



New Zealand Explorer – 18 Days



Tour Summary

Tour name: New Zealand Explorer

Days: 18

Tour Highlights

Exclusive Experiences in Auckland, Bay of Islands, Rotorua, Queenstown, Dunedin and Christchurch
 Adventure Options available in Auckland, Bay of Islands, Rotorua, Queenstown, and Christchurch
 Guided tour of Waitomo Caves
 Cruise Milford Sound in style aboard the Milford Mariner
 17 nights first class hotels in central or unique locations
 Fully cooked breakfasts (B)
 Superb a la carte dinners featuring the finest cuisine that New Zealand has to offer (D)
 Rotorua Theme Dinner - Maori Hangi (feast) and cultural performance (D)
 Dining Options in Queenstown, Nelson and Christchurch (D)
 Arrival and departure transfers

Tour Itinerary

Day 1. Arrive Auckland

You will be met on arrival at Auckland and transferred to your hotel. This afternoon is at leisure for you to explore Auckland.

Accommodation: Auckland, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2 nights

Day 2. Auckland, Freedom of Choice Touring (BD)

You will be met on arrival at Auckland and transferred to your hotel. This afternoon personalise your sightseeing with our range of Freedom of Choice Touring. Perhaps go sailing on Waitemata Harbour, explore Auckland on a City Sights tour or indulge in a Bliss Reflexology spa treatment.

Day 3. Auckland, Bay of Islands (BD)

This morning we journey across the Auckland Harbour Bridge travelling through the farming communities of Warkworth and Wellsford. Visit the Matakohe Pioneer Museum, home to the world's largest collection of Kauri gum. Continue to the majestic Waipoua Kauri Forest Reserve where we view the giant Kauri tree 'Tane Mahuta' (Lord of the Forest). View the magnificent Hokianga Harbour before travelling across country to the subtropical Bay of Islands, a beautiful unspoilt paradise, rich in history and culture. On arrival visit the Waitangi Treaty House, Maori Meeting House and War Canoe.

Accommodation: Bay of Islands, Copthorne Waitangi Resort, 2 nights.

Day 4. Bay of Islands, Freedom of Choice Touring (BD)

Not only is the Bay of Islands the birthplace of the Nation and thus full of New Zealand history, it is also home to 144 islands and renowned as a favourite playground for lovers of anything aquatic; diving, sailing and big game fishing. Today you have the opportunity to choose the sightseeing activity that most interests you and we will include it. Whether it be a day trip to Cape Reinga at the very tip of New Zealand, a tour to Russell, the first capital of New Zealand, sailing on the "R Tucker Thompson" a unique tall ship, swimming with the dolphins, a round of golf at the scenic Waitangi Golf Course, a Bay of Islands fishing experience or simply relaxing on a beautiful golden sandy beach. The choice is yours!

Day 5. Bay of Islands, Auckland (BD)

This morning our Bay of Islands cruise takes us to Cape Brett and the famous 'Hole' in the rock. In these world-renowned deep sea-fishing grounds dolphins and schools of fish are frequently seen. Meander through the inner islands, viewing sandy beaches, rocky outcrops and visit a secluded bay with time for relaxation. Return this afternoon to Auckland via the pretty Whangarei city basin.

Accommodation: Auckland, Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Day 6. Auckland, Waitomo, Rotorua (BD)

This morning we journey to the crest of Mt Eden, one of Auckland's extinct volcanoes, to enjoy spectacular panoramic views of the city and its beautiful harbours. Leaving the 'City of Sails' we travel south through the rich dairy land of the Waikato Province. At Waitomo Caves experience a guided tour of the limestone caverns and glow worm grotto. This afternoon we continue our journey to the centre of Maori culture and the geothermal region of Rotorua. Tonight is a unique experience. Enjoy the warmth of the Maori people with a Hangi (feast) and cultural performance.

Accommodation: Rotorua, Millennium Hotel, 2 nights

Day 7. Rotorua, Freedom of Choice Touring (BD)

Rotorua is New Zealand's oldest and best known resort, where generations of visitors have enjoyed its waters, marvelled at its fascinating geothermal activity and experienced the region's unique Maori culture. Today we give you the opportunity to choose the activity and we will include it. You may choose to visit the "Must See Three" attractions of Rotorua, including Te Puia Thermal Reserve, the Agrodome sheep show and Rainbow Springs or perhaps visit the Polynesian Spa for a spa treatment and leisurely soak in a natural thermal mineral pool. A half day Eco-Thermal Tour might appeal or a tour of the Rotorua Museum or relaxing round of golf.

Accommodation: Country Home-stay option available tonight.

Day 8. Rotorua, Wellington (BD)

Today we visit Wairakei Steam Valley, a unique and fascinating geothermal power project. See spectacular Huka Falls and picturesque Lake Taupo before travelling south we cross the vast volcanic plateau of World Heritage-listed Tongariro National Park. Continue to Wellington, New Zealand's capital city. Enjoy a brief city sightseeing tour including a visit to Mt Victoria to enjoy a stunning vista of this busy cosmopolitan city and its harbour.

Accommodation: Wellington, Hotel InterContinental.

Day 9. Wellington, Nelson, Dine Around Dinner (BD)

Today our Interislander cruise takes us across Cook Strait to the South Island. Sail from scenic Wellington Harbour into the breathtaking natural beauty of the Marlborough Sounds. See magnificent scenery in tranquil Queen Charlotte Sound before arriving in the picturesque seaside port of Picton, gateway to the South Island. This afternoon we journey through the pretty orchard and vineyard region of Marlborough to Nelson. The remainder of today is at your leisure in Nelson, noted for its fruit-growing, wineries, breweries and its energetic arts and crafts community. This evening choose from two fine restaurants located within your hotel. Miyazu, acclaimed as the best Japanese Restaurant in New Zealand or Oceano, with its superb seafood menu.

Accommodation: Nelson, The Rutherford Hotel.

Day 10. Nelson, Franz Josef (BD)

Follow the Heritage Highway through the impressive Buller Gorge to the wild and rugged West Coast. View the fascinating 'Pancake' rock formations and blowholes at Punakaiki. Stop at Hokitika situated beside the Tasman Sea with stunning views to Mt Cook and the spectacular Southern Alps. Here there is the opportunity to see beautiful Pounamu (Jade) being carved into jewellery and other artefacts. We then continue along the dramatic West Coast and enter World Heritage-listed Westland National Park, where you can view the magnificent glaciers, rivers of ice. Nowhere in the world's temperate zones are glaciers as accessible as here. There may be the

opportunity to enjoy a scenic flight over this breathtaking region (own expense, weather permitting). This evening enjoy West Coast hospitality as you dine on regional specialities.

Accommodation: Franz Josef Glacier Hotel.

Day 11. Franz Josef, Wanaka (BD)

View incredible scenery today as we leave this World Heritage-listed area, travelling through Haast Pass and over the incredible Southern Alps. This scenic road takes us along the shore of picturesque Lakes Hawea and Wanaka where crystal clear blue waters reflect dramatic landscapes. Continue to Wanaka township originally settled during the goldrush era of last century and surrounded by Mount Aspiring National Park. Enjoy an overnight stay in this inspiring place of peace and tranquillity.

Accommodation: Wanaka, Edgewater Resort.

Day 12. Wanaka, Queenstown, Dine Around Dinner (BD)

Depart Wanaka this morning and journey to the delightful village of Arrowtown, an old gold rush settlement. Visit the Lake District museum, before continuing to the alpine resort of Queenstown situated on the banks of Lake Wakatipu. The wide range of activities available in and around the area makes Queenstown a popular holiday destination at any time of year. Tonight we explore Queenstown with our Dine Around Dinner. You may wish to take a gondola ride to the Skyline Restaurant and enjoy dinner and spectacular views over Queenstown. Perhaps cruise on the TSS Earnslaw Steamboat, across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak Sheep Station for a sumptuous homestead carvery dinner. Or enjoy a meal at one of the many diverse restaurants and cafes in Queenstown. The choice is yours!

Accommodation: Queenstown, Sofitel Hotel Queenstown, 2 nights.

Day 13. Queenstown, Freedom of Choice Touring (BD)

Today you choose the activity and we will include it. You may like to partake in a Queenstown "Double Decker Explorer" tour, an "Original Wine Tour" of some of the local and award winning wineries, an exhilarating jetboat ride on the Shotover River or a relaxing garden tour. Perhaps the "Safari of the Scenes" tour or an adventure into Skippers Canyon by 4WD might appeal or a leisurely walk around Lake Wakatipu on a "Lakeshore Forest and Bird Walk". The choice is yours!

Day 14. Queenstown, Milford Sound, Te Anau (BD)

This morning travel through Fiordland National Park where lush rainforests meet snow capped mountains. On arrival into Milford we cruise the full length of this beautiful Fiord. The calm 22km long waterway is dominated by sheer weather-scuffed cliffs and peaks, in particular mile-high Mitre Peak. This afternoon we have a relaxing drive returning through the Eglinton Valley and the Homer Tunnel to the pretty lake side settlement of Te Anau.

Accommodation: Te Anau Hotel and Villas.

Day 15. Te Anau, Dunedin, Freedom of Choice Touring (BD)

Today we journey via beautiful Lake Manapouri to the southern most coast of New Zealand. Continue to Dunedin, settled by the Scottish in 1848 and renowned as the 'Edinburgh of the South'. This afternoon you choose the activity and we will include it. Perhaps a visit to Speights Brewery and Heritage Centre where they brew the popular Speights ale. Or discover the Otago Peninsula to visit the Royal Albatross Colony or Penguin Place to see the rare yellow-eyed penguins the "Hoiho",. Perhaps visit New Zealand's only castle "Larnach Castle" for a tour of the castle and stroll around the beautiful gardens or explore the grandeur of Olveston House. The choice is yours!

Accommodation: Dunedin, Southern Cross Hotel.

Day 16. Dunedin, Mt Cook (BD)

Travel north along the coast to view the unique and fascinating Moeraki Beach boulders. Stop at Oamaru, a town renowned for its distinctive limestone architecture. Pass massive hydro-electric dams and glacier-fed lakes of incredible colour on our journey to Mt Cook National Park, a World Heritage-listed area and home to Australasia's highest mountain, Mt Cook at 3763 metres. You may wish to take an optional scenic flight over this awe-inspiring alpine region (weather permitting, own expense) and land on the mighty Tasman Glacier.

Accommodation: Mt Cook, The Hermitage.

Day 17. Mt Cook, TranzAlpine Train, Christchurch (BD)

This morning we visit the beautiful glacier-fed lake of Tekapo and view the tiny Church of the Good Shepherd, built in 1935 of locally gathered stone and oak. Leaving the High Country and its sheep stations you may choose to take the scenic TranzAlpine Train from Arthurs Pass or continue with the coach via the Rakaia Gorge to the charming garden city of Christchurch. This evening you may select from three superb restaurants located within your hotel.

Accommodation: Christchurch, Crowne Plaza Hotel

Day 18. Christchurch, Freedom of Choice Touring (B)

Today enjoy your choice of touring activity. You may like to discover the township of Akaroa, join a whale watching tour to Kaikoura, explore Christchurch visiting the 'Must See Four' attractions, or relax with a punt ride along the Avon River. On conclusion of your touring activity a departure transfer to the airport is included.

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