

Intrepid Travel: Premium New Zealand Encompassed



Dramatic peaks, glittering glaciers and geothermal wonders await on this Intrepid Premium adventure through New Zealand's North and South islands. With a passionate local leader to guide the way, you'll experience a landscape that has been shaped by the elements over thousands of years. Taste local wines at picturesque cellar doors and wineries, set out in search of kiwis, explore the mythical world of Hobbiton and explore the volcanic landscapes of Tongariro. From the pure spectacle of Milford Sound to the simmering geysers of Rotorua, this adventure is sure to blow you away.

This itinerary is valid for departures from 01 October 2026 to 30 September 2027. Please consult your Travel Specialist for details on itinerary variations outside these dates.

Starts in: Auckland
 Finishes in: Queenstown
 Length: 18days / 17nights
 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: Criffel Station foraging & lunch experience with local chef
 Included: West Coast TreeTop Walk
 Included: Waiheke Island winery visits with tasting & lunch
 Included: Te Pa Tu - Māori cultural & culinary experience
 Included: Return Ferry to Waiheke Island
 Included: Pounamu (Greenstone) Studio visit
 Included: Milford Sound Cruise
 Included: Guided walk to the Blue Pools with a local Ornithologist
 Included: Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise
 : 17 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 7 dinners

Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
 Included activity: Intrepid Travel
 Included: Gibbston Valley Winery
 Included: Wellington Harbour Evening Cruise
 Included: Wai O Tapu thermal reserve
 Included: Taranaki Falls, Tongariro National Park
 Included: Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk
 Included: Monteith's Brewing Co. tasting
 Included: Hobbiton Movie Set Tour
 Included: Drink at The Green Dragon (Hobbiton)
 Included: Cruise on the Interislander Ferry

Day 1



Welcome to New Zealand! Your adventure of the volcanic North Island begins in Auckland – New Zealand's most populated city, fringed with beaches, harbours, volcanoes and farmland. You'll be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel, where you'll have a welcome meeting at 6 pm. If you arrive early, you might like to uncover the story of New Zealand rugby during an interactive All Blacks experience where you'll learn about the heritage of the sport and find out what it takes to wear the famous black jersey. After your meeting, get to know your group over dinner at a local bistro in the heart of the city, championing New Zealand producers.

It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this time. If you are going to be late please let your travel agent or hotel reception know. Ask reception or look for a note in the lobby for more information on where the meeting will take place.

Activities:

- Auckland - Welcome Dinner
- Complimentary Arrival Transfer

Staying in:

- M Social or similar (1 night)
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Day 2

Leave the bustle of the big city behind and head offshore to Waiheke Island, famed for its sandy beaches and local wine. Board a ferry from Auckland – if you're lucky, you may even see dolphins or orcas along the way. The day will be spent sipping your way around the island, stopping off at two unique wineries to learn about their production methods, and of course tasting the goods yourself. You'll also enjoy an included lunch on the island, not to mention a few scenic drives with plenty of opportunities for photos. Return to Auckland in the late afternoon with an evening free for your own discoveries of the city.

Activities:

- Waiheke Island - Day Trip by Ferry
- Waiheke Island - Winery Visits with Wine Tasting & Lunch

Staying in:

- M Social or similar (1 night)
-

Day 3

After breakfast this morning, hit the road and drive to the Waitomo Glow Worm Caves – an extensive underground network of tunnels and caverns decorated with stalactites, stalagmites and luminous glow worms. Join a local expert for an in-depth tour of the Ruakuri Cave, descending a spiral entrance to the world below. See the limestone formations, hear the roar of subterranean waterfalls and learn about the glow worms that light up the caves. Continue to Hobbiton, where the epic Lord of the Rings movies were shot. Take a tour around the set with a local guide, hear stories about the production of these iconic films, explore Hobbit holes and enjoy a drink (and maybe a delicious pie) at the mythical Green Dragon Inn. Finally, travel to Rotorua, where you'll spend the evening.

Activities:

- Hobbiton - Visit to the Lord of the Rings Movie Set
- Hobbiton - Drink at the Green Dragon
- Waitomo - Glowworm Cave Tour

Staying in:

- Millennium Rotorua or similar (1 night)
-

Day 4

Spend this morning at your leisure, perhaps relax at the Polynesian Spa or head for adrenaline at the Redwoods Treetop Walkway. This evening, you will pay a visit to Te Pā Tū and be hosted by the people of Tamaki Māori Village. A local expert will guide you in celebrating the abundant harvest of this season, and you will explore concepts, rituals, and stories of ancient Māori warfare and peace in a feast of culture and cuisine. Within the forest-formed amphitheatre you will hear stories relayed through haka, song and drama, before torch light guides you to an al fresco dining space with three-course feast.

Your trip leader has a rest day today, as per NZ legal requirements. Your trip leader will ensure you're ready to enjoy your time in Rotorua, before taking a 24 hour break. They will be available in case of emergencies.

Activities:

- Rotorua - Visit Te Pa Tu Maori Village with Local Guide and Hangi Dinner

Staying in:

- Millennium Rotorua or similar (1 night)
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Day 5

Say goodbye to Rotorua and drive on to Taupō – sitting on the shores of Lake Taupō, the largest lake in New Zealand, this is a popular and scenic town. On the way, visit Waiotapu Thermal Wonderland, where you'll walk through thousands of years of geothermal history and volcanic features, including New Zealand's largest mud pool and bubbling basins bursting with vibrant colours. The rest of the day is yours to discover all that this picturesque part of the country has to offer. One of the best ways to enjoy the lake is to get on its waters – speak to your leader to find out about the sustainable sailing and cruising options available this afternoon.

Activities:

- Rotorua - Waiotapu Thermal Wonderland

Staying in:

- Millenium Taupo or similar (1 night)
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Day 6

Today, uncover the natural wonders of Tongariro National Park, as spiritually significant as it is naturally beautiful. Your leader will guide you on a scenic two-hour walk to the Taranaki Falls – an impressive 20 m cascade tumbling over volcanic cliffs. Later in the day, head to your Feature Stay accommodation at the Powderhorn Hotel which is nestled in the mountain village at the base of Mt Ruapehu.

Activities:

- Tongariro National Park - Taranaki Falls

Staying in:

- Powderhorn Hotel (Feature Stay) or similar (1 night)
-

Day 7

This morning, make tracks for Wellington – New Zealand's trendy capital city. After settling in, hop aboard a private catamaran and get to know the city on an evening cruise around Wellington Harbour. Return to land after an hour and join your group for dinner at a waterfront restaurant – the perfect chance to reminisce about your North Island adventure.

Activities:

- Wellington - Evening Cruise on Wellington Harbour

Staying in:

- Naumi Hotel or similar (1 night)
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Day 8

This morning, check out of your hotel after breakfast and head to the South Island to begin the second half of your New Zealand adventure. Cross the Cook Strait on board a ferry, taking in some pretty unforgettable views along the way. Your introduction to New Zealand's South

Island sets the tone for the rest of the journey – pass through the iconic landscapes of the Marlborough Sounds as you cruise into Picton Harbour. Travel onward by private vehicle to Christchurch. Settle into your accommodation and enjoy a free evening. Today's total travel time is approximately 9 hours.

Activities:

- Wellington - Ferry Cruise through Marlborough Sound

Staying in:

- The Fable Christchurch or similar (1 night)
-

Day 9

The day is yours to explore all that Christchurch has to offer. In the evening there will be a meeting to meet new members of the group before you head out to enjoy a three-course dinner celebrating local producers at a restaurant that champions sustainability.

As this trip is a combination of shorter itineraries, the travellers in your group and your group leader are likely to change today.

Activities:

- Christchurch - Welcome Dinner
- Complimentary Arrival Transfer

Staying in:

- The Fable Christchurch or similar (1 night)
-

Day 10

Take an orientation tour with your leader around some of the landmarks of Christchurch. Then, set off for Punakaiki, driving through Arthur's Pass and Castle Hill – the spectacular mountain scenery may look familiar, as parts of The Chronicles of Narnia and Lord of the Rings movies were filmed here. After lunch in Moana, enjoy a short stop at Lake Brunner – the largest lake in the South Island. Spend the afternoon in Greymouth, stopping into a boutique studio to learn about the prized west coast jade known locally as Pounamu (Greenstone). Then, continue to Monteith's Brewery, considered the original home of New Zealand craft brewing for a tour and tasting. Arrive at Punakaiki Resort by late afternoon – in Paparoa National Park, this resort lies next to Punakaiki Beach and the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes.

Your travel time today will be approximately 5 hours.

Activities:

- Greymouth - Monteith's Brewery Tour & Tasting
- Greymouth - Pounamu (Greenstone) Studio Visit
- Christchurch - Leader-led Orientation Walk
- Lake Brunner - Nature Walk

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Punakaiki or similar (1 night)
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Day 11

After breakfast, explore the Punakaiki Rocks and Blowholes before the drive to Franz Josef. Punakaiki, is a town with less than 100 residents, but famed for its so-called Pancake Rocks. These layers of fossilised animals and plants, formed over 30 million years ago, were thrust above the surface by the moving earth and sculpted by wind and water. At high tide the sea is forced through blowholes in the limestone to burst metres into the air – it's an entertaining sight! Along the way, stop for lunch and then pay a visit to Okarito where you will take part in a hands-on restoration activity with the Okarito Plant Project, a community-led initiative focused on regenerating native forests and protecting the unique ecosystems of the West Coast.

Your travel time today will be approximately 4 hours.

Activities:

- Punakaiki - Rocks & Blowhole Visit
- Okarito - Plant Project Restoration Activity

Staying in:

- Rainforest Retreat Deluxe Tree Hut or similar (1 night)
-

Day 12

Begin your day with a self-guided walk to see the icy wonderland created by the Franz Josef Glacier – one of the steepest glaciers in New Zealand. If you're feeling more adventurous, you may like to join an optional heli-hiking tour and get even closer to the glacier. Other optional activities include kayaking, a scenic cruise on Lake Mapourika or a soak in the hot tubs at Franz Josef. Ahead of your ranger-led visit tomorrow, you will also have access to the West Coast Wildlife Centre for you to explore at your own pace.

Your trip leader has a rest day today, as per NZ legal requirements. Your trip leader will ensure you're ready to enjoy your time in Franz Josef, before taking a 24-hour break. They will be available in case of emergencies. Some walking paths around Franz Josef Glacier are currently closed due to heavy rain. Your leader can provide updates, or you can visit the Westland Tai Poutini National Park website.

Activities:

- Franz Josef – West Coast Wildlife Centre

Staying in:

- Rainforest Retreat Deluxe Tree Hut or similar (1 night)
-

Day 13

This morning, take a private ranger-guided tour of the West Coast Wildlife Centre – home of the official breeding program for the world's rarest kiwi bird, the rowi. Also keep an eye out for tuatara (a reptile endemic to New Zealand). During your visit, your expert ranger will share behind-the-scenes insights into the conservation efforts taking place on the West Coast including how eggs are incubated and chicks are raised before being released into the wild. Then depart Franz Josef for the resort town of Wanaka, arriving by late afternoon. Located next to the resplendent Wanaka Station Park on the shores of Lake Wanaka, and a short stroll from Wanaka township, you'll be perfectly placed to enjoy all this popular town has to offer.

Your travel time today will be approximately 4.5 hours.

Activities:

- Franz Josef - West Coast Wildlife Centre Visit with Ranger

Staying in:

- Edgewater Hotel or similar (1 night)
-

Day 14

Enjoy a sleep-in this morning or start your day with a hike up Mt Iron for a view over Lake Wanaka and the surrounding peaks. Central Otago is a region well known for food and wine, and today you'll visit the spectacular deer station of Criffel Station. Here, you'll be shown around the farm by the family before doing a chef-guided foraging and tasting tour, followed by a delicious lunch.

Activities:

- Wanaka - Criffel Station Lunch Experience

Staying in:

- Edgewater Hotel or similar (1 night)
-

Day 15

Say farewell to Wanaka after breakfast and begin the journey to Doubtful Sound / Patea – a lesser-known but stunning part of Fiordland National Park. Drive to Lake Manapouri where you'll hop on a ferry for a one-hour journey across the water, followed by a scenic drive to Deep Cove via Wilmot Pass – a subalpine road surrounded by dense rainforest. Here, you'll board your vessel and meet the crew for your Doubtful Sound Cruise. This Premium Exclusive Experience includes a delicious three-course dinner featuring local produce, and a resident naturalist who'll share insights about the fiord's history, flora and wildlife – including dolphins, seals and penguins. With fewer boats on the water than in Milford Sound and a more peaceful atmosphere, there's a higher chance these creatures will pop up to say hello! If weather conditions allow, you might also like to explore by kayak.

Your travel time today will be approximately 3.5 hours. Your leader will not be joining you on the overnight cruise, but they will be available by phone if you need to contact them.

Activities:

- Doubtful Sound - Cruise

Staying in:

- Doubtful Sound Cruise (Feature Stay) (1 night)
-

Day 16

Start your day with a hearty cooked breakfast as the mist rolls over the cliffs, then get ready to explore some of the other nooks of the fiord this morning. After, return to Deep Cove to take the ferry back to Lake Manapouri and continue to Queenstown, arriving in the late afternoon. The rest of the evening is free to relax or explore this resort town, famed for its picturesque scenery and dramatic location on the edge of the Southern Alps.

Your travel time today will be approximately 3 hours.

Activities:

- Doubtful Sound - Cruise

Staying in:

- Millenium Queenstown or similar (1 night)
-

Day 17

Soak up a free morning in Queenstown and wander at your own pace. Then, head to Arrowtown in the afternoon. This historic gold mining town is known for its heritage town centre and autumn festival – and perfect to explore on foot. Learn about the town's history on a leader-led walking tour and browse its shops and cafes. Then, head to Gibbston Valley to sample some of Central Otago's famous drops at a well-known winery. Tonight, enjoy farewell dinner with your group and say cheers to an amazing adventure.

Activities:

- Gibbston Valley - Wine Tasting
- Arrowtown - Walking Tour

Staying in:

- Millenium Queenstown or similar (1 night)
-

Day 18

Your New Zealand adventure ends this morning after breakfast. As this trip spends little time in Queenstown, it's recommended that you spend an extra day or two if you want to experience all the town has to offer. Your booking agent will be happy to book additional accommodation for you, just get in touch ahead of time.

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: Small Group Escorted Tour
Starts: Auckland
Finishes: Queenstown
Tour length: 18
Accommodation: Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary