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£5,469 GBP

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Prices valid until
 30th December 2023

13 days
 Duration

Level 1 - Introductory to Moderate
 Activity

Small group tour of New Zealand's North Island

Aug 14 2023 to Aug 26 2023

Small Group Tour of New Zealand's North island

Odyssey offers easy, convenient, and relaxed escorted small group tours across New Zealand. We explore the North island of New Zealand's fairy-tale natural beauty, and its World Heritage Sites, and world 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



Small group tour of New Zealand's North Island

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com.au>

08-Jun-2023

Odyssey Traveller is pleased to introduce our new small group tour of New Zealand, focusing on the beautiful North Island. Our tour is for up to 15 people, typically mature and senior travellers joining as a couple or as solo traveller. This program will guide travellers through the history, Maori culture, and landscapes of the North Island of New Zealand. Our itinerary gets off the beaten track, following the east coast of the North Island from Auckland to Wellington.

For many visitors, the South Island gets all the attention, with the big tourist draws of Franz Josef Glacier, Milford Sound, Queenstown and historic Christchurch. But dig deeper and you'll find that New Zealand's North Island has as much to offer, including the beautiful Bay of Islands, Poor Knights Island, White Island, and Waiheke Island, the bird sanctuary of Tiritiri Matangi, the Art Deco of Hawke's Bay, alpine Tongariro, and the glow worm caves in the Waitomo Caves complex.

The arrival of Europeans – mostly British settlers – in New Zealand set in motion a startling and ultimately largely successful co-existence with the Maori people, that will be the focus of this tour of New Zealand.

Both Maori traditional owners and new settlers had to come to terms with the fiercely disparate environments and climates found through New Zealand, from the subtropical north to the alpine south. This is the route we will follow on this tour, heading from Auckland on a journey through the Coromandel Peninsula, then tracking south through the Bay of Plenty to Tairāwhitu (The East Cape), rich in Maori culture and travel experiences. From Gisborne through Hawkes Bay and the Wairarapa, grape vines dominate the landscape. Our road trip finishes in Wellington, New Zealand's capital city.

On our small group tour of New Zealand:

New Zealand (Maori: *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. The country has two main islands: the North Island (Te Ika-a-Māui) and the South

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Island (Te Waipounamu), and about 600 smaller islands.

Our 13-day small group tour of New Zealand's North Island is the best guided tour of the island's east coast, designed especially for mature and senior travellers. In [Auckland](#), you join your tour guide and after a welcome dinner, the adventure begins the following morning with a trip on the fast ferry, past the island of [Waiheke](#), to the town of Coromandel. From here, we are collected in our coach and our guided tour begins.

This small group tour will be accompanied by an Odyssey tour guide and are joined by expert local guides who will impart their knowledge about the places we will visit. Odyssey conducts educational tours designed for small groups of mature and senior travellers, focusing on history, culture, wildlife and other areas of particular interest where the trip is taking place. A small group tour is typically between 6 to 12 people. The cost of an Odyssey Traveller guided tour is inclusive of all entrances (unless otherwise indicated), tipping, and majority of the meals throughout the trip.

This particular tour has periods of free time built into the itinerary, allowing you explore each destination 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.

Articles about New Zealand published by Odyssey Traveller:

- [Questions about New Zealand](#)
- [Foundations for democracy in New Zealand: 900s – 1945](#)
- [Definitive Guide to Auckland, New Zealand](#)

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:

- [Visit New Zealand](#)
- [One day in Wellington: City walking tour itinerary](#)
- [Te Ara: Auckland](#)
- [New York Times: 36 Hours in Auckland](#)

Highlights

1. Enjoy a scenic drive through the Coromandel Peninsula
2. Immerse yourself in the cultural narratives of Ngāti Awa as you get to know Mataatua Whareniui, the house that came home, New Zealand's longest continually occupied settlement.
3. Spend time immersed in the Art deco city of Napier.
4. Hop on to your private charter and discover 12 km of rugged volcanic coastline Lonely Bay, Cooks Beach, Shakespeare Cliff and Hahei along the way.
5. Go on an ultimate journey of discovery, uncovering Waihi's quest for gold that has spanned three centuries.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Auckland

Overview:

Haere mai! – Welcome to New Zealand!

Hotel check-in is available from 02:00pm.

You have an afternoon to relax before heading out for group welcome dinner. Meet your driver/ guide at Fable Auckland reception at 6pm.

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Auckland – the largest city in New Zealand has three distinct parts. The centre (vibrant restaurants, arts scene, gardens), the East Coast (multiple islands in the beautiful Hauraki Gulf) and the West Coast (crashing surf and black sand beaches, lush rainforest). One of the highlights of a visit to Auckland is its funky dining scene. A few years ago the city woke up and now just a few months away is long enough to lose touch with what's happening with the restaurants and bars. A combination of super-fresh produce and the fresh wind of inspiration combine to delight foodies.

Accommodation:

Fable Auckland, or similar

Day 2

Locations: Auckland to Coromandel

Overview:

After breakfast leave your accommodation around 10:00 AM. Stop in Thames after 90 minutes for a break. This is the start of the Coromandel Peninsula. Coromandel, renowned for its natural beauty – rural farmland, misty rainforests and pristine golden beaches, native forests and laid-back vibe, is one of New Zealand's most popular and best-loved holiday destinations. The Coromandel is blessed with hundreds of natural hideaways, making it an ideal place to escape, relax and unwind.

The next 60 minutes of the journey is a delightful winding coastal road with beautiful views, leading up to the small town of Coromandel. This is where we will stop for lunch. After lunch it's a short 50-minute drive to the other side of the peninsula and our destination of Whitianga.

Whitianga itself is a bustling little seaside town with a number of dining options.

In the afternoon we will hop on a private charter-boat and discover 12 km of rugged volcanic coastline visiting nearby islands and stunning beaches. Get you up close and personal with the impressive Cathedral Cove where Prince Caspian (Chronicles of Narnia) was filmed. Visit Lonely Bay, Cooks Beach, Shakespeare Cliff and Hahei along the way. Venture across the Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve where you'll observe an abundance of marine and bird life. Step back in time and

picture the spectacular geological process that helped form towering pinnacles, giant blowholes and huge sea caves including Orua Sea Cave, one of the largest in NZ and only accessible by boat. Throughout the unforgettable journey your local guide will highlight Mercury Bay's rich and colorful history giving a perfect balance of information and time to soak up the sights and sounds.

Accommodation:

Oceans Resort Whitianga, or similar

Day 3

Locations: Day Trip to Mercury Islands - Private Charter

Overview:

Today is a big day out to one of the prettiest places on earth – Mercury Islands. Depart at 8:00 AM for the 15 nautical mile journey in Windborne; a 1928 Topsail Schooner built in Porthleven England. She was built for Doctor W.Frothingham Roach, a keen racer who named her Magnet, hidden during WW2 to escape being taken by the British Admiralty for coastal patrol work. She turned up in the 60s in Canada under the name of Huegenot and then left for New Zealand about 1975. This cruise allows us to trim the sails and feel the old schooner heeling with the wind. Weather permitting, head for a sheltered bay, which you will have to yourselves. Once there, you have options to swim ashore in the crystal-clear water followed by a walk on the flawless beach or take a short jaunt through the bush to a stunning waterfall and enjoy a dip in the freshwater pool. Whatever you choose to do, native parrots, kaka and tui are abundant, so you are sure to catch sight of these beautiful creatures.

Accommodation:

Oceans Resort Whitianga, or similar

Day 4

Locations: Whitianga to Whakatane via Waihi

Overview:

It's a two hour run this morning down the peninsula to Waihi Beach and an early lunch at the iconic Flat White Cafe. Then a short back track to Waihi town where the Tour Gold Discovery. Go on an ultimate journey of discovery, uncovering Waihi's quest for gold that has spanned three centuries. Discover modern gold mining up close and on a grand scale. Learn how today's miners get the gold out of the rock and into gold bars. You'll be fitted out with safety gear, given a safety briefing then taken inside the security fence to view the mine operations from the best available vantage points. You'll be shown every stage of the process from ore extraction and crushing, through to final processing. There is plenty of massive mining equipment on show too. Your private guide will relate colorful stories from the mine's past and answer any questions you may have about the modern operation. Then a two hour drive to finish in Whakatane. Stay 1 night at The Complex.

Accommodation:

The Complex - Whakatane, or similar

Day 5

Locations: Whakatane to Potaka

Overview:

This morning starts in Whakatane with a traditional Maori welcome at the local meeting house.

Nau mai, haere mai Immerse yourself in the cultural narratives of Ng?ti Awa as you get to know Mataatua Wharenui, the house that came home, New Zealand's longest continually occupied settlement. Your journey begins by being welcomed onto the marae and into the sacred house through the ancient ritual of p?whiri. Follow by a guided tour and interactive cultural workshops, the experience in Mataatua Wharenui concludes with Hiko: Legends Carved in Light. Marvel at the intricacy of the carved representations of the great ancestors of Ng?ti Awa as two of the most famous traditions of our tribe are brought to life before your eyes during this award-winning Mataatua visitor experience. Arrive a

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stranger, leave a friend with unforgettable memories of the house, the people, and the land of Ng?ti Awa and Mataatua.

Then, after early lunch, it's a 2 hours 20 minute drive up towards East Cape, stopping at various stops to the end of the road and quirky Lottin Point Motel.

Accommodation:

Lottin Point Motel, or similar

Day 6

Locations: Potaka to Gisborne

Overview:

Today we we will visit Manuka Honey Facility. This is an interesting tribal-owned group that produces some of the finest honey in the country. They will show us some of their magic.

Then we continue south for two hours until we reach the Emerald Hotel in Gisborne. We will stop at the Tolaga Bay Wharf and a number of other places.

Accommodation:

Emerald Hotel - Gisborne, or similar

Day 7

Locations: Gisborne

Overview:

We are currently in discussions to see what we can create with local tribal elders.

In the afternoon, we will get kitted out in designer waders and embark on a walk across the reef at Tatapouri on the low tide with your experienced guides to meet with the Tamariki (Maori for children) of Tangaroa the Maori Sea God. During the tour, you'll have the opportunity to observe and interact with the Stingrays, Eagle Rays, Kingfish, and other reef dwellers under the guidance. The guides will

provide information about the local inhabitants who live on the reef.

Accommodation:

Emerald Hotel - Gisborne, or similar

Day 8**Locations:** Gisborne to Napier**Overview:**

In the morning we have a relaxed three hour drive to Napier, after which we can check in to our hotel and have a free afternoon to walk around the centre. There are lots of places to eat, some nice antique shops and lots of art deco architecture. After spending the last few days “on a mission” this gives us a chance to be independent for a while. Originally a gentleman farmer’s region, and now supporting a very successful Chardonnay and Bordeaux blends wine growing industry, this is a great place to enjoy the softer and more artistic aspects of New Zealand. The art deco town of Napier and local artists are also enjoyable. In 1931, when an earthquake ravaged Napier, enlightened locals rebuilt the centre entirely in Art Deco style. I’m told every type of art deco feature is incorporated here. This has contributed to the light, upbeat and stylish feeling of this city – if you’re into that sort of thing, definitely worth a look. This is a heavyweight winemaking area, with superb wines and excellent practices in existence. If you love chardonnays, merlots, cabernets and now syrahs – then this is a wonderfully relaxed and sophisticated place to do so.

Accommodation:

The County Hotel - Napier, or similar

Day 9**Locations:** Napier- Martinborough**Overview:**

Today is a day of choices. If you wish we can book you on one of a number of cycle routes through vineyards, or you can be left to your

own devices, or you can agree on places to visit with your guide.

Accommodation:

The County Hotel - Napier, or similar

Day 10**Locations:** Napier to Taupo**Overview:**

It's a two hour run over the mountains across to Taupo. On the way there we will be deviating across beautiful private Lochinver Station. There we will meet with today's guide, Tom Loughlin, who will introduce us to the Maori relationship with food and the outdoors. After that, it's a quick hour into Taupo and a wide range of restaurant choices.

Tom Loughlin is an experienced Maori chef, outdoorsman, and search and rescue specialist (tracker). Tom is passionate about sharing the magic of the New Zealand bush with his guests, combining wonderful Maori/Irish humour with a deep knowledge about Maori relationships with the land. He manages a 5,000 acre block of Maori land up in the Kaimanawa Ranges, an hour outside Taupo, and takes guests as well as Maori groups out there to hunt, gather, cultivate, prepare, cook, and hike. To find out more about the day with Tom, click on our [E Book](#).

Accommodation:

Hilton Lake Taupo, or similar

Day 11**Locations:** Taupo - Wellington**Overview:**

We'll be visiting Delani Brown, acclaimed master carver, probably in his workshop. And spending a bit more time with Tom, from yesterday, as we check out a few local, under the radar, places. Maori Creations – A Day with a Carver. In the Maori world, the carver is second only to the chief in a tribe. This is because the carver is the keeper of history and traditions. Maori had no alphabet when Europeans arrived yet were capable of reciting their genealogy dozens of generations back. This knowledge was kept in carvings and weavings, and blended with

spiritual knowledge. A day with Delani Brown, acknowledged Master Carver, will give you a gentle introduction into this world through his eyes.

After the Carver experience, drive from Taupo to Wellington (drive time 4 hours 50 minutes) with few stops on the way.

Accommodation:

Ramada by Wyndham - Wellington, or similar

Day 12

Locations: Wellington

Overview:

This morning a private guide will pick you up from your accommodation to experience a half-day Wellington walking tour. Today you will be visiting various historic points like Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, Old Bank Arcade and then a short walk-up to Cable Car. Back to Lambton Quay and an easy stroll to Parliamentary precinct via Stout Street. After a short coffee break, walk along waterfront towards Te Papa with a view to lunch at Karaka Cafe (Te Whare Waka). A group Farewell dinner has been organised for the evening. Meet your driver/guide at the reception in the evening.

Accommodation:

Ramada by Wyndham - Wellington, or similar

Day 13

Locations: Wellington

Overview:

This small group tour of New Zealand journey down the East coast of the north Island concludes after breakfast.

Haere pai atu, hoki pai mai! Travel safely!

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

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- 12 nights accommodation.
- 13 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 2 dinners
- Transport by modern and comfortable coach.
- Entrances and sightseeing as specified.
- Services of a Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Detailed Preparatory Information.

What's not included in our Tour

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

Level 1 - Introductory to Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, moderate walking on uneven surfaces for 3 - 5 kilometres per day. Suitable for most fitness levels.

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