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NEW ZEALAND GUIDED TOURS

New Zealand Grand Rail Discovery



Tour Summary

Tour name: New Zealand Grand Rail Discovery

Days: 18

Overview:

Great Rail Journeys:

TranzAlpine Rail Journey
The Overlander
The TranzCoastal

Scenic Cruises:

Cruise majestic Milford Sound
TSS Earnslaw Cruise - Queenstown
Hole in the Rock Cruise
Cruise Marlborough Sounds

Special Features:

3 nights - Auckland & Christchurch
2 nights - Rotorua, Queenstown & the Bay of Islands
Sky Tower, Auckland
Waitangi Treaty House
Skyline Gondola Ride
Farm Show & Exhibition
Maori Arts & Crafts Centre
Te Papa National Museum
Olveston House & Larnach Castle
Homestay Option
Matakohe Kauri Museum
Maori Cultural Concert
Jade Factory & Salmon Farm

Natural Attractions:

Enchanting Bay of Islands
Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve
Guided Walk - Redwood Forests
Waitomo Glow Worm Grotto
View Rainbow Springs & Kiwi
World Heritage Mount Cook
Franz Josef & Fox Glaciers
Fascinating Moeraki Boulders

Superb Dining:

29 quality meals including
17 breakfasts, 11 dinners & 1 BBQ lunch

Feature Meals Included:

Welcome dinner at Sky City
Sumptuous breakfast - Skyline
Traditional Hangi Feast - Rotorua
BBQ lunch - Walter Peak Station
Farewell dinner - Casino

Tour Itinerary

Day 1: Auckland

'Haere Mai - Welcome to New Zealand. Be met upon arrival and transferred to the Mercure Hotel, adjacent to Auckland's waterfront or Copthorne Hotel, Anzac Avenue for a 2 night stay. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

Day 2: Auckland Tour - Sky Tower (BD)

This morning, enjoy a tour of the city, Viaduct Harbour - centre for the 2003 America's Cup Challenge, Devonport, the Rose Gardens, and Parnell. Afternoon at leisure. Tonight enjoy a special buffet dinner at Sky City before ascending Sky Tower, the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere for views over Auckland.

Day 3: Kauri Museum - Waitangi Treaty House - Bay of Islands (BD)

Journey along the Hibiscus Coast. Pause to view the magnificent Kauri tree, before visiting the Matakoho Kauri Museum. Continue to the Bay of Islands. Join a guided tour of the Waitangi Treaty House before arriving at the Quality Hotel Autolodge or Paihia Holiday Motor Inn, for a 2 night stay.

Day 4: Bay of Islands (B)

Today is free to explore. Perhaps take a full day tour to Cape Reinga and drive along the 90 Mile Beach or visit historical Russell. (Optional activities at own expense).

Day 5: Hole in the Rock Cruise & Auckland (B)

Enjoy a cruise to Cape Brett Lighthouse, Piercy Island and through the famous 'Hole in the Rock' aboard a luxury catamaran (weather permitting). Return to Auckland via Northland coastal regions before arriving at the Mercure Auckland or Copthorne Hotel, Anzac Avenue for overnight accommodation.

Day 6: Auckland - Waitomo Caves - Rotorua - Maori Hangi (BD)

Visit Mt Eden for panoramic views of Auckland. Visit the Waitomo Glow Worm Caves for an unforgettable guided boat ride. Continue to Rotorua. Walk through a forest of towering Californian Redwoods. Tonight, be entertained at a traditional Maori welcome and cultural performance before enjoying a Maori Hangi (Feast). Next 2 nights at the Quality Hotel Rotorua.

Day 7: Gondola Ride & Skyline Breakfast - Thermal Reserve - Maori Art Centre (B)

This morning, ride the Gondola for spectacular views over the city and Lake Rotorua before enjoying a sumptuous breakfast at the Skyline Restaurant. Afterwards be entertained by a farm show of sheep shearing, farm dogs and pastoral exhibits. Later view Kiwis and rainbow trout in their natural surroundings. Join local Maori guides as they share the beauty and history of the amazing Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley and visit the fascinating Maori Arts and Craft Centre. This afternoon is at leisure for you to relax or explore this unique area.

Day 8: Rotorua - Overlander Train - Raurimu Spiral - Wellington (BD)

Depart Rotorua and head south via Lake Taupo. Journey to Taumaranui and board The Overlander for a magnificent afternoon's journey up the famous Raurimu Spiral onto New Zealand's awesome volcanic plateau. After the 'drop', the route becomes green and lush again. Be enthralled by the dramatic white cliffs and viaducts of the Rangitekei River and closer to Wellington, the views of Kapiti Island and the exquisite coastline. Overnight: Mercure Wellington.

Day 9: Cruise Cook Strait - Picton - TranzCoastal Train - Christchurch (BD)

Join the Interislander & cruise through Marlborough Sounds to the South Island. Board the TranzCoastal train to enjoy one of New Zealand's most spectacular coastal journeys! Hugging the Kaikoura Coast, the train passes scenic vineyards, salt mountains and river valleys - a visual feast. Arrive in Christchurch and overnight at the centrally located Camelot Cathedral Square Hotel or The Elms Hotel.

Day 10: TranzAlpine Rail - Arthur's Pass - Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers (BD)

Board the TranzAlpine express train for a journey through the scenery of the Southern Alps to Arthur's Pass. Visit a Greenstone (Jade) Factory at Hokitika before continuing to Franz Josef Glacier. Weather permitting, opportunity to experience a scenic helicopter flight with snow landing (own expense). Overnight at the friendly Glacier Country Hotel.

Day 11: Arrowtown - Queenstown (BD)

Another opportunity for scenic flight (own expense). Travel to the natural Salmon Farm and then via sub-tropical rainforest to Haast Pass. Visit popular Arrowtown, a quaint township. Next 2 nights at the luxurious Novotel Queenstown with views of Lake Wakatipu and the 'Remarkables' (mountains).

Day 12: Queenstown Sightseeing - Earnslaw Cruise - BBQ, Walter Peak (BL)

This morning is free to enjoy this alpine resort. Later cruise Lake Wakatipu on the vintage steamship TSS Earnslaw, before enjoying a BBQ lunch and sheep farm demonstrations at Walter Peak High Country Station. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

Day 13: Milford Sound - Te Anau (BD)

Journey to Milford Sound, gateway to Fiordland National Park. Drive through the Hollyford Valley and Homer Tunnel and see the Mirror Lakes. Cruise spectacular of Milford Sound and be enthralled by views of the towering Mitre Peak and the beautiful Bowen Falls. Return to the quaint forested lakeside town of Te Anau for a relaxing night at the friendly Quality Hotel.

Day 14: Te Anau - Dunedin - Olveston House - City Tour (BD)

Tour historic Olveston House and then enjoy an informative sightseeing tour of this enchanting Victorian city, rich in Scottish history. Overnight at the centrally located Quality Hotel Dunedin.

Day 15: Dunedin - Larnach Castle - Moeraki Boulders - Omarama (BD)

Join a tour of magnificent Larnach Castle before travelling to the intriguing Moeraki Boulders. Follow the Waitaki River to Omarama. Overnight at the well appointed Heritage Gateway Hotel.

Day 16: Mount Cook National Park - Lake Tekapo & Christchurch Tour (B)

Weather permitting, opportunity for a scenic flight over the Mount Cook region (own expense). Pass Lake Pukaki and enjoy views of towering Mount Cook (weather permitting). View the Church of the Good Shepherd. Arrive at Christchurch and enjoy a sightseeing tour. Next 2 nights at the centrally located Camelot Cathedral Square Hotel or The Elms Hotel.

Day 17: Christchurch at Leisure - Dinner at Christchurch Casino (BD)

Today is free to enjoy this beautiful city at leisure. Optional excursions are at own expense. Your Tour Director will assist with any arrangements. Perhaps go punting on the River Avon or maybe, stroll through the stunning Botanic Gardens or take a historic tram journey. Enjoy a magnificent farewell dinner and celebratory drink at Christchurch Casino.

Day 18: Christchurch - Homeport (B)

Transfer to Christchurch airport for your flight to homeport - the end of a memorable holiday.

Key (B: breakfast; L: lunch; D: dinner)