Itinerary

Exploring New Zealand featuring the North & South Islands
Nov 4, 2020 - Nov 25, 2020

Pre Night: Rydges Auckland
A refreshing haven from the bustle of downtown Auckland, Rydges Auckland has the heart of the city at its front door. With smiling, attentive staff who put your needs first throughout your stay, you are sure to enjoy a unique and refreshing hotel experience. The newly revitalised rooms at Rydges Auckland are designed to exude warmth and comfort. More than a just hotel, Rydges Auckland is a welcoming hub for your time in Auckland.

Days 1 - 2: Depart from Home
Cross the International Dateline and begin the adventure of a lifetime by skipping a day ahead.

Day 3: Auckland, New Zealand - Tour Begins
Your tour opens in Auckland, the “City of Sails,” consistently rated one of the best places in the world to live. Auckland’s Polynesian population instills into its chic atmosphere the vibrant feel of the Pacific Islands. This evening, join your fellow travelers for a welcome dinner.

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Day 4: Auckland
Come to know the best of Auckland during a panoramic city tour featuring the America’s Cup Village, the War Memorial, bustling Queen Street and the Auckland Harbour Bridge. The afternoon is yours to explore New Zealand’s largest city on your own. Perhaps you will choose to go on an optional America’s Cup sailing experience.

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Day 5: Auckland - Bay of Islands
Day 6: Bay of Islands

Begin the day with a cruise that features the bay’s famous Hole in the Rock and a stop off at picturesque Urupukapuka Island. Relax on the beach or walk to a higher elevation to enjoy 360° views. Look out at the Cape Brett Lighthouse, standing nearly 500 feet above sea level at the edge of the Cape Brett Peninsula. The rest of the day is yours to independently explore Paihia – the quaint town known as “the jewel of the Bay of Islands.”

Day 7: Bay of Islands - Matakahi - Rotorua

Day 8: Rotorua

Today, find yourself amid the dramatic geothermal landscape of Rotorua. With over one-third of its population boasting Maori roots, this city is known as the Maori capital of New Zealand. Visit Te Puia, New Zealand’s premier Maori cultural and geothermal experience. The National Carving School and National Weaving School are located here, passing on age-old customs by teaching the tribal youth these traditional skills. Enjoy the chance to view the Kiwi bird and learn what is being done in an effort to remove this marvelous creature from the endangered species list. In the evening, experience ceremonial Maori rituals at an authentic Hangi dinner and performance.

Day 9: Rotorua - Taupo - Napier

Day 10: Napier

Day 11: Napier - Wellington
Continue your way south through rural vistas. The rugged Rimutaka Range slowly gives way to Wellington, a coastal city nestled against the mountains. Embark on a tour of New Zealand's capital city, known as the "Windy City." See the Beehive – New Zealand's Parliament; historic St. Paul's Church; and the Old Government Building, the largest wooden building in the Southern Hemisphere.

Day 12: Wellington

Enjoy a day at leisure to relax or explore Wellington. You may want to visit the Te Papa Tongawera Museum, a fascinating center dedicated to art, history and the Maori culture, or perhaps ride the Wellington Cable Car to the suburb of Kelburn for stunning panoramic views of the city.

Day 13: Wellington - Picton - Christchurch

Board a ferry and sail across Cook Strait. Experience what has been called “the most beautiful ferry ride in the world.” Arrive in Picton on the South Island where you will have free time for lunch. Continue along the breathtaking east coast to the largest city on the South Island, Christchurch.

Day 14: Christchurch - Mt. Cook Region

The Maori word for Mt. Cook is Aoraki, which means "cloud piercer." Journey through New Zealand's unspoiled wilderness and arrive at the Mt. Cook region, where permanent ice fields and glaciers blanket the ragged peaks. This is where famed New Zealand mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary honed his skills before conquering Everest. You may choose to take a nature walk, enjoy an optional glacier flightseeing tour (weather permitting), or simply meditate on the beauty of the Southern Alps.

Day 15: Mt. Cook Region - Dunedin

Travel to Dunedin, on the southeast coast of New Zealand. One of the earliest European settlements on the islands, Dunedin holds proudly to its Scottish heritage and traditions.

Day 16: Dunedin

This morning's panoramic drive reveals Larnach Castle as well as Baldwin Street, the world's steepest public road. Later, visit the Royal Albatross Centre, the only mainland breeding location in the world for these magnificent birds. Their epic wingspan can reach nearly 10 feet!

Day 17: Dunedin - Manapouri - Te Anau
This property is only a minute’s walk from the center of Queenstown shopping, restaurants, nightlife and other activities. Its location is also nestled beside the beautiful and tranquil lake on which Queenstown sits.

Day 18: Te Anau

Take a short walk to the Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre. This site is your gateway to the natural beauty of New Zealand’s fjords. An expert guide will provide information about the natural and human history of the region, as well as ongoing conservation projects. With the rest of the day at leisure, perhaps you will hike through the park, visit the Te Anau Bird Conservation Center, or take an optional tour to the Waitomo Glow Worm caves.

Day 19: Te Anau - Milford Sound - Queenstown

During a cruise of the beautiful Milford Sound, you will see why this fjord is one of the most visited sites on the South Island. With rock faces that rise nearly 4,000 feet on either side, the scenery will take your breath away. Depart Milford Sound and enjoy the rugged grandeur of the Hollyford Valley and the Homer Tunnel as you head to Queenstown, a mountainside town set against the shores of Lake Wakatipu.

Day 20: Queenstown

Take advantage of a full day at leisure to enjoy Queenstown. The town has earned the nickname of “Adventure Capital of the World” due to its rugged terrain and the adventurous Kiwi spirit. With the Remarkable Mountains surrounding the town and adjacent lake, there is no shortage of natural beauty and outdoor excursions.

Day 21: Queenstown

Journey into the heart of New Zealand’s high country to visit an authentic, family-owned merino sheep farm. En route, enjoy the spectacular scenery of the Remarkables, Cecil Peak, Bob’s Cove and Mt. Earnslaw as you cruise across spectacular Lake Wakatipu to Mt. Nicholas High Country Farm. During your exclusive, behind-the-scenes visit, follow the journey of merino wool from mustering sheep through the creation of modern wool garments. Enjoy a freshly prepared farmer’s lunch before sailing back to Queenstown. Later this afternoon, it’s your choice! You may go bird watching at the Kiwi Birdlife Park -OR- take a gondola to the top of Bob’s Peak for stunning panoramic views of the region. Gather for a farewell dinner with your fellow travelers.

Day 22: Queenstown - Tour Ends

Your adventure comes to a close today, leaving you with many pleasant memories of a wonderful trip.

Post Night: Novotel Queenstown Lakeside
Located in one of the most picturesque settings in the world, Novotel Lakeside is in the very heart of Queenstown and nestled beside the beautiful and tranquil lake on which Queenstown sits. This property is only a minute's walk from the center of Queenstown shopping, restaurants, nightlife and other activities. Novotel Lakeside is a fresh and modern hotel which offers guests superb and uninterrupted views of the lake, mountains and adjoining gardens.