

Kowhai

20 DAYS NORTH & SOUTH ISLANDS

FROM £6,945



Explore the sandy beaches of the Coromandel coastline on North Island, and dip your toes in the azure waters of Abel Tasman National Park at ‘the top of the South’. Come with us deep into Fiordland National Park to cruise on iconic Milford Sound – one of the all-time ‘must do’ experiences on a trip to New Zealand.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Auckland
We meet you on arrival at the airport, and take you to our recommended hotel. You are free to relax in the City of Sails.
M Social or Fable, Auckland

Day 2 Auckland to Bay of Islands
Leaving the city behind, it does not take us long to find New Zealand’s natural beauty in the Kauri forest. Arriving in the Bay of Islands we step back in time at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds to 1840 when Maori tribes signed a treaty with the British settlers. We arrive in Russell by ferry, to stay at the oldest hotel in town.
Duke of Marlborough Hotel, Russell (2 nights)

Day 3 Bay of Islands Your choice
Today you have the choice of two excursions:
Discover the Far North, travelling along 90 Mile Beach to Cape Reinga where the Tasman Sea meets the Pacific Ocean (lunch included).
Enjoy a **Bay of Islands cruise**. Dolphins often race the boat on our way to the Hole in the Rock (sea permitting). Returning to Russell, this option includes a walking tour with an expert on the town’s rip-roaring past!

Day 4 Bay of Islands to Auckland
Return to Auckland to tour the city sights: panoramic views from Bastion Point, trendy Parnell Village and the vibrant Viaduct Harbour area. A guided tour of Auckland Museum reveals treasures of the Pacific peoples.
M Social or Fable, Auckland

Day 5 Auckland to Coromandel Peninsula
Wave goodbye to the City of Sails as we travel to the Coromandel Peninsula and a scenic drive to Whitianga in Mercury Bay.
Oceans Resort, Whitianga (2 nights)

Day 6 Coromandel Peninsula
A day exploring this paradise of golden beaches, turquoise seas and green forests, including Hot Water Beach, Cathedral Cove and Cooks Beach. At the end of the day you can choose either to take the ferry to Whitianga and return to the hotel on foot, or – if you have walked enough – return with our vehicle.

Day 7 Coromandel Peninsula to Rotorua
To Rotorua, famous not only as a geothermal hotspot, but as a centre for Maori culture. We enjoy a guided tour of Te Puia, where the arts of weaving, carving and tattooing are kept alive. We also see, smell and hear the extraordinary mud pools and steam vents!
Millennium Hotel or Royal Palms (2 nights)

Day 8 Rotorua Your choice
Your choice today is either:
Waimangu Volcanic Valley – A walk through an evolving landscape of boiling craters and jewel-coloured steaming lakes, then a cruise across Lake Rotomahana.
Hobbiton™ Movie Set – Step into Middle Earth on a memorable guided tour of the ‘set’ where *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* were filmed. This evening we all visit a Marae (Maori Village) to discover the culture of New Zealand’s indigenous people, and feast at a Hangi, with food cooked in the heat of the earth.

Day 9 Rotorua to Napier
Our drive across the volcanic plateau takes us from ‘Mordor’ to ‘Miami’. On the east coast, Napier is a contender for Miami’s Art Deco crown, and our local expert reveals all on an entertaining walking tour. This evening’s treat is dinner together at Mission Estate, the country’s oldest wine producer.
Scenic Hotel Te Pania, Napier

Day 10 Napier to Wellington
Travel through vineyards and orchards to Wellington. On arrival in the capital, we see the quirky ‘Beehive’ Parliament building, ride the Cable Car and visit Te Papa, one of the most creative museums in the world.
James Cook Grand Chancellor or Wellington Double Tree by Hilton



Day 11 Wellington to Nelson
As *HMS Endeavour* did 250 years ago, we cross the Cook Strait. Landing in South Island, we pause at Blenheim to taste Sauvignon Blanc, the grape synonymous with New Zealand wine, then on to Nelson, which boasts a sunny microclimate and thriving arts scene.
Heritage Rutherford Hotel, Nelson (2 nights)

Day 12 Abel Tasman National Park
Enjoy a morning cruise exploration of New Zealand’s smallest National Park. View world-famous Split Apple Rock, New Zealand Fur Seals, golden sands, and the turquoise waters of Anchorage, Bark Bay.

Day 13 Nelson to Kaikoura Your choice
Depart Nelson and drive through vineyards surrounding Blenheim in the Marlborough Wine Country. From here travel south down the stunning eastern coastline to Kaikōura – where the mountains meet the sea. Today you have the choice of two excursions:
Whale Watch Cruise: Take a 2-hour Whale Watch cruise experience, aboard a modern catamaran for an exciting, close-up encounter with Giant Sperm Whales in their natural environment.
Wings over Whales: Gain an aerial perspective during a “flightseeing” tour on the world of whales and dolphins in Kaikōura’s stunning marine environment, from the comfort of a high fixed-winged aircraft for unobstructed viewing.
Sudima Hotel, Kaikōura

Day 14 Kaikoura to Christchurch
The road south follows the wild coastline, affording constantly changing seascapes and spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. Then descend into the rolling farmland of North Canterbury, to Christchurch. This afternoon we join punting boatmen, for a relaxing cruise along the River Avon through the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Afterwards, enjoy a journey in style onboard a beautifully restored heritage tram through the changing face of Christchurch’s city centre.
Distinction Hotel, Christchurch

Day 15 Christchurch to Fox Glacier
From Christchurch, traverse the Southern Alps aboard the famous TransAlpine rail journey to the West Coast, with a stop at Arthurs Pass National Park. Pass through historic towns reaching Hokitika and its galleries specialising in pounamu (greenstone) jewellery and art works. Continue south to Franz Josef, then on to the small remote village of Fox.
Te Weheka Fox Glacier



Day 16 Fox Glacier to Wanaka
After a photo-opportunity at mirror-like Lake Matheson, we take the Haast Pass river road deep into the Southern Alps and Mt Aspiring National Park to the lakeside resort of Wanaka.
Edgewater Resort, Wanaka (2 nights)

Day 17 Wanaka Your choice
Nature lovers may take a lake cruise to a conservation island with an eco-guide to discover native birds like the flightless Buff Weka, or you can choose to enjoy a scenic 4WD adventure to a high-country farm above the lake.

Day 18 Wanaka to Te Anau
Depart Wānaka, with your first stop to visit historic Arrowtown. Continue your journey to reach Lake Te Anau gateway to Fiordland National Park. On arrival in Te Anau, discover the wild beauty of Fiordland by jet boat and visit a 220-acre working farm and meet a local farmer to gain insight into New Zealand’s agricultural heritage, enjoy a sheep-shearing and dog-mustering demonstration.
Distinction Luxmore, Te Anau

Day 19 Te Anau to Milford Sound and Queenstown
The journey there, through rainforest, is as spectacular as the destination: Milford Sound! Top this with a memorable cruise past Mitre Peak to the Tasman Sea (picnic lunch on board) before ending the day in Queenstown.
Scenic Suites Queenstown



Day 20 Queenstown
Haere rā – farewell from New Zealand. After breakfast you are transferred to Queenstown Airport for your return home, taking with you your fond memories of your time in New Zealand. Alternatively, should you wish to extend your stay in New Zealand, we can assist you with additional travel arrangements!

EXPERIENCES INCLUDED

- Entry to Waitangi Treaty Grounds
- Journey along 90-mile Beach – OR – take a dolphin and Hole in the Rock cruise
- A private guide around a geothermal valley with geysers, mud pools and hot springs
- Visit Waimangu Volcanic Valley – OR – experience Hobbiton™ Movie Set
- Delve into Maori life and enjoy a powerful cultural performance and feast
- Enjoy a wine tasting and evening meal at Mission Estate in Napier
- Travel on Wellington’s famous Cable Car and visit Te Papa Museum
- Scenic Interislander Ferry journey across the Cook Strait
- Wine tasting at one of Marlborough’s premier wineries
- Cruise the turquoise waters of Abel Tasman National Park
- Enjoy a whalewatch experience from the sea -OR- from the air
- Relax as you’re guided along Christchurch’s Avon River on an authentic Edwardian punt
- Enjoy a journey in style onboard a restored heritage tram through the changing face of Christchurch’s city centre
- Experience one of the most scenic rail journeys in the world across the Southern Alps on the Trans Alpine train
- See native birds on a conservation island – OR – take a scenic 4WD adventure in Wanaka
- Explore the historic gold rush village of Arrowtown
- Discover the wild beauty of Fiordland by jet boat
- Gain an insight into Kiwi farming methods on a visit to a Southland farm
- Cruise, with a picnic lunch, on the breath-taking Milford Sound

1. Abel Tasman National Park
2. Auckland Harbour Front
3. TSS Earnslaw
4. Wellington at night