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From
£6,525 GBP

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30th December 2024

17 days
Duration

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

New Zealand: An Odyssey Down Under

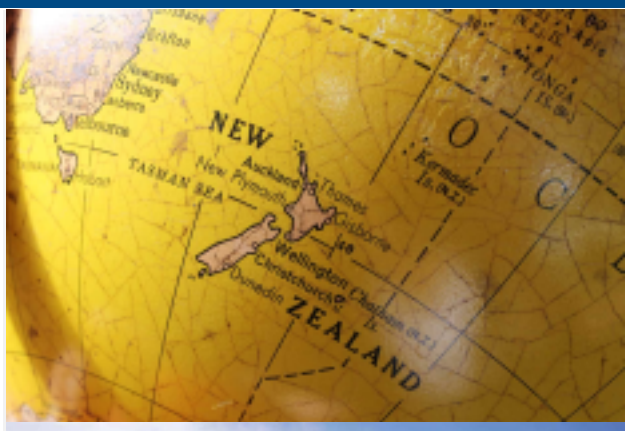
Apr 04 2024 to Apr 20 2024

New Zealand Small Group Tour

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across New Zealand. We explore New Zealand's fairy-tale natural beauty, its ancient landscapes its World Heritage Sites, and famous cities, all with some truly spectacular scenery along the way. This and more is all waiting to be explored on one of Odyssey's small group tours of New Zealand, designed for the senior traveller, and led by experienced, and enthusiastic like minded people



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NOTE; This program may be run in reverse, that is from the South island to the North island. Please contact Odyssey to confirm tour direction.

This New Zealand small group tour for senior and mature travellers will guide travellers through the landscapes of both the North Island and the South island as well as having an opportunity to observe the native wildlife in the national park network and learn about the history of this incredible island country. Travellers on this tour of New Zealand observe the landscape of the North island shaped by Volcanism, from the basalt volcanic cones that dominate Auckland to the geothermal activity including boiling mud in Rotorua. Leaving Rotorua this guided tour travels through landscapes of sharp hills covered in native bush or pasture south to Wellington to take the interislander ferry to the South island. The hard spine of Southern Alps that dominate the South island soon appear after we leave Picton. The Southern alps dominate, hiding the travellers view through to the west coast, only a few passes such as Arthurs pass, Haast pass and Franz Josef allow you through to other side of the South island and the Tasman sea. For the traveller in the South island, the scenic sights are numerous and appear to be on a grander scale from the Abel Tasman National park or Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu and Fjordland National park.

The arrival of the Europeans dominated by British settlers in New Zealand set in motion a startling and ultimately largely successful co-existence with the Maori people that we will see and experience on this educational trip. The traditional owners of the land and immigrants had to come to terms with fiercely disparate environments and climates, from the subtropical north to the alpine south. This is the route we will follow on this tour, moving from the North Island to the South Island, as we track the Maori people from the dawn of history to the present time.

On this 17-day New Zealand tour, mature and senior travellers taking this trip will experience the best of both the North and the South Island. We will begin the tour of New Zealand in Auckland in the North Island, moving south to Rotorua and to the island's southern tip Wellington, the

capital of New Zealand. In South Island, we visit Christchurch, moving south to Dunedin and then Queenstown where the tour will conclude.

This small group tour will be accompanied by an Odyssey Program Leader and local guides who will impart their knowledge about the places we will visit on the trip. Odyssey conducts educational tours with small groups of mature and senior travellers, focusing on history, culture and architecture. Group size is typically between 6 to 12 people. The cost of the tour is inclusive of all entrances (unless otherwise indicated), tipping, and majority of the meals.

This particular tour of New Zealand has periods of free time built into the itinerary, allowing you to explore some destinations at your own pace, and choose from a variety of available activities. This way, we make sure that there is something to enjoy for every kind of traveller.







New Zealand Small Group Tour for seniors; Itinerary & Highlights

New Zealand (Maori name: Aotearoa) is an island country with a total land area of 268,000 square kilometres (103,500 sq. mi) in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It is one of the most southernmost countries in the world, about 2,000 kilometres (1,200 mi) east of Australia across the Tasman Sea and 1,000 kilometres (600 mi) south of the Pacific islands of New Caledonia, Fiji, and Tonga. The country has two main islands: The North Island (Te Ika-a-M?ui) and the South Island (Te Waipounamu), and about 600 smaller islands.

North Island

This Seniors small group tour of New Zealand starts in the North Island in Auckland where we start with a day tour of the city including “Tamaki Drive” out to Mission bay, and Mt Eden. We take a guided tour of the Auckland War memorial museum to gain an understanding of New Zealand culture and geographical presence in the South Pacific.

We then head south to Rotorua. The group has a guided tour of **Te Puia Thermal Reserve,** the centre of Maori culture and a site of incredible

geological activity. We spend time exploring some of the many attractions of Rotorua, including the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute and its many traditional villages, before enjoying a traditional Maori performance and getting to know the Maori culture.

Moving South, we stop at the **Waimangu Volcanic Rift Valley an active geo-thermal park**. The Waimangu Volcanic Rift Valley was once known as Mount Tarawera. We continue onto Lake Taupo, a massive lake created by a volcanic eruption to arrive for a night in the Tongariro National park. In Wellington, we will enjoy a guided walking tour of New Zealand's capital city, finishing at Te Papa Museum on the waterfront.

South Island

Taking the Cook Strait interislander ferry to the South Island, we travel from Wellington to Christchurch. This is a relaxing three-hour journey that will take you through New Zealand's breathtaking scenery and landmarks, stopping en route at the beautiful coastal town of **Kaikoura** for lunch.

We spend two nights in Christchurch, with one day spent with a local tour guide and another day free. An interesting sight nearby is the rock formations of Castle Hill, described by the Dalai Lama as one of the 'spiritual centres of the universe'. We then head to Dunedin to explore and learn about a city designed in Edinburgh, Scotland…. On our way to Dunedin we pause in **Oamaru** to explore Oamaru's quirky Victorian Precinct, famous for its Steampunk playground and restored buildings.

From Dunedin this small group tour travels to Te Anau for a night. A small settlement next to the Fiordland National Park, (Fjordland National park) part of UNESCO World Heritage site, Te W?hipounamu. After overnighting, we take a journey up to see Milford Sound, a drowned glacial valley created in the last ice age! The afternoon we drive around to Queenstown. We spend our last full day in **Queenstown**, with a local guides.

If you would like to learn more about New Zealand, check out our country profile. For more details about this tour, click the 'Top 5' or







'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

USA/Canada visitors; Please call the 1-877-770-0446 Toll Free number







Articles about New Zealand published by Odyssey Traveller

- Questions About New Zealand
- Definitive Guide to Auckland, New Zealand
- Foundations for democracy in New Zealand: 900s – 1945

For all the articles Odyssey Traveller has published for mature aged and senior travellers, click through on this link.

External articles to assist you on your visit to New Zealand

- Tourism New Zealand
- New Zealand History
- New Zealand travel
- New Zealand travel guide and tips

Highlights

1. Learn from Maori leaders about their world pre- and post-European colonisation
2. Experience New Zealand's thermal wonderland, Te Puia Thermal Reserve, in Rotorua.

3. Enjoy a guided tour through New Zealand's Capital city, Wellington
4. Cruise the acclaimed Milford Sound in the Fiordland National Park
5. Tour Queenstown with a knowledgable local guide.







Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Auckland

Overview:

We make our own way to our hotel in Auckland, New Zealand’s most populous urban area.

Auckland, like Rome, is built on a series of hills, extinct volcanoes. We arrive in the evening and will have the time to look out from these hills and see the largest volcanic presence within the city limits, Rangitoto Island, whose symmetrical form is emblematic of New Zealand’s largest city.

Our Welcome Dinner tonight at the iconic Sky Tower will confirm our panoramic impressions, as will our specialist commentator who will give us a *tour d’horizon* of Auckland’s origins as a Maori centre, and of its thrilling colonial development as New Zealand’s great merchant city.

Accommodation:

Auckland TBC

Day 2

Locations: Auckland

Overview:

Auckland has the largest concentration of indigenous Maori, and was the capital of New Zealand before it was replaced by Wellington in 1865.

It is the country's hub of industry.

This morning we will enjoy a tour of the city, visiting its main attractions, including:

- **Queen Street –** major commercial thoroughfare in the Auckland CBD, an early development in the newly founded town of Auckland in 1849
- **Tamaki bay drive through from the City to Mission bay**
- **Bastion Point** – overlooking the Waitemata Harbour, and the site of Maori protests against European settlers and the British Crown, who planned to sell Bastion Point to the highest bidder instead of returning the land to its traditional Maori owners
- **Mission Bay** – a waterfront suburb, providing views of Rangitoto Island.
- Upto Mt Eden for a panorama of the city and its twin Harbours.
- **Auckland War Memorial Museum**– neoclassical building housing lavish displays of Polynesian and colonial artefacts and presentations of Auckland past, present, and future

Auckland straddles New Zealand's northern isthmus, and ferry travel between its numerous islands is part of daily life. This afternoon, we take a break from the bustle of the city and go on a relaxing **scenic cruise of Auckland's Waitemata harbour**, sailing under the Harbour Bridge and learning about Auckland's maritime history from our guide over afternoon tea.

Accommodation:

Auckland TBC





Day 3

Locations: Auckland - Bay of Islands

Overview:

Today we leave early for the Bay of Islands.

This afternoon there is a scheduled tour of the islands. Group meal this evening.

Accommodation:

Pahia or kerikeri. TBC

Day 4

Locations: Cape Reinga- Kaitaia

Overview:

Today, we travel to the top of New Zealand, Cape Reinga. Stopping along our route, there and on our return to Kaitaia at relevant local places to explore and lean about. Picnic lunch provided.

Group meal this evening.

Accommodation:

Kaitaia or surrounds TBC.

Day 5

Locations: Kaitaia to Auckland

Overview:

The group returns to Auckland along the west coast route.

Accommodation:

Auckland TBC.

Day 6

Locations: Auckland - Rotorua

Overview:

Today we will depart Auckland for Rotorua.

In Rotorua, we will have a guided tour of **Te Puia Thermal Reserve,** the centre of Maori culture and a site of incredible geological activity. This landscape is filled with boiling hot pools and incredible geysers.

This is the heart of New Zealand's Thermal Wonderland. We view the bubbling hot pools and the gushing geysers, feeling the ground shaking under our feet. This too is the heart of Maori culture, and we will see for ourselves how for generations they used the thermal activity to their great advantage in cooking and heating.

The Pohutu (Maori: 'constant splashing') geyser is the most active geyser in the Southern hemisphere, erupting twice every hour, with eruptions reaching heights of 30 metres. Te Puia also houses the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, and villages showcasing traditional Maori architecture.

In the evening we will have a traditional dinner at the Tamaki Maori Village, and enjoy a cultural performance travellers from many of the other group tours that stop in Rotorua.

Accommodation:

Rotorua - TBC

Day 7

Locations: Rotorua - Tongariro National park

Overview:

Departing Rotorua for Tongariro National park we stop to visit the **active geothermal area the Waimangu Volcanic Rift Valley**. The Waimangu Volcanic Rift Valley was once known as Mount Tarawera and was famous for its Pink and White Terraces They were described as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" during the Victorian era. The volcanic eruption of 1886 blasted away the mountain and burying the pastel,

multi-hued terraces under a thick layer of volcanic mud.

We continue South pausing to we visit **Lake Taupo.** Taupo was created by one of world's most powerful volcanic eruptions. The lake is nearly the size of Singapore, and is often called an 'inland sea'. Keeping with volcanic theme fro the last 2 days we travel onto the Tongariro National park, where we spend the evening.

Group meal this evening.

Accommodation:

Tongariro National Park

Day 8

Locations: Tongariro - Wellington

Overview:

Today we will be travelling onwards to **Wellington**, capital of NZ. We will be stopping along the way, intending to arrive in Wellington by mid Afternoon.

Group dinner.

Accommodation:

Wellington. TBA

Day 9

Locations: Wellington

Overview:

Wellington has been the nation's capital since 1856. We will enjoy a guided tour in this beautiful city on foot. We take the Wellington Cable Car, New Zealand's only running funicular railway. This ride will take you from the heart of the city to a lookout that will give you a view of Wellington. You can walk through the Botanic Garden, and visit the historic Pioneer Cemetery established in the 19th century.

The tour of Wellington finishes in the Waterfront precinct close to the National Museum of New Zealand "Te papa". We have tickets for entry

into the Museum, the remainder of the afternoon is at your leisure.

Accommodation:

Wellington. TBA

Day 10

Locations: Wellington-Picton- Christchurch

Overview:

Today we will be travelling from Wellington to Christchurch, taking the early interislander ferry across the Cook Strait to **Picton**. Then is a relaxing three-hour journey that will take you through New Zealand's breathtaking scenery and landmarks following the coastline to Christchurch.

The group will stop at the beautiful coastal town of **Kaikoura** for lunch.

Group Dinner.

Accommodation:

Christchurch.TBA

Day 11

Locations: Christchurch

Overview:

Today our local guide assists both on foot and in the Coach to spend the morning exploring and learning about Christchurch, the largest city in New Zealand's South Island. Time permitting we will head over to the French inspired settlement of Lyttelton to learn more about this European settlement. In the early afternoon our day tour will possibly finish on the coast at Sumner where you can explore at your leisure or return to Christchurch.

This reminder of the afternoon is at your leisure.

Accommodation:

Christchurch TBA

Day 12

Locations: Christchurch - Dunedin

Overview:

Today we will be travelling from Christchurch running close to the coast all the way to Dunedin. We stop at Oamaru en-route to explore the quirky Victorian Precinct, famous for its Steampunk playground and restored buildings.

Accommodation:

Dunedin TBA

Day 13

Locations: Dunedin

Overview:

With a local guide Dunedin, to explore and learn about a city designed in Edinburgh, Scotland…. Dunedin was once the largest city in New Zealand and on this tour of the city we see and learn about some terrific buildings and monuments from the Victorian Era including the university and Railway station. There is also likely to be time to visit the worlds steepest street as laid out by the Scottish surveyors in Edinburgh.

We also visit the beautiful gardens and historic house of New Zealand's only castle, Larnach Castle. It was built by the entrepreneur and politician, William Larnach.

Accommodation:

Dunedin TBA.

Day 14

Locations: Te Anau

Overview:

Today we will travel from **Dunedin** to Te Anau via Invercargill. We break for lunch in Invercargill and enjoy a short guided tour of the city, which have the only South facing harbour in the world. Te Anau is a small settlement next to the Fiordland National Park, part of Unesco World

Heritage site, Te W?hipounamu. There may be the opportunity to explore some of the history between Dunedin and Te Anau

Group meal this evening

Accommodation:

Te Anau TBA

Day 15

Locations: Te Anau - Milford Sound - Queenstown

Overview:

Today we venture with many others to take what is described a highlight of ant visit to the South Island, a 90 minute cruise on Milford sound in the Fiordland National park

- **Milford Sound day trip** – a boat cruise through the amazing cliffs of Milford Sound in Fiordland National Park, the cliffs carved by glaciers during the ice ages.

In the afternoon we travel past the National park on our way to Queenstown by road through the Southern alps.

Accommodation:

Queenstown TBA

Day 16

Locations: Queenstown

Overview:

Today we have a day tour to explore Queenstown with our knowledgable local guide.

In the afternoon we take a ride on the tss Earnslaw, a coal fired steam vessel assembled during the gold rush era on the banks of Lake Wakatipu and it has been restored down to its last brass fitting. It is in regular service and is still the main cargo conduit between Queenstown and the sheep stations, as ranches are known, that line the narrow

twisting lake.

Queenstown is a historic gold mining town is the winter sports capital of New Zealand and in the views of many, the adventure capital of the world. The fast-flowing narrow-ravined rivers that once powered the gold sluices have become now the habitat for jet boaters and bungee jumpers.

In the evening we will meet again for our farewell dinner.

Accommodation:

Queenstown TBA

Day 17

Locations: Queenstown

Overview:

Today concludes after breakfast.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 16 nights accommodation.
- 16 breakfasts, 7 dinners. 1 picnic lunch.
- Transport by modern and comfortable coach.
- Entrances and sightseeing as specified.
- Services of Tour Leader for the duration of tour
- Detailed Preparatory Information

What's not included in our Tour

- Return international airfare and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.