

## Signature | Cities and Seas Tour

### Auckland to Christchurch *via Ohakune* – 12 Days

*Cities and Seas* is also offered as a Christchurch to Auckland tour.  
See the end of this itinerary for details.

#### Day 1

##### **Auckland**

Kia Ora!

Welcome to Auckland, New Zealand's City of Sails! Auckland is known for its multi-cultural hub of food, music, arts, and culture.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Auckland has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to visit the Sky Tower or shop along bustling Queen Street. You may even fancy a drink in one of the charming bars or eateries of Vulcan Lane.

Your tour officially begins this evening, as you join your fellow travellers and Tour Director this evening for a welcome reception.

#### **Accommodation**

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

#### **Meals Included**

Dinner with Welcome Drink

#### **Activities**

Welcome Dinner

#### Day 2

##### **Auckland to Hamilton**

#### The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

Your journey awaits as you join the Northern Explorer scenic train. Marvel at rural New Zealand's lush landscapes from the comfort of your scenic carriage. From the sparkling waters of the Waitematā Harbour to the green pastures of the Waikato – you won't want to miss a moment.

Arriving in Hamilton, your coach awaits you to bring you to the famous Hamilton Gardens. Engross yourself in the garden's collection of themed rooms as you are led by an experienced guide. Learn about the history, context and meaning of each garden before finishing this delightful morning with a picnic on the lush lawns. Surrounded by beauty, you will be in utter bliss.

In the early afternoon, enjoy some free time in the heart of Hamilton before departing for an evening visit to Raglan – a seaside surfer town. It's here that you'll enjoy a Sunset Dinner Cruise on the pristine harbour.

*Please note: The tour departing January 27, 2025 will journey by coach from Auckland to Hamilton (2hrs)*

#### **Accommodation**

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

#### **Meals Included**

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### **Activities**

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Hamilton Gardens Guided Tour including a picnic lunch

Raglan Sunset Dinner Cruise

## **Day 3**

### **Hamilton**

#### **Discover Endangered and Bioluminescent Species**

This morning you will depart for your next exciting excursion – Maungatautari Sanctuary Mountain.

Let your guide transport you into an ancient world of ecological wonders as you explore New Zealand's very own pest-free environment, within native forest. On this excursion, you will walk through the home of some of New Zealand's most endangered species. Discover North Island's robins, tomtits, kākā, pōpokotea, bellbirds, hihi, tīeke, fantails, kereru and wētā. This pre-human paradise has one of the world's longest pest-proof fences.

Your expedition continues after a lunch stop in New Zealand's "Kiwiana Capital", Otorohanga. Make sure you capture a photo

of the giant Kiwi birds! Next, discover the famous Waitomo Glow worm Caves and be dazzled by the seemingly star-filled sky as you glide by boat through this impressive cave formation. Tonight, explore Hamilton's riverside walks and shops on this free evening. Enjoy one of the many nearby restaurants as the sun sets over the Waikato River.

#### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

#### Meals Included

Breakfast

#### Activities

Sanctuary Mountain Walk  
Waitomo Glowworm Caves

## Day 4

### Auckland to Tongariro National Park

#### Explore Tongariro National Park

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, today you'll soar over icy mountain streams as you travel to Tongariro National Park, the home of three volcanic mountains.

Tongariro National Park has a diverse range of ecosystems and spectacular landscapes. In 1993, it was recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and was the first property to be inscribed with the criteria describing the cultural values it holds for Māori.

Enjoy a mini excursion up to Tūroa ski field. Here you'll want to capture a panoramic photo of Middle Earth before descending into Ohakune.

Tonight, enjoy a special dinner with your fellow travellers.

#### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

#### Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

#### Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus  
Afternoon excursion to view volcanic landscapes

## Day 5

### Tongariro National Park

#### Explore Tongariro National Park

Today is free for you to discover one of the region's many exciting excursions. Choose from the optional activities on offer and personalise your perfect holiday. Perhaps you will hop aboard a rail cart journey or join a horse trekking experience that takes you along expansive hills, mountains, rivers and into native forest.

If you're after an active day, why not explore Ohakune's historical cycle trail? Rent e-bikes and discover old viaducts, tunnels, old settlers' camps and reclaimed native forests along the Old Coach Road.

#### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

#### Meals Included

Breakfast

## Day 6

### Tongariro National Park to Wellington

#### The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

Your day begins with an elevated experience up the northern face of Mt Ruapehu for panoramic views of the volcanic landscape. Drink in the views of Mt Ngāuruhoe, Mt Tongariro, and beyond across the central North Island.

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, waving goodbye to Tongariro National Park, as you settle into your uber-comfortable seat.

Don't get too comfortable though; dramatic rivers, gorges, and ravines are just around the bend! Stretch your legs and explore the open-air carriage to get the best view from the train.

A little later, why not indulge in a treat from our onboard licensed café? As you glide through rich green farmland and past dramatic coastlines, enjoy the picturesque Porirua Harbour as you arrive into Wellington.

Welcome to Wellington – New Zealand’s windy capital! You’ve arrived at Wellington Railway Station which is just a stone’s throw from downtown, the Beehive and Parliament Buildings. You won't want to waste a moment of time after checking into the hotel - your evening is free to explore this culinary capital from Queen’s Wharf to Cuba street and beyond.

### **Accommodation**

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

### **Meals Included**

Breakfast, Dinner

### **Activities**

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Morning excursion to view volcanic landscapes

## **Day 7**

### **Wellington**

### **Explore Wellington**

The perfect day does exist – and it includes exploring Wellington!

Today is free for you to experience vibrant Wellington as you please. Start by joining our Wellington City introduction tour and then head off to explore Cuba Street’s cafés, bookstores, and eccentric shops. Get cultured at Te Papa, New Zealand’s National Museum, or visit Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary to surround yourself by native birdlife and regenerating forest.

You won’t get bored with the plethora of activities on offer. From coffee, culture, historic buildings to botanic gardens and much more... the list goes on! If you need any suggestions or recommendations, just reach out to your helpful Tour Director or our Travel Centre to pre-book an experience.

Enjoy dinner tonight with your fellow travellers.

### **Accommodation**

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

### **Meals Included**

Breakfast, Dinner

## Activities

Wellington City Introduction Tour  
Group Dinner

## Day 8

### Wellington to Marlborough

## Crossing Cook Strait

This morning you will say poroporoaki ki te motu raki (good-bye to the North Island) as you sail to the South Island, crossing the Cook Strait on the Interislander ferry. As the shores of the North Island slowly disappear, settle down in the comfy seats in the Premium Lounge. Treat yourself to a mimosa and enjoy a hearty seafaring breakfast, but save some room for morning tea!

On your journey across Cook Strait you may spot pods of dolphins playing in the wake or, if you are very lucky, whales. Don't spend all your time inside – as you enter the stunning Queen Charlotte Sound, enjoy the views as you cruise past the remnants of whaling stations, remote working sheep farms, pristine native bush and mussel farms. Admire the beauty of this coastal paradise as you arrive into the gateway of the South Island, Picton. Step off the Interislander Ferry and join your next world-class experience aboard a Marlborough Wine Tour.

## Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

## Meals Included

Breakfast

## Activities

Interislander Ferry  
Marlborough Wine Tour

## Day 9

### Marlborough to Kaikōura

## The Coastal Pacific Scenic Train

Today you will be travelling into Kaikōura. But first, you will go on the Sky Omaka Aviation Museum Tour.

Relax as the train glides across remote beaches, between

mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breath-taking beauty. Keep an eye out for the fur seals lazing on the rocks!

Once in Kaikōura, the evening will be yours to enjoy some iconic kai moana (seafood) at one of the quaint restaurants before enjoying your luxurious ocean-front hotel.

### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

### Meals Included

Breakfast

### Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus

Sky Omaka Aviation Museum Tour

## Day 10

### **Kaikōura to Christchurch**

### Explore Kaikōura

Today will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience of whale watching! Enjoy today's thrill of an up-close encounter with wildlife.

After this outstanding experience, we're sure you will be feeling peckish. Head to the beach to sample some iconic New Zealand food - you can't go wrong with the humble Kiwiana fish and chips. Work off the deep-fried delights by wandering through the wonderful array of local artisan stores and souvenir shops.

In the late afternoon, your highlight day will continue as you rejoin the Coastal Pacific Train en route to Christchurch. The spectacular scenery doesn't cease to amaze as you journey south through the rolling hills and extensive plains. Enjoy the relaxing journey with a glass of wine in hand as you indulge in a gourmet meal. Relax for the remainder of the evening before hitting the town the following day.

### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

### Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

## Activities

Whale Watch Experience  
Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus

## Day 11

### Christchurch

## Explore Christchurch

Christchurch, the hub for South Island exploration, is also a wonderful city that blends modern architecture and technology with the 19th-century Anglican 'gothic revival' architectural influence. Often remembered for its earthquake in 2011, the city is rebuilding itself into a multicultural haven.

Today you are free to explore the museums, Riverside Markets, Punting on the Avon, Gondola and botanical gardens. There is also a multitude of delicious cafés tucked into quaint side streets we're sure you will love.

This evening, you will re-join your fellow travellers for a special dinner. Enjoy a wonderful meal while indulging in fantastic conversation and seasonal cuisine.

## Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

## Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

## Activities

Hop on hop off tram

## Day 12

### Christchurch

## Departing Christchurch

Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast at your hotel.

Not ready to leave Christchurch? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

## Meals Included

Breakfast



**Activities**

Transfer to airport

## Signature | Cities and Seas Tour

### Christchurch to Auckland *via Ohakune* – 12 Days

*Cities and Seas* is also offered as an Auckland to Christchurch tour. See the start of this itinerary for details.

#### Day 1

##### Christchurch

#### Explore Christchurch

Welcome to Christchurch – New Zealand’s Garden City! The largest city in the South Island, Christchurch is known for its historical earthquake in 2011 and how it rebuilt itself into a charming, multicultural city that blends modern architecture and technology with the existing 19th-century Anglican influence.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Christchurch has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to wander through the enticing stalls at Riverside Market or explore the botanical gardens before heading to the art gallery, museums and other city attractions. Enjoy exploring the city onboard the Hop on Hop off Tram service.

Your journey will officially begin as you join your fellow travelers and Tour Director at this evening’s welcome dinner.

#### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

#### Meals Included

Dinner

#### Activities

Hop on hop off tram

#### Day 2

##### Christchurch to Kaikōura

#### The Coastal Pacific to Kaikōura

An early departure from Christchurch, travel through vineyards, rolling hills and along the coastline to Kaikōura — your first train journey in the luxurious Scenic Plus service. Enjoy barista coffee and

pastries, followed by a hot breakfast onboard. In a few short hours, you will step foot into marine wildlife paradise.

Enjoy today's thrill of an up-close encounter with the world's largest-toothed predator, the Giant Sperm Whale, who reside in Kaikōura's waters year-round.

Later, spend the afternoon at your leisure. Kaikōura is a beautiful small town with beaches and excellent fish and chips. We stay this evening at the luxurious Sudima Hotel Kaikōura; indulge in the views and amenities as you rest up for tomorrow's adventures.

#### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

#### Meals Included

Breakfast

#### Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus

Whale Watch Experience

## Day 3

### **Kaikōura to Marlborough**

#### The Coastal Pacific Train

After breakfast, your Tour Director will guide you back to the Kaikōura Railway Station to board the Coastal Pacific, again in Scenic Plus, for the next leg of your journey. Delight in a light lunch complemented by beverages, amidst breathtaking vistas.

Relax and let the train glide you across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breath-taking beauty. Keep an eye out for the fur seals lazing on the rocks at Ōhau Point, and the salt production works at Lake Grassmere.

This afternoon, soak up the views and enjoy the tastings as you sip delicious wine amongst the vines. Listen to passionate wine makers describe the history and processes of these flavorful grapes.

The evening is free for you to explore.

#### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (1 night)

#### Meals Included

Breakfast, Light Lunch

### Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Plus  
Marlborough Wine Tour

## Day 4

### Marlborough to Wellington

### Crossing Cook Strait

This morning you'll head off to the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre near Blenheim which offers a glimpse into New Zealand's role in World Wars I and II, featuring vintage aircraft and exhibits like 'Knights of the Sky' and 'Dangerous Skies,' complete with memorabilia and pilot stories.

After your insightful tour, embark on a journey from the South to North Island via the Interislander Ferry. Enjoy a lunch onboard as you cross Cook Strait, watching the South Island fade into the distance. The ferry offers stunning views through Queen Charlotte Sound and the Wellington Harbour before docking in the capital, where your North Island adventure begins.

### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

### Meals Included

Breakfast, Light Lunch

### Activities

Sky Omaka Aviation Museum Tour  
Interislander Ferry

## Day 5

### Wellington

### Explore Wellington

The perfect day does exist – and it includes exploring Wellington!

Today is free for you to experience vibrant Wellington as you please. Start by joining a Te Papa Museum Introduction Tour and then head off to explore Cuba Street's cafes, bookstores, and eccentric shops. Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary is just around the corner where you can

surround yourself by native birdlife and regenerating forest.

You won't get bored with the plethora of activities on offer. From coffee, culture, historic buildings botanic gardens and more, the list goes on! If you need any suggestions or recommendations, just reach out to your helpful Tour Director or our Travel Centre to pre-book an experience.

Dinner awaits as you join your fellow travellers once again to tell them about the exciting places you have discovered.

#### **Accommodation**

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

#### **Meals Included**

Breakfast, Dinner

#### **Activities**

Te Papa Introduction Tour  
Group Dinner

## **Day 6**

### **Wellington to Tongariro National Park**

#### **The Northern Explorer Scenic Train**

Today you'll be heading north aboard the Northern Explorer Train to explore Tongariro National Park. Sit back and relax while the smooth train departs the bustling capital and travels along the Kāpiti Coast. You won't want to get too comfortable though; dramatic rivers, gorges and ravines are just around the bend! Stretch your legs and explore the open-air carriage to get the best view of the fantastic scenery.

Upon arrival at National Park, you'll venture on a mini excursion up Mt Ruapehu to a volcanic landscape. It's here that your Tour Director will uncover the geological wonder that's underfoot. If you're a Lord of the Rings fan, make sure you capture a panoramic photo of Middle Earth before descending into Ohakune where you will stay for two nights. After a quick tour around the town, the rest of the day is at your leisure before we reunite for dinner.

#### **Accommodation**

4 – 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

#### **Meals Included**

Breakfast, Dinner

### Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

Afternoon excursion to view volcanic landscapes

Group Dinner

## Day 7

### Tongariro National Park

### Discover Tongariro National Park

Today is free for you to discover one of Ohakune's exciting excursions. Choose from the many optional activities on offer and personalise your perfect holiday. Perhaps you will hop aboard a historical rail cart journey or join a horse trekking experience that takes you along expansive hills, mountains, rivers and into native forest.

If you're after an active day, why not explore Ohakune's historical cycle trail? Rent e-bikes and discover old viaducts, tunnels, old settlers' camps and reclaimed native forests along the Old Coach Road!

### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

### Meals Included

Breakfast

## Day 8

### Tongariro National Park to Hamilton

### Volcanoes to City Life

After breakfast, embark on a mini-excursion up to Tūroa ski field. Here you'll want to capture a panoramic photo of Middle Earth before you descend back to Ohakune.

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, today you'll soar over icy mountain streams as you travel north towards Hamilton.

Tonight, explore Hamilton's riverside walks and shops on this free evening. Enjoy one of the many nearby restaurants as the sun sets on the Waikato River.

## Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

## Meals Included

Breakfast

## Activities

Morning excursion to view volcanic landscapes

Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

## Day 9

### Hamilton

## Discover Endangered and Bioluminescent Species

This morning you will depart for your next exciting excursion - Maungatautiri Sanctuary Mountain.

Let your guide transport you into an ancient world of ecological wonders as you explore New Zealand's very own pest-free environment. On this excursion, you will learn about New Zealand's native forests, and visit the home of the most endangered species in the country. This pre-human paradise has one of the world's longest pest-proof fences.

Your expedition continues after a lunch stop in New Zealand's "Kiwiana Capital", Otorohanga. Make sure you capture a photo of the giant Kiwi birds! Next, discover the famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves in the Waikato and be dazzled by the seemingly star-filled sky as you glide by boat through this impressive cave formation.

This evening, enjoy a highlight dinner aboard the Raglan Sunset Cruise. As you glide upon the beautiful Whaingaroa Harbour, indulge in the local cuisine served.

## Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Hamilton)

## Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

## Activities

Sanctuary Mountain Wildlife Experience

Waitomo Glow-Worm Caves  
Raglan Sunset Dinner Cruise

## Day 10

### Hamilton to Auckland

#### Lush Gardens and Your Final Train Journey

After a relaxing morning, depart for the spectacular Hamilton Gardens. Engross yourself in the garden's collection of themed rooms as you are led by an experienced guide. Learn about the history, context and meaning of each garden before finishing this delightful morning with a picnic on the lush lawns. Surrounded by beauty, you will be in utter bliss.

Mid-afternoon you'll climb back aboard the Northern Explorer, for a journey alongside the Waikato River and the Whangamarino Wetland as you head into Auckland.

#### Accommodation

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Auckland)

#### Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### Activities

Hamilton Gardens Guided Tour including a picnic lunch  
Northern Explorer Scenic Plus

## Day 11

### Auckland & Waiheke Island

#### Island and Winery Hopping

Begin your day with a delightful breakfast at the hotel before embarking on an indulgent Waiheke Wine & Dine Day.

Enjoy the freedom of hopping on and off as you please with your included ferry and bus tickets, departing hourly from the Downtown Ferry Terminal. Explore the picturesque Waiheke Island at your leisure, with buses ready to whisk you away to the next scenic spot half-hourly from the island's ferry terminal. Included in your day out



is a sumptuous platter lunch accompanied by exquisite local wines at the acclaimed Stonyridge Vineyard.

After a day of sipping and sightseeing, choose any return ferry back to Auckland, ensuring you're on time for a memorable farewell dinner with your guide at one of Auckland's renowned restaurants.

#### **Accommodation**

4 - 4.5 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Auckland)

#### **Meals Included**

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### **Activities**

Waiheke Hop on Hop off Wine & Dine  
Farewell Dinner

## **Day 12**

### **Auckland**

#### **Departing Auckland**

Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast with your fellow travellers.

Not ready to leave Auckland? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

#### **Meals Included**

Breakfast

#### **Activities**

Transfer to airport