

Signature | Inspiring North Island Tour

Auckland to Wellington *via Ohakune* – 8 Days

Inspiring North Island is also offered as a Wellington to Auckland tour.
See the end of this itinerary for details.

Day 1

Auckland

Kia Ora!

Welcome to Auckland, New Zealand's City of Sails! Auckland is known for its multi-cultural hub of food, music, arts, and culture.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Auckland has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to visit the Sky Tower or shop along bustling Queen Street. You may even fancy a drink in one of the charming bars or eateries of Vulcan Lane.

Your tour officially begins this evening, as you join your fellow travellers and Tour Director this evening for a welcome reception.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Dinner with Welcome Drink

Activities

Welcome Dinner

Day 2

Auckland to Hamilton

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

Your journey awaits as you join the Northern Explorer scenic train. Marvel at rural New Zealand's lush landscapes from the comfort of your scenic carriage. From the sparkling waters of the Waitematā Harbour to the green pastures of the Waikato – you won't want to miss a moment.

Arriving in Hamilton, your coach awaits you to bring you to the famous Hamilton Gardens. Engross yourself in the garden's collection of themed rooms as you are led by an experienced guide. Learn about the history, context and meaning of each garden before finishing this delightful morning with a picnic on the lush lawns. Surrounded by beauty, you will be in utter bliss.

In the early afternoon, enjoy some free time in the heart of Hamilton before departing for an evening visit to Raglan – a seaside surfer town. It's here that you'll enjoy a Sunset Dinner Cruise on the pristine harbour.

Please note: The tour departing January 27, 2025 will journey by coach from Auckland to Hamilton (2hrs)

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Hamilton Gardens Guided Tour including a picnic lunch

Raglan Sunset Dinner Cruise

Day 3

Hamilton

Discover Endangered and Bioluminescent Species

This morning you will depart for your next exciting excursion – Maungatautari Sanctuary Mountain.

Let your guide transport you into an ancient world of ecological wonders as you explore New Zealand's very own pest-free environment, within native forest. On this excursion, you will walk through the home of some of New Zealand's most endangered species. Discover North Island's robins, tomtits, kākā, pōpokotea, bellbirds, hihi, tīeke, fantails, kereru and wētā. This pre-human paradise has one of the world's longest pest-proof fences.

Your expedition continues after a lunch stop in New Zealand's "Kiwiana Capital", Otorohanga. Make sure you capture a photo

of the giant Kiwi birds! Next, discover the famous Waitomo Glow worm Caves and be dazzled by the seemingly star-filled sky as you glide by boat through this impressive cave formation. Tonight, explore Hamilton's riverside walks and shops on this free evening. Enjoy one of the many nearby restaurants as the sun sets over the Waikato River.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Sanctuary Mountain Walk
Waitomo Glowworm Caves

Day 4

Hamilton to Tongariro National Park

Explore Tongariro National Park

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, today you'll soar over icy mountain streams as you travel to Tongariro National Park, the home of three volcanic mountains.

Tongariro National Park has a diverse range of ecosystems and spectacular landscapes. In 1993, it was recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and was the first property to be inscribed with the criteria describing the cultural values it holds for Māori.

Enjoy a mini excursion up to Tūroa ski field. Here you'll want to capture a panoramic photo of Middle Earth before descending into Ohakune.

Tonight, enjoy a special dinner with your fellow travellers.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Afternoon excursion to view volcanic landscapes

Day 5

Tongariro National Park

Explore Tongariro National Park

Today is free for you to discover one of the region's many exciting excursions. Choose from the optional activities on offer and personalise your perfect holiday. Perhaps you will hop aboard a rail cart journey or join a horse trekking experience that takes you along expansive hills, mountains, rivers and into native forest.

If you're after an active day, why not explore Ohakune's historical cycle trail? Rent e-bikes and discover old viaducts, tunnels, old settlers' camps and reclaimed native forests along the Old Coach Road.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Day 6

Tongariro National Park to Wellington

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

Your day begins with an elevated experience up the northern face of Mt Ruapehu for panoramic views of the volcanic landscape. Drink in the views of Mt Ngāuruhoe, Mt Tongariro, and beyond across the central North Island.

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, waving goodbye to Tongariro National Park, as you settle into your uber-comfortable seat.

Don't get too comfortable though; dramatic rivers, gorges, and ravines are just around the bend! Stretch your legs and explore the open-air carriage to get the best view from the train.

A little later, why not indulge in a treat from our onboard licensed café? As you glide through rich green farmland and past dramatic coastlines, enjoy the picturesque Porirua Harbour as you arrive into Wellington.

Welcome to Wellington – New Zealand’s windy capital! You’ve arrived at Wellington Railway Station which is just a stone’s throw from downtown, the Beehive and Parliament Buildings. You won't want to waste a moment of time after checking into the hotel - your evening is free to explore this culinary capital from Queen’s Wharf to Cuba street and beyond.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Morning excursion to view volcanic landscapes

Day 7

Wellington

Explore Wellington

The perfect day does exist – and it includes exploring Wellington!

Today is free for you to experience vibrant Wellington as you please. Start by joining our Wellington City introduction tour and then head off to explore Cuba Street’s cafés, bookstores, and eccentric shops. Get cultured at Te Papa, New Zealand’s National Museum, or visit Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary to surround yourself by native birdlife and regenerating forest.

You won’t get bored with the plethora of activities on offer. From coffee, culture, historic buildings to botanic gardens and much more... the list goes on! If you need any suggestions or recommendations, just reach out to your helpful Tour Director or our Travel Centre to pre-book an experience.

Enjoy your final dinner tonight with your fellow travellers.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Wellington City Introduction Tour

Farewell Dinner

Day 8

Wellington

Departing Wellington

Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast at your hotel.

Not ready to leave Wellington? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Transfer to airport

Signature | Inspiring North Island Tour

Wellington to Auckland *via Ohakune* – 8 Days

Inspiring North Island is also offered as an Auckland to Wellington tour. See the start of this itinerary for details.

Day 1

Wellington

Kia ora!

Welcome to Wellington – New Zealand’s windy capital! Wellington is known for its world-class dining, great coffee and eccentric shops.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Wellington has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to get cultured at Te Papa Museum or grab a drink at one of the many quirky bars on Cuba Street. You may even fancy a ride on the cable car!

After an exciting day on the town, your tour will officially begin as you join your fellow travelers and Tour Director at this evening’s welcome reception.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Dinner

Activities

Welcome Dinner

Day 2

Wellington to Tongariro National Park

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

Today you’ll be heading north aboard the Northern Explorer Train to explore Tongariro National Park. Sit back and relax while the smooth train departs the bustling capital and travels along the Kāpiti Coast. You won’t want to get too comfortable though; dramatic rivers,

gorges and ravines are just around the bend! Stretch your legs and explore the open-air carriage to get the best view of the fantastic scenery.

Upon arrival at National Park, you'll venture on a mini excursion up Mt Ruapehu to a volcanic landscape. It's here that your Tour Director will uncover the geological wonder that's underfoot. If you're a Lord of the Rings fan, make sure you capture a panoramic photo of Middle Earth before descending into Ohakune where you will stay for two nights. After a quick tour around the town, the rest of the day is at your leisure before we reunite for dinner.

Accommodation

4 – 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Afternoon excursion to view volcanic landscapes

Group Dinner

Day 3

Tongariro National Park

Discover Tongariro National Park

Today is free for you to discover one of Ohakune's exciting excursions. Choose from the many optional activities on offer and personalise your perfect holiday. Perhaps you will hop aboard a historical rail cart journey or join a horse trekking experience that takes you along expansive hills, mountains, rivers and into native forest.

If you're after an active day, why not explore Ohakune's historical cycle trail? Rent e-bikes and discover old viaducts, tunnels, old settlers' camps and reclaimed native forests along the Old Coach Road!

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included
Breakfast

Day 4

Tongariro National Park to Hamilton

Volcanoes to City Life

After breakfast, embark on a mini-excursion up to Tūroa ski field. Here you'll want to capture a panoramic photo of Middle Earth before you descend back to Ohakune.

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, today you'll soar over icy mountain streams as you travel north towards Hamilton.

Tonight, explore Hamilton's riverside walks and shops on this free evening. Enjoy one of the many nearby restaurants as the sun sets on the Waikato River.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

Meals Included
Breakfast

Activities

Morning excursion to view volcanic landscapes
Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Day 5

Hamilton

Discover Endangered and Bioluminescent Species

This morning you will depart for your next exciting excursion - Maungatautiri Sanctuary Mountain.

Let your guide transport you into an ancient world of ecological wonders as you explore New Zealand's very own pest-free environment. On this excursion, you will learn about New Zealand's native forests, and visit the home of the most endangered species in the country. This pre-human paradise has one of the world's longest pest-proof fences.

Your expedition continues after a lunch stop in New Zealand's "Kiwiana Capital", Otorohanga. Make sure you capture a photo of the giant Kiwi birds! Next, discover the famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves in the Waikato and be dazzled by the seemingly star-filled sky as you glide by boat through this impressive cave formation.

This evening, enjoy a highlight dinner aboard the Raglan Sunset Cruise. As you glide upon the beautiful Whaingaroa Harbour, indulge in the local cuisine served.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Sanctuary Mountain Wildlife Experience

Waitomo Glow-Worm Caves

Raglan Sunset Dinner Cruise

Day 6

Hamilton to Auckland

Lush Gardens and Your Final Train Journey

After a relaxing morning, depart for the spectacular Hamilton Gardens. Engross yourself in the garden's collection of themed rooms as you are led by an experienced guide. Learn about the history, context and meaning of each garden before finishing this delightful morning with a picnic on the lush lawns. Surrounded by beauty, you will be in utter bliss.

Mid-afternoon you'll climb back aboard the Northern Explorer, for a journey alongside the Waikato River and the Whangamarino Wetland as you head into Auckland.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Auckland)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Activities

Hamilton Gardens Guided Tour including a picnic lunch
Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Day 7

Auckland & Waiheke Island

Island and Winery Hopping

Begin your day with a delightful breakfast at the hotel before embarking on an indulgent Waiheke Wine & Dine Day.

Enjoy the freedom of hopping on and off as you please with your included ferry and bus tickets, departing hourly from the Downtown Ferry Terminal. Explore the picturesque Waiheke Island at your leisure, with buses ready to whisk you away to the next scenic spot half-hourly from the island's ferry terminal. Included in your day out is a sumptuous platter lunch accompanied by exquisite local wines at the acclaimed Stonyridge Vineyard.

After a day of sipping and sightseeing, choose any return ferry back to Auckland, ensuring you're on time for a memorable farewell dinner with your guide at one of Auckland's renowned restaurants.

Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Auckland)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Activities

Waiheke Hop on Hop off Wine & Dine
Farewell Dinner

Day 8

Auckland

Departing Auckland

Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast with your fellow travellers.

Not ready to leave Auckland? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Transfer to airport