



Hidden North Island

Ditch the crowds for the rugged beauty of the "Forgotten World" and the volcanic wilderness of the Central Plateau. This is a journey for those who seek the extraordinary, where days are spent rafting underground rivers and hiking alpine peaks, and nights are spent in secluded cottages and forest lodges. From the black sands of Raglan to the sacred echoes of Whirinaki, discover the side of New Zealand that most travellers never see.

Starts in: Auckland
Finishes in: Auckland
Length: 11days / 10nights
Accommodation:
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: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

plus much more...

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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

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

Included activity: White Water Rafting the Kaituna River with Rotorua Rafting

Day 1



Welcome to Auckland

Welcome to Auckland, known in Māori as Tāmaki Makaurau. Auckland is New Zealand's vibrant "City of Sails," and the country's largest metropolitan area. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. Surrounded by native bush, lush rainforests, and pristine beaches, Auckland is a haven for both adventurers and urban explorers. Wander through world-class museums and galleries in the city centre or enjoy a peaceful retreat at the Auckland Gardens, where stunning landscapes showcase New Zealand's diverse flora. Stroll along the lively waterfront to savour fresh seafood and international cuisine at Viaduct restaurants. For an unforgettable perspective, ascend the iconic SkyTower, New Zealand's tallest structure, and take in panoramic views of the city and its picturesque islands.

Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

You will be met at the Auckland airport by the driver and transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

Viaduct Harbour

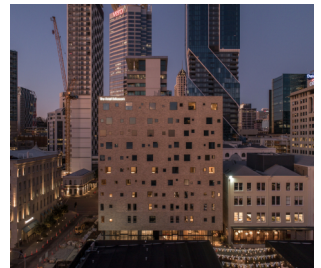
Auckland's Viaduct Harbour was developed in 1999 following the successful New Zealand campaign to host the America's Cup. There are a variety of restaurants and bars to dine on the waterfront - ranging from street food to gourmet cuisine. The name 'City of Sails' quickly becomes evident as you stroll the boardwalk and many different yachts and small seacraft can be spotted. If you're keen to test your sea legs, you can choose to sail on an authentic America's Cup yacht. Also located here is the Maritime Museum and a unique Hilton Hotel - built to the shape of a cruise ship.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Harbour Sailing Dinner Cruise with Explore

This unique on-water sailing and dining experience is not to be missed while you're in Auckland. Enjoy smooth sailing on the Waitemata Harbour - then watch this photogenic city come alive with twinkling lights. Enjoy your meal as you sail around the beautiful Auckland Harbour taking in the view as the sun slowly sets. You'll be treated to canapes and a drink as you set off towards Westhaven Marina. To finish the evening off, savour your dessert course as you leisurely sail back to Auckland's vibrant Viaduct Harbour.

Your accommodation: The Hotel Britomart Auckland

Soulful, smart and contemporary, The Hotel Britomart welcomes guests to Britomart, the vibrant centre of downtown waterfront Auckland. Still and calm, the rooms and suites at The Hotel Britomart pair simple elegance with the luxury of tactile materials. The Hotel Britomart is at the centre of a dynamic nine-block precinct of plant-lined streets, historic warehouses and the city's best shopping and eating.



Day 2



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 bungee jump, then end your day on Ponsonby Road sampling upmarket culinary delights.

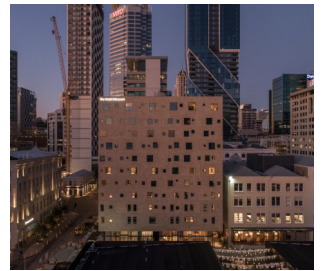
Ferry from Auckland to Rangitoto Island and return with Fullers

A short cruise through the Waitemata Harbour to the Hauraki Gulf delivers you to Rangitoto Island. Rangitoto Island is the largest and youngest of the many volcanoes that make up the Auckland volcanic field. It erupted around 600 years ago, but is extinct now and safe to explore. During your cruise to and from the island enjoy fantastic views of Rangitoto Island and Auckland. On reaching the island you can walk to the summit (1 hour direct) for great views of the Hauraki Gulf and over Waitemata Harbour looking back towards Auckland. There are a number of walking trails to explore this volcanic island, further information can be found at the Department of Conservation website.

Your accommodation: The Hotel Britomart Auckland

Soulful, smart and contemporary, The Hotel Britomart welcomes guests to Britomart, the vibrant centre of downtown waterfront Auckland. Still and calm, the rooms and suites at The Hotel Britomart pair simple elegance with the luxury of tactile materials. The Hotel Britomart is at the centre of a dynamic nine-block precinct of plant-lined streets, historic warehouses and the city's best shopping and eating.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



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.

Auckland to Hamilton City

Just 1 hour south of Auckland is Hamilton City, New Zealand's largest inland settlement. Centred on the Mighty Waikato River the city grew from the abandoned Maori Settlement that the Waikato Militia then occupied. The river has provided a very important trade route for many centuries and today still provides power and water. Hamilton Gardens spectacular 58 hectares of displays and collections provide a wonderful sanctuary within the city for its residents and visitors. The Waikato Museum of Art and History boasts an impressive collection of Maori wood carvings, many recovered from local swamps and waterways. The MV Waipa Delta still plies the waters of the Waikato River taking trips along the waterway. This 1877 vessel takes visitors from Memorial Park along the river and its classic bridges and picturesque tree lined banks. A good selection of cafes, restaurants and shopping is available in the town centre.

Private tour and picnic for two in Hamilton Gardens

Telling the story of gardens through themed collections, Hamilton Gardens explores different civilizations, and recreates historically important garden styles from all over the world.

You will be guided on a journey of discovery along paths delivering mysterious surprises. From a peaceful Sung Dynasty Chinese Scholar's garden to an Italian Renaissance garden, there are 21 themed garden areas with more being developed. Hamilton Gardens is not a botanical garden. Instead, it's a unique and internationally recognised concept that has been compared to a museum. Each garden collection has historic integrity and provides a window into the story of civilizations, their arts, beliefs and life styles.

Hamilton to Raglan

Leaving Hamilton you travel through green Waikato countryside for this short journey to Raglan, a mecca for all manner of wave riders. This seaside community is reminiscent of an older more laid back way of life in New Zealand and is the perfect place to experience real New Zealand. As well as the surrounding beaches and surf, Raglan is an eco-friendly town with a thriving arts and crafts community.

Your accommodation: Luna Cottage

Tucked away in an orchard, with gorgeous views of the Raglan countryside, Luna Cottage is a stylish and cosy cottage, perfect for a stress-free vacation with your loved one.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 4



Raglan to Waitomo

Leaving Raglan you head east towards Hamilton City, before reaching the city you will turn south at Whatawhata. Heading south you travel through the lush farmland of the Waikato, passing through Pirongia with the majestic Mt Pirongia in the distance which reigns over Pirongia Forest Park. The park is the largest tract of unbroken native bush in the Waikato region and offers numerous opportunities for walking. Continue south and you reach the limestone hills of the Waitomo region. Waitomo is home to a huge network of caves from the magical Glow Worms, stunning Rakiura Cave or for a more active experience try black water rafting.

Waitomo to Taumarunui

Travel from Waitomo through the King Country to Taumarunui, gateway to the Whanganui River. Enjoy the stunning landscape unraveling before you as you drive along SH4, surrounded by farm and bushland. Your journey will take you through the small town of Te Kuiti, stop and enjoy this quintessential New Zealand small town where the NZ Shearing Championships are held annually before continuing on your journey. You will arrive in Taumarunui approximately 1 hour 15 minutes after leaving Waitomo.

Your accommodation: Omaka Lodge

Omaka Lodge is a gorgeous boutique bed and breakfast on the crest of a hill with magnificent views that stretch over the majestic hills and valleys of the surrounding farmland.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Rail River Combo with Forgotten World

Be greeted with views of the rolling farmland, native bush, and greenery surroundings as you set off on your rail cart traveling through the tunnels and bridges for 40km of fun and excitement. As the afternoon approaches you will stop for lunch at the Tokirima Station, enjoy a railside picnic lunch before taking the shuttle to reach the Whanganui River. Reaching the landing on the river your jet boat will greet you to take you 20km down the river, showing off the gorgeous sights of the river before reaching Cherry Grove to be transported back to the finishing point.

Your accommodation: Omaka Lodge

Omaka Lodge is a gorgeous boutique bed and breakfast on the crest of a hill with magnificent views that stretch over the majestic hills and valleys of the surrounding farmland.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 6



Taumarunui to Tongariro National Park

Set out from the charming riverside town of Taumarunui and wind your way through the dramatic landscapes of the Central North Island to the majestic Tongariro National Park. This scenic route offers a striking shift—from lush farmland and forested hills to ancient lava fields and towering volcanic peaks. Along the way, take in views of Mount Ngauruhoe (famously known as Mount Doom in The Lord of the Rings trilogy), standing proudly above the landscape. Whether you're heading to hike the world-renowned Tongariro Alpine Crossing or simply to soak up the region's raw natural beauty, this journey is a truly unforgettable experience.

Tongariro National Park

Tongariro National Park, New Zealand's oldest national park, is also the fourth place on earth to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The park features three prominent volcanoes: Mount Tongariro, Mount Ruapehu, and Mount Ngauruhoe. Mount Ngauruhoe and Mount Ruapehu are two of the world's most active composite volcanoes, with notable eruptions from Ruapehu in 1995 and 1996, and Tongariro in 2012. Despite this activity, the volcanoes are closely monitored to ensure visitor safety. When visiting Tongariro National Park, take advantage of the incredible outdoor activities available. In the winter, you can ski or enjoy snow play on Mt Ruapehu Ski Field. In the summer, the world-famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing is a must-do. This one-day hike, taking 6 to 8 hours, is one of New Zealand's Great Walks and will lead you past the stunning Emerald and Blue Lakes and unique volcanic landscapes. For those looking for other hiking options, the park offers a variety of tracks and trails suitable for all abilities, including shorter walks and a guided 3.5-day Tongariro Northern Circuit. You can also experience true isolation by exploring deep canyons and ancient forests along the Whanganui River or walking along ancient lava flows and glacier streams to the Taranaki Falls. After a day of exploring, stop by Pataka Café at Whakapapa to enjoy a meal with an incredible mountain view.

Walking tracks in and around Whakapapa Village, Tongariro National Park

There are a plethora of walks in and around Whakapapa Village and Tongariro National Park. From short 15 minute hikes to longer 5 hour treks, there is something for every level of fitness. All established tracks are maintained by the Department of Conservation and before heading out on a walk, it is best to check the track conditions and suitability at the local DOC information office in the centre of the village. Below are a selection of the best walks to do: Whakapapa Nature Walk, 15 min loop track Mounds Walk, 20 min one way Tawhai Falls, 20 min one way Ridge Track, 40 min return Taranaki Falls, 2 hour return Whakapapanui Walk, 2 hour return Tupapakurua Falls Track, 5 hour return

Sky Waka Gondola Sightseeing Trip with Whakapapa

During the summer months you can take advantage of the skifield facilities and take the gondola over Mt Ruapehu's otherworldly terrain. You'll travel to an altitude of 2020 metres where you'll be treated to magnificent views of Tongariro National Park, including the iconic peaks of Mt Ruapehu, Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe, the latter featured as Mt Doom in the Lord of the Rings movies.

Your accommodation: Plateau Lodge

Plateau Lodge offers cozy and comfortable accommodation in a quiet and peaceful location. It is situated in the foot hills of the UNESCO World Heritage Tongariro National Park.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



1 Day Tongariro Guided Crossing with Adrift

The Tongariro Crossing is New Zealand's best 1 day walk taking you through Tongariro National Park and World Heritage Area. The park is dominated by three majestic volcanoes, Mt Tongariro, Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Ruapehu. During your 19 km hike, you'll follow a well-formed track leading up the saddle between Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Tongariro. The landscape on Tongariro is peppered with the different coloured and shaped craters, scoured volcanic rocks, mountain springs, and brightly coloured emerald lakes. During winter the tours offer you the chance to experience this magnificent landscape covered in snow. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Plateau Lodge

Plateau Lodge offers cozy and comfortable accommodation in a quiet and peaceful location. It is situated in the foot hills of the UNESCO World Heritage Tongariro National Park.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Tongariro (Whakapapa) to Rotorua via Taupo

From Tongariro National Park you will head to the township of Turangi, rated as one of the worlds best trout fishing locations. You then follow the edge of New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo, to Taupo itself. From there you will travel along the thermal highway to Rotorua, along the road Wai O Tapu Thermal Wonderland and the Waimangu Volcanic Valley are well signposted and are worthy detours to explore.

Huka Falls Jet Boat Ride

The Huka Jet is 30 minutes of pure fun and exhilaration, skimming close to cliffs, sliding past trees, feeling the adrenalin of full 360 degree spins. The excitement continues right up to the base of the foaming Huka Falls, where you get a spectacular water level view to New Zealand's most visited natural attraction. Nothing compares to watching 220,000 litres per second tumbling over the cliff face towards you. The water from the mighty Huka Falls runs down the Waikato River through a series of Hydro Power Stations. You'll get a view of the Wairakei Geothermal Power Station in the comfort of a powerful Chevrolet V8 jet boat. This unique Geothermal Power Station uses underground geothermal activity to produce hot steamy water. The Waikato Rivers beautiful environment is varied and unique and is New Zealand's longest river flowing north from our largest lake, Lake Taupō. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

Rotorua

Discover the geothermal, adventure, and cultural wonderland of Rotorua. As you explore, you may see steam rising from cracks in the road, bubbling and hissing water in pools along the lake's edge, and the unmistakable smell of Sulfur. Rotorua is rich in Māori culture and history, with many Māori inhabitants recognising the great potential of the volcanic land. For an outdoor adventure, head to The Redwoods and experience the rainforest treetops from high up. There are a few accessible trails for disabled hikers and great biking trails as well. If you're lucky, you might spot some of New Zealand's native birds, such as the Pīwakawaka (Fantail) and the Tūī. Alternatively, enjoy the Lake Tikitapu Blue Lake Walk or explore Kuirau Park, where you'll find bubbling mud pools and steaming lakes. Don't miss the private thermal reserves such as Te Puia and Wai-O-Tapu, where you can walk among bubbling mud pools, spouting geysers, and Sulfur ponds. Just a few minutes from the town centre, the Agrodome and National Kiwi Hatchery offer an insight into nature. Rotorua's rich Māori culture is a must-see. Spend an evening with Te Pā Tū, complete with a traditional-style dinner or stroll along the lake edge to reach one of the country's oldest Māori villages at Ohinemutu. When hunger strikes, visit Eat Street in Rotorua CBD, a vibrant street lined with delicious eateries and restaurants to satisfy any craving. No visit to Rotorua would be complete without experiencing Rotorua's original tourist attraction - a relaxing spa treatment. This town boasts an array of wellness experiences to unwind in. Whether you are seeking adventure, culture, or relaxation, Rotorua offers an unforgettable experience.

Kohutapu Lodge & Whirinaki Forest Footsteps

Immerse yourself in the heart of New Zealand's rich Māori heritage with an afternoon guided tour of tribal lands. Highlights include a visit to the hidden Māori Rock Carvings, the awe-inspiring Sacred Mountain, and a picturesque waterfall. Engage in interactive cultural activities that bring local traditions to life. After your adventure, return to the welcoming Kohutapu Lodge for a delicious dinner and rest in comfort. Start the next day with a continental breakfast before setting off on a half-day guided cultural rainforest walking tour, where you'll discover the natural beauty and sacred stories of this pristine environment.

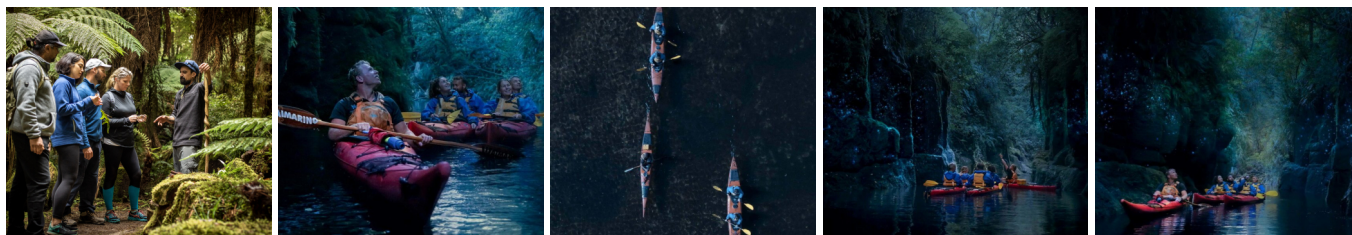
Your accommodation: Kohutapu Lodge

Simple and budget-friendly, the lodge offers a range of cabin rooms and standalone cabins, ideal for families, couples, tourists, hunters, anglers, mountain bikers, and students. Each lodge cabin can host 4 to 6 guests, featuring single or double bunk beds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 9



Kohutapu Lodge & Whirinaki Forest Footsteps - Day Two

Start today with a continental breakfast before setting off on a half-day guided cultural rainforest walking tour, where you'll discover the natural beauty and sacred stories of this pristine environment.

Starlight Gourmet Kayak Tour with Waimarino

Experience an evening adventure kayaking over one of New Zealand's most stunning waterways, Lake Rotoiti. Enjoy the beautiful scenery, abundant birdlife, and learn the myths and legends linked to the area as you paddle towards the magical Glowworm cave. You will paddle across the lake to the stunning Manupirua Hot Pools, which are only accessible by water. Here, you will have a tasty freshly cooked BBQ dinner along with delicious kiwi desert. On the way to the hidden Glowworm cave, you will see how the lake is magically transformed by the moon and twinkling stars above. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please click [here](#).

Your accommodation: Kohutapu Lodge

Simple and budget-friendly, the lodge offers a range of cabin rooms and standalone cabins, ideal for families, couples, tourists, hunters, anglers, mountain bikers, and students. Each lodge cabin can host 4 to 6 guests, featuring single or double bunk beds.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 10



White Water Rafting the Kaituna River

Experience the ultimate thrill on the Kaituna River with Rotorua Rafting, where you'll conquer heart-pounding white-water rapids and plunge over the breathtaking 7-meter Tutea Falls, the world's highest commercially rafted waterfall! This highly-rated, two-hour adventure, run by local experts, immerses you in stunning native scenery while sharing the rich Māori history of the Ōkere awa. Perfect for adrenaline seekers (13+ years for the full trip, 10+ years for the half trip), just bring your swimsuit and towel - we provide the world-class safety gear and an unforgettable experience. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see [here](#).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Ultimate Ziplining Experience with Rotorua Canopy Tours

Embark on a three and a half hour adventure through native New Zealand forest. Journey through the beautiful forest canopy via an incredible network of trails, tree platforms, Ziplines and swing bridges, journey deeper into natural New Zealand than ever before with the Ultimate Canopy Tour. See breathtaking views of the woodland valleys and hills as you fly through tight openings in the trees. In between the thrill of the ziplines and suspended tree bridges, your guides will share their passion and knowledge for the forest and the conservation challenges to preserve it. The tour will conclude with a thrilling 16-meter controlled descent back to the beautiful forest ground. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Half Day Bike Hire with Mountain Bike Rotorua

Experience the thrill of Rotorua's world-renowned mountain biking trails with a half-day full-suspension mountain bike hire. Perfect for adventure seekers of all skill levels, the top-of-the-line full-suspension bikes provide the ultimate comfort and control, ensuring you can tackle any terrain with confidence. Each rental includes a premium full-suspension mountain bike featuring the latest technology, a high-quality helmet and protective gear, detailed trail maps, and expert recommendations to help you make the most of your ride. The friendly staff will ensure your bike is perfectly adjusted to your size and riding style, with on-call support available for any issues during your ride. Rotorua is a mountain biker's paradise, boasting a diverse range of trails that cater to all levels of experience, from the adrenaline-pumping descents of the Redwoods Forest to scenic routes winding through geothermal landscapes. The region's unique combination of natural beauty and challenging terrain makes it a must-visit destination for mountain biking enthusiasts. Bring comfortable riding attire, water, snacks, sunscreen, sunglasses, and a sense of adventure. Book your half-day full suspension mountain bike hire and discover why Rotorua is a global hotspot for mountain biking, offering an unforgettable experience whether you're seeking a heart-pounding adventure or a leisurely ride through stunning scenery.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Hot Tub Session with Secret Spot Hot Tubs

Indulge in tranquillity with a soak in private cedar hot tubs nestled among ferns, overlooking the serene Whakarewarewa Forest and Puarenga Stream. Perfect for unwinding with family or friends, these 39.9°C non-geothermal tubs offer 45 minutes of pure relaxation, with drinks just a button away. By day, enjoy the natural beauty of ancient trees, and by night, marvel at the forest illuminated by colourful lights. After your soak, treat yourself to a complimentary "shinny dip" foot tub at the Basecamp café; while sipping a beverage or enjoying a delicious bite to eat.

Your accommodation: Kohutapu Lodge

Simple and budget-friendly, the lodge offers a range of cabin rooms and standalone cabins, ideal for families, couples, tourists, hunters, anglers, mountain bikers, and students. Each lodge cabin can host 4 to 6 guests, featuring single or double bunk beds.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 11



Rotorua to Auckland

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

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:	North Island Self Drive
Starts:	Auckland
Finishes:	Auckland
Tour length:	11
Accommodation:	
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	The Hotel Britomart Auckland
Day 2	The Hotel Britomart Auckland
Day 3	Luna Cottage
Day 4	Omaka Lodge
Day 5	Omaka Lodge
Day 6	Plateau Lodge
Day 7	Plateau Lodge
Day 8	Kohutapu Lodge
Day 9	Kohutapu Lodge
Day 10	Kohutapu Lodge