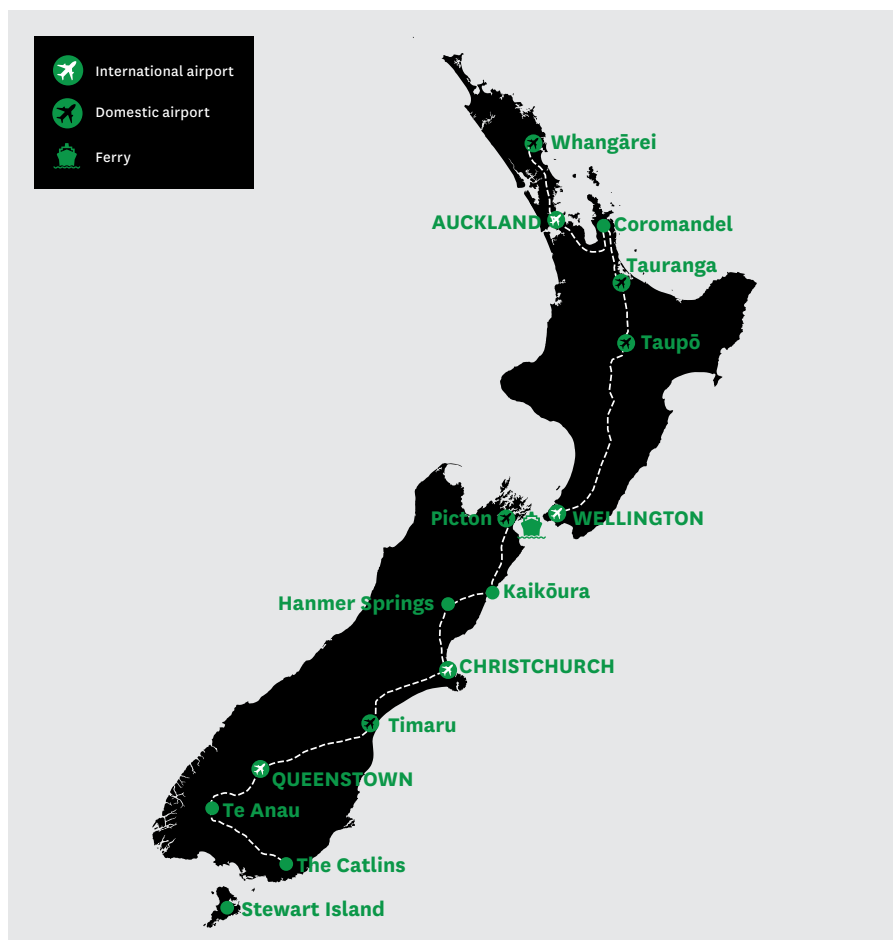


VIBRANT ADVENTURES AND UNEXPECTED THRILLS

Aotearoa New Zealand
23 days self-drive



From top to toe this full country itinerary provides a comprehensive view of Aotearoa New Zealand, taking in some of the best sights and attractions. In the North Island you'll discover beautiful beaches, kauri forests, caves and phenomenal geothermal activity. In the South Island the emphasis is on grand mountain scenery, adventure activities, and wildlife encounters.



Walking



Active



Adrenaline



Food and Wine

HIGHLIGHTS

- Body board down giant sand dunes
- Parasail across Australasia's biggest lake
- Stay in a luxe treehouse
- Witness the Eighth Wonder of the World
- Experience a heavy machinery playground

TE IKA-A-MĀUI THE NORTH ISLAND

DAYS 1, 2 & 3:

Te Tai Tokerau Northland

Journey to Aotearoa New Zealand's northern-most point Te Rerenga Wairua Cape Reinga and witness the extraordinary sight of two oceans colliding. Taitokerau Northland is steeped in history, and in sacred Māori lore, Cape Reinga is the place where spirits depart for home. Don't leave the top of the north without visiting Te Paki sand dunes. These dunes were formed millions of years ago and are up to 150 metres high! For an extra thrill, zoom down them on a body board, all gear is provided on the **Fullers GreatSights** tour.

Meandering south on the **Twin Coast Discovery** route, those keen on exploring what's below the surface can stop to experience one of the top 10 dive sites in the world – The Poor Knights Islands. For something really unique, opt for a two night kayaking tour of the Cavalli Islands. For those wanting a luxury escape, book **The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs**, an opulent accommodation option sure to delight.



DAYS 4 & 5:

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

Whangārei to Auckland 🚗 156km / 97mi | 2 hours 10 min

New Zealand's largest and most diverse city brings travellers a myriad of options for things to do and see. Be it beach, forest or city-based, you're never far from thrilling adventure, stellar shopping or top-notch dining.

Jump off the top of the **Sky Tower**, go **whale watching**, hike one of the region's many inactive volcanoes, visit local vineyards, join a **food tour**, or stargaze from the International Dark Sky Sanctuary of remote Great Barrier Island, are just a few ways to enjoy what Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland has to offer.

Expert tip: There are many quality inner-city hotels with rooftop bars, perfect for watching the sun go down. Some of our favourites are: **SO/ Auckland**, **voco**, **QT** and **Sudima Auckland City**.

DAYS 6 & 7:

Pare Hauraki Coromandel

Auckland to Thames 🚗 114km / 70mi | 1 hour 30 mins

Where many Kiwis holiday, the Coromandel is an easy drive from Auckland. This idyllic region is the perfect place to slow down and admire the scenery. A great way to do this is with a short kayak or paddleboard to **Whenuakura Donut Island**. The island lies off the coast of Whangamatā and features a secluded turquoise lagoon surrounded by native fauna and volcanic cliff. Whenuakura Island is rich in Māori history and is privately owned by local iwi (Māori tribe), who are the guardians of this land.

Following old railway lines between Thames and Te Aroha, the Hauraki Rail Trail is a great way to see the region. The cycling path takes visitors through historic gold mining sites and areas of cultural significance. Pedal alongside the Ohinemuri River and through the Karangahake Gorge to admire the stunning Owharoa Falls and photogenic gold mining sites. Off the bike and back on the water, look out for dolphins and seals with a Cathedral Cove **boat cruise** and visit the impressive Big Bay Blowhole near Hahei.



DAYS 8, 9 & 10:

Te Moana-a-Toi Bay of Plenty

Whangamatā to Tauranga 🚗 90km / 56mi | 1 hour 25 min

The coastal Bay of Plenty region has both vibrant city life and small-town rural charm, the area is known for swimming, surfing and the spirit of manaakitanga (a deep expression of hospitality). Discover the rare beauty of one of New Zealand's little-known treasures, **Moutohorā Whale Island**, home to some of New Zealand's most endangered birds and reptiles. For a healthy dose of adrenaline, embrace the white water rapids of the Rangitāiki river. Rangitāiki is the Bay of Plenty's longest river and holds special significance to Māori, with local iwi having a long history of connection to the awa (river). The Riverbug's **Action Bug tour** takes visitors on a journey through a remote gorge below the spectacular Aniwhenua Falls.

There are plenty of accommodation options in Mauao Mount Maunganui – located in the region's main city, Tauranga. This lively seaside area is full of excellent cafés, restaurants and bars, as well as trendy locals and miles of white sandy beach to surf and explore.

Expert tip: Want to wow your clients with a local tour like no other? **Muir's Tours**, a family owned and operated provider offers hands on fishing, foraging and cooking experiences. You can even add on a scenic heli-flight and dinner with an All Black (New Zealand rugby player) or celebrity chef.



DAYS 11 & 12:

Taupō

Tauranga to Taupō 🚗 148km / 92mi | 1 hour 50 min

If your clients are into hiking, biking, fishing or golfing then the Great Lake Taupō district is a dream come true. After a mandatory visit to Huka Falls by foot or by boat, head to one of Taupō's internationally recognised golf courses such as **Wairakei Golf + Sanctuary**. This predator-free course offers a safe haven to many native animals and manuhiri (visitors) are sure to come across deer and other wildlife on the green. A few minutes down the road lies **Wairakei Terraces & Spa**. Book a guided tour of the silica terraces and exclusive access to the geothermal steam-field, finish the visit with a soak in the thermal pools or a massage at the day spa.

The next morning, experience surreal views of the region and hike some of the most beautiful hidden trails, which are only accessible by air with **Helisika**. Getting out on the lake is a must do while in Taupō. Partake in a cruise to view the Ngatoroirangi Mine Bay Māori Rock Carvings or fly across it via a parasailing adventure. And if your clients are game, the **bungy** is a favourite bucket list activity.

Expert tip: Two minutes from the skiing and fishing village of Tūrangi is **Tongariro River Rafting**. The team specialise in rafting, backcountry fishing and mountain biking. Whether your clients want to explore the land, river or the wildlife, this crowd are experts in it all.

DAYS 13 & 14:

Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington

Taupō to Wellington ✈️ 1 hour

🚗 373km / 232mi | 4 hours 45 min

Keep heading south either by car or plane to the 'coolest little capital', Wellington. Their flourishing coffee and craft beer culture means visitors will never go thirsty. Enjoy a food tour of the city or head out to the iconic **Wētā Workshop** and Wētā Cave to go behind the scenes of movie making. Do you have clients travelling as a group? Check out the opulent **Boomrock** for a brilliant day of clay bird shooting, track car racing, fine dining, wine tasting and more (minimum numbers apply). Then get ready to cross the Cook Strait via ferry to begin the South Island leg of the trip.





Kaikōura

TE WAIPOUNAMU THE SOUTH ISLAND

DAYS 15 & 16:

Kaikōura

Wellington to Picton  3 hours 30 min

Picton to Kaikōura  156km / 96mi | 2 hours

Sitting pretty on the east coast of the South Island lies Kaikōura, renowned for whale and other marine life watching. If your clients fancy a dip (complete with wetsuit!), they can spot seals and swim with dolphins in their natural habitat. With all this adventure building up an appetite, take to the **skies in a helicopter** to see the marine canyon from above and then transfer to **Hapuku Kitchen** to delight the tastebuds with a foraging tour. Here, the team celebrate the abundance of quality local ingredients the surrounding environment has to offer. For an afternoon tippie, visit **Mt Fyffe Distillery** and sample some boutique and small-batch gin in their rustic distillery on their family farm.

Expert tip: Arrange a unique overnight stay at **Hapuku Lodge + Tree Houses**. As well as more traditional accommodation, the lodge has five tree houses nestled at least 10 metres above ground with impressive views of Kaikōura's dramatic mountains and the Pacific Ocean.



Kaikōura



Ōmarama Hot Tubs, Waitaki

DAYS 17, 18 & 19:

Waitaha Canterbury & Waitaki

Kaikōura to Hanmer Springs  130km / 80mi | 1 hour 50 min

Travel south west to Hanmer Springs. Sink into the mineral hot pools at **Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools & Spa** or turn up the adrenaline with **jet boating**, **bungy jumping** and **river rafting**. From here, Waipara is within easy driving distance. This town is an emerging wine region making a name for itself producing internationally recognised riesling and pinot gris.

Further south along the coast lies the town of Timaru, it's quite a distance, so we recommend a stop off at the main centre, Ōtautahi Christchurch. Get a bite to eat at the Riverside Markets or even stay overnight at one of the many hotels and boutique accommodation. Once in Timaru, your clients will find **Te Ana Maori Rock Art Centre**, a unique Māori cultural experience based on Ngāi Tahu iwi (a South Island tribe) culture and the rock drawings of their ancestors. Explore further south to Waitaki's **Ōmarama Hot Tubs and Clay Cliffs** and then journey two and a half hours by car to Tāhuna Queenstown for a night in the vibrant lake-side town.



Milford Sound, Fiordland

DAYS 20 & 21: Te Rua-o-te-Moko Fiordland

Queenstown to Te Anau 🚗 171km / 106mi | 2 hours

Fiordland is arguably one of the most dramatic and beautiful parts of Aotearoa New Zealand. Carved by glaciers over 100,000 years ago the landscape is awe-inspiring and best viewed by water, air or hiking. Fiordland National Park is a World Heritage Site and includes Milford, Dusky and Doubtful Sounds. Piopiotahi Milford Sound was described by Rudyard Kipling as the Eighth Wonder of the World; take a scenic flight over it and you will understand why.

Embark on a **guided cave adventure** and cruise across Te Anau lake into limestone caverns and glow-worm grottos. Explore the unique underwater realms of Milford Sound, where deep water species inhabit the shallows with **Descend Diving**. Go by river and land with a **bike and jetboat combo tour**, a rare opportunity to explore Fiordland National Park away from the crowds.



Milford Sound, Fiordland



Tuatapere Hump Ridge, Fiordland

DAYS 22 & 23: Murihiku Southland & Mata-Au Clutha

Te Anau to The Catlins 🚗 203km / 126mi | 2 hours 30 min

From farms to fiords, the bottom of Aotearoa New Zealand is a treasure trove of unique experiences and outstanding landscapes. The Clutha region has an array of spectacular waterfalls and lush rainforest. Explore with a local and book a sunrise tour to spot rare hoiho (yellow-eyed penguins) with **Catlins Tours**. The neighbouring region Southland is a land of rugged coast and rolling plains, world-renowned Bluff oysters and the launching place for a visit to Rakiura Stewart Island. Explore the southernmost populated point of New Zealand, Stewart Island, to spot an abundance of bird life among the rugged wilderness or even Aurora Australis, the Southern Lights. In Southland's largest town, Invercargill, your clients can experience a heavy machinery playground at **Dig This Invercargill** or use it as a base for the **Tuatapere Hump Ridge Track**.

Want to squeeze in some other key destinations in New Zealand? Visit the **Travel Trade website** for more itineraries as well as inspiration, tips and important trade information.