

Northern Highlights – 8 Days – Auckland/Auckland From \$999pp

Explore the highlights of the North Island including the Bay of Islands and Rotorua, 2 of the most popular destinations

Included in this journey:

7 nights' accommodation

Rental car with full insurance coverage - medium size car (Toyota Corolla sedan or similar)

Unlimited kilometres, GPS navigation, airport and ferry fee

Day 1 – Arrive in Auckland

Collect your rental car from the airport and drive to the city centre. Check-in at the hotel (after 3:00pm).

The 'City of Sails' is the country's largest metro area and it has something for everyone – native bush, rainforests and an array of beaches, shopping, cafes, restaurants..... You will not get bored in Auckland!

Overnight: Auckland

See & Do: Auckland Museum | Auckland Zoo | Waiheke Island | Rangitoto Island | Sky Tower | Viaduct Harbour

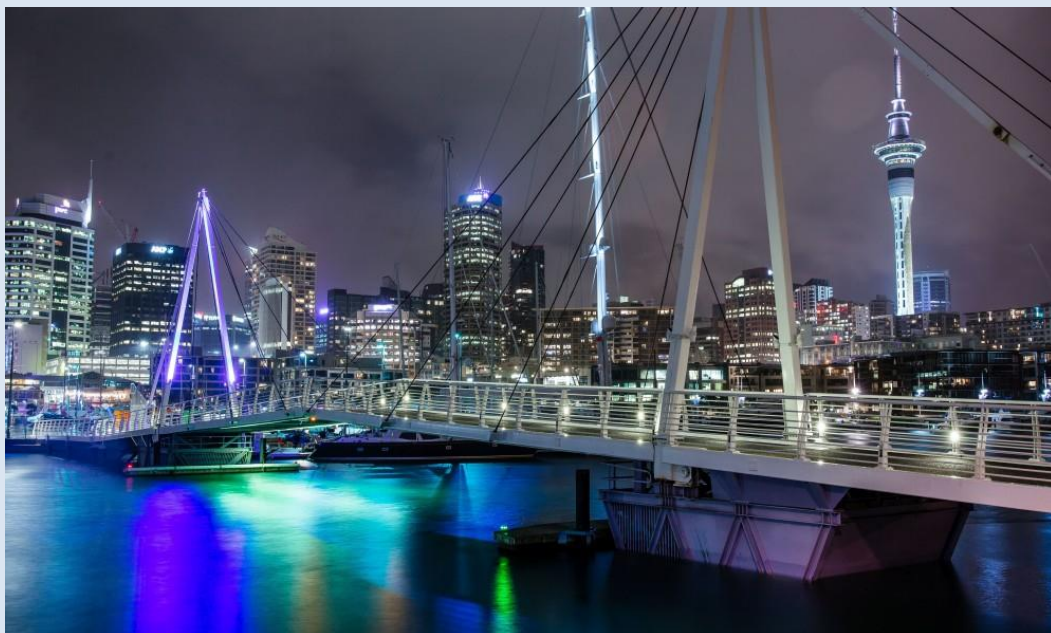
Day 2: Auckland – Paihia

The drive from Auckland to the Bay of Islands takes around 3.5 hours. There is plenty to see and do on the way though so allow yourself some extra time for stops. Places well worth a stop are; Puhoi (historical township), Whangarei and at Kawakawa – home to the world famous Hundertwasser toilets. Enjoy the native bush surrounds and the endless golden beaches as you arrive into central Bay Of The Islands, Paihia.

Approximate distance: 226 kms – 3.0 hours

Overnight: Paihia

See & Do: Dome Valley Lookout | Hundertwasser Toilets | Parry Kauri Park



Day 3: Bay of Islands

The Bay of Islands is made up of over 140 subtropical atolls and is renowned for its untouched beaches, abundant marine life and idyllic climate. Take a break from driving today and spend some time on a remote stretch of beach or hop on an ocean safari and 'swim with dolphins'. If this is not you, then take the morning to descend the Rainbow Warrior – The Greenpeace flagship sunk by French saboteurs in 1985. Wander around Russell, a whaling port founded in 1843. Learn about our culture in historic Waitangi, the site where The Treaty of Waitangi. Take a travel day to Cape Reinga, the very top of the North Island.

Overnight: Paihia

See & Do: Golden Beaches | Swim with Dolphins | Diving & Snorkelling | Waitangi Treaty Grounds | Farmers Markets | Visit Russell

Day 4: Phihia – Snells Beach

Today head west for the wilder shores of Hokianga and the Tasman Sea. Keep an eye out for and stop for a coffee in the small towns of Omapere and Opononi that offers a vintage seaside feel. Take the short walking track at the mouth of the Hokianga Harbour, which offers a unique vantage point to view the harbor and rolling sand dunes. Head south into the Waipoua Forest, home to giant Kauri trees. Number of short walks are available – don't miss the five minute loop to view the largest Kauri in New Zealand, Tane Mahuta. Backtrack cross-country to the Matakoho Kauri Museum – an award winning museum with extensive historical displays. Continue on the road to Snells Beach, a lovely little township close to Warkworth. If time allows, head into Matakana Wine Country for some great dining options..

Approximate distance and time: 295 kms – 3.8 hours

Overnight: Snells Beach

See & Do: Matakana Farmers' Market | Horse Riding | Beach & Bush Walks | Goat Island Marine Reserve | Vineyards

Day 5: Drive Snells Beach to Rotorua

Drive south through on State Highway 1 pass The Bombay Hills and into rolling green farmland and the rich dairy pasture of the Waikato. This is hobbit country and the route takes you through the town of Matamata where you can still visit the film locations made famous in the Lord of the Rings trilogy at Hobbiton Movie Set and Farm Tours. Continuing on you'll pass several small farming communities before you arrival in Rotorua.

Approximate distance and time: 287 kms – 3.4 hours

Overnight: Rotorua



Day 6: Rotorua

You are in Rotorua for the full day and night today. There is plenty to see and do here.

Rotorua has plenty of natural hot springs, boiling mud pools and steaming geysers, Rotorua sits within one of the world's most active volcanic regions. Geothermal landmarks aside, this city of sulphur has a rich indigenous history. Home to several prominent Maori tribes, a visit to one of the Maori Villages (at own cost) should be high on your agenda, as should an excursion to the Polynesian Spa (at own cost) for an invigorating soak in its natural mineral hot springs.

Make the most of your time in Rotorua with an excursion through the Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland – one of the area's most colourful volcanic attractions

Overnight: Rotorua

See & Do: Rotorua Maori Hangi Dinner and Performance | Te Puia | Mitai Maori Village | Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland | Polynesian Spa | Rotorua Redwood Forest

Day 7: Rotorua to Auckland

Make an early start and head to Taupo through the volcanic valleys of Wai O Tapu Thermal Wonderland and Waimangu. The town of Taupo is located on New Zealand's largest lake – Lake Taupo. A little further north you'll come across the Huka Falls, well worth the short detour. Continuing on, you'll arrive in the trout fishing capital of New Zealand, Turangi, before passing through Tongariro National Park – known for its peaks. Make the time to visit the Waitomo Glow Worm Caves before heading back to Auckland.

Approximate distance and time: 471 kms – 5.9 hours

Overnight: Auckland

Day 8: Depart Auckland

Explore more of vibrant Auckland city before dropping your rental car at the airport depot and continuing your onward journey.

See & Do: Auckland Museum | Auckland Zoo | Waiheke Island | Rangitoto Island | Sky Tower | Viaduct Harbour

General notes & conditions:

All prices from, twin share on a room only basis starting on a Monday & subject to availability. All activities at own expense. All distances and times are approximate.