

North Island 9 Day Highlights with Northern Explorer

Explore the North Island's major visitor cities from Auckland, City of Sails, to Rotorua, the art deco city of Napier and the coolest little capital in the world, Wellington City. Return to Auckland on board the Northern Explorer scenic train. A great value tour with plenty of time to self explore the regions.



Starts in: Auckland
 Finishes in: Auckland
 Length: 9days / 8nights
 Accommodation: Hotel 4 star
 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

Includes: Airport & ferry terminal rental car fees

Includes: Comprehensive tour pack (detailed itinerary, driving instructions, map/guidebooks, brochures)

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

Included activity: Te Pā Tū Evening Māori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

Included activity: Private transfer Wellington hotel to train station (IST)

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Train Station to Auckland accommodation with Tourcorp

: Meals included: 8 breakfasts, 1 dinner

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

Includes: GPS navigation

Includes: Additional drivers

Includes: 24/7 support while touring New Zealand

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

Included activity: Orakei Korako Hidden Valley - Open-Dated Voucher

Included activity: The Northern Explorer Scenic Train: Wellington to Auckland

Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland accommodation to Auckland Airport with Tourcorp

Day 1



Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

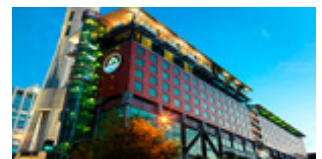
You will be met at the Auckland airport by the driver and transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

Welcome to Auckland

Kia ora! 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, it offers something for everyone. 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 the 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.

Your accommodation: SkyCity Hotel Auckland

This modern and spacious hotel allows you to relax in style while enjoying the world-class casino, more than 20 restaurants, cafes and bars, a theatre, free live entertainment on selected nights and the iconic Sky Tower - all right on your doorstep!



Day 2



Collect Rental Car

Choose a car to best suit your needs from our fantastic rental car range. From compact economy, hatchbacks to prestige SUVs.

Explore Auckland

Perched on the edge of a large natural harbour, New Zealand's "City of Sails" offers the best of both worlds. Sandy beaches, native bush and lush rainforests give way to a vibrant urban culture, humming with life. Spend time in the Viaduct Harbour, try your hand at sailing an America's Cup yacht or take the ferry to nearby Waiheke Island for a gourmet food and wine experience. If you're looking for a lovely walk, venture to the top of Auckland's highest volcano, Mt Eden, and take in soaring views of the gulf or hop on the short ferry to Rangitoto Island and hike to the top of the volcanic island. Immerse yourself in nature's beauty at the expansive Auckland Botanical Garden's, sprawled across 156 acres of lush land and native forest on Hill Road. Pack a picnic, soak up the sunshine, and delight in the melodious birdsong during a peaceful lunch. Head up to the Sky Tower, standing at just over 300m tall (about 1,000 feet) and have a meal in the 360-degree revolving restaurant. Scale the outermost perimeter of the Harbour Bridge or test your stomach and bungy off both. To end your day, catch a cab to Ponsonby Road and sample some upmarket culinary delights.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - America's Cup Sailing Experience with Explore

Participate as crew on an authentic America's Cup yacht. Take the helm, exert energy on the grinders or sit back and enjoy the action and scenery as you sail the beautiful Waitemata Harbour. Experience the excitement of sailing, no experience necessary. Feel the thrill of the wind in your face as you tack and jibe. These powerful and highly engineered race vessels are usually the domain of billionaires and elite professional yachties. Still, this unique two-hour sailing experience allows everyone to sail these Grand Prix racing machines. America's Cup is the world's oldest and most prestigious sporting trophy and ultimate yachting regatta. Experience it firsthand, sailing these remarkable vessels on the harbour that hosted the America's Cup in 2000 and 2003.

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Auckland to Rotorua

The drive south from Auckland takes you past the the Bombay Hills which mark the outer boundary of greater Auckland area and it's here you turn inland to central Waikato. You'll soon go through the town of Matamata where you can visit the fully intact Hobbiton film set used in the shooting of the Lord of The Rings and Hobbit trilogies. Continuing on, you'll pass several small farming communities before telltale signs of steam and other geothermal activity signal your arrival into Rotorua.

Te Pā Tū Evening Māori Cultural Experience - Dinner Included

New Zealand's Most Awarded Cultural Attraction, presenting Te Pā Tū. Feast on song, drama, tradition, and divine seasonal kai (cuisine) within the forest Pā (village) blanketed by towering Tawa trees, blazing bonfires, and a forest-formed amphitheatre. Te Pā Tū shares Māori history, traditions, and cultural aspirations across 4-hours of celebration and feasting. These events change with each season of the Maramataka, the Māori lunar calendar.

Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel Rotorua

Millennium Hotel is Rotorua's largest 4-star deluxe hotel. Perfectly situated in the heart of the city overlooking Lake Rotorua. Five levels of accommodation offer guests a wide variety of scenic views.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 4



Explore Rotorua

Peppered with natural hot springs, boiling mud pools and steaming geysers, Rotorua sits within one of the world's most active volcanic regions. Geothermal landmarks aside, this city of sulphur has a rich indigenous history. Home to several prominent Māori tribes, a visit to one of the Māori experiences should be high on your agenda, learn about the special meaning of pounamu-Greenstone with Mountain Jade, explore the geysers and arts of Te Puia or immerse in an evening with Te Pā Tū. An excursion to one of the area's wellness spas is also a must! Try the Polynesian Spa for an invigorating soak in its natural mineral hot springs, Wai Ariki offers an indulging and unwinding restorative journey or pay a quick visit to Secret Spot for a soak and a delicious smash burger!

If it is a thrill you are looking for, spike your adrenaline at Rotorua Canopy Tours, soaring above the ancient native forest below. Alternatively, head up the Skyline Rotorua Gondola for soaring lake views, and ride the luge at night for an extra thrill.

Make the most of your time in Rotorua with an excursion through the Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland, one of the area's most colourful volcanic attractions. Whatever you are after, Rotorua is almost certain to have it!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - National Kiwi Hatchery Experience

The National Kiwi Hatchery Experience is a special opportunity to gain insight into and view this highly regarded conservation centre. Developed with the visitor experience in mind, the hatchery boasts special viewing opportunities and is hosted by kiwi expert guides who ensure guests leave fully informed and all questions answered. Learn all about New Zealand's intriguing national icon and the efforts of the kiwi husbandry team, see and discover what it takes to hatch and rare chicks, and if you're lucky see baby chicks in person!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Original Ziplining Experience with Rotorua Canopy Tours

Embark on a three-hour adventure through the native New Zealand forest. Journey through the beautiful forest canopy via an incredible network of trails, tree platforms, Ziplines and swing bridges. See breathtaking views of the woodland valleys and hills as you fly through tight openings in the trees. In between the thrill of the ziplines and suspended tree bridges, your guides will share their passion and knowledge for the forest and the conservation challenges to preserve it. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Polynesian Spa Lake View Private Pool

The geothermal mineral waters of the Polynesian Spa in Rotorua are sought after the world over as one of the top 10 spas in the world. Indulge your need for a little luxury and enjoy some time in a Private Deluxe Pool, with stunning 360 degree views over Lake Rotorua, you will be left in peace to soak your cares away. Alkaline geothermal spring water pools are 38.5 °C and 0.7m deep. Available for blocks of 30 minute hire with a minimum of two adults, this is the perfect activity to enjoy a relaxing afternoon with your partner.

Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel Rotorua

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Rotorua to Napier via Orakei Korako Hidden Valley

This drive will take you through the thermal region just south of Rotorua. Home to a plethora of unique geothermal attractions including boiling mud pits, natural hot springs and steaming geysers, this area is a must do before you move on to Napier. Notable attractions are Wai-O-Tapu, Waimangu and Craters of the Moon.

Break up the drive by stopping at Orakei Korako Hidden Valley and enjoying some geothermal wonders.

Continue on to Taupō and marvel at the lake, a giant crater formed following a volcanic eruption in the year 180 CE. As you approach the town, be sure to stop at Huka Falls to view the spectacular sight of hundreds of cubic metres of water spilling every second down the narrow 11 metre drop. For an extra thrill take a jet-boat ride at the base of the falls. Leaving Taupō, follow the road as it climbs the rugged Ahimanawa Range before descending back down the Pacific Coast to art deco coastal township of Napier.

Orakei Korako Hidden Valley

Orakei Korako is situated on the Waikato River at Lake Ohakuri, which is a Hydro-Electric power plant. The name Orakei Korako can be interpreted as 'Place of Adorning'. Maori women used the pool to bath and beautify themselves for ceremonies. The Silica Terraces that form the base of Orakei-Korako Geysersland and Thermal Park are believed to be the largest of its kind since the destruction of the famous Pink and White Terraces in 1886 on the edge of Lake Rotomahana beneath Mount Tarawera. At present, there are up to 23 active natural geysers that play freely throughout the area. One geothermal consultant stated that Orakei Korako has the greatest number of active geysers of any geothermal field in New Zealand, with the most variable and most interesting changes. There is a vast number of boiling hot springs to view at Orakei Korako as well as mud pools and there are extensive bush walks to enjoy through areas of native flora and fauna. The highlight for many visitors on the walk through the valley is the thermal Ruatapu Cave (sacred hole). The cave extends 120 ft down to a hot pool at the bottom named 'Waiwhakaata', which means 'pool of mirrors'.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Triple Chocolate Dipper Tour with the Silky Oak Chocolate Company

A true chocolate indulgence combining chocolate tasting at Silky Oak Chocolate factory shop, entry into the Chocolate "Thru' the Ages" Museum, a Chocolate drink (or tea/coffee), chocolate muffin/ slice, served with liquid chocolate and cream at their Cafe. You'll be presented with a bonus take-home gift - chocolate of course! This is chocolate overload for serious chocoholics!

Your accommodation: Art Deco Masonic Hotel

The Art Deco Masonic Hotel occupies a significant historic building on Napier's waterfront and has been richly refurbished in keeping with the Art Deco architecture. With its central location and decadent décor, this is the best place to experience what Napier is famous for.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 6



Explore Hawke's Bay

Discover Hawke's Bay, known in Māori as Te Matau-a-Māui or the fish hook of Māui. This is a region renowned for its Mediterranean charm, iconic Art Deco architecture, and award-winning wineries. Explore Mission Estate, the birthplace of New Zealand wine, or tour vineyards for a deeper dive into its winemaking legacy. Fans of the 1930s can enjoy a Vintage Car Tour, showcasing Napier's architectural gems. Outdoor enthusiasts can cycle over 200km of scenic trails or unwind at pristine beaches like Ocean and Waimarama. Indulge your taste buds with local delights, from honey and chocolate to fresh orchard produce. The Hawke's Bay is also home to an abundance of wildlife, head out on a Gannet Safari or educate yourself at the National Aquarium of New Zealand.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Gannet Safaris

Drive along the scenic coast from Napier to Te Awanga and join Gannet Safaris Overland and the world's largest, most accessible gannet colony at Cape Kidnappers. Gannet Safaris has been guiding visitors over Cape Kidnappers for over 35 years and their safaris are the only way to be driven right to within a few feet of these remarkable birds. You will travel in comfort in air-conditioned 4 x 4 wheeled vehicles, through Cape Kidnappers Station - traversing riverbeds, broad rolling pastures, stands of native bush, steep gullies and breath-taking inclines. There is a stop on the way at a spectacular cliff top with panoramic views of Hawke Bay right across to Mahia peninsular. The 36km, three hour trip includes a commentary by your tour guide/driver on the farming operation on Cape Kidnappers Station and an introduction to the gannets. On arrival at the gannets you can stretch your legs and take in the scenery from your position at the brink of the cliff's edge, 100 metres above the ocean!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Hawke's Bay Half Day Wine Tour with Grape Escape

This wine tasting tour is designed for casual imbibers and wine aficionados. Meet like-minded people and share an appreciation of Hawke's Bay's fantastic wines. Taste great wines made with passion and learn of the area's unique growing conditions. Take home outstanding wines and wonderful memories. Join a fun filled wine tasting afternoon in the sun driving through absolutely stunning scenery. Meet like-minded people and share an appreciation of this region's fantastic wine. Visit four to five wineries and enjoy a cheese platter on the grounds of the Ngatarawa Vineyard beside the lily pond.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Native Icons Guided Tour in National Aquarium of New Zealand

The National Aquarium of New Zealand stretches along Napier's Marine Parade. It's home to a wide range of saltwater, freshwater, and land animal exhibits from New Zealand and around the world. Native Icon Guided Tour focuses on wonderful native icons including the Kiwi and Tuatara. It gives you the chance to view Kiwi in the wonderful nocturnal house where day turns into night. You will take a close look at Kiwi eggs, and learn about their quirky habits, favorite meals, and more. Tuatara can be tricky to spot - your guide will uncover the mysteries of New Zealand's 'living fossil' and then introduce you to the famous Little Penguins along with some of our other residents.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Little Penguin Close Encounter with National Aquarium of New Zealand

The National Aquarium of New Zealand is one of the only places in New Zealand where you can have a Close Encounter with these entertaining little birds. Little Penguins are only found in New Zealand and South Australia. As part of your encounter, you'll also experience what goes on behind the scenes, discovering all about the day-to-day care of these character-filled little birds and taking part in hand-feeding them. Learn about their rescue and rehabilitation and also what you can do to help preserve this special species and their environment.

Your accommodation: Art Deco Masonic Hotel

The Art Deco Masonic Hotel occupies a significant historic building on Napier's waterfront and has been richly refurbished in keeping with the Art Deco architecture. With its central location and decadent décor, this is the best place to experience what Napier is famous for.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 7



Napier to Wellington City via Masterton

The rolling countryside of the Hawke's Bay leads you into some of New Zealand's richest farmland, located around the Manawatu region. Passing along the Manawatu Gorge the Wairarapa welcomes you. Masterton is home to the golden shears sheep shearing competition while just further south Greytown boasts the largest concentration of historic wooden buildings in the country. Nearby Martinborough is home to dozens of boutique wineries. The route takes you over the Remutaka Range and along the magnificent natural harbour that the capital city of Wellington sits upon.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Zealandia By Night Wildlife Sanctuary Tour

Taking a night tour of Zealandia wildlife eco-sanctuary is an unforgettable experience and one that comes highly recommended. A conservation success and safe haven for some of New Zealand's rarest native animals, Zealandia is home to many remarkable species of birds, reptiles and insects living wild within a beautiful 225 hectare (one square mile) valley, just 10 minutes from the central city.

Your accommodation: Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay

Located on Wellington's premier Oriental Parade, overlooking the stunning Wellington Harbour, Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay is the perfect base to explore the city. Just 10 minutes away are the city's shopping and entertainment centre. Te Papa Museum, Live Theatre in Courtney Place, and many of the city's finest restaurants and bars are also close by.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Private transfer to Wellington train station

You will be collected from your hotel and transferred to Wellington train station to meet your train.

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train: Wellington to Auckland

The Northern Explorer is a journey through the heart of the North Island, travelling between Wellington, New Zealand's arts and culture capital and Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. Along the way you pass the Central North Island ski towns of National Park and Ohakune. You also see fantastic views of New Zealand farmland, the volcanic plateau, Mount Ruapehu, the world famous Raurimu Spiral, and stunning river gorges - all from panoramic windows or open air viewing decks. All carriages feature large panoramic windows giving sweeping views of the magnificent North Island. The Observation Carriage includes a mix of seating including lounge-style seating. The lounge-style seating is arranged at the very rear of this glass-backed carriage enabling you to enjoy a totally unique Northern Explorer experience.

Private Transfer Auckland Train Station to Auckland accommodation

You will be met at the Auckland Train Station and transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Northern Explorer Scenic Plus Addon - KiwiRail

Feel like luxurious service, exclusive meals, inclusive drinks and priority check in and boarding? The Scenic Plus add-on option is for you. Enjoy personal service with panoramic windows, spacious carriages and comfortable seating. The exclusive open-air viewing carriage is available if you feel like capturing the ultimate photo or simply wish to experience the great outdoors whilst travelling through the Southern Alps. Your food is prepared exclusively in a kitchen carriage, with paired drinks and a paddock to plate regionally inspired food menu all your senses will be fully engaged on this journey.

Your accommodation: SkyCity Hotel Auckland

This modern and spacious hotel allows you to relax in style while enjoying the world-class casino, more than 20 restaurants, cafes and bars, a theatre, free live entertainment on selected nights and the iconic Sky Tower - all right on your doorstep!

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



Private Transfer Auckland accommodation to Auckland Airport with Tourcorp

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

Farewell from Aotearoa-New Zealand

Bid farewell to New Zealand, taking with you unforgettable memories of its breathtaking landscapes and incredible adventures. In Maori, 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:	9
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Included activities

Includes	All breakfasts
Includes	Private airport transfers
Includes	Private train station transfers
Includes	Northern Explorer Scenic Train from Wellington to Auckland
Includes	Mitai Maori Village Concert & Buffet Dinner, Rotorua

Accommodation summary

Day 1	SkyCity Hotel Auckland
Day 2	SkyCity Hotel Auckland
Day 3	Millennium Hotel Rotorua
Day 4	Millennium Hotel Rotorua
Day 5	Art Deco Masonic Hotel
Day 6	Art Deco Masonic Hotel
Day 7	Copthorne Hotel Wellington Oriental Bay
Day 8	SkyCity Hotel Auckland