



Kahu Adventure 2025/26

18 DAY One Way NEW ZEALAND Journey

Duration: 18 days, 17 nights

Starts/Finishes: Auckland/Queenstown

Overview

The 18 Day Kahu Adventure tour shows you the highlights of New Zealand in under 18 days. Travel from Auckland through to Queenstown on our small group tour, meeting the friendly locals and ticking off those bucket list highlights as you go. Our fully guided Adventure tours include some meals and activities but we leave plenty of room for optional extras so you can make the adventure your own!

Day 1: Arrival Auckland

Kia Ora (hello) and welcome to Aotearoa (New Zealand) the land of the long white cloud. Make your way to your hostel and then go and explore the city, we recommend starting at the waterfront which is a downhill walk from your accommodation. Meet your Guide at 6pm for an introduction to your tour before heading out together for some dinner (own cost).

Accommodation: Haka House Auckland City (5 Turner St, Auckland CBD)

Free activities: Walk the waterfront

Day 2: Auckland to Hahei

Today's the day we say 'haere rā' (goodbye) to Auckland and 'kia ora!' (hello) to the trip of a lifetime! First stop, Hahei Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula. This gorgeous little place will capture your heart (and have you calculating how much it would cost to move to NZ's coast eternally). When the tides are right, we'll drive over to the nearby Hot Water Beach and dig ourselves an all-natural hot pool in the sand. Who said backpackers can't do luxury? This evening we'll enjoy a classic Kiwi BBQ group dinner together at the resort.

Accommodation: Hahei Holiday Resort

Meal inclusions: Breakfast, Dinner

Optional activities: Kayaking or Hahei Explorer

Free activities: Dig a hot pool at Hot Water Beach

Day 3: Hahei

Today you have a full free day to explore Hahei. Take a sunrise kayak to Cathedral Cove, board a boat and cruise around exploring the sea caves, chill out on the beach or enjoy a beer in the local pub. This is your time to relax in paradise so get your R&R on!

Accommodation: Hahei Holiday Resort

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional activities: Cathedral cove kayaking, Hahei explorer boat

Day 4: Hahei to Rotorua

Rise and shine for an early start this morning as you walk to Hahei Beach to watch the sunrise. Then it's straight back into the bus for our journey to the geothermal wonderland of Rotorua.

Before we get to Rotorua, we'll stop for an incredibly scenic walk through the Karangahake Gorge and then we'll head to the home of the Hobbit and enjoy a tour of the real movie set, which was created right here in Middle Earth! When we arrive in Rotorua, head for a walk through the Whakarewarewa Redwood Forest and then explore the township. There are so many activities available in Rotorua - ask your guide for options!

Accommodation: Haka House Rotorua

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Included activity: Hobbiton Movie Set

Free activities: Whakarewarewa Redwood Forest walk

Day 5: Rotorua to Lake Aniwhenua

This morning, take your pick of epic Rotorua experiences: go ziplining, plunge over a 7m waterfall, soak in the Polynesian Spa's hot pools, or wander through Kuirau Park with its bubbling mud pools. Whether you're chasing thrills or chill time, Rotorua delivers.

In the afternoon, we head off the beaten path to Lake Aniwhenua. Here you'll be welcomed by the local Māori whānau at Kohutapu Lodge. Discover sacred rock carvings, try traditional stick games, and watch a ground-cooked *hangi* come to life—before digging in. Trust us, it might just be the best meal you'll have in New Zealand (or ever).

Exclusive experience includes:

- 1 night's accommodation at the serene lakeside Kohutapu Lodge
- Full traditional hangi buffet dinner & dessert
- Continental breakfast
- Guided tour to sacred Maori rock carvings
- Introduction to the Murupara area, its people, history and challenges

Accommodation: Kohutapu Lodge

Included activity: Learn the Haka, Maori flax weaving

Meal inclusions: Breakfast, traditional hangi dinner and dessert included

Optional activities: Rotorua Canopy tours, Rotorua Rafting, Polynesian Spa

Free activities: Maori rock carvings, volleyball, Maori cultural games

Day 6: Lake Aniwhenua to Lake Taupo

Rise and shine! Enjoy your buffet breakfast and get ready for a day of jam-packed adventure. Keep your togs (swimwear) handy, because our first stop is Kerosene Creek – a naturally hot river and the perfect place for a morning soak. Then it's on to Taupo to see Australasia's largest lake and the mighty Huka Falls, grab lunch and take a walk to explore or simply relax at your accommodation.

Accommodation: Haka House Taupo or similar

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional paid activities: Skydiving or bungee in Taupo

Free activities: Huka Falls, Spa Park walk Taupo

Day 7: Taupo to Tongariro National Park

Limber up! Today you get the chance to tick off one of the most popular hikes in New Zealand, the epic Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Considered one of the world's top one-day walks, this 19 km hike takes you across a rocky plateau with dramatic volcanic peaks, craters and turquoise lakes that you (and your Instagram feed) will remember for a lifetime. The Crossing is open to walk year-round (alpine gear and guide are required in winter for an additional cost), but it is subject to the weather conditions. If the weather prevents you from doing the Crossing, there are other awesome short walks in the area. Tonight, unwind after a big day in your chalet.

Accommodation: Alpine Chalets

Included activities: Tongariro Alpine Crossing transfers

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Meal options: Pack a lunch & plenty of snacks and water.

Free activities: Taranaki Falls walk, visit the Volcanic Centre, Tawhai Falls (Gollum's pool)

Day 8: Tongariro National Park to Wellington

Onwards to Wellington, the 'coolest little capital in the world'! Wellington packs a lot of character into its downtown district, with great restaurants and bars along Cuba Street and Courtenay Place. Fill your afternoon by browsing through the exhibits at Te Papa National Museum (at your own cost), grab a craft beer at a brewery, climb to the top of Mt Victoria for panoramic views or take a stroll along the waterfront and Oriental Parade. Oh and, most importantly for the coffee lovers, you'll be glad to know that Wellington's coffee culture and cafe scene is considered one of the best in NZ.

Accommodation: Haka House Wellington

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional paid activities: Te Papa National Museum, Wellington Cable Car

Meal options: Local restaurants or self-cater in the hostel kitchen

Free activities: Walk Oriental Parade, head up Mt Victoria for fantastic views, visit Te Papa National Museum, Gumboot (welly) throwing

Day 9: Wellington

Today is a free day to spend exploring Wellington, our capital city and home to New Zealand's parliament and the iconic Beehive government building. Also known as the 'coolest little capital in the world' thanks to Lonely Planet, Wellington is a great place to check out the lively arts, craft beer and café culture scenes or do some shopping. The afternoon is yours to explore the sights - we recommend wandering down Oriental Parade or viewing the excellent exhibits on display at Te Papa National Museum.

Accommodation: Haka House Wellington

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional paid activities: Te Papa National Museum, Wellington Cable Car, Weta Workshop

Meal options: Local restaurants or self-cater in the hostel kitchen

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

Day 10: Wellington to Marahau (Abel Tasman)

Today we'll catch an early Ferry across the Cook Strait and through the magnificent Marlborough Sounds to the South Island. If the weather's good, head out to the viewing deck to witness some incredible scenes and spot some wildlife. From there we'll set off through the picturesque Marlborough region to Marahau, our accommodation is situated right on the edge of the spectacular Abel Tasman National Park - perfect for exploring arguably the best National Park in NZ.

Accommodation: The Barn Marahau

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional paid activities: Wine tasting (\$15pp)

Meal options: We'll stop at a supermarket to stock up on supplies - Self-cater or join the optional group dinner

Free activities: Stargazing

Included activity: Ferry Crossing to the South Island

Day 11: Marahau (Abel Tasman)

Count yourself lucky because you have a full day to explore New Zealand's most popular national park today. From our accommodation we'll head by water taxi to Anchorage Bay, admiring the park's natural golden sand beaches and brilliant blue waters along the way. Enjoy a picnic on the beach before checking out Cleopatra's Pools, moss lined fresh water pools with a natural water slide and then, we'll walk approximately 4 hours back to our accommodation, stopping along the way to take amazing photos and swim in the secluded bays.

Accommodation: The Barn Marahau

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Included activity: Water taxi into Anchorage Bay

Optional paid activities: Kayaking, skydiving, canyoning - (PM)

Meal options: Pack a picnic lunch and lots of snacks for your hike, Self-cater in the kitchen or use the BBQs

Free activities: Hike in the national park, relax on the golden sand beaches, see Cleopatra's Pools

Day 12: Marahau (Abel Tasman) to Franz Josef

Buckle up for an awesome day driving down the incredibly scenic 'wild' West Coast, an area known for its untamed beaches and spectacular rainforest. Through Buller Gorge and down a stretch of road named one of the top drives in the world by Lonely Planet, there's not much phone reception but you are NOT going to need it – we dare you to peel your eyes away from the window for even just a second. We'll stop at the Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and blowholes to explore this unique part of coastline before continuing on to the quaint township of Franz Josef, set amongst the rainforest. Tonight, we'll have a group dinner together at our accommodation.

Accommodation: Rainforest Retreat

Meal inclusions: Breakfast, Dinner

Free activities: Buller Gorge, Pancake Rocks and blowholes, Hokitika

Day 13: Franz Josef

Ice, ice baby! Get ready to experience the Franz Josef Glacier, an iconic highlight of the West Coast. Take a short drive to the beginning of the track. Hike through native bush and across glacial streams to the terminal face of the glacier for spectacular photos or just hang out at the Retreat and relax in one of NZ's largest spa pools.

Accommodation: Rainforest Retreat

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional paid activities: Shuttle to the track

Meal options: Local restaurants or self-cater in the hostel kitchen

Free activities: Glacier hike, bush tracks, soak in the spa

Day 14: Franz Josef to Queenstown

It's another scenic journey today with plenty of photo stops. First up is the amazing Lake Matheson, known as the mirror-lake, for a short walk. We travel inland through the mountainous Haast Pass and alongside beautiful Lake Hawea and into Queenstown. Once settled, put on your dancing shoes and head out to explore this lakeside resort, there are over 100 clubs and bars to choose from in Queenstown!

Accommodation: Haka House Queenstown Lakefront

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Meal options: Local restaurants or self-cater in the hostel kitchen

Day 15 & 16: Queenstown (2 Free Days)

Yaaaasssss Queen(stown)! You've got 2 full days in the adventure capital. With awesome night life, beautiful mountain scenery and plenty of outdoor activities, it's easy to understand why so many backpackers refuse to leave this place.

Accommodation: Haka House Queenstown Lakefront

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional paid activities: Any adventure activity that we Kiwis can dream up (bungy, swing, jet boating, skydiving, mountain biking, zipline, horse riding...)

Meal options: Local restaurants or self-cater in the hostel kitchen

Free activities: Hike Ben Lomond, the Queenstown Hill, or Bob's Peak

Day 17: Milford Sound Day Trip

Today you'll hop aboard the Coach and we'll take you to the stunning and world famous Milford Sound. After a super scenic drive, you'll board the boat and cruise across the Sound. Look out for the impressive Mitre Peak, lush rainforests and (if it's been raining) thundering waterfalls. You'll also have the opportunity to spot lots of amazing wildlife like Fur Seals, Penguins and Dolphins. Once you've snapped as many pics as you possibly can, it's back to Queenstown where you can check out some one of the many restaurants Queenstown has to offer - or try the famous Fergburger!

Accommodation: Haka House Queenstown Lakefront

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Included activity: Day trip to Milford Sound

Day 18: Depart Queenstown

Today your adventure comes to an end. Say goodbye to your guide and your new Stray mates, we hope you had a great time and we look forward to adventuring with you again in the future!

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

What's Included:

- Experienced tour guide
- Private coach transport
- 18 days of once in a lifetime experience
- 17 nights' accommodation (dorm-style)
- 17 Breakfasts, 2 Dinners
- 1 x inter-island ferry
- Karangahake Gorge visit
- See Hot Water Beach
- Hobbiton Movie Set Tour
- Experience Geysers and boiling mud pools
- Lake Aniwhenua Cultural Experience
- See the mighty Huka Falls
- Hike the Tongariro Alpine Crossing
- Free day to explore Wellington
- Abel Tasman National Park tracks and water taxi
- Visit Franz Josef Glacier township
- Day trip and Cruise to the Milford Sound

What to Bring:

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

Highlights:

- Karangahake Gorge visit
- See Hot Water Beach
- Visit the Hobbiton Movie Set
- Experience Geysers and boiling mud pools
- Stay with a modern maori family at Lake Aniwhenua
- See the mighty Huka Falls
- Hike the Tongariro Alpine Crossing
- Free Day to Explore Wellington

- Trip to Punakaiki Pancake Rocks
- Visit Franz Josef Glacier township
- Discover the iconic Milford Sound

This 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.