

14 DAY ITINERARY

This two-week itinerary from Auckland to Christchurch offers a fantastic mixture of city life, cultural immersion, stunning coastlines and unique wildlife encounters.

AT A GLANCE

- 13 Nights / 14 Days
- North & South Island
- Maori cultural immersion in Bay of Plenty
- Geothermal wonders in Rotorua
- Whale watching in Kaikoura

DAYS 1-4

Welcome to Auckland, the City of Sails. Spend a day experiencing everything the city has to offer, from the adrenaline inducing Sky Tower jump to a peaceful wine tasting experience on Waiheke Island, just 40 minutes by ferry, but a whole world away from the bustling CBD.

Bay of Plenty offers cultural immersion at Mataatua Marae in Whakatane where visitors can really live the culture and participate in ancient rituals and workshops. After hearing the stories, take a helicopter flight or cruise to the active volcano on White Island or take a bay cruise from Tauranga for great marine wildlife sightings.

Travel into the Waikato region and visit New Zealand's most famous village - Hobbiton, an original film set used for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* movies.

A short drive south brings delivers the Geothermal wonders of Rotorua. Take a dip in hot pools and feast on Kai (food) cooked in the hot spring lakes at Te Puia. Finish the day with a traditional hāngī dinner and cultural show or colourful night lantern walk through the Redwood Treetops. Mt Tarawera offers a fantastic view across the region and if you're looking for something more adventurous try OGO Zorbing or the Skyline Luge.



Hobbiton™ Movie Set,
Waikato



Te Puia, Rotorua



White Island

TOP TIPS

- Explore Auckland's Victorian seaside village, Devonport, for a selection of boutique stores, galleries, parks and cafes
- The Waiheke Ferry runs every 30-60 minutes and takes just 40 minutes to reach the island on a comfortable catamaran with covered seating, wifi and a café.
- Get to know vintners on Waiheke with cellar door tours and hear their stories behind the wine, public buses available but services are infrequent.
- Know Mataatua experience in Whakatane will give you a full cultural immersion. There's also an express tour if you're short on time.
- White Island is best seen by helicopter and the active volcano is often smoking, offering amazing photo opportunities. There are cheaper boat tours available if you have more time.
- Book in advance for Hobbiton as it is very popular and can sell out well in advance.



Split Apple Rock Nelson Tasman

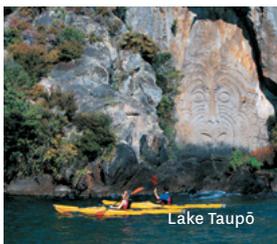
DAYS 5 -7

Continue south towards Taupō, a relaxing lake front town, stopping in at Wai-O-Tapu on the way for more spectacular Geothermal scenery. From Taupō, kayak or cruise out into the crater lake to see the ancient Maori rock carvings in the shadow of Ruapehu and Tongariro mountains or crank up the energy and take a jet boat up to the mighty Huka Falls.

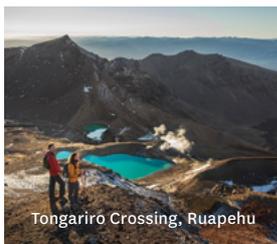
Tackle the famous one-day Tongariro Crossing hike and traverse volcanic craters and lava flows to reach stunning emerald lakes or just explore the shorter walks to beautiful waterfalls around National Park and afterwards retire to the Chateau Tongariro.

Keep travelling south to the coolest little capital, Wellington. If leaving the car in Taupō catch the Northern Explorer scenic train from National Park and relax as the scenery changes before your eyes.

Wellington's thriving coffee and craft beer culture means you will never go thirsty. Enjoy a food tour of the city or nature lovers should visit Zealandia to enjoy native wildlife. Combine it with a trip on the Cable Car to get great scenic views of the city and harbour.



Lake Taupō



Tongariro Crossing, Ruapehu



Wellington

TOP TIPS

- The Tongariro crossing is 19.4km long and takes about 6-8 hours to complete. The crossing is clear of snow from December to May, but if you're visiting in winter then the mountains turn into ski fields from June – October.
- If the weather is questionable then don't attempt the crossing, there are plenty of other walks to enjoy nearby. Alternatively book a guided experience with professional hiking companies to ensure your safety.
- The Northern Explorer train runs from Auckland to Wellington on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays and stops at National Park if you want to avoid the drive to Wellington after the long hike.
- Book a night tour at Zealandia to spot Kiwi's in their natural habitat
- Wellington's many city walkways offer amazing viewpoints around the city, and all of them are easily accessible by metlink public bus services.

DAYS 8 – 14

The three-hour ferry across the Cook Strait to Picton includes a scenic cruise through the spectacular Marlborough Sounds. A short but worthwhile detour west to Nelson promises amazing markets, food, craft beer and local artists. Keep going and you'll reach Abel Tasman National Park, a haven for hiking, kayaking and marine wildlife. Try a traditional Waka Canoe or a guided kayak and walk to hear about the history of the area. Spend a night in the National Park to see as much as possible.

Head back east to taste some of New Zealand's most famous Marlborough Region wines and follow the coastline south to Kaikoura, the famous whale watching mecca where you can see Giant Sperm Whales, Humpbacks, Pilot Whales and Orcas. Make sure you get out on the water with Whale Watch Kaikoura and in the water with Dolphin Encounter or visit the local fur seal colony if you have more time to explore.

Continue south to Christchurch, New Zealand's vibrant and ever-changing second-largest city, affectionately known as 'The Garden City'. For stunning views head up the Christchurch Gondola or explore the centre as you ride on the historic Christchurch Tram.



Blenheim, Marlborough



Christchurch



Kaikoura

TOP TIPS

- Stay overnight in Abel Tasman National Park for the best experience. Accommodation options range from DOC huts or glamping to beautiful lodges.
- Combine kayaking and walking with a guiding company to get the perfect trip.
- Book a vineyard tour in Marlborough as the tastings can be quite generous!
- If you don't want to drive leave the car in Blenheim and catch the Coastal Pacific scenic train, stopping in Kaikoura and Christchurch.
- Pre-book your Whale watch or Dolphin encounter trip as these sell out in busy seasons as only a handful of people get to swim with the dolphins.
- Tramway restaurant in Christchurch combines dinner with a classic city tour.