

Rimu

16 DAYS NORTH & SOUTH ISLANDS
FROM £3,980



Our Rimu Small Group Journey focuses on the natural beauty of both North and South Islands, from the sea and sand of the Coromandel coast to the Ice Age awe of Milford Sound. Active sightseeing by boat and on foot, as well as on board our agile vehicle, enables us to discover warm springs, boiling mud, temperate rainforest and snowy peaks!

ITINERARY

Day 1 Auckland
We meet your flight and transfer you to our hotel, after which you're free to relax and explore: Sky City is a good place to orientate yourself.
M Social, Auckland

Day 2 Auckland to Coromandel Peninsula
We cross the Hauraki Gulf by ferry, to land on the Coromandel's west coast, taking a fun narrow-gauge railway trip, then a scenic drive to Whitianga on lovely Mercury Bay.
Oceans Resort, Whitianga (2 nights)

Day 3 Coromandel Peninsula
An energetic day, discovering this natural paradise on foot and by boat; the bubbling sands of Hot Water Beach and the rock formations of Cathedral Cove are highlights. We take a water taxi to Hahei to re-join our vehicle and head to Cooks Beach. From here, there's a choice: catch a ferry ride to Whitianga and walk to our hotel, or travel back with our driver.

Day 4 Coromandel Peninsula to Rotorua
A change of scene indeed! Rotorua is the epicentre of New Zealand's geothermal activity and its Maori heritage. Our walk around Te Puia with a private guide reveals bubbling mud, steaming pools, indigenous crafts and even timid kiwis!
Prince's Gate Hotel, Rotorua (2 nights)

Day 5 Rotorua YOUR CHOICE
Today you have the choice of two excursions:
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: a must for Tolkien fans!
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 6 Rotorua to Napier
Heading across the volcanic Tongariro Plateau we arrive on the sunny east coast, where the Art Deco town of Napier rivals Miami for its architecture: we learn why, during a walking tour with a local expert. This is also wine country, and tonight's excellent dinner is hosted at New Zealand's oldest winery, Mission Estate.
Scenic Hotel Te Pania, Napier

Day 7 Napier to Wellington
Today we head to breezy Wellington, taking in the panorama from the Kelburn Lookout before descending to sea level by cable car. No stay in the capital is complete without a visit to 'our place of treasures' as Te Papa translates from the Maori: this museum is world-class!
James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor, Wellington

Day 8 Wellington to Nelson
When is a ferry journey a scenic cruise? When the Interislander crosses the Cook Strait and sails up Queen Charlotte Sound. We disembark at Picton then drive to Blenheim and taste some famous Marlborough wines, before our driver delivers us to Nelson. This cheerful arty town enjoys a sunny microclimate and is a great base for discovering 'the top of the South'.
Heritage Rutherford Hotel, Nelson (2 nights)



Day 9 Abel Tasman National Park YOUR CHOICE
Paradise found! Abel Tasman National Park is a mosaic of coves and lagoons sheltered by forested ranges. Few roads mean most journeys are by boat and on foot. Your choice is:
Scenic Cruise: 3-4 hours (no walking) – A morning cruise reveals golden sands and turquoise waters, returning to Nelson for a free afternoon.

Astrolabe Beaches & Bays (plus 2.5 hour walk) – After the Scenic Cruise, disembark at Apple Tree Bay for a self-guided walk (7 kms) to Anchorage Beach. Later transfer to Nelson.
Forest & Swing-Bridge (plus 4 hour walk) – After the Scenic Cruise, disembark at Medlands Beach for a self-guided hike (10.5 kms) that includes South Head lookout and Cleopatra's Pool. Later transfer to Nelson.

Day 10 Nelson to Punakaiki
We travel through the little-known Nelson Lakes National Park to Lake Rotiti and take the challenging Buller River Gorge, carved out of the forest by pioneers, to reach the rugged west coast. Punakaiki is renowned for its rock stacks and blow-holes shaped by the pounding Tasman Sea.
Punakaiki Resort, Punakaiki

Day 11 Punakaiki to Fox Glacier
The frontier town of Hokitika is an attractive halt on the Great Coast Road before we reach glacier country, where Franz Josef Glacier and Fox Glacier reach almost to sea level. Little Fox Village is our base and, weather permitting, there is the chance to fly over the 'rivers of ice' and even land in the snow (at own cost).
Distinction Hotel, Fox Glacier



Day 12 Fox Glacier to Wanaka
After a photo-opp at mirror-like Lake Matheson, we take the Haast Pass river road, deep into Mt Aspiring National Park. The atmosphere lightens as we reach lovely Lake Wanaka, reflecting peaks that in summer offer fine hiking; in winter superb skiing.
Edgewater Resort, Wanaka (2 nights)

Day 13 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 14 Wanaka to Te Anau
Fiordland awaits, and the scenic route takes us over the Crown Range via Arrowtown and down to Lake Wakatipu to Lake Te Anau, the largest (by volume) freshwater lake in the South Island.
Distinction Hotel Luxmore, Te Anau

Day 15 Te Anau to Milford Sound to Queenstown
The climax of the tour is an epic journey through pristine Ice Age wilderness to majestic Milford Sound. On arrival, we board a comfortable small ship to cruise past towering Mitre Peak to the Tasman Sea. Seals and dolphins may follow the boat as we eat our picnic lunch on board. Our drive back is through Cleddau Gorge, Homer Tunnel and the Eglinton Valley then across the Southland farmlands and around spectacular Lake Wakatipu to Queenstown.
Scenic Suites, Queenstown (2 nights)



Day 16 Depart Queenstown
After breakfast we transfer you to the airport for your flight: Haere ra – farewell! Alternatively, extend your time in Queenstown or ask us to tailor-make onward travel.

EXPERIENCES INCLUDED

- A scenic cruise from Auckland to the Coromandel Peninsula
- Narrow-gauge railway journey through native Coromandel bush
- Visit Hot Water Beach and photogenic Cathedral Cove
- 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
- Visit world-famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes at Punakaiki
- See native birds on a conservation island – OR – take a scenic 4WD adventure in Wanaka
- Explore the historic gold rush village of Arrowtown
- Cruise, with a picnic lunch, on the breath-taking Milford Sound

- 1. Kayaking, Abel Tasman National Park
- 2. Geothermal area, Rotorua
- 3. Wine tasting in Hawke's Bay
- 4. Vintage cars, Napier
- 5. Te Papa, Wellington