



North Island Top 2 Bottom



Tour Summary

Tour name: North Island Top 2 Bottom

Days: 11

Overview:

The North Island Top-2-Bottom Tour is the ultimate adventure exploration of the many beaches, islands, bays and hidden treasures of the North Island! It is for those people who want to do more than just see the North Island, it is for those people who want to surf the beaches, walk or bike the tracks, kayak the bays, and experience the wonders of the island while being active! It travels the full length of the North Island and includes the most dramatic scenery, comfortable accommodations in great locations, excellent activities and excursions, great food, and an element of flexibility seldom found in an adventure tour. This is the holiday all New Zealander's dream of!

With a small group of likeminded travellers and the local knowledge of a Serious Fun guide, this trip explores the North Island in 11 days. With such a small group, we are able to explore the hidden wonders of New Zealand beyond the tourist crowd. Visit three national parks. Kayak the tranquil waters of the Bay of Islands, the dramatic coastline of the Coromandel, and many other lakes and streams. Mountain bike the coastline of the Bay of Islands and through the forest in the Coromandel. Hike the volcanoes of Tongariro National Park made famous by the Lord of the Rings movies, through ancient rainforests and along deserted beaches. Even try your hand at surfing secret breaks, or venture beneath the surface with a mask and snorkel to look for New Zealand's underwater friends! Each day is an adventure and your choice to mountain bike, hike, kayak, surf, snorkel, or simply relax.

STYLE

The North Island Top-2-Bottom is an activity-oriented trip, high on the adventure scale, with the ultimate in flexibility. Traveling in a small group (no more than 8) and carrying all the toys for a great vacation (bikes, kayaks, bodyboards, snorkelling gear etc.), each day will be an adventure chosen by the group and guide. With so many options, you can tailor this trip to suit yourself. If you wish to kayak, the guide will show you where; if you wish to ride, the guide will take you to the best track in that area. Our guides will give you basic instruction in all the sports we participate in and then it is up to you! The guide's knowledge of the local areas will allow you to make the best of every destination you visit. This is definitely not your normal sightseeing tour; this is an active adventure tour all about experiencing the places you visit, not just seeing them!

In each area, accommodation is chosen for its location and will be in comfortable hotels, motels, holiday homes & cottages. Some accommodations will be in two or three bedroom apartments or houses with shared bathroom facilities, whilst in others you will have an en suite bathroom. If you wish to have a private room with en suite bathroom for the entire tour, please read the details of the Single Supplement and Accommodation Upgrade.

Meals will be prepared by the guide, with the help of the group. Picnic lunches will be prepared by the guide on location – where ever that day's adventure may take you! Eating out in restaurants is an optional extra at the discretion of the group.

Tour Itinerary

We run the North Island Top-2-Bottom in both directions, so you may end up doing this trip from South to North. Either way, the North Island Top-2-Bottom will deliver the best multi-sport adventure New Zealand has to offer! If you would also like to see the South Island, why not do New Zealand from Top-2-Bottom in 21 days! Or, if you decide the South Island is for you, the 11 Day South Island Top-2-Bottom is a great option. You are able to do any part of the trip for a pro-rated fare. Let us know and we'll organize a trip to suit you!

DAY 1 & 2: ARRIVAL IN AUCKLAND / BAY OF ISLANDS (D/B/L/D)

Meet your guide and fellow adventurers upon arrival in Auckland and then we'll drive north to the Bay of Islands arriving in time for a short paddle or stroll on the beach to stretch your legs, followed by a "Welcome Dinner" of local seafood. The Bay of Islands is punctuated by dozens of secluded beaches and coves, clear waters ranging in hue from turquoise to deep blue. Dotted with nearly 150 islands, the region is aptly named. Numerous options for kayaking to offshore islands, surfing or snorkelling exist along the way. We will spend two days exploring this great area, with plenty of hiking, biking, kayaking and snorkelling! Optional scuba diving and sailing trips are also available in this area.

DAY 3 & 4: KAITAIA – THE FAR NORTH (B/L/D both days)

Welcome to the "far north" of New Zealand! This area is famous for its beautiful beaches, crystal clear water and excellent fishing. The region is steeped in early European and Maori history – check out the museum for the complete story. After an early morning in the surf or paddle, enjoy a hearty breakfast before heading out on an exploration to Cape Reinga. A drive up 90 mile beach is sure to make you realize you're a long way from home! Even try your hand at surfing the huge sand dunes along the way! A BBQ on the beach is a perfect way to immerse yourself in the Kiwi lifestyle!

DAY 5: AUCKLAND (B/L)

Today we head south to Auckland, New Zealand's largest and most multi-cultural city. You'll get a chance to wander round the Viaduct – a vibrant downtown area, and until recently home to the Americas Cup. While the Cup is no longer there, the vibrant atmosphere continues with numerous bars and restaurants open until late. Although Larry Ellison and Cindy Crawford have moved on, friendly locals abound and are more than willing to share a tale or two.

DAY 6 & 7: COROMANDEL PENINSULA (B/L/D both days)

This morning we drive east to the Coromandel Peninsula – a rugged, densely forested peninsula where rivers force their way through gorges and pour down steep cliffs into the sea. From our base in Hahei, we can hike to Cathedral Cove, accessible only at low tide through a gigantic arched cavern. We then walk south to Hot Water beach where thermal waters brew just below the sand. Our Guide will show you how to dig your very own spa in the sand from where you can sit back and contemplate whether to surf, scuba dive or snorkel. This area also has some great mountain biking trails... so what are you waiting for?!

DAY 8: ROTORUA (B/L/D)

Rotorua has the most energetic thermal activity in NZ, with bubbling mud pools, gurgling hot springs and gushing geysers. We will explore the thermal features of Rotorua. In the evening, attend a traditional Maori feast, a Hangi - meats and vegetables are cooked in the traditional fashion beneath the ground on hot rocks. Our local Maori hosts will introduce us to their underground cooking techniques, culture and history.

DAY 9 & 10: TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK (B/L/D both days)

The Central North Island is an area of distinctive geography and scenery, and Tongariro is New Zealand's oldest national park (est. 1887) and a World Heritage area. This status recognizes the park's important Maori cultural and spiritual associations as well as its outstanding volcanic features. The Tongariro, Ngaruahoe and Ruapehu mountains are at the heart of the park and form the southern limits of the Taupo Volcanic Zone. It was this area Peter Jackson chose to film part of Lord of the Rings – you will recognize Mordor and the Plains of Gorgoroth as we hike the Tongariro Crossing, a 7-8 hour trek through spectacular terrain, passing two active volcanoes, lava flows, emerald coloured lakes and hot springs. This is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular hikes in the entire country and very different to the rest of New Zealand.

DAY 11: WELLINGTON / MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS / DEPART (B/L)

Today we leave Tongariro National Park early, arriving in the capital city of Wellington around lunch time. Wellington is the physical and cultural centre of New Zealand. Situated on a beautiful harbour ringed by hills perfect for mountain biking and hiking, Wellington prides itself on being a centre for arts and crafts, with an abundance of restaurants, cafes, nightlife and activities. Affectionately called "Wellywood", Wellington is fast

becoming a major player in international film and TV circles with the studios used for Lord of the Rings located here. A short hike up Mount Victoria will reward you with stunning vistas of the city and on a clear day, views as far as the Marlborough Sounds. Or we can visit Te Papa, the country's national museum.

What's Included

The New Zealand Top-2-Bottom is filled with hiking, kayaking, biking, surfing & snorkelling options – the best part is they are all included so you don't have to pay for any of them! Other inclusions are: experienced local Kiwi guides; comfortable accommodations; all meals (except for one lunch over 11 days); transportation in very comfortable vehicles with reading materials and snacks; a traditional Maori Hangi; and a Serious Fun t-shirt. As everything is already included, you will not need much spending money!

What's Not Included

The only things not included are flights before or after the tour, one lunch, any activities mentioned as “optional” in the itinerary, and expenses of a personal nature.

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