



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 Nesuto Stadium Hotel, Auckland CBD at any time on DAY 1. Check in at the hotel is from 3PM. The group 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: Nesuto Stadium 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 join glide down a cave stream in a boat as you gaze as 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, zorb through rolling hills 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, Zorbing

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 Kerosene Creek – a naturally hot river and the perfect place for a morning soak. Next, we'll drive on 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 glow worm viewing

DAY 7: Blue Duck Station to Tongariro National Park

This morning we're up nice and early to head straight to Tongariro National Park where we'll 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 us across a rocky plateau with dramatic volcanic peaks, craters, and turquoise lakes that we'll remember for a lifetime.

The Crossing is open to walk year-round (alpine gear and guide are required in winter), but it is subject to the weather conditions. If the weather prevents us from doing the Crossing, there are other awesome short walks in the area.

Tonight, we'll unwind in our accommodation with a soak in their outdoor spa.

Accommodation: The Park Hotel or similar

Meals included: Continental breakfast

Meal options: Local restaurants

Included: Transfers for the Tongariro Crossing

Optional paid activities: Tongariro Alpine Crossing Winter Gear & Expert Mountaineer Gear

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
- 8 breakfasts, 3 dinners & 1 lunch
- Hot Water Beach Tarawera Water Taxi
- Lake Aniwhenua Cultural Experience & Hangi
- 4WD Eco Tour at Blue Duck Station
- 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...