

AAT Kings: New Zealand Uncovered 26/27

From north to south, east to west, New Zealand is a country of contrasts. And that's why we love it. One minute you're drifting through World Heritage-listed gorges on a Milford Sound/Piopirotahi tour, then next you're scaling ice on a Franz Josef Glacier/Ka Roimata o Hine Hukatere tour. Sometimes there's a Maori-inspired feast on the menu; at others there's award-winning wine. Spanning two islands and countless attractions - both city and country - this trip to New Zealand is one for the record books.



Starts in: Auckland
 Finishes in: Christchurch
 Length: 17days / 16nights
 Accommodation: Hotel 4 star
 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: All coach transport
 Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
 Included: Auckland City Tour
 Included: Christchurch City Tour
 Included: Maori Village Experience & Hangi (dinner), Rotorua
 Included: Monteith's Brewery experience
 Included: Te Puia geothermal valley
 Included: Visit a local fruit orchard
 Included: Wellington City Tour

Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
 Included: America's Cup tour at New Zealand Maritime Museum
 Included: Be My Guest Afternoon Tea
 Included: Cruise on the Interislander Ferry
 Included: Milford Sound Cruise
 Included: Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk
 Included: TranzAlpine Train
 Included: Visit to Kiwifruit Country
 : 16 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 11 dinners

Day 1

Auckland is the kind of place you could lose yourself in for a couple of weeks. Arrive at your leisure and explore hip new waterfront precincts, or just ready yourself to meet your fellow travel companions for drinks and dinner tonight. And so your NZ tour begins.

Staying in:

- Horizon by SkyCity Auckland (1 night)
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Day 2

A little bit of leisure, a little bit of culture – today is one of those days. Peek behind the scenes of maritime racing history on the New Zealand Maritime Museum's America's Cup Tour, highlighting Auckland's heritage of boat-building, and offering a glimpse of one of the world's only replicas of the America's Cup. Your Auckland tour guide then takes you around the city, pausing at Bastion Point and the Michael Joseph Savage Memorial, and view Mission Bay for epic photo opportunities over the city's dual harbour. By now you should have a few ideas for how to spend your afternoon exploring, but if not, ask us for recommendations. We have a little black book full of contacts.

Staying in:

- Horizon by SkyCity Auckland (1 night)
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Day 3

Staying in:

- Millennium Hotel Rotorua (1 night)
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Day 4

Today, choose your own adventure. We have plenty of ideas for the paths you might follow. Optional Rotorua tour sightseeing experiences include relieving NZ holiday-weary limbs in the thermal waters of Wai Ariki Hot Springs & Spa. Or perhaps you'd prefer to zip across Rotorua's three lakes in an amphibious WWII-era Duck (both own expense). The decision is yours.

Staying in:

- Millennium Hotel Rotorua (1 night)
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Day 5

Say goodbye to Rotorua and hello to the raging rapids of Huka Falls, where 220,000 litres of water barrel over this massive waterfall every second. Your outlook then unfolds into the dreamy landscape of Lake Taupo, the largest of its kind in the country and with a twinkling, blue-eyed-boy charm. Traverse the volcanic Central Plateau to NZ's cool little capital of Wellington, set on a pretty harbour.

Staying in:

- Rydges Wellington (1 night)
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Day 6

Your day in Wellington should – must – begin with a coffee. The city is known for its ubercool cafes. Head out on city sights tour to take in highlights such as its iconic cable car, parliament, and Mt. Victoria. Your tour ends at Te Papa, the national Museum of New Zealand, where you may choose to visit the groundbreaking exhibitions on offer (entrance fee applies). Later you may decide on an optional tour. Lord of the Rings fans will rejoice with a special tour and visit to Weta Workshop. Or choose to visit Zealandia's ecosanctuary restoring 225 hectares of forest (both own expense). Tonight, there are so many restaurants and bars to choose from. Ask us for recommendations or explore at your leisure.

Staying in:

- Rydges Wellington (1 night)
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Day 7

Travel from the North Island to the South Island on a scenic Cook Strait ferry crossing, cruising through Queen Charlotte Sound to Picton. Your journey is elevated with access to the premium Pōhutukawa Lounge onboard Bluebridge, featuring all inclusive food and beverages, spacious and comfortable seating, and an exclusive viewing deck for uninterrupted views. Continue south to Kaikōura, a renowned coastal destination where marine wildlife is often visible from shore. On arrival, join a MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience with the founder of the Kaikōura Wildlife Centre Trust and learn about local wildlife conservation efforts. This evening, dine at Hiku.

Staying in:

- Sudima Kaikoura (1 night)
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Day 8

Enjoy a relaxed start this morning or sign up for one of several local wildlife experiences available. Choose from an optional scenic flight over dramatic beaches framed by turquoise ocean where whales are regularly spotted, or perhaps you'd prefer a cruise to site pods of dolphin which are prolific in the area, or a kayaking tour of the coast to get up close and personal with seals basking on the rocks (all own expense). You won't be disappointed. Follow the coast and Canterbury Plains to Christchurch, home to some of the country's most innovative architecture, art institutions and restaurants. We can help you make a booking in any number of the latter.

Staying in:

- Distinction Christchurch Hotel (1 night)
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Day 9

From its eye-popping, cardboard-crafted Cathedral to its gold-clad central library, Christchurch has well and truly rebuilt itself since the 2010/11 earthquakes, setting the bar high for architecture and design across the country. On your Christchurch tour you'll discover that despite this cosmopolitan culture, South Island locals still cherish a simple life. Prepare yourself for plenty of country swagger over a Be My Guest afternoon tea hosted by Lake Tekapo locals Stan and Angie Taylor at Morelea, their home overlooking the glistening emerald lake. Former farmers, Angie will give a demonstration of her famous pavlova dessert, and you will hear from Stan about a lifetime spent farming in New Zealand.

Staying in:

- Distinction Mackenzie Country Hotel Twizel (1 night)
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Day 10

Oamaru has a rich history and proud heritage, enriched by passionate and perhaps quirky locals. Explore the shops, galleries and traditional crafts within some of the Southern Hemisphere's most complete Victorian streetscapes, before landing in Dunedin. The afternoon is yours to discover the 'Edinburgh of the Southern Hemisphere', whether wandering the manicured grounds of its stately castle, taking a wildlife cruise to spot little penguins, or sampling sustainable gin (all own expense)

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Southern Cross (1 night)
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Day 11

From sheep farms to rugged mountains, today is one of diversity. Venture to the South Island's largest lake and the pretty lakeside town of Te Anau. You'll experience the thrill of jet boating on Lake Manapouri, home to Pomona Island where native birds are under threat - and this MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience is helping to protect them through a community-based conservation project that is also helping to restore native flora. Stop in some quiet and tranquil spots, soak up the amazing surrounds, spot a few trout, and learn about the unique environment and fascinating history of this unique location among Fiordland National Park.

Staying in:

- Distinction Te Anau Hotel and Villas (1 night)
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Day 12

There aren't many places in the world that remind you how precious the planet is. Fiordland National Park is one. Your journey towards Milford Sound/Piopiotahi traverses native rainforest, alluvial flats and meadows, with mirrored lakes, thundering waterfalls, dramatic rocky ranges and millennia-old valleys. Now prepare yourself for your Milford Sound/Piopiotahi boat tour, cruising through this wild expanse, provides enough drama for an entire travel year. You still have the streets of Queenstown, known as the 'Adventure Capital of New Zealand', to explore.

Staying in:

- Millennium Hotel, Queenstown (1 night)
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Day 13

The roll-call of Queenstown optional activities you could sign-up for today is near endless. Perhaps Or maybe your Queenstown tour is dedicated to the gorges of Skippers Canyon. If you're a gourmand at heart, sign up for a Central Otago wine tour, where your day involves sipping your way through award-winning cool-climate wines. Or visit Kiwi Birdlife Park, take on the Shotover River with KJet. The Lord of the Rings fans, there's the Glenorchy Scenic Tour (all own expense). Your day ends on a dreamy TSS Earnslaw cruise across Lake Wakatipu, landing at Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet barbecue dinner at the Colonel's Homestead.

Staying in:

- Millennium Hotel, Queenstown (1 night)
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Day 14

From Arrowtown's tree-lined avenues (where you've been visiting a bygone time) to Central Otago's gleaming lakes, nature rules today. Alpine scenery tiers into rainforest along the West Coast of New Zealand. Welcome to the town of Franz Josef/Waiau, home to Franz Josef Glacier/Ka Roimata o Hine Hukatere, the massif ideally explored on an optional helicopter flight – conditions pending, you may even be able to land and walk across the ice-fall. The bird's-eye view reveals the immensity of this gem-like mound of ice.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier (1 night)
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Day 15

Enjoy a relaxed morning in Franz Josef/Waiau, exploring the small but lively village. Pause at a scenic viewpoint for a glimpse of the Franz Josef Glacier, a powerful river of ice carved deep into the landscape, before continuing to Hokitika, famed for its jade greenstone and creative artisan culture. This evening, arrive at Scenic Punakaiki and unwind over dinner with wine, set against the dramatic rhythm of the West Coast shoreline.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Punakaiki (1 night)
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Day 16

This morning, take in one of New Zealand's most iconic coastal landscapes at the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes. Admire these remarkable layered limestone formations, shaped over 30 million years by wind and sea, with each "whoosh" of the blowholes sending bursts of spray skyward. Continue north for a relaxed lunch at the legendary Monteith's Brewery, a true West Coast favourite. This afternoon, journey inland to Arthur's Pass and board the world-famous TranzAlpine train. Sit back as you cross soaring viaducts, pass through tunnels, and glide past snow-capped peaks, icy rivers, beech forests, and deep gorges. Arrive in Christchurch this evening, where your New Zealand journey concludes with dinner and drinks.

Staying in:

- Distinction Christchurch Hotel (1 night)
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Day 17

How many travel highs can you pack into a holiday? This itinerary has certainly pushed the boundaries. Now all you have to do is go home and

sort through all those photos.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Guided Coach Tour
Starts: Auckland
Finishes: Christchurch
Tour length: 17
Accommodation: Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary