

Best of New Zealand

23 DAYS NORTH & SOUTH ISLANDS
FROM £3,475



See the best of New Zealand in three weeks taking in the thermal splendours of Rotorua on the North Island and the majestic alpine scenery of Fiordland in the South, with some unforgettable experiences en route.

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE

- The volcanic island of Rangitoto on a day trip from Auckland
- A boat trip through subterranean caves where glow worms live
- Relaxing in the naturally hot spa pools of Rotorua
- A Hangi, the traditional Maori feast cooked in the earth's own heat
- Tramping the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, New Zealand's finest one day walk
- Discovering old and new Wellington on a walking tour
- Swimming in the crystal clear coves of the Abel Tasman National Park
- A flight around Aoraki Mt Cook, New Zealand's highest peak
- The majesty of Doubtful or Milford Sound on a nature-focused cruise
- A thrilling jet-boat ride in Queenstown

1. The Remarkables, Queenstown
2. Te Puia, Rotorua
3. Punting on the River Avon, Christchurch
4. Chateau Tongariro
5. Milford Sound

ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive Auckland

We greet you on arrival at the airport and take you to your hotel where you can relax before getting to know the 'City of Sails'.

Day 2 Auckland

A great start to city sightseeing is to ascend the Sky Tower: a SkyWalk is optional! Nearby Queen Street is the main strip and you could end your day with a waterfront dinner in the new Wynyard Quarter.

Day 3 Auckland to Waitomo to Rotorua

Collect a rental vehicle and head south to Waitomo Glow Worm caves before being welcomed to a real New Zealand home. Your hosts are delighted to show off the farm, and share a home-cooked dinner with you before you enjoy a good night's sleep.

Day 4 Rotorua

From the Buried Village to Whakarewarewa, Te Puia and Waimangu: all fascinating attractions that blend the two aspects that make Rotorua a must: Maori culture and geothermal activity. We can also recommend an authentic Maori hangi for dinner!

Day 5 Rotorua to Tongariro National Park or Napier

On the road south, make time to see the Lady Knox Geyser at Wai O Tapu Geothermal Park. Stop in Taupo for lunch before entering Tongariro National Park, a starkly beautiful volcanic landscape. (Alternatively head east to the Art Deco town of Napier.)

Day 6 Tongariro National Park or Napier

Often described as the finest one day walk in NZ, the Tongariro Crossing is a full day traverse of the 'saddle' between Mts Tongariro and Ngauruhoe. Shorter walks are also possible. A round of golf on an all-weather course, or a soak in a natural hot pool are other options.

Day 7 Tongariro or Napier to Wellington

Travel through country towns to Wellington, still the 'coolest little capital in the world' thanks to its combination of location, architecture, café culture and laid-back lifestyle. Drop off your rental vehicle before a stroll through Civic Square to a Queens Wharf restaurant.

Day 8 Wellington to Picton to Nelson

Board the Interislander ferry to cruise to the South Island, boarding a coach in Picton for the transfer to Nelson, the sunniest town in New Zealand.

Day 9 Abel Tasman National Park

It would be easy to gush about the beauty of Abel Tasman National Park! Golden beaches, turquoise water and pristine native bush combine to create a natural paradise you can explore by boat, kayak or on foot. We have plenty of tips for you.

Day 10 Nelson to Punakaiki

Collect a rental vehicle and drive through the challenging Buller Gorge to Westport, with a stop for seal-spotting at Cape Foulwind. Follow the rugged coast to Punakaiki to see the weird blowholes at Dolomite Point.

Day 11 Punakaiki to Hokitika

Today your route takes you down the West Coast, through Greymouth, to Hokitika, keeping the Tasman Sea on your right and the Southern Alps on your left.

Day 12 Hokitika to Franz Josef

Hokitika, once a gold rush town, is now a haven for craftspeople and a good place to buy pounamu (greenstone) carvings. Arrive in Franz Josef in time to see the glacier on a guided hike or helicopter trip: landing on the Tasman Glacier is an unforgettable experience!



NORTH ISLAND

SOUTH ISLAND

ACCOMMODATION

We arrange quality accommodation that we have seen for ourselves, balancing location, standards and availability. This tour price is based on 4-star central hotels in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, with a mix of hotels and charming B&Bs elsewhere, while the homely farmstay is a taste of rural life. We will be delighted to discuss alternative accommodation at additional cost, for example boutique hotels and lodges.

Day 13 Franz Josef to Wanaka

Travel south through native rainforest, over mountain streams into the rugged beauty of the Haast Pass. Continue round the shores of glacial Hawea and Wanaka lakes to Wanaka township.

Day 14 Wanaka

One of our favourite destinations, the snow-capped peaks, long river valleys and lush forest are centred around the beautiful lake. There are 'tramping' opportunities for every experience level.

Day 15 Wanaka

A jet boat trip or a waterfall climb are both guaranteed to set the pulses racing. In the evening, take a seat at Cinema Paradiso: they range from slouchy sofas to a modified Morris Minor!

Day 16 Wanaka to Te Anau

Travel through Central Otago, around the shores of Lake Wakatipu to Te Anau, one of Fiordland's most beautiful lakes. Round off the day with a lakeside stroll.

Day 17 Te Anau to Milford Sound to Te Anau

You have a choice of memorable trips today: either Doubtful or Milford Sound. Stupendous scenery and untouched nature revealed by expert guides during an unforgettable boat trip, returning to Te Anau late afternoon.

Day 18 Te Anau to Queenstown

Drive to Queenstown, sometimes called the 'Switzerland of the Southern Hemisphere' and superbly set on Lake Wakatipu.

Day 19 Queenstown

So much to do, so little time! Stroll in well-kept gardens, cruise Lake Wakatipu or try an adrenalin activity like bungy jumping or off-road 4X4 tour.

Day 20 Queenstown to Mount Cook to Twizel

Drive through Mackenzie Country to Lake Pukaki and up to Mt Cook Village. Short walks to Kea Point or into the Hooker Valley offer wonderful mountain views. Descend to Twizel to overnight.

Day 21 Twizel to Christchurch

Make an early stop at the Church of the Good Shepherd, whose altar window frames Lake Tekapo. Cross the tussock plains, so evocative of sheep country, through Fairlie and Geraldine to arrive in Christchurch.

Day 22 Christchurch

Following 2011's earthquake, this Garden City is rebuilding, blending old (Botanic Gardens, River Avon and the Tram) with new (the Cardboard Cathedral and countless pop-up bars) to reclaim its place as the premier city of the South Island.

Day 23 Depart Christchurch

Transfer to Christchurch Airport for your flight home, or ask us about dovetailing this itinerary with one of our Small Group Journeys to extend your time in New Zealand.

