

## Day 1 - Depart USA

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This evening make your way to the Los Angeles Airport for your overnight flight aboard Air New Zealand to Auckland. Enjoy a dining experience full of super fresh ingredients and flavors and an extensive range of premium New Zealand wines to complement each meal. Relax in the ergonomically designed seats that create generous personal space to ensure a comfortable journey. Take control of the on-demand entertainment and enjoy a wide range of audio and video and a collection of the very best in music.

## Day 2 - International Date Line

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During your flight, you will cross the International Date Line.

## Day 3 - Auckland (L)

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On arrival at Auckland Airport, you will be met and transferred to your hotel by private vehicle for a 1-night stay.

After a quick refresh, your driver will take you on a private 4-hour tour of Auckland. You'll explore beautiful East Coast beaches, capture stunning photos at Achilles Point, and visit the MJ Savage Memorial at Bastion Point. Cross the iconic Harbour Bridge to North Shore, learning about its history. In Devonport, enjoy boutique shops, relax on the beach with a picnic lunch, and climb Mount Victoria for 360° views and the rare Disappearing Gun.

Accommodations: Fable Auckland (Deluxe)

## Day 4 - Rotorua

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Your day begins with a hotel pick-up in Auckland in a comfortable minibus. Enjoy a fully guided drive through the stunning Waikato countryside to Waitomo Caves, where you'll see New Zealand's longest river, beautiful mountains, and various farm animals. At Waitomo, explore ancient caves with unique formations and experience a glowworm boat ride in the grotto. Continuing south to Rotorua, enjoy scenic views of hydro dams, rivers, and more. In Rotorua, we'll guide you past its famous sites, including Lake Rotorua, Government Gardens, and Thermal Springs, before dropping you at your accommodation.

Accommodations: Regent of Rotorua (Superior)

## Day 5 - Rotorua (D)

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This morning, join a guided tour of Rotorua's top geothermal parks: Wai O Tapu Thermal Wonderland, Waimangu Volcanic Valley, Rainbow Mt, and the boiling mud-fields. Your local guide will explain volcanic processes as you explore volcanoes, geysers, boiling mud pools, and hot springs. Highlights include Wai-o-Tapu's colorful hot springs and the Lady Knox geyser, as well as Waimangu's volcanic landscapes and the story of the 1886 Mt Tarawera eruption.

The afternoon is free before enjoying a cultural performance and a 3-course seasonal fusion feast at Te Pā Tū, featuring lesser-known delicacies. A local guide escorts you by coach to the Māori village for an immersive evening that begins with a welcome ceremony by New Zealand's indigenous people. Learn about local customs based on the Māori lunar calendar and watch a powerful display of song and dance.

Accommodations: Regent of Rotorua (Superior)

#### Day 6 - Napier

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Collect your rental vehicle this morning and travel from Rotorua to Napier. As you leave the geothermal wonderland of Rotorua, you'll travel through lush rolling hills, dense forests, and charming rural towns. The route passes by Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake, offering stunning views of its clear waters and surrounding mountains. As you approach Napier, the landscape transitions into the picturesque vineyards and orchards of Hawke's Bay, known for its world-class wine and art deco architecture. The journey is a beautiful blend of natural beauty and cultural richness, making it a memorable part of your travel experience. Enjoy an afternoon of wine tasting, or perhaps take a guided walk around the Art Deco city center (own expense).

Accommodations: The Crown Hotel (Superior)

#### Day 7 - Wellington

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The drive from Napier to Wellington offers a scenic journey through diverse landscapes. As you leave the sun-soaked vineyards and art deco charm of Napier, the road winds through the fertile farmlands and rolling hills of the Hawke's Bay region. Continuing south, you'll pass through the rugged terrain of the Tararua Ranges, with dramatic views of forested mountains and deep valleys. The final stretch along the Kapiti Coast provides stunning ocean vistas, with the Tasman Sea on one side and lush green hills on the other. Approaching Wellington, you'll feel the city's vibrant energy as you arrive in New Zealand's bustling capital, known for its culture, cuisine, and coastal beauty.

#### Day 8 - Wellington

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Make your way to Te Papa Museum and enjoy a 1-hour private tour. Learn about how New Zealand came to be and what the future holds for this island nation on a privately guided tour of the national museum. Explore our diverse natural environment, the continued growth of Māori culture, and what the national art collection has to say about living in New Zealand. Discover intricate details and ask in-depth questions about New Zealand with your own personal guide who will take up close to a diverse array of taonga dotted around the museum.

Late afternoon, make your way to Zealandia for a 2.5-hour experience. Explore the valley by torchlight as your guide leads you in search of the endemic species found in Zealandia. Experience many of the rare and endangered species and see those who only come out at night. Your group may even see some of the 130 little spotted kiwi who call Zealandia home. Gain insights into New Zealand's natural history and the significance within Māori culture. The tour will end with a replenishing cup of hot kawakawa tea (bushman's tea) in the Visitor Centre.

#### Day 9 - Kaikoura

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Return your rental vehicle and board the ferry to travel across Marlborough Sounds to Picton. On arrival, collect a rental vehicle and make your way down the coast to Kaikoura. The drive from Picton to Kaikoura is a breathtaking coastal journey along the rugged eastern coastline of the South Island. With the sparkling Pacific Ocean on one side and the majestic Kaikoura Ranges on the other, this route offers stunning views of both land and sea, making it a scenic highlight of any New Zealand road trip.

Accommodations: Sudima Kaikoura (Superior)

#### Day 10 - Christchurch

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This morning, board your Whale Watch Kaikoura vessel at "The Whaleway Station", Railway Station Road, Kaikoura to commence a Whale Watch Kaikoura cruise. Prepare for exciting up-close encounters with Giant Sperm Whales. Clients may also see migratory humpback whales (June-July), Hector's and Dusky Dolphins, Orcas (December-March) and NZ Fur Seals, as well as plenty of bird species including Royal Albatross, Petrels and Shearwaters. The cruise concludes approximately 3 hours 30 minutes after commencement, back at "The Whaleway Station".

Continue driving through a diverse landscape, transitioning from the dramatic coastal cliffs and rolling hills of Kaikoura to the expansive plains of Canterbury. As you head south, you'll enjoy views of the Pacific Ocean, lush farmland, and the distant Southern Alps, making it a serene and scenic journey to New Zealand's South Island's largest city, Christchurch.

Accommodations: Sudima Christchurch City (Deluxe)

#### Day 11 - Tekapo

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Your drive today from Christchurch to Tekapo offers a stunning journey through the vast Canterbury Plains, gradually giving way to the foothills of the Southern Alps. As you approach Lake Tekapo, the landscape transforms into a picturesque scene of turquoise waters surrounded by snow-capped mountains, creating a breathtaking introduction to the Mackenzie region.

Enjoy the afternoon exploring Tekapo at your leisure. This evening enjoy the wonders of southern night sky and experience the thrill of peering through powerful telescopes. When the stars are hidden from view, you will be taken on a journey to discover the nocturnal world of an astronomer. See research equipment that is out of bounds to the public and experience the wonders of astronomy. With the use of powerful telescopes, you can view distant objects such as planets, star-clusters, nebulae and distant galaxies.

Accommodations: Peppers Bluewater Resort Lake Tekapo (Superior)

#### Day 12 - Queenstown

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Make your way to Mt Cook and check in for your Glacier Explorers trip. Depart by bus out to the Tasman Valley, a short drive away from Mount Cook village. Once you arrive at the Blue Lakes car park there's a 1.5km/25-minute alpine walk through the National Park. Board the Glacier Explorers boat from the Tasman Lake jetty. The whole trip is approximately 2.5 hours, and you can expect to spend approximately one hour on the lake.

Return to Mt Cook for lunch (own expense) before continuing to Queenstown for a three-night stay.

Accommodations: Heritage Hotel Queenstown (Superior)

#### Day 13 - Queenstown

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This morning, you will transfer to the departure point to experience Milford Sound. After check-in, your pilot will provide a pre-flight briefing on the scenic route, highlighting Skippers Canyon, the Paradise region, and the Donne

Glacier. Your 35-minute flight concludes with an overflight of Milford Sound before landing. In Milford Sound, your pilot will escort you to the "Spirit of Milford" for a nature cruise, with a capped number of passengers for an intimate experience. The return flight showcases alpine lakes and waterfalls, including Sutherland Falls, taking another 35 minutes, with the entire trip lasting about five hours, ending back in Queenstown. The remainder of your day is at leisure.

Accommodations: Heritage Hotel Queenstown (Superior)

#### Day 14 - Queenstown (D)

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Today is free to relax and explore Queenstown at your leisure.

This evening, cruise aboard the historic TSS Earnslaw across to Walter Peak High Country Farm. Once at the lakeside Colonel's Homestead Restaurant savor the delicious aromas as our chef has the best of local produce sizzling away on the grill. Overlooking Lake Whakatipu and Queenstown's alpine scenery, the Colonel's Homestead at Walter Peak High Country Farm is the perfect place to spend a few hours. An entertaining farm demonstration is also included, or you can explore the beautiful lakeside gardens. After dinner, cruise back to Queenstown.

Accommodations: Heritage Hotel Queenstown (Superior)

#### Day 15 - Depart Queenstown

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Enjoy a free morning before returning your rental vehicle to Queenstown Airport prior to your return flights to the US.