

Northbound Christchurch to Auckland 17 day self drive tour

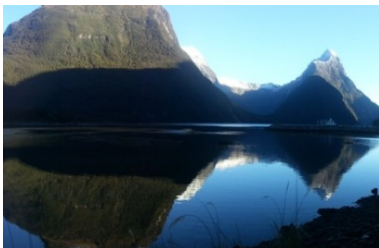
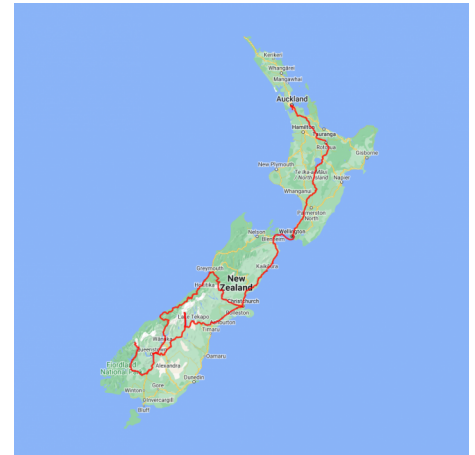


From Christchurch you'll first travel a loop of the lower South Island, beginning with the iconic TranzAlpine scenic train crossing the Southern Alps to the West Coast. Highlights of the section of the trip include a scenic flight and snow landing on the remarkable West Coast glaciers and a spectacular cruise in Milford Sound. Heading north you'll enjoy a wine tasting tour in Marlborough, before crossing the Cook Strait to the North Island and the quirky capital city of Wellington. Travel through the central plateau to Rotorua and its bubbling mud pools and unique Maori culture before arriving into Auckland the 'City of Sails'.



Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Auckland
 Length: 17days / 16nights
 Accommodation: Motels
 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: Unlimited kms
 Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees
 Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)
 Included activity: Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation
 Included activity: Half Day Marlborough Wine Tour with Sounds Connection
 Included activity: Lord Of The Rings Half Day Tour with Capital Personalised Tour
 Included activity: Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring
 Included activity: Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)
 Includes: GPS navigation
 Includes: Additional drivers
 Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand
 Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App
 Included activity: Interislander Ferry Picton to Wellington
 Included activity: Te Pā Tū Evening Maori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included
 Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Christchurch to Greymouth
 Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included



: 1 lunch

Day 1



Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation

On arrival, you will be met by a private driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

Welcome to Christchurch City

Christchurch New Zealand's garden city is steadily being transformed into a vibrant urban destination. Encompassing a large green belt, it is known for its wide tree lined avenues and lush gardens. A great way to explore the city or easy way to see the sights or ride the historic trams across town to the renowned botanic gardens and the unique cardboard Transitional Cathedral, that's right it is built of cardboard!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Discover Christchurch Afternoon Tour

A half-day sightseeing tour of Christchurch highlighting both the damage to the city inflicted by several large earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and the rebuild which is currently in progress, together with the surviving beauty of the city and the historical landmarks. Experience the grand architecture, beautiful gardens, and scenic viewpoints on a half-day city tour of Christchurch.

The tour commences in the central city of Christchurch and covers the area that was completely devastated by the Christchurch earthquakes in February 2011. The guide will explain both the history of the city and the effects of the earthquake. On leaving the inner city, the tour travels to Mona Vale a historic homestead and gardens. Then you will travel to the Sign of the Takahe, a historic building with a lookout providing spectacular views over the city, Canterbury Plains, and the Southern Alps. The tour then travels via the Port Hills and Lyttelton Harbour by way of the Sign of the Kiwi and Governors Bay to the Port of Lyttelton. The tour proceeds through the Lyttelton harbor tunnel to the seaside suburb of Sumner and Cave Rock before returning to the central city where the tour will conclude.

Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping centre and only a short walk to the Botanic Gardens.



Day 2



Private transfer accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring

A private driver will collect you from your accommodation and transfer you to the Christchurch train station in time for your train journey.

TranzAlpine Scenic Train Christchurch to Greymouth

Your early morning departure is rewarded with incredible scenery today onboard the TranzAlpine Scenic Train, considered one of the world's great train journeys. It travels between Christchurch and Greymouth, from one coast of New Zealand to the other. From your carriage you'll see the fields of the Canterbury Plains and farmland, followed by the spectacular gorges and river valleys of the Waimakariri River. Your train then climbs into the Southern Alps before descending through the lush beech rain forest to the West Coast town of Greymouth, a great base for visits to Punakaiki and the West Coast glaciers.

Collect Rental Car

Choose a car to best suit your needs from our fantastic rental car range. From compact economy, hatchbacks to prestige SUVs.

Greymouth

Greymouth sits on the Grey River and is the largest commercial centre on the West Coast. Within the town centre are several historical buildings of note, making it a pleasant place to stroll. For a taste of adventure, there are many activities to do.

The Wild West Adventure Company can take you glow worm caving, four wheel driving, white water rafting, horse back riding, riverboat cruising, bush walking, camping or relaxing in local hot pools. In the centre of town you will also find the Monteith's brewery and a tour of this is highly worthwhile. Just to the south is Shantytown, a replica of a working goldmine village with reconstructed buildings, mine working and a wonderful collection of steam trains.

Greymouth is also where the TranzAlpine train arrives and departs.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Greymouth

Experience true West Coast hospitality at Bella Vista Greymouth. A great base for all your West Coast adventures. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the town centre for shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 3



Greymouth to Franz Josef

Leaving Greymouth you will head south into Glacier Country. Pass through Hokitika and be sure to take a detour to the spectacular Hokitika Gorge, the famous turquoise-coloured river surrounded by native bush-clad cliffs.

Continue on through Ross, a historic gold mining town where several buildings still remain intact and still to this day one of New Zealand's working gold mines. As you travel further down the coast you'll also go through Hari Hari, the town where Guy Menzies, the first person to fly solo over the Tasman crash landed. Heading south along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild west coast beach occasionally. Whataroa is the next town where you can see one of the world's rarest birds, the New Zealand white heron or Kotuku nest at the Waitangi Roto Nature Reserve, and guided tours from October to March will take you there. Arriving in Franz Josef township is a lively place with a great atmosphere, restaurants including Blue Ice and Snakebite are worth a meal. This small town is packed with walks, adventure, and scenic activities, something for everyone.

Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

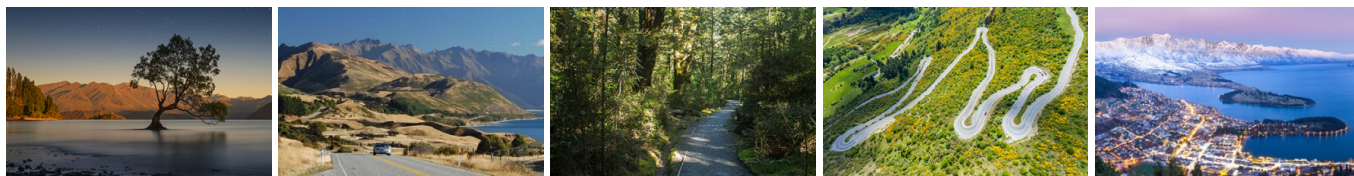
A spectacular scenic flight soaring over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers, Fox and Franz Josef. Landing at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Franz Josef

From the moment you arrive at Bella Vista Franz Josef, you'll enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to shops, restaurants and other activities, as well as being a short walk to the Glacier Hot Pools. Franz Josef village is the perfect place to stay when exploring New Zealand's glaciers.



Day 4



Franz Josef to Queenstown (via Wānaka)

Heading south you pass through the second glacier town of Fox Glacier before heading along the coast and into more classic West Coast bush scenery. We can recommend a stop at the Paringa Salmon Farm for lunch or refreshments, if you have time make sure you feed the fish, it's very impressive! At Knights Point Lookout elephant seals can often be seen basking on the sandy beaches at the far end of the point. Crossing the massive Haast River you turn inland and head into the valley climbing through mountains littered with waterfalls. The Haast Valley offers a spectacular view of the river and its enormous power. The Blue Pools near Makarora are a great 30-minute walk. The road from Makarora leads to Lakes Wānaka and Hāwea which will guide you into the stunning lakeside township of Wānaka before heading over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road and dropping into the Wakatipu basin, home to Queenstown. .

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 5



Milford Sound Cruise and Coach Tour from Queenstown with RealNZ - Lunch Included

Departing from Queenstown sit back and relax aboard a luxury glass-roofed coach to enjoy a relaxing trip along the shores of Lake Wakatipu and through the rolling countryside to Te Anau. The coach driver provides an informative commentary and plenty of photo opportunities. After a morning tea break in Te Anau, the coach continues along the spectacular Milford Road. On reaching Piopiotahi-Milford Sound, board your vessel for a leisurely cruise in the fiord. The cruise provides excellent viewing opportunities and plenty of time is available to enjoy waterfalls, rainforests, mountains and wildlife. Rain or shine, every day in Piopiotahi-Milford Sound will leave you in awe.

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Meals included: Lunch



Day 6



Explore Queenstown

Well-known as New Zealand's 'adventure capital', Queenstown is home to a range of adventures, from the world's first and most famous bungy jumps to jet boat thrills, white-water rafting, and skydiving. However, Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of beautiful Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by many historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Take a stroll through the beautiful lakefront parks and gardens, browse through market stalls on weekends, dine in wonderful al-fresco restaurants, or ride on the 100-year-old historic Steamship - TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Take the Queenstown Gondola up to Bob's Peak and soak up the panoramic views of the magnificent lake and mountain ranges. Steamer Wharf is full of delicious eateries and the O'Connells Pavillion is great for a spot of shopping. And after all of that, if you do want the adrenaline rush, Queenstown is known for taking your pick from the Shotover Jet, Canyon Swing, Zipline, Luge, or Heli-hike.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Skyline Gondola Queenstown and 3 Luge Rides

In the heart of Queenstown, located 450 metres above town in the Ben Lomond Scenic Reserve is the Skyline Complex. A gondola ride to the summit makes for awe-inspiring views of the city surround. Arrive at the complex and wander the outside viewing decks for a picture perfect outlook. Then onto the Luge! The 800 metre luge track offers an exhilarating journey through banked corners, tunnels and dippers.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Shotover Canyon River Jet Boat Adventure

Riding the iconic 'Big Red' Jet Boat through the narrow Shotover Canyon is an exhilarating experience not to be missed. Your skilled jet boat driver pushes the boat to 85 kph, skimming across shallow water and past towering canyon walls. This 25 minute white water ride includes 360 degree spins and maximum thrills.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TSS Earnslaw Cruise and Walter Peak Gourmet BBQ Dinner

Enjoy a quintessential Kiwi experience, a delicious gourmet BBQ buffet meal and a farm demonstration in a stunning lakeside setting. Take in the stunning views of Lake Wakatipu and its surroundings as you cruise across the lake to the historic Walter Peak high country farm aboard the TSS Earnslaw Steamship. Enjoy the ambience of the heart of the stately homestead while your Colonel's Homestead Restaurant chef prepares a gourmet BBQ dinner. Your seasonal menu includes an extensive selection of local New Zealand produce, including succulent meats and a selection of delicious vegetables and salads. Complete your meal with your choice of delicious desserts, New Zealand cheeses, tea, and coffee. After dinner, watch the farm dogs in action with a sheep-herding demonstration and say hello to the other farm animals. Finally, cruise home under the southern stars and enjoy the fresh night air as the lights of Queenstown draw ever closer.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style, comfort and spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 7



Queenstown to Aoraki Mt Cook National Park

Leaving Queenstown you'll head through the Kawarau Gorge and over the historic Kawarau Bridge, a popular bungee jumping location. Choose to participate in this daredevil sport or watch others instead. Continue through Gibbston and be sure to stop at one of its many vineyards for a tasting. As you leave the gorge you'll arrive in Cromwell, known for its many fruit orchards. If you're a foodie at heart, we recommend taking a side trip to Bannockburn for a complete food and wine experience at one of its many award-winning wineries and restaurants. Cromwell itself sits at the head of the Kawarau Gorge and the old historic town is well worth the visit. Completely submerged when the Clyde Dam was built and Lake Dunstan established in 1992, the remnants of the old Cromwell town provides a unique snapshot into this areas history. Head over through the Lindis Pass, one of New Zealand's highest roads, with the summit reaching 971 metres. It's tussock covered hills are a barren but beautiful sight as you descend into the Mackenzie Basin. You'll go through the towns of Omarama and Twizel, the last stops before you arrive at Lake Pukaki and take the Aoraki Mt Cook Highway to arrive in the small village.

Please note: There are no food shops at Mt Cook, and dinner options are limited to one restaurant. If you wish to self-cater, you must stock up before arriving in Mt Cook, or make dinner reservations in advance.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glacier Explorers Mt. Cook

Experience 500 year old icebergs up-close on the Mt Cook terminal lake. The Glacier Explorers tour is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and one of only three in the world! Very few glaciers terminate into lakes and even fewer of them are accessible. See towering ice cliffs and floating icebergs from the safety of a specially designed boat. These boats provide a safe way to view unseen and inaccessible areas of New Zealand's largest glacier The Tasman.

Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel, nestled in the heart of Mt. Cook Village, offers spacious self-contained units that provide comfort and convenience. Each unit is surrounded by breathtaking alpine mountain views, making it the perfect retreat for nature lovers and adventurers alike.



Day 8



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Christchurch

Leaving Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, travel a short distance before stopping at the visitor centre on the southern shores of Lake Pukaki. Learn about the formation of the region and take in the spectacular views of Mount Cook. Lake Tekapo also displays the same reflective qualities of Lake Pukaki, making the waters a bright turquoise. You'll go through the small town of Tekapo, home to some of the most photographed subjects in the country, the Church of the Good Shepherd and the Collie Dog statue. It's a great place to take a scenic flight, enjoy a guided horse trek, a boat trip on the pristine lake or just marvel at the magnificent views. From here you travel through Burkes Pass and into the rich farming valley that surrounds Geraldine. Continue on across the vast Canterbury Plains to Christchurch.

Your accommodation: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping centre and only a short walk to the Botanic Gardens.



Day 9



Christchurch to Kaikoura

The drive north from Christchurch to Kaikoura takes you through the rolling hills of North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley. Allow time for a detour and visit Hanmer Springs for a dip in the mineral hot pools. Continue on and cross the Hawkswood Range before descending to the spectacular Kaikoura coastline - where the road hugs the ocean for the last leg of the drive.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikoura

Experience New Zealand's only marine based whale watching company. Whale Watch Kaikoura offer a once-in-a-lifetime, up close encounter with the giant Sperm Whale. You are also likely to encounter New Zealand fur seals, dusky dolphins and albatross. Depending on the season you may also see pilot, blue and southern right whales as well as migrating humpbacks. Often orcas can be spotted here and the world's smallest dolphin, the Hector's, occasionally make an appearance.

Cruise in style on modern catamarans, specifically designed for whale watching, featuring large passenger cabins and outside viewing decks. Passenger numbers for each tour are kept below the vessel carrying capacity to ensure your tour experience remains a personal one.

Your accommodation: The White Morph, Kaikoura

Set on the Esplanade in Kaikōura, The White Morph enjoys commanding views of the ocean and mountains. Just a 10-minute walk into town, The White Morph has been beautifully placed so that you can take in the spectacular scenery of Kaikoura while enjoying the variety of attractions on offer.



Day 10



Kaikoura to Blenheim

Heading north from Kaikoura, the road hugs the shore for approximately 50 kilometres and offers many opportunities to view the native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. One of the best seal watching locations is Ohau Point (25km north of Kaikoura), where you can observe the adults on the shoreline and the pups frolicking in the waterfall, just a short walk from the road (signposted). As you drive you will have turquoise waters of the South Pacific Ocean to your east and to the west the towering Kaikoura Ranges. Crossing the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges you head towards Marlborough, New Zealand's largest wine producing region. Blenheim sits right at the heart of Marlborough and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

Blenheim

Surrounded by row upon row of vines, Blenheim sits at the heart of the Marlborough Wine region. A compact town centred on an old fashioned marketplace, Blenheim is a great place to soak up the country atmosphere. A great choice of cafes, restaurants, and shops will help you while away the afternoon.

Blenheim is also home to the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre, which houses Peter Jackson's Great War collection, complete with mannequins by Weta Workshop.

Of course, the region is most famous for its world-class wines and a visit would not be complete without sampling the vintages at the many wineries.

Half Day Wine Tour

An afternoon among the vines! Be immersed in the Marlborough wine country with the Sounds Connection half day wine tour. You'll be collected from your accommodation and taken through three or four hand-picked wineries to taste the award-winning produce this region is known for. You'll also hear about the history of winemaking in Marlborough as well as learning the unique processes each winery goes through. A lunch stop is not included in this tour so we do advise you have something to eat prior to this activity.

Your accommodation: Blenheim Palms Motel

Located 100 m from the central shops and eateries, the Blenheim Palms Motel offers tasteful individually designed apartment-styled rooms.



Day 11



Blenheim to Picton

The short drive from Blenheim to Picton takes you through more wine-growing regions and the valley to the west of the Robertson Range. Picton is a port town and its here that the Interislander ferries arrive and depart. The town centre is quite small with plenty of shops and cafes and the waterfront area is a very pleasant place to spend a few hours watching the activity of the ships. The Edwin Fox Maritime Centre on the wharf is worth a visit with the star attraction being the vessel the Edwin Fox, reputedly the 9th oldest ship in the world. The hills to the west of Picton are the start of Queen Charlotte Drive, a very picturesque road to Havelock and Nelson that winds its way along the shores of the sounds.

Interislander Ferry Picton to Wellington

The 92 km journey between Picton and Wellington takes around 3 hours and has been described as 'one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world'. Around one hour of the cruise takes you through the Marlborough Sounds. This region of bush covered mountains, small islands, crystal clear waters and secluded bays offer remarkable photographic opportunities.

From the Cook Strait, spectacular views of the Kaikoura Ranges on the South Island can be enjoyed and often dolphins and sea birds are seen. After crossing the strait you approach Wellington Harbour and pass many interesting points such as Pencarrow Head on top of which is New Zealand's oldest lighthouse (1859). Red Rocks is home to a seal colony and Oterangi Bay is the site which recorded the country's highest ever wind speed of 268 kph (167 mph).

Collect Rental Car

Choose a car to best suit your needs from our fantastic rental car range. From compact economy, hatchbacks to prestige SUVs.

Your accommodation: Adina CityLife Wellington

Adina CityLife Wellington is a suite style hotel with every amenity required for a comfortable stay, as well as being in a superb location to explore the compact city centre. Situated on Lambton Quay, you'll find the best shopping, tourist attractions and cultural landmarks all within easy walking distance.



Day 12



Wellington City

Wellington home to New Zealand's centre of government has a largely cosmopolitan feel. Often referred to as 'mini Melbourne', this (self-described) windy city is a melting pot of art, culture, food, and fashion. Quirky laneway bars, underground art shows, and hipster eateries make up its inner-city vibe, while a host of sandy beaches outside the urban bustle bring a cheerful holiday feel.

Head to Te Papa Museum for a history lesson and a ticket to one of its many international exhibitions or jump aboard the Wellington Cable Car at Lambton Quay - the only running funicular railway in the country. For those with an eye for boutique, fashion wander through Cuba St to sample some of the city's best vintage stores. Break for coffee at a hipster cafe and be sure to snap a pic outside the 'Beehive', New Zealand's parliamentary debate chamber.

Go behind the scenes at Weta Workshop Experience, the Oscar Award Winning design studio behind Lord Of The Rings, The Hobbit, and Avatar. If you're a foodie at heart, a two-hour round trip to Martinborough is a must-do. Take your time as you wind through spectacular wine country, and be sure to stop in at Martinborough Wines or Ata Rangi Martinborough. For an educational day out, learn about New Zealand's native species at Zealandia, the world's first fully-fenced eco-sanctuary and home to over 40 types of endangered and native birds.

Lord Of The Rings Half Day Tour - Wellington

With some of the best Lord of the Rings tours Wellington has to offer, you will not be disappointed on this tour. You'll visit local filming locations, view a short documentary showing the filmmaking exploits of Peter Jackson and his remarkable team and be guided through the sights and sounds of the Weta Workshop in Miramar. This is followed by a fascinating 'Window into the workshop' exhibition, showing film props and weaponry, with the artists themselves describing how the artefacts were created.

Your accommodation: Adina CityLife Wellington

Adina CityLife Wellington is a suite style hotel with every amenity required for a comfortable stay, as well as being in a superb location to explore the compact city centre. Situated on Lambton Quay, you'll find the best shopping, tourist attractions and cultural landmarks all within easy walking distance.



Day 13



Wellington to Rotorua

The drive from Wellington to Taupo takes you via the Kapiti Coast and the seaside towns of Plimmerton, Paekakariki and Paraparaumu are worth a short detour. Heading north you pass through the rural towns of Taihape, Mangaweka and Bulls before arriving onto the central plateau. A little further the military town of Waiouru is home to the National Army Museum, an incredible collection of New Zealand's military history and a memorial to its servicemen. Skirting Tongariro National Park, one of New Zealand's three world heritage sites, you can see the 2,500 metre peak of the volcanically active Mt. Ruapehu. You might also recognise the symmetrical shape of Mt. Ngauruhoe as this was used as the scenery of Mt. Doom in the Lord of the Rings Trilogy. The township of Taupo sits on the shores of New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo - a gigantic volcanic caldera formed during one of the world's largest ever eruptions. Just north of the town are the Huka Falls and a short detour to view is advised. The Huka Jet can get you much closer with a thrilling jet boat ride. Nearby Craters of the Moon is a geothermal reserve with great walking tracks around its many boiling pools and steaming vents. Continuing on to Rotorua you pass the volcanic valley, visit either Wai O Tapu or the Waimangu Valley for a closer look. Arriving into Rotorua the city's geothermal activity is evident with steam rising from the roadside and hills. Rotorua is considered the heart of New Zealand's Maori cultural and it's here you can learn of their history and traditions. The Ohinemutu Village is located on the site of the first Maori settlement in the area. One of the most popular introductions for many to the Maori culture is through an evening at Mitai Maori Village. Here you will gain an insight into the traditional Maori way of life through song, dance and entertainment. A dinner prepared in the traditional manner is served to finish the evening off.

Your accommodation: Silver Fern Suites & Spa

Silver Fern Suites & Spa is located just minutes from Rotorua's city centre and is close to popular thermal attractions, cafes, restaurants and golf courses. Suites have a private spa pool or double spa bath for you to unwind and relax.



Day 14



Explore Rotorua

Peppered with natural hot springs, boiling mud pools and steaming geysers, Rotorua sits within one of the world's most active volcanic regions. Geothermal landmarks aside, this city of sulphur has a rich indigenous history. Home to several prominent Maori tribes, a visit to one of the Maori Villages should be high on your agenda, as should an excursion to the Polynesian Spa for an invigorating soak in its natural mineral hot springs.

Spike your adrenaline at Velocity Valley Adventure Park on stomach-dropping attractions such as static skydiving, or a giant swing reaching 130 km per hour. Alternatively, head up the Rotorua Gondola for soaring lake views, and ride the luge at night for an extra thrill.

Fans of Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit should drive to nearby Matamata and experience the actual movie set 'Hobbiton'. Make the most of your time in Rotorua with an excursion through the Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland, one of the area's most colourful volcanic attractions.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - National Kiwi Hatchery Experience

The National Kiwi Hatchery Experience is a special opportunity to gain insight into and view this highly regarded conservation centre. Developed with the visitor experience in mind, the hatchery boasts special viewing opportunities and is hosted by kiwi expert guides who ensure guests leave fully informed and all questions answered. Learn all about New Zealand's intriguing national icon and the efforts of the kiwi husbandry team, see and discover what it takes to hatch and rare chicks, and if you're lucky see baby chicks in person!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Original Ziplining Experience with Rotorua Canopy Tours

Embark on a three hour adventure through native New Zealand forest. Journey through the beautiful forest canopy via an incredible network of trails, tree platforms, Ziplines and swing bridges. See breathtaking views of the woodland valleys and hills as you fly through tight openings in the trees. In between the thrill of the ziplines and suspended tree bridges, your guides will share their passion and knowledge for the forest and the conservation challenges to preserve it. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

Te Pā Tū Evening Maori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

New Zealand's Most Awarded Cultural Attraction, presenting Te Pā Tū. Feast on song, drama, tradition, and divine seasonal kai (cuisine) within the forest Pā (village) blanketed by towering Tawa trees, blazing bonfires, and a forest-formed amphitheatre. Te Pā Tū shares Māori history, traditions, and cultural aspirations across 4-hours of celebration and feasting. These events change with each season of the Maramataka, the Māori lunar calendar.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland

Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland is a spectacular showcase of New Zealand's colourful and unique geothermal elements sculpted by thousands of years of volcanic activity. You will be introduced to a diversely different natural landscape, extending over 18-sq. km. Enjoy viewing the volcanic features as you walk at your own pace along well-defined tracks. Relax in the first-class Visitor Centre, home to the Gift Shop and Caf'eacute; facilities. Visit the Mud Pool, the largest in New Zealand, it was originally the site of a large mud volcano which was destroyed through erosion in the 1920s. See the history and beauty of the Lady Knox Geyser at 10:15 am every day where a daily eruption happens of up to 20 metres.

Your accommodation: Silver Fern Suites & Spa

Silver Fern Suites & Spa is located just minutes from Rotorua's city centre and is close to popular thermal attractions, cafes, restaurants and golf courses. Suites have a private spa pool or double spa bath for you to unwind and relax.



Day 15



Rotorua to Auckland

The drive from Rotorua to Auckland takes you through the heart of the Waikato and its rich agricultural land. New Zealand's longest river, the Waikato guides you through the art and craft stores of Tirau and the township of Cambridge. Continue on a little further to arrive in Auckland City, your destination for the night.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Hobbiton Movie Set Tour from Shires Rest

Become immersed in the The Lord of the Rings and Hobbit films when you visit the actual Hobbiton movie set. Located just outside of Matamata in the heart of the lush Waikato farming region, your tour will begin with a drive through a picturesque sheep farm. You'll then be taken through Hobbit Holes, the Green Dragon Inn, the Mill and the Party Tree while your guide shares behind-the-scenes tales and insight into the making of the films. Spend time wandering through Bagshot Row before being led inside a Hobbit Hole to view the detailed interiors, designed to provide an authentic glimpse into the dwelling of a Hobbit.

Your accommodation: Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments

Nesuto Stadium offers a comfortable self-contained apartment in downtown Auckland. Located a short walk from Britomart Transport and the Viaduct. Enjoy your stay in central Auckland surrounded by delicious eateries or use your in-house kitchenette to dine in!



Day 16



Explore Auckland

Perched on the edge of a large natural harbour, New Zealand's 'City of Sails' offers the best of both worlds. Sandy beaches, native bush and lush rainforests give way to a vibrant urban culture, humming with life. Spend time in the Viaduct Harbour, try your hand at sailing an America's Cup yacht or take the ferry to nearby Waiheke Island for a gourmet food and wine experience. If you're looking for a lovely hike, walk (if you're that way inclined) to the top of Auckland's highest volcano, Mt Eden, and take in soaring views of the gulf. Immerse yourself in nature's beauty at the expansive Auckland Botanic Gardens, sprawled across 156 acres of lush land and native forest on Hill Road. Pack a picnic, soak up the sunshine, and delight in the melodious birdsong during a peaceful lunch. Head up to the Sky Tower, standing at just over 300m tall (about 1,000 feet) and have a meal in the 360-degree revolving restaurant. Scale the outermost perimeter of the Harbour Bridge or test your stomach and bungee off both. To end your day, catch a cab to Ponsonby Road and sample some upmarket culinary delights.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Ferry from Auckland to Rangitoto Island and return with Fullers

A short cruise through the Waitemata Harbour to the Hauraki Gulf delivers you to Rangitoto Island. Rangitoto Island is the largest and youngest of the many volcanoes that make up the Auckland volcanic field. It erupted around 600 years ago, but is extinct now and safe to explore. During your cruise to and from the island enjoy fantastic views of Rangitoto Island and Auckland. On reaching the island you can walk to the summit (1 hour direct) for great views of the Hauraki Gulf and over Waitemata Harbour looking back towards Auckland. There are a number of walking trails to explore this volcanic island, further information can be found at the Department of Conservation website.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Auckland Wine Country Half Day Tour including Lunch with Bush and Beach

Today you'll be leaving the city and heading north-west to Kumeu Wine Country, Auckland's Heritage Wine Region. Enjoy lunch at a contemporary vineyard, sample world-renowned wines and marvel at the rugged surf-fringed coastline nearby. Your first stop is award-winning Soljans Estate Winery. Utilising both traditional and modern techniques, Soljans produce varied and richly flavoured wines. Built with sunshine in mind and a distinct Mediterranean-style, the onsite restaurant showcases fresh seasonal produce from around the region. Continuing on, you'll visit Muriwai Beach home to a Gannet Colony. Situated on the cliffs overlooking the Tasman sea you'll have breathtaking views of the beach and ocean beyond as you observe one of the largest seabirds, the gannet, in their natural environment. Your final tasting is at West Brook Winery, one of New Zealand's oldest. These wines reflect true varietal character and their unique regional origins.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Harbour Sailing Cruise with Explore

Enjoy the City of Sails from the water on a relaxed harbour sailing yacht. This cruise offers a uniquely local experience experiencing the harbour under sail with a small vessel with an intimate and engaging atmosphere. View the stunning city sights while sailing on the inner Waitemata Harbour. Sail where the wind takes us while enjoying Auckland's city highlights; including sailing under the Harbour Bridge and other well-known landmarks along the harbour's edge. The crew's local knowledge will give you the best harbour sailing experience Auckland has to offer. Become the crew and help participate with the sailing experience take the helm while you carve through the water, or if you prefer just sit back and relax above deck.

Your accommodation: Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments

Nesuto Stadium offers a comfortable self-contained apartment in downtown Auckland. Located a short walk from Britomart Transport and the Viaduct. Enjoy your stay in central Auckland surrounded by delicious eateries or use your in-house kitchenette to dine in!



Day 17



Depart Auckland today

Explore more of vibrant Auckland city before dropping your rental car at the airport depot and continuing your onward journey.

Farewell from Aotearoa-New Zealand

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

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Nationwide Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Auckland
Tour length:	17
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Christchurch to Greymouth
Includes	Interislander ferry crossing
Includes	Mitai Maori Village Concert & Buffet Dinner, Rotorua
Includes	LOTR Film Locations Tour, Wellington
Includes	Real Journeys Milford Sound day tour & cruise from Queenstown
Includes	Twin Glaciers Scenic Helicopter Flight, Franz Josef

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Quest on Cambridge
Day 2	Bella Vista Greymouth
Day 3	Bella Vista Franz Josef
Day 4	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 5	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 6	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 7	Mt Cook Motel
Day 8	Quest on Cambridge
Day 9	The White Morph, Kaikoura
Day 10	Blenheim Palms Motel
Day 11	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 12	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 13	Silver Fern Suites & Spa
Day 14	Silver Fern Suites & Spa
Day 15	Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments
Day 16	Nesuto Stadium Hotel and Apartments