



The Great Volcanic Rail Trail

Start in Auckland and head straight into the magic of Middle-earth and the subterranean wonders of Waitomo. Discover Rotorua's geothermal power and vibrant Māori heritage before heading to the adventure hub of Lake Taupō for a scenic cruise to a Māori carving site. After exploring the urban energy and cinematic secrets of Wellington, board the iconic Northern Explorer train. Wind your way through the dramatic heart of the island to Tongariro National Park, where you'll unwind among volcanic peaks before returning to the city.

Starts in: Auckland
Finishes in: Auckland
Length: 10days / 9nights
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: All coach transport

Includes: Afterhours emergency support while touring

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

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

plus much more...

Includes: All pick ups/drop offs at destinations

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

Included activity: The Visitor Promise - Cultural Learning Course

Included activity: Auckland to Rotorua via Hobbiton & Waitomo with Cheeky Kiwi Travel

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 - 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.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Auckland Sky Tower Admission

Standing at 328 meters (just over 1000 feet) - the Sky Tower is the tallest man-made structure in New Zealand and offers panoramic views of the Auckland landscape. Travel in the glass-fronted lift to one of three spectacular viewing platforms, or for a little more excitement do a SkyWalk - an outside loop around the pergola 192 meters (just over 600 feet) above ground. If you're really bold, Take the quick way down and SkyJump off the tower - a controlled free fall to the base.

Inside, the Sky Lounge offers coffee and light meals while the iconic Orbit Restaurant is Auckland's only 360-degree revolving dining experience.

Your accommodation: Sudima Auckland City

Conveniently located within easy walking distance of Auckland's bustling shopping, arts, dining and entertainment precincts and opposite the New Zealand International Convention Centre.



Day 2



Auckland to Rotorua via Hobbiton & Waitomo with Cheeky Kiwi Travel

This captivating New Zealand adventure kicks off in Auckland, showcasing city highlights before heading south. Journey through the stunning Waikato countryside, an expansive farming region offering picturesque scenery, mighty rivers, and charming towns like Pirongia and Otorohanga. Dive into the ancient wonders of the Waitomo Glowworm Caves, where you'll marvel at unique cave formations and take a boat cruise beneath a ceiling of sparkling glowworms. Experience a delightful interlude with some friendly local animals before stepping into the magical world of the Hobbiton Movie Set for a fully guided tour, complete with a complimentary beverage at The Green Dragon Inn. The day concludes with a scenic drive through the quirky 'Corrugated Iron Capital of the World', Tirau, before arriving for a guided tour of Rotorua's highlights and hotel check-in.

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 Piwakawaka (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: Regent of Rotorua

Regent of Rotorua Boutique Hotel & Spa occupies a great location within walking distance of the lakefront, the government gardens and the city centres shops and restaurants. Luxury rooms are well equipped and on site facilities include a swimming pool, restaurant and bar and spa treatments.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 3



Crater Lakes Flight & Hot Pools by Floatplane with Volcanic Air

Soar beyond the crater's rim on a spectacular floatplane adventure. After taking in the breathtaking aerial views of Rotorua's hidden lakes district and distant volcanoes, you will experience the thrill of a water landing on the crystal-clear shores of Lake Rotoiti. Here, you'll discover a secluded paradise only accessible by water: natural geothermal hot pools tucked away in a quiet bay. Spend 90 minutes soaking in serenity or cooling off with a lakeside swim before your pilot whisks you back to reality.

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.

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Meals included: Breakfast, Speciality Dinner



Day 4



Private Transfer - Rotorua Accommodation to Rotorua Intercity Bus Stop with Ready2Roll

You will be collected from your accommodation and transferred to Rotorua Intercity Bus Stop.

Rotorua to Taupō by InterCity Coach

Today you will travel along the geothermal highway between Rotorua and Taupō. The town of Taupō sits on New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupō. Just north of the town are the Huka Falls, the Huka Jet can get you much closer to the falls with a thrilling jet boat ride. Craters of the Moon is a nearby geothermal reserve with well formed walking tracks around its many boiling pools and steaming vents.

Explore Taupo

Nestled on the shores of New Zealand's largest lake, Taupō is a vibrant town surrounded by stunning volcanic landscapes and the peaks of Tongariro National Park, including Mt Ruapehu. The town buzzes with cafes, shops, and bars, while outdoor enthusiasts can choose from bungy jumping, skydiving, fishing, kayaking, sailing, horse riding, or hiking. Don't miss the quirky 'Arte Cafe and Gallery with its mosaic outdoor living room and iconic 'Alice's Chair'. Just outside town, explore the geothermal wonders of Craters of the Moon, the power of Huka Falls, or take a jet boat ride for an unforgettable view. Taupō perfectly blends natural beauty, thrilling adventures, and unique cultural experiences.

Taupo Coach Depot to Taupo Accommodation with Taupo Private Transfers

You will be collected from Taupo coach depot and transferred to your accommodation.

Maori Rock Carving Cruise

Sit back and relax in luxury bean bags on board the yacht Barbary as you enjoy a scenic sail across Lake Taupo to the 10-metre high Maori rock art, only accessible by boat. You're guaranteed amazing photo opportunities as you experience one of life's postcard moments on this Maori tour. Glide across a smooth lake as you soak up the warming sun or go for a swim before you enjoy free light refreshments at the rock carvings. If you're looking for a little more activity you can help hoist the sails or take a turn at the wheel. Taupo's Maori rock carvings may look like the remains of a 1,000-year-old Maori village, but these rock carvings were created in the late 70s by local artists lead by John Randall. Duration of cruise is 2 to 2.5 hours.

Your accommodation: Millennium Hotel & Resort Manuels Taupo

Millennium Hotel & Resort Manuels Taupo enjoys a magnificent location right on the shores of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 5



Taupo Accommodation to Taupo Coach Depot with Taupo Private Transfers

You will be collected from your accommodation and transferred to Taupo Intercity coach stop.

Taupō to Wellington by Intercity Coach

Your coach journey will skirt around the edge of New Zealand's largest lake and lead you to Turangi, the self-proclaimed Trout Fishing Capital. You then travel up onto the central plateau and the high country Rangipo Desert. Nearby is Tongariro National Park, one of New Zealand's three world heritage sites and if the weather clears you can see the 2,500 metre peak of the still volcanically active Mount Ruapehu. You might recognise the symmetrical shape of Mount Ngauruhoe as this was used as the scenery of Mount Doom in the Lord of the Rings Trilogy. Heading south you pass through the rural towns of Taihape, Mangaweka and Bulls before arriving on the Kāpiti Coast which is the outer limits of greater 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.

Taxi in Wellington - Own Arrangements

Please arrange your own taxi transport at your convenience. We suggest booking ahead for early morning or peak-hour travel to ensure timely arrival.

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.

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: QT Wellington

The QT Wellington is superbly situated opposite Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand and Wellington's waterfront. The luxury rooms are just a few minutes walk from the cafes, restaurants, theatres, galleries and shopping of the vibrant Courtenay Quarter.

Meals included: Breakfast



Get the full experience to Wētā Workshop and back with a guided transfer. Wētā Workshop has been making cool stuff for film and TV since 1987. The crew has brought to life beloved characters and epic special effects for iconic blockbusters like The Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, Avatar and Black Panther: Wakanda Forever. Step into Wētā Workshop Experiences and explore a world of creativity, physical effects and movie magic on a guided tour through our creative home base. You'll learn about the making of props, creatures and costumes created for your favourite films. Get hands-on with unique pieces from many departments, catch the artists at work and discover how Weta have grown into the award-winning workshop you see today.

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.

The Northern Explorer is a journey through the heart of the North Island, travelling between Wellington, New Zealand's capital city, to Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. Your journey today from Wellington travels along the spectacular Kapiti Coast, past the rolling countryside of the Manawatu region to the mountainous Tongariro National Park. Enjoy fantastic views from the panoramic windows in your carriage or the open-air viewing deck at the rear of the train.

Tongariro National Park

Tongariro National Park, New Zealand's oldest national park, is also the fourth place on earth to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The park features three prominent volcanoes: Mount Tongariro, Mount Ruapehu, and Mount Ngauruhoe. Mount Ngauruhoe and Mount Ruapehu are two of the world's most active composite volcanoes, with notable eruptions from Ruapehu in 1995 and 1996, and Tongariro in 2012. Despite this activity, the volcanoes are closely monitored to ensure visitor safety. When visiting Tongariro National Park, take advantage of the incredible outdoor activities available. In the winter, you can ski or enjoy snow play on Mt Ruapehu Ski Field. In the summer, the world-famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing is a must-do. This one-day hike, taking 6 to 8 hours, is one of New Zealand's Great Walks and will lead you past the stunning Emerald and Blue Lakes and unique volcanic landscapes. For those looking for other hiking options, the park offers a variety of tracks and trails suitable for all abilities, including shorter walks and a guided 3.5-day Tongariro Northern Circuit. You can also experience true isolation by exploring deep canyons and ancient forests along the Whanganui River or walking along ancient lava flows and glacier streams to the Taranaki Falls. After a day of exploring, stop by Pataka Caf  ; at Whakapapa to enjoy a meal with an incredible mountain view.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY - Northern Explorer Scenic Plus Addon - KiwiRail

Elevate your North Island rail journey with the Scenic Plus add-on and experience true luxury on the rails! Enjoy inclusive, multi-course dining with fresh, regionally inspired cuisine and perfectly paired New Zealand wines and beverages, all delivered to your spacious, comfortable table seat. You'll receive dedicated personal service as you glide past the volcanic peaks and lush plains of the North Island. Feeling adventurous? Step out to the exclusive open-air viewing carriage to capture the Central Plateau's magnificent vistas and breathe in the great outdoors. This is a full sensory journey through the heart of the North Island.

Your accommodation: Tongariro Crossing Lodge

Tongariro Crossing Lodge is a small boutique, colonial-inspired accommodation whose buildings date back to the early 1900s. The lodge is made up of just six well appointed, large, warm rooms with their own bathrooms.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 8



Premium Half Day Tongariro Alpine Tour with Adrift

Begin your journey on the Tongariro Crossing track and immerse yourself in its splendour as you hike through the volcanic landscape, culminating at the picturesque Soda Springs waterfall. Mt. Ngauruhoe's cold water springs create a small oasis adorned with lush yellow mountain buttercups and white foxgloves. The pristine Soda Springs provides an opportunity to refill your water bottles with pure Tongariro spring water while enjoying morning tea. Learn several aspects of Tongariro and New Zealand, including recent and historical eruptions, geology, flora and fauna, and the settlement of New Zealand. It is important you read and understand the risks associated with this activity. For more information see [here](#).

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Meals included: Breakfast



Day 9



The Northern Explorer Scenic Train: National Park to Auckland

The Northern Explorer is a journey through the heart of the North Island. Your journey today takes you through to the vibrant city of Auckland. Along the way you'll 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.

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

Elevate your North Island rail journey with the Scenic Plus add-on and experience true luxury on the rails! Enjoy inclusive, multi-course dining with fresh, regionally inspired cuisine and perfectly paired New Zealand wines and beverages, all delivered to your spacious, comfortable table seat. You'll receive dedicated personal service as you glide past the volcanic peaks and lush plains of the North Island. Feeling adventurous? Step out to the exclusive open-air viewing carriage to capture the Central Plateau's magnificent vistas and breathe in the great outdoors. This is a full sensory journey through the heart of the North Island.

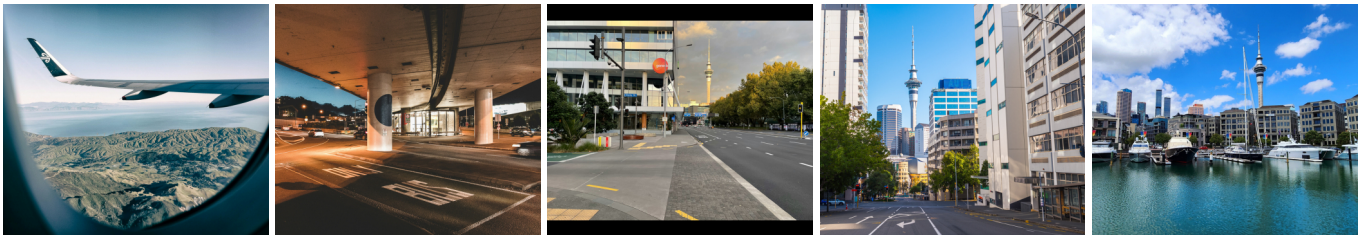
Your accommodation: Sudima Auckland City

Conveniently located within easy walking distance of Auckland's bustling shopping, arts, dining and entertainment precincts and opposite the New Zealand International Convention Centre.

Meals included: Breakfast



Day 10



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 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:	Self-Guided Coach Tours
Starts:	Auckland
Finishes:	Auckland
Tour length:	10
Accommodation:	Hotel 4 star
Car/transport type:	

Accommodation summary

Day 1	Sudima Auckland City
Day 2	Regent of Rotorua
Day 3	Regent of Rotorua
Day 4	Millennium Hotel & Resort Manuels Taupo
Day 5	QT Wellington
Day 6	QT Wellington
Day 7	Tongariro Crossing Lodge
Day 8	Tongariro Crossing Lodge
Day 9	Sudima Auckland City