

Exploring the Winterless North

Explore the tropical Bay of Islands, the magnificent giant Kauri trees of the Waipoua Forest and the boutique wine region of Matakana, the winterless north is the perfect year round destination. From emerald island cruises to private forest walks, discover the refined side of New Zealand's founding region.

While this itinerary serves as a great starting point, we invite you to connect with our travel specialists, who can help tailor these experiences into a larger New Zealand journey personalised to your interests.

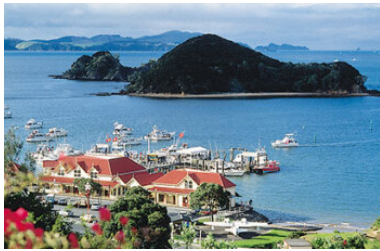
Starts in: Auckland
 Finishes in: Auckland
 Length: 6days / 5nights
 Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
 Can be customised: Yes

This itinerary can be customised to suit you perfectly. We can add more days, remove days, change accommodations, mix it up, add activities to suit your interests or simply design and create something from scratch. Call us today to get your custom New Zealand itinerary underway.



Inclusions:

- Includes: Late model rental cars
- Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)
- Includes: Unlimited kms
- Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
- Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course
- Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App
- Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp
- Included activity: Island Hopper Day Cruise with Barefoot Sailing Adventures - Lunch Included
- Included activity: Waitangi Treaty Grounds Guided Tour and Cultural Performance
- Included activity: Twilight Waipoua Encounter
- Included activity: Matakoho Kauri Museum
- 5 breakfasts, 1 lunch



Day 1



Welcome to Auckland

Welcome to Auckland, known in Māori as Tāmaki Makaurau. Auckland is New Zealand's vibrant "City of Sails," and the country's largest metropolitan area. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. Surrounded by native bush, lush rainforests, and pristine beaches, Auckland is a haven for both adventurers and urban explorers. Wander through world-class museums and galleries in the city centre or enjoy a peaceful retreat at the Auckland Gardens, where stunning landscapes showcase New Zealand's diverse flora. Stroll along the lively waterfront to savour fresh seafood and international cuisine at Viaduct restaurants. For an unforgettable perspective, ascend the iconic SkyTower, New Zealand's tallest structure, and take in panoramic views of the city and its picturesque islands.

Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

You will be met at the Auckland airport by the driver and transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Private Māori Dining Experience with Velskov

Step into the heart of the Waitākere Ranges for an intimate Māori eco-experience. You'll gather native plants, learn their traditional uses in food and healing, and help prepare a seasonal meal in an open-air forest kitchen. Along the way, you'll share stories, connect with the land, and gain a deeper understanding of Māori culture and practices. This is a nourishing and authentic experience for those seeking meaningful connection with nature and the people of Aotearoa.

Your accommodation: The Hotel Britomart Auckland

Soulful, smart and contemporary, The Hotel Britomart welcomes guests to Britomart, the vibrant centre of downtown waterfront Auckland. Still and calm, the rooms and suites at The Hotel Britomart pair simple elegance with the luxury of tactile materials. The Hotel Britomart is at the centre of a dynamic nine-block precinct of plant-lined streets, historic warehouses and the city's best shopping and eating.



Day 2



Collect Rental Car

This tour's from price includes an intermediate-sized vehicle, setting you up for comfortable travels. Yet, we understand every adventure is unique! Feel free to select the perfect wheels from our incredible collection of rental cars, spanning from economy hatchbacks to premium SUVs.

Auckland to Russell

The drive from Auckland to the Bay of Islands normally takes around three and a half hours, but plan to take a little longer for there are many things to see along the way. Stretch your legs in Puhoi, New Zealand's only Bohemian settlement. Go through Warkworth, and Whangarei and see the world famous hundertwasser toilets in Kawakawa. Arriving into Russell via the Opuia Ferry, you'll be greeted by lush bush-clad hillsides dropping to golden sandy beaches.

Explore Russell

Experience the timeless charm of Russell, a historic village accessible by a quick ferry ride from Paihia or a scenic coastal drive. Once a notorious whaling hub, New Zealand's first European settlement, and briefly the country's first capital, Russell now offers a tranquil escape with a rich past. You'll love exploring historical sites like the bullet-scarred Christ Church, New Zealand's oldest church, or the historic Marlborough Hotel, which holds the country's oldest liquor license. For breathtaking views of the Bay and its islands, a short walk up Flagstaff Hill is a must. This historic site tells the story of Māori chief Hone Heke's famous protests. Russell is the perfect place to step back in time while enjoying the stunning beauty of the Bay of Islands

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

Arcadia Lodge is a Russell landmark, a turn of the century home and luxury bed and breakfast overlooking Russell's tranquil Matauwhi Bay.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Explore Bay of Islands

Commonly known as the 'winterless north' New Zealand's Bay of Islands is made up of over 140 subtropical atolls. Renowned for its untouched beaches, abundant marine life, and idyllic climate, this tropical paradise ticks all the boxes. Spend some time on a remote stretch of beach, or see the dolphins on an ocean safari. If diving is your thing, take the morning to descend the Rainbow Warrior - The Greenpeace flagship sunk by French saboteurs in 1985. Wander around Russell, a whaling port founded in 1843. Learn about our culture in historic Waitangi, the site where The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the Māori and Europeans. Alternatively, you may like to take a day tour to Cape Reinga, the very top of the North Island.

Island Hopper Day Cruise with Barefoot Sailing Adventures - Lunch Included

Come spend a day with the Barefoot Sailing crew for a magical day cruise sailing to a beautiful wildlife sanctuary island. You can enjoy water activities such as snorkeling and paddle boarding and explore hiking trails which are perfect for bird lovers.

This small-group tour is designed to suit the active adventurer but is equally relaxing if you're looking for an easy-going day out. Please take your time to understand the risks associated with this activity here.

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

Arcadia Lodge is a Russell landmark, a turn of the century home and luxury bed and breakfast overlooking Russell's tranquil Matauwhi Bay.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 4



Russell to Waipoua Forest via Waitangi

Heading west from the Bay of Islands, you'll leave the coastal charms of the Pacific Ocean behind and transition into Northland's rugged wilderness and the wilder seas of the Tasman. On the way, you'll make a profound and important stop at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, the very place where New Zealand's founding document was signed, allowing you to connect with the nation's powerful history. The journey continues west, through the small seaside townships of Omapere and Opononi, the perfect place to stop for an ice cream. The route then heads south and into the Waipoua Forest, home to the massive Kauri trees. As you pass through the forest, be sure to take one of the short walks to view the majestic Tāne Mahuta, the largest of all the trees, on a not to be missed 5-minute loop.

Waitangi Treaty Grounds Guided Tour and Cultural Performance

Waitangi is one of New Zealand's most historic sites where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the Māori and the British Government. This two day pass allows you access to the Treaty of Waitangi Grounds and includes admission to the Te Kōngahu Museum and Te Rau Aroha Museum and a Maori Cultural performance. During your guided tour, learn about the history of the treaty and discover the stories and events that shaped New Zealand. The cultural performance inside the carved meeting house includes waiata (singing), poi and the haka - a war dance Aotearoa-New Zealand is well known for.

Twilight Waipoua Encounter

Experience the Waipoua Forest at night on this spectacular 4 hour tour. Learn about the rich birdlife and fauna that inhabit the forest, including the carnivorous kauri snail. You'll also get to experience the deep spiritual respect the Maori people have for this place. Your Maori guide will brief you on the protocols for your visit and you once formal greetings have been made you will be allowed to meet the giant Tane Mahuta, or Lord of the Forest - the oldest Kauri tree in the world.

Your accommodation: Waipoua Lodge

Waipoua Lodge is nestled on a ridge overlooking the mighty Waipoua Forest. Experience authentic New Zealand luxury hospitality in a breathtaking ancient and natural environment. Please contact the property a day or two before your arrival to discuss menu preferences.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Waipoua to Mangawhai

Continue down the Kauri Coast and across the country towards the Matakoho Kauri Museum. This award-winning museum has extensive displays of the region's logging, farming, and social history. As you leave the Kaipara Harbour behind you'll make your way to Warkworth a laid-back town situated at the head of the Mahurangi River and is a gateway to many beaches along the Matakana and Kowhai Coasts.

Matakoho Kauri Museum

The Kauri Museum is located approximately 90 minutes drive north of Auckland, in the rural backdrop of Matakoho. Offering insight into the region's pioneering history, it charts the rise and fall of the great Kauri forests with stunning displays and detailed exhibitions including: The largest collection of Kauri Gum in the world, a fully furnished 1900's era Kauri house, the largest collection of Kauri furniture in the world, a huge 22 metre long Kauri slab and a magnificent collection of original photographs and pioneering memorabilia.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Sculptureum - Gardens and Galleries Experience

This 90-minute self-guided experience host you in a Garden of Creative Diversity with plenty of weird and wonderful art. The tour finishes with the sixth gallery which contains a stunning glass chandelier by American artist, Dale Chihuly. Be sure to indulge at the Rothko Restaurant located on site.

Your accommodation: Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth

Contemporary secluded villa accommodations in paradise-like grounds are set high above surrounding land, meaning privacy is guaranteed and views extend as far as the Hauraki Gulf. Facilities include a restaurant, outdoor pool, sauna, day spa treatments, cocktail bar, and extensive grounds to explore.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Mangawhai to Auckland Airport

Leaving the idyllic lower Northland region, head south on State Highway one towards Auckland 'City of Sails'. The route takes you through the farming regions of Wellsford and Warkworth where - if time allows - a side trip to Matakana or the Tawharanui Peninsula is well worth the effort. Pass through the suburbs of the North Shore before crossing the harbour bridge into the heart of Auckland City and on to the Auckland Airport.

Return your rental car

Return your rental vehicle to your designated depot before your next adventure.

Farewell from Aotearoa / New Zealand

Bid farewell to Aotearoa / New Zealand, taking with you unforgettable memories of its breathtaking landscapes and incredible adventures. In Māori, it is said mā te wā, which is not goodbye, it is see you soon!

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: North Island Self Drive
Starts: Auckland
Finishes: Auckland
Tour length: 6
Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary

Day 1 The Hotel Britomart Auckland
Day 2 Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 3 Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 4 Waipoua Lodge
Day 5 Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth