

AAT Kings: New Zealand Uncovered 25/26

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 hangi feast on the menu; at others there's award-winning wine. Spanning 17 days, 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: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations
- Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring
- Included: Be My Guest Afternoon Tea
- Included: Wellington Orientation tour
- Included: Visit to Whakarewarewa Living Village
- Included: TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
- Included: TranzAlpine Train
- Included: Te Puia geothermal valley
- Included: Te Pa Tu - Māori cultural & culinary experience
- Included: Pounamu Pathway Self-Guided Journey
- Included: Rotorua Orientation Tour
- Included: Pure Wilderness trip/MTM experience in Te Anau
- Included: Punakaiki Pancake Rocks walk
- Included: MTM Biodiversity talk in Kaikoura
- Included: Monteiths Distillery Tour
- Included: Milford Sound Cruise
- Included: Maritime Museum Visit with a Local Specialist
- Included: Introducing Te Papa Museum Tour
- Included: Interislander Ferry
- Included: Huka Falls
- Included: Franz Josef Glacier
- Included: Christchurch City Tour
- Included: Be My Guest experience in the Red Barn
- Included: Auckland City Tour
- : 16 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 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

Leave Auckland behind and journey into the countryside for an exclusive family-style Be My Guest lunch in the Red Barn on a working dairy farm. Prior to your farm to table lunch prepared by the onsite chef, get a feel for country life as you're invited to roll up your sleeves and make your own butter - butter churners, tiny mason jars and all! The next hot-spot – in every sense of the word – on your NZ holiday is Rotorua. Visit Te Puia to see and support Maori artisans at work, then continue your Rotorua tour at the steamy Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve, a staggering valley where geysers pop and thermal springs jettison skywards.

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). Tonight, dive deep into Maori culture at Te Pa Tu Maori Experience, an important hub keeping tradition, art and music alive. Oh, and exciting Maori cuisine. Enjoy forest ai horotai (seasonal canapes) and chef choice aperitif, followed by a three-course dinner.

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

This morning cruise the Cook Strait into tranquil Queen Charlotte Sound from the North Island to the South, through a maze of arms and inlets into the sleepy seaside village of Picton. Continue to Kaikoura, where Sperm Whales, dolphins and fur seals can often be seen not far from shore. On arrival you will be treated to a biodiversity talk from the founder of Kaikoura Wildlife Centre Trust, Sabrina Luecht at a MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience. Sabrina's ambitious goal is to implement a world-class wildlife hospital in this biodiversity hotspot. Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation is a critical conservation tool, providing treatment to injured and ill animals, ensuring at-risk native species have a chance at recovery and return to the wild. Tonight, you'll dine at Hiku. Hiku celebrates what Kaikōura is all about - kai moana, fresh produce, marine life, and dramatic sea and mountain scapes.

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

Sleep in or take the morning to explore the small but lively Franz Josef/Waiau village - perhaps visiting the West Coast Wildlife Centre - before venturing to Hokitika, home of the native jade greenstone. From natural jewellery to natural surroundings, you're off to Punakaiki to view the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes. Stand at the edge of the water and take in these eroded limestone foundations - they really do look like pancakes! - which began forming 30 million years ago. Imagine the water and wind forming this pancake-like stack of limestone but be sure to listen closely. When you hear a 'whoosh' of water, you can be sure a burst of sea spray is coming through the blowholes. After a spectacular day, spend the night at the eco-friendly, waterfront Ocean View Retreat dining on local specialities with wine and views of the thundering surf just steps away.

Staying in:

- Scenic Hotel Punakaiki (1 night)
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Day 16

Venture into the Ponaumu Pathway. Delve into the history and culture of the local Maori (Poutini Ngai Tahu) and the Mawhera Pa settlement. Embark on a unique self-guided journey, as you make your way through this extraordinary storytelling experience born from a collaboration with the Weta Workshop. An inspiring and unforgettable cultural experience. We've got you sorted for lunch at legendary Monteith's Brewery. You only live once, right? The best is yet to come – all aboard for the scenic TranzAlpine train from Arthur's Pass back to Christchurch. Travel through tunnels and over viaducts, with panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, icy rivers, beech forests, gorges and river valleys. Your NZ tour arrives in Christchurch just in time for dinner.

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