

Legendary NZ Tour

Day 1: Auckland to Coromandel

Kia ora (hi) and welcome to Aotearoa (New Zealand)!

Leaving the big smoke behind, we head to the Coromandel Peninsula, a veritable paradise of beautiful beaches and misty rainforests. The drive here is epic – the road twists and turns dramatically round the coastline and the ocean gets clearer and more pristine before your eyes. Cameras ready – the views are magnificent!

The Coromandel is home to the famous Hot Water Beach – thousands visit each year to dig their own personal hot tub. If the tide times allow, we'll definitely grab our buckets and spades and get busy!

We arrive in the Coromandel with plenty of time for your guide to show you around. Sample the sandy beaches or simply enjoy the vibes.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Hot Water Beach

Day 2: Coromandel to Rotorua

This morning walk along the cliffs and down to Cathedral Cove (which you might recognise from the Chronicles of Narnia). With perfect beaches and massive rock arches and columns, it's one of the most popular spots in the Coromandel.

Alternatively, take an optional guided Cathedral Cove kayak trip and check out this stunning coastline from a different angle, accompanied by a local dolphin or two if you're lucky!

Later this afternoon we head towards Rotorua; en route, we'll visit Matamata – best known for being the home of Hobbiton.

Much to the delight of Lord of the Rings fans, a guided visit awaits us at the Hobbiton Movie Set, which is an absolute must-do when visiting NZ. On this fully guided tour of the 12 acre Middle-earth set you will see Hobbit Holes, the Mill, and even enjoy a drink at the Green Dragon Inn!

While the majority of the North Island is volcanic in some way, Rotorua is exceptional for its geothermal activity. With neon blue and red lakes, steaming rivers, active volcanoes and

geysers galore, there are more unique natural wonders to be found in Rotorua than many other places in the world.

Special note: Due to severe damage caused by extreme weather in early 2023, the Cathedral Cove walking track is closed until further notice. You can still opt to kayak from Hahei to Cathedral Cove, or you can simply relax at Hahei Beach. Many roads on the Coromandel Peninsula also remain impassable. For this reason, some route adjustments will take place to ensure you are still able to experience New Zealand safely. Your leader will inform you of any further details regarding the daily itinerary as you travel.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Hobbiton Movie Set Tour

Day 3: Rotorua

Today is a free day to explore Rotorua and its surrounding area. Talk to your guide for the best free things to see and do in the neighbourhood (Kuirau Park's steaming and hissing mud pools are a great option). There are also a number of optional activities you can choose from:

If adrenaline is your thing, the highest commercial waterfall drop in the world, on the Kaituna River, is begging to be conquered on an exhilarating rafting trip.

Perhaps you'd like to try thundering down grassy hills in a giant air-cushioned inflatable ball (aka ZORB)?

Alternatively head deep into one of New Zealand's most ancient forests and let the fun begin on a 3 hour eco canopy adventure. Experience over 600 meters of ziplines and swing bridges, plus about the native wildlife and ecology as you zipline from tree to tree.

Or take a guided kayak trip across scenic Lake Rotoiti to the spectacular Manupirua Springs Hot Pools, which are only accessible by boat. Have a leisurely soak while your guide cooks an appetising Kiwi BBQ Dinner. After dinner enjoy a sunset paddle across the lake and a visit to the glow worm caves.

However you spend today - be sure to get a good night's sleep as there are more Rotorua adventures tomorrow!

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 4: Rotorua to Murupara

This morning we visit Te Puia Maori Village. Here you'll learn more about Māori history and culture, come face to face with the Pohutu Geyser, see jumping mud pools and get up close and personal with kiwi birds.

Later this afternoon we head to Kohutapu Lodge in Murupara – where you'll get fully immersed into the Māori culture.

Here you'll also have a chance to learn the world-famous haka dance, and weave your own dinner plate using flax (a type of plant).

Tonight's dinner is a traditional hāngi meal. Cooked in an underground earth oven you can expect tender meat and delicious vegetables infused with a smoky, earthy fragrance – it will fill your puku (belly) right up!

The best part about spending the evening at Kohutapu Lodge? The majority of proceeds from this activity go back to the local community.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Te Puia Māori Village
- See kiwi birds
- See the Pohutu Geyser
- Learn the haka
- Learn to weave flax
- Dinner (a hāngi cooked in an underground oven)

Day 5: Murupara to Taupo

It's only a short drive to our next destination, Taupō, and there's plenty to discover along the way. From mesmerising mud pools to the thundering rapids of the Huka Falls and Aratiatia Dam, your trusty Haka guide will make sure you don't miss a thing.

Taupō is a beautiful lakeside town with a stunning mountain backdrop. Lake Taupō is New Zealand's largest lake – believe it or not, it's roughly the same size as Singapore!

This place is all about the thrills and spills, and there are plenty of options in store this afternoon. Get your hair wet with a water touch bungy jump, take an unforgettable skydive or a sunset lake cruise for amazing lake and mountain views.

If you'd prefer to relax, jump on a boat for a sailing trip to view Māori rock carvings. However you choose to spend today we guarantee you won't forget it.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Find natural hot springs

Day 6: Taupo

A full day in Taupō... are you in the mood for peaceful lakeside tranquility or unlimited adrenaline and adventure? Either way, Taupō's got you covered. For many, the ultimate adventure on offer here is the hiking (or tramping, as we Kiwis know it).

The Tongariro Crossing is among the top 10 full-day walks in the world. This 19.4-kilometre mountain trek boasts emerald green lakes, venting steam, lava flows and craters. You'll come back grinning from ear to ear before falling into bed and sleeping like a baby.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 7: Taupo to Wellington

It's a big drive from Taupō to Wellington, but there's some unmissable scenery on offer. Lord of the Rings junkies, you're in for a treat!

Our journey takes us through Tongariro National Park via the Rangipo Desert (bet you didn't know New Zealand had one of those!). Some of your favourite Lord of the Rings battle scenes were filmed right here.

The Desert Road boasts incredible views of three active volcanic peaks – Mount Tongariro, Mount Ngauruhoe, and Mount Ruapehu. You may know Mount Ngauruhoe as Mount Doom, so be sure to snap a Mordor selfie!

We pass through two of the North Island's quirkiest towns – as ever, your Haka Guide has a couple of surprises up their sleeve...

We pull into Wellington in the afternoon, with just enough time for film buffs to make a trip to Weta Workshop, where the special effects of Lord of the Rings and Avatar were produced.

New Zealand's capital is famous for its bars and eateries, and is a paradise for lovers of craft beer – you'll be spoilt for choice tonight!

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Scenic drive through Tongariro National Park
- Mt Victoria Lookout

Day 8: Wellington to Kaikoura

Packed with quirky cafes and beautiful street art, and famous for its wind, Wellington will blow you away in more ways than one! Your guide will introduce you to some of our favourite spots this morning. If there wasn't a chance yesterday we'll take a trip up Mount Victoria for the best views in town.

This afternoon we say farewell to the North Island with a scenic ferry journey across the Cook Strait. The South Island has a stunning welcome in store for us – gliding through the Marlborough Sounds as we approach Picton Harbour, you'll feel like you're in another world.

Our next destination, Kaikōura literally means “to eat crayfish”, and the area is teeming with them. The nutrient-rich waters of this area attract a wide variety of marine wildlife including the stars of the show – the whales and dolphins.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Cook Strait Ferry Crossing

Day 9: Kaikoura to Christchurch

The chance to encounter dolphins in the wild is a massive New Zealand highlight for many travellers, and Kaikōura is one of the best places to find them, with pods of up to 300 of these playful creatures hanging out here at any one time.

If you want to get up close to the giants of the ocean, a whale watching tour here is the way to do it. Humpbacks, sperm whales and orca all stop by at various times of year, so this is a great chance to meet some of them.

After visiting the local seals on our way out of town, our road trip continues to our home for the night – Christchurch, known as the 'Garden City' for its peaceful parklands and lazy rivers.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit a seal colony

Day 10: Christchurch to MacKenzie Country

This morning we'll explore iconic downtown Christchurch and your guide will show you the cool and creative ways the city is being rebuilt after the life-changing 2011 earthquake here. Christchurch folk are an innovative and creative bunch – the Transitional Cathedral, created from cardboard, is totally inspirational.

After lunch we leave the city behind and head for Lake Tekapo. The lake's breathtaking turquoise colour and mountain backdrop is a photographer's dream come true.

The tiny Church of the Good Shepherd stands right at the water's edge, proving that small is definitely beautiful. Grab some confetti and congratulate any passing brides – couples travel from all over the world for wedding shots in front of the chapel!

Tekapo has been declared an International Dark Sky Reserve and the super clear skies make it the best place in New Zealand to see the stars and galaxies on a clear night. Sit back, relax and enjoy.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

- Christchurch City Tour
- Visit the Church of the Good Shepherd
- Experience Tekapo's Dark Sky Reserve

Day 11: MacKenzie Country to Queenstown

This morning if you're feeling energetic, hike up to the summit of Mt John. With awesome views of the Southern Alps, you'll feel on top of the world. Speaking of views, today's scenic drive to Queenstown is a show-stopper.

From the golden tussocklands of Mackenzie country – where epic battles of Return of the King were filmed – to the dramatic peaks of the Southern Alps, it's like you're driving into a postcard.

We'll pause for lots of photo stops en route to give your camera a workout, including a stop at the spectacular Kawarau Gorge. This also happens to be the World Home of Bungy, give it a go or enjoy watching the jumpers scream their way through the gorge!

Whether you're an adrenaline junkie, an avid hiker, wine taster or scenery lover, Queenstown has something for absolutely everyone. With two nights and plenty of daylight hours here, get ready – this town certainly knows how to live life to the max!

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Hike up Mt John (optional)
- Visit Kawarau Gorge

Day 12: Queenstown

With a full day in Queenstown, let's work on that bucket list! There are heaps of options to choose from: paragliding over the lake, hiking trails trails to die for, bungy jumping while your Haka friends cheer you on, drive through Lord of the Rings scenery, and swinging through a canyon are just a few of our favourites.

For scenery lovers, Milford Sound is a must-see. Whether you fly or drive, the scenery en route is as awesome as the destination. Once on the Sound, sailing beneath thundering waterfalls and towering cliff faces, you'll understand why some call it the "8th Wonder of the World".

Tonight you have around 40 bars to choose from – your guide will fill you in on their favourites – to share your adventures with your travel buddies, and party the night away.

Alternatively you can opt for an early night ready for another day of adventure!

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 13: Queenstown to Wanaka

One last morning in Queenstown to work on that bucket list. What will it be today – a canyoning experience, Lord of the Rings 4x4 safari, or a jet boat ride along the Shotover River? There are so many options. You decide.

After the excitement of Queenstown, this afternoon is a chance to chill. Wanaka is Queenstown's slightly quieter little sister, a mere one hour drive away. On the way we'll stop at charming Arrowtown, a historic gold rush village with heaps of old-world character.

Blessed with towering peaks and a glacial blue lake, you'll soon see why Wanaka's considered to be one of New Zealand's most beautiful mountain towns. There are stunning hikes and bike rides all around for a welcome chance to relax.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Arrowtown – a charming and historic gold rush village

Day 14: Wanaka to Franz Josef

This morning is about exploring Wanaka. How, exactly, is up to you! Optional activities include a flying lesson, skydiving or a lake cruise and nature walk on Mou Waho Island.

If none of those appeal, there are lots of scenic short walks in the area – including a visit to #thatwanakatree. Talk to your guide for the best options.

The journey to Franz is another stunner – many of our Haka Guides rate it as their favourite drive in New Zealand.

As we hit the road, we'll stop at one of our top lakeside lookout points at Lake Hawea or Lake Wanaka. Your guide will keep an eye on the weather and pick the best option.

From the cascading waterfalls of Haast Pass to classic Kiwi coastal views, you won't want to nap on the bus in case you miss anything. Your guide will have some epic surprise photo stops and short walks along the way.

We roll into Franz Josef around late afternoon/early evening. This UNESCO World Heritage area is famous for its spectacular glacier, just 5 kilometres from town, which is begging to be explored tomorrow.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Lake Hawea Lookout
- Haast Pass

Day 15: Franz Josef

With Aoraki/Mount Cook (New Zealand's highest mountain) twinkling behind the glaciers, Franz Josef is about as beautiful a setting as you can find in New Zealand.

Te Wāhi Pounamu (which means 'the place of greenstone' in Māori) is the name given to this part of the West Coast because of the abundance of pounamu (greenstone/jade) to be found here. Included in your tour today is a special opportunity to carve your very own pounamu pendant at a local gallery.

There are heaps of ways to enjoy Franz Josef Glacier; weather permitting, to get up onto the bluest ice you can take a scenic helicopter flight and hike onto the glaciers. Or maybe you'd prefer to kayak on a glacial lake.

As well as the awesome glacier activities you could also try out skydiving or even a bit of group karaoke tonight in Franz Josef!

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Carve your own pounamu necklace

Day 16: Franz Josef to Punakaiki

Driving along the incredible coastal road and exploring the lush West Coast forests, it almost feels like you've stepped back in time. It's a rare treat to experience such remote prehistoric landscapes, so make the most of this awesome opportunity to unplug from the outside world.

Get excited; our trusty guides always have some surprises up their sleeves for this part of the trip, including a spot or two to get your feet wet.

We'll visit one of the famous artisan greenstone factories in Hokitika as we make our way north, as well as passing through some old gold mining towns before arriving in Punakaiki.

One of Punakaiki's many natural wonders is the subtropical rainforest – and we are staying in the heart of it for the next two nights!

Cook up a group dinner (not included) in this rainforest paradise, and be sure to end the day watching the sun set over the ocean tonight.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Visit Hokitika Greenstone Factory
- See the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks
- Stay in a rainforest retreat

Day 17: Punakaiki

Whether you decide to soak up the sun on the unspoilt beaches or stroll through the rainforest to a chorus of birdsong, you'll shed your cares in this magical place.

A short walk to see a giant stack of pancakes is a must-do: Punakaiki's limestone Pancake Rocks developed over 30 million years ago. You'll see what water pressure can do when the waves power through some seriously impressive blowholes – watch out for that spray!

Today you could try your hand at bone carving or exploring the region's underground caves by tube. Or simply chill by the beach near your rainforest home.

On a clear night, head to the beach with your buddies and watch the stars come out to play – seriously, is there a better way to end the day?

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Stay in a rainforest retreat
- Dinner

Day 18: Punakaiki to Abel Tasman

Cruising up north from Punakaiki, the scenery gets better and better. The powerful, untouched coastline gives way to rivers and gorges before we drive over the hills and down towards the bayside town of Nelson, to stock up on supplies before our next remote hideaway.

Mārahau, the gateway to Abel Tasman National Park, boasts golden beaches, tranquil lagoons and crystal clear waters. Abel Tasman is the perfect contrast to the wildness of the rainforests and mountains.

Why will you fall in love with Abel Tasman? Lush forests, sandy beaches, sheltered bays, and jaw-dropping views... not to mention the resident wildlife. Get ready to lose your heart to the most popular National Park in New Zealand.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 19: Abel Tasman

Abel Tasman... you beauty! Lush forests, golden sandy beaches, sheltered bays, and jaw-dropping views... not to mention the local seals, dolphins and bird life..

You might like to hike part of the Abel Tasman Coast Track – one of New Zealand's nine Great Walks – or paddle a kayak to Split Apple Rock.

You could jump, slide, abseil, float and zipline your way through the park on an awesome canyoning adventure.

Fancy a relaxing day instead? Choose yourself a golden beach and make yourself at home.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 20: Abel Tasman to Wellington

Today is the last day of your tour!

Today you'll start things off by learning to paddle a traditional waka (a Māori war canoe). Experience a karakia (blessing for protection), and learn tikanga (Māori knowledge and etiquette on the waka), all while getting out on the water to enjoy this unique included activity.

Our road trip continues along the northern edge of the South Island this afternoon. We'll make a quick stop at Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve (a film location for *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*) and make our way through Havelock as we wind our way towards Picton to catch the afternoon ferry to Wellington.

As the lights of Picton Harbour fade into the night, relax on board together for a chilled evening.

The tour officially finishes at 8pm today in Wellington, but your accommodation tonight is included.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Paddle a waka (war canoe)
- Visit Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve
- Cook Strait Ferry Crossing to Wellington