

23 Day New Zealand Tour

Day 1: Auckland to Paihia

Kia ora! Nau mai, haere mai ki Aotearoa!

Hello and welcome to New Zealand –The Land of the Long White Cloud!

After our 8am welcome breakfast, we'll kick off our tour with a leisurely scenic drive to the subtropical "Winterless North".

The Northland region is home to some seriously ancient and impressive kauri forests. We'll stroll through the largest of these – the Waipoua Forest – to meet Tane Mahuta, the hugest of them all. At over 1,250 years old and over 51 metres tall, he's looking pretty good for his age. We'll also visit Hokianga Harbour, unique for its 150 metre high sand dunes. When the weather's fine and the tides are on our side, you've got the option of sandboarding down into the beautiful water – it's an unforgettable experience worth the cheap and cheerful price!

We reach the town of Paihia, the jewel of the Bay of Islands, in the early evening. As the sun sets, we'll treat you all to a fish and chips feast overlooking the water. It doesn't get more Kiwi than that!

INCLUDED:

- Breakfast
- See Tane Mahuta
- Fish & Chips Dinner

Day 2: Paihia

With more than 140 sub-tropical islands dotted around the coastline, how will you spend your day in the Bay?

Hitting the water is the best way to enjoy the coves and beaches of this corner of paradise, and the options are endless. Cruise through a natural rock archway, explore the ocean floor on a scuba mission, sail in search of the local dolphins (or even swim with them!), or snorkel your way around beautiful islands. Check out our awesome add-ons for ideas or hit up your guide for inspiration.

For an epic day out, take a road trip to Cape Reinga – the northernmost tip of New Zealand – to see where the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean collide. It's an unforgettable sight.

Thrill-seekers – you'll have the chance to fly high above the ocean on a parasailing adventure. Or hire a kayak, sail boat or stand-up paddleboard and check out the Bay of Islands from sea level.

Whatever you choose, you'll have epic stories to swap with your travel buddies tonight as the sun sets on an awesome day.

Thrill-seekers rejoice - this is your chance to get a bird's-eye view by jumping out of a plane, or soar high above the ocean on a parasailing adventure. Or hit the trails at the Waitangi MTB Park for an action-packed afternoon.

Whatever you decide to do today, you'll have epic stories to swap with your travel buddies tonight as the sun sets on an awesome day.

INCLUDED:

- Breakfast

Day 3: Paihia to Auckland

Today, discover the Bay of Islands' important role in New Zealand's history with a trip to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. We love bringing you here, it's a truly unforgettable insight into Māori culture. The 35-metre carved waka (ceremonial war canoe), the world's biggest, is a must-see.

After lunch we say goodbye to the Bay. There are some beautiful waterfalls around the area, if you know where to look – and we certainly do! So we'll stop off at one of them, depending on the weather and what your Haka Guide's favourite spot is.

We head back to Auckland via Northland's east coast, which boasts stunning beaches and coastal walks. Be sure to have your swimwear handy – if time permits, your Haka Guide will take you to some of their top locations!

After an epic day, we reach the bright lights of the City of Sails in the early evening.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Waitangi Treaty Grounds
- See Whangarei Falls
- Visit East Coast Beaches

Day 4: Auckland to Coromandel

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 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 5: 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.

For Lord of the Rings fans, a visit to Hobbiton Movie Set is an absolute must-do. On a 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!

If hobbits aren't your thing there are plenty of scenic short walks to enjoy Matamata's lush green rolling hills.

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.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 6: 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 –white water rafting, zip-lining, rolling down a hill in a giant inflatable ball, river sledging and more!

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)?

A day trip to Waitomo is another option today. Famous for its glowworms there are a number of ways to experience these twinkling creatures up close.

Discover the magic of both the world-famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves, as well as the enchanting Ruakuri Cave on a '2 cave combo' walking/boat tour. Or you can float along an underground river on a Black Water Rafting trip as the glow worms light your path.

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

Day 7: 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 – a living Māori village - where you will experience a tribal tour by a village elder.

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 Maori Village

- See kiwi birds
- See the Pohutu Geyser
- Learn the haka
- Learn to weave flax
- Dinner (a hangi cooked in an underground oven)

Please note: Private accommodation upgrades are not available for this night of the tour due to the limited availability of accommodation.

Day 8: 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.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Find natural hot springs

Day 9: Taupo

A full day in Taupō... are you in the mood for peaceful lakeside tranquillity 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.

If you'd prefer to relax, jump on a boat for a sailing trip to view Māori rock carvings. Or head to Spa Park and soak until your fingers are wrinkly. However you choose to spend today we guarantee you won't forget it.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 10: 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 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

Day 11: 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 12: Kaikoura to Christchurch

The chance to swim with 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 13: 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

Please note: Private accommodation upgrades are not available for this night of the tour due to the limited availability of accommodation in the area.

Day 14: 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 15: 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, mountain bike parks and trails to die for, bungy jumping while your Haka friends cheer you on, horse riding 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.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast

Day 16: 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 in 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 17: Wanaka to Franz Josef

This morning is about exploring Wanaka. How, exactly, is up to you! Optional activities include an aerobatic plane flight, skydiving, a bike tour along Wanaka's lakeside, 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 18: 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 Wahi 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. Maybe you'd prefer to kayak on a glacial lake; or just relax in the steamy hot springs down below.

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

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Carve your own pounamu necklace

Day 19: 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 20: 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 surfing 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

Day 21: 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.

Marahau, 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 22: 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 23: Abel Tasman to Wellington

Today is the last day of your tour!

You'll start things off by learning to paddle a traditional waka (Māori war canoe). Experience a karakia (blessing for protection), and learn tikanga (waka etiquette) 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

Day 24: Optional transfer to Auckland

Need to get back to Auckland? Today is an optional transfer day where you can catch a ride on the Haka bus with your tour guide back to Auckland, arriving around 7pm.

The cost for this additional service is 25 NZ\$.

If your plan is to stay in Wellington there is still plenty to see and do. Perhaps a self-guided tour of Te Papa Museum, or visit the famous Weta Workshop where a lot of Lord of the Rings props were designed.

Teilnehmer: max. 16 Personen (Mindestalter 18 Jahre)

Transport: kleiner Bus; Fähre

Inkludierte Mahlzeiten: Frühstück

Übernachtung: 4-6 Bettzimmer in Lodges, Motels, Hostels

Gepäck Limit: 20 kg

Rollstuhlgeeignet: nein

Geeignet für Menschen eingeschränkter Mobilität: ja

(genauere Informationen auf Anfrage)

Die Sprache während der Tour ist englisch