Australian Escapes Holiday & Travel Club
1800 669 579
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North Island Escape

Experience the absolute highlights of the North Island on a route that weaves together New Zealand's extraordinary nature and wildlife with the enduring stories of Māori tradition. From the world-famous hills of Hobbiton to the elegant Art Deco shores of Napier, this journey visits rare wildlife sanctuaries, breathtaking volcanic landscapes, and the creative buzz of the country's most iconic urban cities.

Starts in:	Auckland
Finishes in:	Wellington
Length:	8days / 7nights
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: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

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

plus much more...

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

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

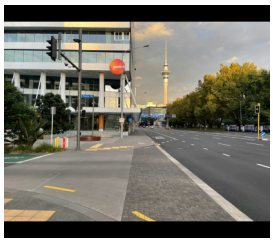
Included activity: Private Transfer Auckland Airport to your Auckland Accommodation with Tourcorp

Included activity: Auckland Whale and Dolphin Safari

Day 1







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.

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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - All Blacks Experience

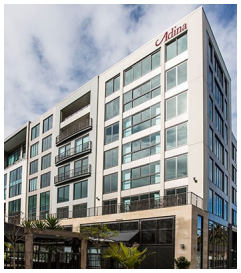
See what it takes to make, shape and be an All Black. Experience first-hand the excitement and emotion of game day. Discover the stories behind some of world rugby’s most famous players, moments, and matches.
This guided experience introduces you to the game of rugby including state-of-the-art displays 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.

Auckland Whale and Dolphin Safari

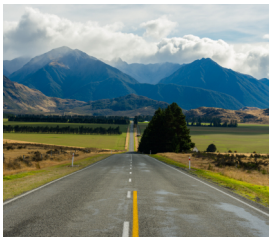
Leave the hustle and bustle of the city and discover the beautiful Hauraki Gulf Marine Park - visited by a staggering one third of all the types of marine mammals found on earth. Departing directly from the Viaduct Harbour, be welcomed aboard the 20 metre, purpose-built vessel Dolphin Explorer for an unforgettable marine mammal eco-safari out on the sparkling waters of the Hauraki Gulf. Be surrounded by some of the most abundant marine life in New Zealand, and discover what the beautiful Auckland area has to offer.

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




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 Rotorua via Matamata

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.

Hobbiton Movie Set Signature Tour from Shires Rest

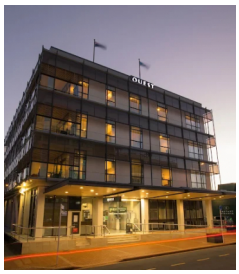
In the heart of New Zealand, you can step into the lush pastures of the Shire with a guided tour of Hobbiton, as featured in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit Trilogies. Hobbiton is located just outside of Matamata in the heart of the lush Waikato farming region. Here you can visit such iconic Hobbit locations as Hobbit Holes, the Green Dragon Inn, the Mill and the Party Tree with a guide sharing behind-the-scenes tales and insight into the making of the films. Spend time wandering through Bagshot Row before being led inside a Hobbit Hole to view the detailed interior, designed to provide an authentic glimpse into the dwelling of a Hobbit.

Rotorua

Discover the geothermal, adventure, and cultural wonderland of Rotorua. As you explore, you may see steam rising from cracks in the road, bubbling and hissing water in pools along the lake's edge, and the unmistakable smell of Sulfur. Rotorua is rich in Māori culture and history, with many Māori inhabitants recognising the great potential of the volcanic land. For an outdoor adventure, head to The Redwoods and experience the rainforest treetops from high up. There are a few accessible trails for disabled hikers and great biking trails as well. If you’re lucky, you might spot some of New Zealand's native birds, such as the Pīwakawaka (Fantail) and the Tūī. Alternatively, enjoy the Lake Tikitapu Blue Lake Walk or explore Kuirau Park, where you'll find bubbling mud pools and steaming lakes. Don't miss the private thermal reserves such as Te Puia and Wai-O-Tapu, where you can walk among bubbling mud pools, spouting geysers, and Sulfur ponds. Just a few minutes from the town centre, the Agrodome and National Kiwi Hatchery offer an insight into nature. Rotorua's rich Māori culture is a must-see. Spend an evening with Te Pā Tū, complete with a traditional-style dinner or stroll along the lake edge to reach one of the country's oldest Māori villages at Ohinemutu. When hunger strikes, visit Eat Street in Rotorua CBD, a vibrant street lined with delicious eateries and restaurants to satisfy any craving. No visit to Rotorua would be complete without experiencing Rotorua's original tourist attraction - a relaxing spa treatment. This town boasts an array of wellness experiences to unwind in. Whether you are seeking adventure, culture, or relaxation, Rotorua offers an unforgettable experience.

Your accommodation: Quest Rotorua Central

Located in the heart of Rotorua, just a stone’s throw from the restaurant and shopping precinct. Purpose built in 2012, all apartments are equipped with modern fixtures, full cooking and laundry facilities that make Quest Rotorua Central your perfect home away from home.



Day 3







Te Rā Day Pass and Haka Cultural Performance Combo at Te Puia

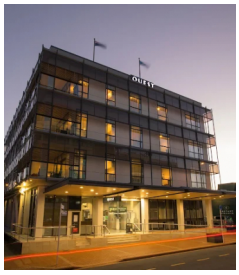
Embark on a guided tour through the heart of Māori craftsmanship and heritage at the New Zealand Māori Arts & Crafts Institute. Explore the renowned schools of greenstone carving, wood carving, and flax weaving, where master artisans and students bring ancient techniques to life. Your journey continues at Rotowhio Pā, a living Māori village, and the Kiwi Conservation Centre, where you'll get a rare glimpse of New Zealand's iconic and endangered Kiwi bird. As you delve into Te Whakarewarewa geothermal valley, marvel at the dramatic landscapes shaped by geothermal activity, including the awe-inspiring Pōhutu Geyser, the largest active geyser in the Southern Hemisphere. The cultural highlight of your visit will take place in our beautifully carved meeting house, Te Aronui a Rua. Here, you’ll be welcomed with a pōhiri (traditional welcome), followed by a captivating cultural performance featuring waiata (song), mōteatea (traditional chant), poi, and the powerful haka. This immersive experience at Te Puia offers a deep connection to Māori culture, artistry, and the natural wonders of New Zealand.

Redwoods Nightlights and Glowworms, General Admission

Redwoods Nightlights is one of New Zealand's top design-led tourism experiences, featuring 30 exquisite lanterns designed by world-renowned designer and sustainability champion David Trubridge. Floating between 9 and 20 metres above the forest floor, this core eco-tourism walk is 700 metres long, spans across 28 suspension bridges and 27 platforms, and takes about 40 minutes to complete. Then descend into a 70-metre eco-cave to witness the magic of over 5,000 native glowworms illuminating rock formations and a reflective water feature. The combined experience offers a total immersion into the forest's nocturnal beauty, both high in the canopy and deep within the earth.

Your accommodation: Quest Rotorua Central

Located in the heart of Rotorua, just a stone’s throw from the restaurant and shopping precinct. Purpose built in 2012, all apartments are equipped with modern fixtures, full cooking and laundry facilities that make Quest Rotorua Central your perfect home away from home.



Day 4







Rotorua to Napier via Taupō

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. 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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Huka Falls Jet Boat Ride

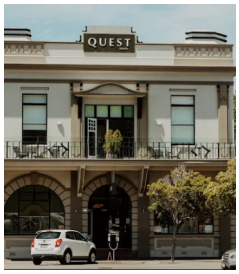
The Huka Jet is 30 minutes of pure fun and exhilaration, skimming close to cliffs, sliding past trees, feeling the adrenalin of full 360 degree spins. The excitement continues right up to the base of the foaming Huka Falls, where you get a spectacular water level view to New Zealand's most visited natural attraction. Nothing compares to watching 220,000 litres per second tumbling over the cliff face towards you. The water from the mighty Huka Falls runs down the Waikato River through a series of Hydro Power Stations. You'll get a view of the Wairakei Geothermal Power Station in the comfort of a powerful Chevrolet V8 jet boat. This unique Geothermal Power Station uses underground geothermal activity to produce hot steamy water. The Waikato Rivers beautiful environment is varied and unique and is New Zealand's longest river flowing north from our largest lake, Lake Taupō. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information please see here.

Native Icons Guided Tour in National Aquarium of New Zealand

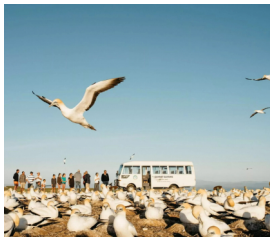
The National Aquarium of New Zealand stretches along Napier’s Marine Parade. It's home to a wide range of saltwater, freshwater, and land animal exhibits from New Zealand and around the world. Native Icon Guided Tour focuses on wonderful native icons including the Kiwi and Tuatara. It gives you the chance 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.

Your accommodation: Quest Napier

Quest Napier occupies a funky historic building, blending the charm of a by-gone era with the modern conveniences to make you stay enjoyable. Being in the heart of the city, you’re just a short walk from the Art Deco attractions of Napier.



Day 5







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!

Napier to Paraparaumu

Travel through the rolling countryside of Hawke's Bay which leads you into some of New Zealand’s richest farmland, located around the Manawatu region. From here you will travel through Palmerston North. In the town centre, the New Zealand Rugby Museum displays sporting memorabilia, including vintage All Blacks uniforms. Next door is the Te Manawa art, science and history museum. Continue south to Paraparaumu on the Kapiti Coast, 55 kilometres north of the nation's capital city, Wellington. Golf, gourmet foods and scenic flights are three reasons to spend some time in Paraparaumu. This sunny coastal town promises plenty to do.

The Kapiti Coast

Just a short drive north of Wellington, the Kapiti Coast offers a refreshing escape with its long, sandy beaches, stunning views, and laid-back coastal towns. This stretch of coastline is defined by its star attraction: the majestic Kāpiti Island. Kāpiti Island is one of New Zealand's most important and accessible nature reserves. A protected sanctuary for rare and endangered native birds, the island is a genuine ecological treasure. A guided tour is a truly special experience, where you can walk through pristine native forest and get up close with species like the cheeky kākā, the curious weka, and if you’re lucky, even the rare takahe. Back on the mainland, a string of charming towns offers a slice of authentic Kiwi life. Paekākāriki, at the southern end, is known for its artsy, bohemian vibe, while Paraparaumu serves as the main hub and the departure point for Kāpiti Island tours. Further north, Ōtaki is rich in Māori culture and history. All along the coast, you'll find boutique shops, vibrant cafés, and beautiful beaches perfect for a walk, a swim, or simply watching the sunset over the Tasman Sea.

Your accommodation: Aston Road Villa Bed and Breakfast

Aston Road Villa offers a contemporary and spacious two bedroom guest wing. The Villa can be used for a relaxing weekend, or as a base for exploring the Kapiti coast. Aston Road Villa offers you a "home away from home" experience.



Day 6







Kapiti Classic Guided Day Tour with Kapiti Island Nature Tours - Lunch Included

Your day trip to Kapiti Island begins at Paraparaumu where you'll catch the short ferry ride over to Waiorua Bay at the northern end of Kapiti Island. On arrival you'll be welcomed to the island and your experienced nature guide will introduce you to the natural and human history of the island. You'll discover for yourself the remarkable bird life that exists on this predator free island when you're guided on a 1 hour nature walk. A delicious cooked lunch is also provided at the lodge on the island.

Paraparaumu to Wellington

Continue south along Kapiti Coast. The coastal seaside towns of Paekakariki and Plimmerton are also worth a short detour before arriving into the capital city of Wellington. Wellington City is New Zealand's capital. It sits on a wonderful deep natural harbour and is surrounded by bush clad hills. The city centre itself is quite compact (only around 1 square kilometre) and so exploring on foot is relatively easy. From your city centre accommodation you can easily stroll the cafes and restaurants around Courtenay Place or visit New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa, which is also close by.

Return your vehicle to Wellington Airport

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

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.

Meals included: Lunch



Day 7



Explore Wellington

Wellington, known in Māori as Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui ("The Head of the Fish of Maui") or Te Whanganui a Tara ("The Great Harbour of Tara"), is New Zealand’s vibrant capital. Often called a ‘mini-Melbourne,’ this cosmopolitan city blends art, culture, food, and fashion with quirky laneway bars, hip eateries, and underground art shows. Stroll the waterfront to Te Papa, New Zealand’s national museum, or ride the historic cable car from Lambton Quay for stunning city views. Explore Cuba Street’s unique boutiques and visit the iconic ‘Beehive’ at Parliament. Fans of The Lord of the Rings can tour Weta Workshop, the Oscar-winning design studio behind Middle-earth. Just an hour away, Martinborough offers a culinary escape with top-notch food and wine. Nature lovers can’t miss Zealandia, the world’s first fully fenced eco-sanctuary. End your day sampling Wellington’s renowned dining scene—search 'Metro Eats' for the city’s best spots.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Entry to Te Papa The Museum of New Zealand

Te Papa Tongarewa, meaning "Container of Treasures," is New Zealand’s national museum, located on Wellington’s stunning waterfront. Renowned for its bold and innovative approach, Te Papa seamlessly blends science, art, history, and Māori culture into interactive and thought-provoking exhibitions. Visitors can explore everything from colossal squid and geological wonders to contemporary art and powerful stories of Aotearoa’s people. A visit to Te Papa is more than a museum experience, it’s an inspiring journey through the heart of New Zealand’s identity.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Zealandia By Day Wildlife Sanctuary Tour

Taking a day 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.
Walk through the gates of the Zealandia predator-exclusion fence into the sanctuary. Your guide will then lead you on a walk through the native New Zealand bush. Possible sights include Kaka, Kakariki, Takahe, Tuatara, Saddleback, Whitehead, Weta, Kereru, Hihi and the Bellbird. New Zealand has some of the most unique biodiversity and advanced conservation techniques in the world. Soak up the beautiful scenery while learning more about our unique ecological history.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Wellington Cable Car

Take a ride on the historic Wellington Cable Car and enjoy stunning views of the city and harbour, Te Whanganui-a-Tara, as you ascend Kelburn Hill in just five minutes. At the top, visit the Cable Car Museum to see the original machinery and watch a short film about its history, or browse the gift shop. Just a short walk away, Space Place at Carter Observatory offers interactive exhibits and a digital planetarium exploring the Southern skies. If you have time, stroll back down through the scenic Wellington Botanic Garden.

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 8








Private Transfer Wellington Hotel to Airport with In Style Executive

You will be collected from your Wellington hotel and transferred to the 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:	Wellington
Tour length:	8
Accomodation:	Apartments
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Adina Apartment Hotel Auckland Britomart
Day 2	Quest Rotorua Central
Day 3	Quest Rotorua Central
Day 4	Quest Napier
Day 5	Aston Road Villa Bed and Breakfast
Day 6	Adina CityLife Wellington
Day 7	Adina CityLife Wellington