

16 Day New Zealand Tour ex Auckland

Day 1: Auckland to Coromandel

Leaving the big smoke behind, we head to the Coromandel Peninsula, a veritable paradise of beautiful beaches and misty rainforests. The drive here is epic – 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 the famous Hot Water Beach – thousands visit each year to dig their own personal hot tub. If the tide times allow, we'll definitely 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 or simply enjoy the vibes.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Hot Water Beach

Day 2: Coromandel to Rotorua

This morning walk along the cliffs and down to Cathedral Cove (which you might recognize from the Chronicles of Narnia). With perfect beaches and massive rock arches and columns, it's one of the most popular spots in the Coromandel.

Alternatively, take an optional guided Cathedral Cove kayak trip and check out this stunning coastline from a different angle, accompanied by a local dolphin or two if you're lucky!

Later this afternoon we head towards Rotorua (or Rotovegas as it is locally known). En route, we'll visit Matamata - best known for being the home of Hobbiton.

For Lord of the Rings fans, a visit to Hobbiton Movie Set is an absolute must-do. On a fully guided tour of the 12 acre Middle-earth set you will see Hobbit Holes, the Mill, and even enjoy a drink at the Green Dragon Inn!

If hobbits aren't your thing there are plenty of scenic short walks to enjoy Matamata's lush green rolling hills.

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.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 3: 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:

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 4: Rotorua to Murupara

This morning we visit Te Puia Maori Village. Here you'll learn more about Maori history and culture, come face to face with the Pohutu Geyser, see jumping mud pools and get up close and personal with kiwi birds.

Later this afternoon we head to Kohutapu Lodge in Murupara – a living Māori village – where you will experience 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 hāngi 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.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Te Puia Maori Village
- See kiwi birds
- See the Pohutu Geyser
- Learn the haka
- Learn to weave flax
- Dinner (a hāngi cooked in an underground oven).

Day 5: Murupara to Taupo

It's only a short drive to our next destination, Taupo, and there's plenty to discover along the way. From mesmerising mud pools to the thundering rapids of the Huka Falls and Aratiatia Dam, your trusty Haka Guide will make sure you don't miss a thing.

Taupo is a beautiful lakeside town with a stunning mountain backdrop. Lake Taupo is New Zealand's largest lake – believe it or not, it's roughly the same size as Singapore!

This place is all about the thrills and spills, and there are plenty of options in store this afternoon. Get your hair wet with a water touch bungy jump, take an unforgettable skydive or a sunset lake cruise for amazing lake and mountain views. Psst – bring your swimwear today, one of our favourite secret stops is on the cards!

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Find natural hot springs

Day 6: Taupo

A full day in Taupo... are you in the mood for peaceful lakeside tranquillity or unlimited adrenalin 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 7: Taupo to Wellington

It's a big drive from Taupo to Wellington, but there's some unmissable scenery on offer. *Lord of the Rings* junkies, you're in for a treat!

Our journey takes us through Tongariro National Park via the Rangipo Desert (bet you didn't know New Zealand had one of those!). Some of your favourite *Lord of the Rings* battle scenes were filmed right here.

The Desert Road boasts incredible views of three active volcanic peaks – Mount Tongariro, Mount Ngauruhoe, and Mount Ruapehu. You may know Mount Ngauruhoe as Mount Doom, so be sure to snap a Mordor selfie!

We pass through two of the North Island's quirkiest towns – as ever, your Haka Guide has a couple of surprises up their sleeve...

We pull into Wellington in the afternoon, with just enough time for film buffs make a trip to Weta Workshop, where the special effects of *Lord of the Rings* and *Avatar* were produced.

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
- Scenic drive through Tongariro National Park

Day 8: Wellington to Kaikoura

Packed with quirky cafes and beautiful street art, and famous for its wind, Wellington will blow you away in more ways than one! Your guide will introduce you to some of our favourite spots this morning. If there wasn't a chance yesterday we'll take a trip up Mount Victoria for the best views in town.

Later on we say farewell to the North Island with a scenic ferry journey across 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.

Our next destination, Kaikōura 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

- Breakfast
- Cook Strait Ferry Crossing
- Mt Victoria Lookout

Day 9: Kaikoura to Christchurch

The chance to swim with dolphins in the wild is a massive New Zealand highlight for many travellers, and Kaikōura 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.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit a seal colony

Day 10: 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.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Christchurch City Tour
- Visit the Church of the Good Shepherd
- Experience Tekapo's Dark Sky Reserve
- Stargazing in one of the world's best dark sky reserves

Day 11: 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 12: 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 fainthearted) 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 13: Queenstown to Wanaka

One last morning in Queenstown to work on that 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, the 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 14: 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 favourite 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 15: 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 16: Franz Josef to Christchurch

Before you know it, it's your last 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, you'll arrive in Christchurch around 6.30pm before transferring to your accommodation. Your tour officially ends in Christchurch, 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!

Teilnehmer: max. 16 Personen (Mindestalter 18 Jahre)

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