



## GRAND TRAVERSE – 15 DAYS (AKL-ZQN)

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### TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- All transport
  - Camping accommodation
  - Experienced Tour Guide
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### TOUR DESCRIPTION:

If you are starting in Auckland and have around 2 weeks to tour the best of the country then this trip is for you. Our Grand Traverse trip launches from the City of Sails (Auckland) and takes in the country's finest natural highlights as you head south.

#### DAY 1: AUCKLAND – HOT WATER BEACH

We leave Auckland at 8am and drive south towards the Coromandel Peninsula. The Coromandel is a popular holiday spot for us Kiwi's and it's not hard to see why. With stunning white sandy beaches, dense fern forests and a rich history of both Maori and European settlement, the Coromandel Peninsula is the perfect place to start your trip!

After a lunch stop in the seaside town of Tairua, we'll travel to Hahei Beach - the gateway to Cathedral Cove. You can either walk along the coastline or get stuck in to the first optional activity on your trip with one of the best sea kayak options in the country. Cathedral Cove has a stunning limestone archway that featured as the gateway to Narnia in the movie 'Prince Caspian' and is a great place take a dip in the turquoise waters of the Pacific Ocean before heading back to Hahei and on to camp at another iconic location, Hot Water Beach. Our campground is a short walk away from the beach where, at low tide, you can grab a shovel and head down to dig your very own hot pool in the sand! This is all thanks to a unique geothermal reservoir of hot water under the sand, what a way to round off your first day on tour!

<b>Meals included:</b>	Dinner
<b>Walks:</b>	Stunning coastal walk with views over the Pacific
<b>Bike rides:</b>	8km scenic road cycling
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Sea kayaking, Hahei Explorer
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes - subject to availability

#### DAY 2: HOT WATER BEACH - ROTORUA

After breakfast we'll start our journey towards the central area of the North Island but before that, we'll explore a little more of the Coromandel Peninsula. We'll drive down to the historic gold mining town of Waihi and take a look at the huge 'Martha's Mine', a working gold mine! Afterwards, the cyclists among us will have the chance to ride a section of the Hauraki Rail Trail and the rest of us will head to the Karangahake Gorge for an historic walk. We'll look through the 'windows of the past' of mining history and see some pretty spectacular landscapes along the way. When everyone is back together we'll enjoy a picnic lunch in the gorge before continuing on to Rotorua.

There are heaps of optional activities in Rotorua including a zipline eco tour, zorbing, lugging or relaxing in a thermal spa. If you'd prefer to explore the natural geothermal features of the area, there's plenty of world famous bike trails and walks in the area too. In the evening, we recommend immersing yourself in Maori culture at the Mitai Maori Village where you'll learn about Maori culture, experience an equally stunning and terrifying Haka and feast on a traditional Hangi meal.

There's a lot to pack into one day but we promise it'll leave you wanting more!

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast & lunch
<b>Walks:</b>	Stroll through towering, ancient forests & unique thermal landscapes
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Hauraki Rail Trail, Te Ara ahi trail to Redwoods, Whakarewarewa Forest
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Mitai Maori Village, Zorb, Luge, hot pools, Zipline Canopy Tour
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 3: ROTORUA – TAUPO**

We begin the day with a short drive to visit some of the North Island's most impressive geothermal sites. We'll see bubbling mud pools, a huge Geyser and then take some time to explore the Wai o Tapu Geothermal Wonderland, home to an impressive array of multi coloured rock formations and pools created by superheated water bringing minerals to the surface creating this otherworldly landscape.

Our next stop on the way into Taupo is the mighty Huka Falls, an impressive waterfall found along the Waikato river. This is also our drop off point for those wanting to go white water rafting or skydiving! If you're not doing these activities there's a great walk or a bike ride into the city along the river's edge - be sure to stop off at the natural hot spring along the way or get an adrenaline buzz from the Taupo bungy which is conveniently located on your way into town. You'll have some time in Taupo to grab some lunch and check out New Zealand's largest lake, Lake Taupo, before we make our way to camp later that afternoon.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast & dinner
<b>Walks:</b>	Walks of various distances past dramatic waterfalls and around Lake Taupo
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Waikato River MTB Trail Huka Falls 6.4km, cycle on the lakefront – up to 10km
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Skydiving, bungy, giant swing, Te Puia - Te Ra Guided Experience
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 4: TAUPO – KAPITI COAST**

Voted one of the best day hikes in the world, today's 19.4km walk takes in some of New Zealand's most impressive and diverse landscapes. The challenging Tongariro Alpine Crossing hike covers a small section of the country's oldest national park and dual UNESCO world heritage area, the Tongariro National Park. On a fine day you'll be able to see Mt Ruapehu, the North Island's highest peak which stands at a towering 2797 metres. You'll also be able to see Mt Ngauruhoe, which featured in Lord of the Rings as Mount Doom.

If you'd prefer not to do this hike, there's cycle options or a walk along the Tongariro river where you'll have a beautiful mountainous backdrop. When everyone is back together after the hike we'll start making our way to our camp, situated along the Kapiti Coast.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast, lunch & dinner
<b>Walks:</b>	Tongariro Alpine Crossing, Tongariro river track
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Tongariro river track
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Tongariro Alpine Crossing (transfer fee only)
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 5: KAPITI COAST – WELLINGTON – PICTON**

This morning it's a short drive to Wellington, New Zealand's capital city! We'll arrive before 9am giving you most of the day to explore the Te Papa Museum, Weta Workshop and the Botanical Gardens. The capital is also home to the Beehive, our government building, as well as great shopping areas and a thriving café culture to explore - Wellington is renowned for serving NZ's best cup of coffee.

Later on we'll be travelling across the Cook Strait by ferry to the South Island. The ferry takes approximately 3 hours and is very scenic, particularly as the boat makes its way through the Marlborough sounds just before reaching Picton. The rolling green hills offer a stark contrast to the blue waters of the sound and make for a magical sight. If you can, make your way outside and try and spot dolphins playing in the sounds.

Camping isn't possible tonight so we'll stay at a great hostel with various room options, we've booked everyone's dorm beds so there's no need to do anything.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast
<b>Accommodation:</b>	Dorm bed
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Te Papa National Museum of NZ (free), Weta Workshop, Cable car

### **DAY 6: PICTON - KAIKOURA**

We'll depart Picton and travel through the Marlborough region towards the coast where the views of the Pacific Ocean are complemented by the mountains in the distance. Along this stretch of coastline, we'll make a stop for lunch and try to spot the native Fur Seals that often relax on the rocks in front of the ocean.

Kaikoura is all about the ocean and offers options to go whale watching, sea kayaking and fishing. If you'd prefer to explore the area on foot, there's a great walk around the peninsula or you can hop on your bike and take in the views on two wheels.

Our camp tonight is down at the beach and we'll be preparing a fresh seafood meal to complement the area's abundant sea life (unless of course you don't eat seafood, in which case we'll prepare something equally delicious for you).

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast & dinner
<b>Walks:</b>	Kaikoura peninsula walk
<b>Bike rides:</b>	9km ride from South Bay to camp
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Whale watching by boat or by plane, deep sea fishing
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes - subject to availability

### **DAY 7: KAIKOURA - CHRISTCHURCH - RANGITATA**

This morning you'll have the opportunity to take part in one of the most popular activities in New Zealand: swimming with dusky dolphins! It's an early start but it's a great way to begin your day from the epic sunrise to swimming with wild dolphins, this is the kind of once in a lifetime experience you won't soon forget. For those of us who aren't swimming, we'll have a leisurely breakfast and the chance to explore Kaikoura before heading south to Christchurch.

We'll arrive in Christchurch in time for lunch and you'll have a couple of hours to explore the city that's still on the mend after two major earthquakes in 2010 and 2011. Evidence of these earthquakes can be found all over, but there's also some new and exciting rebuilding happening. Visit the restart mall, made from shipping containers which were brought in shortly after the quakes, check out the botanical gardens and see the remains of the Christchurch Cathedral which famously collapsed during the earthquakes.

After leaving Christchurch we'll start heading towards the mountains and across the Canterbury plains, a flat open area of farmland. Tonight we'll stay in Peel Forest, close to the Rangitata River.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast & dinner
<b>Walks:</b>	Take an early walk around our coastal camp, evening walk in peel forest
<b>Bike rides:</b>	9 - 18km country road cycling
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Dolphin swimming, dolphin viewing
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes - subject to availability

### **DAY 8: RANGITATA - LAKE TEKAPO**

Wake up to mountain views and try white water rafting on the mighty Rangitata River! If rafting isn't for you, soak it all in with a morning cycle or walk through Peel forest. We then head through more jaw dropping landscapes (they don't stop in the South Island) to the picture postcard, Lake Tekapo. Here you will view the most spectacular turquoise waters which get their colour from the glacial flour brought down from the rivers flowing from glaciers high up in the mountains.

Relax in the nearby hot pools or enjoy star gazing at the Mt John Observatory and make the most of staying in an International Dark Sky Reserve, plus there are plenty of hike and cycle options to choose from.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast & lunch
<b>Walks:</b>	Peel forest, Mt John walkway
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Peel forest cycle ride then Lake Tekapo Regional Park

<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Tekapo Hotel Pools, Dark Sky Project - Dark Sky Experience, Virtual Stargazing Experience or Summit Experience
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 9: LAKE TEKAPO – MT COOK - MOERAKI**

Immerse yourself in the snow-capped mountain scenery that New Zealand is famous for and explore Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park. Hike to the base of NZ's highest mountain following a trail up the Hooker valley where you'll cross swing bridges and get stunning views of the mountains before finishing up at a glacial lake with views of the Hooker Valley glacier. We then travel back towards the Pacific coast for a quick stop in the historic town of Oamaru before continuing onwards to the small village of Moeraki. Walk to a great view point offering expansive views of the Pacific Ocean and try to spot a little Blue Penguin along the shore. If you have a bike it's possible to visit a colony of extremely rare Yellow-eyed Penguins near to camp.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast, lunch & dinner
<b>Walks:</b>	To the base of Mount Cook & Hooker Valley, explore the Moeraki Heritage Trail
<b>Bike rides:</b>	13km Alps2Ocean trail ride, Yellow-eyed penguin colony
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 10: MOERAKI VILLAGE - DUNEDIN**

If the tide is low then we can walk along the beach to the mysterious Moeraki boulders. These perfectly round spheres of rock have formed over millions of years and have found their way onto the beach near Moeraki and make for some fun photo opportunities.

Afterwards it's onto the historic Scottish city of Dunedin, the South Island's second-largest city. This southern city is home to the world's steepest residential street and the coastline is home to some fantastic and rare wildlife. It's possible to take a tour onto the Otago Peninsula to view some of this diverse wildlife which includes Albatross and Fur Seals. For the adventurous, why not try surfing at one of Dunedin's best breaks! Our camp is a short distance from St. Kilda beach with a variety of restaurants close by to choose from.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast
<b>Walks:</b>	Moeraki heritage trail, World's steepest street, explore Dunedin city
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Dunedin soldier memorial 12km, ride from the city to camp or along the waterfront
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Otago Peninsula Wildlife Tour, Otago Early Settlers Museum
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 11: DUNEDIN – FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK**

Today is one of our longer travel days as we drive through some of New Zealand's most dramatic natural scenery on our way to Fiordland. Large parts of the landscape have been carved out over thousands of years to leave stunning paths that weave through snow-capped mountains. We stop briefly in Te Anau, the hub and gateway town for Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound and your last chance to get supplies for those doing the Routeburn Track tomorrow. Tonight's camp is on the lakeside in Te Anau.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast & dinner
<b>Walks:</b>	Plenty of short walks from camp
<b>Bike rides:</b>	8km road cycle to camp
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 12: TE ANAU – MILFORD SOUND - TE ANAU**

Travel one of the world's most scenic routes into Milford Sound! Described as the 'eighth wonder of the world', Milford Sound was carved by glaciers during the ice ages. We highly recommend taking a cruise on Milford Sound where you'll see dramatic waterfalls, snow-capped peaks and have the chance to spot wildlife such as dolphins, penguins and seals! As it's just the one road in and out, we head back along the same breath-taking route to our lakeside camp in Te Anau. Along the way, we drop off those doing the 3-day Routeburn Track, one of New Zealand's 9 Great Walks. This 3-day hike passes through two National Parks and is a haven for native birdlife. Charge up your camera as this hike offers everything from mountainous peaks and sheer rock faces to pristine lakes, cascading waterfalls and dense, luxuriant forest.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast & lunch
<b>Walks:</b>	The awesome 3-day Routeburn Track (rejoin group in Queenstown on day 14)
<b>Bike rides:</b>	10.5km Te Anau loop, Ivan Wilson Park Mountain bike trail
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Milford Sound Cruise, Te Anau glowworm caves tour & boat ride
<b>Cabin upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 13: TE ANAU - QUEENSTOWN**

Today we journey to Queenstown along the shores of the photogenic Lake Wakatipu. Once we arrive at the adventure capital of New Zealand you have a huge selection of activities to choose from. There is everything here, from adrenalin pumping bungy, canyon swing and skydiving to a relaxing horse trek or boat cruise – this place has it all. There are great tracks around the lake ideal for bikers and hikers and all with wonderful views of this alpine region. Camping isn't feasible in this bustling alpine village, for the next two nights we stay in dorm-share accommodation (cost included) in a centrally located hostel. Perfect for making the most of all Queenstown has to offer.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast
<b>Walks:</b>	Queenstown walks, lakefront, Queenstown hill
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Lake Wakatipu trail 16km
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Too many to list – something for everyone (see our website or ask us for details)
<b>Private room upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 14: QUEENSTOWN**

With so much to do we spend the full day in fantastic Queenstown with the opportunity to enjoy those once in a lifetime experiences (don't forget to try the legendary and very tasty Fergburger!). Routeburn Track walkers re-join the group here at midday with time to try some of the many exciting activities this vibrant city has to offer. Tonight, we dine out at one of Queenstown's many delicious eateries - a great chance for your group to enjoy a true kiwi feast (own cost).

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast
<b>Walks:</b>	Queenstown walks, Ben Lomond
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Road cycling around town or on one of the many Queenstown trails
<b>Activities (own cost):</b>	Too many to list – something for everyone (see our website or ask us for details)
<b>Private room upgrades:</b>	Yes – subject to availability

### **DAY 15: QUEENSTOWN**

A last chance to indulge in the Queenstown action before finishing your tour with us here and saying farewell to your fellow Flying Kiwi travellers by 2:00pm.

<b>Meals included:</b>	Breakfast
<b>Bike rides:</b>	Road cycling around town.