



Ultimate North Island Explorer

Begin in Auckland, exploring its vibrant urban culture and panoramic views from the Sky Tower. Delve into Māori heritage in Rotorua, witness geothermal wonders, and cruise the serene waters of Lake Taupō. Discover the rich history and culture of Wellington, then venture to the Bay of Islands for pristine beaches and marine life. Explore the Coromandel Peninsula's coastal beauty, the renowned wine regions of Martinborough and Hawke's Bay, and the rugged Taranaki coastline. Experience the secluded charm of Cape Palliser before returning to Auckland, completing a circle of unforgettable experiences. This meticulously crafted itinerary offers a perfect blend of natural beauty, cultural immersion, and relaxation.

Starts in: Auckland

Finishes in: Auckland

Length: 21days / 20nights

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: Late model rental cars

Includes: Unlimited kms

Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

Included activity: Mount Tarawera & Orakei Korako Thermal Explorer by Floatplane with Volcanic Air

Included activity: Little Penguin Close Encounter with National Aquarium of New Zealand

Included activity: Guided Tour of Te Papa The Museum of New Zealand

Included activity: Waitomo and Aranui Caves tour Combo

Included activity: Full Day Taste of Auckland Tour with Bush and Beach - Lunch Included

Included activity: Waitangi Treaty Grounds Guided Tour and Cultural Performance

plus much more...

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Te Pā Tū Evening Māori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

Included activity: Mountain Jade - Highlights Tour

Included activity: A Wine & Gourmet Odyssey - Lunch Included

Included activity: Wellington Half Day Private Tour with Capital Personalized Tour

Included activity: Dinner at the Sky Tower Orbit Restaurant

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland accommodation to Auckland Airport with Tourcorp

Included activity: Island Hopper Day Cruise with Barefoot Sailing Adventures - Lunch Included

Day 1



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.

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Harbour Sailing Dinner Cruise with Explore

This unique on-water sailing and dining experience is not to be missed while you're in Auckland. Enjoy smooth sailing on the Waitemata Harbour - then watch this photogenic city come alive with twinkling lights. Enjoy your meal as you sail around the beautiful Auckland Harbour taking in the view as the sun slowly sets. You'll be treated to canapes and a drink as you set off towards Westhaven Marina. To finish the evening off, savour your dessert course as you leisurely sail back to Auckland's vibrant Viaduct Harbour.

Your accommodation: M Social Hotel Auckland

A contemporary hotel for the curious, the explorers and those who thrive on new experiences. Functionally chic, this contemporary hotel overlooks the vibrant Princes Wharf that is home to a good array of dining, entertainment and shopping experiences.



Day 2



Full Day Taste of Auckland Tour with Bush and Beach - Lunch Included

Start your day in central Auckland, exploring The Domain, Ponsonby, and the North Shore. Stroll along Narrow Neck Beach in Devonport and enjoy panoramic views from Mt Victoria. Visit the Viaduct Harbour's fish market and yachting precinct before heading northwest to Kumeu, Auckland's Heritage Wine Region. Savour lunch at a vineyard restaurant, sample world-renowned wines, and visit Muriwai Beach, where you can observe majestic gannets in their natural habitat against the stunning Tasman Sea backdrop.

Dinner at the Sky Tower Orbit Restaurant

Soaring high above Auckland you'll discover Orbit, a truly iconic New Zealand brasserie offering diners sensational views - and food to match. Situated at the top of Auckland's Sky Tower, the dining room rotates once every hour, providing a truly unique experience with amazing 360-degree panoramas of the city, the Hauraki Gulf and beyond. Orbit offers a modern dining experience in a relaxed, open atmosphere with a delicious kiwi-inspired a la carte menu that features the best local and seasonal produce. As New Zealand's only rotating restaurant offering 360-degree views, it's an unforgettable experience that never ceases to delight.

Your accommodation: M Social Hotel Auckland

A contemporary hotel for the curious, the explorers and those who thrive on new experiences. Functionally chic, this contemporary hotel overlooks the vibrant Princes Wharf that is home to a good array of dining, entertainment and shopping experiences.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 3



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 Paihia

The drive from Auckland to the Bay of Islands takes approximately 3.5 hours, but allow extra time to enjoy the sights along the way. Pause for a breath of fresh salty air in Whangarei, where you can explore scenic highlights like the Whangarei Falls or the lively Town Basin. Further along, take a break in Kawakawa known for its quirky, world-famous Hundertwasser Toilets. As you approach Paihia, the gateway to the Bay of Islands, soak in the stunning views of native bush and endless golden beaches that define this iconic Northland region.

Bay of Islands

Discover the Bay of Islands, a jewel of the Northland, beckoning with its idyllic sub-tropical climate and a rich tapestry of history and natural beauty. This renowned holiday destination boasts over 140 atolls, 40 parks and reserves, and 800 kilometres of stunning coastline. Immerse yourself in the vibrant marine world, where dolphins, seals, penguins, whales, and gannets flourish. Numerous charter companies offer unforgettable journeys, taking you deeper into the islands to marvel at incredible geographic formations like the iconic 'Hole in the Rock'. For those seeking a more personal exploration, yacht chartering provides an unparalleled way to navigate the area's pristine waters. Beyond the marine park, the seas are world-renowned for big game fishing, with impressive catches of marlin, broadbill, and game sharks. Delve into New Zealand's compelling past with a visit to Russell, just across the harbour from Paihia. This charming township is steeped in history; explore the Pompallier Mission House, the local museum, and take a stroll to New Zealand's oldest church. Russell also offers an array of fine restaurants, cafes, and is home to the nation's oldest licensed premises, the Duke of Marlborough. No visit to the Bay of Islands is complete without journeying to Waitangi, the birthplace of modern New Zealand, to explore the historic Treaty Grounds and Treaty House.

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.

Your accommodation: Tarltons Lodge

In your luxury guest room, perched on a hill next to Paihia, you will awaken to nature at its finest with breathtaking sunrises and a spectacular panorama of the sea overlooking the famous Bay of Islands.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



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.

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Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 5



Cape Reinga Scenic Flight and Guided Tour with Salt Air

Experience the beauty of the North from both air and land. Take a spectacular scenic flight to Cape Reinga over Whangaroa Harbour and the Rangaunu Harbour as well as Coopers Beach, Doubtless Bay and Ninety Mile Beach.

Cape Reinga

Cape Reinga, at the northwestern tip of the Aupouri Peninsula, is often mistaken for New Zealand's northernmost point, but that title belongs to Surville Cliffs, 30 km to the east. Here, the Pacific Ocean and Tasman Sea meet, creating dramatic tides. The Cape's lighthouse, built in 1941 and automated in 1987, stands as a beacon of this iconic location. In Māori mythology, Cape Reinga, or Te Rerenga Wairua, is the "leaping off place of spirits" on their journey to Hawaiiki. Nearby Tapotupoto Bay and Spirits Bay offer beautiful beaches and are ideal for short rest stops or exploring more of the area's cultural significance.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Russell to Paihia Return Ferry with Northland Ferries - Book Direct

Catching the ferry between Russell and Paihia is a fun and easy way to get out on the water in the Bay of Islands.

Regular passenger ferry services operate throughout the day between Russell Wharf and Paihia. Ferry crossings take approximately 15 minutes.

In the busy summer months, we recommend checking in for your preferred ferry service ahead of time.

Please pay on board at the time of travel. Visit the Northland Ferries Website for the ferry timetable and up-to-date pricing.

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In your luxury guest room, perched on a hill next to Paihia, you will awaken to nature at its finest with breathtaking sunrises and a spectacular panorama of the sea overlooking the famous Bay of Islands.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Paihia, Bay of Islands to Snells Beach via Waipoua

From the Bay of Islands you will head west, leaving the Pacific Ocean for the wilder shores of Hokianga and the Tasman Sea. Small towns Omapere and Opononi are reminiscent of days gone by with a vintage seaside feel and are the perfect place to stop for an ice cream in a hot day. To the south is the Kauri coast, which you're about to explore. Head south into the Waipoua Forest, home to giant Kauri trees. Allow time for one of a number of short walks available in the area. Not to be missed is the five minute loop to view the largest Kauri in New Zealand, Tane Mahuta. Backtrack cross-country to the Matakohe Kauri Museum an award winning museum with extensive historical displays. Continue on the road to Snells Beach, a lovely little township close to Warkworth. If you arrive in plenty of time, head into Matakana Wine Country for some great dining options. Another must do while you're here is a day excursion to one of many deserted beaches in the Tawharanui Marine Reserve.

Manea Footprints of Kupe Guided Tour

Enter Te Hokianga-nui-a-Kupe, our sacred cradle of tribal histories. Walk in the footprints of the Maori ancestor – Kupe the intrepid, Kupe the voyager, Kupe the discoverer.

Experience a Pōwhiri (welcome ceremony) and other rituals and customs experienced through interaction with the descendants of Kupe.

Explore the contemporary cultural centre with carvings and artefacts holding the stories of the past, giving you incredible insight into the history of Aotearoa.

Matakohe Kauri Museum

The Kauri Museum is located approximately 90 minutes drive north of Auckland, in the rural backdrop of Matakohe. 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.

Your accommodation: Tahi Lodge

Tahi Lodge is situated at Snells Beach in the picturesque Matakana Coast Wine Country region, only an hour scenic drive north from Auckland and close to many activities and attractions. It is an ideal accommodation choice for relaxing short breaks, holidays with family and friends or celebrating special occasions such as birthdays, weddings or anniversaries.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Snells Beach to Whitianga via Coromandel Township

Head South from Warkworth passing through the city of Auckland. Leaving the city boundaries the landscape changes to lush rolling farmland. Crossing the Hauraki Plains - one of the biggest dairy producing regions in New Zealand - you'll see many black and white Friesian cows before crossing the Thames Estuary, a haven for shorebirds. A short detour to Miranda is worthwhile to see large flocks of oystercatchers and godwits, among others. Continue on through the historic gold mining town of Thames before following the Pohutukawa Coast to The Coromandel - named for the British Ship the HMS Coromandel, which visited the area in 1820. Head inland directly across the Peninsula passing several small towns including Kuaotunu and Waiata Bay before reaching your destination - Whitianga.

Driving Creek Railway & Potteries - EyeFull Tower Tour

Driving Creek Railway and Potteries has become a Coromandel icon. The dream of Barry Brickell was to establish a pottery workshop on his land. Using a railway he would have access to the clay on the land and the pine kiln fuel. Over the next 15 years the railway developed until in 1990 it was finally licensed to carry fare paying passengers and ever since thousands of visitors have made the trip to Coromandel to experience this unique attraction. The 1 hour return train trip on the innovatively designed trains takes you through replanted native kauri forest and includes 2 spirals, 3 short tunnels, 5 reversing points and several large viaducts as it climbs up to the mountain-top terminus. The pottery is still producing and you can watch the artists at work as well as purchase items. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

Explore Whitianga

Whitianga is located at Mercury Bay on the eastern coast of the Coromandel peninsula, a 3-hour drive from Auckland and 1 and a half hours from Thames. Captain Cook arrived there in 1769 to observe the transit of Mercury, and hence the bay was named. This small bustling town once played a major part in the kauri logging industry, with over 150 million metres of timber being exported between 1830 and the end of the century. The Whitianga museum, housed in the old dairy factory, displays an interesting collection designed to relay engrossing tales of the time.

Today, the town has many cafes and craft shops, with its income derived mainly from tourists. The summer months bring visitors to enjoy fishing, surfcasting, and swimming along the palm-fringed beaches. But the largest attraction is probably the big game marlin fishing, with many charters available to hunt in the rich waters of the Pacific Ocean.

On the other side of the harbour is Australasia's oldest stone wharf, from where a passenger ferry takes visitors to the delightful Cooks Beach, just a 5-minute walk along the road. Nearby is Buffalo Beach, named after H.M.S. Buffalo, a ship taking convicts and settlers to South Australia that blew aground in 1840. As well as Opito Bay, Flaxmill Bay, and Kuaotuna Beach, to name but a few of the many locations easily visited from Whitianga, the region is well worth a visit.

Your accommodation: Sovereign Pier On The Waterways

Sovereign Pier on the waterways provides 5 Star holiday water front accommodation in an exciting location. A reflection of good taste and quality to provide value in holiday choices for all. Enjoy a private balcony with stunning views and access to a private marina and a swimming pool with hot tub.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Coves, Caves and Coastline Cruise from Whitianga

Explore the volcanic coastline with its many caves, blowholes and golden beaches all from the comfort and safety of an ex coastguard 28 ft cruiser. Departing from Whitianga Wharf journey past the towering Shakespeare's Cliffs and historic Cooks Beach. Visit Cathedral Cove and the islands in the marine reserve. There is also a chance to swim with the abundant fish in the reserve (on board snorkel gear provided - don't forget your swimsuit and towel). For those who prefer to stay dry an underwater camera relays images to an onboard TV.

Hot Water Beach

Famous for its naturally heated geothermal springs, Hot Water Beach offers a unique experience where you can dig your own spa pool in the sand at low tide and relax in the warm waters with stunning coastal views. With its golden sands, powerful surf, and peaceful atmosphere, it's the perfect blend of relaxation and adventure.

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Day 9



Whitianga to Matamata

Head south along the Peninsula, passing the idyllic seaside communities of Hahei, Hotwater Beach and Tairua before turning inland. Continuing south I'll pass through Paeroa, the home of New Zealand's iconic soft drink L&P, keep an eye out for the giant bottle. Next is the beautiful Edwardian spa town of Te Aroha "The Mountain of Love" is famous for sparkling hot mineral spas and the world's only hot soda water geyser. Once you reach Matamata you are in hobbit country and the route takes you to the town of Matamata where you can visit the film locations made famous in the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit movies at Hobbiton Movie Set and Farm Tours.

Hobbiton Movie Set Tour from Shires Rest

In the heart of New Zealand, you can step into the lush pastures of the Shire with a guided tour of Hobbiton, as featured in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit Trilogies. Hobbiton is located just outside of Matamata in the heart of the lush Waikato farming region. Here you can visit such iconic Hobbit locations as Hobbit Holes, the Green Dragon Inn, the Mill and the Party Tree with a guide sharing 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 interior, designed to provide an authentic glimpse into the dwelling of a Hobbit.

Matamata to Rotorua

Just south of Matamata is the township of Tirau, home to the largest tin sheep and sheepdog, but it also offers a surprising number of bric a brac, art, craft and antique stores if you feel like browsing.

Arriving into the City of Rotorua the regions geothermal activity becomes evident as you see steam rising from the roadside and surrounding hills.

Considered the cultural centre for the Maori people, Rotorua is the ideal place to gain an insight into the history and culture. Dominating the display is the devastating volcanic eruption of Mt. Tarawera in 1886 but also of great interest is the Maori battalion display which portrays stories of this once feared military unit.

Nearby Ohinemutu Village is the original site of the first Maori settlers in the area and despite its now modern surroundings and buildings you can still gain a sense of what the original village was like. The magnificent meeting house and historic carvings along with the unique 'Tudor-style' St Faiths Church feature in many visitors photo albums.

One of the most popular introductions to the Maori Culture is through an evening at Mitai Maori Village where you can enjoy performances and demonstrations followed by a traditionally cooked hangi meal.

Of course Rotorua is also a great place to enjoy many other activities including, fishing, 4WD trips, relaxing spa treatments, mountain biking, walking and hiking plus helicopter and float plane trips.

Rotorua

Discover the geothermal, adventure, and cultural wonderland of Rotorua. As you explore, you may see steam rising from cracks in the road, bubbling and hissing water in pools along the lake's edge, and the unmistakable smell of Sulfur. Rotorua is rich in Māori culture and history, with many Māori inhabitants recognising the great potential of the volcanic land. For an outdoor adventure, head to The Redwoods and experience the rainforest treetops from high up. There are a few accessible trails for disabled hikers and great biking trails as well. If you're lucky, you might spot some of New Zealand's native birds, such as the Piwakawaka (Fantail) and the Tūī. Alternatively, enjoy the Lake Tikitapu Blue Lake Walk or explore Kuirau Park, where you'll find bubbling mud pools and steaming lakes. Don't miss the private thermal reserves such as Te Puia and Wai-O-Tapu, where you can walk among bubbling mud pools, spouting geysers, and Sulfur ponds. Just a few minutes from the town centre, the Agrodome and National Kiwi Hatchery offer an insight into nature. Rotorua's rich Māori culture is a must-see. Spend an evening with Te Pā Tū, complete with a traditional-style dinner or stroll along the lake edge to reach one of the country's oldest Māori villages at Ohinemutu. When hunger strikes, visit Eat Street in Rotorua CBD, a vibrant street lined with delicious eateries and restaurants to satisfy any craving. No visit to Rotorua would be complete without experiencing Rotorua's original tourist attraction - a relaxing spa treatment. This town boasts an array of wellness experiences to unwind in. Whether you are seeking adventure, culture, or relaxation, Rotorua offers an unforgettable experience.

Polynesian Spa Deluxe Lake Spa

Rotorua's Polynesian Spa offers a unique thermal spa experience on the shore of Lake Rotorua. Enjoy tranquil bathing and lake views in four shallow alkaline rock pools, each with different temperatures (36°C to 42°C). Surrounded by revitalising native New Zealand flora, natural rocks, the sound of two waterfalls and a grotto. The pools are filled with soothing alkaline mineral water leaving your skin soft and supple. Unwind in either the indoor or outdoor relaxation area overlooking the four hot mineral pools and Lake Rotorua, here you can further decompress on the five geothermally heated recliners set in the stunning backdrop of New Zealand's lush and natural greenery. The Lake Spa is a unique thermal pool environment, where the atmosphere changes from day to night, and from winter steam to summer sparkle.

Your accommodation: On the Point

On the Point is a beautiful lodge accommodation in a stunning location and offering panoramic views. It also offers gourmet New Zealand food and wine, as well as a range of on site activities from pampering massage, fly fishing from the private beach, water sports, tennis, gym and boating and is only 10 minutes from the heart of Rotorua.



Day 10



Mount Tarawera & Orakei Korako Thermal Explorer by Floatplane with Volcanic Air

From above Mount Tarawera's impressive views include vast volcanic rifts, distant national parks, and our treasured lakes. Flying south on a floatplane, you will gain an appreciation of what local Maori refer to as the 'Sisters of Fire'. Here, volcanic activity has pierced the earth's surface across the fault line forming the reserves of Waimangu and Wai-O-Tapu which, when viewed from above, display a spectacular palette of nature's most vibrant colors. Landing at Orakei Korako, 'the Hidden Valley', is an amazing opportunity to experience hot springs, gushing geysers, and the natural beauty of this geothermal wonderland.

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!

Te Pā Tū Evening Māori 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.

Your accommodation: On the Point

On the Point is a beautiful lodge accommodation in a stunning location and offering panoramic views. It also offers gourmet New Zealand food and wine, as well as a range of on site activities from pampering massage, fly fishing from the private beach, water sports, tennis, gym and boating and is only 10 minutes from the heart of Rotorua.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



Mountain Jade - Highlights Tour

This 30-minute highlights tour is a rare opportunity to spend time with New Zealand Jade artists. New Zealand Jade known as Greenstone, but more commonly known in New Zealand as Pounamu has a rich history within Maori culture. The expert guide will show you the intricate process of Pounamu carving firsthand in the Mountain Jade studio. The local artist will be there to personally demonstrate the carving process and share their stories and knowledge with you. To top off the tour, you will get to select your very own piece of Pounamu and learn to string it yourself so you can take it home.

Rotorua to Napier via Taupō

This drive will take you through the thermal region just south of Rotorua. Home to a plethora of unique geothermal attractions including boiling mud pits, natural hot springs and steaming geysers, this area is a must do before you move on to Napier. Notable attractions are Wai-O-Tapu, Waimangu and Craters of the Moon. Continue on to Taupō and marvel at the lake, a giant crater formed following a volcanic eruption in the year 180 CE. As you approach the town, be sure to stop at Huka Falls to view the spectacular sight of hundreds of cubic metres of water spilling every second down the narrow 11 metre drop. For an extra thrill take a jet-boat ride at the base of the falls. Leaving Taupō, follow the road as it climbs the rugged Ahimanawa Range before descending back down the Pacific Coast to art deco coastal township of Napier.

Napier City

Napier, a coastal gem, is famed for its 1930s Art Deco architecture, the annual Art Deco Weekend, stately Norfolk pines, nearby wineries, and fresh local produce. With a Mediterranean climate and over 2,200 hours of sunshine annually, it boasts a thriving café culture set against stunning heritage buildings. The city center has around 30 cafés within walking distance, while Ahuriri, just beyond Bluff Hill, offers more upscale dining. Marine Parade overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Cape Kidnappers, home to the world’s largest mainland gannet colony. Visitors can explore Ocean Spa, the Hawke's Bay Museum, and the National Aquarium of New Zealand. Bluff Hill, a key landmark, provides sweeping views of Napier, Perfume Point, Westshore Beach, and the busy Port of Napier, which exports timber, fruit, and meat worldwide. In 1931, Napier was devastated by a 7.8-magnitude earthquake, New Zealand’s worst natural disaster. Fires ravaged the city. Rebuilding efforts transformed Napier and Hastings into modern cities, while the uplifted Ahuriri Lagoon created much-needed land for expansion.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Huka Falls Jet Boat Ride

The Huka Jet is 30 minutes of pure fun and exhilaration, skimming close to cliffs, sliding past trees, feeling the adrenalin of full 360 degree spins. The excitement continues right up to the base of the foaming Huka Falls, where you get a spectacular water level view to New Zealand's most visited natural attraction. Nothing compares to watching 220,000 litres per second tumbling over the cliff face towards you. The water from the mighty Huka Falls runs down the Waikato River through a series of Hydro Power Stations. You'll get a view of the Wairakei Geothermal Power Station in the comfort of a powerful Chevrolet V8 jet boat. This unique Geothermal Power Station uses underground geothermal activity to produce hot steamy water. The Waikato Rivers beautiful environment is varied and unique and is New Zealand's longest river flowing north from our largest lake, Lake Taupō. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

Your accommodation: Swiss-Belboutique Napier

Combine your Napier experience with a stay at the premium Art Deco-style hotel at the heart of downtown Napier. Located just a five-minute stroll from Marine Parade – spanning Hawke's Bay waterfront and home to the Sunken Gardens and National Aquarium of New Zealand.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



A Wine & Gourmet Odyssey - Lunch Included

Indulge in a gourmet journey through Hawke’s Bay's premier wineries, including historic Mission Estate. Enjoy in-depth tastings of award-winning varietals from the prestigious Gimblett Gravels, and savour a fine dining lunch paired with exquisite wines. Marvel at the panoramic views from Te Mata Peak and receive a souvenir engraved wine glass to commemorate your magnificent day.

Little Penguin Close Encounter with National Aquarium of New Zealand

The National Aquarium of New Zealand is one of the only places in New Zealand where you can have a Close Encounter with these entertaining little birds. Little Penguins are only found in New Zealand and South Australia. As part of your encounter, you'll also experience what goes on behind the scenes, discovering all about the day-to-day care of these character-filled little birds and taking part in hand-feeding them. Learn about their rescue and rehabilitation and also what you can do to help preserve this special species and their environment.

Walking tracks in and around Hawkes Bay

Hawke's Bay offers a variety of scenic walks, from coastal paths to forest trails, perfect for exploring the region's natural beauty. Whether you're looking for a short stroll or a more challenging hike, there's something for everyone. Be sure to check with the Department of Conservation for current conditions before heading out.

Your accommodation: Swiss-Belboutique Napier

Combine your Napier experience with a stay at the premium Art Deco-style hotel at the heart of downtown Napier. Located just a five-minute stroll from Marine Parade – spanning Hawke's Bay waterfront and home to the Sunken Gardens and National Aquarium of New Zealand.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 13



Napier to Martinborough

As you leave the rolling countryside of the Hawke's Bay you'll be greeted with some of the country's richest dairy farmland in the Manawatu Gorge. Continue on through the Wairarapa region and stop in the Pukaha Mount Bruce Wildlife Centre, where you can see some of New Zealand native animals. Take another break in Masterton, and visit the interactive Woolshed Museum to learn about sheep farming in New Zealand. As you drive south, a visit to historic Greytown is a must-do. Take in the restored Victorian buildings and make time for a cup of tea at one of its quaint cafes. Leaving state highway 2 you will cross over the Ruamahanga River into Martinborough wine country your destination for the day.

Martinborough

Known for producing some of the world's finest wines, the Martinborough region is home to over 30 vineyards, many of which are easily accessible from the town center. A great way to begin your exploration is at the Martinborough Wine Centre, where you can sample wines from all the local labels and plan your itinerary. For a more relaxed experience, consider booking a guided tour so you can fully enjoy the tastings without having to drive.

In 2023, Martinborough was designated as a Dark Sky Reserve, a rare honor that highlights the exceptional quality of its night sky. This celestial status adds another layer of magic to the area, inviting you to pair the region's exquisite wines with an evening of spectacular stargazing.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Martinborough Half Day Wine Tour with Martinborough Wine Tours

Visit wonderful vineyards such as Te Kairangi Wines, Tirohana Estate, Cabbage Tree Vineyard and Martinborough Vineyard on this half day tour of the premium wine region of Martinborough. Taste the wines, learn about the development of the region, its people and characters from knowledgeable guides.

Your accommodation: The Martinborough Hotel

At the Martinborough Hotel, indulge in the elegant surroundings of this 1882 building. There are nine Verandah Rooms, at the top of the grand flight of stairs and seven spacious Garden Rooms finished in a restful simple country style.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 14



Cape Palliser and the South Coast

Just around 45 minutes south of the town of Martinborough will bring you to one of the most spectacular coastlines in the country. Rocky shores and tiny settlements feature as you head towards the magnificent views from the Cape Palliser lighthouse. New Zealand fur seals make these rocky shores and outcrops their home and offer some great photo opportunities. The small township of Ngawi is also quite a unique spot. As you approach you will be forgiven for thinking it's a massive graveyard for old tractors but in fact it's a bustling fishing community. Crayfish are the main catch and massive tractors and bulldozers are used to haul the boats from the water and over the pebble beach. Heading back towards Martinborough a detour to the Lake Ferry Hotel and some local seafood is highly recommended.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Pinot to Palliser Guided Tour with Martinborough Wine Tours

This tour combines the picturesque countryside of the southeastern coastline of the North Island with Martinborough village and wine tasting. After a drive through the village, drive through the country-side to the rugged and spectacular Palliser Bay coastline. The bay is one of New Zealand's most important early Maori settled areas. Driving along the dynamic coast you will pass beach terraces raised by past earthquakes, see the old abandoned homes falling into the sea due to wave action, and view the precariously placed rock formation known as Kupe's Sail.

Then go on to Cape Palliser lighthouse where you can climb up to the lighthouse and enjoy spectacular views of Palliser Bay. Before and after the lighthouse stop, visit the seal colonies and enjoy the antics of the young seal pups.

Your accommodation: The Martinborough Hotel

At the Martinborough Hotel, indulge in the elegant surroundings of this 1882 building. There are nine Verandah Rooms, at the top of the grand flight of stairs and seven spacious Garden Rooms finished in a restful simple country style.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 15



Martinborough to Wellington City

Cross the Remutaka Ranges as you make your way to New Zealand's capital city, Wellington. Often compared to Melbourne, Wellington is a vibrant cultural hub. Home to the nation's centre of government. Legislation happens in the aptly named 'Beehive'; an executive wing attached to the Houses of Parliament. At 1km squared, the city centre (easily traversed on foot) has an international feel and is peppered with underground art shows, alleyway cafes and New York style delis. Take in the boardwalk view as you stroll to Te Papa Museum or indulge your cinematic side exploring Weta Workshop, the Oscar Award winning design studio for Lord Of The Rings. For a taste of vintage fashion, spend some time (and dollars!) on Cuba Street browsing the boutiques. Work off last night's dinner with a cycling tour of Oriental Bay and undo your good work with a Hokey Pokey ice-cream in the sun. For those heading further down, the capital is where you board the ferry crossing the Cook Strait to the South Island.

Wellington

Wellington known in Māori as Te Whanganui-a-Tara is home to New Zealand's centre of government. Often referred to as 'mini Melbourne', this 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 - 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. 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.

Your accommodation: Naumi Hotel Wellington

Naumi Studio Wellington, an iconic heritage landmark in the heart of the Cuba Street precinct. After an extensive renovation, this 116-room property has transformed into a visual feast for the senses, enthralling guests with eclectic spaces inspired from seafaring, the library world and enduring love.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 16



Wellington Half Day Private Tour with Capital Personalized Tour

Witness the best sights of New Zealand's capital city up close and personal, before experiencing the beauty of the coastline that surrounds central Wellington and its harbour. On this tour, you will head for the hills of Mt Victoria to witness the stunning landscape of Wellington and its harbour below. You will then follow the coastline round to the Weta Cave Museum, which is the showpiece of Peter Jackson's film empire. After a drive around the south coast, you will head back into the city for a ride on the Cable Car and a walk around the lady Norwood rose gardens. The tour concludes with a visit to the Beehive and our Parliament buildings.

Guided Tour of Te Papa The Museum of New Zealand

Beginning over one hundred million years ago, join your guide on a journey through New Zealand's rich history and cultures. Hear stories of our adaptive wildlife, the resilience of the Māori people, and artistic interpretations of life in the South Pacific. Whether you have limited time or here for an extended visit, this tour will give you a great opportunity to understand the vibrant landscapes and cultures you will encounter throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Zealandia By Night Wildlife Sanctuary Tour

Taking a night tour of Zealandia wildlife eco-sanctuary is an unforgettable experience and one that comes highly recommended. A conservation success and safe haven for some of New Zealand's rarest native animals, Zealandia is home to many remarkable species of birds, reptiles and insects living wild within a beautiful 225 hectare (one square mile) valley, just 10 minutes from the central city.

Your accommodation: Naumi Hotel Wellington

Naumi Studio Wellington, an iconic heritage landmark in the heart of the Cuba Street precinct. After an extensive renovation, this 116-room property has transformed into visual feast for the senses, entralling guests with eclectic spaces inspired from seafaring, the library world and enduring love.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 17



Wellington to New Plymouth

Follow the main highway north along the Kapiti Coast towards the rich farmland of the Manawatu and Taranaki. Continue north-west towards the city of Whanganui which rests on the banks of the spectacular Whanganui River. Follow the coast of the South Taranaki Bight towards the volcanically formed region of New Plymouth. The dominant and perfect volcanic cone of Mt Egmont/Taranaki is visible for many miles as you approach the region. New Plymouth is the largest town in Taranaki. Situated on the coast this busy centre has a great range of restaurants and accommodation. The coastal highway and the magnificent Mt. Taranaki are the main attractions. The Taranaki region is very popular for its gardens and hosts the Rhododendron festival each year. New Plymouth has over 70 000 people with a beautiful coastal walkway running from Port Taranaki to the Waiwhakaiho River mouth. Pukekura Park, just a 5 minute walk from the city centre, is a haven of over 25ha of native bush including a beautiful lake. The district boasts 16 parks and reserves, with 13 official beaches, 60km of walkways as well as many "tucked away" spots for a peaceful moment.

Explore New Plymouth

New Plymouth, the vibrant heart of the Taranaki region, is a bustling coastal city with a population of over 70,000 people. Its stunning natural setting is defined by two key landmarks: the picturesque coastline and the magnificent, snow-capped Mount Taranaki. It is an ideal base for exploring the region. A highlight of New Plymouth is the scenic Coastal Walkway, a 12.7 km path that stretches from Port Taranaki to the mouth of the Waiwhakaiho River. The city is also a haven for garden enthusiasts, with the Taranaki region celebrated for its numerous parks and the annual Rhododendron Festival. Within a short walk of the city center lies Pukekura Park. This 52-hectare botanical gem features native bush, a beautiful lake with rowboats for hire, and the renowned Bowl of Brooklands, a natural amphitheater and outdoor concert venue. Adjacent to this is Brooklands Zoo, a family-friendly attraction. The city's commitment to green spaces is evident in its 16 parks and reserves, 13 official beaches, and 60 km of walking tracks, providing endless opportunities to appreciate the natural beauty of the area.

Your accommodation: King & Queen Hotel Suites

King & Queen Hotel Suites is New Plymouth's luxury boutique accommodation conveniently located in the Arts and Cultural hub of New Plymouth. The hotel is within easy walking distance of New Plymouth's finest restaurants, hospitality facilities, retail precinct, coastal walkway and Puke Ariki.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 18



Egmont National Park - Te Papakura o Taranaki

Te Papakura o Taranaki - Egmont National Park covers 33,534 hectares of Taranaki countryside on the west coast of the North Island, and the best place to base yourself is the town of New Plymouth. As you approach the park, the dominant feature is the volcano Mt Taranaki (or Mt Egmont as it is also known), standing 2518 meters high. This amazing symmetrical mountain stands alone in the rural landscape, creating an impressive panorama visible from great distances.

High rainfall and a warm coastal climate have contributed to the lush rainforest that covers the lower volcano slopes. Further up, you reach the 'goblin forest' with its gnarled and twisted branches with their coats of trailing moss. There are many beautiful walks through the forest to waterfalls and viewpoints, offering a less strenuous way of enjoying the park. If you are up to it, though, and the weather allows, you can take the challenging climb to the mountain summit. The summit walk is recommended for experienced hikers only, or for the less experienced, a guided trip will ensure you have a safe and memorable alpine experience. The Department of Conservation website has lots of detailed information on activities, guides, and features of Egmont National Park.

Pukeiti Gardens Taranaki - suggested activity

Established in 1951 by Douglas Cook (of Eastwoodhill Arboretum), and others forming the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, the garden is located adjacent to the National Park on the slopes of Taranaki. Wonder at the beauty of a world-class rhododendron collection within a rainforest and sense the history and learn the stories of the land. Supported by the exotic garden, birdlife thrives in the rainforest and many native birds such as tui, bellbird, pigeon, fantail, wax-eye, and cuckoo are seen or heard. The mountain streams contain some rare and endangered native fish. Pukeiti's season starts in July with the first of the giants awake; large - leaf rhododendrons flowering amongst the rainforest canopy - one of the finest collections anywhere. Camellias, the large magnolias and michelia follow. By October the garden is alive with colour from flower and foliage. Complementary herbaceous plantings, alpines, primulas, hostas and thousands of bulbs continue the display until the giant Himalayan lilies flower in December and fill the air with their honey scent. The hydrangea collection comes to a peak in mid-summer and on into autumn. Flowering a few times in one year - vireya rhododendrons provide year-round vibrancy and beauty in the Covered Exhibition Walks. During the high season, the Founders Cafe is open for a selection of lunches and tasty snacks so visitors can relax and enjoy the panoramic views.

Your accommodation: King & Queen Hotel Suites

King & Queen Hotel Suites is New Plymouth's luxury boutique accommodation conveniently located in the Arts and Cultural hub of New Plymouth. The hotel is within easy walking distance of New Plymouth's finest restaurants, hospitality facilities, retail precinct, coastal walkway and Puke Ariki.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 19



New Plymouth to Waitomo

Follow the coastline of the North Taranaki right before turning inland through the beef and cattle farming regions on North Taranaki. The small townships en route provide an insight into the real rural New Zealand. The township of Te Kuiti sits within the King Country, named after the movement of the Maori warrior Chief King Tawhiao, who during the Maori Wars, led a resistance against the European's who coveted their land. The rich rolling countryside accompanies you to the limestone valleys and caves that have attracted visitors for the past century.

Waitomo Glowworm Caves and Aranui Cave tour

For over 100 years Waitomo Glowworm Caves have attracted people from all over the world to this subterranean wonderland. An ancient underground labyrinth of limestone caves and grottos, and amazing stalactites and stalagmites.

Waitomo Glowworm Caves

Formed over 30 million years ago there are two levels to the Waitomo Glowworm Caves which are 16 metres apart. The upper level is dry and includes the entrance to the cave, the Catacombs and the Organ Loft. The lower level consists of stream passages and the Cathedral. As you glide quietly beneath the lights of thousands of glowworms, it is only the gentle sound of dripping water that reminds you that you are deep underground and not beneath a star filled sky.

Aranui Cave

Located in Ruakuri Scenic Reserve, Aranui is a dry cave. There is only one entrance to Aranui and without a river flowing through, it houses very little life past the entrance. However, just inside the entrance is a colony of cave wetas. Aranui is famous for its beautiful arrays of stalactites, stalagmites, flowstones and unusual formations.

Duration: Allow 2 hours for the two cave combo.

Waitomo to Cambridge

Today cross the lush farmland of the Waikato as you make your way to Cambridge. Pass through several small farming towns such as Otorohanga and Kihikihi, before arriving to small township of Cambridge. Renowned for producing racing horses, the town is centred around a traditional village green, giving Cambridge the feel of an English country town and making it well worth a stop to explore the cafes and antique stores.

Your accommodation: Hidden Lake Hotel & Apartments

Hidden Lake is a luxury new Solar Hotel with a broad palette of natural, sustainable and design aesthetics. Comfort is defined in its leisurely manner. Rooms and apartments reflect the woodland setting with floor to ceiling windows and splashes of colour. Features and facilities show creative flair and a commitment to sustainability and organic produce.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 20



Cambridge to Auckland

Heading north from Cambridge the main highway follows the Waikato River. State Highway 1 runs from Cape Reinga at the top of the North Island to Bluff at the bottom of the South Island and this section follows what was the original main trunk line, the Waikato River. New Zealand's longest river was used by Maori as an important trading and transport route and it is still important today as a water and power supply. Continuing north you will reach New Zealand's largest city, Auckland.

Return your rental car

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

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - All Blacks Experience

See what it takes to make, shape and be an All Black. Experience first-hand the excitement and emotion of game day. Discover the stories behind some of world rugby's most famous players, moments, and matches.

This guided experience introduces you to the game of rugby including state-of-the-art displays combining sound, images, interactive technology, and hands-on activities. Discover New Zealand's deep passion for our national sport, experience the full force of the All Blacks haka, and tackle interactive zones where you can try out your kicking, catching, line-out, and accuracy skills against legendary All Blacks.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wētā Workshop Unleashed

A jaw-dropping, senses-shattering, awe-inspiring adventure into the heart of movie magic! Get hands-on and immerse yourself in an extraordinary world of practical effects, props and larger-than-life sets. On this award-winning tour, you can explore three movie projects imagined by the Weta crew and uncover how they bring big screen concepts to life. Discover a mind-blowing world of robots, monsters, dinosaurs and more - step right into the action to see, play and experience movie-making up close.

Your accommodation: M Social Hotel Auckland

A contemporary hotel for the curious, the explorers and those who thrive on new experiences. Functionally chic, this contemporary hotel overlooks the vibrant Princes Wharf that is home to a good array of dining, entertainment and shopping experiences.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 21



Private Transfer Auckland accommodation to Auckland Airport with Tourcorp

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

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: Self Drive Tour (FTNZ ONLY)
Starts: Auckland
Finishes: Auckland
Tour length: 21
Accommodation: Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| Day 1 | M Social Hotel Auckland |
| Day 2 | M Social Hotel Auckland |
| Day 3 | Tarltons Lodge |
| Day 4 | Tarltons Lodge |
| Day 5 | Tarltons Lodge |
| Day 6 | Tahi Lodge |
| Day 7 | Sovereign Pier On The Waterways |
| Day 8 | Sovereign Pier On The Waterways |
| Day 9 | On the Point |
| Day 10 | On the Point |
| Day 11 | Swiss-Belboutique Napier |
| Day 12 | Swiss-Belboutique Napier |
| Day 13 | The Martinborough Hotel |
| Day 14 | The Martinborough Hotel |
| Day 15 | Naumi Hotel Wellington |
| Day 16 | Naumi Hotel Wellington |
| Day 17 | King & Queen Hotel Suites |
| Day 18 | King & Queen Hotel Suites |
| Day 19 | Hidden Lake Hotel & Apartments |
| Day 20 | M Social Hotel Auckland |