



Kea Adventure 2025/26

23 DAY COMPLETE NEW ZEALAND Journey

Duration: 23 days, 22 nights

Starts/Finishes: Auckland

Overview

The 23 Day Kea tour is the ultimate tour for adventurers. You'll see New Zealand's iconic sights from rainforests and beaches to mountains and volcanoes. We'll also take you off the beaten track and show you the real New Zealand where you'll meet friendly locals and get away from the tourist crowds. 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 Beach 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 or walk 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 Beach Resort

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Optional activities: Cathedral Cove kayaking, Hahei explorer boat

Free activities: Visit Cathedral Cove

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, we'll head to Kuirau Park where we'll see some geothermal activity, boiling mud pools and steaming lakes!

After hanging out in a major tourist destination like Rotorua, you'll probably feel ready to experience a more authentic slice of New Zealand culture. Today we venture off the beaten track to the shores of Lake Aniwhenua. Kohutapu Lodge is owned by a local Maori family who are passionate about their Maori tribal heritage and their local community. You'll see sacred Maori rock carvings, play traditional stick games and watch the preparation of a ground cooked 'hangi', before tasting it for yourself! Prepare your tastebuds - this will probably be the best meal you eat in New Zealand, or maybe even in your lifetime!

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

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

Optional paid activities: Skydiving or bungy in Taupo

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

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, 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

Optional paid activities: Wine tasting

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

Included activity: Water taxi into Anchorage Bay

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

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

Optional paid activities: Shuttle to the track

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

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

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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: Queenstown to Lake Tekapo

It's a short drive to Lake Tekapo this morning where we'll see an electric blue lake framed by the Southern alps. Walk over to the famous Church of the Good Shepherd, a quaint stone church right on the edge of the lake for some awesome photo opportunities. In the afternoon, take a hike up to the Mount John

Observatory to see the incredible views, or if you'd rather just have a 'self-care' afternoon, then the Tekapo Hot Springs are the perfect place to relax.

Tonight, we'll head to the team at Dark Sky for their Crater Experience where you'll have the chance to stargaze at one of the best stargazing spots in the country.

Accommodation: Haka House Lake Tekapo

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

Included activity: Dark Sky Crater Experience

Optional paid activities: Tekapo Hot Springs (All seasons), Ice Skating, Snow tubing (Winter only)

Meal options: Self-catering in the hostel kitchen or local bars and restaurants

Free activities: Mount John Observatory Hike, Church of the Good Shepherd, stargazing

Day 19: Lake Tekapo to Christchurch

Our next stop is Christchurch, a super cool city with the Avon River running through it, full of lush parks and cool laneway bars! Spend your afternoon wandering the city streets to discover creative street art and hidden eateries, visit the Botanic Gardens, do some shopping or hop on the tourist tram and see the sights!

Accommodation: Drifter Christchurch

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

Free activities: Explore Christchurch by foot, check out the new Riverside Market, Botanic Gardens

Day 20: Christchurch to Kaikoura

We've got an early morning start for a beautiful drive up the coast to Kaikoura, arriving around midday so you have the afternoon free to explore. See the Kekenos (NZ fur seal) colony near Goose Bay and hike around the peninsula to check out the breath-taking views from the lookout. You're likely to see sea birds, seals and maybe even whales or dolphins if you're lucky. Or, if you'd like to see whales and dolphins, jump on a boat or plane!

Accommodation: Dusky Lodge

Optional paid activities: Whale watching by boat or by plane, swimming with dolphins, ziplining

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

Free activities: Visit a fur seal colony, walk around the peninsula and up to the lookout

Day 21: Kaikoura to Wellington (via Picton)

This morning we'll hop on the bus and wind our way up the coastal roads towards the top of the South Island. We'll catch the afternoon Ferry across the Cook Strait and then you'll have the evening in Wellington, your second chance to explore the city's nightlife!

Accommodation: Haka House Wellington

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

Free activities: Seal and dolphin spotting

Included activity: Ferry Crossing to the North Island

Day 22: Wellington to Auckland

We'll head out this morning and continue north, arriving in Auckland early afternoon, with plenty of daylight left to enjoy your last night in New Zealand with your new Stray family.

Accommodation: Haka House Auckland City

Meal inclusions: Breakfast

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

Free activities: Explore the city

Day 23: Depart Auckland

All good things must come to an end, and after an incredible few weeks of exploring New Zealand it's officially time to head to the airport. We hope this was truly a once in a lifetime experience for you and you'll take some of New Zealand's way of life home with you. Please come back and visit us again someday!

What's Included:

- Experienced tour guide
- Private coach transport
- 23 days of once in a lifetime experience
- 22 nights' accommodation (dorm-style)
- 21 Breakfasts, 3 Dinners
- 2 x inter-island ferries
- See Hot Water Beach & Cathedral Cove
- Karangahake Gorge visit
- Hobbiton Movie Set Tour
- Experience geothermal activity and boiling mud pools
- Lake Aniwhenua Cultural Experience
- See the mighty Huka Falls
- Transfer for 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
- Stargazing Experience in Lake Tekapo
- View the Seal Colony on the Kaikoura Coast

What to Bring:

- Camera
- Sturdy walking shoes/boots
- Warm clothing
- Waterproof jacket
- Hat & sunscreen

- Bathers/towel
- Water bottle
- Motion sickness tablets
- Insect repellent

Highlights:

- Dig yourselves an all-natural hot pool in the sand at Hot Water Beach
- Relax at the beach, explore the world-famous Cathedral Cove and stay beachside in the classic kiwi cabins at Hahei Beach
- Explore Middle Earth as you visit the Hobbiton Movie set and see bubbling mud pools and geysers in Rotorua.
- Take a scenic walk through the Karangahake Gorge and the Whakarewarewa Redwood Forest.
- Explore Kuirau Park in Rotorua where we'll see some geothermal activity, boiling mud pools and steaming lakes!
- Experience life with a modern Maori family in an idyllic lakeside location as you feast on a traditional Hangi meal and play traditional games
- Have a soak in the naturally hot Kerosene Creek and visit the mighty Huka Falls
- Hike the incredible, other-worldly Tongariro Alpine Crossing, one of the most famous one-day walks in the world
- Spend two days in paradise as you explore the golden beaches of the Abel Tasman National Park.
- Visit Punakaiki Pancake Rocks and blowholes before staying in the rainforest at Franz Josef
- Enjoy at stop at the amazing Lake Matheson, known as the mirror-lake
- Look out for the impressive Mitre Peak, lush rainforests, waterfalls and wildlife during a day trip to the iconic Milford Sound
- Stargaze in an International Dark Sky Reserve for some of the brightest stars you'll ever see!
- Explore the city and then enjoy the quality hospitality at newly renovated Drifter Christchurch complete with its own bar.
- See the Kekenos (NZ fur seal) colony and then enjoy the pool, sauna and spa at our accommodation, Dusky Lodge in Kaikoura
- Relax in quality accommodation at Haka House Auckland, Wellington, Queenstown & Tekapo.
- Free time in Hahei, Wellington, Franz Josef, Queenstown, Lake Tekapo & Kaikoura.

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.