



Cultural Threads of Aotearoa

From Auckland, travel north to a place where Māori traditions are woven into the land. Immerse yourself in the geothermal wonders of Rotorua and encounter rare birds on the secluded Kāpiti Island. Crossing to the South Island, explore the rugged West Coast, the ancient forests of Fiordland, and the quiet serenity of Stewart Island. This isn't just a tour; it's a deep cultural immersion and an authentic adventure, uncovering New Zealand's hidden gems and lesser-known regions. It's a journey of connection, storytelling, and breathtaking landscapes, designed for the curious and the adventurous. You won't just see New Zealand, you'll feel it.



Starts in: Auckland
Finishes in: Christchurch
Length: 26days / 25nights
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: Guided Tour of Te Papa The Museum of New Zealand

Included activity: Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura

Included activity: Māwhera Pounamu Pathway Immersive Experience

Included activity: Ata Whenua - Shadowland Film at Fiordland Cinema

Included activity: Return Ferry to Tiritiri Matangi Island and Guided Walk

Included activity: Ulva Island Half Day Guided Walk with Ulva's Guided Walks

Included activity: Ōtautahi City Meander with Amiki Cultural Food Tours

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

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

Included activity: Paparoa Experience

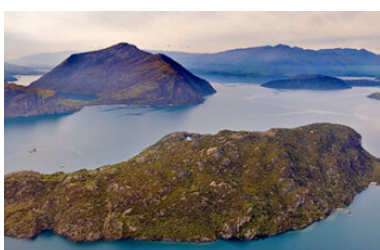
Included activity: Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise with Real NZ - Lunch Included

Included activity: Stewart Island Ferry Bluff to Stewart Island Return

Included activity: Evening Kiwi Spotting with Ulva's Guided Walks

Included activity: Matakōhe Kauri Museum



Day 1



Welcome to Auckland

Kia ora! 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, it offers something for everyone. 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 the 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 is known in Māori as Tāmaki Makaurau, which translates to "desired by many". The city offers an abundance of activities and hidden gems suited for everyone. For a serene escape, venture to the award-winning wineries scattered across Waiheke; simply hop on a ferry and enjoy a leisurely day in the coastal breeze. Auckland Botanical Gardens, sprawled across 156 acres of lush land and native forest on Hill Road. Experience the great outdoors by visiting iconic landmarks such as One Tree Hill or the renowned ex-volcano, Mt Eden. Alternatively, hop on a quick ferry from the CBD to Devonport and discover this charming seaside suburb. Shopaholics will be delighted to explore Auckland's main shopping district, Newmarket, boasting an array of local boutiques and luxury labels nestled within the Newmarket Westfield Mall. Ponsonby a short drive from the CBD offers New Zealand designers, quaint boutiques, and exceptional dining options. Explore the eclectic mix of bars, thrift shops, and culinary delights along Karangahape Road, affectionately known as "K Road" by locals. Once Auckland's red-light district in the 1960s, it's now recognised as the world's 6th coolest street. Auckland's diverse cultural landscape has inspired an array of tantalising cuisines and dining experiences scattered across the city.

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.

Your accommodation: Sudima Auckland City

Conveniently located within easy walking distance of Auckland's bustling shopping, arts, dining and entertainment precincts and opposite the New Zealand International Convention Centre.



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.

Your accommodation: Sudima Auckland City

Conveniently located within easy walking distance of Auckland's bustling shopping, arts, dining and entertainment precincts and opposite the New Zealand International Convention Centre.

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 Matakoho

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 chaging to State Highway 12 and heading west to Matakoho.

Matakoho Kauri Museum

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

Matakoho 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 Kaitiaki, 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 Paihia

Leaving the soothing geothermal waters of Ngāwhā Springs behind, head east from Kaikohe toward the bustling coastal town of Paihia, a gateway to the stunning Bay of Islands. The journey takes approximately 30 minutes and offers a delightful mix of rolling countryside and glimpses of subtropical beauty. Take State Highway 12 out of Kaikohe and join State Highway 1, traveling through peaceful farmland and small rural communities. The scenery gradually transforms as you approach the Bay of Islands, with hints of the ocean peeking through the lush vegetation. Upon reaching Paihia, you'll find yourself in a vibrant seaside town buzzing with activity.

Paihia, Bay of Islands

Paihia, an oceanside gem, played a pivotal role in Aotearoa-New Zealand's history. A visit to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds offers a profound look into the signing of the Waitangi Treaty, where 43 Māori chiefs and 39 Crown representatives shaped the nation's future. Beyond its rich history, Paihia is a haven for water-based activities. From sailing through the Hole in the Rock and dolphin spotting to kayaking or fishing, or perhaps a day relaxing on the beach, this picturesque coastal town is the perfect base to explore the stunning Bay of Islands.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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: Copthorne Hotel and Resort Bay of Islands, Paihia

Copthorne Hotel & Resort Bay of Islands is located within the Waitangi Treaty grounds, surrounded by native bush and the beautiful Bay of Islands Harbour.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Paihia, Bay of Islands to Warkworth

Embark on a scenic journey south from the coastal beauty of Paihia to the charming town of Warkworth, located in the heart of the Matakana wine region. This drive showcases a mix of Northland's lush countryside, tranquil beaches, and charming small towns. From Paihia, follow State Highway 11 toward Kawakawa, where you can make a quick stop to see the quirky Hundertwasser Toilets, a work of art in themselves. Continue south, merging onto State Highway 1, which will guide you through rolling farmland and dense native bush. Consider a detour to Whangārei, the largest city in Northland, where you can stretch your legs with a walk to the stunning Whangārei Falls or grab a coffee in the vibrant Town Basin.

Back on the highway, the road meanders past small towns like Ruakākā and Waipū, with optional side trips to pristine beaches. As you approach Warkworth, you'll notice the landscape transitioning into vineyards and orchards, a signature of the Matakana region.

Warkworth's relaxed charm, with its boutique shops, cafés, and the nearby Matakana Coast, makes it a great place to end this leg of your journey.

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.

Sculptureum - Gardens and Galleries Experience

This 90-minute self-guided experience host 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.

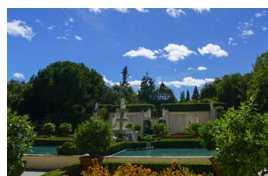
Your accommodation: Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth

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



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 its 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.

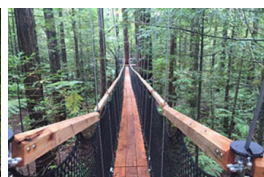
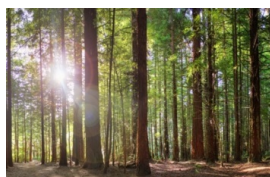
Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel Rotorua

Millennium Hotel is Rotorua's largest 4-star deluxe hotel. Perfectly situated in the heart of the city overlooking Lake Rotorua. Five levels of accommodation offer guests a wide variety of scenic views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Redwoods Treewalk

Redwoods Treewalk is Rotorua's newest Eco-Tourism attraction. Using ecologically friendly engineering, the Treewalk is suspended from 100-year-old majestic redwoods. Featuring a series of suspension bridges and living decks, elevated from 6-metres to 12-metres at its highest point.

Designed for use without harnesses or protective gear, it is suitable for all ages. The only pre-requisite is that all users must be able to walk the entire 553-metres.

Restorative Journey Package with Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa

Indulge your senses in a Restorative Journey (Wai Whakaora), a thoughtfully designed therapeutic experience inspired by the practices and culture of Ngāti Whakaue. Embrace the healing power of the natural environment as your senses awaken through a series of hot and cold therapies. Your journey begins beneath a cascading waterfall, cleansing your body and mind. Transition to Te Ahi Tupua, where a sequence of hot and cold immersions invigorates and rejuvenates. Relax in the soothing waters of the Geothermal Pool, sourced from the renowned Rachel Spring. Follow this with a refreshing cold plunge, easing muscle tension and reducing inflammation. Conclude your experience in the Kohu Wai Arik steam room, where heated stones create a serene space for reflection and relaxation, leaving you revitalized and restored.

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.

Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel Rotorua

Millennium Hotel is Rotorua's largest 4-star deluxe hotel. Perfectly situated in the heart of the city overlooking Lake Rotorua. Five levels of accommodation offer guests a wide variety of scenic views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Mt Tarawera Volcanic Crater Half Day Experience with Kaitiaki Adventures

Experience the unique landscape and history of Mt Tarawera. Infamous for its eruption on June 10th, 1886, Mt Tarawera created the world's youngest geothermal valley of Waimangu, at the same time destroying the legendary Pink and White Terraces.

This fully guided hiking experience encompasses the unique landscape and history of the area and requires a moderate level of fitness. Each journey begins with an off road 4x4 experience through native New Zealand bush, transporting you to the crater's edge. With spectacular scenic vistas and 360 panoramic views this experience is ideal for all ages and includes an optional run into the heart of the volcanic crater. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#)

Kohutapu Lodge & Whirinaki Forest Footsteps Overnight Combo

Immerse yourself in the heart of New Zealand's rich Māori heritage with an afternoon guided tour of tribal lands. Highlights include a visit to the hidden Māori Rock Carvings, the awe-inspiring Sacred Mountain, and a picturesque waterfall. Engage in interactive cultural activities that bring local traditions to life. After your adventure, return to the welcoming Kohutapu Lodge for a delicious dinner and rest in comfort. Start the next day with a continental breakfast before setting off on a half-day guided cultural rainforest walking tour, where you'll discover the natural beauty and sacred stories of this pristine environment.

Your accommodation: Kohutapu Lodge

Simple and budget-friendly, the lodge offers a range of cabin rooms and standalone cabins, ideal for families, couples, tourists, hunters, anglers, mountain bikers, and students. Each lodge cabin can host 4 to 6 guests, featuring single or double bunk beds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 10



Rotorua to Paraparaumu

The drive from Rotorua to Paraparaumu takes you via the township of Taupo and New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo, which is actually a gigantic volcanic caldera formed during one of the world's largest ever eruptions. Just north of Taupo are the Huka Falls and a short detour to view is recommended. For an even closer view you can ride the thrilling Huka Jet. Also nearby is Craters of the Moon a geothermal reserve with well formed walking tracks around its many boiling pools and steaming vents.

Through Tongariro and onto the central plateau and the high country Rangipo Desert. Skirting Tongariro National Park, one of New Zealand's three world heritage sites and clouds permitting you can see the 2,500 metre peak of the active volcano Mt. Ruapehu. You might recognise the symmetrical shape of Mt. Ngauruhoe as this was used as the scenery of Mt. Doom in the Lord of the Rings Trilogy. A little further the military town of Waikaremu also hosts the Army Museum, an incredible collection of New Zealand's military history and a memorial to its servicemen. Heading south you pass through the rural towns of Taihape, Mangaweka and Bulls before arriving on the Kapiti Coast and the coastal seaside town of Paraparaumu. Plan to take most of the day for this drive.

Explore Paraparaumu

As the main town on the Kapiti Coast, Paraparaumu has plenty of everything for travellers. The shopping centre has more than 50 stores, as well as banks, supermarkets, and cinemas. North of the town is a farm park where you'll find farm shows and gourmet food producers (cheese, olives, honey, ice cream, and other treats), while Paraparaumu Beach is the launching spot for trips to Kapiti Island, a nature reserve hosting some of New Zealand's most endangered birds. Experience scenic flights and glider rides, and if you love old vehicles, the local car museum has one of the largest collections in Australasia.

Your accommodation: Greenmantle Estate

This spacious and rambling two storied lodge is set amid established gardens which have been lovingly tended for generations. Tuis, wood-pigeons and fantails abound in season. Beautifully appointed throughout with private suites that will envelope you in luxury.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



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 Waiohau 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: Greenmantle Estate

This spacious and rambling two storied lodge is set amid established gardens which have been lovingly tended for generations. Tuis, wood-pigeons and fantails abound in season. Beautifully appointed throughout with private suites that will envelope you in luxury.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 12



Paraparaumu to Wellington

Continue south along Kapiti Coast. The coastal seaside towns of Paekakariki and Plimmerton are also worth a short detour before arriving into the capital city of Wellington. Wellington City is New Zealand's capital. It sits on a wonderful deep natural harbour and is surrounded by bush clad hills. The city centre itself is quite compact (only around 1 square kilometre) and so exploring on foot is relatively easy. From your city centre accommodation you can easily stroll the cafes and restaurants around Courtenay Place or visit New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa, which is also close by.

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.

Your accommodation: Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay

Located on Wellington's premier Oriental Parade, overlooking the stunning Wellington Harbour, Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay is the perfect base to explore the city. Just 10 minutes away are the city's shopping and entertainment centre. Te Papa Museum, Live Theatre in Courtney Place, and many of the city's finest restaurants and bars are also close by.

Meals included: Breakfast



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's 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 to Kaikoura

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 breathtaking seaside town teeming with marine life and natural beauty. As you wander through this coastal paradise, you'll be enveloped by the fresh sea breeze and the sounds of the ocean. Begin your adventure by observing the lively fur seal colony at the tip of the peninsula. For an unforgettable experience, board a boat to go whale watching and marvel at the majestic whales that call these waters home year-round. If you're feeling adventurous, take the plunge and swim with the playful dusky dolphins in their natural habitat. For bird enthusiasts, Kaikōura offers the chance to get up close with the native albatross, an awe-inspiring sight. 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 watch seabirds soaring above. Be sure to keep a respectful distance from the sleeping sea lions you might encounter along the way. Ohau Point is another highlight, where you can watch fur seals frolic in their natural environment. To delve into Kaikōura's fascinating history, visit Fyffe House. This historic whaler's cottage offers a glimpse into the town's whaling past and its evolution over the years. No trip to Kaikōura is complete without sampling the local seafood. Renowned for having some of the best fish and chips in the country, Kaikōura's eateries serve fresh catches straight from the morning's haul, ensuring a delicious and authentic dining experience. If you need a break from the action, unwind at Lavendyl Lavender Farm. Stroll through the fragrant lavender fields, relax in the serene atmosphere, and browse the gift shop for a variety of lavender products. Kaikōura seamlessly blends adventure, history, and relaxation, making it a perfect destination for travellers seeking a unique and enriching experience.

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, Lunch



Day 14



Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura

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

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



Kaikoura to Punakaiki via the Lewis Pass

The drive from Kaikoura follows the spectacular coastline before heading inland and through North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley. You are also introduced to the South Island's most numerous inhabitant, the sheep, as you head inland towards Hanmer Springs and its famous thermal hot pools. The alpine village of Hanmer Springs has been a favourite holiday destination for New Zealanders for many years. The alpine environment, with its rivers and mountains, makes it appealing year-round. Gentle pursuits include forest walks, thermal pools, massage therapy, health treatments and golf as well as pure relaxation in the alpine atmosphere. 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. Maruia Springs has been attracting travellers for years, and the natural hot springs are now located within an authentic Japanese-themed resort. Reefton sprang to life in the 1870s 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. Continuing onto Greymouth and then a short drive along the wild west coast to Punakaiki. Punakaiki is most famous for the Pancake Rocks and Blowholes. Visitors are often less aware of the many other great experiences available. Located in the heart of the Paparoa National Park, the area offers guided beach, forest and mountain walks, canoeing, wildlife, horse trekking, surfing, gemstone hunting, caving and climbing, heritage sites. There are taverns, cafes and restaurants, and a great range of accommodation. The area also boasts a vibrant arts and crafts community and a cooperative gallery.

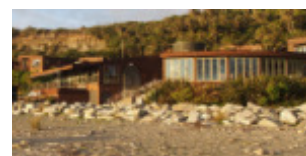
Paparoa Experience

Uncover a hidden world at Paparoa: A Hidden World Awaits. Discover the dramatic landscapes of Paparoa National Park and the rich history of Ngāti Waewae, the local Māori tribe. Learn the secrets of Te Tai Poutini (the West Coast) through the tale of Tamaahua, the creation of pounamu (greenstone), and the fascinating plants and animals of the region. Explore incredible limestone caves and feel the power of the Pancake Rocks blowhole.

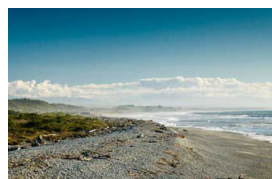
Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki

Scenic Hotel Punakaiki is a modern, award-winning hotel complex, architecturally designed to harmonious with the local environment. Nestled in the foothills of Paparoa National Park the resort has spectacular views of the Wild West Coast beaches while all rooms have rainforest and/or ocean views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 16



Punakaiki to Franz Josef Glacier

The drive South on State Highway 6 takes you through many West Coast towns. The first is Greymouth, the commercial centre for the West Coast. Just south of the town is Shantytown a replica gold rush town with lots of great displays from yesteryear.

The next town is Hokitika and this is a great place to explore the craft and gift stores. The Jade or Greenstone on offer in Hokitika is probably some of the best you will see in the country. The Hokitika Gorge, off the beaten track and inland a little is a spectacular 50 minute detour. Turquoise waters flowing through a narrow gorge. A great short walk will deliver you to this piece of paradise.

Ross is the site of an old gold mining town and some of the old buildings and workings remain. In fact Ross is still home to one of the few working gold mines left in New Zealand and the local information centre offers you the chance to pan for gold.

Continuing south Hari Hari is the township that Guy Menzies decided to land in (or rather crash land) as he became the first person to fly solo across the Tasman.

Whataroa, a small township on the main road is where you would head off to see one of the worlds rarest birds. The entire population (somewhere between 150 and 200 birds) of the New Zealand white heron or kotuku nest at the Waitangi Roto Nature Reserve and guided tours from October to March will take you there.

Arriving in to the Glacier region you catch your first glimpse of Franz Josef Glacier from a few kilometres out as it flows from the Southern Alps. Franz Josef township is a lively place with a great atmosphere, plenty of choice to dine out and some wonderful activities to enjoy.

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.

Franz Josef

Franz Josef, named after both the local village and the nearby glacier, holds special significance in Māori culture as "Ko Roimata o Hine Hukatere" – The Tears of the Ice Maiden. This rare glacier is one of only three in the world that descends from alpine heights into a temperate rainforest, almost reaching sea level. New Zealand is home to two of these unique glaciers, Franz Josef and Fox Glacier, both highly accessible and popular with visitors. The best ways to experience the glacier are through scenic flights or, for the adventurous, a heli-hike. You can also enjoy glacier views with a short drive from the village and walking tracks. Beyond the glacier, Franz Josef offers a wealth of adventure activities and beautiful forest and alpine walks, making it a must-visit destination.

Your accommodation: Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier

Only a breath away from the Franz Josef Glacier, Scenic Hotel is located in the heart of Franz Josef Village. Here you will find all of the amenities you would expect, as well as being close to the shops, restaurants and activities on offer in the beautiful Westland region.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 17



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. Paringa Salmon Farm is worth a stop to stretch your legs, feed the fish, and stop for lunch and refreshments. 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.

Wānaka

Nestled on the shores of one of New Zealand's largest lakes and framed by the stunning Southern Alps. Wānaka is an alpine village that perfectly blends adventure, breathtaking scenery, and a laid-back vibe. In winter, Wānaka transforms into a bustling hub as snow sports enthusiasts flock to its renowned ski fields, Treble Cone and Cardrona, as well as cross-country at Snow Farm. As the gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park, it offers endless opportunities for hikers, with trails winding through remote wilderness, majestic peaks, and serene river valleys. Closer to town, you'll find a network of scenic walking tracks, such as the popular Mount Iron Track, and from the lakefront, it is a short walk to "That Wanaka Tree". For thrill-seekers, Wānaka is an adrenaline playground, offering skydiving, paragliding, downhill biking, rock climbing, and jet boating.

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.

Your accommodation: Edgewater Wanaka

Edgewater is Wanaka's leading hotel located right on the edge of Lake Wanaka. A short stroll to the town centres shops, cafes and restaurants and close to many walking trails the resort is ideal to explore this wonderful Alpine setting.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 18



Wanaka to Te Anau

From Wanaka you cross the Crown Range via the highest sealed road in the country. As the road descends toward Queenstown you can enjoy spectacular views of the Wakatipu basin and the Remarkables mountain range.

Lake Wakatipu guides you south towards Te Anau and Fiordland National Park and at the southern end of the lake tiny Kingston Township is home to a classic steam train, The Kingston Flyer. The rolling farmland of Southland accompanies you as you pass through Garston, Athol and Five Rivers before turning west towards Mossburn, the deer capital of New Zealand.

You soon arrive into Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park.

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: Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas

The Te Anau Hotel and Villas offers a range of accommodation from hotel rooms and suites to villas. Ideally located on the lake front this hotel is just a few minutes stroll from the shops, cafes and many activities Te Anau has to offer.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 19



Te Anau to Milford Sound, returning to Te Anau

The magnificent Milford Road leading to Milford Sound offers some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery in the country. Countless photo opportunities mean this drive should not be rushed. From crystal clear lakes and towering mountains to lush glacier-formed meadows, this area is abundant with picture-perfect scenes. Continue on through the Homer Tunnel, an engineering marvel at 1219 meters long. Arriving in the village of Milford, you will be greeted with an amazing view of Mitre Peak. A day cruise into the heart of the sound is not to be missed.

You'll learn about how this magnificent area was formed and experience the wonder of the falls that line the Fjord before back-tracking the way you came.

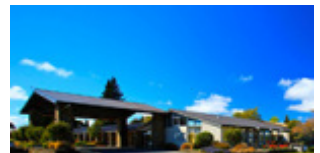
Milford Sound Cruise with Real NZ - Lunch Included

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. Informative, participative and relaxed, this is the perfect way to experience Milford Sound to the fullest.

Your accommodation: Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas

The Te Anau Hotel and Villas offers a range of accommodation from hotel rooms and suites to villas. Ideally located on the lake front this hotel is just a few minutes stroll from the shops, cafes and many activities Te Anau has to offer.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 20



Te Anau to Bluff

Wave goodbye to the beautiful town of Te Anau, as you continue South to Invercargill. Pass through some wonderful and often overlooked regions of Southland, before arriving into the city of Invercargill. This city is a gateway to the wilderness areas including Stewart Island, beautiful parks like Queens Park and Waituna Lagoon. Invercargill is also home to interesting museums such as the Bill Richardson Transport World, showcasing a vast collection of vintage automobiles and the E.Hayes & Sons iconic hardware store, for the chance to view 'The World's Fastest Indian'. After visiting Invercargill, make your way onto the Bluff Highway to one of the oldest European settlements in New Zealand, Bluff. This seaside town is home to the world renowned Bluff Oysters. While visiting Bluff, stop by the Bluff signpost and Bluff Hill for amazing views of the ocean.

Stewart Island Ferry Bluff to Stewart Island Return

Stewart Island is perfect for a day excursion or an extended stay. Experience Foveaux Strait in comfort and style on board The Stewart island Experience express catamarans. During the one-hour crossing between Bluff and Stewart Island keep a look out for wildlife, including seals, dolphins and sea birds. Ferry schedules allow for almost a full day to explore Stewart Islands wonderful scenery and nature.

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 21



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 22



Stewart Island Ferry to Bluff with RealNZ

Return to the mainland. During the one-hour crossing keep a look out for wildlife, including seals, dolphins and sea birds.

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.

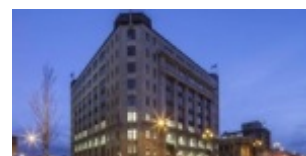
Dunedin

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.

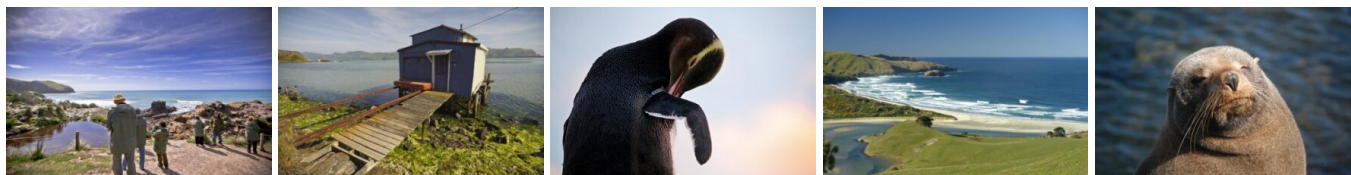
Your accommodation: Distinction Dunedin Hotel

Distinction Dunedin Hotel occupies the grand Chief Post Office built in the 1930's. This art deco inspired building has recently been transformed into a 4 star hotel with elegant décor, set in the heart of the city.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 23



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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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

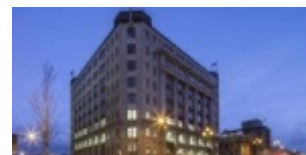
Learn about the endangered Yellow Eyed Penguin when you visit The Opera - Otago Peninsula Eco Restoration Alliance, a private conservation reserve dedicated to ensuring the survival of this unique species. The project is entirely funded by guided tours which allow the conservation team to engage in habitat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

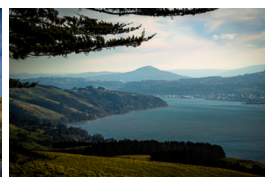
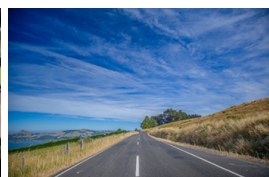
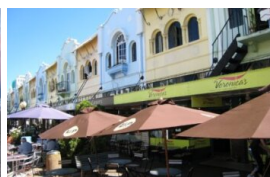
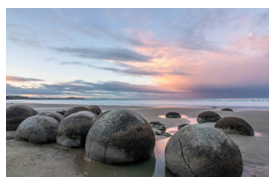
Your accommodation: Distinction Dunedin Hotel

Distinction Dunedin Hotel occupies the grand Chief Post Office built in the 1930's. This art deco inspired building has recently been transformed into a 4 star hotel with elegant décor, set in the heart of the city.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 24



Dunedin to Christchurch

Heading north from Dunedin your first stop should be Moeraki to explore the famous and unique Moeraki Boulders strewn on the beach. The town of Oamaru is most famous for its buildings constructed with the unique locally quarried white stone. Explore the old quarter or if you don't mind a late arrival into Christchurch then stay longer to see the blue penguins come ashore at dusk. The port town of Timaru is next and then the vast Canterbury Plains. Crossing New Zealand's longest bridge at Rakaia you can view some great examples of the South Island's famous braided rivers. Arriving in Christchurch City puts you close to the airport and the International Antarctic Centre, a visit is highly recommended. Here you can get as close to experiencing life on the frozen continent without actually visiting plus see New Zealand's little blue penguins and ride in a Haaglund Tracked vehicle.

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 Lyttelton Harbour which hosts fantastic markets on Saturday mornings.

Your accommodation: Sudima Christchurch City

Sudima Christchurch City is a brand new 5-star boutique hotel, ideally located on Victoria Street. Amidst an array of cafes, restaurants and bars, stay only a martini olive pips' throw from beautiful Hagley Park and Christchurch's CBD. Experience the garden city in comfort and style.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 25



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.

Ōtautahi City Meander with Amiki Cultural Food Tours

Discover the cultural richness of Ōtautahi Christchurch on this 75-minute guided walk. Begin with a traditional Māori welcome and hear ancestral tales of creation and connection. Stroll along laneways and the river, learning how Māori heritage is reflected in the city's rebuild. From mahinga kai traditions and stories of settlers to modern art and architecture, this tour celebrates Christchurch's diverse history and vibrant future, offering a unique way to explore the city's past and present.

Your accommodation: Sudima Christchurch City

Sudima Christchurch City is a brand new 5-star boutique hotel, ideally located on Victoria Street. Amidst an array of cafes, restaurants and bars, stay only a martini olive pips' throw from beautiful Hagley Park and Christchurch's CBD. Experience the garden city in comfort and style.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 26



Farewell from Aotearoa-New Zealand

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

Return your rental car

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

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Nationwide Self Drive
Starts:	Auckland
Finishes:	Christchurch
Tour length:	26
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Auckland Harbour Bridge Climb
Includes	Rotorua Forest Canopy Tours
Includes	Huka Falls Jet Boat Tour
Includes	Twilight Odyssey Progressive Dinner and Winery Tour

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Sudima Auckland City
Day 2	Sudima Auckland City
Day 3	The Sands Hotel & Resort Hokianga
Day 4	The Sands Hotel & Resort Hokianga
Day 5	Copthorne Hotel and Resort Bay of Islands, Paihia
Day 6	Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth
Day 7	Millennium Hotel Rotorua
Day 8	Millennium Hotel Rotorua
Day 9	Kohutapu Lodge
Day 10	Greenmantle Estate
Day 11	Greenmantle Estate
Day 12	Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay
Day 13	Sudima Hotel Kaikōura
Day 14	Sudima Hotel Kaikōura
Day 15	Scenic Hotel Punakaiki
Day 16	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier
Day 17	Edgewater Wanaka
Day 18	Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas
Day 19	Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas
Day 20	Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant
Day 21	Church Hill Boutique Lodge & Restaurant
Day 22	Distinction Dunedin Hotel
Day 23	Distinction Dunedin Hotel
Day 24	Sudima Christchurch City
Day 25	Sudima Christchurch City