

## 16 Day New Zealand Tour ex Christchurch

### Day 1: Christchurch to Mackenzie Country

This morning we'll explore iconic downtown Christchurch and your guide will show you the cool and creative ways the city is being rebuilt after the life-changing 2011 earthquake here. Christchurch folk are an innovative and creative bunch – the Transitional Cathedral, created from cardboard, is totally inspirational.

After lunch we leave the city behind and head for Lake Tekapo. The lake's breathtaking turquoise colour and mountain backdrop is a photographer's dream come true. The tiny Church of the Good Shepherd stands right at the water's edge, proving that small is definitely beautiful.

Grab some confetti and congratulate any passing brides – couples travel from all over the world for wedding shots in front of the chapel!

Tekapo has been declared an International Dark Sky Reserve and the super clear skies make it the best place in New Zealand to see the stars and galaxies on a clear night. Sit back, relax and enjoy.

**Please note:** Private accommodation upgrades are not available for this night of the tour due to the limited availability of accommodation in the area. In special circumstances other arrangements may be possible - please contact us for more information.

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Christchurch City Tour
- Visit the Church of the Good Shepherd
- Experience Tekapo's Dark Sky Reserve

### Day 2: Mackenzie Country to Queenstown

This morning if you're feeling energetic, hike up to the summit of Mt John. With awesome views of the Southern Alps, you'll feel on top of the world. Speaking of views, today's scenic drive to Queenstown is a show-stopper.

From the golden tussocklands of Mackenzie country – where epic battles of Return of the King were filmed – to the dramatic peaks of the Southern Alps, it's like you're driving into a postcard.

We'll pause for lots of photo stops en route to give your camera a workout, including a stop at the spectacular Kawarau Gorge. This also happens to be the World Home of Bungy, give it a go or enjoy watching the jumpers scream their way through the gorge! Whether you're an adrenalin junkie, an avid hiker, wine taster or scenery lover, Queenstown has something for absolutely everyone. With two nights and plenty of daylight hours here, get ready – this town certainly knows how to live life to the max!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Hike up Mt John (optional)
- Visit Kawarau Gorge

### Day 3: Queenstown

With a full day in Queenstown, let's work on that bucket list! There are heaps of options to choose from: paragliding over the lake, mountain bike parks and trails to die for, bungy jumping while your Haka friends cheer you on, horse riding through Lord of the Rings scenery, and swinging through a canyon are just a few of our favourites.

Hikers: the Ben Lomond day walk (not for the faint-hearted) will be right up your alley. This is a firm tour guide favourite, and they can recommend great shorter walks too.

For scenery lovers, Milford Sound is a must-see. Whether you fly or drive, the scenery en route is as awesome as the destination. Once on the Sound, sailing beneath thundering waterfalls and towering cliff faces, you'll understand why some call it the "8th Wonder of the World"

Tonight you have around 40 bars to choose from – your guide will fill you in on their favourites – to share your adventures with your travel buddies, and party the night away.

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast

### Day 4: Queenstown to Wanaka

One last morning in Queenstown to work on the bucket list. What will it be today – a canyoning experience, Lord of the Rings 4x4 safari, or a jet boat ride along the Shotover River? There are so many options. You decide.

After the excitement of Queenstown, this afternoon is a chance to chill. Wanaka is Queenstown's slightly quieter little sister, a mere one hour drive away. On the way we'll stop in at charming Arrowtown, a historic gold rush village with heaps of old-world character.

Blessed with towering peaks and a glacial blue lake, you'll soon see why Wanaka's considered to be one of New Zealand's most beautiful mountain towns. There are stunning hikes and bike rides all around for a welcome chance to relax.

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Arrowtown – a charming and historic gold rush village

### Day 5: Wanaka to Franz Josef

This morning is about exploring Wanaka. How, exactly, is up to you! Optional activities include an aerobatic plane flight, skydiving, a bike tour along Wanaka's lakeside, or a lake cruise and nature walk on Mou Waho Island.

If none of those appeal, there are lots of scenic short walks in the area – including a visit to #thatwanakatree. Talk to your guide for the best options.

The journey to Franz is another stunner – many of our Haka Guides rate it as their favourite drive in New Zealand.

As we hit the road, we'll stop at one of our top lakeside lookout points at Lake Hawea or Lake Wanaka. Your guide will keep an eye on the weather and pick the best option.

From the cascading waterfalls of Haast Pass to classic Kiwi coastal views, you won't want to nap on the bus in case you miss anything. Your guide will have some epic surprise photo stops and short walks along the way.

We roll into Franz Josef around late afternoon/early evening. This UNESCO World Heritage area is famous for its spectacular glacier, just 5 kilometres from town, which is begging to be explored tomorrow.

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Lake Hawea Lookout
- Haast Pass

#### Day 6: Franz Josef

With Aoraki/Mount Cook (New Zealand's highest mountain) twinkling behind the glaciers, Franz Josef is about as beautiful a setting as you can find in New Zealand.

Te Wahi Pounamu (which means 'the place of greenstone' in Maori) is the name given to this part of the West Coast because of the abundance of pounamu (greenstone/jade) to be found here. Included in your tour today is a special opportunity to carve your very own pounamu pendant at a local gallery.

There are heaps of ways to enjoy Franz Josef Glacier; weather permitting, to get up onto the bluest ice you can take a scenic helicopter flight and hike onto the glaciers. Maybe you'd prefer to kayak on a glacial lake; or just relax in the steamy hot springs down below. As well as the awesome glacier activities you could also try out quad biking, horseback riding and even a bit of group karaoke tonight in Franz Josef!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Carve your own pounamu necklace

#### Day 7: Franz Josef to Christchurch

After breakfast we head further along the beautiful west coast on another of the most spectacular drives in the country (and, some would say, the world): a rugged, primeval landscape of luxuriant rainforest juxtaposed against breathtaking beach and ocean waves. We stop at Hokitika and visit a greenstone factory, a great place to stock up on souvenirs for your friends and family back home. Time permitting, we may also visit the National Kiwi Centre where there is guaranteed viewing of rare kiwi birds in their nocturnal house.

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Hokitika Greenstone Factory
- TransAlpine Train Journey

#### Day 8: Christchurch to Kaikoura

You can have a lie in this morning if you want! Alternatively, there is an opportunity for hot air ballooning, surf lessons and tank driving. There is also a chance to explore the city and do some shopping before we leave for Kaikoura.

Rugged snowcapped mountains drop right down to the beach in Kaikoura, making it an incredible backdrop to experience the famous sea life in the area.

There's something for every traveller in Kaikoura: go giant whale watching, take a surf lesson, go fishing, kayak, play mini-golf or swim with hundreds of friendly and curious wild dolphins in the bright blue water; how often do you get to swim with dolphins in the wild? Be sure to have your camera ready for a visit to the fur seal colonies (there may even be even baby seals!) and for all of the great sea life you're going to spot.

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit a seal colony

#### Day 9: Kaikoura to Wellington

After kicking off the morning with some final exploration of Kaikoura, we head north. Upon arriving into Picton there is a short break to explore the port and get something to eat before catching the ferry to Wellington.

One of the most iconic and classic New Zealand activities is sailing the Cook Strait between the North and South Islands. From the decks of the ferry, you'll enjoy beautiful views of the Marlborough Sounds before heading out into the open waters of the Cook Strait. The city skyline of New Zealand's capital will stretch out in front of you for the final stretch through Wellington Harbour.

If you'd prefer to stay inside, the ferries have amenities to enjoy – from TV and cinema rooms to free Wi-Fi to various food and drink options.

New Zealand's capital is famous for its bars and eateries, and is a paradise for lovers of craft beer – you'll be spoilt for choice tonight!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Cook Strait Ferry Crossing

#### Day 10: Wellington to Taupo

In the morning your tour guide will give you a tour of Wellington city and the surrounding bays. This can include a trip to Weta Workshop, where films like Lord of the Rings have been made. We also may visit the parliament buildings, cable car and Mount Victoria.

On the way to Taupo we drive along the Desert Road that divides the Rangipo Desert (an area with poor vegetation because of bad soil conditions and drying winds). The climate is harsh and in winter it is not unusual to see snow. However, the biggest attractions on this road are that of Mount Ruapehu, Mount Tongariro and Mount Ngauruhoe, the volcano better known as Mount Doom in Lord of the Rings. On the other side of the road is the lesser noticed Kaimanawa Range, home to a breed of wild horses that can be spotted on rare occasions.

We arrive at the accommodation by evening. With a whole day to explore Taupō tomorrow, feel free to relax at the hostel or go out to experience some of the town's best nightlife!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Mt Victoria Lookout
- Scenic drive through Tongariro National Park

#### Day 11: Taupo

A full day in Taupo... are you in the mood for peaceful lakeside tranquility or unlimited adrenaline and adventure? Either way, Taupo's got you covered.

For many, the ultimate adventure on offer here is the hiking (or tramping, as we Kiwis know it).

The Tongariro Crossing is among the top 10 full-day walks in the world. This 19.4-kilometre mountain trek boasts emerald green lakes, venting steam, lava flows and craters. You'll come back grinning from ear to ear before falling into bed and sleeping like a baby.

If you'd prefer to relax, jump on a boat for a sailing trip to view Maori rock carvings. Or head to Spa Park and soak until your fingers are wrinkly. However you choose to spend today we guarantee you won't forget it.

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast

### Day 12: Taupo to Murupara

After our morning in Taupo we head to Kohutapu Lodge in Murupara - a living Maori village - where you will be taken on a tribal tour by a village elder.

Here you'll also have a chance to learn the world-famous haka dance, and weave your own dinner plate using flax (a type of plant).

Tonight's dinner is a traditional hangi meal. Cooked in an underground earth oven you can expect tender meat and delicious vegetables infused with a smoky, earthy fragrance – it will fill your puku (belly) right up!

The best part about spending the evening at Kohutapu Lodge? The majority of proceeds from this activity go back to the local community.

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#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Find natural hot springs

### Day 13: Murupara to Rotorua

While the majority of the North Island is volcanic in some way, Rotorua is exceptional for its geothermal activity. With neon blue and red lakes, steaming rivers, active volcanoes and geysers galore, there are more unique natural wonders to be found in Rotorua than many other places in the world.

On the way to Rotorua, we stop at what really makes the town famous, along with giving it its unique smell: one of several extraordinary geysers and thermal parks.

There's heaps of time to get amongst Rotorua's diverse attractions while you're here.

We'll get you started with an orientation tour, including a stroll through the flower-filled Government Gardens by the lakefront.

Lord of the Rings fans, channel your inner hobbit with an optional visit to picturesque Hobbiton – have a ginger beer at the Green Dragon pub for us!

If adrenalin's your thing, the highest commercial waterfall drop in the world, on the Kaituna River, is begging to be conquered on an exhilarating rafting trip. Or let your guide coax you into thundering down grassy hills in a giant air-cushioned inflatable ball (or OGO) – you won't regret it!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Te Puia Maori Village

- See kiwi birds
- See the Pohutu Geyser

### Day 14: Rotorua

Today is a free day to explore Rotorua and its surrounding area. Talk to your guide for the best free things to see and do in the neighbourhood (Kuirau Park's steaming and hissing mud pools are a great option).

There are also a number of optional activities you can choose from – white water rafting, zip-lining, rolling down a hill in a giant inflatable ball, river sledging and more!

If adrenaline is your thing, the highest commercial waterfall drop in the world, on the Kaituna River, is begging to be conquered on an exhilarating rafting trip.

Perhaps you'd like to try thundering down grassy hills in a giant aircushioned inflatable ball (aka ZORB)?

A day trip to Waitomo is another option today. Famous for its glowworms there are a number of ways to experience these twinkling creatures up close.

Discover the magic of both the world-famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves, as well as the enchanting Ruakuri Cave on a '2 cave combo' walking/boat tour. Or you can float along an underground river on a Black Water Rafting trip as the glow worms light your path.

However you spend today, be sure to get a good night's sleep as there are more Rotorua adventures tomorrow!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast

### Day 15: Rotorua to Coromandel

It's no secret that many blockbuster hits have been filmed in New Zealand due to our incredible landscapes. Around lunchtime, we head off to the Coromandel to discover them first-hand.

We'll walk together out along the cliffs down to Cathedral Cove (which you might recognise from the Chronicles of Narnia films). Beautiful in its own right, with perfect beaches and massive rock arches and columns it's one of the most popular spots in the Coromandel and for good reason!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast

### Day 16: Coromandel to Auckland

Beautiful remote beaches, dense wooded forest and clear blue waters make the Coromandel one of New Zealand's favourite getaways. At low tide, we'll make our way out to the world-famous Hot Water Beach.

When the tide's out, you can dig a hole in the sand where natural hot springs bubble up to create your own personal hot tub!

Finally, we head to Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city. Auckland sits on the narrow sliver of land where the Northland peninsula tapers south to meet the rest of the North Island. So the sea is always nearby, and it isn't difficult to guess the origin of its nickname 'City of Sails'.

Your tour officially ends at 8pm today in Auckland, so feel free to party on with your new travel buddies for as long as you like – your accommodation tonight is included so you

can treat yourself to a lie-in in the morning! Or if you have a few spare days, why not hop on our three day Bay of Islands tour?

**INCLUDED**

- Breakfast
- Visit Hot Water Beach

**Teilnehmer:** max. 16 Personen

**Transport:** Kleiner Bus / Van

**Includierte Mahlzeiten:** Frühstück

**Übernachtung:** 4-6 Bettzimmer in Lodges, Motels, Hostels

**Gepäck Limit:** 20 kg pro Person

**geeignet für Menschen mit eingeschränkter Mobilität:** ja (genauere Information auf Anfrage)

**Rollstuhl geeignet:** nein

**Die Sprache während der Tour ist englisch**