

FIRSTLIGHTTRAVEL



*Your South Pacific Travel Specialists*

# NEW ZEALAND

2023-2024 GUIDED HOLIDAYS



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# Essence of New Zealand



## Highlights

### ✂ Flexible Holidays

We've crafted an itinerary with plenty of two-night stays, which means you can sleep in and truly take the pulse of your destination.

### 📍 Iconic Sites

From the bubbling geysers of Rotorua to the gem-like surface of Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere, nature and culture unite across the North and South islands.

### 📷 Time For You

Get under the skin of New Zealand's cities – Queenstown, Wellington, Nelson & Rotorua – exploring at your leisure.

### 🍱 Sustainable Travel

MAKE TRAVEL MATTER EXPERIENCE The 'Eat My Lunch' program that your travels support ensure that kids across New Zealand go to school with a packed lunch and a full stomach.

### 🏞 Natural Wonders

More than 97% of Stewart Island is protected national parkland – unspoilt and largely unpeopled. It's a magnet for the kiwi bird, which thrives here.

## 1 Welcome to Christchurch

Arrive early to see just how Christchurch has transformed itself since the 2010/11 earthquakes. The best way to do this? Aboard the city's tram. It loops past historic attractions as well as some new ones. **Hotel: Ibis.**

## 2 Christchurch – Oamaru

Step out with your guide for a deeper dive into 'The City of Gardens' before traversing the colourful Canterbury Plains: the turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo, snow-capped mountains and wildflower-strewn meadows. Opt to take in the drama from the air on a scenic flight over Aoraki/Mount Cook, the Southern Alps and Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere. **Hotel: Heritage Gateway. B D**

## 3 Oamaru – Dunedin

Easing through the Waitaki Valley, you're en route toward New Zealand's oldest public gardens. They lie in the pretty town of Oamaru, known for its stately tree-lined streets and limestone buildings. Architectural drama of a different kind awaits in Dunedin. The afternoon is yours to while away. Perhaps sipping a lager or two at Speight's Brewery, or venturing further afield to discover Larnach Castle. **Hotel: Kingsgate. B**

## 4 Dunedin – Invercargill

If you've got an odd urge to hear Slim Dusty while traversing rolling green pastures en route to Gore, you're not alone. Fun fact: this is the country music capital of NZ. Invercargill is obsessed with something else: motor vehicles. Tributes to speed legends colour the city, telling the story of everyone from Burt Munro to Bill Richardson – his shed full of classic vehicles is the largest private collection of its type in the world. **Hotel: Kelvin, 2 nights. B**

## 5 Stewart Island

The ferry ride to Stewart Island is wild and wonderful. When you arrive, you're welcomed by the country's southernmost community. It's largely untouched, which means endemic flora and fauna thrive here. But don't take our word for it. Meet the locals on a tour through valleys and bays and out to avian heaven at Ulva Island. Or, jump on an e-bike. **B**

## 6 Invercargill – Queenstown

Queenstown is known as NZ's adventure capital for good reason. If you'd like to discover why, we can point you in the direction of the world's first bungy

jump, the Shotover Jet, or 4WDs to explore Skippers Canyon. There are plenty of alternatives for sybarites. Like vineyards, onsen hot pools, and Lake Wakatipu walking trails. Speaking of which, there's also an afternoon cruise on TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a barbecue dinner. The choice is yours. **Hotel: Copthorne Hotel & Resort, 2 nights. B**

## 7 Queenstown Free Time

Today, sign up to dive deep into Milford Sound/Piopiotahi within World Heritage listed Fiordland National Park, best explored on an optional tour cruising the waterway. Don't be surprised if you see dolphins and seals. **B**

## 8 Queenstown – Franz Josef/Waiau

Around the next bend is the Alpine countryside of the Southern Lakes, from Lake Dunstan to oh-so-blue Lake Hawea and lovely Lake Wanaka. Over the Haast Pass, Franz Josef Glacier/Kā Roimata o Hine Hukatere shimmers like a gem. **Hotel: Scenic Franz Josef Glacier (Graham Wing). B D**

## 9 Franz Josef/Waiau – Punakaiki

Wandering Hokitika's windswept shore on the West Coast feels a bit like you've discovered the end of the Earth. The town's other natural beauty is pounamu (native greenstone or jade). Prepare yourself for Punakaiki's Pancake Rocks and blowholes; they owe their existence to the thundering surf that will lull you to sleep. **Hotel: Ocean View Retreat. B D**

## 10 Punakaiki – Nelson

Ease along the Heritage Highway toward Nelson. Press your nose against the glass as your coach weaves through Buller Gorge and Kahurangi National Park, a place of wild rivers, high plateaus, alpine herb fields and coastal forests. **Hotel: Rutherford, 2 nights. B**

## 11 Nelson Free Time

Today is at your leisure. Lace up your hiking shoes, or sit back on a boat and soak up the silence of Abel Tasman National Park. This wilderness inspires calm, its golden beaches framed by sculpted granite cliffs that all unite to create one of the country's most legendary coastal tracks. **B**

## 12 Nelson – Wellington

You'll want a window seat for the cruise from the South Island to the North aboard the Interislander. This spectacle unfolds as you glide through



Huka Falls



## 6 Included Experiences

### Departure Dates

| 2022   | 2023           | 2024                   |
|--------|----------------|------------------------|
| Nov 24 | Jan 05, 26     | Jan 04, 25             |
| Dec 15 | Feb 02, 16     | Feb 01, 08, 15, 22, 29 |
|        | Mar 02, 09     | Mar 07, 21             |
|        | Apr 06, 27     |                        |
|        | Sep 07         |                        |
|        | Oct 05, 19     |                        |
|        | Nov 02, 23, 30 |                        |
|        | Dec 14, 21, 28 |                        |

A limited number of single rooms are available. Ask your local travel agent at time of booking.

See available prices and departure dates from 01 Oct 2024 at [aatkings.com](http://aatkings.com). Or contact your local travel agent.

### Dining

17 Full buffet breakfasts B      1 Highlight Dinner HD  
 1 Lunch L                              4 Dinners D

### Flight Information

Day 1 – flights to arrive prior to 4.00pm into Christchurch Airport  
 Day 18 – flights to depart any time from Auckland Airport  
**Flights are not included in the holiday price**

Queen Charlotte Sound to NZ's cool little capital of Wellington. We'll gladly point you in the direction of one of the city's happening restaurants for dinner tonight. **Hotel: Travelodge, 2 nights. B**

#### 13 Wellington Free Time

Grab a coffee to fuel your free day, whether that sees you catching up on Māori culture or perhaps taking a tour of Parliament. Peter Jackson fans will have their sights set firmly on a Lord of the Rings movie tour or visit to the Weta Workshop, where special-effects wizards work their magic. **B D**

#### 14 Wellington – Napier

Flattened by an earthquake in 1931, Napier rebuilt itself in just two years. Today, the city is home to the world's greatest concentration of Art Deco, Spanish Mission and Stripped Classical buildings. Your local guide will give you the architectural lowdown. **Hotel: Scenic Te Pania. B L**

#### 15 Napier – Rotorua

Tonight, Māori culture and traditions are in the spotlight at Te Puia. Your journey starts with a guided tour including the Māori Arts & Crafts Institute and Pohutu Geyser, followed by a hangi dinner overlooking the geothermal valley, and a Māori cultural performance in the meeting house, Te Aronui a Rua. **Hotel: Sudima, 2 nights. B HD**

#### 16 Rotorua Free Time

Today, it's your choice. Your Travel Director can point you in the direction of a kiwi nursery and hatchery. Hobbit fans will want to take advantage of the opportunity to tour the sights featured in The Lord of the Rings movies at Hobbiton. Want a bit of down time? Bliss out at the Polynesian Spa. **B**

#### 17 Rotorua – Auckland

Welcome to Auckland, the 'City of Sails'. You'll understand how it got its moniker when you glimpse yachts gliding around its two harbours. But today your sights are firmly set on the city's other love: rugby. The interactive All Blacks Experience begins with a haka before journeying through the sporting team's history. **Hotel: Holiday Inn Express. B**

#### 18 Farewell from Auckland

It's amazing how much of two islands you can see in 18 days. Provided you have the right people at the helm, and like-minded company, that is. **B**

