

The Ultimate Birds of New Zealand Tour

Embark on an extraordinary journey across New Zealand, uncovering its diverse birdlife and stunning landscapes. Begin in Auckland, visiting Tiritiri Matangi Island, a sanctuary teeming with rare birds. Explore the Kauri Museum in Matakōhe before heading to Hokianga to see Tāne Mahuta, the majestic giant Kauri tree. Discover history and birdlife in Russell, then marvel at marine species in Tāwharanui Marine Reserve. Travel to Rotorua for geothermal wonders and a full-day birding tour with Foris Eco Tours, followed by Napier to encounter the world's largest mainland gannet colony. In Wellington, venture to Kapiti Island, a haven for native species, before crossing the Interislander to the South Island.

From Picton, journey to Kaikōura to spot seabirds and marine life, and relax in Hanmer Springs. Immerse yourself in West Coast culture at Pounamu Pathway, then explore the wetlands of Ōkārito and Whataora. Visit Franz Josef Glacier, and enjoy a birdwatching trip to Mou Waho Island in Wanaka. In Queenstown, embark on an overnight cruise through Milford Sound before spending three nights on Stewart Island, spotting kiwis and exploring Ulva Island. Experience Dunedin's iconic albatross and penguins, then head to Mt Cook to marvel at the alpine scenery before concluding your adventure in Christchurch.

Starts in: Auckland
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 30days / 29nights
Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
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: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

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

Included activity: Pūkaha Mount Bruce Wildlife Centre General Admission - Open-Dated Voucher

Included activity: Interislander Ferry Wellington to Picton with Premium Plus Lounge

Included activity: 30 Minute Whale Watch Explorer with Wings over Whales Kaikoura

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: Gannet Safaris

Included activity: Kapiti Classic Guided Day Tour with Kapiti Island Nature Tours - Lunch Included

Included activity: Albatross Tour with Encounter Kaikōura

Included activity: Māwhera Pounamu Pathway Immersive Experience

Day 1



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.

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.

Auckland

Auckland, or Tāmaki Makaurau in Māori, is a city that effortlessly blends vibrant urban life with stunning natural beauty. Take a ferry to Waiheke Island for award-winning wineries, olive groves, and pristine beaches, or explore Devonport, a charming seaside suburb with historic streets and cafés; culture. Climb One Tree Hill or the volcanic Mt Eden for panoramic views of the city and harbour. Shop and dine in Ponsonby's stylish boutiques and eateries, or experience the eclectic energy of K Road, once a red-light district and now the world's sixth coolest street. Nature enthusiasts can wander the Auckland Botanic Gardens, hike the scenic Waitākere Ranges, or surf the rugged west coast beaches like Piha and Muriwai. Art lovers can visit the Auckland Art Gallery, while adventure seekers can sail the Waitematā Harbour or take in the city skyline from the iconic Sky Tower. With its mix of culture, cuisine, and outdoor escapes, Auckland promises unforgettable experiences for every traveller.

Your accommodation: Abstract Hotel & Residences

Abstract is Auckland's freshest new vibe, blending hotel and residences for urban adventurers. Whether for work, family vacation or romantic escape, come and relax in a comfortable and stylish room. A guest lounge, co-working spaces, library, bar, a restaurant, gym, and a luxury spa are available on site.



Day 2



Return Ferry to Tiritiri Matangi Island and Guided Walk

Situated in the middle of the Hauraki Gulf only a 75 minute ferry trip from Auckland is Tiritiri Matangi Island. One of the world's most successful volunteer conservation projects, it has been re-vegetated with over 300,000 native trees as well as several different species of endangered birds and reptiles. Tiritiri Matangi meaning 'tossed by wind' is an open scientific reserve managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) in partnership with the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi.

It's 'open sanctuary' status allows for 150 ferry visitors daily - from Wednesday to Sunday. Here you have the opportunity to see first hand some of New Zealand's rarest inhabitants in a natural and protected environment. There are numerous walking tracks throughout the island which vary in length and fitness. Forested walking tracks are well established with custom built boardwalks paving the way through coastal bush. Other tracks include a pathway skirting the perimeter of the island and several roads traversing the interior. The Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi are enthusiastic about sharing the wealth of knowledge they have accumulated. You'll join a 1.5 hour guided experience and learn about the endangered bird life, natural surrounds, revegetation and history of Tiritiri Matangi. Your guide will highlight the best spots to see wildlife on the island, and will help you to identify the bird calls and sounds which echo through the trees. You'll also be taken up to the visitor centre to view its informative exhibits. Your lunchtime and afternoon will then be free for you to wander the island.

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Meals included: Breakfast



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 Matakōhe

The first leg of the journey takes you across the Auckland Harbour Bridge and the North Shore suburbs along State Highway 1. Travelling north, you will pass through the historic town of Warkworth before changing to State Highway 12 and heading west to Matakōhe.

Matakōhe Kauri Museum

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

Matakōhe to Hokianga

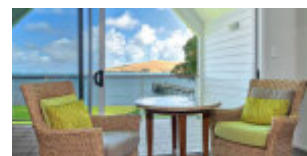
The drive north to Hokianga via the Waipoua Forest and the Kauri Coast takes you along the remote West Coast of the North Island and around one of the world's largest natural harbours, the Kaipara Harbour. Dargaville is a Northland river town with an interesting history and is a great jumping off point from which to explore the Kauri Coast.

From Waipoua Forest continue north to the mouth of the Hokianga Harbour. Stop for a breath of fresh air before and walking to the heads for truly stunning views. As you continue your drive the road takes you inland along the harbour to the small township of Opononi, famous for a friendly dolphin named Opo who swam with the local children in the 1950s.

Your accommodation: The Sands Hotel & Resort Hokianga

Just 3.5 hours from Auckland, get away from the hustle and bustle of the city life at the Sands Hotel, a four star accommodation with world-wide service, overlooking the Hokianga Harbour. Enjoy a relaxing and comfortable stay by the quiet water's edge of the harbour and explore the beautiful surrounding nature with the Waipoua Forest and its famous ancient Kauri tree in the area.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Hokianga region

Just a three-hour drive north of Auckland lies the Hokianga, a breathtaking estuarine harbour on the North Island's west coast, also known as the Hokianga River. This captivating region is steeped in history, having been inhabited by the Ngāpuhi for centuries before European arrival in the early 19th century. Despite a colourful past of early, often reluctant, settlers, Hokianga holds the distinction of hosting New Zealand's first Catholic mass.

While its impressive sandbar restricts access to small boats, this fourth-largest harbour in New Zealand opens up to 20 kilometres of navigable waters inland. On the northern shore, colossal, ever-shifting sand dunes, reaching up to 200 metres, invite adventurous spirits for thrilling descents.

The charming seaside towns of Omapere and Opononi offer a relaxed escape with holiday homes, craft shops, cafes, and local pubs. Further inland, the historic town of Rawene, with its unique cantilevered wooden buildings over the harbour, serves as a vital ferry point. Catching the Rawene ferry saves approximately an hour on your journey north to Kaitia, allowing you more time to immerse yourself in the Hokianga's rich tapestry of culture, history, and stunning natural beauty.

Twilight Waipoua Encounter

Experience the Waipoua Forest at night on this spectacular 4 hour tour. Learn about the rich birdlife and fauna that inhabit the forest, including the carnivorous kauri snail. You'll also get to experience the deep spiritual respect the Maori people have for this place. Your Maori guide will brief you on the protocols for your visit and you once formal greetings have been made you will be allowed to meet the giant Tane Mahuta, or Lord of the Forest - the oldest Kauri tree in the world.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

Your accommodation: The Sands Hotel & Resort Hokianga

Just 3.5 hours from Auckland, get away from the hustle and bustle of the city life at the Sands Hotel, a four star accommodation with world-wide service, overlooking the Hokianga Harbour. Enjoy a relaxing and comfortable stay by the quiet water's edge of the harbour and explore the beautiful surrounding nature with the Waipoua Forest and its famous ancient Kauri tree in the area.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Omapere to Ngawha Springs

Your drive from the coastal charm of Omapere to the rejuvenating thermal pools of Ngāwhā Springs takes you through the heart of the Hokianga and its surrounding landscapes. Begin by heading east along State Highway 12, enjoying the sweeping views of the Hokianga Harbour as you leave the tranquil seaside town behind. The road winds through picturesque countryside, dotted with lush green paddocks and native bush. As you continue inland, the scenery shifts to rolling hills and farmland. Keep an eye out for signs directing you toward Kaikohe. Once you reach the town, follow the road to Ngāwhā Springs, a short distance from Kaikohe. These geothermal pools, famed for their mineral-rich waters, are perfect for a relaxing soak after your drive.

Ngawha Springs

Bathe in the healing waters at Ngawha Springs and let the ancient energy revitalise your senses while the minerals from deep in the earth permeate your body. The mineral-rich hot waters of Ngawha Springs bubble up from deep within the Earth. Nestled in the heart of Te Tai Tokerau, Northland, the springs have a long history of being a restorative and healing place to visit. The people of Ngāpuhi have attended the natural springs to replenish wairua (spirit), alleviate the sensation of pain, and repair common ailments.

Ngawha Springs to Russell, Bay of Islands

Your journey from Kaikohe to Russell is a scenic drive that showcases the best of Northland's landscapes and history. As you approach the Bay of Islands, make a stop at Opuā, a charming seaside village known for its marina and connection to the vehicular ferry. Board the ferry here for a short but memorable crossing to Okiato, the site of New Zealand's first capital. Keep an eye out for seabirds and sailboats as you glide across the calm waters. Once you disembark, it's a short, winding drive through tranquil coastal scenery to Russell, one of New Zealand's most historic towns. Often referred to as the "birthplace of the nation," Russell offers a mix of history, charm, and natural beauty.

Russell, Bay of Islands

Experience the timeless charm of Russell, a historic village accessible by a quick ferry ride from Paihia or a scenic coastal drive. Once a notorious whaling hub, New Zealand's first European settlement, and briefly the country's first capital, Russell now offers a tranquil escape with a rich past. You'll love exploring historical sites like the bullet-scarred Christ Church, New Zealand's oldest church, or the historic Marlborough Hotel, which holds the country's oldest liquor license. For breathtaking views of the Bay and its islands, a short walk up Flagstaff Hill is a must. This historic site tells the story of Māori chief Hone Heke's famous protests. Russell is the perfect place to step back in time while enjoying the stunning beauty of the Bay of Islands

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Waitangi Hangi and Concert

Waitangi is just 2km north of Paihia in the Bay of Islands and is arguably one of New Zealand's most historic sites. It was here in 1840 that the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between Maori and the British government. Still on the 400 hectare reserve is the Georgian style home of James Busby, a fully-carved Maori meeting house and Ngatokimatawhaoua, a 37 metre kauri waka (canoe). The latter is one of the largest ever carved and was crafted to mark the centenary of the signing of the treaty in 1940. You will experience Waitangi as part of an intimate Hangi and concert evening. Begin at the Whare Waka Cafe with the unveiling of the Hangi, followed by a themed Cultural Performance in the carved Meeting House. After the show you will be escorted back to the Whare Waka Cafe for your Hangi dinner.

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

Arcadia Lodge is a Russell landmark, a turn of the century home and luxury bed and breakfast overlooking Russell's tranquil Matauwhi Bay.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Russell, Bay of Islands to Warkworth

Depart Russell via the Okiato vehicle ferry to Ōpua (shuttles run every 10 minutes, payable on board by card), then follow State Highway 1 south. Along the way, take a quick break at the Hundertwasser Toilets in Kawakawa or stop for a photo at the spectacular Whangārei Falls, located just minutes off the main road. As you continue south, enjoy the panoramic views from the Brynderwyn Hills before arriving in Warkworth, where you can stretch your legs with a walk along the Mahurangi River or grab a craft beer at a local riverside taproom.

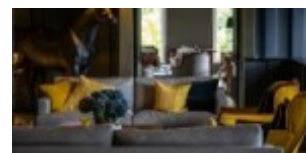
Warkworth

Warkworth, a delightful town boasting a charming array of cafes, restaurants, and art stores, offers the perfect spot to slow down and indulge in some leisurely browsing. This pretty little town serves as a fantastic base for exploring some of Northland's most exquisite natural attractions. Just a short drive east lies Goat Island Marine Reserve, a true underwater paradise. Here, you can take a glass-bottom boat or hire snorkels and fins and immerse yourself in a vibrant aquatic world, swimming amongst thousands of fish that thrive in this protected marine environment. A short distance further, you'll discover Tawharanui Regional Park. This stunning park offers kilometres of picturesque walking tracks, inviting you to explore its diverse landscapes and encounter abundant birdlife.

Your accommodation: Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth

Contemporary secluded villa accommodations in paradise-like grounds are set high above surrounding land, meaning privacy is guaranteed and views extend as far as the Hauraki Gulf. Facilities include a restaurant, outdoor pool, sauna, day spa treatments, cocktail bar, and extensive grounds to explore.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Sculptureum - Gardens and Galleries Experience

This 90-minute self-guided experience hosts you in a Garden of Creative Diversity with plenty of weird and wonderful art. The tour finishes with the sixth gallery which contains a stunning glass chandelier by American artist, Dale Chihuly. Be sure to indulge at the Rothko Restaurant located on site.

Tawharanui Marine Reserve

The abundance of fish and edible plants in Tawharanui has provided food to its occupants for the last 1000 years. When Europeans purchased the land in 1873 the timber was milled and the land farmed as well as some parts of it quarried. The park's boundaries were extended in 1981 to create New Zealand's first Marine Protected Area. This prohibits the taking of any marine life from the region and provides a unique environment for snorkelers and divers to experience the many and varied forms of wildlife in this environment. The New Zealand dotterel nests in the sand dunes here and there are many other birds such as the coastal reef heron and spotless crane that also make this place home.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Warkworth to Rotorua

Continuing south through Auckland, State Highway 1 quickly takes you into rolling green farmland and the rich dairy pasture of the Waikato. The Bombay Hills mark the outer boundary of great Auckland and it's here you turn inland to central Waikato. This is hobbit country and the route takes you through the town of Matamata where you can still visit the film locations made famous in the Lord of the Rings trilogy at Hobbiton Movie Set and Farm Tours.

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 Pīwakawaka (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.

Nocturnal Adventure Glow-Worm Tour with Real Rotorua

Explore New Zealand's native forest and wildlife after dark on this guided tour from Rotorua. Discover waterfalls, towering trees, and giant ferns accompanied by thousands of glow worms shining brightly. Watch as your guide points out other nocturnal creatures in the forest. Before departing from Rotorua, get kitted out with the necessary equipment, including specialised flashlights. After a 25-minute drive, the real adventure begins. A 2 km walk under the canopy of a native rainforest where every twist and turn of the trail reveals another surprise. After a walk through the darkness of the native forest, you will be guided by the sound of running water. Towering banks will rise up all around you, and if you turn your flashlights off, you will not be disappointed. Literally thousands of glowworms light up like stars in the night sky, forming their own constellations all around you. Enjoy a trek in the dark and discover something new at every turn of the trail. Top off your stellar evening by relaxing under the stars.

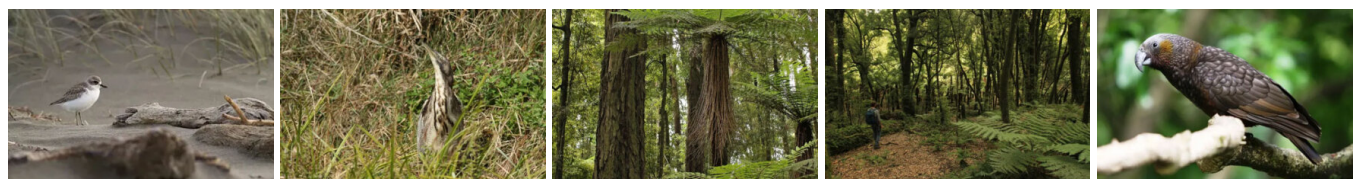
Your accommodation: On the Point

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 9



Birding Day Tour in Rotorua with Foris Eco Tours - Lunch Included

Join us for New Zealand's ultimate birding adventure! Spend the day exploring diverse habitats, from wetlands to ancient rainforests, and encounter some of the world's rarest birds in their natural environment. Spot iconic species like Bar-tailed godwits, Royal Spoonbills, Kaka, and Wrybill, while learning about vital conservation efforts. This full-day tour offers a unique wildlife experience, starting from Rotorua, Taupo, or Tauranga, and promises an unforgettable connection with nature.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

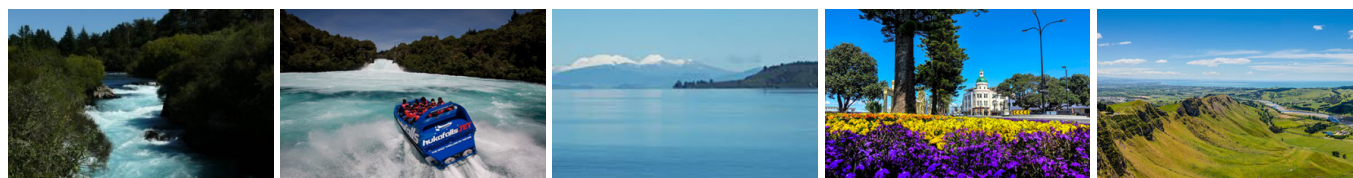
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Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 10



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 caf  s 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.

Gannet Safaris

Drive along the scenic coast from Napier to Te Awanga and join Gannet Safaris Overland and the world's largest, most accessible gannet colony at Cape Kidnappers. Gannet Safaris has been guiding visitors over Cape Kidnappers for over 35 years and their safaris are the only way to be driven right to within a few feet of these remarkable birds. You will travel in comfort in air-conditioned 4 x 4 wheeled vehicles, through Cape Kidnappers Station - traversing riverbeds, broad rolling pastures, stands of native bush, steep gullies and breath-taking inclines. There is a stop on the way at a spectacular cliff top with panoramic views of Hawke Bay right across to Mahia peninsular. The 36km, three hour trip includes a commentary by your tour guide/driver on the farming operation on Cape Kidnappers Station and an introduction to the gannets. On arrival at the gannets you can stretch your legs and take in the scenery from your position at the brink of the cliff's edge, 100 metres above the ocean!

Your accommodation: Art Deco Masonic Hotel

The Art Deco Masonic Hotel occupies a significant historic building on Napier's waterfront and has been richly refurbished in keeping with the Art Deco architecture. With its central location and decadent d  cor, this is the best place to experience what Napier is famous for.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



Napier to Masterton

The rolling countryside of the Hawke's Bay leads you into some of New Zealand's richest farmland, located around the Manawatu region. Passing along the Manawatu Gorge the Wairarapa welcomes you as you arrive in Masterton, home to the golden shears sheep shearing competition. In the centre of town is the beautiful Queen Elizabeth Park, which has one of the best children's playgrounds in New Zealand as well as a flying fox, paddle boats, bike hire, miniature train, skate park, swing bridge and mini golf course. Just across the road is Aratoi: Wairarapa Museum of Art & History which holds exhibitions of national significance and explores the region's history and stories.

P  kaha Mount Bruce Wildlife Centre General Admission - Open-Dated Voucher

Set in 940 hectares of forest, P  kaha is on State Highway 2, half way between Napier and Wellington right at the heart of the Classic New Zealand Wine Trail. A perfect and special stop off point to learn about New Zealand's very special environment. At P  kaha, they are dedicated to restoring the forest and protecting and nurturing endangered birds and animals – particularly kiwi, kokako, kaka and tuatara. P  kaha has a very successful breeding programme.

Your entry fee covers seven daily wildlife talks and feeds as well as entry to the nocturnal house where you can see North Island Brown Kiwi. Enjoy a walk through free flight aviary where you can experience the bush as it was hundreds of years ago. Enjoy the birds flying around you while viewing the Whio (Blue duck) and Pateke (Brown Teal) on the river run.

Masterton to Wellington

Continuing south from Masterton you reach the delightful village of Greytown home to the largest concentration of historic wooden buildings in the country. From the Wairarapa you'll cross the Remutaka Ranges and drop towards the impressive deep water harbour of Wellington City. Wellington is home to a selection of great museums such as Te Papa New Zealand's national museum (not to be missed), The National Library and the Museum of Wellington City and Sea. For some great views of the city and the harbour take the Cable Car from Lambton Quay up into the hills of Kelburn, 130 metres above the city. The ride terminates in the botanic gardens, a 26 hectare park with rose gardens, ferns, succulents, exotic trees and native forest displays. If you're feeling energetic take a stroll past the waterfront cafes of Oriental Bay and walk to the top of Mount Victoria, a great vantage point with views across to the Hutt Valley. Wellington has excellent shopping, theatre, cafes and restaurants and being only 2 kilometres wide the majority can easily be explored on foot.

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.

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.

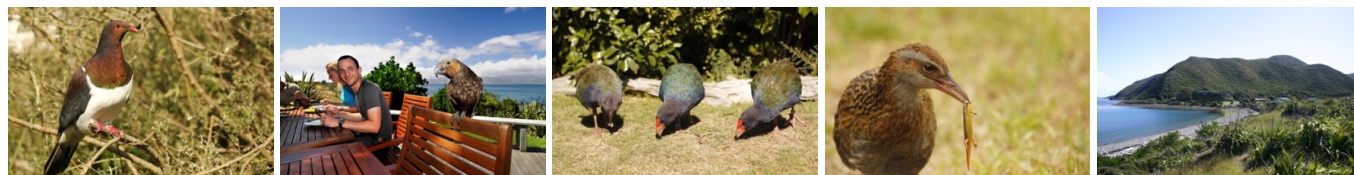
Your accommodation: TRYP by Wyndham Wellington

Enjoy the comforts of being in the heart of the central business center, a short walk from the Wellington waterfront and the bustling foodie hot spots.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



Kapiti Classic Guided Day Tour with Kapiti Island Nature Tours - Lunch Included

Your day trip to Kapiti Island begins at Paraparaumu where you'll catch the short ferry ride over to Waiorua Bay at the northern end of Kapiti Island. On arrival you'll be welcomed to the island and your experienced nature guide will introduce you to the natural and human history of the island. You'll discover for yourself the remarkable bird life that exists on this predator free island when you're guided on a 1 hour nature walk. A delicious cooked lunch is also provided at the lodge on the island.

Your accommodation: TRYP by Wyndham Wellington

Enjoy the comforts of being in the heart of the central business center, a short walk from the Wellington waterfront and the bustling foodie hot spots.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 13



Return your rental car

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

Interislander Ferry Wellington to Picton with Premium Plus Lounge

The 92 km ferry journey between Wellington and Picton, taking around 3 hours, is hailed as one of the world's most beautiful ferry rides. Departing Wellington Harbour, you'll pass landmarks like Pencarrow Head with New Zealand's oldest lighthouse, Red Rocks seal colony, and Oterangi Bay, famous for its record wind speed. From the Cook Strait, marvel at views of the Kaikōura Ranges and spot dolphins and seabirds. An hour of the trip winds through the stunning Marlborough Sounds, featuring bush-clad mountains, tranquil bays, and crystal-clear waters—a photographer's dream. The journey concludes in the charming town of Picton at the end of Queen Charlotte Sound. When not soaking up the views from the deck, relax in the Premium Plus lounge, offering complimentary drinks, snacks, internet, and luxurious seating for the most comfortable way to cross the Cook Strait.

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.

Picton

Picton is a picturesque portside town at the top of the South Island. Gateway to the forest, marine and island attractions of the Marlborough Sounds, Picton is built around a sheltered harbour. Home to cafes, restaurants and galleries it also has a floating maritime museum and aquarium. Picton is also the starting point for Queen Charlotte Track, one of New Zealand's leading hiking trails.

Your accommodation: Sennen House, Picton

This magnificent 2-storey villa is one of Picton's original colonial homesteads. Extensively restored, Sennen House offers guests a truly unique accommodation experience, set in 5 acres of National Trust protected native forest and grounds, yet only a short stroll to Picton's restaurants, shops, ferries and foreshore.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 14



Picton to Kaikōura

From Picton head south on State Highway One towards Blenheim, and the wine-producing region of Marlborough. Ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce, stop for a guided wine tour with Full Day Marlborough Wine Tour. Crossing the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges you head towards one of the most spectacular coastlines of the South Island, the Kaikōura Coast. The road hugs the shore for around 50 kilometres and offers many chances to view the native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. To the east is the Pacific Ocean and to the west you'll follow alongside the Kaikōura Ranges before arriving into the bustling Kaikōura Township.

Kaikōura

Kaikōura is a stunning coastal town known for its rich marine life and dramatic scenery. Visit the fur seal colony, take a whale-watching cruise, or swim with playful dusky dolphins. The town is rich with attractions, walking tracks, and activities for every visitor. A walk around the Kaikōura Peninsula is a must, where you can explore tide pools teeming with marine life, observe sea creatures basking on the rocks, and, for bird lovers, spot the impressive native albatross. Just be sure to keep a respectful distance from any sea lions you meet. Highlights like Ohau Point and historic Fyfe House offer insight into the region's wildlife and whaling past. Finish your visit by sampling the fresh local seafood, renowned for having some of the best fish and chips in the country, or by taking a relaxing wander through the tranquil Lavendyl Lavender Farm.

Your accommodation: Sudima Hotel Kaikōura

This state-of-the-art waterfront hotel in Kaikōura has a 4.5 star rating with an outstanding in-house restaurant, a bar and conference facilities.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 15



Albatross Tour with Encounter Kaikōura

A world renowned marine reserve, Kaikōura is brimming with marine life and ocean-going birds. It is the Albatross capital of the world and has up to 14 different species visiting the area throughout the year. You'll be taken by boat, 15 minutes off the coast where a huge range of elusive and usually inaccessible albatross can be sighted. You'll also see penguins, gannets, skuas, shearwaters petrels and terns. Travel in a dedicated albatross encounter vessel, adapted specifically for maximum wildlife viewing opportunities.

Your accommodation: Sudima Hotel Kaikōura

This state-of-the-art waterfront hotel in Kaikōura has a 4.5 star rating with an outstanding in-house restaurant, a bar and conference facilities.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 16



30 Minute Whale Watch Explorer with Wings over Whales Kaikoura

In a typical 30 minute flight you will see the majestic Sperm Whale preparing for his next dive and up to 500 Dusky Dolphins cavorting with each other. On occasion, sightings include Southern Right, Humpback, Fin, Sei, Brydes, Pilot, Southern Bottlenose and the mighty Blue Whales. You may also spot Hector's, Risso's, Southern Right Whale Dolphins, and Orca, although these are all less frequent visitors to the area. Gain an aerial perspective of this fantastic marine environment in a high-winged aircraft with optimal, unobstructed viewing.

Kaikoura to Hanmer Springs

The drive from Kaikoura follows the spectacular coast before heading inland through North Canterbury's major wine region, The Waipara Valley. You'll see many sheep as you wind your way through the vineyards and small towns of Rotherham and Waiau before arriving into the alpine village of Hanmer Springs, your destination for the night.

Hanmer Springs

Nestled in the Southern Alps, the alpine village of Hanmer Springs has long been a cherished New Zealand holiday destination, offering year-round appeal. Its world-renowned Thermal Pools & Spa are a major draw, complemented by a stunning natural environment of rivers and mountains. For those seeking tranquility, enjoy forest walks, relaxing thermal soaks, rejuvenating massage therapy, health treatments, or a round of golf, all within the pure alpine atmosphere. Adventure awaits with jet boating on the Waiau River, horse trekking, mountain biking, or even bungy jumping from the historic bridge. Surrounding forests boast over 50km of dedicated walking and mountain bike trails, showcasing spectacular seasonal colours, particularly in autumn and spring. In winter, Hanmer Springs transforms into a snowy haven, with easy access to both Hanmer Springs Ski Area and Mt. Lyford Ski Area.

Your accommodation: Edit Hanmer Springs

Surrounded by stunning scenery and nestled amongst beautiful gardens and tall canopies, the Hanmer Springs Hotel is a truly relaxing retreat. Located in the heart of Hanmer Springs near shops, restaurants and attractions, everything you need is only a small stroll away.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 17



Hanmer Springs to Hokitika via the Lewis Pass

Heading north west from Hanmer Springs and onto the Lewis Pass the landscape changes to a sub alpine zone with large forests of red and silver beech. Near the summit a short walking track, the Tarn Nature Walk, is an ideal place to break your journey. Further on the Maruia Springs have been attracting travellers for years and the natural hot springs are now located within an authentic Japanese themed resort. You next reach the small town of Reefton which sprang to life in the 1870's when gold was discovered (as did many other West Coast towns) but the mining here was so successful and the town became so prosperous that it became the first place in Australasia to have electric lighting. The visitor centre tells a great tale and also has a replica gold mine. Follow the road to Greymouth on the scenic west coast. Greymouth sits on the Grey River almost at the western end of State Highway 73. It's the largest town on the coast and as such is the commercial centre. A fine small town centre with some interesting buildings makes it a pleasant place to stroll. Continue south, passing near Shantytown, a replica of a working goldmine village with reconstructed buildings, mine workings and a wonderful collection of steam trains. Hokitika, is a quaint town brimming with character, natural beauty, and rich history. Known as the "Cool Little Town," Hokitika is celebrated for its vibrant arts scene, stunning landscapes, and as a hub for pounamu (New Zealand greenstone).

Māwhera Pounamu Pathway Immersive Experience

Māwhera Pā in Greymouth is the first location along the Pounamu Pathway touring route to open. This self-guided experience is a historical and creative exploration of the Poutini Ngāi Tahu and the Māwhera Pā settlement people, retold by their ancestors. The exhibition will lead you through six different narratives, each tale including a large-scale masterpiece, artistically crafted by Weta Workshop to cultivate an immersive journey of visuals and sound.

Your accommodation: Rimu Lodge

Rimu Lodge is just a short drive from Hokitika, but once you arrive it feels like a world away. Set amidst New Zealand native bush each room takes advantage of the amazing West Coast views making for a relaxing retreat.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 18



Hokitika to Franz Josef

Leaving Hokitika pass through the old gold mining town of Ross where some of the original buildings and workings remain. Ross is also home to one of the few working mines left in New Zealand. Continuing South pass through Harihari, the township Guy Menzies crash-landed in after he became the first person to fly solo across the Tasman. The next established town is Whataroa, a small township, home to some of the world's rarest birds - White Heron known in Māori as the Kōtuku. From here it is a short drive to arrive into the glacier region, on a clear day you'll spot the Franz Josef Glacier ahead of the township.

Okarito Lagoon Guided Kayak Trip (2 hours) with Okarito Kayaks

Kayaking is by far the best way to enjoy the flora, fauna, and scenic grandeur of New Zealand's largest unmodified coastal wetland. Previous experience is not necessary. Okarito Lagoon covers more than 3240 hectares of shallow open water and is well known for its outstanding bird life, including white heron and royal spoonbill. Exploring the open water and river channels that lead you deep into the heart of the rainforest is like stepping back in time to pre-European conditions and on a clear day you enjoy fantastic views of Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps. Your guide will take you to their favourite spots where you'll discover the flora, fauna, and history of the lagoon.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - White Heron Sanctuary Tour

View the magnificent Kotuku (White Heron), the Kotuku Ngutu Papa (Royal Spoonbill), the Kawapaka (Little Black Shag) and other Bird life - all in their natural environment.

Tours to the White Heron Colony open late October and the Kotuku disperse from the colony about the end of February/Early March each year. A unique experience to New Zealand's only Kotuku (White Heron) nesting site, in the Waitangi Roto Nature reserve, the Kotuku Ngutu Papa (Royal Spoonbill) also nests here.

The tour consists of a short minibus ride to the river to connect with the jet boat. The jet boat ride is a gentle 20 minutes each way. From the jetty it is just a short boardwalk (500mtrs) through native bush to where you can stay for 30-40 minutes to view the birds.

Your accommodation: Rainforest Retreat

Rainforest Retreat is centrally located in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier Village. Nestled in six acres of idyllic native bush each unit was built exclusively to the beautiful, natural environment of Westland National Park.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 19



Franz Josef to Wanaka

Heading south you will climb over the Fox hills before arriving at the small town of Fox Glacier. If it's a nice day enjoy spectacular reflections of snowcapped mountains in Lake Matheson, located just 5 minutes west of Fox. Heading south from fox enjoy the amazing scenery of the Southern Alps, and sneak peeks of the rugged beaches while winding through ancient temperate rainforests. At Knights Point Lookout, elephant seals can often be seen basking on the sandy beaches at the far end of the point. Crossing the Haast River you'll turn inland and through the mountainous valley littered with waterfalls. A great suggested stop along this route is the Blue Pools. Continue on past lakes Hawea and Wanaka into the alpine township of Wanaka.

Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

Lying close to the centre of Lake Wanaka is Mou Waho Island Nature Reserve. A unique glacial remnant of the last ice age, the island is also the historic site of early shipbuilding and used to be a stopping place for the steamers and log rafts that once plied the lake. Accessible from Wanaka by a 35-minute boat cruise, the landing is on the eastern side of the island where the remnants of the early settlement remain; a stone wharf and a hut. A well-formed track leads from the landing and climbs steadily through native bush to near the top of Tyrwhitt Peak. Just before the top, we see Arethusa Pool, a small lake on the island with small islands in it - very intriguing! From the top, we have a sweeping 360-degree view of Lake Wanaka, its surrounding mountains and valleys, and below Arethusa Pool. The perfect spot to stop for tea or coffee. Going back down the track gives us more time to take in our surroundings, listening to and watching the lively bird-life, and just enjoying this unique wildlife reserve. You will feel well rewarded as you re-join the boat for the cruise back to Wanaka. Total cruise time is 1.5 hours. The trip runs subject to weather and lake conditions. Depending on the planting season, you can help The Reforestation of Mou Waho by planting a tree.

Wanaka to Queenstown

Leaving Wanaka, you head over New Zealand's highest sealed road, Crown Range Road, before dropping into Queenstown. This drive only takes about an hour, but you should allow more time to enjoy the magnificent scenery and explore the walks and many stops en route, including the Cardrona Distillery, wonderful views from Crown Range's highest point over Queenstown, the picturesque town of Arrowtown, and if time allows, even the wineries in Gibbston.

Your accommodation: Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel

Queenstown Park Hotel is a boutique hotel with a modern romantic style in the heart of New Zealand's adventure capital. Set in peaceful parkland, savour views of Queenstown's majestic mountains. Enjoy easy access to the vibrant town centre where shopping, cafes and nightlife nestled on the shores of spectacular Lake Wakatipu.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 20



Queenstown

Queenstown known in Māori as Tāhuna, is home to many adrenaline-inducing activities. Nestled on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, this alpine town has very distinct seasons, and most adrenaline-filled activities can be accessed year-round. Queenstown is home to jet boating, bungy jumping, rafting, skydiving, paragliding, and even indoor thrills. If you want that rush - head out on the Shotover Jet, dive off the Nevis Bungy, freefall on the Canyon Swing, or Zip line the Gondola. While arguably the brightest gem in New Zealand's crown, Queenstown offers far more than an action-packed getaway. If you're looking for a slightly slower pace, there are plenty of recreational activities, including hiking and biking trails to explore, guided tours, boat cruises, scenic flights, or spa and wellness options to help you get away. Head to the lakefront, eat at one of the al fresco eateries, and soak up the local vibes; catch a ride on the iconic 100-year-old steamship the TSS Earnslaw; or take the Skyline Gondola and enjoy bird's-eye views of the Remarkables mountain ranges and Lake Wakatipu. Pack a picnic and go for a hike, only 20 minutes from Central Queenstown, Coronet Peak opens for summer sightseeing. You can ride the Peak Gondola to the top for panoramic views and hike the trails, or go for a bike ride on many excellent biking trails. In winter, Queenstown becomes a world-class winter resort, with four ski areas and a range of activities, bars, restaurants, and ways to relax and unwind.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Kiwi Park Entry

Explore the 5-acre oasis at the Kiwi Park. A family-owned and operated wildlife centre in the heart of Queenstown, dedicated to saving New Zealand's endangered wildlife species. The Kiwi Park has over 20 species of native wildlife on display, including New Zealand's national icon, the Kiwi, and the living fossil, the Tuatara.

Your accommodation: Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel

Queenstown Park Hotel is a boutique hotel with a modern romantic style in the heart of New Zealand's adventure capital. Set in peaceful parkland, savour views of Queenstown's majestic mountains. Enjoy easy access to the vibrant town centre where shopping, cafes and nightlife nestled on the shores of spectacular Lake Wakatipu.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 21



Queenstown to Milford Sound

Departing Queenstown, you'll skirt the shores of Lake Wakatipu beneath the towering Remarkables before venturing through the fertile plains of Southland toward Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park. The journey continues along the scenic Milford Road, where highlights like the Mirror Lakes and the impressive Homer Tunnel offer breathtaking photo opportunities. Upon arrival, the iconic Mitre Peak welcomes you to the fjord, where a boat cruise reveals the sheer scale of the Milford Sound glacial cliffs and cascading waterfalls.

Milford Sound Overnight Cruise on the Fiordland Jewel with Fiordland Discovery

Indulge in an exclusive overnight cruise aboard the Fiordland Jewel, a luxury boutique catamaran. This intimate experience fully immerses you in the dramatic beauty of Milford Sound's towering peaks and cascading waterfalls. The journey navigates past iconic landmarks like Mitre Peak and Stirling Falls. Wildlife sightings are exceptional, including seals, dolphins, and penguins, with an underwater remote operated vehicle offering views of rare black coral. Anchor in a secluded cove for the evening, where you can explore by kayak before enjoying gourmet dining. The morning begins with a breathtaking sunrise over the majestic fiord, ensuring you experience this natural wonder in unparalleled luxury.

Your accommodation: Fiordland Jewel

The Fiordland Jewel is a luxury boutique catamaran built with nine comfortable cabins. Enjoy the natural wonders of Milford Sound at dawn, dusk or underneath the stars.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 22



Milford Sound to Te Anau (one way)

Today you'll return on the Milford Road from Milford Sound to Te Anau. You'll have time to explore any of the walks and viewing points that you missed on the drive in.

Note: Please make sure to allow 2.5hrs to Te Anau, this takes into account the current road works on the Milford Road."

Te Anau

It is the gateway to Fiordland National Park and a perfect base to visit Piopiotahi-Milford Sound. The Milford Road originates here, and this is arguably one of the most scenic stretches of highway in the country. Te Anau sits on the shores of spectacular Lake Te Anau, which reaches depths of 417 meters. Te Anau Township is the starting point for many walking tracks, including two of New Zealand's Great Walks, the Milford track and the Kepler track. Apart from hiking, you could go kayaking, lake cruising, fishing, or exploring Te Anau Glowworm Caves. You could go for a bike ride alongside the lake towards Lake Manapouri, on a popular Lake to Lake biking route. Along the way, you will pass a bird sanctuary specialising in Takahe, and other native birds.

Ata Whenua - Shadowland Film at Fiordland Cinema

Ata Whenua refers to the southwestern coast of New Zealand and translates to English as "Shadow Land". This breathtaking short film will take you on an unforgettable journey through one of the most awe-inspiring landscapes on earth, Fiordland National Park. Shot by award-winning cinematographers with outstanding musical composition, this is the next best thing to a scenic flight over this spectacular wilderness.

Your accommodation: Te Anau Lodge

Te Anau Lodge began its existence as a Catholic convent in 1936 before being converted into a wonderful lodge. A beautiful Rimu wood interior awaits you and each of the 7 rooms house furniture made from stunning native woods.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 23



Te Anau to Invercargill

Leaving Te Anau you'll cross country through the rural townships of Lumsden and then Winton, which service the surrounding dairy and sheep farms. Winton's streets are lined with many historic building, an indication of the community's history. Today these are home to a number of cafes and shops. It's a short drive from Winton to the world's southern most city, Invercargill.

Invercargill to Stewart Island with Stewart Island flights

The first air transport to connect Stewart Island and the mainland was Stewart Island Air Service, operating an amphibian aircraft. The plane landed in the harbour and taxied up the beach to the local hotel. Twenty years ago this was succeeded by Southern Air Ltd with the establishment of an airstrip at Ryan's Creek. Today, Stewart Island Flights is a locally owned and operated business who maintain scheduled flights linking Stewart Island and Invercargill as well as a number of exciting alternatives providing access to the more remote reaches of the island. They operate two Britten Norman Islanders, two Piper Cherokee Six and one Cessna 185.

As well as offering scheduled flights between Invercargill and Stewart Island scenic flights can also be arranged on demand to suit your schedule.

Stewart Island - Rakiura National Park

Stewart Island, or Rakiura (meaning "Glowing Sky" in Māori), is New Zealand's third-largest island, located just 30 km south of the South Island across the Foveaux Strait. Despite its size, the island is largely uninhabited, with fewer than 400 residents living primarily around Halfmoon Bay. The island's untouched nature is its defining feature. Approximately 85% of its 1,746 km² area is Rakiura National Park, established in 2002. This protected wilderness is a paradise for those seeking a genuine escape. The island's landscape is diverse, ranging from undulating, forested hills to a coastline featuring sandy beaches, sheer cliffs, and extensive wetlands. The highest point is Mount Anglem/Hananui, at 981 meters. The native bush is home to a rich variety of birdlife, and the surrounding crystal-clear waters teem with marine life, making the island a prime spot for fishing and wildlife watching.

A major attraction is Ulva Island, a nearby predator-free sanctuary for rare and endangered bird species and native plants. With only 28 km of roads and 280 km of walking tracks, Stewart Island is all about immersing yourself in its natural, unspoiled wilderness, stunning sunsets, and aurora displays, which inspired the island's Māori name.

Your accommodation: Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant

Fully hosted boutique lodge has three spacious, stand alone suites with full glass frontages and private decks maximising views of spectacular Halfmoon Bay where you can relax, unwind and soak up the panoramic views. Ideally located within easy walking distance of all amenities or if a retreat is what you are after all your needs can be met without leaving the lodge.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 24



Ulva Island Half Day Guided Walk with Ulva's Guided Walks

Discover the unique, rare, and endangered birds and plants at predator-free Ulva Island with an exceptional local guide. Well-maintained gravel walking tracks weave around fallen trees, through lush native podocarp forest alive with birdsong. See exquisite seasonal orchids and be amazed by the very friendly birdlife that will come too close for your camera lens.

Ulva Island Half Day guided Walk with Ulva's Guided Walks

Spend a memorable evening searching for the largest of New Zealand's iconic kiwi species, the Stewart Island Brown Kiwi (Tokoeke) in its natural habitat. With a local guide, you will explore the forest and favoured hang-outs of these rare iconic birds. Listen for Morepork and Blue Penguin and marvel at the stars above - Stewart Island's spectacular night sky is accredited Dark Sky Sanctuary status by the International Dark Sky Association.

Your accommodation: Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant

Fully hosted boutique lodge has three spacious, stand alone suites with full glass frontages and private decks maximising views of spectacular Halfmoon Bay where you can relax, unwind and soak up the panoramic views. Ideally located within easy walking distance of all amenities or if a retreat is what you are after all your needs can be met without leaving the lodge.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 25



Coastal Highlights Guided Day Hike with Ruggedly Range - Lunch Included

A delightful day hike on the Rakiura Great Walk. Nature, coastal scenery, flora, birds and history. Cruise along Stewart Island's northeast coast to Port William. Enjoy a guided walk through coastal rainforest in Rakiura National Park. Enjoy superb views, picturesque bays and golden beaches scattered with sea shells. We share our in-depth local knowledge of Stewart Island's natural and cultural history and show you some special places along the way. You can also hike the North Arm coastal stretch with lovely views across Paterson Inlet, rich in cultural history on an additional day.

Your accommodation: Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant

Fully hosted boutique lodge has three spacious, stand alone suites with full glass frontages and private decks maximising views of spectacular Halfmoon Bay where you can relax, unwind and soak up the panoramic views. Ideally located within easy walking distance of all amenities or if a retreat is what you are after all your needs can be met without leaving the lodge.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 26



Stewart Island to Invercargill with Stewart Island flights

The first air transport to connect Stewart Island and the mainland was Stewart Island Air Service, operating an amphibian aircraft. The plane landed in the harbour and taxied up the beach to the local hotel. Twenty years ago this was succeeded by Southern Air Ltd with the establishment of an airstrip at Ryan's Creek. Today, Stewart Island Flights is a locally owned and operated business who maintain scheduled flights linking Stewart Island and Invercargill as well as a number of exciting alternatives providing access to the more remote reaches of the island. They operate two Britten Norman Islanders, two Piper Cherokee Six and one Cessna 185.

As well as offering scheduled flights between Invercargill and Stewart Island scenic flights can also be arranged on demand to suit your schedule.

Invercargill to Dunedin

The route from Invercargill to Balclutha will take you along State Highway 1 and the "Old Coach Road" between the Southland township of Mataura and the Western Otago town of Clinton, as it bypasses the town of Gore. The tranquil river town of Balclutha is the largest in the South Otago region and is memorable for its arched concrete bridge, under which flows the mighty Clutha River, which is largest waterway in New Zealand by volume.

From Balclutha, continue along State Highway 1 past Milton and Mosgiel before arriving to Dunedin.

Dunedin

Dunedin, known in Māori as Ōtepoti, is referred to as the "Edinburgh of the Southern Hemisphere". The city has a rightly deserved reputation as one of the best-preserved Victorian and Edwardian cities in the Southern Hemisphere. Of particular note is Dunedin Railway Station, built 1904 - 1906, and St Paul's Cathedral in the Octagon. The Otago Museum is renowned for its Māori and Pacific Island collections and natural history displays. A visit to the Speights, New Zealand's oldest brewery, is also considered a must while in Dunedin. The Botanic Gardens is a great spot and at the right time of year, you can witness the Rhododendron Dell in bloom. The Otago Peninsula is the only home in the world to the Northern Royal Albatross. The Peninsula can be visited for the day from Dunedin and the stunning harbor landscape and wildlife are worth exploring. High among the rolling hills of the Peninsula is Larnach Castle, the grand home of an early politician. Construction of the castle began in 1871 and was completed 12 years later. From here, views out to sea and back towards the city emphasize the singular beauty of Dunedin and its jewel-like harbor.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

Your accommodation: Larnach Lodge at Larnach Castle

Larnach is New Zealand's only Castle, built in 1871 and immaculately restored and maintained.

Accommodation is offered in individually themed lodges set in glorious gardens.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 27



Walking tracks on the Otago Peninsula

There are a number of short walks to enjoy on the Peninsula. The information below is provided by the Department of Conservation. Sandfly Bay

Walking Time: 1 hr return walk from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 25 minutes from the centre of Dunedin. Tunnel Beach

Walking Time: 1 hour / 2km return walk from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 15 minutes south from the centre of Dunedin. Sandymount

Walking Time: Lovers Leap 50 min return walk from carpark or Sandymount Circuit 1 hr return walk from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 30 minutes from the centre of Dunedin. Allans Beach

Walking Time: 5 min walk to the beach from carpark

Getting there - drive is approximately 40 minutes from the centre of Dunedin.

Royal Albatross Centre - Unique Albatross and Fort Taiaroa Tour

The Royal Albatross colony at Taiaroa Head on the Otago Peninsula is the only mainland breeding colony of Royal Albatross in the world. From the centre, it's a short walk to the observatory for the privilege of seeing the greatest of all seabirds. Wander through the McMillan Gallery and learn more of the history and wildlife of the area. The Unique Taiaroa experience offers a comprehensive 90 minutes guided tour of both the Albatross colony and Fort Taiaroa. Enjoy spectacular Albatross viewing from the Richdale Observatory including the introductory "Attenborough" video and albatross breeding cycle information. The Fort Taiaroa guided tour takes you back into New Zealand's colonial past. It covers the Maori and European occupation of the headland with a visit to 'Fort Taiaroa,' underground fortifications beneath the Albatross Colony. Walk through the underground tunnels to the 1886 Armstrong Disappearing Gun that is still in working order. This was established to counter the anticipated threat of invasion from Tsarist Russia.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Penguin Tour with The Opera

Learn about the endangered Yellow Eyed Penguin when you visit The Opera - Otago Peninsula Eco Restoration Alliance, a private conservation reserve dedicated to ensuring the survival of this unique species. The project is entirely funded by guided tours which allow the conservation team to engage in habitat restoration, predator control, a research program, and an on-site rehabilitation facility.

On your tour, you will learn about the issues the Yellow Eyed Penguin faces, their life cycle, and how the project is carried out. Your experience will begin in a theatre before moving to the rehabilitation center where penguins may be seen up close. You'll take a short bus trip over to the reserve and be led on foot approx 2km by your guide through a system of covered trenches to view hides that allow access to the living and breeding habitat of this very shy bird without disturbing them. There is also an opportunity to meet other animals that reside in the reserve including fur seals, sea lions, and several species of shore and land birds.

Dinner at Camp Estate, Larnach Castle

Keeping with the historical setting of Larnach Castle, a four-course dinner is offered in a grand Castle Dining Room. This is a trust-the-chef experience where you may indulge in incredible meals and meet other guests. The menu reflects local meats and vegetables, served in a traditional New Zealand-style cuisine with the opportunity to pair with regional wines.

Your accommodation: Larnach Lodge at Larnach Castle

Larnach is New Zealand's only Castle, built in 1871 and immaculately restored and maintained. Accommodation is offered in individually themed lodges set in glorious gardens.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 28



Dunedin to Mt Cook National Park

Heading north from Dunedin your first stop should be Moeraki to explore the famous and unique boulders strewn on the beach. Before heading inland along the Waitaki Valley you pass through the historic township of Oamaru and its Stone buildings. Take time to head into the old quarter and if your timing is right you may get to see some of the local resident little blue penguins. The Waitaki Valley makes a large contribution to New Zealand's electricity supply with its 3 hydro dams. Arriving into Omarama you are now truly in the high country but don't think these vast empty lands are useless, these are some of the country's most productive merino sheep stations. The turquoise waters of Lake Pukaki guide you the final 45 minutes to Aoraki Mount Cook Village

Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

At 3754m Aoraki-Mt Cook is Aotearoa-New Zealand's highest mountain, located deep in the heart of the Southern Alps. As well as its impressive beauty, Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park is also home to a huge range of awe-inspiring sights and activities. Take to the air with Mt Cook Ski Planes for a scenic flight that includes a glacier landing. At around 27 kilometres long the Tasman Glacier is New Zealand's longest and a Glacier Explorers tour allows you to see its unique features up close.

There are many short hikes in and around the park and these are well signposted around the village. Those with an interest in the night sky should take a Big Sky Stargazing tour with the Hermitage Hotel. The region is considered to have one of the clearest night skies in the world and is one of the few gold-rated dark sky reserves worldwide.

Visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre for insight into this region's mountain climbing history. You'll also learn of Sir Ed's incredible achievements and his dedication to helping others around the world.

Walking Tracks in Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Aoraki-Mt Cook Village offers a variety of short scenic walks suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Start your adventure at the Department of Conservation Information Centre, where you can learn about track conditions, local history, and the area's wildlife. Here are a few popular walks to explore: Bowen Bush Walk: 10-minute return Glencoe Walk: 10-minute return Red Tarns Track: 2-hour return Kea Point Walk: 2-hour return Sealy Tarns Track: 3 - 4 hours return Please be aware that at Aoraki/Mount Cook, you will need to pay for parking at the White Horse Hill car park. The cost is \$5 per hour or \$25 for the full day. A 20-minute free period is available for quick drop-offs.

The Panorama Room 3-course Dinner with The Hermitage Hotel

Since first opening its doors in 1969, The Panorama Room has gained a reputation as being one of the best restaurants in New Zealand. This reputation is reflected in the numerous awards the restaurant has received over the years. A simple philosophy of using just the freshest, local ingredients, in particular from New Zealand's South Island, is still the secret to its success today. The menu has a strong international influence and reflects both the establishment's taste and the fact that most of the chefs have travelled and worked widely throughout the world.

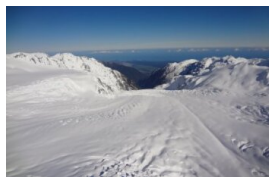
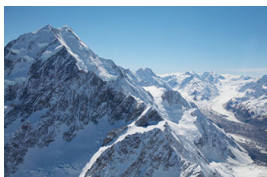
Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium

The Hermitage Hotel ringed by magnificent snow-capped peaks of the Southern Alps, is a world-renowned tourist destination and has been an icon of superior accommodation and dining since 1884.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 29



SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Mountain High Scenic Flight with The Helicopter Line

The premier flight over this amazing alpine region with vast snowfields, glaciers and a spectacular view of New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki/Mount Cook. Land high above glaciers and experience what it feels like to stand in snow amongst the mountains. Traverse the Southern Alps to view the mighty Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers as they journey slowly down towards the native rainforests and the Tasman Sea on the rugged West Coast. It is important to read and understand the risks associated with this activity. A full risk disclosure can be found here.

Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park to Christchurch

Leaving Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, travel a short distance for a stop 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 Aoraki-Mount Cook. Along the way, you'll reach Lake Tekapo which also displays the same reflective qualities as Lake Pukaki, making the waters bright turquoise. It's a great place to take a scenic flight, soak in a hot spring or just marvel at the magnificent views. From here you travel through Burkes Pass and into the rich farming valley that surrounds Geraldine. Continue across the vast Canterbury Plains to Christchurch.

Christchurch

Christchurch known in Māori as Ōtautahi, is the largest metro area in the South Island. Commonly referred to as New Zealand's "Garden City", Christchurch is home to one of the biggest public parks in the country, and beautiful botanic gardens. The city was hit with devastating earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, now the city crosses the line between its English heritage and a new modern architecture. To take in some arts and culture, pay a visit to the Canterbury Museum or the Christchurch Art Gallery. Take a step back in time with a tram around the city or punt along the Avon River. If tasting your way around the city is your means of travel, try out a cultural eating tour. A short drive from the CBD will lead you to the outskirts of the Banks Peninsula beachside suburb of Sumner or through the tunnel to Lyttleton Harbour which hosts fantastic markets on Saturday mornings.

Te Wepu Native Garden

Meaning 'The Web', In Maori, Te Wepu is home to a large group of mature natives, a fernery, flax, hebes, lancewood, paths and lawns as well as two Japanese style gardens. The St Albans creek running through the property creates a natural habitat for resident ducks, and native birds. There is also a large lime tree planted in 1882. Located in the heart of the city this garden sits on a half acre of land as part of the original Te Wepu mansion estate.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Pohatu Penguin Evening Tour by 4WD

Pohatu is the largest Australasian Little Penguin colony on mainland New Zealand. Much work has gone into protecting the White-flipped Penguins from introduced predators. You'll join a guided tour to view these birds in their natural habitat. This evening tour gives you the chance to observe the birds returning from hunting at sea and you'll be involved in the monitoring programme of the nesting boxes to learn more about the conservation work. The best time for penguin viewing is the breeding season between the end of August and January. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Merivale Manor House

Originally built in the 1880's, Merivale Manor has been transformed into elegant motel and apartment accommodation. Less than 200 metres to central Merivale with its premier shopping, restaurants, cafes and bars.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 30



Return your rental car

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

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:	Christchurch
Tour length:	30
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Abstract Hotel & Residences
Day 2	Abstract Hotel & Residences
Day 3	The Sands Hotel & Resort Hokianga
Day 4	The Sands Hotel & Resort Hokianga
Day 5	Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 6	Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth
Day 7	Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth
Day 8	On the Point
Day 9	On the Point
Day 10	Art Deco Masonic Hotel
Day 11	TRYP by Wyndham Wellington
Day 12	TRYP by Wyndham Wellington
Day 13	Sennen House, Picton
Day 14	Sudima Hotel Kaikōura
Day 15	Sudima Hotel Kaikōura
Day 16	Edit Hanmer Springs
Day 17	Rimu Lodge
Day 18	Rainforest Retreat
Day 19	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel
Day 20	Queenstown Park Boutique Hotel
Day 21	Fiordland Jewel
Day 22	Te Anau Lodge
Day 23	Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant
Day 24	Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant
Day 25	Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant
Day 26	Larnach Lodge at Larnach Castle
Day 27	Larnach Lodge at Larnach Castle
Day 28	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium
Day 29	Merivale Manor House