

## 20 Day New Zealand Tour (Premium) ex Auckland



### TOUR THE BEST OF THE NORTH ISLAND & SOME SOUTH ISLAND HIGHLIGHTS

Created for travellers in their mid-thirties and upwards, on this tour you will discover New Zealand's unmissable highlights in just under three weeks: geothermal wonders, otherworldly glaciers, sublime beaches, lush forests, lofty mountains, secluded swimming spots, UNESCO World Heritage Areas, flora, fauna, heritage and culture.

This New Zealand tour includes special activities such as one of the world's most scenic train journeys, a guided e-bike tour along Wanaka's lakeside, a traditional Māori meal, and a walk amidst towering – and magically lit – treetops, and a night of glamping. You can also choose to select some tour add-ons such as hiking the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, kayaking to a natural hot pool, climbing a glacier, visiting an off-shore eco-sanctuary, visiting Hobbiton, or flying above an active volcano!

You'll have the chance to swim, kayak, hike a glacier, skydive, see kiwis, relax in hot pools, roll down a hill in a giant ball, eat and drink like a local, and more! This is your trip, and it's designed to be flexible. The choice is yours – pick the activities that appeal to you.

We'll fill your days with the best things to see in do in the North Island and the South Island and also give you a great insight into New Zealand life and culture. At the end of the day, you can relax in comfortable 3–4 star accommodation to ensure you have a great night's sleep ready for the following day's activities.

On this tour you'll encounter an array of landscapes: lush, green rolling hills; beautiful golden sand beaches, tumbling waterfalls, geothermal valleys filled with bubbling mud and sulphuric lakes, magnificent mountains, icy glaciers, jurassic rainforests, cosy laid-back surf towns and vibrant cities. Prepare you camera and get ready to make some magical memories!

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Auckland

Kia ora (hello!) and welcome to Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Settle into your accommodation and be ready for the 6pm pre-tour meeting. Here you will get to know your Tour Manager and be introduced to your new roadtrip friends. Afterwards, the evening is yours to enjoy. We recommend a good night's sleep to be ready for tomorrow's early start, but you may want to experience Auckland's exciting nightlife - the choice is yours!

## Day 2: Auckland to Coromandel

After a continental breakfast it's time to board our comfortable air-conditioned vehicle and leave the big city behind.

The Coromandel Peninsula is a paradise of beautiful beaches and misty rainforests. The drive here is truly spectacular – the road twists and turns dramatically round the coastline and the ocean gets clearer and more pristine before your eyes. Cameras ready – the views are magnificent.

The Coromandel is home to famous Hot Water Beach – thousands visit each year to dig their own personal hot tub. If the tide times allow, we'll grab our buckets and spades and get busy.

We arrive in Whitianga with plenty of time for your guide to show you around. Sample the sandy beaches, take a surf lesson with the locals, or simply enjoy the vibes.

### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Hot Water Beach
- Visit Cathedral Cove

## Day 3: Coromandel to Raglan

Today's road trip to the arty surf mecca of Raglan will give you a first glimpse of the North Island's rolling tree-lined hills and valleys. Your guide has some great sights to show you en route, including the 55-metre high Bridal Veil Falls.

If you have always wanted to try surfing, or if you're dying to get back on your board, Raglan is the perfect destination both for beginners and experienced surfers.

Not keen on surfing? There's plenty to enjoy in this laid-back township. With an awesome blend of cafes, bars, surf shops and galleries, the streets here ooze character and creativity. Relax on the beach and leave any lingering jet-lag behind, or enjoy a variety of bush and coastal scenery on Raglan's walking trails.

For dinner tonight, tuck into New Zealand's unofficial dish – fish and chips (or fush and chups, as it tends to sound in a Kiwi accent). And what better way to enjoy a tasty meal than on a sunset boat cruise of Raglan Harbour?

### INCLUDED

- Raglan Sunset Boat Cruise
- Fish & Chips Dinner

## Day 4: Raglan to Rotorua (via Waitomo)

Our first stop of the day is the Waitomo Caves famous for its glow worms. There are fantastic and informative walking tours of the caves where you can learn more about the history, geology and Maori mythology of this unique area of New Zealand.

For those who prefer to stay above ground, we highly recommend exploring the tree-studded gorges and limestone arches of the nearby Ruakuri Forest Walk; definitely a favourite amongst the guides.

This afternoon we'll make our way to Rotorua, famous for its geothermal activity and Maori culture.

We start our time in Rotorua with The Redwoods Treewalk. This amazing included activity allows you to experience the majestic Redwood Forest from a series of suspension bridges and living decks (platforms), elevated from 9-metres to 12-metres at the highest point.

#### **INCLUDED**

- Redwood Forest Canopy Walk
- Ruakuri Bush Walk

### **Day 5: Rotorua**

Rotorua has it all: natural beauty, unique geothermal landscapes, and iconic Lord of The Rings destinations. We stay here a full day to make the very most of it.

This area is world-renowned for its geothermal activity, with neon blue and red lakes, steaming rivers, violent geysers, and bubbling mud pools galore.

A visit to the picturesque Hobbiton movie set is a must-do activity for many. Even if you haven't seen the films, it's impossible not to be charmed by this gorgeous hobbit village set amongst the lush green hills of Matamata.

For a truly epic brush with nature, fly high through the lush ancient forest canopy on a zipline tour complete with swing bridges crossings and treetop platforms. What better way to get to know the native plants and birds – many of which unique to New Zealand. This evening we are welcomed to a Maori village for an unmissable cultural experience featuring combat demonstrations and – of course – the breathtaking haka. This experience extends beyond the performance – you'll have the chance to see magnificent geothermal activity and get to spot kiwi birds.

#### **INCLUDED**

- Breakfast
- Dinner (a hangi cooked in an underground oven)
- See the world famous haka dance
- See the Pohutu Geyser
- See kiwi birds

### **Day 6: Rotorua to Tongariro National Park (via Taupo)**

Rotorua is a spectacular whitewater rafting destination, and with expert guidance it can be experienced by first timers and pro-paddlers alike. For the ultimate thrill this morning you can raft the highest commercial waterfall drop in the world – the 7-metre Tutea Falls, on the Kaituna River.

If that's not your cup of tea, spend the morning exploring Rotorua's many attractions such as the ultra-relaxing Polynesian Spa, or perhaps the naturally-impressive Kuirau Park full of steaming, hissing and boiling geothermal pools.

There are also some fantastic cafes and bakeries in the area. Why not grab a sweet treat for the road – a ginger slice is as Kiwi as it gets!

From Rotorua it's a quick drive to Taupō; a beautiful lakeside town with a stunning mountain backdrop. It's a short drive but we'll take our time, checking out bubbling mud pools and thundering waterfalls en route.

We finish our day nestled in Tongariro National Park, where we'll spend the next 2 nights, home to one of the 10 best one-day walks in the world – the Tongariro Crossing.

## **INCLUDED**

- Breakfast
- See Huka Falls

### **Day 7: Tongariro National Park**

Decision time – is today the day you brave the Tongariro Crossing?

Considered one of the world's top 10 best one-day walks, this 19.4km mountain trek boasts emerald green lakes, venting steam, lava flows, craters and rich green bush.

Not for the faint-hearted – it's a challenging day! But every step of the way the views are spectacular. Our guides highly recommend this activity, it's definitely a highlight.

If 19.4km is a little too far for you, there are plenty of shorter walks and hikes to enjoy.

However you choose to spend today in this UNESCO World Heritage Area, we guarantee you won't forget it.

## **INCLUDED**

- Breakfast

### **Day 8: Tongariro National Park to Wellington**

Today we head to the coolest little capital city in the world, the hip and happening Wellington.

Perched on the edge of a spectacular harbour, encircled by green, towering hills, Wellington is a stunning and compact city. Vibrant, exciting and cultured, the nation's capital combines the stimulation and sophistication of a big city with the quirkiness and personality of a much smaller town.

After a quick afternoon orientation from your guide, head up Mount Victoria for some of the best views in town.

This evening, the city lights are yours to enjoy. Discover why Wellington is celebrated for its foodie culture – you are truly spoilt for dining choices tonight.

Wellington is also widely regarded as the craft beer capital of New Zealand. Want to test this for yourself? Talk to your guide to find the hidden gems.

## **INCLUDED**

- Breakfast
- Mount Victoria Lookout

### **Day 9: Wellington**

Soak up the atmosphere of vibrant Wellington. Famous for being a bit on the windy side, be prepared to ditch the hairspray and go with the flow.

As always, your guide will introduce you to the city with an orientation tour – including a drive around the bays through central Wellington to the Botanic Gardens and Parliament Buildings.

You will also stop by Weta Studios, most famous for its creative contribution to all things Lord of the Rings. Take an optional tour to see prop-makers in action and learn about the immersive world of filmmaking.

Wellington has a feast of cultural attractions and its crowning glory is Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand. Situated on Wellington's magnificent waterfront, this internationally acclaimed museum combines leading edge technology with traditional exhibits to tell the stories of New Zealand's land and people. The museum is free for all.

If being outdoors is more your thing, head off to Kapiti Island for an optional nature tour. Here you can see endangered birds up close and learn more about New Zealand's unique flora and fauna.

### Day 10: Wellington to Kaikura

This morning we say farewell to the North Island and take one of the world's most scenic ferry journeys as we cross the Cook Strait.

The South Island has a stunning welcome in store for us – gliding through the Marlborough Sounds as we approach Picton Harbour, you'll feel like you're in another world.

One of the best ways to explore Marlborough, the region at the top of the South Island, is with your tastebuds. That's why we jump straight on a wine tasting, to sample some of the best vineyards in the country.

After lunch, our next destination is Kaikoura which literally means "to eat crayfish" – and the area is teeming with them. The nutrient-rich waters of this area attract a wide variety of marine wildlife including the stars of the show – the whales and dolphins.

#### INCLUDED

- Cook Strait Ferry
- Wine Tasting

### Day 11: Kaikoura to Christchurch

The chance to swim with dolphins in the wild is a massive New Zealand highlight for many travellers, and Kaikoura is one of the best places to find them, with pods of up to 300 of these playful creatures hanging out here at any one time.

If you want to get up close to the giants of the ocean, a whale watching tour here is the way to do it. Humpbacks, sperm whales and orca all stop by at various times of year, so this is a great chance to meet some of them.

After visiting the local seals on our way out of town, our road trip continues to our home for the night – Christchurch, known as the "Garden City" for its peaceful parklands and lazy rivers.

### Day 12: Christchurch to Ohau (via Lake Tekapo)

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.

Mid-morning we head for Lake Tekapo. Ready your camera – 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 bold and 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!

#### INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Dinner
- Mt John Lookout

### Day 13: Ohau to Queenstown

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 into the gorge.

Whether you're an adrenaline junkie, an avid hiker, wine taster or scenery lover, Queenstown has something for absolutely everyone. With 2 nights and plenty of daylight hours here, get ready – this town certainly knows how to live life to the max.

## **INCLUDED**

- Breakfast

### **Day 14: Queenstown**

With a full day in Queenstown, let's work on that bucket list!

There are heaps of options to choose from: extreme jet boat rides, river kayaking, horseback riding through Lord of the Rings scenery, and the skyline gondola are just a few of our favourites

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, as you sail beneath thundering waterfalls and towering cliff faces, you'll understand why we call it the "8th Wonder of the World".

### **Day 15: Queenstown to Wanaka**

With the morning in Queenstown, you have another chance to tick off your bucket list today. What will it be? A trip to the top of the Skyline Gondola, or perhaps an adrenaline-pumping jet boat ride through the Shotover Canyon? You decide!

This afternoon we jump back onto the road and head off to Wanaka, a quick one hour drive away. The drive is a scenic highlight in itself, so make sure your camera is fully charged and ready to go.

En route we'll stop in charming Arrowtown, a historic gold rush village with heaps of old-world character.

This afternoon is your chance to relax in stunning Wanaka, known as Queenstown's slightly quieter little sister.

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 breathtaking hikes and easy bike rides for a welcome chance to relax.

### **Day 16: Wanaka**

Today is your chance to explore one of the most beautiful towns in the southern lakes region with plenty of activities to tempt every lover of the outdoors.

Included this morning is a guided e-bike tour along Wanaka's lakeside. An e-bike, for those wondering, is an electronic bicycle. It's like a normal bike but has a small motor so you don't need to pedal as hard.

One optional activity today – a visit to Mou Waho Island. Accessible only by boat from Wanaka and famous for being home to an (unnamed) island, in a lake (Arethusa Pool), on an island (Mou Waho), in a lake (Lake Wanaka), on an island (the South Island) in the ocean (the Pacific!). Sounds complicated, but once you are there it will all make sense! In Wanaka there are many walks, hikes and biking trails to choose from – check out the famous "Wanaka Tree" while making your way around the lake! Or, if you feel like relaxing, ask your guide to recommend their favourite secret spots to enjoy the surrounding scenery.

One of the best ways to admire Wanaka is from the air. Treat yourself to a skydive or a scenic flight in a vintage plane – you can even take a flying lesson. As always, it's your trip and your choice: you do you!

We mix things up tonight by heading to the stunning Criffel Station for a night of glamping (aka glamorous camping)! Think fancy canvas tents with decadently comfortable beds and the great outdoors right on your doorstep. The views from Criffel are sublime... to get the real experience, you'll have to see it for yourself!

## INCLUDED

- Dinner
- Millennium Trail Guided e-bike Tour
- Glamping Experience at Criffel Station

### Day 17: Wanaka to Franz Josef

After a relaxing morning in Wanaka, the journey to Franz is another stunner – many of our Guides rate it as their most favourite drive in New Zealand.

As we hit the road, we'll stop at one of our most popular 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.

Between September and December it's whitebait season (a small fish that's a delicacy in New Zealand). Fried up with eggs and served on toast, it's a local treat and shouldn't be missed. We'll stop at one of the local spots for a taste during the season.

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

## INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Blue Pools Walkway

### Day 18: 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
- Greenstone pendant carving

### Day 19: Franz Josef to Christchurch

Before you know it, it's your last full day!

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.

On the way back to Christchurch, you'll traverse the South Island on the stunning TranzAlpine train crossing. Travelling across the Southern Alps through Arthur's Pass, this is considered as one of the world's most scenic train journeys. Along the way you'll see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River and see miles of native beech forest.

You'll arrive in Christchurch around 6.30pm before transferring to your accommodation.

#### **INCLUDED**

- Breakfast
- Visit the Mountain Jade Factory in Hokitika
- TranzAlpine Train

#### **Day 20: Christchurch (Post Tour Debrief)**

Today is the final day of tour, where we exchange photos and stories over breakfast before saying our goodbyes and parting ways.

#### **INCLUDED**

- Breakfast

**Teilnehmer:** max. 16 Personen

**Transport:** kleiner Bus

**Includierte Mahlzeiten:** 11x Frühstück, 4x Mittagessen

**Übernachtung:** 19 Nächte in 3-4 Sterne Unterkunft - ein Mix aus Motel, Hotel und Lodges and rainforest retreats

**Gepäck Limit:** 20 kg

**Rollstuhlgeeignet:** nein

**Geeignet für Menschen eingeschränkter Mobilität:** nein

(genauere Informationen auf Anfrage)

**Die Sprache während der Tour ist englisch**