

# PUKEKO SELECT

## 9 Day Auckland to Wellington Tour

New Zealand North Island Select Tour

**STARTS:** Auckland

**FINISHES:** Wellington

**DURATION:** 9 days / 8 nights

**DEPARTS:** Wednesday

**ENDS:** Thursday

**MIN/MAX NUMBERS:** 6/24 passengers



### START INFORMATION

Arrive at Oaks Auckland Hotel, 40 Beach Road, Auckland CBD at any time on DAY 1. Check in at the hotel is from 3pm. The welcome dinner is at 6pm.

## DAY 1: Arrival Day Auckland

Kia Ora (hello) and welcome to your New Zealand adventure. Your tour begins in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), the largest city in New Zealand and home to over 2 million people and around 50 volcanoes.

You can arrive at any time today and we encourage you to explore the city. Walk down to the viaduct for a spot of lunch, wander over to Britomart for a coffee or head to Commercial Bay if you'd like to do some shopping. You can check into your hotel from 3pm, and this evening you'll meet your group and Stray Guide at reception at 6pm for a welcome dinner (own cost) to get to know your new travel mates.

**Accommodation:** Oaks Auckland Hotel or similar

**Optional activities:** Have lunch at the viaduct, enjoy coffee in Britomart, go shopping at Commercial Bay

## DAY 2: Auckland to Rotorua via Waitomo Caves

We'll head out this morning and travel south to Waitomo, famous for its limestone caves lit by thousands of glowworms. You have the option to glide down a cave stream in a boat as you gaze at the hundreds of glittering glowworms above you, or don a wetsuit and harness and do some abseiling and rock climbing through the famous caves - whichever option you choose it will be a magical way to begin your adventure!

Continuing on we'll head for Rotorua, the North Island's geothermal hotspot and a great place to experience Maori culture. We'll arrive in the early evening so we'll head straight to our hotel, which is home to a spa, swimming pool and unlimited Wi-Fi (not the norm here in New Zealand)!

**Accommodation:** Distinction Rotorua or similar

**Meal Options:** Local eateries

**Optional paid activities:** Waitomo Cave activities

## DAY 3: Rotorua

Today it's all about the Roto (Māori for 'Lake'). After breakfast we'll travel past the vibrant Blue and Green Lakes on our way to Lake Tarawera where the mighty volcano Mt Tarawera looms on the horizon. From there we'll take an aqua taxi to Te Rata Bay, home to Hot Water Beach (note: not the Hot Water Beach located next to Hahei), where a hot thermal spring feeds into lake water. For those keen for a hike, take a quick soak before embarking on the 15km (4.5-5hrs) Tarawera Trail, where you'll enjoy incredible views over Lakes Rotomahana and Tarawera. If you prefer to spend the morning in a more relaxing way, indulge in a long soak in the steamy waters, sit on the warm sands and spend your morning in geothermal heaven before heading back to Rotorua after lunch.

In the afternoon, we'll collect you from the beach to take you back to the city where you'll have the opportunity to go white water rafting down the Kaituna River, zipline through the trees on an eco-tour, or relax at a geothermal spa. If you'd like to see some geothermal activity for free, head to Kuirau Park to see boiling mud pools and steaming lakes.

**Accommodation:** Distinction Rotorua or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Included activity:** Water Taxi to Hot Water Beach - Te Rata Bay

**Meal options:** Local restaurants

**Free activities:** Tarawera Trail hike, Kuirau Park

**Optional paid activities:** Ziplining, White Water Rafting, Hell's Gate Geothermal Reserve and Mud Spa

## DAY 4: Rotorua to Lake Aniwhenua

After a couple of days in a major tourist destination like Rotorua, it's time to recharge our batteries and experience a more authentic slice of New Zealand culture. After lunch, we'll travel to the shores of Lake Aniwhenua and the incredible Kohutapu Lodge. Owned by a local Maori family whose passion about their Maori tribal heritage is matched only by their commitment to the local community.

We'll receive a welcome to the tribal lands before travelling on to Kohutapu Lodge where we'll watch the preparation of a ground cooked 'hangi' before enjoying an afternoon tea of freshly made fried bread as we chat with the team at the lodge and practise our weaving and haka skills. In the evening, we'll sit down and feast on our lovingly prepared hangi - this will probably be the best meal you'll eat in New Zealand!

### Exclusive experience includes:

- Welcome to the tribal lands and a guided tour to sacred Maori rock carvings
- Introduction to the Murupara area, its people, history, and challenges
- Afternoon tea
- Mau Rakau (Maori stick games)
- Weaving Lesson
- Haka Lesson
- 1-night accommodation at the lakeside Kohutapu Lodge
- Full traditional hangi buffet dinner & dessert
- Storytelling around the fire pit
- Continental breakfast

**Accommodation:** Scenic lakefront cabins

**Meals included:** Breakfast, full traditional hangi dinner and dessert

**Free activities:** Maori rock carvings, volleyball

## DAY 5: Lake Aniwhenua to Blue Duck Station

This morning after our buffet breakfast we'll say goodbye to our wonderful hosts at the lakeside lodge before departing to Taupo to see Australasia's largest lake and the frothy Huka Falls before heading inland to Blue Duck Station for an immersive and off the grid experience.

Blue Duck Station is the most sustainable high-country sheep and cattle station in New Zealand. Surrounded by the stunning Whanganui National Park, driving into the station is like entering the world of King Kong or Jurassic Park! The team at Blue Duck have made it their mission to protect their native environment for its namesake, the rare Whio (blue duck).

On arrival, we'll settle in to learn a little about daily life at the station, their interesting settlement history and their sustainability efforts before eating a home-cooked meal and relaxing around the campfire.

**Accommodation:** Country station lodge

**Meals included:** Continental breakfast, Dinner

**Free activities:** Huka Falls, Spa Park walk Taupo

**Optional paid activities:** Skydiving or bungy in Taupo

## DAY 6: Blue Duck Station

This morning you'll jump on a 4WD and travel through native bush to the 'Top of the World' where you can see the three peaks of Mount Ruapehu, Mount Tongariro and Mount Ngauruhoe. You'll learn about the history of the station, see some amazing views, and enjoy a sweet ride with the crew!

Later you'll have some time to explore the station on your own. Hike to the Kaiwhakauka waterfall and spot the rare blue duck in the flesh and this evening play some games at the lodge or relax around the campfire and make s'mores. Whatever you decide, we have no doubt this will be the start of your love affair with this lush kiwi paradise!

**Accommodation:** Country station lodge

**Meals included:** Continental breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Included activities:** 4WD farm eco-tour

**Free activities:** Hike to Kaiwhakauka waterfall, evening glowworm viewing

## DAY 7: Blue Duck Station to Tongariro National Park

This morning we rise early and make our way to Tongariro National Park to tackle what is widely regarded as the best one-day walk in the world - the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. This unforgettable 19 km journey traverses an awe-inspiring landscape of volcanic peaks, vast craters, and striking turquoise alpine lakes - the kind of scenery you'll remember long after you return home.

The Crossing can be walked year-round, and when there is snow or ice present, a qualified alpine guide and specialised equipment are required (**additional cost may apply**). These alpine conditions - typically from May to October, but possible at any time - can make the experience even more spectacular, showcasing Tongariro in its purest form. All plans remain weather dependent for comfort and safety, and if conditions aren't suitable, there are other excellent walks in the national park to enjoy.

After an incredible day on the trails, return to your accommodation and soak in the outdoor spa while admiring the surrounding mountain views - the perfect way to unwind.

**Accommodation:** The Park Hotel (or similar)

**Meals included:** Continental breakfast

**Meal options:** A range of local restaurants and cafés. For Crossing, pack a lunch & plenty of snacks and water

**Included:** Tongariro Alpine Crossing (snow & ice, extra cost)

**Optional paid upgrade:** Alpine guide and specialist winter gear (required in snow/ice conditions)

## DAY 8: Tongariro National Park to Wellington

After breakfast we'll head down to Wellington - New Zealand's capital city! We humbly recommend a visit to the Te Papa National Museum first (own cost), and then you're free to grab a craft beer at a brewery, hike to the top of Mt Victoria for panoramic views, take a stroll along the waterfront or simply enjoy the best cup of coffee you'll have in New Zealand (oh yes, they are very proud of their coffee scene in Wellington!).

**Accommodation:** Ibis Wellington or similar

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Meal options:** Local restaurants

**Free activities:** Walk Oriental Parade, head up Mt Victoria for fantastic views

**Optional paid activities:** Te Papa National Museum

## DAY 9: Wellington Departure Day

Today your adventure comes to an end. Say goodbye (or see you soon) to your mates and go your separate ways for now. We hope you had a blast and remain close with your Stray Mates for 4ever!

**Meals:** Breakfast

### What's Included:

- Experienced tour guide
- Private coach transport
- 8 nights' accommodation
- 7 breakfasts, 3 dinners & 1 lunch
- Hot Water Beach Tarawera Water Taxi
- Lake Aniwhenua Cultural Experience & Hangi
- 4WD Eco Tour at Blue Duck Station
- Tongariro Alpine Crossing (snow & ice, extra cost)
- Plenty of stops at lakes, lookouts, mountains, hikes, beaches, national parks, rivers, waterfalls and more...

### What to Bring:

- Camera, Sturdy walking shoes/boots, Warm clothing, Waterproof jacket, Hat & Sunscreen, Bathers/towel, Water bottle, Toiletries, Motion sickness tablets, Insect repellent

## Please Note:

- Luggage is limited to one piece per person with a maximum weight of 23kg plus a day pack
- A basic level of fitness is required for medium length walks
- Single travellers will be put in a twin room with another single traveller of the same gender. For single travellers wanting a private room, they will need to purchase the 'Private/Sole Use' product option.
- Accommodation at Lake Aniwhenua and Blue Duck Station is specialist. All cabins are private, but facilities are shared.
- Our itinerary is a guide. Given the spontaneous nature of our trips and lack of control over New Zealand's weather(!), what we do each day might occasionally vary.

## Highlights:

- Visit the world famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves
- Take a water taxi to the stunning geothermal Hot Water Beach Te Rata Bay and hike the Tarawera Trail
- Explore the geothermal wonderland of Rotorua
- Experience life with a modern Maori family in an idyllic lakeside location as you feast on a traditional Hangi meal and play traditional games
- Jump on the high country 4WD Eco Safari in remote Blue Duck Station
- Take an optional hike across the iconic Tongariro Alpine Crossing to see volcanic landscapes and lakes
- Free time in Rotorua & Blue Duck Station
- Plenty of stops at lakes, lookouts, mountains, hikes, beaches, national parks, rivers, waterfalls and more...