

CULTURAL WONDERS & LOCAL CUISINE

Auckland to Wellington
10 days self-drive



Discover the culture and mystique of Aotearoa New Zealand, exploring the North Island with this 10-day itinerary through regions filled with impressive landscapes, vibrant culture, world-class cuisine, and friendly locals who demonstrate the spirit of manaakitanga (deep expression of hospitality and warmth).



Walking



Culture



Golf



Food and Wine

HIGHLIGHTS

- Uncover subterranean secrets dating back to the 1940s
- Tee off at a World Top 100 golf course
- Spot an ancient warrior standing guard over the forest
- Discover some of Aotearoa New Zealand's founding documents
- Explore the world of special effects at Wētā Workshop

DAYS 1 & 2:

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

To get your bearings, view the city at 186 metres above street level, from Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's iconic **Sky Tower** observation deck. With sweeping harbours, it becomes apparent why Auckland is named the 'City of Sails'. How about experiencing this first hand? Embark on a dinner cruise on the Waitematā Harbour, or even have a go at sailing a luxury catamaran.

A short 40 minute ferry ride from Auckland CBD lies Waiheke Island. Settle in for a wine tasting and long lunch at one of the many vineyards. Or for something a little more adventurous, seek out subterranean secrets with a **Stony Batter tunnel tour** – 1.2 kilometres of underground passages commissioned in 1942.



DAYS 3 & 4:

Rotorua

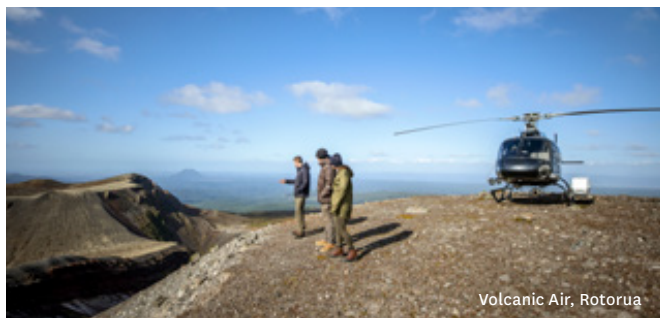
Auckland to Rotorua 🚗 226km / 140mi | 2 hour 30 min

Rotorua, a town set on its namesake lake, is known as the cultural epicentre of Aotearoa. Immerse yourself in traditional Māori culture at **Te Puia**, New Zealand's geothermal paradise. Breathe the steam from dramatic geysers, see bubbling mud pools, and observe Māori carvers and weavers in action.

Take to the skies with **Volcanic Air** and get an aerial view of the volcanic peaks of Mt Tarawera, and the stunning lakes which surround it. Catch a glimpse from the air of **Waimangu Volcanic Valley**, home to the now buried Pink and White Terraces. If choosing to visit this historic area once back on the ground, the boat cruise on Lake Rotomahana is a must-do.

To end the day, opt for the ultimate indulgence and plunge into one of the many geothermal hot springs and spas in the area.

Expert Tip: For a different dining experience, head up the gondola at **Skyline Rotorua** and dine at Stratosphere restaurant. Your clients will be wowed by the vast mountaintop views.



DAYS 5 & 6:

Te Matau-a-Māui Hawke's Bay

Rotorua to Napier 🚗 217km / 135mi | 2 hour 40 min

Welcome to food and wine country, the sunny Hawke's Bay. Some say the best way to explore a region is via the tastebuds, so arrange a food and wine tour and be guided through some of the area's vineyards and wineries - there are over 200 to choose from! For the golf aficionados, tee off at one of Golf Digest's top 100 golf courses in the world; **Cape Kidnappers**. The course is built on a ridge-and-valley landscape, with sea views that are second to none.

For those interested in art and culture, be sure to explore the architecture and history of Ahuriri Napier, also known as New Zealand's art deco capital. Take a tour in a vintage car or join a guided walk to discover how the great earthquake of 1931 has shaped Napier and the surrounding towns

For an all weather activity, visit **The National Aquarium of New Zealand**, go beneath the surface and witness marine life swimming overhead in a 1.5 million litre oceanarium. Or step into the keeper's shoes and head behind the scenes into the terrapin (turtle) habitat

Expert Tip: **Tākaro Trails** offer guided cycle tours to wineries and beyond. They tailor their routes to match your clients interests – wineries, food, art deco, nature, the great outdoors and more.





Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington

DAY 7: Manawatū

Napier to Palmerston North 🚗 185km / 115mi | 2 hour 30 min

Manawatū translates to “heart standing still” and it’s easy to see why once there. Located in the lower North Island, the region is packed with lush countryside, and native wildlife. With an abundance of rural appeal, Manawatū is a great place to experience the farming culture of Aotearoa. A tour or guided experience is the best way to get a glimpse into a working farm. Te Āpiti – Manawatū Gorge is a national taonga (treasure). Formed over 1.5 million years ago before the arrival of humans, it stands as a reminder of another time. Explore its wonders by foot, water or rail and come face to face with the sculpture of Whātonga, an ancient warrior who stands guard over the forest.

Many say New Zealand is synonymous with rugby. And Palmerston North provides your chance to explore our most comprehensive collection of rugby memorabilia at the **New Zealand Rugby Museum**. Discover an iconic sport which is quintessentially Kiwi and has strong ties to the Manawatū region. Enjoy a tranquil night’s sleep in the foothills of the Ruahine mountain ranges at **Makoura Lodge**. This venue also offers a range of activities such as clay bird shooting and archery.

Expert Tip: To get the lay of the land, recommend a drive out to Stormy Point Lookout. Here, visitors are able to spot both Mt Ruapehu and Mt Taranaki on a fine day.



DAYS 8, 9 & 10: Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington

Palmerston North to Wellington 🚗 143km / 88mi | 1 hour 40 min

The Museum of New Zealand **Te Papa Tongarewa** is a landmark building in the heart of Aotearoa’s capital city, Wellington. For history buffs and the curious, you can spend an entire day wandering the floors of Te Papa. Opt for the daily **Mana Māori** guided tour to experience the living and breathing taonga of te iwi taketake (first peoples of the land).

For more on the background of Aotearoa, stroll the grounds of the parliament buildings then witness some of the most important documents in New Zealand’s history; the Treaty of Waitangi, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Declaration of Independence on display at the **National Library of New Zealand**.

After some time surrounded by nature? No visit to Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington is complete without a quick trip up the hill on the historic **Wellington Cable Car**. From downtown Wellington, the ride takes you to the top entrance of the **Botanic Garden**. It’s well worth packing a picnic and exploring the 25 hectares of specialised plant collections and protected native bush.

For those J. R. R. Tolkien fans, discover Wellington’s Lord of the Rings filming locations on guided tour or go behind the scenes at the world-famous **Wētā Workshop**. Partake in the tour to uncover the wonders brought to life by Sir Peter Jackson and his legendary team.

If your clients are ending their holiday in Wellington, there is an international and domestic airport. Alternatively, extend their trip by combining with another of our itinerary suggestions.