

## Day 1 - Auckland (D)

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Welcome to Auckland, New Zealand's City of Sails! Auckland is known for its multicultural hub of food, music, arts, and culture.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Auckland has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to visit the Sky Tower or shop along bustling Queen Street. You may even fancy a drink in one of the charming bars or eateries of Vulcan Lane.

Your tour officially begins this evening, as you join your fellow travellers and Tour Director this evening for a welcome reception.

Accommodations: Fable Auckland (Deluxe)

## Day 2 - Auckland - Hamilton (B,L,D)

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Your journey awaits as you join the Northern Explorer Scenic train. Marvel at rural New Zealand's lush landscapes from the comfort of your scenic carriage. From the sparkling waters of the Waitematā Harbour to the green pastures of the Waikato – you won't want to miss a moment.

Arriving in Hamilton, your coach waits for you to take you to the famous Hamilton Gardens.

Engross yourself in the garden's collection of themed rooms as you are led by an experienced guide. Learn about the history, context and meaning of each garden before finishing this delightful morning with a picnic on the lush lawns. Surrounded by beauty, you will be in utter bliss.

In the early afternoon, enjoy some free time in the heart of Hamilton before departing for an evening visit to Raglan – a seaside surfer town. It's here that you'll enjoy a Sunset Dinner Cruise on the pristine harbour.

Please note: The tour departing January 27, 2025 will journey by coach from Auckland to Hamilton (2hrs)

## Day 3 - Hamilton (B)

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This morning you will depart for your next exciting excursion – Maungatautari Sanctuary Mountain.

Let your guide transport you into an ancient world of ecological wonders as you explore New Zealand's very own pest-free environment, within native forest. On this excursion, you will walk through the home of some of New Zealand's most endangered species. Discover North Island's robins, tomtits, kākā, pōpokotea, bellbirds, hihi, tīeke, fantails, kereru and wētā. This pre-human paradise has one of the world's longest pest-proof fences.

Your expedition continues after a lunch stop in New Zealand's "Kiwiana Capital", Otorohanga. Make sure you capture a photo of the giant Kiwi birds! Next, discover the famous Waitomo Glow worm Caves and be dazzled by the seemingly star-filled sky as you glide by boat through this impressive cave formation.

Tonight, explore Hamilton's riverside walks and shops on this free evening. Enjoy one of the many nearby restaurants as the sun sets over the Waikato River.

#### Day 4 - Hamilton - Tongariro NP (B,D)

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Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, today you'll soar over icy mountain streams as you travel to Tongariro National Park, the home of three volcanic mountains.

Tongariro National Park has a diverse range of ecosystems and spectacular landscapes. In 1993, it was recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and was the first property to be inscribed with the criteria describing the cultural values it holds for Māori.

Enjoy a mini excursion up to Tūroa ski field. Here you'll want to capture a panoramic photo of Middle Earth before descending into Ohakune.

Tonight, enjoy a special dinner with your fellow travellers.

Accommodations: Powderhorn Chateau (Superior)

#### Day 5 - Tongariro NP (B)

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Today is free for you to discover one of the region's many exciting excursions. Choose from the optional activities on offer and personalize your perfect holiday. Perhaps you will hop aboard a rail cart journey or join a horse trekking experience that takes you along expansive hills, mountains, rivers and into native forest.

If you're after an active day, why not explore Ohakune's historical cycle trail? Rent e-bikes and discover old viaducts, tunnels, old settlers' camps and reclaimed native forests along the Old Coach Road.

Accommodations: Powderhorn Chateau (Superior)

#### Day 6 - Tongariro NP - Wellington (B,D)

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Your day begins with an elevated experience up the northern face of Mt Ruapehu for panoramic views of the volcanic landscape. Drink in the views of Mt Ngāuruhoe, Mt Tongariro, and beyond across the central North Island.

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, waving goodbye to Tongariro National Park, as you settle into your uber-comfortable seat. Don't get too comfortable though; dramatic rivers, gorges, and ravines are just around the bend! Stretch your legs and explore the open-air carriage to get the best view from the train.

A little later, why not indulge in a treat from our onboard licensed café? As you glide through rich green farmland and past dramatic coastlines, enjoy the picturesque Porirua Harbour as you arrive in Wellington.

Welcome to Wellington – New Zealand's windy capital! You've arrived at Wellington Railway Station, which is just a stone's throw from downtown, the Beehive and Parliament Buildings. You won't want to waste a moment of time after checking into the hotel - your evening is free to explore this culinary capital from Queen's Wharf to Cuba street and beyond.

#### Day 7 - Wellington (B,D)

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The perfect day does exist – and it includes exploring Wellington!

Today is free for you to experience vibrant Wellington as you please. Start by joining our Wellington City introduction tour and then head off to explore Cuba Street's cafés, bookstores, and eccentric shops. Get cultured

at Te Papa, New Zealand's National Museum, or visit Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary to surround yourself by native birdlife and regenerating forest.

You won't get bored with the plethora of activities on offer. From coffee, culture, historic buildings to botanic gardens and much more... the list goes on! If you need any suggestions or recommendations, just reach out to your helpful Tour Director or our Travel Centre to pre-book an experience.

Enjoy dinner tonight with your fellow travellers.

#### Day 8 - Wellington - Marlborough (B)

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This morning you will say poroporoaki ki te motu raki (good-bye to the North Island) as you sail to the South Island, crossing the Cook Strait on the Interislander ferry. As the shores of the North Island slowly disappear, settle down in the comfy seats in the Premium Lounge. Treat yourself to a mimosa and enjoy a hearty seafaring breakfast but save some room for morning tea!

On your journey across Cook Strait you may spot pods of dolphins playing in the wake or, if you are very lucky, whales. Don't spend all your time inside – as you enter the stunning Queen Charlotte Sound, enjoy the views as you cruise past the remnants of whaling stations, remote working sheep farms, pristine native bush and mussel farms. Admire the beauty of this coastal paradise as you arrive at the gateway of the South Island, Picton. Step off the Interislander Ferry and join your next world-class experience aboard the Marlborough Wine Tour.

Accommodations: Scenic Hotel Marlborough (Superior)

#### Day 9 - Marlborough - Kaikoura (B)

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Today you will be travelling to Kaikōura. But first, you will go on the Sky Omaka Aviation Museum Tour. Relax as the train glides across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breath-taking beauty. Keep an eye out for the fur seals lazing on the rocks!

Once in Kaikōura, the evening will be yours to enjoy some iconic kai moana (seafood) at one of the quaint restaurants before enjoying your luxurious ocean-front hotel.

Accommodations: Sudima Kaikoura (Superior)

#### Day 10 - Kaikoura - Christchurch (B,D)

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Today will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience of whale watching! Enjoy today's thrill of an up-close encounter with wildlife.

After this outstanding experience, we're sure you will be feeling peckish. Head to the beach to sample some iconic New Zealand food - you can't go wrong with the humble Kiwiana fish and chips. Work off the deep-fried delights by wandering through the wonderful array of local artisan stores and souvenir shops.

Gather again for the next leg of your journey. Late afternoon, board the Coastal Pacific for the Scenic Plus experience, treating yourself to unparalleled vistas as you glide along the coastline. Revel in dinner and drinks, included with your Scenic Plus package, as you unwind and soak in the breathtaking scenery.

Relax for the remainder of the evening before hitting the town the following day.

## Day 11: Christchurch (B,D)

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Christchurch, the hub for South Island exploration, is also a wonderful city that blends modern architecture and technology with the 19th-century Anglican 'gothic revival' architectural influence. Often remembered for its earthquake in 2011, the city is rebuilding itself into a multicultural haven.

Today you are free to explore the museums, Riverside Markets, Punting on the Avon, Gondola and botanical gardens. There is also a multitude of delicious cafés tucked into quaint side streets we're sure you will love. Enjoy exploring the city onboard the Hop on Hop off Tram service.

This evening, you will re-join your fellow travellers for a special dinner on Christchurch's historic dinner tram. Enjoy a wonderful circuit of the city while indulging in fantastic conversation and seasonal cuisine.

## Day 12 - Christchurch - West Coast (B,L)

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The moment has come to experience the world-famous TranzAlpine journey indulging in Scenic Plus experience through the Southern Alps, emerging in the West Coast!

On this fantastic escape, you will see epic vistas, soar on the edges of the ice fed Waimakariri River, traverse through the Great Divide, and experience ever-changing landscapes. The natural scenery isn't the only marvel, though. The TranzAlpine passes through the Otira Tunnel, a true engineering marvel of 100 years!

Once you arrive on the West Coast, a private coach will take you even further off the beaten track to Punakaiki Pancake Rocks. Here you will explore curious limestone formations and blowholes before finishing your day in the ocean-front town of Hokitika.

Accommodations: Te Waonui Forest Retreat (Deluxe)

## Day 13 - West Coast (B,D)

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This morning, you'll start your West Coast adventure by visiting one of the South Island's most popular activities – the West Coast Tree Top Walk. This elevated adventure will get you acquainted with the locals – the ancient Rimu and Kamahi trees.

After your sky-high experience, continue south into Glacier Country. Franz Josef Glacier is quite special in that it survives in coastal rainforest temperatures. With a short walk to a viewpoint, you'll get a fantastic view of the vast valley, as well as a sneak peek of Franz Josef Glacier itself. If you would prefer to get up close, we recommend booking an optional helicopter flight. This will ensure you are getting the best possible view of this natural wonder.

After indulging in the local activities and retail therapy in Franz Josef's souvenir shops, join your group for an impeccable highlight meal at Te Waonui Forest Retreat.

Accommodations: Te Waonui Forest Retreat (Deluxe)

## Day 14 - West Coast - Queenstown (B)

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Today you will explore the Haast Pass. With changing landscapes around every bend, this journey of about five hours to Queenstown, will be one of the most scenic drives you may ever take. While aboard an exciting river boat and private coach, marvel at the beaches, crystal blue lakes and rivers, mountain peaks, lush vineyards, charming

plains and majestic glaciers as your Tour Director guides you between local hidden gems. Stop in unique locations that only locals know about.

Emerging on the other side of the pass, explore the local fruit hotspot – Mrs. Jones' Fruit Stall before exploring the cobblestone streets of Arrowtown.

After an exciting plunge into the history of this gold rush village, you will arrive in the world-famous resort town of Queenstown!

#### Day 15 - Milford Sound (B,L)

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Make sure you charge your camera before you set off on today's adventure. Today you're heading to Milford Sound/ Piopiotahi to be engulfed in towering peaks and waltz through plunging valleys.

After travelling through native rainforests, meadows, and past beautiful reflective pools, you will join your cruise in Milford Sound. Enjoy one of the most stunning natural features New Zealand has to offer. Aboard the cruise, you will meander down the sound to experience the rumble of Bowen and Stirling Falls as they plummet from glacial hanging valleys. Marvel at the sheer pinnacle of Mitre Peak, rising from the deep waters of the fjord.

Or, if you'd like to soar like the Piopio (ancient bird), why not elevate your day by booking a flight into the Sound by plane?

After this adventure, you will be heading back to Queenstown for a relaxing evening.

#### Day 16 - Queenstown (B,D)

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Queenstown truly has something for everyone. Personalize your day to be as active or relaxed as you'd like. Whether it's exploring Walter Peak on a horse trekking adventure, hopping on the gondola for inspiring views, or sipping wine in Gibbston Valley, there is no shortage of activities to delight your senses.

Enjoy a 'final hurrah' this evening as we board the TSS Earnslaw Steamship Cruise, dinner, and show. Reflect on your great adventure with your fellow travellers as you cruise to your dining experience at Walter Peak overlooking the beautiful Table Bay. Sit back and watch a true Kiwi experience as you learn about sheep shearing and dog herding in this beautiful setting. This evening will truly encapsulate your great journey as a truly New Zealand highlight.

Not ready to call it a night? Sip cocktails and indulge in Queenstown's exciting nightlife alongside the sparkling Lake Wakatipu.

#### Day 17 - Depart Queenstown (B)

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Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast with a transfer to Queenstown Airport.