



Boutique Escape to Northland

Experience a boutique journey through Northland, New Zealand's hidden gem, where ancient kauri forests meet serene beaches and the sparkling waters of the South Pacific coastline. Savour artisan wines in Matakana and fresh seafood along the Bay of Islands. Immerse yourself in Māori heritage at Waitangi Treaty Grounds, wander charming coastal towns like Russell, and indulge in thoughtfully curated meals along the way. A perfect blend of nature, culture, and culinary delights.

Starts in: Auckland
Finishes in: Auckland
Length: 10days / 9nights
Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Can be customised: Yes

This itinerary can be customised to suit you perfectly. We can add more days, remove days, change accommodations, mix it up, add activities to suit your interests or simply design and create something from scratch. Call us today to get your custom New Zealand itinerary underway.



Inclusions:

Includes: Late model rental cars

Includes: Unlimited kms

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

Included activity: Perfect Day Ocean Cruise with Dive! Tutukaka

Included activity: Cape Reinga & Ninety Mile Beach Full Day Tour with Fullers Bay of Islands - Lunch Included

Included activity: Matakoho Kauri Museum

Includes: Fully inclusive rental car insurance (excess may apply)

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

Included activity: Taste of Waiheke Vineyard Tour with Fullers

Included activity: Hole in the Rock Cruise with Fullers

Included activity: Waitangi Treaty Grounds Guided Tour and Cultural Performance

: 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch

Day 1



Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

You will be met at the Auckland airport by the driver and transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

Welcome to Auckland

Welcome to Auckland, known in Māori as Tāmaki Makaurau. Auckland is New Zealand's vibrant "City of Sails," and the country's largest metropolitan area. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea. Surrounded by native bush, lush rainforests, and pristine beaches, Auckland is a haven for both adventurers and urban explorers. Wander through world-class museums and galleries in the city centre or enjoy a peaceful retreat at the Auckland Gardens, where stunning landscapes showcase New Zealand's diverse flora. Stroll along the lively waterfront to savour fresh seafood and international cuisine at Viaduct restaurants. For an unforgettable perspective, ascend the iconic SkyTower, New Zealand's tallest structure, and take in panoramic views of the city and its picturesque islands.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Harbour Sailing Dinner Cruise with Explore

This unique on-water sailing and dining experience is not to be missed while you're in Auckland. Enjoy smooth sailing on the Waitemata Harbour - then watch this photogenic city come alive with twinkling lights. Enjoy your meal as you sail around the beautiful Auckland Harbour taking in the view as the sun slowly sets. You'll be treated to canapes and a drink as you set off towards Westhaven Marina. To finish the evening off, savour your dessert course as you leisurely sail back to Auckland's vibrant Viaduct Harbour.

Your accommodation: Hotel DeBrett

Located in downtown Auckland, Hotel DeBrett sits between two of Auckland's best known precincts - High Street's hip fashion and Shortland Street's tailored commerce. The iconic building has been stylishly updated into a 25 room luxury boutique hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 2



Explore Waiheke Island

Waiheke Island is the most visited island in the gulf. A delightful 45 minute ferry ride from downtown Auckland will find you standing at Matiatia Wharf set to enjoy a multitude of diverse attractions. The island is home to around 7,000 people but during the summer weekends there can be as many as 35,000 people enjoying the vineyards, restaurants, cafes, arts and the idyllic scenery. Among the two dozen or so vineyards on the island, Mudbrick, Goldwater Estate, Stoneyridge and Te Whau are some of the best known. The beaches are pristine and the countryside provides many interesting walks. Most notable is the trip to Stoney Batter where you can enjoy breathtaking views of the Hauraki Gulf. The area also has the remains of gun emplacements and a series of tunnels and chambers, protected by the historic places trust.

Taste of Waiheke Vineyard Tour

Depart from the Auckland Ferry Terminal and enjoy a scenic cruise through the Hauraki Gulf to Waiheke Island. On arrival at Matiatia Wharf, you'll be greeted and directed to your coach for the day. The Taste of Waiheke tour will first take you to enjoy a glass of wine and two-course lunch at Batch Winery. Views from the Batch are stunning with its vineyard sitting at the highest altitude on the island. You then depart for the beautiful Mudbrick Vineyard to enjoy a some award-winning wines before experiencing an olive oil tasting at Allpress Olive Groves. Before you are returned to the ferry terminal, wander through the acres of sun-soaked gardens at Heke Kitchen, Brewery & Distillery, home to craft beer and whiskey.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Collect Rental Car

This tour's from price includes an intermediate-sized vehicle, setting you up for comfortable travels. Yet, we understand every adventure is unique! Feel free to select the perfect wheels from our incredible collection of rental cars, spanning from economy hatchbacks to premium SUVs.

Auckland to Tutukaka via Puhoi

The journey from Auckland to the stunning Tutukaka Coast is a curated introduction to Northland's coastal charm and artisan heartland. Take your time to discover the unique villages along the way, beginning with the historic Bohemian settlement of Puhoi, where you can savour a taste of award-winning local cheeses. Continue to the renowned Matakana region, a gourmet oasis dotted with boutique wineries, a vibrant village market, and artisan producers offering everything from exquisite chocolates to freshly brewed coffee. Further north, a stop at Whangarei's spectacular Hundertwasser Art Centre provides a moment of unexpected architectural delight and cultural immersion.

Tutukaka Coast

The Tutukaka Coast is your gateway to an underwater world of wonder. Offshore lie the legendary Poor Knights Islands, declared by Jacques Cousteau as one of the top 10 dive sites globally, a vibrant marine reserve teeming with life. These waters are also a renowned hotspot for big game fishing, boasting numerous world-record catches. Beyond diving and fishing, explore the stunning coastline with scenic cruises, kayaking tours, or tranquil strolls along sandy beaches. When hunger strikes, local cafes and restaurants offer delicious fresh seafood straight from the ocean, ensuring a taste of Tutukaka's bounty.

Your accommodation: Lodge 9

Nestled in the heart of the Tutukaka, in the bustling coastal village. The lodge has 6 large rooms, with bespoke furnishings, signature artwork, and an organic zone- making the resort the perfect getaway. The communal area is a quirky tropical paradise, relax out in the courtyard by the saltwater pool or lounge around and enjoy the complimentary tapas and wines.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 4



Perfect Day Ocean Cruise

Washed by warm currents sweeping south from the Coral Sea, the Poor Knights Islands are an international icon 23km off the Tutukaka Coast. The island's volcanic origins provide myriad spectacular drop offs, walls, caves, arches and tunnels, all inhabited by an amazing array of underwater life.

The best way for non-divers to experience the wonder of Poor Knights Island. This special day-trip, Perfect Day includes sight-seeing, kayaking, cave explorations, snorkelling, swimming, sea mammal-spotting, snippets of fascinating history, Island facts and great food.

The boat is incredibly well fitted-out, with plenty of indoor and outdoor seating, upstairs viewing, plenty of facilities and the fabulous 'fish cam' feeding live underwater shots right into the boat. You will visit the world's largest sea cave, Rikoriko Cave by boat, and the various arches. It is important to read and understand the risks associated with this activity before travel. For more information please see here

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Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 5



Tutukaka to Russell

Your journey begins by soaking up the last moments of the Tutukaka Coast's beauty. Consider a peaceful stop at the serene Whale Bay, an exquisite beach accessible via a short, beautiful bush walk. Referred to by many as a top hidden gem, it offers a tranquil final moment before your drive. From there, your drive unfolds into the rich cultural heartland of Northland, making a fascinating and whimsical stop in the town of Kawakawa, known for its world-famous public toilets designed by the visionary artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser. Continue on to the ferry terminal at Opua, where a short and scenic car ferry will transport you to the tranquil shores of Russell. This pleasant 15-minute crossing saves a long drive around the harbour, providing a final moment to take in the beautiful bays before you arrive in a historic and charming seaside village that serves as your idyllic base for the next part of your adventure.

Explore Russell

Experience the timeless charm of Russell, a historic village accessible by a quick ferry ride from Paihia or a scenic coastal drive. Once a notorious whaling hub, New Zealand's first European settlement, and briefly the country's first capital, Russell now offers a tranquil escape with a rich past. You'll love exploring historical sites like the bullet-scarred Christ Church, New Zealand's oldest church, or the historic Marlborough Hotel, which holds the country's oldest liquor license. For breathtaking views of the Bay and its islands, a short walk up Flagstaff Hill is a must. This historic site tells the story of Māori chief Hone Heke's famous protests. Russell is the perfect place to step back in time while enjoying the stunning beauty of the Bay of Islands

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

Arcadia Lodge is a Russell landmark, a turn of the century home and luxury bed and breakfast overlooking Russell's tranquil Matauwhi Bay.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Hole in the Rock Cruise with Fullers

Board your cruise and take in the stunning views as you glide out through the islands and along the Rakaumangamanga Peninsula to Cape Brett, where a historic lighthouse keeps watch over and Piercy Island/Motukōkako, or as it is popularly known as the Hole in the Rock. According to Māori legend, local warriors used to paddle through the Hole in the Rock in their canoes before departing for battle. Drops of water from the cave roof above were a good omen. If conditions permit, your skipper will expertly guide the ship through the narrow space. Keep an eye out for common and bottlenose dolphins, whales, and other marine life during your cruise, and have your camera ready as you get up close to the action. Stop off at Otehei Bay on Urupukapuka Island where you have time to relax, take a walk, have a swim, or enjoy a bite to eat and drink from the on-site fully licensed cafe.

Your accommodation: Arcadia Lodge, Russell

Arcadia Lodge is a Russell landmark, a turn of the century home and luxury bed and breakfast overlooking Russell's tranquil Matauwhi Bay.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Cape Reinga & Ninety Mile Beach Full Day Tour with Fullers Bay of Islands - Lunch Included

Journey to the very tip of the North Island and uncover a region of rich Māori tradition along the way on an unforgettable full-day tour. Travel along the sand-swept shore of Ninety Mile Beach in our purpose-built coach and experience sandboarding (weather permitting). In Māori tradition, Cape Reinga or Te Rerenga Wairua is the place where spirits depart on their long journey back to the homeland. Stand at the northernmost point of New Zealand and drink in the panoramic views. As you stand beneath the iconic lighthouse, and watch the Tasman Sea and the mighty Pacific Ocean collide far below, you'll feel the power of this special place. Throughout the day your local driver guide will provide an entertaining and thought-provoking insight into the culture, history and natural wonders of the Far North.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Russell to Waipoua Forest via Waitangi

Heading west from the Bay of Islands, you'll leave the coastal charms of the Pacific Ocean behind and transition into Northland's rugged wilderness and the wilder seas of the Tasman. On the way, you'll make a profound and important stop at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, the very place where New Zealand's founding document was signed, allowing you to connect with the nation's powerful history. The journey continues west, through the small seaside townships of Omapere and Opononi, the perfect place to stop for an ice cream. The route then heads south and into the Waipoua Forest, home to the massive Kauri trees. As you pass through the forest, be sure to take one of the short walks to view the majestic Tāne Mahuta, the largest of all the trees, on a not to be missed 5-minute loop.

Waitangi Treaty Grounds Guided Tour and Cultural Performance

Waitangi is one of New Zealand's most historic sites where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the Māori and the British Government. This two day pass allows you access to the Treaty of Waitangi Grounds and includes admission to the Te Kōngahu Museum and Te Rau Aroha Museum and a Maori Cultural performance. During your guided tour, learn about the history of the treaty and discover the stories and events that shaped New Zealand. The cultural performance inside the carved meeting house includes waiata (singing), poi and the haka - a war dance Aotearoa-New Zealand is well known for.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Twilight Waipoua Encounter

Experience the Waipoua Forest at night on this spectacular 4 hour tour. Learn about the rich birdlife and fauna that inhabit the forest, including the carnivorous kauri snail. You'll also get to experience the deep spiritual respect the Maori people have for this place. Your Maori guide will brief you on the protocols for your visit and you once formal greetings have been made you will be allowed to meet the giant Tane Mahuta, or Lord of the Forest - the oldest Kauri tree in the world.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Manea Footprints of Kupe Guided Tour

Enter Te Hokianga-nui-a-Kupe, our sacred cradle of tribal histories. Walk in the footprints of the Maori ancestor & Kupe the intrepid, Kupe the voyager, Kupe the discoverer.

Experience a Pōwhiri (welcome ceremony) and other rituals and customs experienced through interaction with the descendants of Kupe.

Explore the contemporary cultural centre with carvings and artefacts holding the stories of the past, giving you incredible insight into the history of Aotearoa.

Your accommodation: Waipoua Lodge

Waipoua Lodge is nestled on a ridge overlooking the mighty Waipoua Forest. Experience authentic New Zealand luxury hospitality in a breathtaking ancient and natural environment. Please contact the property a day or two before your arrival to discuss menu preferences.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Waipoua to Warkworth

Leaving the ancient Waipoua Forest, your journey continues south along the Kauri Coast, a route steeped in history. The landscape gradually transitions from lush bush to scenic farmland, leading you to a key stop along the way. Here, the award-winning Matakoho Kauri Museum provides a fascinating and comprehensive look into the region's pioneering past and the logging industry that shaped its identity. From there, your drive takes you across the country to the east coast, where the rugged landscapes give way to a cultivated and tranquil beauty. From the highway, you have the option to take a short detour to the celebrated Matakana region, a gourmet hub and the perfect detour for unwinding amidst boutique vineyards and artisan food producers. Continuing just a little further, your final destination is the historic riverside town of Warkworth, a peaceful conclusion to your Northland adventure.

Matakoho Kauri Museum

The Kauri Museum is located approximately 90 minutes drive north of Auckland, in the rural backdrop of Matakoho. Offering insight into the region's pioneering history, it charts the rise and fall of the great Kauri forests with stunning displays and detailed exhibitions including: The largest collection of Kauri Gum in the world, a fully furnished 1900's era Kauri house, the largest collection of Kauri furniture in the world, a huge 22 metre long Kauri slab and a magnificent collection of original photographs and pioneering memorabilia.

Your accommodation: Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth

Contemporary secluded villa accommodations in paradise-like grounds are set high above surrounding land, meaning privacy is guaranteed and views extend as far as the Hauraki Gulf. Facilities include a restaurant, outdoor pool, sauna, day spa treatments, cocktail bar, and extensive grounds to explore.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



Mangawhai to Auckland Airport

Leaving the idyllic lower Northland region, head south on State Highway one towards Auckland & City of Sails. The route takes you through the farming regions of Wellsford and Warkworth where - if time allows - a side trip to Matakana or the Tawharanui Peninsula is well worth the effort. Pass through the suburbs of the North Shore before crossing the harbour bridge into the heart of Auckland City and on to the Auckland Airport.

Farewell from Aotearoa / New Zealand

Bid farewell to Aotearoa / New Zealand, taking with you unforgettable memories of its breathtaking landscapes and incredible adventures. In Māori, it is said mā te wā, which is not goodbye, it is see you soon!

Tour details

Departures: Daily
Tour type: North Island Self Drive
Starts: Auckland
Finishes: Auckland
Tour length: 10
Accommodation: Boutique Lodges & Hotels
Car/transport type:

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Hotel DeBrett
Day 2	Hotel DeBrett
Day 3	Lodge 9
Day 4	Lodge 9
Day 5	Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 6	Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 7	Arcadia Lodge, Russell
Day 8	Waipoua Lodge
Day 9	Woodhouse Mountain Lodge Warkworth