

Reisebine

10 Day Best of the North

Winter departures: May – September 2019

Start: Auckland

Finish: Auckland

Duration: 10 days/9 nights

Departs: Tuesdays & Thursdays

DAY 1: Auckland to Hahei

Depart Auckland in the morning and head south to the Coromandel Peninsula via the old colonial town of Thames. We'll settle into our accommodation in Hahei before heading to Hot Water Beach, where you can dig your own natural spa pool in the sand (tide dependent).

Accommodation included: Hahei Holiday Resort - Exclusive accommodation by the waterfront

Activities included: Hot Water Beach visit

DAY 2: Hahei (free day)

Today you have a full free day to embrace the laid-back Coromandel lifestyle. Get up early to catch the sunrise on the beach, then take a scenic coastal walk or opt to kayak to stunning Cathedral Cove. Another option is to take a guided boat tour through the cliffs and caves of the nearby marine reserve.

Accommodation included: Hahei Holiday Resort - Exclusive accommodation by the waterfront

Optional activities: Kayaking, guided boat tour

Free activities: Walk to Cathedral Cove, sunrise on the beach

DAY 3: Hahei to Rotorua

We leave Hahei early travelling through to Paeroa, home of New Zealand's oldest and largest soft drinks company – L&P, where we'll stop for breakfast. Our drive today will take us through the Waikato region, known for its many dairy farms, rolling hills and the mighty Waikato River (the largest river in New Zealand). This afternoon you'll have free time to explore the sights and smells of Rotorua.

Accommodation included: Comfortable central city hostel

Optional activities: White-water rafting, zorbing, adrenaline fuelled adventure park (big swings, bungees and more)

Free activities: Whakarewarewa Redwood Forest walk

DAY 4: Rotorua (free day)

Often labelled the adventure capital of the North Island, you have a full free day in Rotorua to discover an area rich in Maori heritage, adventure activities and bubbling geothermal wonders. There are plenty of exciting local activities to get the adrenaline pumping, such as whitewater rafting, ziplining through native bush, zorbing or a truly unique guided jet boat adventure up to bath in a hot waterfall. Alternatively you can sign up for a guided tour through the world famous Hobbiton Movie Set.

Accommodation included: YHA Rotorua - Comfortable central city hostel

Optional activities: Waitomo 'must do' caving options, Hobbiton Movie Set tour.

Activities included: Walk around Ruakuri Reserve, Waitomo Valley Caves walk.

DAY 5: Rotorua to Lake Aniwhenua

Today we head further off the beaten track to the remote area of Lake Aniwhenua. A local Maori guide will share the area's history and lead us to visit the area's sacred archaeological sites. Tonight, your hosts will teach you how to prepare a traditional 'Hangi' (a feast cooked underground) and introduce you to a fun stick game to challenge your hand-eye coordination. For those visiting during school term, you will be both touched and inspired as you learn about a local community program in which Stray passengers are participating. (D)

Accommodation included: Kohutapu Lodge - Scenic lakefront lodge

Activities included: Kohutapu 'Strademark' Experience – guided tour of sacred Maori rock carvings, introduction to the Murupara area, delicious ground cooked hangi feast, dessert and continental breakfast

Optional activities: White water rafting, Zorbing, Ziplining

DAY 6: Lake Aniwhenua (via Taupo) to Blue Duck Station

After breakfast we depart and head to Taupo to see the mighty Huka Falls, and for the brave we have time for skydiving! In the afternoon, we make our way to Blue Duck Station, an award-winning 7,200 acre high country farm that is both a working station and an environmental conservation leader. Settle in and spend the evening learning a little more about what makes this unique destination one of Stray's top rated stops. (B)

Accommodation included: Blue Duck Station

Optional activities: Skydiving

Free activities: Huka Falls, enjoy your hosts' hospitality and stories on the local wildlife and history

DAY 7: Blue Duck Station (free day)

Today you have a free day to explore this truly amazing and secluded location in depth. The included 4WD farm tour will give you a tantalising taste of life in remote, rural New Zealand. There are plenty of other optional farming and conservation-based activities for you to experience around the property as well.

Accommodation included: Blue Duck Station - Country station lodge

Activities included: Eco-Warrior 4WD farm tour

Optional activities: Horse riding, clay pigeon shooting and goat hunting

Free activities: Walk around the property, take in the lush scenery, walk to the Kaiwhakauka waterfall

DAY 8: Blue Duck Station (via Tongariro) to Raetihi

We depart at 6am and head to the active volcanoes of the nearby dual World Heritage Site of Tongariro National Park. Today you get a chance to do what is rated as one of the world's best one day walks: the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Be prepared for some epic scenery as you walk around the base of "Mt Doom" from the Lord of the Rings films. Tonight, you can soothe your tired muscles from the big walk in the spa pool at your accommodation or relax with a celebratory drink by the fire.

Accommodation included: Snowy Waters Lodge - Historic residence with mountain views

Optional activities: Tongariro Alpine Crossing

Free activities: Taranaki Falls walk, visit the Volcanic Centre

DAY 9: Raetihi to Wellington

Today we head to Wellington, New Zealand's capital city, via Ohakune, Taihape and Bulls. You have the afternoon to cruise around the shops and cafes along popular Cuba Street, discover the New Zealand wonders on display in Te Papa Museum or stroll along the waterfront.

Accommodation included: Nomads Capitol - Central city hostel

Free activities: Walk Oriental Parade, head up Mt Victoria for fantastic views, visit Te Papa National Museum

DAY 10: Wellington to Auckland

Today is a very early departure out of Wellington - this is an express day via Raetihi to Auckland, where your trip comes to an end when you arrive in the early evening. We hope you had a blast on your Stray Journey!

Tour Inclusions

All transport: You'll travel in our comfortable mid-sized coaches around New Zealand.

Experienced tour guide: Expect entertaining commentary, insight into local secrets and extra support from your tour guide.

Accommodation: 9 nights' dorm-share accommodation in a variety of quality backpacker hostels, wilderness lodges and cabins. Upgrades to twin and single rooms are

Top rated activities:

- Lake Aniwhenua: Kohutapu experience – guided tour of sacred Maori rock carvings, introduction to the Murupara area, Hangi and Maori bread cooking demonstration, delicious ground cooked hangi feast, dessert and continental breakfast.
- Whakahoro: Eco-Warrior 4WD farm tour

What's not included?

- Additional activities not specified as included on the itinerary. These can be booked via your guide, often at an exclusive Stray special price!
- No meals are included with Winter Itineraries except for at Lake Aniwhenua (includes afternoon tea, dinner and breakfast).

What to Bring

Sturdy walking shoes (ankle high), swimming gear, hat and sunscreen, motion sickness tablets, water bottle, towel and toiletries, warm clothing and waterproof jacket, insect repellent, camera.

Please note:

- During Winter our Stray Journeys are operated on our hop-on hop-off bus network. This means some passengers on your trip who are travelling on flexible passes will be hopping on and off the bus. Stray Journeys passengers will follow a fixed itinerary with specified inclusions. You can expect to travel on a modern comfortable bus (mid-coach) and to be led by a knowledgeable Driver Guide.
- No meals are included with Winter Itineraries except for at Lake Aniwhenua (includes afternoon tea, dinner and breakfast). Winter itineraries are discounted to compensate for this.