyway.

3.4 Accommodation

There are many places to stay in Queenstown. The sort of accommodation that I assume that we would be looking for is some form of self-contained apartment. The ones that I have found to be the best so far are the following. These are ordered in respect to their decreasing costs.

3.4.1 Glebe Luxury Apartments

These apartments are right in the middle of the city, and a brief stroll to the lake. As expected, these apartments carry a bit more of a premium for its modern apartment facilities and location. We can expand to a 4 bedroom apartment if necessary here. See more details here: <http://www.theglebe.co.nz>

Daily Rates for the Glebe Luxury Apartments (NZ\$)								
Number of People	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Rate (Total) 2 Bed	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300			
Rate (pp) 2 Bed	\$ 150	\$ 100	\$ 75	\$ 60	\$ 50			
(Adjusted + 2 people)			\$ 75	\$ 60	\$ 50	\$ 43	\$ 38	
Number of People	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Rate (Total) 3 Bed	\$ 550	\$ 550	\$ 550	\$ 550	\$ 550			
Rate (pp) 3 bed	\$ 275	\$ 183	\$ 138	\$ 110	\$ 92			
(Adjusted + 2 people)			\$ 138	\$ 110	\$ 92	\$ 79	\$ 69	

If we had 4-6 people, we would be better suited for the 2 bedroom apartment. We'd only need to stay for 6 nights, so the costing here is max NZ\$450 (AUD\$405), min NZ\$300 (AUD\$270). If we had 7+ people, we would go to a larger apartment. This would be max NZ\$474 (AUD\$246.60) and gets cheaper depending on how many people stay.

It's a bit weird here how on the website, they don't charge more for each additional person like in other places. So take this into account.

3.4.2 Point Luxury Apartments

Two-storied 2/3 bedroom apartments by the lake. It is 1.5km from the heart of town, with a nice lake side walking track. See the details here: <http://thepoint.net.nz/>

Daily Rates for the Point Luxury Apartments (NZ\$)								
Number of People	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Rate (Total) 2 Bed	\$ 180	\$ 210	\$ 240	\$ 270	\$ 300			
Rate (pp) 2 Bed	\$ 90	\$ 70	\$ 60	\$ 54	\$ 50			
(Adjusted + 2 people)			\$ 45	\$ 42	\$ 40	\$ 39	\$ 38	
Number of People	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Rate (Total) 3 Bed	\$ 250	\$ 280	\$ 310	\$ 340	\$ 370			
Rate (pp) 3 bed	\$ 125	\$ 93	\$ 78	\$ 68	\$ 62			
(Adjusted + 2 people)			\$ 63	\$ 56	\$ 52	\$ 49	\$ 46	

If we had 4-6 people, we would probably be better suited for the 2 bedroom apartment. We'd only need to stay for 6 nights, so the costing here is max NZ\$270 (AUD\$243), min NZ\$240 (AUD\$216).

If we had 7+ people, we would go the larger apartment. This would be max NZ\$294 (AUD\$264.60), and gets cheaper as more people come on board.

3.4.3 Fernhill Apartments

A set of suites that is closer to town, (5 minute drive) which is not lake side. It is joined with a hotel so there are other facilities (fireside bar, spa/sauna that must be paid for). We can

expand to a 3 bedroom apartment if necessary here. See the details here:
<http://www.fernhillapartments.co.nz/>.

Daily Rates for the Fernhill Apartments (NZ\$)								
Number of People	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Rate (Total) 2 Bed	\$ 195	\$ 210	\$ 225	\$ 240	\$ 255			
Rate (pp) 2 Bed	\$ 98	\$ 70	\$ 56	\$ 48	\$ 43			
(Adjusted + 2 people)			\$ 49	\$ 42	\$ 38	\$ 34	\$ 32	
Number of People	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Rate (Total) 3 Bed	\$ 195	\$ 210	\$ 225	\$ 240	\$ 255			
Rate (pp) 3 bed	\$ 98	\$ 70	\$ 56	\$ 48	\$ 43			
(Adjusted + 2 people)			\$ 49	\$ 42	\$ 38	\$ 34	\$ 32	

Once again, got for 2 bedroom apartment for 4-6 people. Max rate for 6 nights is NZ\$294 (AUD\$264.60). Min rate for 6 nights is NZ\$228 (AUD\$205.20).
 If we go with 3 bedrooms for 7+ people, max rate is NZ\$209 (AUD\$183.60).

Note that I don't think that the website's rates are correct – especially considering that the 3-bedroom rates are the same as the 2-bedroom rates. I have emailed them, and are awaiting their response.

3.4.4 The Lofts

The Lofts Apartments – Another apartment set that is in the middle of Queenstown. These sets of apartments look a little older and has all the standard facility. Check it out here:
<http://www.lofts.co.nz/>

I am still waiting for a response to find out what their rates are.

3.4.5 Conclusion

The costs for the accommodation are of course variable, and depends on how many people we get. Though I am not anticipating huge numbers, we may want to split into two separate apartments if we have to. In general, I think that we will be able to fit more people into the apartment than specified.

There is always the lounge, and with a sleeping bag, there is always the floor. No doubt they can provide cots/foldable beds if we need it.

I am all for either the Glebe Apartments or the Point Luxury apartments. These apartments are much newer and (I think) a lot larger from the photos. The only bad thing I don't like about the Point is that it is a little out of town, but it is still cheaper. I'd like to hear your opinions on this.

Either way, though these are sort of premium apartments, I think that we will still get a pretty good deal with it.

3.5 Transportation

In order to get around Queenstown, and even to get to Queenstown, we will probably need to hire a car or something. Depending on how many people we have, we will probably either rent a van of some sort (perhaps maybe a minibus – though I think we may be better getting two vans depending).

Costs for the car will probably be around NZ\$115 or NZ\$110 a day. We will probably need it for the entire 7 days for a total of NZ\$805. So between 6 people, that's NZ\$134 or AUD\$120.75 for the week. The Toyota Previa (one of the Tarago-like) things, can fit up to 8 people, though I'm not sure if we want to do that. There will be other costs involved with petrol, but we will have to deal with that anyway. My proposition there is to put in a pool of NZD when we get there and we'll split it off as we go along.

3.6 Ski Tickets

Normal organisers sometimes package up the tickets with the deal, but I think we'll be best to wait until we get there. What happens is that if everyone buys a 5-day ski pass, we may not all want to go skiing for 5 days straight. Most tour operators charge us AUD\$1 for NZ\$1 when it comes to the price of those tickets as well. 5-day lift passes (as well as many other combinations) are available on site at a discount as well.

The booking of ski lessons and ski-lift passes can also be combined (at NZ rates over there) making it easier for everyone to pay for exactly what they want. I will coordinate with each of you individually to work out what you want.

3.7 Ski Gear and Skis

This is one of the least important factors to consider at this time because it is pretty cheap and everyone needs different things. There will be some people that only need to hire skis, other people who need to hire the clothing and stuff. Once we have decided on the important matters, I will try to work out where it is best to hire the stuff and we can go from there.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 My Opinion

For the best New Zealand experience, it is my opinion that we should do the following:

1. Fly from Brisbane to Christchurch on a Tuesday/Wednesday in early August. The reasons for this include:
 - o There will be many more flights available at a cheaper rate.
 - o Flying mid-week adds availability and is a little bit cheaper than flying near the end of the week. I hope to visit a travel agent once I have closer estimates of number to see if I can get cheaper rates than what I can on the Internet.
 - o It will give us an awesome way of seeing more of New Zealand than just the ski slopes.
2. Once we get to Christchurch, we will pack into our rental van(s), and head for Queenstown.
 - o Though the drive is quite long, I think it will definitely be worth it. There are many places to stop on the way to Queenstown that will add to a much more pleasurable experience.
 - o I have also heard that Christchurch is a good place to pick up good deals with ski rental gear and all that stuff. Either way, we can pick some stuff up for the trip and continue south.
3. Arrive at Queenstown and check into our units.
 - o As I mentioned, I am favouring either Glebe or The Point apartment complexes. They seem much nicer than the others I've looked at and are reasonable.
4. Settle in, and organise skiing for the next day
 - o I think after the long drive, I'm not sure if I would be up for skiing (you guys might be different) but the rest of the day could be used for organising (if we couldn't do this before) and picking up lift passes or lesson passes, or the ski equipment.
 - o Give us a chance to find our way around Queenstown, have a talk with the locals to find the best places to eat and entertain and find out more about the mountains we hope to go to.
5. Ski and/or do other things for 5/6 days
 - o Depending on how many people we have, we may have only one car. So it's probably better if we select the mountain that we want to go to for the day and go to that one.
6. Checkout from the unit, drive back to Christchurch and depart NZ.

4.2 Estimated Total Cost

This cost entails the most important aspects at this time and is what most other tours provide. This is basically the transportation and accommodation cost. Other items that will take up money include. I have no idea how much they might cost – a ball park figure (not based on anything at all) might be another AUD\$100/day.??? No clue really...

- Ski Equipment (Clothing/Ski/Snowboard)
- Ski Lift passes
- Food/Drink expenses
- Petrol

	Flying Qantas/AirNZ		Flying Freedom Air	
Flight	AUD\$760		AUD\$520	
Car Rental	AUD\$230		AUD\$230	
	Glebe	Point	Glebe	Point
Accommodation	AUD\$410	AUD\$300	AUD\$410	AUD\$300
Total Estimated Cost	AUD\$1,400	\$1,290	\$1,160	\$1050

4.3 Notable Notes ;-)

- Freedom Air airlines have the best prices, but some funny departure times. As long as everyone can cope with these times, then I think that's okay
 - The available flights they have depart Brisbane about 5:40pm – 6:30pm and arrive in Christchurch at around Midnight. Now, if we can pick up the car at midnight, then we can be in Queenstown sometime in the morning.
 - On the way back, they depart Christchurch around 6:20am and arrive in Brisbane around 8am-9am. I'm not sure how this would work, but we would probably need to checkout of our apartment sometime in the morning. We could either stay in Queenstown for a while, or do some other things and then drive back up. We would then need to drop off our car and check-in for the airport.
- Accommodation
 - Costs obviously (especially with Glebe) reduce as we get more people to join in. If we get too many, though, we need to split.
- Transportation
 - If we do intend to drive, we will probably need two drivers for every vehicle. I haven't driven in the snow before, but I am willing to if I need to. Please let me know if you are able to drive in NZ. I don't think that we need any special licenses.

5 ITINERARY

Here's the deal:

- Fernhill 3-bedroom apartments are not available for the month of August.
- Fernhill 2-bedroom apartments are only available for 1-7, 10-13, and 17-31.

So here is the proposed itinerary with the availability of apartments in mind. I have requested to be upgraded to a 3-bedroom one if anyone cancels.

The aim for this trip is to fit in the maximum amount of time over there, so I anticipate to take up two weekends doing this. Leave Friday (Aug 15) after work (a little bit earlier), arriving pretty much midnight. We will then depart NZ Monday (Aug 25) morning and arrive in Brisbane around 9am (thus probably starting work a little late).

The only issue if we leave Friday is that we won't have accommodation in Queenstown until the 17. Thus, I think we should take this opportunity to spend some time in Mehtven and ski Mt Hutt.

So the features for this itinerary are:

- Maximum amount of skiing (effectively 9 days skiing)
- We get to ski Mt Hutt

Not so great features:

- Pay for Bed and Breakfast stay
- Be picking up ski equipment twice (Methven/Queenstown)
- Arrive late to work on Monday (not that should be a problem right ; -))

Itinerary 1	
August 15	Depart Brisbane Friday night
August 16	Arrive Christchurch Midnight Pick up Car Drive to Methven (1.5 hours) Stay in a B&B/lodge/motel Check out Pick up ski/snowboard gear Ski Mt Hutt for the day Drop ski/snowboard gear off Dinner in town [Stay another night and depart early? Or don't bother] Depart for Queenstown after diner
August 17	Arrive 5-7am-ish Breakfast Drive to Mountain for the day Pick up ski gear Ski Check into Apartments
August 18 to Aug 24	Ski, do other stuff – Night Skiing here Fri/Sat too
Aug 24	Check out of apartments (morning) Ski for the day Finish early – drop off ski equipment Dinner in Queenstown Depart for Christchurch 9pm/10pm
Aug 25	Arrive in Christchurch 4am/5am Drop off car Check into airport Depart NZ at 7am Arrive Brisbane 9am Arrive work 10am/11am

5.1 Breakdown of Final Costing

5.1.1 Airfares

The airfares would stay the same per person AUD\$520 per person to get to and from NZ. I also found out that there is a NZ departure tax we must pay at the airport not included with the flight costs. This amount is NZ\$25.

5.1.2 Accommodation

There will now be two places where we will need to stay. These are detailed below

Methven

- ❑ Bed and Breakfast places go for around NZ\$40-NZ\$60 per person
- ❑ 1, maybe 2 nights
- ❑ Total per person for the week is NZ\$80 or NZ\$120

Queenstown

- ❑ Fernhill Apartments
- ❑ 2 Bedroom stayin with 4 people
- ❑ Rate is NZ\$195 for 2 + 3 @ NZ\$15 each
- ❑ Total is NZ\$240/night = NZ\$48 per person per night [**I am waiting for confirmation that prices are GST inclusive**]
- ❑ Staying from August 17 to August August 23 (7 nights/8 days)
- ❑ Total per person for the week is NZ\$336

Total is \$473.75 to \$513.75

5.1.3 Car Hire

- ❑ Car Hire is from Saturday Aug 16 to Aug 25 (9 days)
- ❑ Rental per day is NZ\$125 + GST = NZ\$140.625 = NZ\$35.16 per person per day
- ❑ Airport pickup fee is NZ\$17 = NZ\$4.25 per person
- ❑ Total for the week is NZ\$257 per person
- ❑ Ford Escape 4WD (a bit more expensive but safer)
- ❑ Booked through using the Oracle Reservation Number is C15227731E4 – Updated now to C1560153678
- ❑ Midnight pickup is okay
- ❑ Free ski racks
- ❑ Free ski chains
- ❑ 1 Free Ski Pass per day per vehicle.
- ❑ Unlimited Km's

We will be renting the car from Saturday August 16 until August 25 (9 days). Rental per day is NZ\$125 + GST = NZ\$140.625. There is the airport fee of NZ\$17 = NZ\$4.25 per person.

For 9 days, this ends up being NZ\$1285 = NZ\$321.25. New booking number is C1560153678

5.1.4 Totals

	AUD\$	NZ\$
Accommodation		416
Flights	520	25
Car Hire		257
Totals	\$520	\$698
AUD	520	628.20

Total AUD at 0.9 rate = \$520 + \$628.20 = AUD\$1148.20

So this price includes two more days of skiing, the departure tax and assuming we will stay two nights in Methven instead of just one. Things this doesn't include yet are: Ski/Board hire, Clothing Hire, Petrol, Ski Lift Passes, and food/entertainment.

A: Board, Lift Pass, Transport	\$140	\$90
B: Board, Lift Pass, Clothing, Transport	\$165	

Performance

	rate per day	1	2-5	6+
Skis, Boots, Poles		\$32	\$29	\$26
Skis or Boots		\$25	\$22	\$20
[Med Soft Flex Carving Skis]				

Executive

	1	2-5	6+
Skis, Boots, Poles	\$39	\$36	\$33
Skis or Boots	\$32	\$30	\$28
[Aggressive Flex Carving Skis for all mountain]			

Demo

	1	2-5	6+
Skis, Boots, Poles	\$49	\$46	\$43
Skis or Boots	\$42	\$40	\$38
[Specialised Freeride/Freestyle Skis]			

Ski Packages

	rate per day	Adult	Child
A: Skis, Lift Pass, Transport		\$125	\$75
B: Skis, Lift Pass, Clothing, Transport		\$150	

FREE hotel delivery!!!

-10% booked online

7 ITINERARY

7.1 Flight – Freedom Air

Confirmation Number: K1G5AE

Depart: Brisbane, Aug 15 Flight SJ914 @ 6:10pm (checkin 2 hours before)

Arrive: Christchurch @ 11:40pm

Depart: Christchurch, Aug 25, Flight SJ909 @ 6:55am (checkin 90 minutes before)

Arrive: Brisbane @ 8:50am

Departure Tax leaving NZ is NZ\$25.

New Zealand Phone Number: 0800 600 500 or +64 9 912 6801

Australian Phone Number: 1800 122 000

7.2 Fernhill Apartments

Sainsbury Road

Queenstown

New Zealand

Phone: +64 3 442 7107

Fax: +64 3 442 6498

Freecall: 0800 756 343

7.3 Car Hire - Hertz

Car Type: Ford Escape 4WD

Reservation Number: C1560153678 (old number was C15227731E4)

Australian Reservation Number: 133039

New Zealand Reservation Number: 0800 654 321

Details:

- Free Ski Racks
- Free Ski Chains
- 1 Free Ski Pass per day
- Unlimited Km's
- Total is NZ\$1285 – NZ\$125 + GST, + NZ\$17 airport fee
- Midnight Pickup is okay
- Does it have a tape or CD?

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Aug 25	Arrive in Christchurch 4am/5am Drop off car Check into airport Depart NZ at 7am Arrive Brisbane 9am Arrive work 10am/11am