



NEW ZEALAND GARDEN HOLIDAYS

16 DAY NEW ZEALAND GARDEN HOLIDAY TOUR



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Silver Fern Holidays
The New Zealand Specialists



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PRICE ON
REQUEST

A must for every garden lover. Journey, by coach, through some of New Zealand's most iconic scenic, stopping en route to visit some of the country's most beautiful natural and landscaped gardens. Your tour of these horticultural masterpieces will be punctuated by several memorable sightseeing excursions, including: a visit to the Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley, featuring the Pohutu Geyser; a traverse of the Southern Alps aboard the famous Tranz-Alpine train; and a scenic cruise of Doubtful Sound.

Day 1 ARRIVE AUCKLAND

Welcome to New Zealand! Meet and greet on arrival at Auckland International Airport, before being transferred to your hotel.

Day 2 AUCKLAND

This morning, travel west of city to visit the stunning Totara Waters garden and stop at Coopers Creek Winery – which, since humble beginnings, has matured over the years with the landscaping of the gardens, positioning it as one of the most picturesque settings in the region. Then visit the aviaries garden at Twin Lakes, Coatesville. This afternoon, return to Auckland to tour of the highlights of Auckland City (the City of Sails), exploring the lively waterfront area and the base of New Zealand's America's Cup Challenge. Enjoy the relaxing views along Tamaki Drive, which runs east, past peaceful sheltered bays, to Auckland's most expensive real estate, as well as a stop at Bastion Point to see panoramic views of the city and harbour. Also visit the nearby Eden garden – formed within the former Eden Quarry.

Tonight is free for you to explore the local restaurants, cafes, and bars.

Day 3 AUCKLAND / HAMILTON / ROTORUA

This morning visit the Auckland Botanic Gardens, home to over 10,000 plant types. Afterwards, continue to visit the famous Ayrlies country garden, one of the most celebrated gardens in New Zealand. Sculptured from a bare paddock in 1964, this garden is approaching maturity and is known for its sweeping lawns and informal, but detailed, plantings and vibrant, but sensitive, use of colour. New Zealand native plants are a strong component of the garden, and there is a large wetland area linking the garden to the waters of the Hauraki Gulf.

Leave Auckland and travel south over the Bombay Hills through the Dairy Rich Waikato Countryside, where you arrive at Hamilton to visit the impressive Hamilton Gardens. The unique theme of Hamilton Gardens is 'the story of gardens', which is explored through a series of five garden collections. The Paradise Garden Collection features gardens representing some of the most significant garden design traditions. The Productive Garden Collection represents different aspects of the relationship between people and plants. The Fantasy Garden Collection represents different forms of garden fantasy. The Cultivar Garden Collection features the story of plants selected and bred for the garden. The Landscape Garden Collection is divided into areas representing the different historic interpretations of an idealised landscape.

From Hamilton, continue to the thermal wonderland of Rotorua, the Sulphur City. Rotorua has the most energetic thermal activity in the country, with bubbling mud pools, gushing geysers, beautiful coloured hot springs, and terrace formations created by mineral water. The city is also known for its Maori cultural activities.

Day 4 ROTORUA / NEW PLYMOUTH

This morning, enjoy a city tour of Rotorua, including a visit to the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute and Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley, featuring the Pohutu Geyser.

Depart Rotorua to New Plymouth, via the west coast of the North Island. New Plymouth is dominated by the almost perfect volcanic cone of Mt Taranaki. The mixture of mountain and coastal scenery is difficult to beat. The Taranaki area is known for its dairy farming and off shore natural gas and oil field resources.

Day 5 NEW PLYMOUTH

Today, take in a city sights tour of New Plymouth, featuring the gardens and beaches of this unique town, including visits to the following gardens:

- Mark and Abbie Jury's Tikorangi and Ngamamuku Gardens
- Hollards Gardens
- Pukeiti Gardens



Day 6 NEW PLYMOUTH / WELLINGTON

Today, depart New Plymouth southbound to Wellington, via Wanganui. Stop en route near Wanganui, to visit Paloma Gardens where Nicki and Clive Higgin have specialized in exotic flora to produce a landscape like no other in New Zealand. Nicki and Clive have landscaped with plants from all over the world, from the jungles of Asia to the deserts of Africa and the Americas. The garden is best presented as several distinct zones, including the Palm Garden, the Desert House, the Garden of Death, the Bamboo Forests, the Jardin Exotique, the Wedding Lawn, and the two Arboreta.

Afterwards, continue south to Wellington. Upon arrival, enjoy a visit to Te Papa, New Zealand's National Museum, which offers visitors a unique and authentic experience of New Zealand's treasures and stories. Time to explore Te Papa independently, to learn about the shaping of its land, the spirit of its diverse peoples, its unique wildlife and landscapes, and its distinctive popular culture.

Day 7 WELLINGTON

Today, enjoy a sightseeing tour of New Zealand's Capital City. Highlights include a drive along the pretty Oriental Bay to Mt Victoria, for the 360-degree panoramic views of the city, Wellington Harbour, and the surrounding hills. Stop at Otari-Wilton's bush garden, for a guided walk of this unique plant sanctuary, which has New Zealand's foremost collection of native plants, including many rare and endangered species. Also visit the Wellington Botanic Gardens for a guided walk.

The gardens comprise 25 hectares of unique landscape, protected native forest, specialised plant collections, colourful floral displays, and conifers. There are magnificent views over Wellington city and harbour. The Lady Norwood Rose Garden provides a colourful spectacle, with 106 formal beds, each containing a different cultivar.

Remainder of day at leisure, in Wellington, to enjoy the local café culture and arts and crafts shops.

Day 8 WELLINGTON / CHRISTCHURCH

Today commences with a cruise across the Wellington Harbour out onto the Cook Strait on the Interislander Ferry, and through New Zealand's only true sounds, the picturesque Marlborough Sound, into Picton. The bustling port of Picton is the terminal for inter-island ferries, and gateway to the 'Mainland' – the South Island's self-proclaimed nickname.

At Picton, reboard your coach and pass south through the grape growing region of Marlborough, then travel along a thin ledge of land pinned between the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean and the rugged Kaikoura Ranges. Pass Kaikoura, a popular whalewatching area, then cross the farmlands of the North Canterbury Plains and arrive in Christchurch.

Day 9 CHRISTCHURCH & AKAROA

This morning take a sightseeing tour of Christchurch City. See the River Avon, Hagley Park, the Christchurch Museum, plus learn about the effects that the 2011 earthquakes have had upon the city. Visit the Christchurch Botanic Gardens for a guided tour. Renowned for its beautiful trees, the Christchurch Botanic Garden is contained within a loop of the meandering Avon River, near the city centre. From a solitary oak planted in 1863, the gardens have flourished – becoming the heart of the garden city. Through depression, war, and earthquakes, the gardens remain a jewel in the centre of Christchurch, a permanent monument to the beauty of the natural world, and a symbol of growth and renewal. The gardens now feature one of the finest collections of exotic and native plants in New Zealand.

In the late morning, travel out to Akaroa, a small settlement on Banks Peninsula. Akaroa was settled by the French in an early attempt to colonise New Zealand, and still retains a good deal of French character in its street names, boutique shops, and cafes. Here, visit The Giant's House. Home to artist Josie Martin, The Giants House is an historic Akaroa house, featuring original artwork, terraced gardens with sculptures, welded steel sculptures, and other creations.

In the late afternoon, retrace your journey back to Christchurch.

Day 10 CHRISTCHURCH / FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER

From Christchurch, traverse the Southern Alps aboard the famous Trans-Alpine train to Arthur's Pass. 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. Your train then climbs into the Southern Alps. Once the train has crossed into the Southern Alps, you are met at the village of Arthur's Pass by your coach, to continue your journey to the West Coast – or 'the Coast' as locals call it – stopping in Hokitika, where a visit is made to the Greenstone and Glass Blowing factories. Further south, enter the Westland National Park, the home of Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers. On arrival, time is available for optional scenic flights, before continuing onto your overnight accommodation.



Day 11 FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER – QUEENSTOWN

Driving towards the southern end of the South Island's West Coast Road, you get a strong sense of entering a primeval land, and a feeling of total isolation. Arriving at Haast, you are surrounded by a landscape of rainforest, wetlands, sand dunes, and surf-pounded shingle beaches. This wilderness forms part of the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area, so designated because South Westland and Fiordland have some of the most dramatic forest and mountain scenery and natural resources in the world. From the Westland National Park, travel through the Haast River valleys, and over the Haast Pass, to Makaroa and on to the upper reaches of Lake Wanaka. Travel past Lake Hawea, then reach the popular Lake Wanaka – the starting point of the mighty Clutha River. This afternoon, travel via Cromwell, following the rugged Kawarau Gorge Road, into Queenstown. Nestled among glacier-rounded hills and dramatic rugged mountain peaks, Queenstown is New Zealand's premier year-round alpine resort.

Day 12 QUEENSTOWN

Today is a day of leisure – allowing you time to relax or to enjoy your own choice of activities.

This evening, take a cruise across Lake Wakatipu on the steamer, TSS Earnslaw, to Walter Peak Station, to dine at the Colonel's Homestead and to view the gardens.

Day 13 QUEENSTOWN / DOUBTFUL SOUND / TE ANAU

Today, leave Queenstown, following the shore of Lake Wakatipu, beneath the towering Remarkables, to Lake Manapouri, for a cruise across the lake to the West Arm, before boarding a coach to cross over the Wilmot Pass to Deep Cove. Here, board another vessel for a cruise of Doubtful Sound – viewing excellent waterfalls, rainforest, mountains, and wildlife. Of particular interest are a resident pod of Bottlenose Dolphins and a colony of Fur Seals. On return, the vessel's engines will be turned off, allowing you to experience the 'Sound of Silence'. Retrace your journey to Pearl Harbour and Lake Manapouri via the Wilmot Pass, featuring moss, lichens, and liverworts at the Moss Garden. From Manapouri, travel on to Te Anau for your overnight.

Day 14 TE ANAU / INVERCARGILL / DUNEDIN

Depart Te Anau, and travel through some of New Zealand's most populated sheep country to Lumsden, then south to New Zealand's southernmost city. On arrival, enjoy a sightseeing tour of Invercargill, then time out for lunch before visiting Maple Glen Gardens in Wyndham for a guided tour, viewing this magnificent 25 acre private garden, nursery, aviary, woodland, and wetland, set in the rolling green countryside of Southland. From here, continue on to Dunedin – a charming city renowned as the 'Edinburgh of the South'.

Day 15 DUNEDIN – CHRISTCHURCH

This morning, travel along Otago Peninsula for a visit to Larnach Castle and a guided tour of their magnificent gardens. The scenery is spectacular, and although the garden is subjected to wind and low rainfall, it contains a unique collection of plants seldom seen elsewhere. The plantings reflect owner Margaret Barker's interest in New Zealand plants, and in their southern hemisphere relations. Larnach Castle garden has a special historic ambience – it is beautifully landscaped with a disciplined eye, reflecting appropriately its association with the castle.

Leave Dunedin and travel north to Christchurch, via Oamaru, for a look at the 'White Stone City'. The old buildings have been constructed with local limestone. It was from Oamaru that New Zealand's first frozen meat was shipped in 1882, taking over three months to reach England – and thus began New Zealand's most important export industry. From Oamaru, we follow the east coast north, back to Christchurch.

Day 16 DEPART CHRISTCHURCH

Farewell from New Zealand – today you are transferred from the hotel to Christchurch International Airport for your flight home.

Important Note

The itinerary is just a guide and summarises our favourite places, sights and experiences. Any or all of them may be enjoyed as part of a tour.

Have a look at our recommendations, highlight places you wish to include and get in touch with us: together we can create a unique and unforgettable holiday experience.