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New Zealand Experience

Adventure Relaxation Culture

Trip Name: New Zealand Experience **Trip Code:** NZXP **Duration:** From 17 days

Trip Highlights

- Overnight in a traditional Maori Marae
- Milford Sound cruise
- Jaw-dropping scenery
- Awe-inspiring National Parks- Tongariro, Abel Tasman
- Alpine retreat accommodation in Tongariro NP
- 3 nights in exciting Queenstown
- Wine tasting in Marlborough
- Stay in Fox Glacier
- Arrow River bike trails
- Traditional Kiwi lamb roast dinner with pavlova

Overview

Discover the best of what New Zealand has to offer on this 17 day action packed tour. Journey across jaw-dropping landscapes, pass through the Southern Alps, visit some stunning national parks, explore fantastic towns and cities and experience traditional Maori culture. This tour has something for everyone!

Starting out on the North Island you'll get to explore the beautiful beaches Bay of Islands has to offer, explore geothermal Rotorua, Tongariro National Park and wander the streets of cosmopolitan Wellington. You'll then hop over to the South Island and the fun will begin all over again with visits to Abel Tasman National Park, Fox Glacier, Queenstown and stunning Milford Sound. We've got New Zealand covered!

Destination Info

New Zealand has two main islands – North Island and South Island – which are very different in landscape and climate. Your adventure tour will give you the opportunity to explore both.

The North Island is where the major cities are - the capital Wellington and Auckland – ‘the city of sails’. It’s mainly

volcanic in origin with lots of 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 in Maori).

The country has a landmass a little larger than the UK with a population of some four million. With 10 sheep to every person it's no surprise their major export is lamb! Despite the huge number of visitors travelling there every year, it’s never crowded.

Itinerary

Day 1: Auckland to Paihia, Bay of Islands

Kio Ora! Today you'll leave the bright lights of Auckland behind and head north to the beautiful Bay of Islands.

There's an optional 'Rock the Boat' overnight upgrade where you spend the night sailing through the islands and stargazing from the deck.

Day 2: Paihia, Bay of Islands

Today is a free day for you to explore the pristine area where there are loads of things to see and activities to take part in (at your own cost). Adventure lovers can catermaran along the inner bay looking for dolphins, kayak through mangrove forests to the Haruru Falls, or take a ride along 90 mile beach to Cape Reinga. Get to grips with fascinating Kiwi history at Waitangi Treaty House to learn about New Zealand's past. In the evening you'll enjoy a delicious Kiwi favourite, fish and chips.

Day 3: Bay of Islands to Rotorua

You'll go back to Auckland before heading on to Rotorua. Tonight you'll have the unique opportunity to stay in a traditional Maori Marae (sacred meeting house), so get ready for a spiritual evening of historical and cultural stories and learn local Haka and Poi dances.

Day 4: Rotorua

Famous for its geothermal activity, Rotorua is full of geysers and thermal spa pools all waiting to be explored. There are loads of other activities too; hire a mountain bike or go white water rafting.

Day 5: Rotorua to Tongariro National Park

From one geothermal site to another, you'll stopover in the Taupo volcanic zone to explore the boiling mud and steaming waters of the Wai-O-Tapu region. There'll be the chance to visit Huka Falls and Lake Taupo, and there's loads of activities in the area to keep you busy. You'll then be taken to our alpine retreat in the amazing Tongariro National Park. Tonight we savour the flavours of our traditional Kiwi roast lamb dinner follwed by the ultimate Kiwi desert, pavlova!

Day 6: Tongariro National Park

You'll want to make sure you've had a good nights rest as today is your free day to explore the National Park- and there is loads to do. Hiking the beautiful Tongariro Crossing is a must or you can hire a mountain bike and even ski during the winter months. Later you can rest those sore feet as you have a realaxing evening in the spa pool and sauna at the accommodation.

Day 7: Tongariro National Park to Wellington

Today you'll leave behind the great New Zealand countryside as you rock up in the capital city, Wellington. Considered by many to be the coolest city in the country, Wellington is jam-packed full of funky galleries, designer shops, top museums, great restaurants and stylish bars.

Day 8: Wellington to Nelson

You'll trade North Island for South Island with a ferry through the picturesque Marlborough Sounds today. First stop, an included wine tasting in the Marlborough region, before staying overnight in Nelson, New Zealand's sunniest region.

Day 9: Abel Tasman National Park

Today you'll visit the nearby beauty of Abel Tasman National Park to hike the trails or take an optional ocean kayak trip. Other choices include horse riding, quad biking and many more. You'll finish the day off with a scrumptious local Kiwi BBQ.

Day 10: Nelson to Christchurch via Kaikoura

Pass through the Rai Valley with stops in Blenheim, Ohau Point to spot fur seals and Kaikoura, with options to go whale watching or dolphin/seal swimming (summer only). Tonight you'll stopover in Christchurch, a city heroically rebuilding itself after the 2011 earthquakes.

Day 11: Christchurch to Fox Glacier

Leaving Christchurch behind, we set off through the majestic Southern Alps to enjoy some of New Zealand's most jaw-dropping scenery. Along the way you'll visit a jade factory in Hokitika to see the carvers skilfully creating works of art from the iconic Pounamu greenstone.

The visit to Lake Matheson is a highlight of the day where you will hopefully catch a glimpse of New Zealand's two highest peaks reflecting in the lake's waters. You'll spend the night in Fox Glacier

Day 12: Fox Glacier to Queenstown

Most of the day will be spent in Fox Glacier with the opportunity to do a half-day hike or heli-hike on the glacier- an incredible experience that will live with you forever! Afterwards the amazing scenery will continue as you drive past Thunder Creek Falls, Haast River and Lake Wanaka en-route to the adreniline capital of the world, Queenstown!

Days 13 to 14: Queenstown

Are you ready for Queenstown? This lively alpine resort on the shores of Lake Wakatipu has loads of extreme activities on offer. Deep breath...horseriding, boat safari, mountain biking, a skyline gondola, a walk to Ben Lomond for 360 degree views or one of the many fantastic walks Queenstown has to offer! Phew! If this is all a bit active for you, there are loads of beautiful spots to relax around the lake, or experience the legendary nightlife in the evenings. Most of the time spent in Queenstown will be free for you to do whatever you fancy!

Day 15: Queenstown to Fiordland

Get ready for more awe-inspiring scenery as you take on the Fiordland region via Mirror Lakes and Hollyford Valley. This afternoon you're in for a treat with a nature cruise on the stunning Milford Sound- keep your eyes peeled for seals, dolphins and even penguins. Tonight you'll stay in the lakeside village of Te Anau.

Day 16: Fiordland to Lake Ohau

Journey alongside Lake Wakatipu and stop off in quaint Arrowtown where you'll leave the coach behind for just a little while and use pedal power! Cycle along the willow-lined Arrow River, crossing various bridges along the way before ending up at the famous Kawarau Bridge, home of the world's first commercial Bungy operation. It's then back to the comfort of the coach for more dramatic scenery as you head to your home for the night, a classic Kiwi lakeside lodge on the shores of Lake Ohau.

Day 17: Lake Ohau to Christchurch

Hop on board the coach for one last time as you head back to Christchurch where the tour will sadly come to an end. It's not over yet though and there's plenty more to see along the way. You'll stop at Mount Cook Village and Lake Pukaki for some photos and then take a lunch stop on the shores of Lake Tekapo's blue waters. In the afternoon you'll have a Kiwi Farm Experience in Fairlie where you'll learn about life on a sheep farm! From here it's on to the final destination, Christchurch, where the tour will end. The tour usually finishes at about 6:30pm so don't make any onward travel arrangements until after this time.

Accommodation

15 nights in hotels, motels and lodges plus one night in a traditional Maori marae

On your trip you will stay at a variety of multi-share accommodations, which include hotels, motels, lodges and even a traditional Maori Marae! The number of people in a room varies depending on the type of accommodation however it is generally based on a 4-share same sex basis. There is also the option to upgrade to single or twin share rooms if you want a little extra privacy, for an additional cost.

Meals

16 breakfasts, 1 afternoon tea, 7 dinners

Breakfasts are included every day (except on the first morning). A typical breakfast may consist of cereals with milk or yoghurt, bread and a range of spreads, with fruit juice, tea or coffee to drink. It is rare to get a hot breakfast, though on some occasions there may be some hot food available as well. Some included evening meals will be prepared by the Road Crew and some by local restaurants and accommodation places. If you have special dietary requirements e.g. vegetarian or wheat intolerance, we will make every endeavour to cater to your specific needs as long as you advise us when you book. Please be aware that in some areas, the restaurants we use for included meals may not be able to cater for every single dietary requirement, but we will always try our best to arrange it. However, we cannot cater for tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

What's Included

- All accommodation
- Activities as stated in the itinerary
- Most meals (16 breakfasts, 1 afternoon tea, 7 dinners)
- Cook Strait ferry crossing
- Modern air-conditioned coach with Wi-Fi
- Services of a trip leader throughout

What's Not Included

- Flights
- Travel insurance
- Visas
- Optional activities

Additional Information

Tour Operator

This tour is operated by Topdeck.

Minimum Age

Minimum age is 18 years. Maximum age is 38 years.

Flights

Your flight to New Zealand should arrive at Auckland Airport the day before your programme start date, and your return flight should be arranged for the day after your programme end date departing from Christchurch Airport.

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.

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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