



Boutique Northerner Tour

This extensive month long tour visits a diverse mix of destinations in both the North and South Islands. With multiple night stays, you'll have time to discover the hidden gems. The tour includes a great range of activities such as wildlife tours, kayaking Abel Tasman, Scenic Flights, Glacier adventures, overnight cruises and so much more. In the evenings you'll relax at our favourite boutique lodges where your hosts will make you feel right at home.

Starts in: Christchurch
 Finishes in: Auckland
 Length: 31days / 30nights
 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: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch Accommodation

Included activity: Glacier Explorers

Included activity: Half Day Marlborough Wine Tour with Sounds Connection

Included activity: Interislander Ferry Picton to Wellington

Included activity: Shared Transfer from Christchurch CBD Accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring Company

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

Included activity: Hole in the Rock Cruise with Fullers GreatSights

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: Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Tour and Wildlife Cruise with Monarch

Included activity: Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura

Included activity: Beaches, Bays and Seals Guided Sea Kayaking Trip with Wilsons - Lunch Included

Included activity: Zealandia by Night Wildlife Sanctuary Tour

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Christchurch to Greymouth Scenic Plus with Great Journeys NZ

Included activity: Driving Creek Railway & Potteries - EyeFull Tower Tour

Included activity: Cape Reinga Scenic Flight and Guided Tour with Salt Air

Day 1



Private Transfer Christchurch International Airport to Christchurch 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!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Discover Christchurch Afternoon Tour

A half-day sightseeing tour of Christchurch highlighting both the damage to the city inflicted by several large earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and the rebuild which is currently in progress, together with the surviving beauty of the city and the historical landmarks. Experience the grand architecture, beautiful gardens, and scenic viewpoints on a half-day city tour of Christchurch.

Your accommodation: Orari Bed & Breakfast

Orari Bed and Breakfast offers elegant and inviting accommodation in the heart of Christchurch city. This heritage building has all the charm of a grand Victorian home, but with modern comforts providing for an enjoyable stay.



Day 2



Shared Transfer from Christchurch CBD Accommodation to Christchurch Train Station with Christchurch Touring Company

You will be met by a driver at your Christchurch Accommodation and transferred to the railway station.

TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Christchurch to Greymouth Scenic Plus with Great Journeys NZ

Great Journeys New Zealand's Scenic Plus carriage provides comfort and vast panoramic views, making our TranzAlpine scenic train journey the perfect way to explore coast-to-coast through the 'Great Divide' and the indomitable spine of mountains that partitions New Zealand's South Island. Scenic Plus offers an all-inclusive experience on the unique TranzAlpine scenic rail journey to invigorate all the senses! Feast your eyes on epic scenery while you savour regionally inspired cuisine paired with sumptuous wine and beer all from the comfort of your luxurious seat – a hosted dining experience like no other. Quite simply, we have done everything we can to ensure you feel at peace as you sink back in your seat and soak up the scenery.

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.

Greymouth to Franz Josef

Leaving Greymouth you will head south into Glacier Country. Pass through Hokitika and be sure to take a 50 minute detour to the spectacular Hokitika Gorge, the famous turquoise-coloured river surrounded by native bush-clad cliffs.

Continue on through Ross, a historic gold mining town where several buildings still remain intact and still to this day one of New Zealand's working gold mines. As you travel further down the coast you'll also go through Hari Hari, the town where Guy Menzies, the first person to fly solo over the Tasman crash landed. Heading south along the mighty West Coast highway you pass through ancient temperate rainforests while getting sneak peeks of the wild west 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. Arriving in Franz Josef township is a lively place with a great atmosphere, restaurants including Blue Ice and Snakebite are worth a meal. This small town is packed with walks, adventure, and scenic activities, something for everyone.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Franz Josef Glacier Helihike with Franz Josef Glacier Guides

After a thrilling scenic flight, high above the rugged terrain, you will land on the glacier, ready to undertake a guided glacier hike. Your friendly guide will lead you through some of the most pristine and awe-inspiring glacial scenery in the world. Your guide will choose your route carefully as you go and, with an eye for the most spectacular ice formations, you'll soon be making your way through an extraordinary landscape of towering peaks and glistening blue ice. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity prior to travel. For more information please see here.

One Hour Private Tub with Waiho Hot Tubs

Relax and unwind in the soothing comfort of fresh, warm water and aromatic wood smoke. Enjoy your own private tubs, nestled in a lush rainforest setting on New Zealand's West Coast. These wood-fired hot tubs combine the soothing comfort of warm water with the unique atmosphere of wood smoke to give you an unforgettable experience.

Your accommodation: Westwood Lodge

Westwood is a purpose built lodge, crafted entirely from wood and exquisitely decorated throughout. The lounge is the place to meet to watch the Southern Alps turn a soft pink in the setting sun.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



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.

Your accommodation: Lime Tree Lodge

Set on a ten acre estate just outside Lake Wanaka, Lime Tree Lodge offers luxury boutique accommodation with stunning 360-degree uninterrupted mountain views.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

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

Wanaka to Queenstown

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

Your accommodation: The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



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 many 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-hike.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Gondola and 3 Luge Rides with Skyline Queenstown

In the heart of Queenstown, located 450 metres above town in the Ben Lomond Scenic Reserve is the Skyline Complex. A gondola ride to the summit makes for awe-inspiring views of the city surround. Arrive at the complex and wander the outside viewing decks for a picture perfect outlook. Then onto the Luge! The 800 metre luge track offers an exhilarating journey through banked corners, tunnels and dippers.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Appellation Boutique Wine Tour

Experience a tasting journey through three of Central Otago's incredibly scenic and varying wine sub-regions; Gibbston, Bannockburn and Cromwell. Visit three boutique vineyards, tasting their unique cool climate wines and discover why the Central Otago region has become world-renowned in its own right. Indulge at a fourth vineyard restaurant for a platter-style lunch, savouring the finest and freshest produce, accompanied with a wine flight.

There will also be an opportunity to retrace history when you stroll through the charming historical settlement of Old Cromwell.

Your accommodation: The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Wilderness Jet Experience with Dart River Safaris

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. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

Your accommodation: The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter

The Dairy Private Hotel – a unique blend of exquisite design, rich history and warm hospitality in the city centre. Beginning as Queenstown's original 'dairy' (corner store) in 1920, it has now transformed into an interiors masterpiece after an exquisite refurbishment that features wallpapers from British luxury interiors brand House of Hackney.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Queenstown to Manapouri

The spectacular Lake Wakatipu guides you south towards Te Anau and Fiordland. The rolling farmland of Southland accompanies you as you pass through Garston, Athol and Five Rivers before turning west towards Mossburn and Manapouri.

Doubtful Sound Fiordland Navigator Overnight Cruise

Take in the tranquillity of remote Doubtful Sound on this unique overnight wilderness cruise. Beginning in Manapouri with a short boat ride across the lake, you'll be taken by coach over the Wilmot Pass to Deep Cove, Doubtful Sound. Board the Fiordland Navigator, a purpose-built vessel designed like a traditional coastal trading scow. Be accommodated in a private cabin with an ensuite bathroom or a quad-share bunk room with shared bathroom facilities. The Navigator has a large spacious deck for viewing the scenery and wildlife as well as a dining saloon, bar and observation lounge. As you take in the stunning scenery of the Fiord, you'll be provided with a running commentary of the area and its history, points of interest and wildlife. You'll have the opportunity to see dolphins, fur seals and, if you're lucky rare Fiordland penguins. After anchoring in a sheltered cove, choose to explore the shoreline by kayak or stabicraft, or if you're really brave take a dip in the water. In the evening enjoy a buffet dinner prepared on board and served in the dining saloon. Enjoy beer and fine wines from the licensed bar, and spend time star gazing on the upper deck. Following hearty cooked breakfast the next morning you will spend your remaining time exploring other parts of the fiord before returning to Deep Cove for the trip back to Manapouri.

Your accommodation: Fiordland Navigator Overnight Boat in Doubtful Sound

The Fiordland Navigator is purpose built for cruising in the fiords. The vessel offers spacious viewing decks, a comfortable dining saloon and observation lounge.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 9



Manapouri to Te Anau

Your Doubtful Sound Overnight Cruise returns to Manapouri at midday. The short drive takes you along the lakeside and across Southern farmland to Te Anau, the gateway to the Fiordland National Park. Te Anau sits on the shores of the 345 square kilometre Lake Te Anau which reaches depths of 417 metres. Te Anau Township is the starting point for many walking tracks including the Milford track and the Kepler track. The Milford road originates here and this is arguably one of the most scenic stretches of highway in New Zealand.

Ata Whenua - Shadowland Film at Fiordland Cinema

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

Your accommodation: Te Anau Lodge

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

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



Te Anau to Dunedin

The drive from Te Anau to Dunedin takes you through classic Southland farmland scenery to Gore, the official home of country music in New Zealand. Continuing onward to the East Coast you'll pass through small farming communities and then on to State Highway 1. Balclutha is the next landmark town and gateway to the seaside community of The Catlins. From here it is a short drive through to Dunedin, known in Māori as Ōtepoti and known worldwide as "Edinburgh of the South".

Your accommodation: Fable Dunedin

Located in the centre of Dunedin, Fable Hotel is within walking distance of shopping, cafes and restaurants and the central focus of the Octagon. Beautifully appointed accommodation and a chic restaurant and bar are augmented by contemporary touches throughout.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



Wildlife Peninsula Encounter Tour and Wildlife Cruise with Monarch

Join a small-group bus tour led by a local guide across the Otago Peninsula, featuring stunning harbour views, rural landscapes, and unique wildlife. Visit a remote beach to spot sea lions, take a Monarch Wildlife Cruise to see albatross, seals, and rare seabirds, and explore a Yellow-eyed Penguin conservation reserve with hidden viewing hides. This unforgettable journey blends breathtaking scenery with intimate wildlife encounters before a relaxed return to Dunedin.

Your accommodation: Fable Dunedin

Located in the centre of Dunedin, Fable Hotel is within walking distance of shopping, cafes and restaurants and the central focus of the Octagon. Beautifully appointed accommodation and a chic restaurant and bar are augmented by contemporary touches throughout.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 12



Dunedin to Mt Cook National Park

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

Your accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium

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

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 13



Glacier Explorers

Experience 500-year-old icebergs up close on the Aoraki-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.

Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park to Christchurch

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

Your accommodation: Orari Bed & Breakfast

Orari Bed and Breakfast offers elegant and inviting accommodation in the heart of Christchurch city. This heritage building has all the charm of a grand Victorian home, but with modern comforts providing for an enjoyable stay.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 14



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.

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: Bendamere House B&B

Bendamere House B&B has quality ensuite rooms, detached from the main house adding to the privacy and comfort, with superb views overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Seaward Kaikoura mountain range.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 15



Kaikoura to Blenheim

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 Marlborough, New Zealand's largest wine producing region. Blenheim sits right at the heart of Marlborough and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

Half Day Marlborough Wine Tour with Sounds Connection

An afternoon among the vines! Be immersed in the Marlborough wine country with the Sounds Connection half day wine tour. Get collected from your accommodation and taken through three or four hand-picked wineries to taste the award-winning produce this region is known for. Hear about the history of winemaking in Marlborough as well as learning the unique processes each winery goes through.

Your accommodation: 14th Lane Urban Hotel

In the heart of Blenheim CBD, and central to the laid-back community of bars, cafes, retailers, and town amenities. Just step outside the door to discover Blenheim and the Marlborough Region, the perfect place for work or play.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 16



Blenheim to Abel Tasman National Park via Queen Charlotte Drive

Take a short drive to the small port of Picton where the Interislander ferry connects with Wellington. A bustling seaside destination, Picton is well equipped with shops, cafes and is also the starting point for the famous Queen Charlotte Walk. You'll travel along Queen Charlotte Drive, traversing the length of the Marlborough Sounds coastline. Magnificent views are abundant so be sure to make time to stop and enjoy the scenery as you go.

Continue through the small port town of Havelock, home to a variety of cafes and restaurants. The highway between Nelson and Picton crosses the pelorus river, and at this junction you'll find the famous pelorus bridge. From here there are a number of forest walks, the most popular a 30 minute loop through beech, rimu, and totara forest. Traverse Tasman Bay passing through Motueka to arrive on the outskirts of Abel Tasman National Park.

Your accommodation: Kimi Ora Eco Resort

Kimi Ora Eco Resort offers panoramic views of Kaiteriteri beach and estuary and is close to the Abel Tasman National Park. Surrounded by beautiful native bush, these chalets offer peace and seclusion.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 17



Abel Tasman National Park

Experience the golden beauty of Abel Tasman National Park, a coastal paradise renowned for its spectacular hiking track, pristine golden beaches, secluded inlets, and private lagoons. With its mild climate and stunning natural environment, it's a cherished destination for New Zealanders nationwide. 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 park's many animal residents, including native bats, geckos, birds, marine mammals, fur seals, and dolphins.

Beaches, Bays and Seals Guided Sea Kayaking Trip with Wilsons - Lunch Included

This adventure combines Abel Tasman's stunning beaches, coastal walks, and wildlife. Starting with a Vista Cruise to Torrent Bay, you'll enjoy kayaking, a picnic lunch, and the chance to spot seals and penguins. Return via boat and, in summer, opt for an unguided walk through the beautiful Torrent Bay Lagoon and Cleopatra's Pool. After a refreshing shower at the lodge, you'll cruise back to Kaiteriteri. This tour offers a mix of nature, adventure, and relaxation. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Kimi Ora Eco Resort

Kimi Ora Eco Resort offers panoramic views of Kaiteriteri beach and estuary and is close to the Abel Tasman National Park. Surrounded by beautiful native bush, these chalets offer peace and seclusion.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 18



Marahau to Picton

The drive from Abel Tasman National Park (Marahau) to Picton is a stunning journey transitioning from the golden-sand beaches of the Tasman region to the spectacular waterways of the Marlborough Sounds. After leaving Marahau and heading through the orchards of the Motueka Valley, you can make your first stop in Motueka itself for a coffee or to check out the local art scene. 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).

Your accommodation: Bolton Hotel Wellington

The Bolton Hotel offers contemporary apartment-style accommodation in the heart of Wellington. Just steps from the Parliament buildings and central business district, Bolton Hotel is conveniently close to the best of the city's shops, cafes and restaurants and is within walking distance of Wellington's vibrant waterfront.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 20



Wellington to Napier

Leaving Wellington today you will first pass the Wairarapa on the eastern side of the Remutaka Ranges. A significant contrast to the hills of Wellington, it's rich pastures and boutique vineyards of Martinborough give way to grassy plains and rugged coastal shores. Go through Greytown, home to the largest number of wooden buildings in the country then stop in Masterton, a small farming town known for its Golden Shears competition - where shearers compete for the title of fastest shearer. Continue on to Hawkes Bay and Havelock North before arriving in Napier, the art deco capital of New Zealand.

Walking tracks in and around Hawkes Bay

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

Your accommodation: Art Deco Masonic Hotel

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

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 21



Napier City

Napier, a coastal gem, is famed for its 1930s Art Deco architecture, the annual Art Deco Weekend, stately Norfolk pines, nearby wineries, and fresh local produce. With a Mediterranean climate and over 2,200 hours of sunshine annually, it boasts a thriving café culture set against stunning heritage buildings. The city center has around 30 cafés within walking distance, while Ahuriri, just beyond Bluff Hill, offers more upscale dining. Marine Parade overlooks the Pacific Ocean and Cape Kidnappers, home to the world's largest mainland gannet colony. Visitors can explore Ocean Spa, the Hawke's Bay Museum, and the National Aquarium of New Zealand. Bluff Hill, a key landmark, provides sweeping views of Napier, Perfume Point, Westshore Beach, and the busy Port of Napier, which exports timber, fruit, and meat worldwide.

In 1931, Napier was devastated by a 7.8-magnitude earthquake, New Zealand's worst natural disaster. Fires ravaged the city. Rebuilding efforts transformed Napier and Hastings into modern cities, while the uplifted Ahuriri Lagoon created much-needed land for expansion.

Explore Hawkes Bay

Discover Hawke's Bay, known in Māori as Te Matau-a-Māui or the fish hook of Māui. This is a region renowned for its Mediterranean charm, iconic Art Deco architecture, and award-winning wineries. Explore Mission Estate, the birthplace of New Zealand wine, or tour vineyards for a deeper dive into its winemaking legacy. Fans of the 1930s can enjoy a Vintage Car Tour, showcasing Napier's architectural gems. Outdoor enthusiasts can cycle over 200km of scenic trails or unwind at pristine beaches like Ocean and Waimarama. Indulge your taste buds with local delights, from honey and chocolate to fresh orchard produce. The Hawkes Bay is also home to an abundance of wildlife, head out on a Gannet Safari or educate yourself at the National Aquarium of New Zealand.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Gannet Safaris

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

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Hawkes Bay Wine and Dine Tour with Grape Escape

Experience a fun-filled Grape Escape wine and dine tour in the sun driving through absolutely stunning scenery. Meet like-minded people and share an appreciation of this region's fantastic wine. We visit four to five boutique wineries. Later, we enjoy a light cheese platter on the grounds of Ngatarawa or Sileni, weather dependent. You will taste around 30 different wines along with the main varieties, including Merlot, Syrah, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Viognier, and lesser-known aromatics such as Cabernet Franc, Gewurztraminer, and Riesling.

Your accommodation: Art Deco Masonic Hotel

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

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 22



Napier to Rotorua

Cross the Ahiminawa Ranges to arrive into the town of Taupo which is situated on New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo a gigantic volcanic caldera formed during one of the world's largest eruptions. Just north of Taupo are the Huka Falls, an impressive body of water draining from the Waikato river. See it from the wooden viewing platform or get up close to the spray with a ride on the Huka Jet. Visit nearby volcanic reserve Craters of the Moon to see boiling pools and steaming vents. Continue on through the Waimungu Valley before arriving into geothermal Rotorua, the heart of New Zealand's Maori culture.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Te Pō - Indigenous Evening Experience

Indulge in Te Puia's world-famous hāngī buffet dinner, served in the inviting atmosphere of Pātaka Kai Restaurant, Bar & Café. The menu, crafted with the freshest ingredients, offers a delightful array of traditional Māori cuisine. This banquet combines contemporary cuisine with a traditional hāngī (earth-cooked oven meal). The evening's cultural performance will take place in an exquisitely carved meeting house, Te Aronui a Rua. Here, you'll experience a rich showcase of Māori traditions, beginning with a pōhiri (traditional welcome), followed by the melodious harmonies of waiata (song), the powerful rhythms of mōteatea (traditional chant), the graceful artistry of poi, and the intense energy of the haka. As the night draws to a close, savor hot chocolate heated in geothermal water and steamed pudding while basking in the enchanting ambiance of the geyser terrace. Bathed in colored light and surrounded by the mystical steam rising from the earth, this unforgettable evening at Te Puia is a feast for the senses and a celebration of Māori culture.

Your accommodation: Pullman Rotorua

Pullman Rotorua is surrounded by surreal scenery and iconic attractions. Discover shooting geysers, bubbling mud, natural hot springs and magical forests.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 23



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

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

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland

Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland is a spectacular showcase of New Zealand's colourful and unique geothermal elements sculpted by thousands of years of volcanic activity. You will be introduced to a diversely different natural landscape, extending over 18-sq. km. Enjoy viewing the 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 Caf'e 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 where a daily eruption happens of up to 20 metres.

Your accommodation: Pullman Rotorua

Pullman Rotorua is surrounded by surreal scenery and iconic attractions. Discover shooting geysers, bubbling mud, natural hot springs and magical forests.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 24



Rotorua to Hahei

Pyes Pa Road is the scenic route towards the Bay of Plenty and the town of Tauranga before heading north along the coast towards the first of the Coromandel towns, Waihi. This old mining town still has an operating open cast gold mine and you can view the workings of the Martha Mine from a vantage point signposted from the town centre. For rail enthusiasts the Goldfields Railway operates passenger trains along a scenic and historic section of track towards Waikino. Next the popular locals holiday destination of Whangamata with its golden beaches and surf. Tairua is also a great location and Paku Hill offers spectacular views over the natural harbour and the Pacific Ocean. Close by is the famous Hot Water Beach where you can dig your own hot pool on the beach during low tide. A short drive from Hot Water Beach you reach the holiday village of Hahei, with its long white sandy beach. Nearby Cathedral Cove is a popular day walk, taking you to a secluded golden beach with massive limestone formations.

Your accommodation: Hahei Bed & Breakfast

Hahei Bed & Breakfast, you will be able to look forward to quiet surroundings, large swimming pool and subtropical gardens. Relax into this idyllic environment, and prepare for the perfect beach holiday! You'll be able to enjoy the comfort of this peaceful, fresh-styled property.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 25



Hahei to Auckland via Coromandel township

Heading north along the east coast you pass through the town of Whitianga and from here you can take the small foot ferry over to Cooks Beach and Flaxmill Bay. Mercury Bay was named by Captain Cook on one of his voyages as he stopped here to engage in some astronomy. Continue north along the beaches of Kuaotuna and Whangapoua Harbour to Coromandel Township, whose history is steeped with the gold rush of the late 1800's and the pioneers and settlers of the day. Today there are still known deposits of gold, silver, lead and zinc throughout the ranges but residents and conservationists are unlikely to allow any form of exploitation of the region. Remote towns, isolated bays and a rich history of pioneers and fortune hunters make this one of the more diverse regions to explore. The west coast of the peninsula drops to the Firth of Thames with steep pohutukawa clad cliffs while the east coast has an abundance of golden sand beaches and inlets. On the other side of the Firth of Thames is Miranda and this out of the way spot is a haven for shorebirds. R.B. Simpson discovered in 1940 that Miranda was a feeding ground for large numbers of wading birds. Since then ornithological societies have censused the numbers and found that 5-6,000 lesser knots and 7-10,000 bar tailed godwits travel here during the summer months before departing to the Siberian and Alaskan feeding grounds. In addition over 20,000 South Island pied oystercatchers and 300 wrybills spend the summer months here after breeding the South Island. Many more birds can also be found here and the Miranda Shorebirds Centre has lectures and displays. The shoreline of Miranda itself is also very unique and is considered the finest example in the world of an active sand and chenier plain. The Hunua ranges to the east mark the original shoreline about 4000 years ago and since then continuous tidal and wind action has deposited shell ridges to form the land or coastal plain you see today. The drive to Auckland now takes you through the Hauraki Plains, a very fertile dairy farming region and then State Highway 1 delivers you to Auckland City.

Driving Creek Railway & Potteries - EyeFull Tower Tour

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

Your accommodation: Fable Auckland

Located right on Queen Street the Fable Auckland is boutique and stylish property with an ideal location to enjoy and explore the vibrant heart of the 'City of Sails'.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 26



Auckland to Paihia

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

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

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

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 27



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. Stop off at Otehei Bay on Urupukapuka Island where you have time to relax, take a walk, have a swim, or enjoy a bite to eat and drink from the on-site fully licensed cafe. The purpose-built catamaran is licensed by DOC (the Department of Conservation) for dolphin viewing and the crew has years of experience locating dolphins in these waters.

Explore Bay of Islands

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

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

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

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 28



Cape Reinga Scenic Flight and Guided Tour with Salt Air

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

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

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

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 29



Paihia, Bay of Islands 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 Matakoho 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: Fable Auckland

Located right on Queen Street the Fable Auckland is boutique and stylish property with an ideal location to enjoy and explore the vibrant heart of the 'City of Sails'.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 30



Explore Auckland

Perched on the edge of a large natural harbour, New Zealand's 'City of Sails' offers the best of both worlds. Sandy beaches, native bush and lush rainforests give way to a vibrant urban culture. Spend time in the Viaduct Harbour, try your hand at sailing an America's Cup Yacht or take the ferry to nearby Waiheke Island for a gourmet food and wine experience. Venture to the top of Auckland's highest volcano, Mt Eden, for soaring views of the Hauraki Gulf or hop on the short ferry to Rangitoto Island and hike to the top of the volcanic island. Immerse yourself in nature at the expansive Auckland Botanic Gardens, sprawled across 156 acres of native forest, pack a picnic, soak up the sunshine, and enjoy the birdsong. Head up to the Sky Tower, standing over 300m tall, and have a meal in the 360-degree revolving restaurant. Scale the outermost perimeter of the Harbour Bridge or test your stomach with a bungy jump, then end your day on Ponsonby Road sampling upmarket culinary delights.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Auckland Wine Country Half Day Tour with Bush and Beach - Lunch Included

Head north-west to Kumeu Wine Country, Auckland's Heritage Wine Region. Enjoy lunch at a contemporary and traditional vineyard, sample world-renowned wines and marvel at the rugged surf-fringed coastline nearby. Later, visit Muriwai Beach, home to a Gannet Colony and situated on the cliffs overlooking the Tasman sea you'll have breathtaking views of the beach and ocean beyond. Finish up at a wine tasting at one of New Zealand's oldest. These wines reflect true varietal character and their unique regional origins.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - America's Cup Sailing Experience with Explore

Participate as crew on an authentic America's Cup yacht. Take the helm, exert energy on the grinders or sit back and enjoy the action and scenery as you sail the beautiful Waitemata Harbour. Experience the excitement of sailing, no experience necessary. Feel the thrill of the wind in your face as you tack and jibe. These powerful and highly engineered race vessels are usually the domain of billionaires and elite professional yachties. Still, this unique two-hour sailing experience allows everyone to sail these Grand Prix racing machines. America's Cup is the world's oldest and most prestigious sporting trophy and ultimate yachting regatta. Experience it firsthand, sailing these remarkable vessels on the harbour that hosted the America's Cup in 2000 and 2003.

Your accommodation: Fable Auckland

Located right on Queen Street the Fable Auckland is boutique and stylish property with an ideal location to enjoy and explore the vibrant heart of the 'City of Sails'.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 31



Depart Auckland today

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

Farewell from Aotearoa / New Zealand

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

Tour details

Departures:	Daily
Tour type:	Nationwide Self Drive
Starts:	Christchurch
Finishes:	Auckland
Tour length:	31
Accommodation:	Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Orari Bed & Breakfast
Day 2	Westwood Lodge
Day 3	Westwood Lodge
Day 4	Lime Tree Lodge
Day 5	The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter
Day 6	The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter
Day 7	The Dairy Hotel Queenstown, A Naumi Chapter
Day 8	Fiordland Navigator Overnight Boat in Doubtful Sound
Day 9	Te Anau Lodge
Day 10	Fable Dunedin
Day 11	Fable Dunedin
Day 12	Hermitage Hotel, Aoraki Wing Premium
Day 13	Orari Bed & Breakfast
Day 14	Bendamere House B&B
Day 15	14th Lane Urban Hotel
Day 16	Kimi Ora Eco Resort
Day 17	Kimi Ora Eco Resort
Day 18	Bolton Hotel Wellington
Day 19	Bolton Hotel Wellington
Day 20	Art Deco Masonic Hotel
Day 21	Art Deco Masonic Hotel
Day 22	Pullman Rotorua
Day 23	Pullman Rotorua
Day 24	Hahei Bed & Breakfast
Day 25	Fable Auckland
Day 26	Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 27	Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 28	Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 29	Fable Auckland
Day 30	Fable Auckland