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# Kiwi Experience - North to South (Sheep Dog Bus Pass)

Adventure Relaxation Culture

**Trip Name:** Kiwi Experience - North to South (Sheep Dog Bus Pass) **Trip Code:** NZSD **Duration:** From 12 months

## Trip Highlights

- Get the ultimate Kiwi Experience on a hop on hop off bus around New Zealand's North Island and South Island.
- The Sheep Dog bus pass starts in Auckland and ends in Christchurch showing you all the best bits in between.
- The freedom to explore on a gap year in New Zealand at your leisure with a 12 month bus pass.
- Travel with like-minded travellers.

## Overview

You'd be barking mad to miss out on this fantastic hop on hop off Sheep Dog bus pass which will take you to the most exciting areas of New Zealand in North Island and South Island. Starting in Auckland your ride will take you down to the West Coast of the South Island before venturing back up to Christchurch.

Being a one-way pass means it can be done in just 13 days in the summer which is great if you want to see a lot but don't have a lot of time. Don't let that stop you though – if you have got more time you can hop-on, hop-off along the way and like all our New Zealand bus passes you've got 12 months to complete your trip.

## Destination Info

New Zealand is extremely popular in terms of tourism, especially with backpackers due to its diverse range of geographical features, extreme sports and cosmopolitan cities. It is one of the most recently populated major landmasses, settled by the Maori's in the year 1000. The Maori language native to New Zealand is named Aotearoa, Land of the Long White Cloud.

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New Zealand consists of two main islands, the North and the South. The North Island, home to the major cities: the capital Wellington and “The city of sails” Auckland is mainly volcanic in origin boasting many seismic features such as geysers and hot springs. The South Island is separated down its length by the Southern Alps, the highest point of which is Mount Cook/ Aoraki. For a landmass that is a little larger than the UK, the population is only 4.1 million - which makes the ratio of sheep to people 10:1! However, this means that despite the huge number of visitors that travel to New Zealand every year it never really feels crowded.

So if you want to pump up your adrenalin, bask in the peace and tranquillity of Milford Sound or cruise dramatic bays spotting dolphins and whales... New Zealand is the place for you!

## Itinerary

**Auckland to Mercury Bay (Whitianga)**
Spend the afternoon at the beach or kayaking!

After visiting the Kiwi Experience office and Mt Eden (one of many dormant volcanoes in Auckland) we head towards the Coromandel Peninsula and spend the afternoon at Cathedral Cove; accessible only on foot or by kayak. This beautiful coastal spot is great for swimming, sea kayaking, and spotting dolphins if you’re lucky. Provided the tides are right we may also check out Hot Water Beach and dig our own hot pools.

**Mercury Bay (Whitianga) to Rotorua**
Check out New Zealand’s gold mining history and rocket down a hill, on the way to the Maori culture capital of New Zealand

After an early start our first stop is the Karangahake Scenic Reserve to explore a native bush-clad gorge, swing bridges and the history of gold mining in New Zealand. On arriving into Rotorua you will have the chance to go luging or zorbing before experiencing a traditional Maori hangi (feast) and concert in the evening with Tamaki Tours - a night not to be missed!

**Rotorua to Waitomo**
Experience the glow-worms, underwater caves and forest walks of Waitomo.

Today we start with a visit to Te Puia - a large geothermal reserve with New Zealand's largest geyser, and a chance to see our famous Kiwi bird. Next it's onto Waitomo caves (wai meaning water, tomo meaning cave) which are made out of limestone (basically 40 million year old dead fish). We spend the afternoon checking out the Ruakuri reserve. Apart from glow-worms in caves, you will see stalactites, cave coral, fossil oysters and other crazy stuff like tubing and rafting 40 metres underground!

**Waitomo to Taupo**
A popular backpacker destination, with New Zealand's biggest lake and plenty to keep you occupied!

The bus departs late today so that you have enough time to experience the caves! Other adventure activity options include the brand new Ruakuri Cave walk, which is an engineering masterpiece. Around midday, we leave Waitomo behind and head for Lake Taupo, which is known as the adventure capital of the North Island with skydiving, bungy jumping, jet boating and the spectacular Tongariro Crossing!

**Taupo (extra day)**
We recommend staying an extra night in Taupo because there's so much to do there. If you're short on time, you can always skip this extra day, timetable allowing, and get to the next stop sooner.

Enjoy a sleep-in (for those not doing the Tongariro Crossing) and experience one of the many activities on offer. A walk down to Spa Park to relax in the natural hot springs by the river is a great way to spend the day (or night). Alternatively if you have time head off on our 'East As': 4 day, 3 night unique add-on trip around the East Cape, which takes you to places few tourists get to see.

**Taupo to River Valley**
Visit Tongariro National Park, take and enjoy some stunning free walks before arriving at River Valley Adventure Lodge

We head south around the "great lake" towards the Tongariro National Park for a picnic lunch and a two hour walk through native bush and waterfalls. In the afternoon we travel through to the ultimate adventure lodge - River

Valley, situated amongst towering cliffs and bush-clad hills. The lodge offers grade five rafting on the Rangitikei River, scenic horse riding, and a small golf course. Spend the evening enjoying the delicious roast dinner and relaxing by the open fire.

**River Valley to Wellington**
New Zealand's capital city is full of culture, cafes and cable cars!

We head away late after a morning white water rafting or horse riding, and head throughthe rolling hills full of deer, cattle and sheep. We arrive in Wellington late in the afternoon. This city is the undisputed capital of culture, the arts, restaurants, fashion and nightlife. It's home to the largest cultural attraction in New Zealand, Te Papa Museum, which is well worth a look (and it's free).

**Wellington to Picton to Nelson**
Travel across the stunning Cook Strait to the seaside town of Picton, then on to the golden beaches of Nelson.

You can choose to take the Interislander ferry across to the South Island, through the magnificent Marlborough Sounds; or arrange a flight. Travel via the Pelorous Bridge to Nelson, New Zealand's sunniest city. Nelson's a great place to jump off the bus and explore the Abel Tasman National Park. There is an option to explore New Zealand's youngest National Park by foot and camping, or by kayaking with some adventurous locals of the area.

**Nelson to Westport**
Snow-capped mountains and adventure activities on the Buller River

We visit the Nelson Lakes National Park for a walk in some awesome beech forest and to view one of the more spectacular lakes in the area, surrounded by beautiful snow capped mountains. En-route to Westport we meet the team (and Rata the dog) from Buller Adventure Tours where you can experience the best value for money jet boating and horse trekking in New Zealand.

**Westport to Lake Mahinapua**
Continue down the West Coast via the world famous 'Highway 6' and be treated to some amazing sights.

Today we cruise down the spectacular Highway 6 that stretches along the rugged Tasman shoreline. The road winds along diverse landscapes, which never cease to amaze both locals and visitors alike. Highlights include the Cape Foulwind seal colony, rugged beach walks and the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks. Tonight your Driver Guide will arrange a group meal for you at the Mahinapua Hotel, known as the legendary “Poo Pub”. It’s an awesome evening of fancy dress and a good way to get to know your fellow travellers.

**Lake Mahinapua to Franz Josef**
Incredible views of glaciers towering over subtropical rainforests.

Our first stop this morning is the Bushman’s Centre, where you will get an insight into how people make a living on the coast with helicopter deer recovery, old timber-milling techniques and possum trapping. We then head through to the Franz Josef Glacier Village, nestled in the Westland National Park.

**Franz Josef (Extra Day)**
We recommend staying an extra night in Franz Josef because there’s so much to do there. If you’re short on time, you can always skip this extra day, timetable allowing, and get to the next stop sooner.

Today is your chance to hike on the Franz Josef Glacier, rated as one of the top three activities to do in New Zealand, by Kiwi Experience passengers. You could also take the option of a heli-hike, and be flown up the glacier, or take a more sedate approach and explore the various walks in the area.

**Franz Josef to Wanaka**
Take the time to chill out by Lake Wanaka.

We start out early in order to catch the perfect mirror reflection of Mt Cook and the Southern Alps on Lake Matheson. We then cruise down the last stretch of Highway 6, stopping at popular scenic spots along the way. Then it’s into Mount Aspiring National Park, arriving in the awe-inspiring destination of Wanaka in the afternoon.

**Wanaka to Queenstown**
Adventure capital of New Zealand…and the world!

It's only a short drive today through to New Zealand's adventure capital, Queenstown. Highlights include Puzzling World, skydiving over Lake Wanaka and stopping at the world's first commercial bungy site - the Kawarau Bridge. On arrival in Queenstown you can book all activities and confirm onward bus travel at Base, as well as get a group photo with all your new West Coast mates. Then it's out on the town exploring Queenstown's infamous nightlife with all the crew!

**Queenstown (Extra Day)**
We recommend staying an extra night in Queenstown because there's so much to do there. If you're short on time, you can always skip this extra day, timetable allowing, and get to the next stop sooner.

Queenstown is rated as one of our passenger's favourite spots to hang out in New Zealand. Take the time to spend a few days here as it is one of the most picturesque places in the world. Make the most of the beautiful lake and surrounding walks, or get into a whole range of adrenalin pumping activities. If there was one activity that you couldn't miss it would be the day trip to Milford Sound, commonly referred to as New Zealand's most beautiful spot!

**Queenstown to Lake Tekapo**
We head out of Queenstown, through the Lindis Pass, so get your cameras ready because this is 'Lord of the Rings' territory. After dropping people in Twizel for the connection to Mt Cook, we travel through to the amazing aqua blue Lake Pukaki, with a stunning view of Mt Cook. We stay overnight in Lake Tekapo right on the shores of the lake itself. There's plenty to do here, from relaxing at the lakeside, soaking in the hot springs or going on one of many scenic walks.

Lake Tekapo to Christchurch
Head to the 'garden city'! We have a straight run into Christchurch, the largest city on the South Island.

## Accommodation

Accommodation is not included in this bus pass, however your bus driver will be able to tell you the best places to stay at great backpacker rates!

## Programme Services and Facilities

### Internet

Most larger towns and cities along the way will have cyber cafes so you can keep in touch by email and book ahead on to buses, tours and into hostels. Prices vary from around $1-$3 per hour. Some hostels may offer free access.

### Telephone

The international telephone access code for New Zealand is +64.

To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK, +49 for Germany, followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap Experience dial +44 1892 516164 / +49 69 222226 475.

As with the net, all towns and cities will have pay phones, so you will need to get yourself an international phone card. You can buy one when you arrive, or get one before you go, such as the one Real Gap offers.

Another good option would be to take your mobile and purchase a pay-as-you-go SIM in New Zealand, or get a Real Gap SIM before you depart, to allow you to text and call cheaply, and keep track of your spending. Before you depart, please ensure that your mobile is set up with international roaming and is unlocked, so you may use a pay-as-you-go SIM while you are away.

### Laundry

You will find launderettes in large towns and cities. Some hostels also offer laundry facilities. It is advisable to take some travel wash with you so that you can wash essentials, like underwear and swimwear, by hand as you go.

## Meals

Meals are not included in this bus pass.

## What's Included

- Bus pass valid for 12 months
- 24 hour emergency assistance
- Detailed pre-departure information
- Extensive tour information provided by bus staff
- Cathedral Cove, Coromandel
- Secrets of Bungy, Queenstown
- Karangahake Gorge
- Ruakuri Walk
- Taranaki Falls
- Nelson Lakes National Park
- Cape Foulwind
- Punakaiki Pancake Rocks
- Lake Matheson

## What's Not Included

- Flights
- Personal travel insurance
- Visas
- The cost of the ferry crossings between the North and South Islands if your bus pass travels around both islands
- Extra activities, excursions and transport during free time not listed under 'What's included'
- Accommodation and meals

## What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore, you may not need all of the listed items on your travels nor is it exhaustive.

### Personal Admin

- Visa documents
- Passport
- Driving Licence
- NHS card or a National Insurance card or proof of entitlement to your National Health Service, or the German Krankenversicherungskarte
- Insurance policy document or card
- Credit card, for emergencies and booking internal flights

### General

- Journal or diary
- Towels
- Toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothbrush etc)
- Alarm clock
- Torch/batteries
- Sleeping bag
- Sun block
- Small padlock to secure luggage

### Clothing

- Clothing suitable for all weather conditions
- Raincoat and/or waterproof clothing (expect some rainy days)
- Sturdy walking boots/shoes and thick socks
- Wide brim hat
- Sunglasses
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- Swimming costume

### Medical Kit

- Medication

- First Aid Kit
- Insect repellent

## Flights

Your flight to New Zealand should arrive at the airport nearest your starting point for your trip on your programme start date, and your return flight should be arranged for your programme end date from where you plan to finish.

To book your flights, please contact your travel advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

**Please note:** If you are flying to New Zealand via the USA you will need to obtain Travel Authorisation by registering online through the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) no later than 72 hours before departure. This is compulsory and will cost USD$14 to register. To register, please visit: www.esta.cbp.dhs.gov

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your Online account, or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

## FAQs

1. **What if I'm travelling on my own?**
   Most people are! You will meet so many other travellers on the buses, the people are one of the best parts!

2. **What is included?**
   Bus transport, free activities during the day stops, huge discounts on other activities and the services of an excellent driver!

3. **How long should I travel for on this pass?**
   We have guidelines for minimum travel times to help you plan your stay in New Zealand, whichever bus pass you choose!

4. **How do I get between the North & South islands?**
   Your driver will be able to help you plan this, you can either take the ferry or a short flight.

5. **How do I book my accommodation?**
   Your driver will help you with this along the way and make recommendations of great hostels.

## Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

## Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

## Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

## Money Matters

The unit of currency is the New Zealand Dollar. Changing foreign currency or travellers cheques is usually no problem at banks throughout New Zealand or at licensed moneychangers.

New Zealand is affordable by Western European and American standards, but if you are travelling on from Southeast Asia you'll notice a big increase in costs!

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant 13.21 $
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) 4.19 $
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) 1.76 $
Water (0.33 litre bottle) 1.68 $

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

## Passports and Visas

You should ensure that you have a full passport that is valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information provided below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays up to 6 months, the following nationals DO NOT need a visa before you leave, you will receive a 6-month tourist visa on arrival into New Zealand: holders of passports endorsed British Citizen & other British passport holders who produce evidence of the right to reside permanently in the United Kingdom, holders of Australian passport. For all other nationals, please visit the following website for the most up to date information on visa requirements: http://www.immigration.govt.nz

**Working Holiday Visa**

If you intend to get paid work in New Zealand then you must apply for a working holiday visa instead and this must be granted before you enter New Zealand. To be eligible for a work visa under this scheme you must:

- Be a British citizen resident in the United Kingdom at the time of applying, and
- Aged between 18 and 30 years, and
- Not accompanied by children on your visit.

You can apply online for the working holiday visa at: http://www.immigration.govt.nz

## Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

## Safety

As in most counties there are people who try to take advantage of tourists. The following advice is intended to help you stay safe:

- Always keep your personal items such as passport, money and camera with you and in a safe place. You can buy mini padlocks to prevent people from going into your bag without your permission.
- Don't carry excess amounts of cash
- Wherever possible, walk around in groups, especially after dark, and avoid taking short cuts.
- Do not pick up hitch hikers if you are driving and do not hitch hike yourself.
- When you are out do not leave your drinks unattended, as there have been reports of drinks being spiked

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk
USA: www.travel.state.gov
Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

### ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately

to the bank or cancel your card.

## Food & Drink

You will find a range of cuisine in New Zealand to suit all taste buds. But quintessential New Zealand cuisine takes inspiration from Europe, Asia and Polynesia. Meat and fish feature majorly in native dishes, and keep an eye out for kumara (sweet potato). Those with a sweet tooth will be pleased to know that Pavlova is the National dessert along with the kiwi fruit.

It is really important that you let Real Gap know before you depart if you are a vegetarian or have any other dietary requirements.

## Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country.

To view a list of the public holidays for New Zealand, please see the link below:
www.timeanddate.com/holidays/new-zealand/

## Weather

The climate differs from the North Island to the South Island. On the North Island, the far North boasts warm summers and mild winters, with the rest of the island being slightly cooler. On the South Island, you'll find much lower temperatures throughout the year. The New Zealand Alps are covered in snow throughout the year.

## Time

New Zealand is 12 hours ahead of GMT.

## Electricity

Electricity in New Zealand is 230 Volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second.

Sockets in New Zealand are V-shaped flat prongs.

## Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of reommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

## Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

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