

10 DAY FULL NORTH ISLAND AUCKLAND – AUCKLAND

Duration: 10 days / 9 nights

Departs: Sundays

Start Location: Auckland CBD

Finish Location: Auckland CBD

First Departure: 15/09/19

Last Departure: 26/04/20

DAY 1: Auckland to Paihia

Nau mai, haere mai (welcome)! Your journey kicks off in New Zealand's largest city Auckland, known as the 'City of Sails' because of its location between the Waitemata and Manukau Harbours, making it a boaters' paradise. Pick-ups start at your accommodation bright and early, before we head north to the seaside town of Paihia, gateway to the Bay of Islands. We stop en-route to hug some of the world's mightiest trees, the native Kauri, and stop for lunch at scenic Waipu Cove. This is followed by a trip to the historic Waitangi Treaty Grounds (own expense), before settling into our accommodation where you'll have a group meal and the evening free to relax. (D)

Accommodation included: Hostel along from the beach

Activities included: Tree hugging huge kauri trees at Parry Kauri Forest, swim or walk to see waterfalls at Waipu Cove (weather dependent)

Optional activities: Waitangi Treaty Grounds

DAY 2: Paihia to Hokianga

This morning we take a wildlife cruise in the beautiful Bay of Islands, a collection of 144 islands bursting with marine life. There's no better way to see it than by boat - keep an eye out for wild dolphins. In the afternoon it's off to the Hokianga Harbour, where we will see the huge sand dunes across the harbour. Tonight, you have the option to take part in a Maori-guided twilight encounter in the Waipoua Forest, where you'll learn about Maori legends and the spiritual inhabitants of the forest, and visit the largest Kauri tree in the world, the "God of the Forest" Tane Mahuta (own expense). Finish the day with a Kiwi classic for dinner, traditional fish and chips. (B,D)

Accommodation included: Harbourside hotel

Activities included: Hole in the Rock marine cruise

Optional activities: Footprints Waipoua twilight encounter, bone carving

DAY 3: Hokianga to Auckland

We start the morning with a ferry ride across the Hokianga Harbour for a sand boarding adrenalin rush (weather dependent) before we start to make our way south through the mighty Waipoua Forest. Here we will have the opportunity to see NZ's largest Kauri trees. We'll stop at the idyllic Kai Iwi Lakes for a swim in the beautiful crystal-clear waters surrounded by a pure white sandy beach, before returning to the 'Big Smoke' Auckland for

a late afternoon arrival. (B)

Accommodation included: Central city hostel

Activities included: Hokianga Ferry ride, sand boarding, visit Waipoua Forest (NZ's largest Kauri trees), swim in the Kai Iwi Lakes

DAY 4: Auckland to Hahei

We depart Auckland and head south east to the pristine sands of Hahei Beach, from which you can access the famous Cathedral Cove. Accessible only by foot, boat or kayak, you'll discover some of New Zealand's most spectacular scenery and stunning sea views in this beautiful coastal spot. Cathedral Cove is a 'must see' on the Coromandel Peninsula. We'll also pay a visit to Hot Water Beach, a unique surf beach where you can dig a hole in the sand to create in your own personal spa pool (tide dependent). (D)

Accommodation included: Comfortable beachside accommodation

Activities included: Dig your own spa pool at Hot Water Beach, walk to Cathedral Cove

Optional activities: Sea kayaking trip

DAY 5: Hahei to Rotorua

Today, we'll make our way towards the North Island's main tourism hub of Rotorua. This evening you will be welcomed into the authentic Tamaki Maori Village, where you will discover Maori art, ancient rituals and traditions. Tonight, we dine on a delicious hangi (Maori feast), enjoy an interactive cultural performance and the company of our Maori hosts. (B, D)

Accommodation included: Central city motel

Activities included: Cultural experience with traditional hangi meal, kapa haka (Maori song and dance) and interactive performance

DAY 6: Full day in Rotorua

You have a full free day in Rotorua to discover an area well-known for its Maori heritage, adventure and geothermal activity. Here you have the chance to do some great optional activities, such as a visit to the Hobbiton Movie Set, white water rafting, ziplining through native bush, mountain biking and more. A great option to finish the day is to spend the evening soaking in the hot pools at the luxurious Polynesian Spa. (B)

Accommodation included: Central city motel

Optional activities: Visit Hobbiton, white water rafting, ziplining, mountain biking, spa, luge

DAY 7: Rotorua to National Park

It's a very early start this morning so we can make our way to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Tongariro National Park, where you'll get the chance to do one of the world's best one day walks, the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Trek through dramatic natural scenery past volcanic peaks, vast craters and stunning turquoise lakes on one of the most spectacular treks in New Zealand. Alternatively, you can go on one the shorter walks around this volcanic region or visit the Volcanic Centre Museum. (B,L,D)

Accommodation included: Alpine lodge

Activities included: Tongariro Alpine Crossing and transfers, or Taranaki Falls walk and Tawhai Falls (Gollum's Pool)

DAY 8: National Park to Blue Duck Station

After your big day of hiking, you get a chance to sleep in and we won't depart until mid-morning. Our destination today is one of the most remote parts of the North Island by road. We're heading for the award-winning Blue Duck Station in Whakahoro, a 7,200-acre high country farm that is both a working sheep and beef station and an environmental conservation leader. This afternoon you get the opportunity to take part in a 4WD Bush Safari and farm adventure, where you'll explore this vast land and the New Zealand native bush, discover the remains of an unbelievable local history, and learn about the farm's conservation efforts. Your dinner is cooked using local produce. (B,D)

Accommodation included: Remote country station lodge

Activities included: 4WD eco-wilderness farm adventure

DAY 9: Blue Duck Station to Wellington

We depart early to arrive into Wellington by early afternoon. Wellington is known as the 'coolest little capital in the world' thanks to Lonely Planet, and it's a great place to check out the lively arts scene, shopping, craft breweries and café culture. As New Zealand's capital city, it is home to New Zealand's parliament and the iconic 'Beehive' government building. This afternoon, you have the option to marvel at the wonders of Te Papa National Museum or wander along the Oriental Parade for excellent views of the city. (B)

Accommodation included: Central city hostel

Optional activities: Te Papa National Museum

DAY 10: Wellington to Auckland

Today is an express day via National Park back to New Zealand's largest city Auckland. We stop along the way for photo opportunities and have lunch in National Park town, before heading back to Auckland for a late afternoon arrival. We hope you had a blast on your New Zealand journey! (B)

Notes:

- Standard accommodation is **quad share** in hostels, cabins and lodges, except at Blue Duck Station which is six-share
- Upgrades to twin/double and private rooms are available subject to availability
- Room upgrades do not apply in Hahei
- Luggage is limited one backpack, bag or suitcase per person with a maximum weight of 15kg plus a day pack
- Trips are not suited to children aged 6 years or under. 7 – 17-year-olds may travel if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian
- A basic level of fitness is required for medium length walks

This itinerary is a guide. Given the spontaneous nature of our trips and lack of control over New Zealand's weather(!), what we do each day might occasionally vary.