

Magical Tour of New Zealand

17 days

Journey across patchwork plains, over shimmering blue waters, through mist-shrouded forests and along roads hand-carved into sheer mountainsides. Travel through almost every type of natural landscape you can imagine, as you make your way to Auckland in the North Island from Christchurch in the South Island.

FIRSTLIGHTTRAVEL
Your South-Pacific Travel Specialists

Highlights

- Tour through Christchurch to witness the incredible rebuild of the city
- Visit a green stone factory and watch the jade artists at work
- See awe-inspiring Franz Josef Glacier
- Sail across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak for a unique highlight dinner
- Let loose in the adventure capital Queenstown
- Cruise on breath-taking Milford Sound
- See spectacular Lake Tekapo and Lake Te Anau
- Marvel at Fur Seals at Ohau Point and Whales at Kaikoura
- Set sail on Queen Charlotte Sound
- Visit Te Papa, the Museum of New Zealand
- Explore New Zealand's capital Wellington
- Discover the arts and traditions of New Zealand's Maori culture
- Feast on a Maori Hangi at a unique dinner experience with the Tamaki family
- Cruise through Waitomo's famous Glowworm Grotto
- Cruise in the stunning Bay of Islands and through 'Hole in the Rock'
- Experienced Travel Director and Driver Guide

Waitomo Glowworm Grotto

Day 1: Welcome to Christchurch

On arrival in Christchurch you'll be transferred from the airport to your hotel. Meet your Travel Director and fellow travellers for a welcome reception and dinner. **Hotel: Ibis Hotel, Christchurch. D**

Day 2: Christchurch – Franz Josef

First up this morning board the TranzAlpine, one of the top six train journeys in the world. This spectacular journey takes you across the Canterbury Plains and over the Southern Alps to Arthur's Pass. Later, visit Hokitika, home of the native greenstone (jade) for a jewellery factory visit. Next stop is Franz Josef Glacier (optional Franz Josef Glacier scenic flight is available). **Hotel: Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier (Graham Wing), Franz Josef. B D**

Day 3: Franz Josef – Queenstown

Travel through the Haast Pass, view Thunder Creek Falls and take a rainforest walk. Then it's a trio of lakes – Wanaka, Hawea, Dunstan. Next is Cromwell and its stone fruit and Arrowtown on the Arrow River. On arrival in Queenstown, the adventure-capital, an orientation tour completes your day. **Hotel: Copthorne Hotel & Resort, Queenstown, 2 nights. B**

Day 4: Queenstown 'Free Time'

Explore exciting Queenstown your way – from wine tours to jet boat rides and white water rafting. This evening cruise across Lake Wakatipu aboard New Zealand's oldest steamship, the TSS Earnslaw, to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a gourmet barbecue highlight dinner at the Colonel's Homestead. An entertaining after-dinner farm show provides a glimpse into high-country farm life. **B HD**

Day 5: Queenstown – Te Anau

Travel along the Devil's Staircase and the shores of Lake Wakatipu to Te Anau. You'll be awestruck by great sights from Fiordland National Park to Milford Sound, one of the world's most amazing places, where you'll cruise on the waters of this natural wonder. En route you'll drive through the hand-made Homer Tunnel to the abundant photo opportunities afforded by the Mirror Lake, Pop's Lookout, Cleddau Valley, the Chasm, Mitre Peak and Bowen Falls. Then return to Te Anau. Tonight you have the option to visit the Te Anau Glowworm Caves. **Hotel: Luxmore Hotel, Te Anau. B D**

Day 6: Te Anau – Dunedin

Cross sheep-filled farming land to

Dunedin for a city tour. Enjoy time at leisure this afternoon – consider a wildlife cruise, visit the Cadbury Chocolate Factory or ride the historic Taieri Gorge Railway. **Hotel: Scenic Hotel Dunedin City. B D**

Day 7: Dunedin – Omarama

Free time to relax this morning – perhaps visit Larnach Castle, New Zealand's only castle. Then travel through Oamaru, with its limestone buildings, passing the Waitaki Hydro Power Scheme and Benmore Dam en route to Omarama. **Hotel: Heritage Gateway Hotel, Omarama. B D**

Day 8: Omarama – Christchurch

Soak up the alpine scenery of Mt. Cook National Park (optional scenic flight is available). See Lake Pukaki and Lake Tekapo, visit the iconic Church of the Good Shepherd and travel across the colourful Canterbury Plains to Christchurch. **Hotel: Ibis Hotel, Christchurch. B**

Day 9: Christchurch – Picton

Travel along the rugged Pacific Ocean coast to Kaikoura, famous for its whales (optional whale-watching flight is available). See New Zealand's fur seals at Ohau Point. Pass the Grassmere Salt Works then travel to the seaside town of Picton. **Hotel: Beachcomber, Picton. B D**

Day 10: Picton – Wellington

Cruise on Queen Charlotte Sound and across Cook Strait to Wellington for a city tour. There's some time at leisure before visiting Te Papa, to discover New Zealand's nature, history, art and heritage. **Hotel: Travelodge, Wellington. B D**

Day 11: Wellington – Rotorua

Travel along the Kapiti Coast, through the dairy farms of Manawatu to Tongariro National Park and discover the alpine scenery of Mt. Ruapehu. Visit Taupo and drive along the shores of New Zealand's largest lake. View Huka Falls and pass the Wairakei Geothermal Power Station. Enjoy an evening of fun and laughter and gain an insight into traditional Maori culture followed by a delicious buffet highlight dinner at the Tamaki Maori Village. **Hotel: Ibis Hotel, Rotorua, 2 nights. B HD**

Day 12: Rotorua

Visit the Agrodome Farm Show for a sample of farm life then enjoy an afternoon at leisure – perhaps visit Rainbow Springs Nature Park, abundant with Rainbow Trout and native fauna including the kiwi, or Te Puia, where a local Maori will guide you through the geothermal valley with its mud pools and geysers. **B**

Day 13: Rotorua – Auckland

This morning travel through lush Waikato farmland to Waitomo Caves. See the amazing underground Glowworm Grotto by boat and walk through the limestone caves. Later you'll follow the Waikato River, New Zealand's longest river, into Auckland, to enjoy a sightseeing tour of New Zealand's largest city. This evening celebrate your holiday at a dinner with your Travel Director. **Hotel: VR Queen Street, Auckland. B D**

Day 14: Auckland – Bay of Islands

Over the Auckland Harbour Bridge, through Orewa and the scenic Hibiscus Coast, birth place of Sir Edmund Hillary. Walk amongst Kauri trees at Parry Kauri Park. There's time to explore Whangarei, the northern-most city in New Zealand then it's off to the beautiful Bay of Islands. Take a scenic cruise through game fishing waters to Cape Brett and, weather permitting, through the famous 'Hole in the Rock' formation. The return cruise to Paihia meanders through picturesque islands – see deserted sandy beaches and secluded bays and keep your eyes peeled for the marine life. **Hotel: Copthorne Resort (Garden View), Bay of Islands, 2 nights. B D**

Day 15: Bay of Islands 'Free Time'

You have a free day to experience the beauty of the Bay of Islands. Perhaps go dolphin-watching, take a coach trip to Cape Reinga via idyllic 90 Mile Beach, a day of sailing on a tall ship or take a tour to historic Russell. Ask your Travel Director about optional experiences. **B**

Day 16: Bay of Islands – Auckland

You have the opportunity to visit the historic Waitangi Treaty Reserve, where New Zealand's founding document was signed. You'll have time on your own to take in highlights such as the magnificent Maori War Canoe (Waka) and Marae or Meeting House (own expense). This afternoon enjoy the farmland scenery as you return to Auckland. **Hotel: VR Queen Street, Auckland. B**

Day 17: Farewell from Auckland

Your holiday concludes this morning. You'll be transferred to Auckland Airport for your onward flight. **B**

Flight information

Day 1 – Flights to arrive prior to 4.00pm into Christchurch Airport

Day 17 – Flights to depart anytime from Auckland Airport

Airfares are not included

Rural Homestay Option: Day 12

A warm welcome awaits you on your New Zealand rural homestay and your hosts will provide you with wonderful Kiwi hospitality that really makes you feel 'at home'. Enjoy dinner and breakfast, a tour to introduce you to their way of life and comfortable accommodation in their home or cottages. You may choose to meet the animals, which may include sheep, cows, deer and many others, or simply relax and enjoy the company of your hosts in scenic surroundings. Additional cost per person \$65.



Optional Experience Day 15: Bay of Islands Scenic Flight

This helicopter scenic flight offers exceptional views of the beautiful islands, flying over Russell and Opuia, leading to the infamous 'Hole in the Rock'. Return over the main islands of the area with a bird's eye view of their white sandy beaches and inviting turquoise waters. Ask your Travel Director for details.

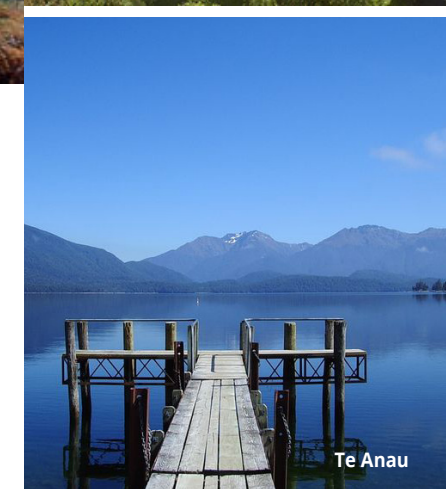


BEST BUYS

Please check our website for up to date pricing and specials



Tranzalpine train



Te Anau



Queenstown