



8 Day PUKEKO Tour

New Zealand North Island Journey Tour

STARTS: Auckland **FINISHES:** Wellington

DURATION: 8 days & 7 nights

DEPARTS: Thursday

2022 DEPARTURES: 9 Jun, 7 Jul, 4 Aug, 8 Sep, 29 Sep, 10 Nov, 1 Dec

2023 DEPARTURES: 12 Jan, 2 Feb, 2 Mar, 13 Apr

MINIMUM NUMBERS: 6 passengers

MAXIMUM NUMBERS: 23 passengers



DAY 1: Auckland to Rotorua

Kia Ora (hello) and welcome to your New Zealand adventure. Our tour begins in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), the largest city in New Zealand and home to over 2 million people and around 50 volcanoes.

We'll head out bright and early this morning and travel down to Rotorua, the North Island's geothermal hotspot and probably second only to Queenstown in terms of its adventure activity offerings. Fondly known as 'Roto-vegas' due the high volume of tourists it receives, Rotorua is a hive of activity and culture.

We'll stop at the Whakarewarewa Forest for a walk through the giant California Redwoods which were planted over 100 years ago before checking in at our hotel, the Distinction Rotorua. Centrally located and home to a spa, swimming pool and unlimited wifi (not the norm here in New Zealand) it's a great base to explore from.

Accommodation: Distinction Rotorua or similar

Meal Options: Local eateries

Free activities: Whakarewarewa Redwood Forest walk

DAY 2: Rotorua

Today we have a free day in Rotorua. Have breakfast at the hotel and then head off to an activity of your choice. Go white water rafting down the kaituna river, zipline through the trees on an eco-tour, zorb through rolling hills or just relax at a geothermal spa. If you'd like to see some geothermal activity for free, head to Kuirau Park to see boiling mud pools and steaming lakes.

Accommodation: Distinction Rotorua or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Local restaurants

Free activities: Kuirau Park

DAY 3: Rotorua to Lake Aniwhenua

After a couple of days in a major tourist destination like Rotorua, you'll probably want some time to recharge the batteries and experience a more authentic slice of New Zealand culture. After breakfast, we'll venture 'off the beaten track' to the shores of Lake Aniwhenua and the incredible Kohutapu Lodge. Owned by a local Maori family who are passionate about showcasing their Maori tribal heritage, the lodge is a pillar of the local community.

We'll be taken to see sacred Maori rock carvings, play a traditional game of Mau Rakau and watch the preparation of a ground cooked 'hangi'. We'll enjoy an afternoon tea of freshly made fried bread as we speak with the team at Kohutapu Lodge and practice our weaving and haka skills. In the evening, we'll sit down to enjoy our lovingly prepared hangi feast - this will probably be the best meal you'll eat in New Zealand, or dare we say, your lifetime.

Exclusive experience includes:

- Welcome to the tribal lands and a guided tour to sacred Maori rock carvings
- Introduction to the Murupara area, its people, history, and challenges
- Afternoon tea
- Mau Rakau (Maori stick games)
- Weaving Lesson
- Haka Lesson
- 1-night accommodation at the lakeside Kohutapu Lodge
- Full traditional hangi buffet dinner & dessert
- Storytelling around the fire pit

- Continental breakfast

Accommodation: Scenic lakefront cabins

Meals included: Breakfast, full traditional hangi dinner and dessert

Free activities: Maori rock carvings, volleyball

DAY 4: Lake Aniwhenua to Blue Duck Station

We'll tuck into our buffet breakfast and say goodbye to our wonderful hosts at the lakeside lodge before we depart this morning to Kerosene Creek – a naturally hot river and the perfect place for a morning soak. Afterwards we'll drive on to Taupo to see Australasia's largest lake and the frothy Huka Falls before heading inland to Blue Duck Station for an immersive and off the grid experience. Blue Duck Station is a 7,200-acre high country farm and is the most sustainable high country sheep and cattle station in New Zealand, the team have made it their mission to protect their native environment for its namesake, the rare blue duck. On arrival, we'll settle in to learn a little about daily life at Blue Duck, the station's interesting settlement history and their sustainability efforts before cooking some dinner and relaxing around the bonfire.

Accommodation: Country station lodge

Optional paid activities: Skydiving or bungy in Taupo

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Free activities: Huka Falls, Spa Park walk Taupo

DAY 5: Blue Duck Station

Good news - we have a full free day to explore the station, a ruggedly charming destination that's as far as we can get from the ocean by road. Options for entertainment today are horseback riding over rolling green hills or a 4WD eco tour through native bush to the 'Top of the World' where we can see the three peaks of Mount Ruapehu, Mount Tongariro and Mount Ngauruhoe. To explore on foot, hike to the Kaiwhakauka waterfall and try to spot a rare blue duck in the flesh. So much to do and a whole day in which to do it - today is about our love affair with this lush kiwi paradise, ah those holiday romances.

Accommodation: Country station lodge

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Included activities: 4WD farm eco-tour

Free activities: Hike to Kaiwhakauka waterfall

DAY 6: Blue Duck Station to Ohakune

This morning we're up nice and early to head straight to Tongariro National Park where we'll tick off one of the most popular hikes in New Zealand, the epic Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Considered one of the world's top one-day walks, this 19km hike takes us across a rocky plateau with dramatic volcanic peaks, craters, and turquoise lakes that we (and our Instagram feed) will remember for a lifetime. The Crossing is open to walk year-round (alpine gear and guide are required in winter), but it is subject to the weather conditions. If the weather prevents us from doing the Crossing, there are other awesome short walks in the area. Tonight, we'll unwind after a big day at our accommodation, the Powderhorn Chateau. Styled like a log cabin, this boutique accommodation is so cosy and even has an indoor heated pool where we can rest our weary bones after our big walk - after all, we're on holiday aren't we?

Accommodation: Powderhorn Chateau or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Local restaurants

Optional activities: Tongariro Crossing

DAY 7: Ohakune to Wellington

This morning after breakfast we're going for a scenic bike ride along the Old Coach Road, an easy but epic 4-hour unguided bike trail. We'll cycle on a unique cobbled road, past historic Viaducts and limestone cliffs and there'll be plenty of stops along the way to take photos for the 'gram. This is a great way to spend a morning learning about New Zealand history and seeing some pretty spectacular views as we go.

Afterwards, we're heading down to Wellington, the 'coolest little capital in the world'! Wellington packs a lot of character into its downtown district, with interesting restaurants and bars along Cuba Street and Courtenay Place. We'll have an afternoon to browse through the exhibits at Te Papa National Museum, grab a craft beer at a brewery, climb to the top of Mt Victoria for panoramic views or take a stroll along the waterfront and Oriental Parade. Oh and, most importantly for those who seek 24/7 caffeination, we are happy to say that Wellington's coffee culture and cafe scene is considered one of (if not THE) best in New Zealand.

Accommodation: Ibis Wellington or similar

Meals included: Breakfast

Meal options: Local restaurants

Included activity: Electric bike along the historic Old Coach Road

Free activities: Walk Oriental Parade, head up Mt Victoria for fantastic views, visit Te Papa National Museum

DAY 8: Wellington Departure Day

Today your adventure comes to an end. Say goodbye (or see you soon) to your mates and go your separate ways for now. We hope you had a blast and remain close with your Stray Mates for 4ever!

Meals: Breakfast

This itinerary is a guide. Given the spontaneous nature of our trips and lack of control over New Zealand's weather(!), what we do each day might occasionally vary.

What's Included:

- Experienced tour guide
- Private coach transport
- 7 nights' accommodation
- 7 Breakfasts, Dinners
- Meals as specified

- Lake Aniwhenua Cultural Experience & Hangi
- Old Coach Road E-Bike adventure

What to Bring:

- Camera, Sturdy walking shoes/boots, Warm clothing, Waterproof jacket, Hat & Sunscreen, Bathers/towel, Water bottle, Toiletries, Motion sickness tablets, Insect repellent

Please Note:

- Luggage is limited to one piece per person with a maximum weight of 23kg plus a day pack
- A basic level of fitness is required for medium length walks
- Accommodation at Lake Aniwhenua, Blue Duck Station and Marahau (Abel Tasman) is specialist. All cabins are private, but facilities are shared.