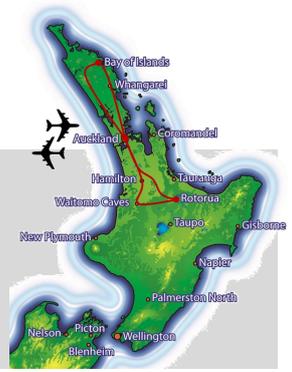


North Island Wonderland

Self Drive, Independent Coach, Private Car or Group Tour

8 Days / 7 Nights

Exploring the 'Wonders' of the North Island is what this itinerary is all about. From the beauty of the Bay of Islands in the far North to the hustle and bustle of Auckland, New Zealand's largest city to the cultural hub of New Zealand, Rotorua. En route you also venture to the deep surrounds of the Glow-worm grotto of the Waitomo Caves and visit the home of the Hobbits at Hobbiton.



Day 1 ARRIVE AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Haere mai - Welcome to New Zealand! Transfer from Auckland International Airport to your hotel. Regularly named as one of the best life-style cities in the world, Auckland is a vibrant cosmopolitan city, with a busy nightlife, world-class restaurants, and diverse neighbourhoods to explore.

Day 2 AUCKLAND / BAY OF ISLANDS

Depart Auckland city and travel north to the [Bay of Islands](#), travelling through spectacular scenery of native forests and sub-tropical bush before arriving at your destination seaside town of Paihia. There's no place in the world like the Bay of Islands, a stunning region of 144 secluded islands, abundant in natural wonders and marine life. Regarded as the [birthplace of New Zealand](#) as a bi-cultural nation, the Bay of Islands is rich in both Maori culture and early European history. Discover well-preserved Maori and European relics of the past and learn more about the unique history that has shaped New Zealand. Visit the [Waitangi Treaty Grounds](#) before enjoying a [cruise amongst the islands of the bay, travelling through the famous 'Hole in the Rock'](#) (weather permitting).

Day 3 BAY OF ISLANDS

Today is a day of leisure. The Bay of Islands has so many options for you to discover - perhaps a day trip to the light house at Cape Reinga, the most northern tip of New Zealand, followed by a safari along 90 Mile Beach on the way home. Maybe try your luck at deep-sea fishing, or take the plunge swimming with the dolphins or just take time out to relax within Paihia or Russell - New Zealand's first capital.



Day 4 BAY OF ISLANDS / AUCKLAND

Today retrace your journey south to Auckland. Travel through small farming settlements before passing the lovely beaches of the Hibiscus Coast and crossing the Auckland Harbour Bridge to arrive into the spectacular city scene of Auckland.

Day 5 AUCKLAND / WAITOMO / ROTORUA

Travel south from Auckland through the rich farmlands of the Waikato on to Waitomo. Enjoy a guided tour through the long galleries and lofty chambers of the [world famous Glowworm Caves](#). Your tour concludes with a silent boat ride through the [Glowworm Grotto](#), where the ceiling is lit by thousands of tiny lights from the glow worms. From Waitomo, travel to the [thermal wonderland of Rotorua](#). This popular tourist town has the most energetic thermal activity in the country with bubbling mud pools, gushing geysers, beautiful coloured hot springs and terrace formations created by mineral water. Rotorua also has a large Maori population and is renowned for Maori cultural activities and history.

Day 6 ROTORUA

This morning enjoy a half day city tour of Rotorua. Highlights include a [guided tour of Te Puia to visit the Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve](#) to see the boiling mud pools, steaming silica terraces and the geyser activity and the [New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute](#) where young Maori are learning traditional carving and weaving skills. Visit the [Agrodome](#) to learn about how sheep and wool are one of New Zealand's premier exports and see the working sheep dogs at the entertaining Sheep Show. Visit [Rainbow Springs](#), a showcase of New Zealand's natural flora and fauna – see the [rare Kiwi bird](#) in a special nocturnal enclosure and New Zealand's only reptile, the Tuatara.

This evening visit a [local Maori village](#) for an immersive feast of indigenous cultural storytelling, entertainment and food. Enjoy a [performance of Maori song and dance including the fearsome Haka](#) before dining on a sumptuous [buffet dinner including food from the hangi](#) (traditional Maori method of cooking).

Day 7 ROTORUA / AUCKLAND

Travel from Rotorua into the fertile Waikato Valley for a [visit to Hobbiton](#). Experience the real Middle-earth with a [guided visit to the Hobbiton Movie Set](#), the bucolic setting for The Shire that featured in the [Peter Jackson directed films, 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy and more recently, 'The Hobbit' trilogy](#). Your guide will escort you through the ten-acre site recounting fascinating details of how the Hobbiton set was created. The Hobbit holes, Green Dragon Inn, Mill and other structures created for The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit films can be viewed and you will see how this beautiful piece of Waikato farmland was transformed into The Shire from Middle-earth. Upon completion of your tour enjoy a complimentary beverage in the Green Dragon Inn then return to The Shires Rest.

From Hobbiton, drive north across the Bombay Hills and into Auckland City.

Day 8 DEPART AUCKLAND

Farewell from New Zealand. Today transfer from your hotel to Auckland International Airport for your flight home.