

## With Agri-Travel International

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# NEW ZEALAND ITINERARY

**Land & Air 25 days - Friday, 19 February, 2010 – Tuesday, 16 March, 2010**

**Land Package: 23 full days and 23 nights**

*New Zealand is a unique land of breathtakingly beautiful and varied scenery. "Visitors are drawn by the country's craggy coastlines, golden beaches, verdant forests, snow-capped alpine mountains, volcanic pools, fish-filled rivers and glacier-fed lakes, all beneath a brilliant blue sky."*

*It ranges in latitude from subtropical to sub-Antarctic, and is a tectonically active hotspot with frequent volcanic activity. In addition to its many wonders of Nature, and large variety of outdoor activities, New Zealand is also a country rich in cultural influences: – the original adventurous Polynesian navigators (Maoris), and the pioneering European settlers who followed a thousand years later, whose effect on the country is shown in the many museums and galleries of New Zealand's main cities and local towns.*

*This is a very comprehensive tour covering both North and South Islands. There will be a fair amount of walking, especially in order to get the most enjoyment out of it, and although such walking is not generally difficult, good walking shoes are highly recommended.*

This tour is NOT recommended for people with walking problems, breathing or heart problems.

BB=Bed & Breakfast, D=Dinner at 7:00 pm. L=Lunch included

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### DAY 1/2/3

Fri,Sat,Sun

Fly Vancouver – Christchurch

We fly directly from Vancouver to Auckland with Air New Zealand

Depart Flight NZ 0083 at approx. 9:00 pm?

Arrive Auckland 06:00 am?, with a good connection to Christchurch.

*(flights to be verified when schedules for 2010 are available.)*

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### DAY 3

Sunday, Feb.21st

Start Land Package

We have arranged for an early lunch (included), after which we have a short relaxing walking tour of the city with a local guide – you'll be ready to stretch your legs after the long flight – as we cannot check into the hotel until 2:00 pm, as is usual at most hotels nowadays. The rest of the afternoon is then free to rest or explore **Christchurch**. At the time of our visit, the **annual Festival of Flowers** will be on in Christchurch, so we will definitely be able to see some of this world-famous event while we are there.

Tonight, we will have an early dinner at 6:30 pm.

1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights, Latimer Hotel, Christchurch

LDBB

DAY 4

Monday, 22nd

English breakfast at the hotel

A scenic, relaxing drive to the quaint little fishing village of **Akaroa**, an hour's drive south of Christchurch, nestled in the heart of an ancient volcano. It was originally an historic French and British settlement with its colonial architecture, craft stores, and cafés; a 'must see' when visiting Christchurch. On route back we will see attractive **Lyttleton Harbour**, and the rest of the afternoon is again free to enjoy Christchurch on your own.

Last of 2 nights in Christchurch

DBB

DAY 5

Tuesday, 23rd

Full English breakfast at the hotel

Depart for **Dunedin** stopping near **Oamaru**, which has become famous for the geological wonder of the **Moeraki Boulders** on the windswept sands of a dramatic coastline nearby. These are huge perfectly spherical boulders formed from ancient sea sediments, strewn at random on the beach, and are like no others anywhere else in the world.

We continue down the coast to Dunedin where we have a short tour of New Zealand's oldest city, and one of the best preserved Victorian and Edwardian cities in the entire Southern Hemisphere. We will have time to stroll through the Botanic Gardens before having dinner there.

Overnight: Dunedin City Hotel, Dunedin

DBB

DAY 6

Wednesday, 24th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We have an early departure for the resort town of **Te Anau**, the best base for exploring the **Fiordland** region.

After checking into the hotel and lunch, we take a boat trip across Lake Te Anau to visit the **Glow Worm Caves** and a chance to stroll through the native rainforest. The rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy this small town.

1<sup>st</sup> of 3 nights: Luxmore Hotel, Te Anau

DBB

DAY 7

Thursday, 25th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

Today we have a full-day excursion to **Doubtful Sound** and **Lake Manapouri**, known for its wilderness and wildlife. We visit the **Manapouri Underground Power Station**, the country's largest hydroelectric power station which is considered New Zealand's greatest engineering feat. It is unique in that nearly all of it is built underground. We then cross magnificent **Willmott Pass** for our cruise on Doubtful Sound, with scenic photographic stops on the way. Lunch is included today.

2<sup>nd</sup> of 3 nights in Te Anau

LDBB

DAY 8

Friday, 26th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We have another full-day excursion – to experience the wonders of **Milford Sound** and the gorgeous scenery en route. On our boat trip on this stunning Sound nowhere else in Fiordland do the mountains stand as tall, directly out of the sea. There are magnificent waterfalls straight into the Sound, and if it rains (actually a bonus) there are literally thousands of amazing additional waterfalls – so maybe we should hope it rained *before* we get there! On the return journey,

we will have time for several special photo stops and some wonderful short nature walks. Lunch is included on the boat today.

Last of 3 nights in Te Anau – dinner on own

LBB

### DAY 9

Saturday, 27th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

Depart for **Queenstown**, New Zealand's premier tourist resort, on the shores of crystal-clear **Lake Wakatipu** and surrounded by majestic mountains.

As it will be too early to check into the hotel, we go to the boat dock for 12 noon for a 1.5 hr. boat excursion up the lake as far as the Walter Peak Sheep Station. Affectionately known as the "Lady of the Lake," the vintage steamship *TSS Earnslaw* is the only coal fired, passenger-carrying vessel still operating in the southern hemisphere. You can either have a snack on board or wait for lunch later when the rest of the afternoon is free in Queenstown.

1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights: Novotel Gardens Hotel, Queenstown

DBB

### DAY 10

Sunday, 28th

Driver's Rest Day

Full English breakfast at the hotel

A free day in Queenstown (suggestions: Shotover River adventure, Skippers Canyon, Gondola to the Skyline Chalet, Heritage tours covering the gold rush, scenic flights [small plane and helicopter], wine tours, guided nature walks, gorgeous gardens, and the Trilogy Trail for Lord of the Rings fans). There are more than enough things to do in Queenstown to suit anybody's preference. There will be a handout describing these options in more detail.

Last of 2 nights in Queenstown – dinner on own

BB

### DAY 11

Monday,  
March 1<sup>st</sup>

Full English breakfast at the hotel

En route for **Lake Wanaka** we visit historic **Arrowtown** where, in 1862, gold was found in the river and the small town rapidly grew to a population of over 7,000. Now, it is the most well-preserved gold-mining town in the county of Otago: its buildings are protected and many have been so well restored that you feel as if you have walked back in time.

**Wanaka Town** is at the foot of the Southern Alps, at the edge of yet another crystal clear lake in the dramatic alpine Mount Aspiring National Park. This lake is New Zealand's fourth largest lake, an inland sea for sailors and jet-boaters. The afternoon is free for you to enjoy the walking trails, or whatever other outdoor activities are available. Or visit Stuart Landsborough's Puzzling World, a world-unique attraction with a fascinating theme of anything eccentrically puzzling.

Overnight: Edgewater Resort, Wanaka

DBB

### DAY 12

Tuesday, 2nd

Full English breakfast at the hotel

Today promises to be one of the most scenic drives in the whole of New Zealand (can anything be even better than what we've already seen?), along the side of Lake Hawea, through Mt. Aspiring National Park, and over the Haast Pass. We have a short walk to see the famous **Blue Pools of Haast**, then an exciting "safari" jet-boat cruise on the Haast River which allows us to explore an area of New Zealand that has been untouched by humans – ie. the Haast River and the surrounding glacial valley where we will see some of the most

stunning scenery of New Zealand. This guided cruise takes us to some intriguing and pristine places along the river, with stories of the cultural history and legends.

After lunch we continue to **Fox Glacier** where we take a walk as close to the foot of a glacier as possible. This is an unusual area of the world where the glaciers are not retreating but, rather, advancing. Of all the glaciers in the Southern Alps, only the **Fox** and **Franz Josef glaciers** have crept as far as the rain-forests, where these giant tongues of ice have squeezed down their valleys to just 250 metres above sea level. Optional scenic heli-flights with snow landing are available at Fox Glacier.

Overnight: Fox Glacier Hotel

DBB

### DAY 13

Wednesday, 3rd

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We start early with a diversion to nearby Lake Matheson (the “mirror” lake) where, if we are lucky, there should be a perfect reflection of the major mountains in the lake before the wind ruffles the surface.

We continue up the windy coastal road to stop at **Hokitika** to see the gold and greenstone (jade) factories, and perhaps a short walk on the black beach.

After lunch near **Greymouth** our next stop is for nee of the West Coast’s most famous sights - the fascinating ‘**pancake**’ rocks and blowholes at **Punakaiki**. These ‘pancakes’ are thousands of thin, horizontal layers of limestone, about 2-4 cm. thick, scattered on the beach and piled on top of each other.

Overnight: Punaikaki Resort Hotel (to be confirmed)

DBB

### DAY 14

Thursday, 4th

Full English breakfast at the hotel.

Today we drive through the spectacular **Buller Gorge**, on a the twisting road that has been carved through the steep-sided, bush-clad gorge, en route for **Nelson**, our last stop at the north end of South Island on the shores of Tasman Bay. It is the geographic centre of New Zealand and renowned for having the most sunshine in the entire country! It is also New Zealand's largest fishing port and the gateway to a major forestry and horticulture industry. We have another wonderful resort to enjoy, overlooking the bay.

Overnight: Grand Mercure Monaco Hotel & Resort, Nelson

DBB

### DAY 15

Friday, 5th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

An early departure in order to get to **Picton** for the 9:50 ferry to **Wellington**, at the foot of North Island, which takes 3.5 hours – so lunch on board.

After checking into our hotel, we have a walking tour of Wellington with a local guide, after which we visit the magnificent **Te Papa Tongnerwa Museum** for a guided tour. This is New Zealand's national museum which offers visitors a unique and authentic experience of the country's treasures and stories - from the shaping of its land to the spirit of its diverse people, from its unique wildlife to its distinctive art and visual culture. Afterwards, you can explore on your own as one can walk from one side of downtown Wellington to the other in approx. 20 minutes.

Overnight: Novotel Capital, Wellington

DBB

DAY 16

Saturday, 6th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We depart for **Napier**, on the shore of Hawkes Bay, which was entirely rebuilt in the early 1930s following a massive earthquake which almost destroyed the entire city. By the end of the decade, after a huge rebuilding boom, Napier was the newest city on the globe. The rebuilding period coincided with the short-lived and rapidly changing Art Deco era and the Great Depression. As a result Napier's architecture is strikingly different from any other city and in many ways it resembles a film set.

After we check in at the hotel, we have an “**Art Deco**” **guided walk**, then free time for relaxation or to explore more of Napier on your own.

Dinner tonight is at Mission Winery, in an old converted monastery.

Overnight: Beach Front Hotel, or Te Pania Hotel, Napier (to be confirmed) DBB

DAY 17

Sunday, 7th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We leave the coast to drive to **Rotorua** via **Taupo**, New Zealand's largest freshwater lake created by a gigantic volcanic eruption, with pumice-sand beaches. We have a photo stop by the lake, and a walk to see a little of the spectacular **Huka Falls** before continuing to **Rotorua**, a geothermal paradise, and home to one of the most unique tourism sites in the world. Set amid attractive scenery, the entire region is a geologically exciting volcanic wonderland. The city itself is a pleasure to explore, with steam escaping from cracks in the road, and back gardens having their own thermal pools, with the pungent aroma of sulphur everywhere!

We visit **Te Puia** to introduce you to the area. We hear about Maori life, see the carving school, and learn about the unique Maori lifestyle and traditions, how they have come to live in harmony within this unique environment. It is set amidst a landscape of erupting geothermal activity, hot thermal springs and bubbling mud pools, where we can see the highest Pohutu geyser.

1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights: Royal Lakeside Novotel, Rotorua

DBB

DAY 18

Monday, 8th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

An early start today with a fair amount of walking. We drive to the exciting **Waimangu Volcanic Valley**, the only hydrothermal system in the world wholly formed within historic times as a result of a volcanic eruption in 1886. The area is a scenic and wildlife reserve, protected by the Department of Conservation. We can follow a walkway to see large craters filled with hot, coloured or clear water, silica terracing, hot running streams, fumaroles and hot springs, to a boat dock for a 45-minute boat cruise in a crater lake, see several endangered plants that exist beside the geothermal activity, along with many unusual thermally-adapted plants.

After lunch at Waimangu we depart for the **Agrodome Sheep Show**, the entertaining, multi-award-winning, stage show where the presenter gives us an exciting and informative insight into agriculture in New Zealand. During the show we will see nineteen sheep breeds introduced onto the stage, the art of sheep shearing, sheep-dog demonstrations, cow milking, an exciting sheep auction, and be able to bottle feed lambs.

This evening we will attend a special **Maori concert and feast** (*hangi*) with a floodlit walk through Rainbow Springs where we will hope to see the iconic nocturnal kiwi bird and the ancient tuatara, the world's only living dinosaur.

Last of 2 nights in Rotorua

DBB

### DAY 19

Tuesday, 9th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

After having seen all the major marvels that this area has to offer, you have until 10:45 for free time in Rotorua to enjoy this attractive little city before we depart for the coast again. We can have a lovely walk to see the beautiful **Okere Falls** before continuing on to **Tauranga**, located on the Bay of Plenty and surrounded by orchards and gardens growing everything from kiwifruit and citrus fruit to avocados and culinary herbs. There is a thriving local wine industry and plentiful fresh seafood and you'll see why the region's restaurant culture is so well developed.

En route we stop at **Comvita**, a very interesting honey and natural health product factory (fascinating to see the bees at work) at **Te Puke**, which is also the kiwifruit capital of New Zealand.

After checking in at the hotel we have a drive to **Mount Maunganui**, to see the harbour and fabulous beaches, after which there is free time to relax.

Overnight: The Sebel Trinity Wharf Hotel, Tauranga

DBB

### DAY 20

Wednesday, 10th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

Today we drive round the **Coromandel Peninsula**, which has some of the most stunning beaches in the North Island, with golden sand, hot pools and glorious waters, plus some small picturesque coastal resorts. This will be a very relaxing day with an opportunity to gaze at perfect beaches with maybe a chance to get your feet wet.

Overnight: Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland

DBB

### DAY 21

Thursday, 11th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We depart for **Bay of Islands**, one of the most picturesque and popular holiday sites in New Zealand. It is a stunning region of 144 secluded islands, abundant in natural wonders and marine life. It is also regarded as the birthplace of New Zealand as a bi-cultural nation, rich in both Maori culture and early European history, with some of New Zealand's most significant historic sites.

We stop at the **Kauri Museum** at **Matakohe**, one of the country's most amazing internationally-acclaimed theme museums. This award-winning museum tells a fascinating story of the pioneering days through the use of kauri timber and kauri gum. Settlers first came to Matakohe and nearby Paparoa and Maungaturoto in 1862 and this museum was established to celebrate their centennial and to pay tribute to those early pioneers.

The kauri tree is New Zealand's largest and most famous native tree - a special type of conifer or pine tree which grows in the subtropical northern part of the North Island. After lunch, we continue up the west coast route and see the largest kauri in the country. After checking in at the lovely resort of **Paihia** it's

at your leisure to take a 5-minute ferry trip across the bay to **Russell**, as the rest of the afternoon is on your own to explore this lovely little seaside village across the harbour, which was actually the first capital of New Zealand! It has lots of history and old buildings, most of the places are free, and you can return independently on the boat in time for dinner.

1<sup>st</sup> of 3 nights: Cophorne Hotel & Resort, Paihia

DBB

## DAY 22

Friday, 12th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

Today we explore more of the history of the area in nearby **Waitangi** where, at the **Treaty House**, Maori and Europeans joined in signing the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. It established British law in New Zealand, at the same time guaranteeing Maori authority over their land and culture. It is considered to be New Zealand's founding document. On the same site, in a vast, peaceful park, is a fully-carved **Maori Meeting House**, one of the largest remaining Maori war canoes, and a superb Visitor Centre and Gallery.

En route to **Kerikeri**, a fertile orchard town, we have a photo stop at **Hurua Falls** before continuing to photograph the **Mission House**, the oldest wooden building in New Zealand, and adjacent **Stone House**, the oldest building. After lunch we have a wonderful short walk to the famous **Rainbow Falls**, before returning to Paihia where the rest of the day is free to enjoy this lovely little resort by the water. Dinner will be on your own, with plenty of choice.

2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights in Paihia – dinner on own

BB

## DAY 23

Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup>

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We have a full day tour along the western coast of the Aupouri Peninsula to **Cape Reinga**, at the very northern tip of New Zealand where two mighty oceans meet. Here the Tasman Sea clashes with the Pacific Ocean in a ridge of foaming water which can create 10-metre waves. The well-photographed Cape Reinga lighthouse and a gnarly 800-year old *pohutukawa* tree mark “land's end” where these two mighty oceans meet and the spirit of the Maori are said to leap off. The lighthouse can be seen from 90 miles away.

The natural landscape is exposed to the full force of two oceans, and is home to magnificent sandy beaches, huge sand-dunes, and lush green pastures. We drive along the famous 90-mile beach, and stop at the **Kauri Forest** at **Puteki** on our return. Lunch is included.

Last of 3 nights in Paihia – dinner on own

LBB

## DAY 24

Sunday, 14th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

We return to **Auckland**, one of the world's most exciting waterside cities, and New Zealand's largest and most vibrant one. Known as the “City of Sails,” Auckland features spectacular harbour views, with more yachts and sailboats per capita than any other city in the world.

We start with a visit to the top of the **Sky Tower**, the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere, after which a local guide will take us on a walking tour.

1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights: Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland

DBB

DAY 25

Monday, 15th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

In the morning, we have a trip from Waitemata Harbour to **Rangitoto Island** to visit the extinct volcano. We visit the lovely village of **Devonport** for lunch, after which our driver will take us on a driving tour of Auckland, including **Auckland Harbour Bridge**, which gives spectacular views of the city; **One Tree Hill, burial place of the city's founder**; and **Mt. Eden**. Auckland is built on 48 dormant or extinct volcanoes, and at 196 m. Mt Eden is the highest volcanic cone in the area. From the summit we have a marvellous 360° panoramic view of the city. We will see the **Auckland Domain**, the city's central park, with nearby **Auckland University** and **Parnell Village** where are some of the cities most historic sites which you can visit on your free time.

Last of 2 nights in Auckland

DBB

DAY 26

Tuesday, 16th

Full English breakfast at the hotel

Free day in Auckland until we leave for the airport. Suggestions in Handout.

Approx. 16:00

Transfer to Airport for 19:30 pm? flight home via San Francisco

NZ Flight 008 and AC Flight 568? Flights to be verified with 2010 schedules.

**Included in the price:**

- Airport transfers for those arriving and leaving with the group
- Accommodation and transportation for tour length
- All breakfasts, 19 dinners, 4 lunches, tea or coffee with dinner
- Admission to all attractions as per itinerary
- Portage - **one medium-sized bag per person** in and out of hotels
- Local guides (although *small* tips can be given if you really enjoy the service)
- Escort throughout

**Not included:**

- Airfare and related taxes
- All Insurance
- Personal requirements: eg. laundry
- Alcoholic and beverages other than tea/coffee as specified
- Gratuities for driver and escort/guide