



Northbound Adventure

A 30 day tour visiting all major regions on both the North and South Islands. A relaxed pace allows time to immerse yourself into the local atmosphere. The tour includes a great range of activities such as wildlife tours to view seals, albatross, penguins and bird life plus must see destinations such as Milford Sound. An afternoon wine tour in Marlborough, a Maori cultural evening and dinner plus much more make this comprehensive itinerary a great option.

Starts in: Christchurch
Finishes in: Auckland
Length: 30days / 29nights
Accommodation: Motels
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: Ocean's Cabin with Whale Watch Kaikōura

Included activity: Interislander Ferry Picton to Wellington

Included activity: TranzAlpine Scenic Train: Christchurch to Greymouth

Included activity: Gannet Safaris

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

Included activity: Cape Reinga & Ninety Mile Beach Full Day Tour with Fullers Bay of Islands - Lunch Included

Included activity: Lake Cruise and Island Nature Walk with Eco Wanaka

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

Included activity: One Hour Private Tub with Waiho Hot Tubs

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

Included activity: Te Pā Tū Evening Māori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

Included activity: Hole in the Rock Cruise with Fullers

Included activity: Franz Josef Nature Tour with Glacier Valley Eco Tours

Included activity: Wilderness Jet Experience with Dart River Safaris

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

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 with Leisure Tours

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: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping centre and to the Botanic Gardens.



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

The early morning departure is rewarded with incredible scenery today onboard the TranzAlpine Scenic Train. Considered one of the world's great train journeys, it travels between the East Coast, Christchurch and the West Coast, Greymouth. From your carriage, you'll see the fields of the Canterbury Plains and farmland, followed by the spectacular gorges and river valleys of the Waimakariri River. The train then climbs into the Southern Alps passing through small settlements and Arthur's Pass National Park before descending through the lush beech rain forest to the West Coast town of Greymouth, a great base for visits to Punakaiki and the West Coast glaciers.

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.

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: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



Day 3



Franz Josef Nature Tour with Glacier Valley Eco Tours

Nestled in thick historic West Coast forest and a stone's throw from wild black sand beaches, this is one of the world's most unusual glaciers. Beautiful blue skies or magical misty rain, whatever the weather - you will feel like you are in Narnia or LOTR.

With easy walking at your pace, information on glaciology, geology, geomorphology, flora and fauna, local legends, history, and small guided groups with fantastic guides, you will experience this glacier in style and in the best hands with the only local company. Wander past glacier rivers and streams and through beautiful podocarp forest; discover hidden natural treasures such as native snails, wild native mushrooms, and dozens of species of native orchids; listen to native bird song and waterfalls; see if you can spot a Chamois or a Tahr on the huge snow-capped mountains above while drinking a cup of tea and talking one-on-one with your guide.

Explore Franz Josef

Franz Josef is a small yet lively town in the heart of New Zealand's West Coast, best known for its spectacular 12 km-long glacier. The township is surrounded by lush, rainforest-clad mountains and has a vibrant atmosphere with plenty to explore. A variety of scenic walking trails offer incredible views of the glacier, but for a truly up-close experience, a licensed helicopter tour is the only way to set foot on the ice. Beyond the glacier, unwind in the rejuvenating Hot Pools or visit the West Coast Wildlife Centre to spot rare kiwi birds. If you're in the mood for a more relaxed day, the township is home to charming souvenir and gift shops, as well as great dining spots like SnakeBite Brewery and King Tiger. Whether you're chasing adventure or relaxation, Franz Josef is a stunning blend of wild beauty and welcoming hospitality.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Twin Glacier Scenic Helicopter Flight with The Helicopter Line

A spectacular scenic flight soaring over two of New Zealand's most famous glaciers, Fox and Franz Josef. Landing at the head of one and view the incredible sight of this frozen river as it winds its way through ancient carved valleys. It is important to read and understand the risks associated with this activity. A full risk disclosure can be found here.

Your accommodation: Punga Grove Motel & Suites

Punga Grove is right in the heart of Franz Josef Glacier village stylish accommodation in a beautiful rainforest setting.



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. 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: Clearbrook Motel and Serviced Apartments

Clearbrook offers luxury apartment style and townhouse accommodation options and is located just metres from Wanaka's main street and its majestic lake front.



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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Gondola and Buffet Dinner with Skyline Queenstown

With breathtaking views across Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu, the Skyline Complex is a must-do. Catch the fully enclosed gondola to the summit for a remarkable panorama of the city's surroundings. Wander the outdoor viewing decks then enjoy a gourmet buffet meal in the Stratosphere Restaurant.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style and comfort, with a selection of rooms having spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 6



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: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style and comfort, with a selection of rooms having spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 7



Queenstown to Te Anau

Passing through the bustling suburb of Frankton, follow the shores of Lake Wakatipu. The Remarkables mountain range towers over you on the stretch of road known as "The Devil's Staircase" leading you to the township of Kingston. You'll venture into Southland before crossing the rolling tussock lands of Mossburn (deer capital of New Zealand) and shortly arriving at Te Anau, the gateway to Fiordland National Park.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Te Anau Glowworm Caves with RealNZ

Begin your Te Anau Glowworm experience with a scenic cruise across Lake Te Anau on board the luxury catamaran, Luminosa, to the western side of the lake. On arrival, you'll enter the caves through Cavern House, where informative displays detail the history of this 12,000 year old underground network. You'll then explore by limestone pathway while your guide points out hidden whirlpools, sculpted rock formations, and a rushing underground waterfall. See a magical display of thousands of glowworms as you glide through the darkness in a small boat.

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self-contained motel units less than a minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Enjoy a close walk to shops, cafes and restaurants.



Day 8



Te Anau to Milford Sound, returning to Te Anau

The magnificent Milford Road leading to Milford Sound offers some of the most beautiful and iconic scenery in the country. Countless photo opportunities mean this drive should not be rushed. From crystal clear lakes and towering mountains to lush glacier-formed meadows, this area is abundant with picture-perfect scenes. Continue on through the Homer Tunnel, an engineering marvel at 1219 meters long. Arriving in the village of Milford, you will be greeted with an amazing view of Mitre Peak. A day cruise into the heart of the sound is not to be missed. You'll learn about how this magnificent area was formed and experience the wonder of the falls that line the Fjord before back-tracking the way you came.

Milford Sound Cruise with Real NZ - Lunch Included

Get up close and personal with Milford Sound on a leisurely cruise of this spectacular fiord. From thundering waterfalls to sky-high mountains to lush rainforests, Milford has it all. Experience the spray of a waterfall as you cruise close to sheer rock faces. Informative, participative, and relaxed, this is the perfect way to experience Milford Sound to the fullest. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information, see [here](#).

Your accommodation: Lakefront Lodge

Stylish self-contained motel units less than a minute walk from Te Anau Lakefront. Enjoy a close walk to shops, cafes and restaurants.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 9



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: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 10



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: Motel on York

Motel on York is located in the heart of Dunedin city. The property offers superior accommodation only 300 metres away from cafes and restaurants.



Day 11



SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Larnach Castle and Gardens

Larnach Castle, New Zealand's only castle, was built in 1871 by politician and merchant William Larnach, a visionary who played a key role in shaping the country's early history. Constructed for his beloved first wife, Eliza, the castle's shell took 200 workmen three years to complete, followed by twelve years of intricate interior craftsmanship. Perched high on the Otago Peninsula, the castle offers stunning views over Dunedin City. Its gardens hold International Garden of Significance status and feature a unique collection of antiques, including a rare nine-piece Totara knot suite. The Ballroom Cafe provides the perfect spot to relax and enjoy refreshments while reflecting on your visit. The ballroom itself has a fascinating history, having once served as an asylum, an antique sales room, and even a sheep pen before its beautiful restoration. With a self-guided tour, you can explore the castle and gardens at your own pace.

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 Omarama 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: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel, nestled in the heart of Mt. Cook Village, offers spacious self-contained units that provide comfort and convenience. Each unit is surrounded by breathtaking alpine mountain views, making it the perfect retreat for nature lovers and adventurers alike.



Day 12



SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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 reach 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: Quest on Cambridge

Quest on Cambridge serviced apartment-style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience. Each room has an open-plan living area, a fully equipped kitchen, and natural light. Quest on Cambridge is a short walk from the south shopping centre and to the Botanic Gardens.



Day 13



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.

Your accommodation: The White Morph, Kaikōura

Set on the Esplanade in Kaikōura, The White Morph enjoys commanding views of the ocean and mountains. Just a 10-minute walk into town, The White Morph has been beautifully placed so that you can take in the spectacular scenery of Kaikoura while enjoying the variety of attractions on offer.



Day 14



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.

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.

Your accommodation: Blenheim Palms Motel

Located 100 m from the central shops and eateries, the Blenheim Palms Motel offers tasteful individually designed apartment-styled rooms.



Day 15



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: Ocean View Chalets

The Ocean View Chalets are situated on a 50-acre farmlet, slightly elevated and nestled along the bush line with panoramic sea views. Great access the National Park and close to the friendly Marahau village.



Day 16



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: Ocean View Chalets

The Ocean View Chalets are situated on a 50-acre farmlet, slightly elevated and nestled along the bush line with panoramic sea views. Great access the National Park and close to the friendly Marahau village.



Day 17



Marahau to Picton

The drive from Abel Tasman National Park (Mārahau) 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 Mārahau 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).

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.

Your accommodation: Adina CityLife Wellington

Adina CityLife Wellington is a suite style hotel with every amenity required for a comfortable stay, as well as being in a superb location to explore the compact city centre. Situated on Lambton Quay, you'll find the best shopping, tourist attractions and cultural landmarks all within easy walking distance.



Day 18



Wellington

Wellington known in Māori as Te Whanganui-a-Tara is home to New Zealand's centre of government. Often referred to as 'mini Melbourne', this windy city is a melting pot of art, culture, food, and fashion. Quirky laneway bars, underground art shows, and hipster eateries make up its inner-city vibe, while a host of sandy beaches outside the urban bustle bring a cheerful holiday feel. Head to Te Papa Museum for a history lesson and a ticket to one of its many international exhibitions or jump aboard the Wellington Cable Car - the only running funicular railway in the country. For those with an eye for boutique, fashion wander through Cuba St to sample some of the city's best vintage stores. Break for coffee at a hipster cafe and be sure to snap a pic outside the 'Beehive', New Zealand's parliamentary debate chamber. Go behind the scenes at Weta Workshop Experience, the Oscar Award Winning design studio behind Lord Of The Rings, The Hobbit, and Avatar. If you're a foodie at heart, a two-hour round trip to Martinborough is a must-do. Take your time as you wind through spectacular wine country. For an educational day out, learn about New Zealand's native species at Zealandia, the world's first fully-fenced eco-sanctuary and home to over 40 types of endangered and native birds.

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.

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 Half Day Wine Tour with Grape Escape

This wine tasting tour is designed for casual imbibers and wine aficionados. Meet like-minded people and share an appreciation of Hawke's Bay's fantastic wines. Taste great wines made with passion and learn of the areas unique growing conditions. Take home outstanding wines and wonderful memories. Join a fun filled wine tasting afternoon in the sun driving through absolutely stunning scenery. Meet like-minded people and share an appreciation of this region's fantastic wine. Visit four to five wineries and enjoy a cheese platter on the grounds of the Ngatarawa Vineyard beside the lily pond.

Your accommodation: Bella Vista Napier

Bella Vista Motel Napier invites you to experience its friendly service and modern motel units. Located close to shops, restaurants and the renowned Marine Parade with its majestic Norfolk pines.



Day 21



Napier to Rotorua

Cross the Ahimnawa 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.

Te Pā Tū Evening Māori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

New Zealand's Most Awarded Cultural Attraction, presenting Te Pā Tū. Feast on song, drama, tradition, and divine seasonal kai (cuisine) within the forest Pā (village) blanketed by towering Tawa trees, blazing bonfires, and a forest-formed amphitheatre. Te Pā Tū shares Māori history, traditions, and cultural aspirations across 4-hours of celebration and feasting. These events change with each season of the Maramataka, the Māori lunar calendar.

Your accommodation: Quest Rotorua Central

Located in the heart of Rotorua, just a stone's throw from the restaurant and shopping precinct. Purpose built in 2012, all apartments are equipped with modern fixtures, full cooking and laundry facilities that make Quest Rotorua Central your perfect home away from home.

Meals included: Speciality Dinner



Day 22



Explore Rotorua

Peppered with natural hot springs, boiling mud pools and steaming geysers, Rotorua sits within one of the world's most active volcanic regions. Geothermal landmarks aside, this city of sulphur has a rich indigenous history. Home to several prominent Māori tribes, a visit to one of the Māori experiences should be high on your agenda, learn about the special meaning of pounamu-Greenstone with Mountain Jade, explore the geysers and arts of Te Puia or immerse in an evening with Te Pā Tū. An excursion to one of the area's wellness spas is also a must! Try the Polynesian Spa for an invigorating soak in its natural mineral hot springs, Wai Ariki offers an indulging and unwinding restorative journey or pay a quick visit to Secret Spot for a soak and a delicious smash burger! If it is a thrill you are looking for, spike your adrenaline at Rotorua Canopy Tours, soaring above the ancient native forest below. Alternatively, head up the Skyline Rotorua Gondola for soaring lake views, and ride the luge at night for an extra thrill. Make the most of your time in Rotorua with an excursion through the Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland, one of the area's most colourful volcanic attractions. Whatever you are after, Rotorua is almost certain to have it!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - National Kiwi Hatchery Experience

The National Kiwi Hatchery Experience is a special opportunity to gain insight into and view this highly regarded conservation centre. Developed with the visitor experience in mind, the hatchery boasts special viewing opportunities and is hosted by kiwi expert guides who ensure guests leave fully informed and all questions answered. Learn all about New Zealand's intriguing national icon and the efforts of the kiwi husbandry team, see and discover what it takes to hatch and rare chicks, and if you're lucky see baby chicks in person!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Original Ziplining Experience with Rotorua Canopy Tours

Embark on a three-hour adventure through the native New Zealand forest. Journey through the beautiful forest canopy via an incredible network of trails, tree platforms, Ziplines and swing bridges. 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. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

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: Quest Rotorua Central

Located in the heart of Rotorua, just a stone's throw from the restaurant and shopping precinct. Purpose built in 2012, all apartments are equipped with modern fixtures, full cooking and laundry facilities that make Quest Rotorua Central your perfect home away from home.



Day 23



Rotorua to Coromandel Township via Tairua

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 you will travel north to the popular locals' holiday destination of Whangamata with its golden beaches and surf, and onto Tairua. Here, The Mt Paku Summit offers spectacular views over the natural harbour and the Pacific Ocean. Further north you can take a side-trip to the famous Hot Water Beach and the holiday town of Hahei. North of Hahei Beach is the popular walk to Cathedral Cove, well worth the effort to view the massive, aptly named limestone formation on the golden sand beach.

Heading north along the east coast of the Coromandel Peninsula you will pass through the town of Whitianga which sits in Mercury Bay (Te Whanganui-o-Hei). Stop here to take the small foot ferry over to Ferry Landing and explore Cooks Beach and Flaxmill Bay. Continue further north along the peninsula to Kuaotuna Beach and then west via the coastline of Whangapoua Harbour. On the west coast of the peninsula you will reach the Coromandel Township, whose history is steeped with the gold rush of the late 1800's and the pioneers and settlers of the area. 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.

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: Coromandel Court Motel

The Motels are in an excellent location with just a 3-minute stroll to shops and restaurants. Well equipped to ensure a comfortable stay.



Day 24



Coromandel Township to Auckland

The west coast of the peninsular 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.

Your accommodation: Oaks Auckland Hotel

Oaks Auckland Hotel offers a comfortable self-contained apartment in downtown Auckland. Located a short walk from Britomart Transport and the Viaduct. Enjoy your stay in central Auckland surrounded by delicious eateries or use your in-house kitchenette to dine in!



Day 25



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: Sea Spray Suites

Sea Spray Suites offers comfortable and relaxing accommodation close to Paihia's best activities and attractions. Directly across the road is the beautiful Te Ti Beach, exploring Paihia's beautiful waters and wildlife is only a short step away. If you are interested in experiencing New Zealand's heritage, The Waitangi Treaty House is only 1km away.



Day 26



Hole in the Rock Cruise with Fullers

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.

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: Sea Spray Suites

Sea Spray Suites offers comfortable and relaxing accommodation close to Paihia's best activities and attractions. Directly across the road is the beautiful Te Ti Beach, exploring Paihia's beautiful waters and wildlife is only a short step away. If you are interested in experiencing New Zealand's heritage, The Waitangi Treaty House is only 1km away.



Day 27



Cape Reinga & Ninety Mile Beach Full Day Tour with Fullers Bay of Islands - Lunch Included

Journey to the very tip of the North Island and uncover a region of rich Māori tradition along the way on an unforgettable full-day tour. Travel along the sand-swept shore of Ninety Mile Beach in our purpose-built coach and experience sandboarding (weather permitting). In Māori tradition, Cape Reinga or Te Rerenga Wairua is the place where spirits depart on their long journey back to the homeland. Stand at the northernmost point of New Zealand and drink in the panoramic views. As you stand beneath the iconic lighthouse, and watch the Tasman Sea and the mighty Pacific Ocean collide far below, you'll feel the power of this special place. Throughout the day your local driver guide will provide an entertaining and thought-provoking insight into the culture, history and natural wonders of the Far North.

Your accommodation: Sea Spray Suites

Sea Spray Suites offers comfortable and relaxing accommodation close to Paihia's best activities and attractions. Directly across the road is the beautiful Te Ti Beach, exploring Paihia's beautiful waters and wildlife is only a short step away. If you are interested in experiencing New Zealand's heritage, The Waitangi Treaty House is only 1km away.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 28



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 Matakohe 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: Oaks Auckland Hotel

Oaks Auckland Hotel offers a comfortable self-contained apartment in downtown Auckland. Located a short walk from Britomart Transport and the Viaduct. Enjoy your stay in central Auckland surround by delicious eateries or use your in-house kitchenette to dine in!



Day 29



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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - 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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Waiheke Island Explorer Hop On Hop Off Tour

The most flexible tour on Waiheke Island, introducing you to the island's top spots! Start the tour of at Auckland harbor cruising on the ferry to reach Waiheke Island where you can hop on and off as much as you like at any of the 16 convenient stops which include vineyards, beaches and restaurants. If you prefer, stay on board and enjoy a 1 1/2 hour scenic tour of the island. The buses stop at some of the island's iconic spots including Oneroa Village, Onetangi Beach, Batch Winery, the new Tantalus winery/brewery, Mudbrick Vineyard, Cable Bay Vineyard and more. Knowledgeable tour drivers, and the addition of an on-board host, ensure you'll receive the most informative commentary as you travel around and you can get all the local tips and tricks for how best to enjoy Waiheke. The Explorer Hop on Hop off departs from each hop on hop-off location approximately every 60 minutes throughout the day. At the end of the tour hop on the ferry and cruise the sparkling waters back to the Auckland harbor.

Your accommodation: Oaks Auckland Hotel

Oaks Auckland Hotel offers a comfortable self-contained apartment in downtown Auckland. Located a short walk from Britomart Transport and the Viaduct. Enjoy your stay in central Auckland surround by delicious eateries or use your in-house kitchenette to dine in!



Day 30



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:	30
Accommodation:	Motels
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Quest on Cambridge
Day 2	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 3	Punga Grove Motel & Suites
Day 4	Clearbrook Motel and Serviced Apartments
Day 5	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 6	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 7	Lakefront Lodge
Day 8	Lakefront Lodge
Day 9	Motel on York
Day 10	Motel on York
Day 11	Mt Cook Motel
Day 12	Quest on Cambridge
Day 13	The White Morph, Kaikōura
Day 14	Blenheim Palms Motel
Day 15	Ocean View Chalets
Day 16	Ocean View Chalets
Day 17	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 18	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 19	Bella Vista Napier
Day 20	Bella Vista Napier
Day 21	Quest Rotorua Central
Day 22	Quest Rotorua Central
Day 23	Coromandel Court Motel
Day 24	Oaks Auckland Hotel
Day 25	Sea Spray Suites
Day 26	Sea Spray Suites
Day 27	Sea Spray Suites
Day 28	Oaks Auckland Hotel
Day 29	Oaks Auckland Hotel