



## HIGH PEAK

A Hunting Destination for the Discerning Few.

### Getting the most from your New Zealand hunting guide

So, here are the top ten High Peak tips for getting the most from your guide. These are based on around 26 years' experience of hunters from all walks of life and are relevant not only to New Zealand, but all guided hunting destinations.

#### 1. Do your research.

This is an obvious starting point and almost a pre-cursor to the point of this post, but it goes without saying that you need to pick the right outfitter / guide for your particular circumstances. New Zealand, like anywhere in the world, has a huge variance in hunting terrain, species, accommodations and guiding methods, so be clear about what it is you want and select your outfitter based on these criteria. And whatever you do, don't let price be the final decider – go with your instinct instead.

#### 2. Bring the right attitude.

Once you've made your choice of outfitter, you should enter into arrangements with an attitude of mutual trust and a focus on the same outcome (i.e. a successful trip in every respect). There is little point in undertaking a hunting trip without expecting that your guide will be doing his or her utmost to ensure you have a great time. To enter into an arrangement with an outfitter based on an element of suspicion or mistrust is starting on the back foot and it will never quite work.

#### 3. Be liberal with information about yourself.

The more detailed a picture you can paint of yourself, the better your guide will be positioned to deliver the experience you want. Obvious information about age, fitness and hunting experience is vital, but don't stop there – let them know how you like to hunt, what the best hunt you've ever had is and why, along with any stories or anecdotes that will give the guide an idea of the sort of individual they're dealing with. This is all part of the process of getting to know one another before you arrive, and is an excellent ice-breaker.

#### 4. Be clear on what you want.

You'll probably have a pretty well-defined idea in your mind about the hunt, [trophy\(s\)](#) and experience you want (and just as importantly, what you *don't* want). Make sure you let your guide know this explicitly – it will help him in his planning, as well as add to his overall impression of you as a client, and give you both something to refer back to at any stage.

#### 5. Get the conversation going.

Once you arrive, it's a good idea to set your guide at ease with some good conversation. Even experienced guides and outfitters experience some





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apprehension prior to meeting their client for the first time – those who don't would suggest some sort of complacency. Many travelling hunting clients are driven, successful individuals who's alpha personalities can intimidate; others are passionate hunters on their trip of a lifetime. Either way, the guide doesn't want to disappoint. By breaking the ice with some good chat will help you to establish a rapport and let the guide get on with his job of delivering you a first-class experience.

### **6. You're still the hunter.**

I read a comment recently that stated 'I don't consider guided hunting a true hunt, as the guide becomes the hunter and I just tag along'. I disagree, but I can see where he's coming from – if you expect, or need, the guide to do everything, then he will. But if you want spot the animals and plan your stalk with your guide on hand for advice, then he isn't going to stop you unless he recommends otherwise. Think of a guided hunt as going on a hunt in a far-flung location with a friend who lives there – who might well visit you one day on your patch for a reciprocal guided experience.

### **7. Only you can pull the trigger.**

Following on from tip 6 above, it's clear who's the primary decision maker of the business end of the hunt. The guide can give you all the advice and assistance that you require to get you in a position to close the deal, but only you can carry out that final act. Knowing this empowers the hunter and puts the guide's role into context – he or she is there to facilitate the hunt, not take it over.

### **8. Be prepared to celebrate.**

If your guide delivers the experience you came for and more, let him or her know it. As mentioned previously, most guides do their job for the love of it – for many, the thrill of seeing a client get a dream trophy is greater than that of taking one themselves. Guides live for that feeling of a client on cloud nine after a hard earned kill, and if you can give it to them, you'll each have a much better feeling about the whole undertaking.





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### 9. Tell others.

If you had a great time, be prepared to tell your friends and peers about it. Good guides can only prevail over the less-celebrated members of our profession if clients spread the good word. Remember that good clients and good guides depend on one another for survival, so the only way to ensure quality future hunting is to get these people together.

### 10. Stay in touch.

The saying 'arrive as a client, leave as a friend' is a cliché of the highest order, but it is often true. Sometimes, you just hit it off with your client and you become good friends almost immediately. A good hunt will cement this friendship for a long time. This is something worth preserving as it may be a place you will visit again in the future, possibly with others in tow. Alternatively, your guide may join you in your place one day to further your mutual love of hunting.

*We want to know what you think – please get in touch by email [simon@highpeak.co.nz](mailto:simon@highpeak.co.nz) or visit [www.huntingredstag.com/](http://www.huntingredstag.com/)*

