

13 Day Full North Island Auckland - Auckland

Duration: 13 days / 12 nights

Departs: Saturdays

Start: Auckland CBD

Finish: Auckland CBD

First Departure: 02/05/20

Last Departure: 26/09/20

Itinerary

DAY 1: Auckland to Paihia

Haere mai (welcome)! Your Stray adventure kicks off in New Zealand's largest city, Auckland. We depart northbound for the relaxed seaside town of Paihia, gateway to the beautiful Bay of Islands. On the way you'll learn about the rich early European and Maori history of the region. After stopping to see giant kauri trees en-route, we continue on to Paihia, where you have the afternoon free to explore this charming seaside town.

Accommodation included: Hostel along from the beach

Activities included: Hole in the Rock cruise

Optional activities: View huge kauri trees at Parry Kauri Forest

DAY 2: Paihia to Cape Reinga to Paihia

Today you travel to the northernmost point of the country, the spiritually significant Cape Reinga. Highlights of this day trip include a visit to 90 Mile Beach, dune surfing and seeing the clashing of two oceans! You have the option to sample some of the best fish and chips available on your way back to Paihia (own expense). Make sure you pack a lunch, snacks and enough water to fuel you through the day.

Accommodation included: Hostel along from the beach

Activities included: Cape Reinga day trip, surf massive sand dunes

Optional activities: Sample fresh fish and chips

DAY 3: Paihia to Auckland

This morning you are free to explore this charming seaside town. You could view the 144 islands of the Bay of Islands from above with an exhilarating skydive, visit the nearby Waitangi Treaty Grounds, hop on the ferry to wander around Russell across the bay or just relax on the beach. We depart in the afternoon to head back to Auckland, where you have the evening free in the city.

Accommodation included: Central Auckland hostel

Activities included: Skydiving, Waitangi Treaty Grounds, ferry to Russell

DAY 4: Auckland to Hahei

Depart Auckland in the morning and head south to the Coromandel Peninsula via the old colonial town of Thames. We'll settle into our accommodation in Hahei before heading to Hot Water Beach, where you can dig your own natural spa pool in the sand.

Accommodation included: Exclusive accommodation by the waterfront

Activities included: Hot Water Beach visit

DAY 5: Hahei

Today you have a full free day to embrace the laid-back Coromandel lifestyle. Get up early to catch the sunrise on the beach, then take a scenic coastal walk or opt to kayak to stunning Cathedral Cove. Another option is to take a guided boat tour through the cliffs and caves of the nearby marine reserve.

Accommodation included: Exclusive accommodation by the waterfront

Optional activities: Kayaking, guided boat tour

Free activities: Walk to Cathedral Cove, sunrise on the beach

DAY 6: Hahei to Rotorua

We leave Hahei early travelling through to Paeroa, home of New Zealand's oldest and largest soft drinks company – L&P, where we'll stop for a fun photo op at local landmark. Carrying on, we'll arrive in Rotorua, known for its lively geothermal activity, rich Maori history and adventure tourism. Get the adrenaline pumping this afternoon and sign up for a white water rafting adventure, head to the adventure park, or take a walk around town.

Accommodation included: Comfortable central city hostel

Optional activities: White water rafting, adrenaline-fuelled adventure park (big swings, bungys and more)

Free activities: Whakarewarewa Redwood Forest walk, see the bubbling mud pools at Kuirau Park

DAY 7: Rotorua

Often labelled the adventure capital of the North Island, you have a full free day in Rotorua to discover a wealth of adventure activities and geothermal wonders. Go ziplining through native bush, zorbing or take a truly unique guided jet boat adventure to bathe in a hot waterfall. Looking to relax instead? Visit the hot pools and bubbling mud baths at one of Rotorua's geothermal parks or take in a Maori cultural performance. Film buffs may want to sign up for a guided tour through the world-famous Hobbiton Movie Set. The choice is yours!

Accommodation included: Comfortable central city hostel

Optional activities: River jet tour, white water rafting, ziplining, zorbing, geothermal attractions, Maori village & performance experience, Hobbiton Movie Set tour

DAY 8: Rotorua to Lake Aniwhenua

There's time to squeeze in one last Rotorua activity this morning before we head further off the beaten track to the remote area of Lake Aniwhenua for an exclusive cultural experience like no other. Your Maori host family will share with you their story and traditions, as well as their vision for making a difference in their remote community. You'll see sacred Maori rock art, play traditional stick games for hand-eye coordination and watch the preparation of a ground cooked 'hangi', before tasting it for yourself! (D)

Accommodation included: Scenic lakefront lodge

Activities included: Kohutapu 'Strademark' Experience – guided tour of sacred Maori rock carvings, introduction to the Murupara area, delicious ground cooked hangi feast, dessert and continental breakfast

DAY 9: Lake Aniwhenua (via Taupo) to Blue Duck Station

After breakfast we depart and head to Taupo, where the brave hearted can opt to plunge from a plane to skydive over Australasia's largest lake! If you're not up for an adrenaline hit, walk the Huka Falls Walkway track, or spend time exploring this popular lakeside town. In the afternoon, we make our way to Blue Duck Station, an award-winning 7,200 acre high country farm that is both a working station and an environmental conservation leader. Settle in and spend the evening learning a little more about what makes this unique destination a top-rated stop. (B)

Accommodation included: Country station lodge

Optional activities: Skydiving

Free activities: Huka Falls walkway track, enjoy your hosts' hospitality and stories on the local wildlife and history

DAY 10: Blue Duck Station

Today you have a free day to explore this truly amazing and secluded location in depth. The included 4WD farm tour will give you a tantalising taste of life in remote, rural New Zealand. There are plenty of other optional farming and conservation-based activities for you to experience around the property as well.

Accommodation included: Country station lodge

Activities included: 4WD eco-wilderness farm tour

Optional activities: Horse riding, clay pigeon shooting, pes hunting

Free activities: Walk around the property, take in the lush scenery, Kaiwhakauka waterfall

DAY 11: Blue Duck Station (via Tongariro) to Raetihi

We depart at 6am and head to the active volcanoes of the nearby dual World Heritage Site of Tongariro National Park. Today you get a chance to do what is rated as one of the world's best one day walks: the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Be prepared for some epic scenery as you walk across a rocky plateau with dramatic volcanic peaks, craters and turquoise lakes that you'll remember for a lifetime. Tonight, you can soothe your tired muscles from the big walk in the spa pool at your accommodation or relax with a celebratory drink by the fire.

Accommodation included: Historic residence with mountain views

Optional activities: Tongariro Alpine Crossing (subject to weather conditions)

Free activities: Taranaki Falls walk, visit the Volcanic Centre

DAY 12: Raetihi to Wellington

Today we head to Wellington, New Zealand's capital city, via Ohakune, Taihape and Bulls. You have the afternoon to cruise around the shops and cafes along popular Cuba Street, discover the New Zealand wonders on display in Te Papa Museum or stroll along the waterfront.

Accommodation included: Central city hostel

Free activities: Walk Oriental Parade, head up Mt Victoria for fantastic views, visit Te Papa National Museum

DAY 13: Wellington to Auckland

Today is a very early departure out of Wellington - this is an express day via Raetihi to Auckland, where your trip comes to an end when you arrive in the early evening. We hope you had a blast on your Stray Journey!

Notes:

- Standard accommodation is **dorm share** in hostels, cabins and lodges
- 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 case 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 old's 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.