



Northbound Navigator

In just over 3 weeks, you'll experience an amazing diversity in scenery, landscape and geography as you journey from the alpine regions of the South Island to the sub-tropical Bay of Islands in the North Island. Along the way you have many two night stays allowing you the time to relax and soak up your surroundings which will vary from cosmopolitan cities to national parks and everything in between.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Auckland
Length: 23days / 22nights
Accommodation: Motels
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

Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees

Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)

Included activity: Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Included activity: Interislander Ferry Picton to Wellington

: 1 lunch

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

Includes: GPS navigation

Includes: Additional drivers

Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand

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

Included activity: Shared Transfer from the Railway Station to a City Hotel with Christchurch Touring Company

Included activity: Milford Sound Cruise and picnic lunch with RealNZ

Day 1



Private transfer Christchurch International Airport to your accommodation

On arrival, you will be met by a private driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

Welcome to Christchurch City

Christchurch New Zealand's garden city is steadily being transformed into a vibrant urban destination. Encompassing a large green belt, it is known for its wide tree lined avenues and lush gardens. A great way to explore the city or easy way to see the sights or ride the historic trams across town to the renowned botanic gardens and the unique cardboard Transitional Cathedral, that's right it is built of cardboard!

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Christchurch

Bella Vista Motel Christchurch offers a great range of comfortable modern units with excellent facilities. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the Christchurch CBD, shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 2



Collect your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Christchurch to Aoraki Mt Cook National Park

Today you'll drive through the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury plains. Catch your breath in Geraldine before continuing through Fairlie. Ascending Burkes pass you'll come to the picturesque lakeside town of Tekapo.

Follow the road and take in the view of Aoraki Mt Cook (New Zealand's tallest mountain) from the shores of Lake Pukaki, known for its glacier fed turquoise blue colour. Continue along the lake to your final destination Mt Cook Village.

Please note: There are no food shops at Mt Cook, and dinner options are limited to one restaurant. If you wish to self-cater, you must stock up before arriving in Mt Cook, or make dinner reservations in advance.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glacier Explorers Mt. Cook

Experience 500 year old icebergs up-close on the Mt Cook terminal lake. The Glacier Explorers tour is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and one of only three in the world! Very few glaciers terminate into lakes and even fewer of them are accessible. See towering ice cliffs and floating icebergs from the safety of a specially designed boat. These boats provide a safe way to view unseen and inaccessible areas of New Zealand's largest glacier The Tasman.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Big Sky Stargazing

Mt Cook is far from the city lights and therefore has some of the darkest skies in New Zealand, perfect for viewing the night sky! Their fully trained guides are delighted to show you the beautiful southern night sky using the naked eye, state of the art astronomy telescopes and binoculars at the outdoor viewing platform. If the weather is not favourable then there will be an indoor alternative featuring New Zealand's first full dome digital Planetarium, a high-definition video images on a suspended 9m wide x 4.5m high full dome. Unleash your imagination as you discover the night sky including the Southern Cross, seasonal ecliptic objects, planets, star clusters, moons, distant galaxies and even our very own galaxy, the spectacular Milky Way!

Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel is located in the centre of Mt. Cook village. The self-contained units are spacious and all are surrounded by alpine mountain views.



Day 3



Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Dunedin

Today you'll leave Aoraki Mt Cook National Park and travel past Twizel, one of the locations for the Lord of the Rings films. Go through Omarama, the gliding capital of New Zealand, be sure to stop at The Wrinkly Ram, a quirky local cafe and souvenir store. Driving through the Waitaki Valley follow the hydro power generating system towards the east coast. Stretch your legs in Oamaru, known for its white stone buildings constructed with the local Oamaru Stone. If you were a little late off the mark this morning you may get the chance to see the blue penguins come ashore at dusk.

Continue south down the coast to Moeraki, and take a detour towards the beach to see the Moeraki Boulders, a unique geological feature well worth a look. As you arrive in Dunedin, take in the city's Edwardian and Scottish heritage reflected in the buildings around the city centre The Octagon.

Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 4



Explore Dunedin and the Otago Peninsula

Known as the Edinburgh of the South, Dunedin City has a heavy Scottish influence. Surrounded by rugged coastal plains and windswept beaches it's home to an eclectic mix of historical and modern architecture as well as industrial technology. Renowned for its Flemish Baroque-inspired 'gingerbread house', Railway Station, this university town is bustling with life. Head to the Saturday farmers market held in the aforementioned railway grounds for a taste of organic produce, handmade crepes and local honey. Explore the many cafes and wine bars in The Octagon, then continue on a self-guided walking tour of the internationally acclaimed Street Art dotted around the city. Drive to the coast and watch the freighters passing in the distance while you sunbathe, or hire a mountain bike and test your legs on one of the many trails available in the area. For a more immersive historical experience, follow the coast to New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle. On your way back be sure to head to the Otago Peninsula to see the largest mainland Albatross colony in the world.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Elm Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Tour Including Wildlife Cruise

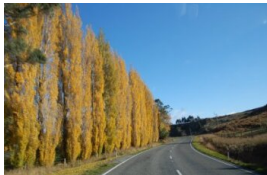
A small-group bus tour from Dunedin. Join a local guide for a journey across the Otago Peninsula. Travel over the high road with postcard views of the harbour and coast. You'll travel past quaint communities and rural farms. Spot wading birds as your mini-bus explores around the inlets and the wetland eco-systems. Your tour will visit a remote Otago Peninsula beach. A short walk from the mini-bus will provide dramatic views of rugged coastal cliffs, offshore islands and perhaps some huge sea lions. The trip continues to Wellers Rock Wharf, for a Monarch Wildlife Cruise. You'll travel out of the harbour, around Taiaroa Head, and out to sea. Watch royal albatross glide across the water and return to their breeding colony. Beneath a historic lighthouse is a colony of playful fur seals. You'll spot other rare seabirds and maybe blue penguins or other marine mammals. You are also welcome to bring a pre-packed meal on tour with you. Snacks and drinks can be purchased whilst aboard the MV Monarch. We recommend having a good-sized lunch before the tour departs Dunedin. The final stop is at a Yellow-eyed Penguin conservation reserve. Visit the on-site rehab centre before a tour of the reserve. You'll take trails through native bushland, walking through tunnels and trenches to different viewing hides scattered around the reserve. Watch as the world's rarest penguin returns ashore and interacts around their nesting sites. The tour ends with a relaxed drive, following the harbour, back to Dunedin.

Your accommodation: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 5



Dunedin to Te Anau

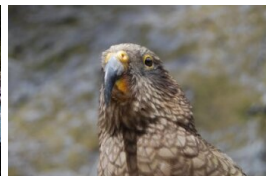
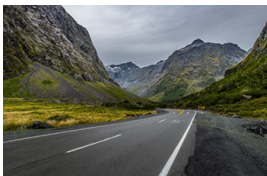
The drive to Te Anau takes you through classic Southland farming scenery. Head off-the-beaten-track today and follow the coastline instead of the inland route. Go through The Catlins area and be sure to take a detour to Kaka Point to view its majestic cliffs and pounding surf. Continue through Invercargill to Riverton and Colac Bay, and then head north to Manapouri. From here you can embark on a day or overnight cruise to the remote Doubtful Sound, renowned for its natural beauty. Just a short way further will bring you to your lakeside destination of Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.



Day 6



Te Anau to Milford Sound and return to Te Anau

The road to Milford Sound offers some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery in the country. From crystal clear lakes and towering mountains to lush glacier formed meadows, this area is dramatic and unyielding. Stretch your legs on the Chasm Walk, a short stroll through native beech forest to see several powerful waterfalls. Continue on through the Homer Tunnel, an engineering marvel at 1219 metres long. Arriving into 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 Fiord before back-tracking the way you came.

Please note: Make sure to allow 2.5hrs to Milford Sound, this takes into account the current road works on the Milford Road.

Milford Sound Cruise with RealNZ

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: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self contained motel units less than one minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Close to shops, cafes and restaurants.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 7



Te Anau to Queenstown

Today you'll cross vast tussock lands on your way to Queenstown. Pass through Mossburn, the deer capital of the nation. Continue on through the Southland countryside where the road begins to hug the lake edge and the Remarkables mountain range towers over your approach into the adventure capital of New Zealand.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TSS Earnslaw cruise to Walter Peak including gourmet BBQ dinner and a farm tour

Enjoy a quintessential Kiwi experience, a delicious gourmet BBQ buffet meal and a farm demonstration in a stunning lakeside setting. Take in the stunning views of Lake Wakatipu and its surroundings as you cruise across the lake to the historic Walter Peak high country farm aboard the TSS Earnslaw Steamship.

Enjoy the ambience of the heart of the stately homestead while your Colonel's Homestead Restaurant chef prepares a gourmet BBQ dinner. Your seasonal menu includes an extensive selection of local New Zealand produce, including succulent meats and a selection of delicious vegetables and salads. Complete your meal with your choice of delicious desserts, New Zealand cheeses, tea and coffee.

After dinner, watch the farm dogs in action with a sheep-herding demonstration and say hello to the other farm animals. Finally, cruise home under the southern stars and enjoy the fresh night air as the lights of Queenstown draw ever closer.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Queenstown

Bella Vista Motel Queenstown is an easy 3-minute walk to Queenstown centre. Offering mountain views and great facilities for visitors to the alpine resort town.



Day 8



Explore Queenstown

Well-known as New Zealand's 'adventure capital', Queenstown is home to a range of adventures, from the world's first and most famous bungy jumps to jet boat thrills, white-water rafting, and skydiving. However, Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of beautiful Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by a plethora of historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Take a stroll through the beautiful lakefront parks and gardens, browse through market stalls on weekends, dine in wonderful al-fresco restaurants, or ride on the 100-year-old historic Steamship - TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Take the Queenstown Gondola up to Bob's Peak and soak up the panoramic views of the magnificent lake and mountain ranges. And after all of that, if you do want the adrenaline rush, Queenstown is known for taking your pick from the Shotover Jet, Canyon Swing, Zipline, Luge, or Heli-ski.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Dart River Wilderness Jet

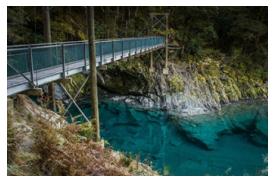
Journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mt Aspiring National Park, where myth, heritage and fantasy come to life. As one of Queenstown's most exhilarating activities, the Wilderness Jet adventures on a spectacular journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mount Aspiring National Park.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Queenstown

Bella Vista Motel Queenstown is an easy 3-minute walk to Queenstown centre. Offering mountain views and great facilities for visitors to the alpine resort town.



Day 9



Queenstown to Franz Josef Glacier via Wanaka

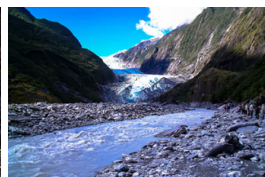
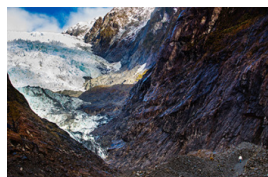
From Queenstown you'll cross the Crown Range, the highest sealed road in New Zealand to arrive in the Alpine town of Wanaka, gateway to Mt Aspiring National Park. Skirting the shores of both Lake Wanaka and Hawea, you will enter the small town of Makarora. Stop at Blue Pools for a 1-hour return walk through the native beech forest to a glacier-fed swimming hole. Continue on through the remote seaside settlement of Haast before heading up the wild West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beaches occasionally. Paringa Salmon Farm is worth a stop to stretch your legs, feed the fish, and stop for lunch and refreshments. Keep heading North and be sure to enjoy the view of the ever-changing towering snowcapped Southern Alps Mountain Range. Fox Glacier welcomes you first, then comes your destination for the night Franz Josef township.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village and offers affordable and stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 10



Explore Franz Josef

Franz Josef is a small but lively town in the heart of the West Coast, known for its 12 km long glacier. Surrounded by lush rainforest-clad mountains the township has a vibrant and bustling atmosphere. To see the ice from a viewpoint you can walk along the valley floor to the viewpoint below the terminal face. However, to go on the glacier itself you must take a licensed helicopter tour.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

Take a spectacular scenic flight over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers. Land at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys. Should weather not be suitable to take this flight you are able to transfer your booking onto a similar tour on any of the Helicopter Line's operations in Queenstown or Mt Cook.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village and offers affordable and stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 11



Franz Josef to Greymouth Train Station

Today head north along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild coast beach occasionally. Whataroa is the next town where you can see one of the world's rarest birds, 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.

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 center offers you the chance to pan for gold.

Hokitika is a great place to explore craft and gift stores and head to the coast and take in the endless sea views. The Jade or Greenstone on offer in Hokitika is probably some of the best you will see in the country. The Hokitika Gorge is located 45 minutes inland and offers turquoise waters flowing through a narrow gorge. A great short walk will deliver you to this piece of paradise.

Continue on to Greymouth, the largest town on the West Coast and the starting point for the next leg of your journey the TranzAlpine Scenic Train. Drop your rental car at the Greymouth Train Station depot located at the train station building before boarding your train to Christchurch.

TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Greymouth to Christchurch

Considered one of the world's great train journeys, the TranzAlpine Scenic Train takes you from Greymouth to Christchurch. You'll travel across the South Island from the west to the east coast through Arthur's Pass National Park. From the comfort of your carriage see lush beech forest, deep river valleys and the spectacular peaks of the Southern Alps. Descend to the windswept Canterbury Plains before arriving in the city of Christchurch.

Shared Transfer from the Railway Station to a City Hotel with Christchurch Touring

On arrival at the Christchurch railway station, you will be met by a driver and transferred to your Christchurch accommodation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - TranzAlpine Scenic Plus Addon - KiwiRail

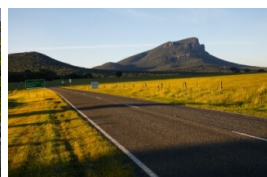
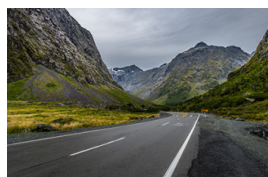
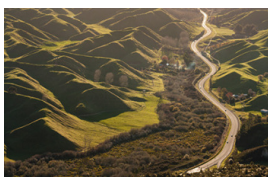
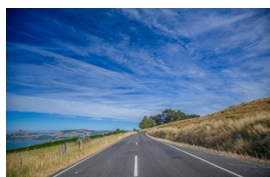
Feel like luxurious service, exclusive meals, inclusive drinks and priority check in and boarding? The Scenic Plus add-on option is for you. Enjoy personal service with panoramic windows, spacious carriages and comfortable seating. The exclusive open-air viewing carriage is available if you feel like capturing the ultimate photo or simply wish to experience the great outdoors whilst travelling through the Southern Alps. Your food is prepared exclusively in a kitchen carriage, with paired drinks and a paddock to plate regionally inspired food menu all your senses will be fully engaged on this journey.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Christchurch

Bella Vista Motel Christchurch offers a great range of comfortable modern units with excellent facilities. Enjoy the convenience of being located in close proximity to the Christchurch CBD, shops, entertainment and other activities.



Day 12



Collect your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Christchurch to Kaikoura

The drive north from Christchurch to Kaikoura takes you through the rolling hills of North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley. Allow time for a detour and visit Hanmer Springs for a dip in the mineral hot pools. Continue on and cross the Hawkswood Range before descending to the spectacular Kaikoura coastline - where the road hugs the ocean for the last leg of the drive.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Whale Watch Kaikoura

Experience New Zealand's only marine based whale watching company. Whale Watch Kaikoura offer a once-in-a-lifetime, up close encounter with the giant Sperm Whale. You are also likely to encounter New Zealand fur seals, dusky 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 make an appearance.

Cruise in style on modern catamarans, specifically designed for whale watching, featuring large passenger cabins and outside viewing decks. Passenger numbers for each tour are kept below the vessel carrying capacity to ensure your tour experience remains a personal one.

Your accommodation: The White Morph, Kaikoura

Set on the Esplanade in Kaikōura, The White Morph enjoys commanding views of the ocean and mountains. Just a 10-minute walk into town, The White Morph has been beautifully placed so that you can take in the spectacular scenery of Kaikoura while enjoying the variety of attractions on offer.



Day 13



Kaikoura to Abel Tasman National Park

Heading north from Kaikoura, the road hugs the shore for approximately 50 kilometres and offers many opportunities to view the native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. One of the best seal watching locations is Ohau Point (25km north of Kaikoura), where you can observe the adults on the shoreline and the pups frolicking in the waterfall, just a short walk from the road (signposted). As you drive you will have turquoise waters of the South Pacific Ocean to your east and to the west the towering Kaikoura Ranges. Crossing the dry hills of the Marlborough ranges you head towards New Zealand's largest wine producing region. The vineyards surrounding Blenheim are a great place to stop for a wine tasting or lunch at one of the many fine restaurants, including the award winning Herzog Winery and Restaurant. A short drive from Blenheim you reach the busy port town of Picton, and it's here that the Interislander ferries arrive and depart. The town centre is quite small with plenty of shops and cafes and the waterfront area is a very pleasant place to spend time watching the activity of the ships. The Edwin Fox Maritime Centre on the wharf is worth a visit with the star attraction being the vessel the Edwin Fox, reputedly the 9th oldest ship in the world. It's also the starting point for the famous Queen Charlotte Walk. Queen Charlotte Drive travels the Marlborough Sounds coastline between Picton and Havelock. Magnificent views of the sounds can be had from many vantage points so allow plenty of time to enjoy the scenery. The highway between Nelson and Picton also crosses the Pelorus River and just at this junction is the famous and historic Pelorus Bridge. From here there are a number of forest walks with the most popular the 30 minute loop through beech, rimu and totara forest to the swing-bridge. Crossing the Bryant Range you arrive onto Tasman Bay and the city of Nelson. Motueka is a further 45 minutes along the bay and from there it's just a short drive to Kaiteriteri and Marahau, all ideal spots from which to explore the beautiful Abel Tasman National Park.

Your accommodation: Ocean View Chalets

The Ocean View Chalets are situated on a 50-acre farmlet, slightly elevated and nestled along the bush line with panoramic sea views. Great access the National Park and close to the friendly Marahau village.



Day 14



Abel Tasman National Park

Abel Tasman National Park, known for its coastal hiking track has an abundance of golden beaches, inlets and private lagoons. The park has a mild climate and is a special place to visit at any time of the year. Why not enjoy a scenic cruise through the Sounds or take a kayaking tour around its many sheltered bays? Relax to the melodious birdsong and get up close to some of the parks many animal residents, including native bats, geckos, birds and marine mammals fur seals and dolphins.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Beaches, Bays and Seals Guided Sea Kayaking Trip Including Picnic Lunch

Combining the best of the Abel Tasman, this trip showcases incredible beaches, coastal walks and native wildlife. First you'll meet your guide and join the 9.30 am Vista Cruise along the magnificent coastline to Torrent Bay. You'll then arrive at Torrent Bay Lodge and complete a full training session and safety briefing before moving on to the water in kayaks to discover beautiful beaches, tidal estuaries and rivers. Stop for a picnic lunch in a sheltered cove and take some time to swim, explore or sunbathe on the sand. On your return trip, if the winds are favourable, sails will be hoisted and you'll sail back via Pinnacle Island to view the seal colony there - if you're lucky, you may even see some resident blue penguins at the same time. Arriving back at Torrent Bay Lodge, freshen up with a hot shower and re-join the vista cruise back to Kaiteriteri, arriving at 4.10 pm.

During the summer there is the option to enjoy an unguided two hour coastal bush walk after the kayaking trip. Walk around the picturesque Torrent Bay Lagoon via Cleopatra's Pool to the anchorage where you will re-join the boat back to Kaiteriteri.

Your accommodation: Ocean View Chalets

The Ocean View Chalets are situated on a 50-acre farmlet, slightly elevated and nestled along the bush line with panoramic sea views. Great access the National Park and close to the friendly Marahau village.



Day 15



Marahau to Picton

The drive takes you through the city of Nelson and along the coast of Tasman Bay towards the Bryant Range. The highway between Nelson and Picton also crosses the Pelorus River and just at this junction is the famous and historic Pelorus Bridge. From here there are a number of forest walks with the most popular the 30 minute loop through beech, rimu and totara forest to the swing-bridge.

Starting in the town of Havelock the Queen Charlotte Drive travels the Marlborough Sounds coastline towards the port town of Picton.

Magnificent views of the sounds can be had from many vantage points so allow plenty of time to enjoy the scenery. If you can spare the time take the narrow windy road to Portage along Mahau Sound and Kenepuru Sound with their bush clad hillsides and secluded sandy coves.

Arrive in the busy port town of Picton, and it's here that the Interislander ferries arrive and depart. The small town centre has plenty of shops and cafes and the waterfront area is a very pleasant place to spend a few hours watching the activity of the ships. The Edwin Fox Maritime Centre on the wharf is worth a visit with the star attraction being the vessel the Edwin Fox, reputedly the 9th oldest ship in the world.

Interislander Ferry Picton to Wellington

The 92 km journey between Picton and Wellington takes around 3 hours and has been described as 'one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world'. Around one hour of the cruise takes you through the Marlborough Sounds. This region of bush covered mountains, small islands, crystal clear waters and secluded bays offer remarkable photographic opportunities.

From the Cook Strait, spectacular views of the Kaikoura Ranges on the South Island can be enjoyed and often dolphins and sea birds are seen. After crossing the strait you approach Wellington Harbour and pass many interesting points such as Pencarrow Head on top of which is New Zealand's oldest lighthouse (1859). Red Rocks is home to a seal colony and Oterangi Bay is the site which recorded the country's highest ever wind speed of 268 kph (167 mph).

Collect your rental car

This tour can be priced with any of the rental cars available in our fantastic range, from economy hatchbacks to prestige saloons and SUV's.

Your accommodation: Travelodge Wellington

Travelodge Wellington is superbly positioned for you to experience everything the capital has to offer. Situated in the city centre, the hotel is just a short stroll to Lambton Quay, Wellington's premier shopping precinct and the beautiful harbour. Local attractions are a stone's throw away including Pimmar Steps, Te Papa Museum, TSB Bank Arena and Westpac Stadium.



Day 16



Wellington City

Wellington home to New Zealand's centre of government has a largely cosmopolitan feel. Often referred to as 'mini Melbourne', this (self-described) 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 at Lambton Quay - 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, and be sure to stop in at Martinborough Wines or Ata Rangi Martinborough. 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 - Lord Of The Rings Half Day Tour - Wellington

With some of the best Lord of the Rings tours Wellington has to offer, you will not be disappointed on this tour. You'll visit local filming locations, view a short documentary showing the filmmaking exploits of Peter Jackson and his remarkable team and be guided through the sights and sounds of the Weta Workshop in Miramar. This is followed by a fascinating 'Window into the workshop' exhibition, showing film props and weaponry, with the artists themselves describing how the artefacts were created.

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 tour begins with an interactive exhibition before you walk through the gates of Zealandia predator-exclusion fence into the sanctuary. Your guide will then lead you on a torch-light walk through the native New Zealand bush. Possible sights include Kiwi foraging on the forest floor, tuatara hunting for food, glowworms shining, tiny Maud Island frogs in their enclosure, pateke (brown teal) ducks feeding at night and kaka (parrots) coming in to roost. Zealandia is one of the best places to see kiwi in the wild. Over 100 of these nocturnal birds live freely in their natural environment inside the safety of the sanctuary valley, so your chances of seeing one are high!

Your accommodation: Travelodge Wellington

Travelodge Wellington is superbly positioned for you to experience everything the capital has to offer. Situated in the city centre, the hotel is just a short stroll to Lambton Quay, Wellington's premier shopping precinct and the beautiful harbour. Local attractions are a stone's throw away including Pimmar Steps, Te Papa Museum, TSB Bank Arena and Westpac Stadium.



Day 17



Wellington to Rotorua

The drive from Wellington to Taupo takes you via the Kapiti Coast and the seaside towns of Plimmerton, Paekakariki and Paraparaumu are worth a short detour. Heading north you pass through the rural towns of Taihape, Mangaweka and Bulls before arriving onto the central plateau. A little further the military town of Waikouaiti is home to the National Army Museum, an incredible collection of New Zealand's military history and a memorial to its servicemen. Skirting Tongariro National Park, one of New Zealand's three world heritage sites, you can see the 2,500 metre peak of the volcanically active Mt. Ruapehu. You might also recognise the symmetrical shape of Mt. Ngauruhoe as this was used as the scenery of Mt. Doom in the Lord of the Rings Trilogy. The township of Taupo sits on the shores of New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo - a gigantic volcanic caldera formed during one of the world's largest ever eruptions. Just north of the town are the Huka Falls and a short detour to view is advised. The Huka Jet can get you much closer with a thrilling jet boat ride. Nearby Craters of the Moon is a geothermal reserve with great walking tracks around its many boiling pools and steaming vents. Continuing on to Rotorua you pass the volcanic valley, visit either Wai O Tapu or the Waimangu Valley for a closer look. Arriving into Rotorua the city's geothermal activity is evident with steam rising from the roadside and hills. Rotorua is considered the heart of New Zealand's Maori cultural and it's here you can learn of their history and traditions. The Ohinemutu Village is located on the site of the first Maori settlement in the area. One of the most popular introductions for many to the Maori culture is through an evening at Mitai Maori Village. Here you will gain an insight into the traditional Maori way of life through song, dance and entertainment. A dinner prepared in the traditional manner is served to finish the evening off.

Your accommodation: Silver Fern Suites & Spa

Silver Fern Suites & Spa is located just minutes from Rotorua's city centre and is close to popular thermal attractions, cafes, restaurants and golf courses. Suites have a private spa pool or double spa bath for you to unwind and relax.



Day 18



Explore Rotorua

Peppered with natural hot springs, boiling mud pools and steaming geysers, Rotorua sits within one of the world's most active volcanic regions. Geothermal landmarks aside, this city of sulphur has a rich indigenous history. Home to several prominent Maori tribes, a visit to one of the Maori Villages should be high on your agenda, as should an excursion to the Polynesian Spa for an invigorating soak in its natural mineral hot springs.

Spike your adrenaline at Velocity Valley Adventure Park on stomach-dropping attractions such as static skydiving, or a giant swing reaching 130 km per hour. Alternatively, head up the Rotorua Gondola for soaring lake views, and ride the luge at night for an extra thrill.

Fans of Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit should drive to nearby Matamata and experience the actual movie set 'Hobbiton'. Make the most of your time in Rotorua with an excursion through the Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland, one of the area's most colourful volcanic attractions.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Original Ziplining Experience with Rotorua Canopy Tours

Embark on a three hour adventure through native New Zealand forest. Journey through the beautiful forest canopy via an incredible network of trails, tree platforms, Ziplines and swing bridges. See breathtaking views of the woodland valleys and hills as you fly through tight openings in the trees. In between the thrill of the ziplines and suspended tree bridges, your guides will share their passion and knowledge for the forest and the conservation challenges to preserve it.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Te Pā Tū Evening Maori Cultural Experience

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland

Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland is a spectacular showcase of New Zealand's most colourful and unique geothermal elements sculpted by thousands of years of volcanic activity. You are introduced to a uniquely different natural landscape – the key to what you see lies below the surface – one of the most extensive geothermal systems in New Zealand, extending over 18-sq. km. Enjoy viewing unique volcanic features as you walk at your own pace along well-defined tracks. Relax in the first-class Visitor Centre, home to the Gift Shop and Café; facilities. Visit the Mud Pool, the largest in New Zealand, it was originally the site of a large mud volcano which was destroyed through erosion in the 1920s. See the history and beauty of the Lady Knox Geyser at 10:15 am every day. Lady Knox Geyser provides a unique opportunity to see an eruption to heights of 10 to 20 metres.

Your accommodation: Silver Fern Suites & Spa

Silver Fern Suites & Spa is located just minutes from Rotorua's city centre and is close to popular thermal attractions, cafes, restaurants and golf courses. Suites have a private spa pool or double spa bath for you to unwind and relax.



Day 19



Rotorua to Auckland

The drive from Rotorua to Auckland takes you through the heart of the Waikato and its rich agricultural land. New Zealand's longest river, the Waikato guides you through the art and craft stores of Tirau and the township of Cambridge. Continue on a little further to arrive in Auckland City, your destination for the night.

Your accommodation: Auckland City Hotel

The Auckland City Hotel is a peaceful sanctuary ideally located in the heart of Auckland's entertainment and business district. It is situated five-minute walk from the Sky Tower, Aotea Square, and the centre of town, Queen Street.



Day 20



Auckland to Paihia, Bay of Islands

The trip from Auckland to the Bay Of Islands takes around 3.5 hours but give yourself some leeway for stops and sightseeing. As you go through Puhoi, take in the bohemian atmosphere of this historical township. Stop for a breath of fresh salty air in Whangarei and take another break at Kawakawa, home to the world famous Hundertwasser toilets. Enjoy the native bush surrounds and marvel at the endless golden beaches as you arrive into central Bay Of The Islands, Paihia.

Your accommodation: Sea Spray Suites

Sea Spray Suites offers comfortable and relaxing accommodation close to Paihia's best activities and attractions. Directly across the road is the beautiful Te Ti Beach, exploring Paihia's beautiful waters and wildlife is only a short step away. If you are interested in experiencing New Zealand's heritage, The Waitangi Treaty House is only 1km away.



Day 21



Explore the Bay of Islands

Commonly known as the 'winterless north', New Zealand's Bay of Islands is made up of over 140 subtropical atolls. Renowned for its untouched beaches, abundant marine life and idyllic climate, this tropical paradise ticks all the boxes. Spend some time on a remote stretch of beach, or see the dolphins on an ocean safari. If diving is your thing, take the morning to descend the Rainbow Warrior - The Greenpeace flagship sunk by French saboteurs in 1985. Wander around Russell, a whaling port founded in 1843. Learn about our culture in historic Waitangi, the site where The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the Maori and European settlers dictating the terms by which New Zealand would become a British colony. Alternatively you may like to take a day tour to Cape Reinga, the very top of the North Island.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Hole in the Rock Cruise with Fullers GreatSights

Board your cruise and take in the stunning views as you glide out through the islands and along the Rakaumangamanga Peninsula to Cape Brett, where a historic lighthouse keeps watch over and Piercy Island/Motukōkako, or as it is popularly known as the Hole in the Rock. According to Māori legend, local warriors used to paddle through the Hole in the Rock in their canoes before departing for battle. Drops of water from the cave roof above were a good omen. If conditions permit, your skipper will expertly guide the ship through the narrow space. Keep an eye out for common and bottlenose dolphins, whales and other marine life during your cruise, and have your camera ready as you get up close to the action. The purpose-built catamaran is licensed by DOC (the Department of Conservation) for dolphin viewing and the crew have years of experience locating dolphins in these waters. Dolphin Seeker has indoor and outdoor seating available, and the largest outdoor viewing decks in the Bay of Islands.

Your accommodation: Sea Spray Suites

Sea Spray Suites offers comfortable and relaxing accommodation close to Paihia's best activities and attractions. Directly across the road is the beautiful Te Ti Beach, exploring Paihia's beautiful waters and wildlife is only a short step away. If you are interested in experiencing New Zealand's heritage, The Waitangi Treaty House is only 1km away.



Day 22



Bay of Islands (Paihia) to Auckland via Waipoua Forest

Today you will leave the Bay of Islands for a scenic return trip to Auckland. Head west, leaving the Pacific Ocean for the wilder seas of the Tasman and Hokianga. Go through the small townships of Omapere and Opononi, each with a great seaside feel. Your route now goes south through Waipoua Forest, home to the largest and oldest Kauri trees in the country. Make sure you allow time for several of the signposted short walks as you pass - not to be missed is the five minute loop to view the largest of all the trees - Tane Mahuta. As you make your way back down the country you'll pass the Matakohe Kauri Museum with extensive displays on the region's logging, farming and social history. Continuing on, go through Warkworth and the bohemian settlement of Puhoi before crossing the harbour bridge to arrive in Auckland city.

Your accommodation: Auckland City Hotel

The Auckland City Hotel is a peaceful sanctuary ideally located in the heart of Auckland's entertainment and business district. It is situated five-minute walk from the Sky Tower, Aotea Square, and the centre of town, Queen Street.



Day 23

Depart Auckland today

Explore more of vibrant Auckland city before dropping your rental car at the airport depot and continuing your onward journey.

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Nationwide Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Auckland
Tour length:	23
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	TranzAlpine Train from Greymouth to Christchurch
Includes	Interislander ferry crossing
Includes	Real Journeys Milford Sound Cruise

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Bella Vista Christchurch
Day 2	Mt Cook Motel
Day 3	Motel on York
Day 4	Motel on York
Day 5	Lakefront Lodge
Day 6	Lakefront Lodge
Day 7	Bella Vista Queenstown
Day 8	Bella Vista Queenstown
Day 9	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 10	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 11	Bella Vista Christchurch
Day 12	The White Morph, Kaikoura
Day 13	Ocean View Chalets
Day 14	Ocean View Chalets
Day 15	Travelodge Wellington
Day 16	Travelodge Wellington
Day 17	Silver Fern Suites & Spa
Day 18	Silver Fern Suites & Spa
Day 19	Auckland City Hotel
Day 20	Sea Spray Suites
Day 21	Sea Spray Suites
Day 22	Auckland City Hotel