
Day 01 ARRIVE AUCKLAND

Arrive in Auckland.

After claiming their luggage (carts are available free of charge) and completing Customs and Immigration formalities, guests will exit the Customs Hall where they are met and directed to their coach.

Transfer the short distance to Auckland city.
Check into your accommodation.

Accommodation for 2 nights at: Airedale or similar **NB: Normal check-in time is 2:00 pm**

Auckland

Auckland is the gateway to New Zealand and is known as the “City of Sails”. Auckland is not only a boating paradise, but it is also has many, hiking trails, surf beaches and great shopping centres. Auckland has nearly 60 dormant volcanoes with the last eruption being approximately 600 years ago. Auckland is New Zealand’s largest city with approximately one third (1.3 million) of the population living in the city. To the north east of the city, the area has abundant vineyards and fruit-growing regions. Auckland is well provisioned with parks and reserves. The city is one of New Zealand's fastest growing communities and its streets are lined with busy department stores, boutiques, coffee shops, nightclubs and craft centres. The downtown harbour-side area is rich with numerous restaurants and bars each reflecting the many flavours of this, the largest Polynesian city in the world. Auckland has plenty of sports and recreational facilities with more than 30 golf courses and dozens of beaches within easy reach. The sparkling waters of the Waitemata Harbour are an anchorage for all types of sea craft. Each January it is the scene of the world's largest one-day yachting regatta, staged here as part of the city’s anniversary celebrations. It is appropriate that the city titles itself the City of Sails.

Day 02 AUCKLAND

(Breakfast)

Morning Auckland Sightseeing

The tour will begin with a drive to the summit of Mount Eden, Auckland’s highest dormant volcanic cone. Here you have splendid panoramic views of Auckland city and its location set on an isthmus between two great harbours, the Waitemata (on the Pacific coast) and the Manukau (on the Tasman Sea coast.) The waters of the Waitemata Harbour join the Hauraki Gulf and some of the many islands of the Gulf may also be seen from the summit.

From Mount Eden continue to the **Auckland Museum** where time will be allowed to view the Maori and Polynesian Sections. These house one of the world’s best collections of Maori and Polynesian artefacts. The Museum dates from just after the First World War and was built as a memorial to those who lost their lives in that war and the Second World War. A section of the Museum is devoted to collections from both wars.

Leaving the Museum, travel through the Parnell Village, this contains a fascinating selection of colonial-style shops, boutiques, craft shops and arcades.

Following the stop at Parnell Village travel along the waterfront and through the central business district back to your accommodation where you will check in.

The rest of the evening is at leisure.

Day 03 AUCKLAND - WAITOMO - ROTORUA

(Breakfast, Lunch)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

As you depart Auckland, you will travel along the Southern Motorway and through the southern suburbs of the greater Auckland City region to a point where you pass over the Bombay Hills and into the fertile dairy lands of the Waikato River Valley. You will pass by the historic Redoubt at Rangiriri near the banks of the Waikato River and then through the coal-mining town of Huntly.

Following alongside New Zealand's longest river your journey takes you past Taupiri, the sacred mountain to the Tainui Maori tribe of this region. A short way on is Ngaruawahia and the Marae of Turangawaiwai, official residence of the Maori King. Crossing the river here, it is not too much further before you arrive in Hamilton, New Zealand's largest inland city and the major commercial and industrial centre for one of the richest agricultural and pastoral areas in the world. The route continues through beautifully rich pastoral farmland and through to the rural townships of Te Awamutu, the "rose town". South from here you enter the "King Country", named so during the Colonial period in NZ's history when this region was ravaged with battles between some Maori groups and the British Militia. The township of Otorohanga is next before we turn off the main road and arrive at Waitomo where many of the subterranean limestone outcroppings have been transformed into a series of spectacular caves.

In Waitomo you will visit the Waitomo Caves.

Waitomo Caves

These caves in the limestone hill country southwest of Hamilton are one of New Zealand's premier tourist attractions. The largest and best-known attraction is the "Glow Worm Cave", renown for the presence of glowworms, which seemingly turn the cavern roof into a galaxy of stars. The other caves are different entirely but well worth exploring.

Following your visit to the Waitomo Caves you will travel on to Crosshills for lunch.

Crosshills Lunch

This is the family home of Graham and Elizabeth Robertson. The French provincial style house overlooks the main portion of their 500 acre Dairy Farm and the paddocks are spread across the low hills, thus the name. Bordering the house is a lovely English-style garden complete with a pond. Citrus fruit trees fit in among the flowering shrubs and plants making the yard a delight to visit. Doves in a purpose built "castle" are happy inhabitants of this garden where the simple walkways lure one to explore each area further. A delicious home cooked meal is served in the lounge and covered patio area of the house here at Crosshills.

Departing Crosshills, retrace the route toward Te Awamutu turning off the main highway at Kihikihi. Then travel across the farming district of Waipa eventually crossing the mighty Waikato River. A little further south you will pass Lake Karapiro, the site of one of the best rowing courses in the world and one of the eight hydro-electric power stations on the Waikato River. The countryside will become increasingly rugged as the road climbs over the densely native-forested Mamaku Ranges. The final approach to Rotorua is downward into the Caldera or crater of the Volcano, which filled with water to form Lake Rotorua. The city nestles on the edge of the lake.

On arrival in Rotorua,

Accommodation for 2 nights at: Ibis Rotorua

Day 04 ROTORUA

(Breakfast)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

This morning's tour of Rotorua commences with a visit to **Te Puia** for a guided tour through the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. Here young Maori carvers are taught the skills of their ancestors. Also seen is a model Maori Village, and the Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley where you will see pools of bubbling mud, spouting geysers, silica terraces and steam pouring out of vents at your feet.

Visit the newly opened **Kiwi Encounter** which is playing a key roll in the conservation and breeding of New Zealand's Native Bird. This unique attraction allows visitors to see how the breeding process unfolds, from incubating a new egg to releasing the grown bird back to where it was found in the wild.

From here located within the same complex visit **Rainbow Springs**, this park which displays Rainbow and Trout in their various stages of development against the background of native flora and fauna. Rainbow Springs contains over 135 different native trees, ferns, from 60 foot tall tree ferns to tiny delicate maidenhair ferns. Many of New Zealand's large native birds are on display in the aviaries and the nocturnal Kiwi House, which opened in 1975. These include pigeons, pukekos, keas, kakarikis, moreporks, paradise ducks, wekas and harrier hawks. An important function of Rainbow Springs is the preservation of New Zealand's national heritage.

The rest of the day and evening is at leisure.

Day 05 ROTORUA - - QUEENSTOWN

(Breakfast)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

This morning your coach will transfer you to the Rotorua Airport.

Fly Rotorua to Queenstown on flight to be advised

On arrival in Queenstown you will be met and transferred to your accommodation.

Stay at:

Copthorne Lakefront Hotel or similar - 2 nights

Queenstown

The first European to have visited this part of Central Otago explored Lake Wakatipu on a raft. That was in 1859. Should he return now, he would see a bustling, colourful and leading tourist city in the South Island set in a region of exceptional and diverse beauty. It is regarded by seasoned world travellers as one of the premier scenic areas in the world. The town nestles beside the lake, under the towering Remarkables Range. It offers a host of holiday/tourist attractions for the visitor, from helicopter flights and trips on jet boats to walks, tramps and climbs, and even a cruise in a 1912 old steamer. Queenstown is a popular ski centre in the winter. There are many places of interest in the region including the Skippers Canyon and Arrowtown.

The rest of the day and evening is at leisure.

Day 06 QUEENSTOWN

(Breakfast, Dinner)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

This morning you will go on a local sightseeing tour of Queenstown and its environs.

You will travel via Arthur's Point and the Edith Cavell Bridge to the picturesque holiday settlement of Arrowtown, an old gold mining town which has retained much of its early pioneering character. Here you can spend the morning looking around this quaint and historic town, which was once a busy hub of the area during the gold rush era of the mid 1800's. Arrowtown, with its dry stone buildings now nestles peacefully beneath the shadows of great trees planted by the miners over a century ago. Take the opportunity here to have morning tea and a coffee or do some shopping.

The coach will then take you to one of the icons of Queenstown - the AJ Hackett Bungy Bridge. AJ Hackett, the pioneer of bungy jumping has made Queenstown the bungy jumping capital of the world. It is a wonderful spectator sport, watching participants defy gravity by jumping off the bridge with their feet firmly attached to a rubber bungy cord. This stop is for spectators only - participants are free to go back in their own time if they wish to partake in this activity.

Following the stop at the Bungy Site it is off to Gibbston Valley Winery for some wine tasting.ch.

Gibbston Valley pioneered commercial winemaking in the Central Otago region. Alan Brady founded this when he planted the first grapes in 1981, with the goal of exploring the regions viticulture potential and trying to capture its essence in the bottle. The new vineyards have thrived on the warm north-facing slopes where miners dug for gold 100 years ago. It has a very Mediterranean feel that you could almost think you were in the South of France!

The vineyards of Central Otago are the southernmost in the world, the highest above sea level in New Zealand (at over 300 metres), and the farthest from the sea - all factors which contribute to highly distinctive wines which are already attracting world-wide attention. Gibbston Valley Wines has earned an international reputation for Pinot Noir and other thriving grape varieties such as: Chardonnay, Pinot Gris Riesling, and Pinot Blanc. The team has won many prestigious awards and accolades for their efforts, including the 2000 Reserve Pinot Noir being named the Champion Pinot Noir of the World in the 2001 International Wine Challenge, London.

From here your coach will transfer you into Queenstown where you will join the Gondola aerial cableway for a 1500 feet ride up Bob's peak to the Skyline Chalet. Here you will enjoy the magnificent lake and mountain scenery. The breathtaking views from the top extend almost full circle, from Coronet Peak around to The Remarkables and on to Cecil and Walter Peaks on to the other side of beautiful Lake Wakatipu.

The rest of your afternoon and dinner will be at leisure.

Evening Dining

Relive a bygone era onboard the TSS Earnslaw – a vintage steamship that takes you on one of the most picturesque journeys across Lake Wakatipu. One of the last remaining coal-fired vessels, she is affectionately known as “Lady of the Lake” and used to transport goods to remote settlements. Tonight the Earnslaw will take you across the Lake to Walter Peak Sheep Station where dinner will be served is the historic homestead.

Return to Queenstown at 10.00pm and transfer back to the hotel by coach.

Day 07 QUEENSTOWN - MILFORD SOUND - TE ANAU (Breakfast, Lunch).

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Depart from Queenstown by coach and settle back to watch the most amazing scenery unfold before you. Travel along the eastern shoreline of Lake Wakatipu in the shadow of the Remarkable Range to Kingston. Drive through the Five Rivers farming community to Lake Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland.

From Te Anau travel around the shores of Lake Te Anau into the rugged valley of the Eglinton River. As the road passes Lakes Gunn and Fergus beech covered mountains frame the view of distant peaks. The road then enters the Hollyford Valley and climbs to the Homer Saddle. After driving through the 1200 metre long Homer Tunnel, the road drops down to follow the swiftly flowing Cleddau River into Milford Sound.

On arrival join the Milford Adventurer for a cruise on Milford Sound. This fiord was created during an ice age and knives out to sea with native forests and sheer cliffs rising from the waterway to heights of several thousand feet. Gigantic waterfalls tumble into the fiord from lofty mountain lakes. Here lies some of the most talked about scenery in the world, including mile-high Mitre Peak, the aptly named focal point of majestic Milford Sound. On board the Boat the group will be served with a scrumptious lunch with all of the food being local produce.

After the cruise the group will have a relaxing journey back to Queenstown.

Day 08 QUEENSTOWN - MILFORD SOUND - WANAKA (Breakfast, Lunch).

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Stay at:

Edgewater Hotel or similar - 1 night

Day 12 WANAKA - CHRISTCHURCH (Breakfast, Lunch)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

The drive to Mount Cook takes approximately 4 hours. Depart Wanaka travelling through the fruit growing areas of Central Otago which are crossed before climbing the Lindis Pass into the McKenzie Country. This is a sea of tussock - named after an infamous Scottish drover of the 19th century. Follow the western shore of Lake Pukaki to Mount Cook. The scene is a paradox of wild beauty and forbidding solitude, pale blue lake and golden tussock contrasting with the snow-capped Southern Alps.

Mount Cook

Renowned for its craggy beauty, Mt Cook is a magnet for mountaineers who pit their climbing skills against its challenging peaks and glaciers. Less energetic visitors come here to enjoy the park's alpine scenery and explore its trails and tarns.

There will be a stop in Mount Cook for you to have lunch (own cost).

OPTIONAL SKI PLANE FLIGHT WITH GLACIAL LANDING.

(At an additional cost)

The Southern Alps are the backbone of the South Island of New Zealand. A majestic mountain range combining snow fed rivers, yawning ravines, soaring peaks and towering rock faces, carved over thousands of years by mighty glaciers. New Zealand aviation history was made in 1955 with the first Ski Plane landing on the Tasman Glacier. Today, nestled at the base of Mount Cook is the Hermitage at Mount Cook Village, the departure point for the world famous Ski Plane flights.

Mount Cook Ski Planes operate a modern fleet of Cessna and Pilatus Porter aircraft all year round. The professional and experienced pilots will ensure your comfort in flight while sharing with you their vast knowledge of the landscape in this breathtaking corner of the world. Fly the length of the Tasman Glacier to view spectacular scenery and majestic mountains that seem almost close enough to touch. Land on the glacier (weather permitting) and absorb the tranquillity and silence of this pristine alpine environment.

Day 12 MOUNT COOK- CHRISTCHURCH

(Breakfast)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

The drive to Christchurch takes approximately 5 hours. Depart from the Mt Cook National Park and travel past Lake Pukaki before turning north to continue through the MacKenzie Country to Lake Tekapo. Before leaving Tekapo visit the simple stone Church of the Good Shepherd, built in 1935 as a memorial to the pioneer run-holders of the MacKenzie Country.

Nearby is another memorial, a bronze sheep dog sculpted by a local farmer's wife recording the district's obligation to sheep dogs - the unsung heroes of high country farming. From Tekapo a descent is made through Burke's Pass to the rural settlement of Fairlie and Geraldine, before crossing in the process the checker-board farmlands of the Canterbury Plains to reach Ashburton and Christchurch.

Christchurch

Christchurch is the South Island's largest city. Visitors find Christchurch is a charming city, modelled in the English style. The River Avon meanders through the city and its banks provide a popular lunchtime retreat. Cathedral Square is a place to relax and take in the proportions of the stone-built Cathedral, or listen to New Zealand's' only authentic and somewhat eccentric "Wizard" entertain lunchtime crowds. Christchurch is said to be the most English city outside England. "Old" Christchurch is best reflected in the Arts Centre, housed in the original buildings of Christchurch's first University. Adjacent is the fabulous Canterbury Museum located next to the gates of the Botanical Gardens.

Stay – Crowne Plaza (or similar) – 2 nights

The rest of your afternoon and dinner will be at leisure.

Day 13 CHRISTCHURCH

(Breakfast)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Morning sightseeing tour of Christchurch.

Christchurch Sightseeing

Your tour of Christchurch City will include Cathedral Square, the Town Hall, River Avon, Hagley Park and many landscaped parks and suburbs, before driving up the cashmere Hills to the "Sign of the Takahe", an old stone roadhouse overlooking Christchurch with magnificent panoramic views of the Southern Alps and Canterbury Plains.

Rest of the day at leisure

Day 14 CHRISTCHURCH - SYDNEY

(Breakfast)

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Transfer to the airport to visit the International Antarctic Centre before check-in for your onward flight.

Christchurch's Antarctic links go back to the time when Captain Scott sailed from Lyttelton on his final journey to the South Pole in 1912.

The International Antarctic Centre in Christchurch Upon arrival, you will see many informative displays depicting life and work on the frozen continent. You can even experience sub-zero conditions in a specially-designed blizzard room. You will then view the audio-visual film, The Great White South, and visit the Penguin Encounter enclosure to see the cute and entertaining little blue penguins swimming and roaming about in their specially re-created marine environment.

Next, you will take an exhilarating 10-minute ride on a genuine Hagglund All-Terrain Snowmobile over an outdoor adventure course. Along the way, your snowmobile will climb over a steep incline and cross a pool of water. This tracked, 16-seat vehicle is the same type used in Antarctica by the U.S. and New Zealand Antarctic programs.

Fly to Sydney.