

FIRST LIGHT TRAVEL



Your South Pacific Travel Specialists



Hiking New Zealand

- 2019 -



NORTHERN PORTION

ITINERARY



The North Island is blessed with an array of natural wonders. Discover the world underground at Waitomo, explore the geothermal delights of Rotorua, hike across active volcanoes and lava valleys in the world-renowned Tongariro National Park and sip coffee in the coolest little capital of the world – Wellington.

We have chosen excellent quality hotels and lodges and all rooms have ensuite bathrooms. Every place we stay has something special to offer and your evenings will be just as enjoyable as your days spent outdoors. Wonderful meals are included giving you an opportunity to sample the local cuisine from the restaurants in the cities and towns we stay.

This is the first 5 days of the New Zealand Uncut.

LENGTH	5 days
GRADE	B - Up to 4-5 hours physical activity per day
START	Auckland – 7:00am Heritage Hotel foyer, 35 Hobson Street, Central Auckland
FINISH	Wellington – 5:00pm (approx.)
ACCOMMODATION	Hotels and Lodges
INCLUDED ACTIVITIES	Mitai Maori Village Wai-o-tapu Thermal Wonderland
OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES	All activities outlined in itinerary are included in trip price.
DEPARTURES	2019 Oct: 31 Nov: 14, 28 2020 Jan: 23 Feb: 6, 20 Mar: 19

“WONDERFUL ITINERARY, GUIDES, HIKES”

Every detail was taken care of. I loved not having to think about driving, food, lodgings, pit stops, trail maps, etc. The company even offered to supply rain gear (no charge), which I took them up on and it saved me from having to check a bag. They provided excellent information in advance so I was well prepared with what I did bring. As a solo traveller, I was very comfortable with the small group and our two knowledgeable, engaging guides. I saw and learned more than I ever would have on my own.

~ Amanda - California, January 2017, **Trip Advisor**

“THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE”

In 5 days there is a lot packed in, but the pace feels about right. Lots of lovely walks, with the Tongariro crossing the last and most spectacular. Very good accommodation and meals along the way. A thoroughly enjoyable way to see the natural beauty of the north island.

~ Linda M - Australia, January 2018, **Trip Advisor**

ITINERARY

DAY 1 AUCKLAND - WAITOMO CAVES - ROTORUA

1-2km/2 hours hiking

Meet your North Island guide and the rest of the group in the Heritage Hotel foyer at 7am before driving south through the classic patchwork green farming country alongside the Waikato River. Arriving at the Waitomo Caves area descend into the vaulted galleries of the Ruakuri Cave with its limestone formations and crystals. Be captivated by the thousands of tiny glowworms that cling to the cave ceiling and mimic a starlit night sky. Later we emerge into the sunshine and wander on a loop trail through an outstanding limestone canyon. We arrive in the volcanically active area of Rotorua late afternoon. Rotorua is also the centre of Maori cultural tourism in New Zealand and tonight we enjoy an evening meal and cultural performance. *Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Rotorua. Includes lunch and dinner.*



DAY 2 ROTORUA LAKES - LAKE TAUPO

8 km/5 hours hiking

Hike alongside the beautifully clear Lake Tarawera, enjoying the shade that towering tree ferns and ignimbrite cliffs offer. Plop into the water to cool off at any one of the tiny pumice beaches as you wait for the others to catch up. There are astonishing views all along this trail, giving glimpses of how expansive this massive wilderness of forest, lakes and volcanoes really is. In the afternoon we explore some of the amazing thermal areas located a little south of Rotorua. Wander along boardwalks that connect pools of bubbling mud, mineral-tainted hot pools and plumes of rising steam as you wonder at this unique area. Grab a cuppa before we drive toward the lakeside town of Taupo. At Huka Falls feel the power as the huge Waikato River gets pinched through a narrow rock corridor. Our accommodation is in Taupo. Relax with a drink and enjoy the views.

Accommodation: Beechtree Motel, Taupo. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.



DAY 3 TONGARIRO

8 km/2-4 hours hiking

We drive around Lake Taupo's shores to New Zealand's first national park - Tongariro. Take a leisurely morning walk through stunning forest around the slopes of Mt Pihanga and to the mystical Lake Rotopounamu (Lake of Greenstone). The next two nights are spent in a hotel on the edge of the park, providing a great opportunity for you to explore the area at your leisure. Join the guide this afternoon for a great walk to Taranaki Falls, cascading 20 metres over a 15,000 year-old lava flow. Enjoy dinner with the group in the comfort of your hotel. *Accommodation: hotel at the gateway to Tongariro National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 4 TONGARIRO

23 km/6-8 hours hiking

Join the guide today for a full days walking on the famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing, regarded as one of the best day walks in the world. The well built track traverses up, steeply at times, to the craters of Mt Tongariro. Stop and admire the views of the Red Crater, Emerald Lakes and steaming vents that make this hike so iconic. After a sometimes long and physically challenging day celebrate your achievement at dinner with a bottle of fine New Zealand wine. Those who prefer a more restful day can find plenty to do at the village: Soda Springs walk, Taranaki Falls walk, or simply drink coffee and view the great exhibits at the Park Visitor Centre. Enjoy your second night in this village. *Accommodation: hotel at the gateway to Tongariro National Park. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 5 TONGARIRO - WELLINGTON

Rest your legs this morning as we drive south through rolling green hill country to the capital city of Wellington. The tour finishes early afternoon in this buzzing wee city. Stroll along the fabulous waterfront and absorb some of New Zealand's history in the national museum - Te Papa, or simply get lost admiring the heritage houses along one of the many improbably steep streets. Nowhere is very far in Wellington. There is a vibrant café and restaurant scene here – enjoy. *Includes breakfast.*



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE B

- Up to 4-5 hours of physical activity per day
- At times carrying a backpack of 4-5kgs
- Tracks generally in good condition
- Altitude gains of up to 600m (2000ft) on harder days
- No hiking experience necessary

The full (optional) Tongariro Alpine Crossing on day 4 takes 6-8 hours and has an altitude gain of 750m.

GUIDES AND SAFETY

Our handpicked professionals come from a range of backgrounds. Each has extensive outdoor and hiking experience and a passion for New Zealand's wild and beautiful backcountry. Our guides are exactly that – they will guide you in the outdoors. Occasionally they might dash ahead to set up lunch or bring the bus around to meet you, but the rest of the day they are there for you. Expect a high level of care, knowledge and thoughtfulness. Our guides will ensure that your trip is truly inspiring, a huge amount of fun and safe. All guides are trained in Mountain Safety First Aid. All walks described in the itinerary are guided, however, the guide can suggest a number of shorter self-guided walks if you wish to do a little more or a little less walking on some of the days.



FOOD

Almost all of the meals are included on this tour, but when staying in the cities we let you do your own thing and try some of the excellent local restaurants (see "Additional Costs" section). Breakfast is usually (but not always) continental-style in the lodges and hotels. There are plenty of opportunities to graze the local cafes if you would prefer to explore in the morning. The lunches we prepare ourselves are often 'on the run' in picnic areas or on trails. Our guides usually set out lunch food for you and you simply help yourself. We provide healthy and wholesome food and include a lot of fresh produce. It is part of our philosophy to get everyone involved so there is a pretty good chance you may find yourself wielding a sharp knife or pushing the tea trolley around at lunchtime. Our customised trailers have a fold down table and cooking area that is perfect for preparing picnics at all those secret places we will take you. Included dinners are frequently in lodge restaurants (either set menu or a la carte), or in a restaurant in the town but occasionally somewhere out of the ordinary!



TRANSPORT

The average driving time per day varies; we have some days where we hardly drive at all. On a typical day we might be in the vehicle for 2-3 hours. But some days we will drive for longer. The driving time is a chance to rest and enjoy the fantastic scenery that is forever changing. We travel in a luxury minibus towing a custom-built trailer with food, equipment and your luggage. We carry a library box with some natural history reference books for you to peruse too. There will be a range of roads - sealed and unsealed. The guides are easily convinced to stop the vehicle if there is a great photo opportunity, vineyard or notable ice cream shop!



ACCOMMODATION

The Northern Portion uses a range of hotels and quality lodges chosen for their good standards and wonderful locations. All rooms have ensuite bathrooms. Some lodges have units with two bedrooms per unit. Rooms are twin share or doubles. If you are travelling on your own you will be given a twin share room with a fellow traveller of the same gender. Single supplements are available on this tour. The Northern Portion has been created for those that appreciate a high standard of accommodation after a good day of hiking.

LAUNDRY

Laundry facilities are available most nights, either as the hotel laundry service (additional charge) or as access to laundry facilities for hotel guests. Save up your NZ\$1 and \$2 coins as most washers and driers require these to operate. Laundry detergent is often available to purchase on-site.

CHARGING DEVICES

Devices such as cameras and cellphones can be charged throughout the tour - while travelling in the vehicle (bring along a charger adaptor) and during the hotel nights.

PACKING LIST

Items shown in bold can be hired from us.
Please arrange hire at least one week prior to your departure date.

What to take

New Zealand's weather is very changeable and cold weather can be experienced at any time of year, especially in the mountains. We recommend wearing lightweight and breathable fabrics while hiking. Merino or polypropylene underwear is great in cold weather and will still keep you warm when it gets wet, unlike cotton. Jeans are not suitable for hiking.

WALKING

- Hiking boots or shoes
- Daypack (25-30 litres)
- Drink bottle - 1L
- Waterproof raincoat (gore-tex or similar)**
- Warm fleece/wool jersey** (not cotton)
- Thermal underwear** (top and bottom, wool or polypropylene)
- Socks (we suggest 3 pairs)
- Warm hat or balaclava
- Long sleeve shirt (for sun protection)
- Shorts for hiking (or lightweight hiking trousers)
- Gloves or mittens (wool or fleece)

GENERAL

- Spare lightweight shoes or sandals
- Insect repellent (sandflies like foreign blood)
- Casual clothing for travel and evenings
- Dry bag for clothes/valuables

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

- Sunscreen, sunhat and sunglasses
- Rain trousers
- Camera
- Togs (swimming costume)
- Towel (lightweight travel towels are great)
- Walking poles**

SUPPLIED

- First Aid kit
- Drinking water
- Safety equipment
- Maps

Equipment

We can offer quality hiking equipment for use on your tour at no additional charge. We are able to supply fleece jacket, thermal top and bottom, raincoat and walking poles. Requests for equipment must be made at least 5 days before the departure date.

ADDITIONAL COSTS

Meals

Meals that are included in the trip price are detailed above. One evening meal is not included (Wellington). The typical cost for a restaurant main course in New Zealand is about \$28. One lunch is not included (en-route to Wellington).

Optional activities

All activities outlined in itinerary are included in trip price.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

For bookings four or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 65 days prior to your trip. For bookings within four months of the departure, full payment is required.

Cancellations

More than 20 days prior to departure - 80% refund of full ticket price.

20 to 10 days prior to departure - 50% refund of full ticket price.

Less than 10 days prior to departure - NO REFUND.

Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.