Australian Escapes Holiday & Travel Club
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Lord of the Rings Scenic Explorer

Embark on an epic journey through Middle-Earth as you explore the iconic filming locations from The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit movies. Visit the enchanting Hobbiton Village, a must-see for any Tolkien fan, and traverse the dramatic Canterbury high country, home to Mt. Potts and Mt. Sunday, famously known as Edoras. Drive through the stunning Mackenzie Country near Aoraki-Mt. Cook National Park, where breathtaking backdrops bring Middle-Earth to life. In Queenstown, join the renowned Nomad Safari of the Scenes tour to discover legendary sites like the Forest of Lothlórien and Ithilien Camp. Immerse yourself in the magic of Tolkien's world on this unforgettable New Zealand adventure!

Starts in:	Auckland
Finishes in:	Queenstown
Length:	14days / 13nights
Accommodation:	Apartments
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: Electronic Travel Guide and In-Country Support App

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

plus much more...

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

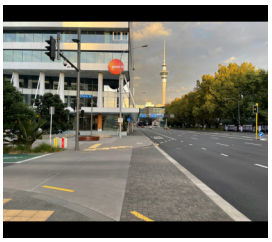
Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Lord of the Rings Queenstown Tour with Nomad Safaris

Day 1




Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

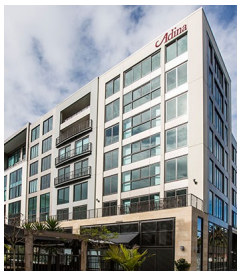
You will be met at the Auckland airport by your private driver and be transferred to your Auckland accommodation.

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.

Your accommodation: Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland Britomart

Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland, Britomart is only minutes away from Queen's Wharf harbour in the heart of Auckland's CBD. Offering stylish, modern studio rooms and apartments, ideal for families, modern explorers or business travellers.



Day 2








Unleased by Wētā Workshop

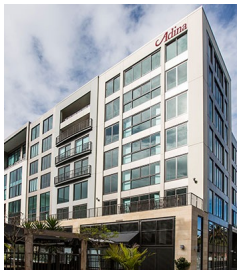
A jaw-dropping, senses-shattering, awe-inspiring adventure into the heart of movie magic! Get hands-on and immerse yourself in an extraordinary world of practical effects, props and larger-than-life sets. On this award-winning tour, you can explore three movie projects imagined by the Wētā crew and uncover how they bring big screen concepts to life. Discover a mind-blowing world of robots, monsters, dinosaurs and more - step right into the action to see, play and experience movie-making up close.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - All Blacks Experience

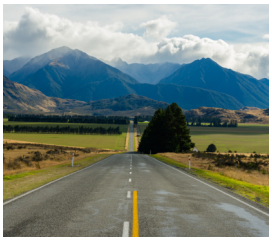
See what it takes to make, shape and be an All Black. Experience first-hand the excitement and emotion of game day. Discover the stories behind some of world rugby’s most famous players, moments, and matches.
This guided experience introduces you to the game of rugby including state-of-the-art displays combining sound, images, interactive technology, and hands-on activities. Discover New Zealand’s deep passion for our national sport, experience the full force of the All Blacks haka, and tackle interactive zones where you can try out your kicking, catching, line-out, and accuracy skills against legendary All Blacks.

Your accommodation: Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland Britomart

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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 Hobbiton via Matamata

Head southbound on State Highway one through the lush farmland and dairy pastures of the Waikato region. The Bombay Hills mark the outer boundary of the greater Auckland area and its here you turn inland towards Matamata. This is the real Middle Earth, and you'll see many locations used in the filming of The Lord of The Rings and The Hobbit, as well as visiting the actual set of Hobbiton.

Behind the Scenes Tour at Hobbiton

Immerse yourself in the magic of Middle-earth on this exclusive walking tour of the Hobbiton Movie Set. In a small group of up to 30, explore the iconic 12-acre set, wander past famous Hobbit Holes and Bagshot Row, and step inside a Hobbit’s home. Relax at The Green Dragon Inn with a drink from the Southfarthing range, then savour a hearty banquet lunch at The Millhouse, with second helpings encouraged. Go behind the scenes in the Art Department’s workshop to uncover the craftsmanship behind Hobbiton’s enchanting details. Conclude your adventure with a Hobbit-style platter of cheese, chutneys, and fruit at a hidden spot with stunning views.

Matamata to Waitomo

Travel towards the coast today, stopping first in the charming town of Cambridge. With its English country village ambience, Cambridge boasts delightful cafes, antique stores, and a picturesque village green. As the heart of New Zealand’s equine industry, the town also features an impressive bronze horse sculpture honouring its rich history. Along the way you'll pass through Otorohanga known for its "Kiwiana" energy, from here it’s a short drive to the iconic limestone hills of Waitomo, home to its world-famous cave complex and breathtaking underground wonders.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glow Worm Caves Tour with Discover Waitomo

Explore a 30 million year old cave network spread across three levels. You'll travel deep underground through the limestone caves viewing stalactites and stalagmites as well as hearing about the caves historical and geological significance. You'll then hop into a boat and glide silently through the glow worm grotto - a galaxy of tiny living lights.

Your accommodation: Waitomo Caves Guest Lodge

The guest lodge is situated right in the heart of Waitomo Caves Village, in a peaceful garden setting, with beautiful views over the surrounding countryside. Opposite the award-winning Huhu cafe and just a couple of minutes walk from the Waitomo i-SITE Visitor and Discovery Centre.



Day 4







Waitomo to Piopio

On your short drive south from Waitomo you’ll pass through the rugged rural countryside of the King Country, named after the Maori King Tawhiao who lived in exile here in the mid 1800’s. Your destination of Piopio is home to the Mangaotaki Rocks which formed the striking backdrop for scenes in the Hobbit movies, including the troll and campfire scenes. As well as a tour of the film location, Piopio is home to the Crafty Pigeon and Fat Pigeon café where you can stop for lunch and browse for New Zealand crafts.

Hairy Feet Scenic Film Location Tour

Visit the stunning farm location at Mangaotaki Rocks Piopio - near Waitomo - where the troll and campfire scenes in 'The Hobbit' were filmed. You'll see the towering limestone cliffs, massive rock formations and primaeval forest that make up the location for Staddle Farm and Trollshaws. You can also have your photo taken in the exact spot where Bilbo received his magical sword 'Sting' from Gandalf. You'll join a personally guided tour of several key filming locations including the site where the Orcs and Wargs began attacking and the 'exit from the cave' containing the troll hoard.

Piopio to Whakapapa Village

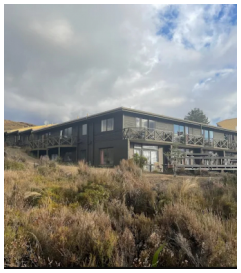
Travel south into the heart of the Central Volcanic Plateau, Tongariro National Park. Leaving the limestone hills of Piopio, follow the road through lush King Country pastures, named after the Maori King Tawhiao who lived here in exile during the mid-1800s. Continue to arrive in this World Heritage Park, home to three active volcanoes - Tongariro, Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe - as well as many walking tracks, adventure activities and the renowned Tongariro Crossing.

Sky Waka Gondola Sightseeing Trip with Whakapapa

During the summer months you can take advantage of the skifield facilities and take the gondola over Mt Ruapehu's otherworldly terrain. You'll travel to an altitude of 2020 metres where you'll be treated to magnificent views of Tongariro National Park, including the iconic peaks of Mt Ruapehu, Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe, the latter featured as Mt Doom in the Lord of the Rings movies.

Your accommodation: Skotel Alpine Resort

Located in the tussock on the edge of the Whakapapa Village in the heart of the Tongariro National Park The Skotel Alpine Resort offers a wonderful atmosphere and well equipped rooms to relax and enjoy the region from.



Day 5




Whakapapa Village to Wellington

This drive takes you to New Zealand's capital, Wellington. Leaving Whakapapa Village, make your way through the Rangipo Desert, skirting the edges of the Tongariro National Park, one of New Zealand’s three world heritage sites. Catch a glimpse of the volcanically active Mt Ruapehu and Lord of the Rings fans, will appreciate the view of Mt. Ngauruhoe, better known as Mt Doom. Continue south to the rural towns of Taihape, Mangaweka, and Bulls before arriving on the spectacular Kapiti Coast before arriving in Wellington City.

Wellington

Wellington known in Māori as Te Whanganui-a-Tara is home to New Zealand’s centre of government. Often referred to as ‘mini Melbourne', this windy city is a melting pot of art, culture, food, and fashion. Quirky laneway bars, underground art shows, and hipster eateries make up its inner-city vibe, while a host of sandy beaches outside the urban bustle bring a cheerful holiday feel. Head to Te Papa Museum for a history lesson and a ticket to one of its many international exhibitions or jump aboard the Wellington Cable Car - the only running funicular railway in the country. For those with an eye for boutique, fashion wander through Cuba St to sample some of the city's best vintage stores. Break for coffee at a hipster cafe and be sure to snap a pic outside the ‘Beehive,’ New Zealand’s parliamentary debate chamber. Go behind the scenes at Weta Workshop Experience, the Oscar Award Winning design studio behind Lord Of The Rings, The Hobbit, and Avatar. If you're a foodie at heart, a two-hour round trip to Martinborough is a must-do. Take your time as you wind through spectacular wine country. For an educational day out, learn about New Zealand's native species at Zealandia, the world's first fully-fenced eco-sanctuary and home to over 40 types of endangered and native birds.

Your accommodation: Adina CityLife Wellington

Adina CityLife Wellington is a suite style hotel with every amenity required for a comfortable stay, as well as being in a superb location to explore the compact city centre. Situated on Lambton Quay, you'll find the best shopping, tourist attractions and cultural landmarks all within easy walking distance.



Day 6



Lord of The Rings Full Day Tour with Kaewa Tours

Explore the enchanting world of Wellington with a full-day tour of iconic filming locations from The Lord of the Rings. Begin with a behind-the-scenes guided tour of the award-winning Weta Workshop, where movie magic comes to life. Wander through Rivendell, stroll the Fords of Isen, and walk in the footsteps of Gandalf and Saruman in the Gardens of Isen. Visit the sites of Helm’s Deep and the River Anduin, and relive the moments from the "Shortcut to Mushrooms" and "Get off the Road" scenes on Mt. Victoria. You'll also visit Stansborough Woollen Mill, the home of the Hobbits and Wizards cloaks, where you can take a wander through the Narnia Wardrobe for your very own 'unexpected journey'. Enjoy panoramic views of Wellington’s city and harbor from Mt. Victoria and take a scenic drive through the charming Eastern suburbs. A must-do experience for any fan of Middle-earth!

Your accommodation: Adina CityLife Wellington

Adina CityLife Wellington is a suite style hotel with every amenity required for a comfortable stay, as well as being in a superb location to explore the compact city centre. Situated on Lambton Quay, you'll find the best shopping, tourist attractions and cultural landmarks all within easy walking distance.



Day 7








Bluebridge Ferry Wellington to Picton - vehicle + passengers

Picton to Havelock via Queen Charlotte

Queen Charlotte Drive travels the Marlborough Sounds coastline between Picton and Havelock. Magnificent views of the sounds can be had from many vantage points so allow plenty of time to enjoy the scenery. If you can spare the time take the narrow windy road to Portage along Mahau Sound and Kenepuru Sound with their bush clad hillsides and secluded sandy coves. The small port town of Havelock has a great variety of cafes and restaurants to choose from so plan your journey to arrive in time for lunch.

Hobbit Barrel Run Kayak Trip with Pelorus Eco Adventures

Immerse yourself in Sir Peter Jackson's 'The Hobbit'. Journeying down the Beautiful Pelorus River you'll see actual filming locations including the rocks where Bilbo Baggins stood, the place where the dwarfs exited the barrels and the exact location where Kili was shot. Not just for Lord of the Rings fans, this spectacular kayaking trip will enthral anyone wanting to experience the beauty of New Zealand's rivers. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

Havelock to Blenheim

From Havelock you follow the valley south towards Blenheim and wine growing region of Marlborough. The town of Blenheim sits right at the heart of the New Zealand's largest wine producing region, Marlborough, and is ideally located to enjoy an afternoon sampling the local produce. A great way to do this is to take a guided wine tour with Sounds Connection Wine Tours.

Your accommodation: St Leonards Vineyard Cottages

The Homestead and Self-Catering Cottage Accommodation now form a unique collection of traditional buildings that have retained their original charm and yet provide up-to-date facilities. The views are wonderful and the settings private



Day 8




Picton to Christchurch

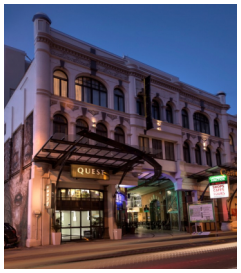
From Picton you cross the hills of the Marlborough ranges as you head towards one of the most spectacular coastlines of the South Island, the Kaikōura Coast. The road hugs the shore for around 50 kilometres and offers many chances to view native wildlife such as seabirds and New Zealand fur seals. To the east are the turquoise waters of the South Pacific Ocean and to the west are the towering Kaikōura Ranges. Kaikōura Township is a bustling place with many cafes, restaurants and shops, but the main reason for visiting here is the wildlife. Whale Watch Kaikōura is New Zealand's only marine-based whale-watching company offering visitors an exciting up-close encounter with the Giant Sperm Whale at all times of the year. The drive from Kaikōura to Christchurch continues to follow the spectacular coastline before heading inland and through North Canterbury's major wine region, the Waipara Valley to arrive in Christchurch City.

Christchurch

Christchurch known in Māori as Ōtautahi, is the largest metro area in the South Island. Commonly referred to as New Zealand's "Garden City", Christchurch is home to one of the biggest public parks in the country, and beautiful botanic gardens. The city was hit with devastating earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, now the city crosses the line between its English heritage and a new modern archetecture. To take in some arts and culture, pay a visit to the Canterbury Museum or the Christchurch Art Gallery. Take a step back in time with a tram around the city or punt along the Avon River. If tasting your way around the city is your means of travel, try out a cultural eating tour. A short drive from the CBD will lead you to the outskirts of the Banks Peninsula beachside suburb of Sumner or through the tunnel to Lyttleton Harbour which hosts fantastic markets on Saturday mornings.

Your accommodation: Quest Cathedral Junction

Quest Cathedral Junction serviced apartment style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience.
Quest Cathedral Junction is located within the Christchurch CBD, only a short walk to Cathedral Square, New Regent Street Entertainment Precinct, Isaac Royal Theatre, Botanic Gardens.



Day 9



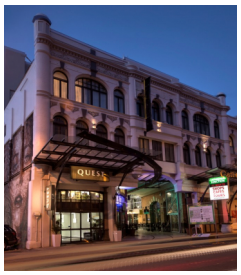



Lord of the Rings Edoras Tour with Hassle Free Tours - Lunch Included

Step into the world of Middle-earth on the Lord of the Rings Edoras Tour and visit the stunning filming location of Edoras at Mt Potts High Country Station. Explore the remote and breathtaking Mt Sunday, transformed into the capital city of Rohan for the iconic trilogy. Immerse yourself in the unspoiled beauty of this incredible area, surrounded by crystal-clear lakes, vibrant blue rivers, and crisp mountain air. A must-do experience for any Lord of the Rings fan!
Please note: Visiting these special locations involves a 5.5 hour driving journey, which is balanced by numerous scenic stops and breaks for morning tea and lunch. The hike to the summit of Mt Sunday/Edoras itself is approximately a 20 minute ascent (and descent) that requires a reasonable level of fitness.

Your accommodation: Quest Cathedral Junction

Quest Cathedral Junction serviced apartment style hotel rooms offer guests a relaxed and comfortable Christchurch accommodation experience.
Quest Cathedral Junction is located within the Christchurch CBD, only a short walk to Cathedral Square, New Regent Street Entertainment Precinct, Isaac Royal Theatre, Botanic Gardens.



Day 10




Christchurch to Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park

Drive through the heart of the South Island, crossing the vast Canterbury plains. Catch your breath in Geraldine before continuing through Fairlie. Ascending Burkes pass you'll come to the picturesque town of Lake Tekapo. Follow the road and take in the view of Aoraki-Mt Cook (New Zealand's tallest mountain) from the shores of Lake Pukaki, known for its glacier fed turquoise blue colour. Continue along the lake to your final destination Aoraki-Mt Cook Village.

Aoraki / Mt Cook National Park

At 3754m Aoraki / Mt Cook is Aotearoa-New Zealand's highest mountain, located deep in the heart of the Southern Alps. As well as its impressive beauty, Aoraki / Mt Cook National Park is also home to a huge range of awe-inspiring sights and activities. Take to the air with Mt Cook Ski Planes for a scenic flight that includes a glacier landing. At around 27 kilometres long the Tasman Glacier is New Zealand's longest and a Glacier Explorers tour allows you to see its unique features up close.
There are many short hikes in and around the park and these are well signposted around the village. Those with an interest in the night sky should take a Big Sky Stargazing tour with the Hermitage Hotel. The region is considered to have one of the clearest night skies in the world and is one of the few gold-rated dark sky reserves worldwide.
Visit the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre for insight into this region's mountain climbing history. You'll also learn of Sir Ed's incredible achievements and his dedication to helping others around the world.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Glacier Explorers

Experience 500-year-old icebergs up close on the Aoraki-Mt Cook terminal lake. The Glacier Explorers tour is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and one of only three in the world! Very few glaciers terminate into lakes and even fewer of them are accessible. See towering ice cliffs and floating icebergs from the safety of a specially designed boat. These boats provide a safe way to view unseen and inaccessible areas of New Zealand's largest glacier The Tasman.

Your accommodation: Mt Cook Motel

Mt Cook Motel, nestled in the heart of Mt. Cook Village, offers spacious self-contained units that provide comfort and convenience. Each unit is surrounded by breathtaking alpine mountain views, making it the perfect retreat for nature lovers and adventurers alike.



Day 11





Aoraki Mt Cook National Park to Queenstown

Leaving the alpine region of Aoraki Mt Cook, you'll travel through the lakeside town of Twizel, then a little further to Omarama the gliding capital of New Zealand. Continue on over the Lindis Pass, one of New Zealand's highest roads with a summit of 971 metres. Arrive in the quaint village of Tarras, then continue on a short way to the historic Bendigo Reserve, one of Otago's original gold mining settlements.Follow the road to Cromwell, and keep going through the sheer cliffs of the Kawarau Gorge towards Gibbston, one of New Zealand's premier wine growing regions. See the historic Kawarau Bridge where you can bungy jump or relax and watch others take the plunge. Approaching Queenstown, the Remarkables mountain range comes into view as you arrive into the adventure capital of New Zealand.

Explore Queenstown

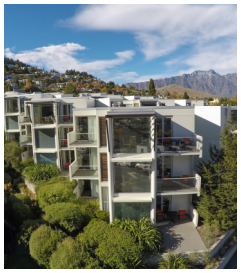
Well-known as New Zealand's ‘adventure capital’, Queenstown is home to a range of adventures, from the world's first and most famous bungy jumps to jet boat thrills, white-water rafting, and skydiving. However, Queenstown offers far more than a fast-paced, action-packed holiday. Settled on the shores of beautiful Lake Wakatipu beneath a soaring panorama of the Remarkables Mountain Range, this alpine town is surrounded by many historic, gastronomic, and scenic wonders. Take a stroll through the beautiful lakefront parks and gardens, browse through market stalls on weekends, dine in wonderful al-fresco restaurants, or ride on the 100-year-old historic Steamship - TSS Earnslaw to Walter Peak Station. Take the Queenstown Gondola up to Bob's Peak and soak up the panoramic views of the magnificent lake and mountain ranges. And after all of that, if you do want the adrenaline rush, Queenstown is known for taking your pick from the Shotover Jet, Canyon Swing, Zipline, Luge, or Heli-hike.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Lord of the Rings and Glacier Explorer Flight with Glacier Southern Lakes Helicopters

On this Lord of the Rings Glacier Explorers flight, you'll fly through the land where many parts of the Lord of the Rings trilogy were filmed along with the chance to fly with our most experienced pilot, Alfie Speight, who was the principal filming pilot for the series.
Fly along the Shotover River to the scene where Arwen turns to face the Nazgul at the Ford of Bruinen. Fly over the mountain range from the opening scene of The Two Towers on the way to landing on a glacier alongside the Misty Mountains and get a sense of what it might be like to cross The Redhorn Pass. Head across to Glenorchy via the Dart Valley and Mount Earnslaw to see the natural features you may better recognize as Isengard, Amon Hen, and Lothlorien. Experience a second landing amongst one of these scenes to truly feel immersed in Middle-earth.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style and comfort, with a selection of rooms having spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 12

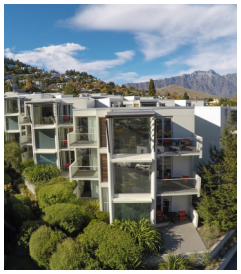


Lord of the Rings Queenstown Tour with Nomad Safaris

A thrilling Lord of the Rings Queenstown Safari, combining breathtaking filming locations with exhilarating 4WD action. Discover the magic of Middle-earth as expert guides bring Tolkien’s world to life with fascinating facts and tales. Visit iconic sites like the Misty Mountains, the Pillars of the Kings (Argonath), and more. Travel along a historic gold mining road, try your hand at gold panning, and soak in spectacular panoramic views of Queenstown’s stunning landscapes. A must for any Lord of the Rings fan and adventure seeker!

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

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Day 13

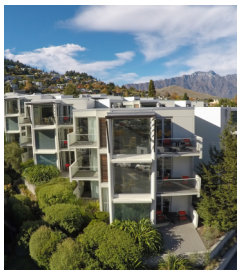


Lord of the Rings Scenic Tour with Pure Glenorchy

This half-day Lord of the Rings tour starts from Queenstown and visits Glenorchy, Paradise, The Dart River Valley and Mt Aspiring World Heritage Area. Take a journey deep into Middle Earth and visit Lord of the Rings filming locations. On your scenic guided tour, you will explore Isengard, Amon Hen, Lothlorien Forest, The Misty Mountains and Ithilien. You will also visit a location from the recently filmed, The Hobbit! Stories and secrets will be shared by guides who have great insight into the filming.

Your accommodation: Scenic Suites Queenstown

Scenic Suites Queenstown offers guests exquisite style and comfort, with a selection of rooms having spectacular views over Lake Wakatipu and the Southern Alps. The hotel prides itself on its 4-star hospitality that will make your stay in Queenstown even more memorable.



Day 14





Return your vehicle to Queenstown Airport

Explore more of Queenstown before dropping your rental car at the airport depot and continuing your onward journey.

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:	Nationwide Self Drive
Starts:	Auckland
Finishes:	Queenstown
Tour length:	14
Accomodation:	Apartments
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland Britomart
Day 2	Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland Britomart
Day 3	Waitomo Caves Guest Lodge
Day 4	Skotel Alpine Resort
Day 5	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 6	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 7	St Leonards Vineyard Cottages
Day 8	Quest Cathedral Junction
Day 9	Quest Cathedral Junction
Day 10	Mt Cook Motel
Day 11	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 12	Scenic Suites Queenstown
Day 13	Scenic Suites Queenstown