

20 DAY NEW ZEALAND RAIL JOURNEY

DESTINATIONS

-
- WELLINGTON
- CHRISTCHURCH
- AUCKLAND
- PICTON
- BAY OF ISLANDS
- WAITOMO
- FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER



TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

Destination	Auckland
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Copthorne Auckland City, or similar

Welcome to Auckland. On arrival, please make your way to your hotel for check-in. The rest of the day is at leisure to get acquainted with this vibrant city.

DAY 2

Destination	Auckland 🚌 Paihia (Bay of Islands)
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Kingsgate Hotel Paihia, or similar

Today a spectacular journey awaits. Make your way to the Sky City Coach Terminal on Hobson Street to board your coach to Paihia. New Zealand runs one of the world's best tourist coach networks all across the country. Intercity coaches are modern and comfortable air-conditioned buses.

Note: You will be returning to the same hotel in Auckland on Day 3. You may wish to leave your main suitcase and travel with an overnight bag to Paihia.

Paihia is considered the gateway to the Bays of Islands. If you want to discover the coves and beaches of the Bay of Islands, Paihia is the perfect place to start. On arrival, your coach will drop you off close to Paihia Wharf, from here it is only 200m to your hotel.

This afternoon, make your way back to the wharf to board your afternoon Hole in the Rock cruise. Take in the stunning views as we glide out through the islands and along the Rakaumangamanga Peninsula to Cape Brett, where a historic lighthouse keeps watch over Piercy Island/Motukōkako, or as it is popularly known the 'Hole in the Rock'

DAY 3

Destination	Paihia (Bay of Islands) 🚌 Auckland
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Copthorne Auckland City, or similar

Today entry to the Waitangi Treaty Grounds is included. The treaty grounds are only an easy 25 minute walk from Paihia (2km). This afternoon, reboard your coach back to Auckland. Coaches depart Paihia from the location you disembarked. On arrival back in Auckland check in to your hotel.

DAY 4

Destination	Auckland 🚌 Hobbiton 🚌 Waitomo 🚌 Auckland
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Copthorne Auckland City, or similar

Today you will be collected from your hotel to join a guided tour of Hobbiton and Waitomo. Travel south from Auckland over the Bombay Hills to the rich farmland of the Waikato region. Your journey takes you through undulating green hills reminding you that you are approaching The Shire. Your guide will give you commentary on the way to Hobbiton with insights into the areas you are travelling through, along with some background to the movies.

TOUR ITINERARY

On arrival at Shire's Rest you embark on your Hobbiton movie set tour. This location is the largest "green set" in the world and the only part of the set remaining in New Zealand. You see 44 hobbit holes, the Mill and the Party Tree. At this stunning location you can take a photo at the gate to Bilbo's house, "Bag End", looking out over the whole set to the hills in the distance. You will be treated to a sumptuous buffet lunch in the marquee. There is time for shopping before your tour continues to Waitomo. (Drive time 1 hr 20min). On arrival in Waitomo, join a 45 minute guided tour of the incredible Waitomo Glow Worm caves. Discover an ancient world 30 million years in the making. Enjoy the delicate cave formations and be wowed in the Cathedral, before taking the iconic boat ride through the glow worm grotto (subject to water levels). Marvel in silence at thousands of magical glow worms, which are unique to New Zealand before exiting the cave. Upon conclusion you will be returned to your hotel in Auckland.

DAY 5

Destination	Auckland
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Copthorne Auckland City, or similar

Enjoy a free day at leisure to explore Auckland at your own pace.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Experience the best sights of Auckland City in the morning combined with an afternoon Wilderness Experience – a day of contrasts. See the best of New Zealand's biggest city on an Auckland City highlights tour which includes Queen Street and the Harbour Bridge with its views of the harbour and yacht marina. See Mt Eden (360 degrees views) and the Domain, Parnell Village, Paratai Drive - the most exclusive homes in Auckland - and the waterfront. Continue on the Wilderness Experience tour and discover Auckland's largest regional park, the Waitakere Ranges only 30kms from the city. Visit the Arataki Centre with its spectacular views of both coasts and magnificent Maori carvings. Continue to Black Sand Beach where the guide will explain local history, flora and fauna of the region, then visit a dense rainforest with giant tree ferns, Kauri trees and waterfalls before returning to Auckland.

Includes, pick up and drop off from your accommodation and light snacks.

DAY 6

Destination	Auckland  Wellington
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Distinction Wellington, or similar

Today make your way to Auckland central station to board the Northern Explorer. New Zealand's longest running passenger service, the Northern Explorer is a long distance scenic train service running between Auckland and Wellington, stopping at Palmerston North, Ohakune, National Park and Hamilton. This iconic train journey allows you to experience the extremes of New Zealand's scenery, from the fertile farmlands of Waikato to the volcanic peaks of the Central Plateau and the sparkling Kapiti coast.

The train has panoramic windows, open-air view carriage, a fully licenced cafe plus commentary allowing you to connect with the histories, legends and myths of New Zealand.

On arrival in Wellington, disembark your scenic train and make your way to your hotel. We recommend a short taxi service which can be found easily when exiting the station.

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 7

Destination	Wellington
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Distinction Wellington, or similar

This morning, you'll be collected from your hotel to join a half day city sights tour of Wellington. An intimate tour looking at the unique aspects of the World's Coolest Little Capital. Drive through Courtenay Place and Oriental Parade and head up Mt Victoria for spectacular views of the City and Harbour. Then travel the stunning, rugged coastline, now a marine reserve, stopping along the way to taste some famous Wellington coffee. Return to the central city for a drive through the quirky Cuba Street district and along Lambton Quay, the main shopping street, for a chance to ride the famous Wellington Cable Car. We finish the tour with stops at Parliament and Old St Paul's Cathedral. The tour concludes at your hotel around 1:30pm where the rest of the day is at leisure.

DAY 8

Destination	Wellington
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Distinction Wellington, or similar

Enjoy a free day at leisure to explore Wellington at your own pace.

LORD OF THE RINGS FULL DAY TOUR

Starting on Mt Victoria with a visit to the lookout then onto locations used in the Trilogy like the Outer Shire, Hobbiton Woods & Dunharrow. Then out to the Hutt Valley to Kaitoke Regional park, the location of Rivendell. Along the way visiting Isengard, Fords of Isen, the River Anduin and past the quarry where Helms Deep & Minas Tirith were filmed. The Full day tour also includes an Orc sized picnic lunch or café lunch plus a visit to the famous Weta Cave and now including the Weta Workshop tour.

Duration: This tour starts at 08.30am and returns at 04.30pm

Inclusions: Hotel pick up and drop off and lunch.

DAY 9

Destination	Wellington 🚢 Picton 🚆 Kaikoura
Meals included	
Hotel	4 ★ Whit Morph Kaikoura, or similar

A big day of stunning landscapes is ahead of you today. This morning, make your way to the central wharf to board the Interislander ferry to Picton. Connecting the North Island and South Island together since 1962, the Interislander ferry service is New Zealand's original Cook Strait ferry. Sailing between Wellington and Picton several times a day, the Interislander journey is considered one of the most beautiful ferry journeys in the world and one of New Zealand's most iconic experiences and connects seamlessly with the Coastal Pacific train which is the next leg of your journey.

On arrival in Picton the ferry and the train are separated by only metres. The location is well sign posted. The Coastal Pacific train takes you along rugged coastlines, across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breathtaking beauty.

TOUR ITINERARY

Explore the stunning Kaikōura Coastline, famous for its marine life and whale watching. On arrival in Kaikoura disembark the Coastal Pacific and make your way to your hotel either on foot or using the local Kaikoura shuttle service which can be found at the station on arrival.

DAY 10

Destination	Kaikoura 🚗 Kaikoura 🚗 Christchurch
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Ibis Hotel Christchurch, or similar

This morning make your way to the wharf to board a half day whale watching tour. The main focus of your tour is to locate and view the Giant Sperm whale. They average between 1 to 2 whale sightings per tour due to the length of time the whales can stay submerged.

This afternoon, make your way back to the station to reboard the Coastal train from Kaikoura to Christchurch. On arrival in Christchurch, disembark your scenic train and make your way to your hotel. We recommend a short taxi service which can be found easily when exiting the station.

DAY 11

Destination	Christchurch
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Ibis Hotel Christchurch, or similar

This morning you will be collected from the hotel to enjoy a half-day guided tour of Christchurch. Your guide will explain both the history of the city and the effects of the earthquake, you will see for yourself both the destructive powers of nature and the rebuild taking place. On leaving the inner city, the tour travels to Mona Vale a historic homestead and gardens. We then travel to the Sign of the Takahe, an historic building with a lookout providing spectacular views over the city, Canterbury Plains and to the Southern Alps. The tour then travels via the Port Hills and Lyttleton Harbour by way of the Sign of the Kiwi and Governors Bay to the Port of Lyttleton. The tour proceeds through the Lyttleton harbour tunnel to the seaside suburb of Sumner and cave rock before returning to your hotel where the tour will conclude. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure.

DAY 12

Destination	Christchurch
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Ibis Hotel Christchurch, or similar

Enjoy a free day at leisure to explore Christchurch at your own pace.

TOUR ITINERARY

AKAROA DAY TOUR INCLUDING HARBOUR CRUISE AND LUNCH

Visit the beautiful unspoilt old French whaling depot of Akaroa. Stop at the Hill Top to experience panoramic views of Akaroa Harbour and visit the Cheese Factory at Barry's Bay to sample some fine New Zealand cheeses. In the afternoon enjoy a 2 hour harbour cruise on the Canterbury Cat, sightseeing dolphins, penguins and seals.

Duration: This tour departs at 09.00am and returns at 05.00pm.

Inclusions: Hotel pick up and drop off; Harbour Cruise and lunch.

DAY 13

Destination	Christchurch 🚗 Mt Cook National Park
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Mt Cook Lodge, or similar

Today the driving portion of your holiday begins! New Zealand is a drivers paradise, stunning scenery, leisurely speeds and easy navigable roads. Please make your way to the city Hertz office to collect your vehicle. The car includes unlimited kilometres in a mid-sized Group D vehicle.

Leaving Christchurch, begin the drive south. Watch the scenery and skyline becomes jaw-dropping with the Southern Alps towering over the horizon.

Mt Cook, locally known as Aoraki is the highest mountain in New Zealand at 3,754m. The drive takes approximately 4.5hrs from Christchurch. At the foot of the mountain sits the village of Mount Cook - a comfortable haven in one of the most unforgiving parts of New Zealand. On every side, the Southern Alps scrape the sky. On arrival check in to your hotel and enjoy the alpine village. The nearby Hooker River is accessible to see huge glacier carved icebergs.

DAY 14

Destination	Mt Cook 🚗 Queenstown
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Heartland Hotel Queenstown, or similar

Leaving Mt Cook this morning, continue your drive south to Queenstown. It seems impossible the scenery can get any better, but today's drive takes you even deeper into the majesty of New Zealand.

On arrival in Queenstown make your way to your hotel for check in and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

DAY 15

Destination	Queenstown
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Heartland Hotel Queenstown, or similar

Enjoy a free day at leisure to explore Queenstown at your own pace.

TOUR ITINERARY

MILFORD SOUND CRUISE

Considered one of the most beautiful drives in the world, experience this journey in comfort on our exclusive 'state of the art' coaches. The only operator providing glass roofed coaches with glass above every seat, enjoy the panoramic views from our theatre style, reclinable seats that are angled outwards to maximise viewing. There are multiple stops along the Milford Road and time for short walks and photo opportunities. Our friendly coach drivers provide detailed commentaries throughout the trip. On reaching Milford Sound, join a spectacular one hour 40 minute cruise to the mouth of the fiord on a modern vessel with excellent viewing opportunities. Large windows, spacious decks and comfortable lounges offer uninterrupted views of towering peaks and surging waterfalls. Hotel pick up and drop off included. Plus morning tea.

DAY 16

Destination	Queenstown
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Heartland Hotel Queenstown, or similar

Enjoy a free day at leisure to explore Queenstown at your own pace.

HALF DAY 4WD SKIPPERS CANYON

Join a Skippers Canyon adventure is a half-day heritage tour that follows the rugged and once treacherous Skippers Road. Travel the road that was hacked by hand into the sheer cliff sides of the Shotover River Valley making this an exciting adventure the whole family will enjoy. As your guide navigates this awe-inspiring canyon you will visit many historic sites such as the Skippers Suspension Bridge and the township of Skippers. Visit the restored school house where you will gain a real insight into the local heritage through photos and histories of life in this tough environment. British Automobile Association voted Skippers Canyon Road as one of the 25 most scenic roads in the world. Hotel pick up and drop off included.

DAY 17

Destination	Queenstown 🚗 Wanaka
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Lake Wanaka Bella Vista, or similar

Today, make the short drive to Wanaka. The suggested route is via Cardrona Road along the Crown Range. The Crown Range road climbs to high altitudes and crosses a mountain chain the Cromwell route doesn't. While the Crown Range Road is a shorter distance to journey between Queenstown and Wanaka, travel time is longer and the road is more challenging than the usual route through Cromwell. You should also allow time to stop and admire the massive views, which are often accompanied by amusing encounters with kea (mountain parrots). On arrival in Wanaka make your way to your hotel for check in and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 18

Destination	Wanaka 🚗 Franz Josef Glacier
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Franz Josef Glacier Punga Grove, or similar

Leaving Wanaka, make your way up the western coast of New Zealand. This trip tracks down the West Coast through the breathtaking Haast Pass and to Glacier country. Fox Glacier and Franz Josef allow you to see two glaciers in one day. The Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers are unique relics of the last ice age. Mighty rivers of solid white, tumbling down ice-hewn rock valleys, they are classically beautiful in the glacial sense. Nowhere else in the world have glaciers advanced so close to the sea at this latitude. On arrival in Franz Josef make your way to your hotel for check in and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure.

DAY 19

Destination	Franz Josef Glacier 🚗 Greymouth 🚆 Christchurch
Meals included	
Hotel	3 ★ Ibis Hotel Christchurch, or similar

Continuing driving the West Coast until arriving in Greymouth. On arrive in Greymouth, drop your car at the Hertz office before boarding the TransAlpine train to Christchurch.

Considered one of the world's greatest train journeys, this journey you'll see epic vistas, travel the edges of the ice-fed Waimakariri River, traverse the Southern Alps, and see miles of native beech forest.

The train has panoramic windows, open-air view carriage, a fully licenced cafe plus commentary allowing you to connect the scenery all around you.

On arrival in Christchurch, disembark your scenic train and make your way to your hotel. We recommend a short taxi service which can be found easily when exiting the station.

DAY 20

Destination	Christchurch
Meals included	
Accommodation	N/A

Your holiday concludes this morning or make your own arrangements to continue your journey.

TOUR ITINERARY

Inclusions

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Incredible sightseeing, visit Bay of Islands, Waitomo and Hobbiton, travel on some of the world's most scenic rail journeys, go whale watching and visit New Zealand's famous glaciers and national parks
- 19 nights accommodation in hotels and motels
- Travel on board the TranzAlpine, Northern Explorer and Coastal Pacific trains
- Cruise between Wellington and Picton on the Interislander scenic ferry
- Included guided day tours as per the itinerary
- Enjoy the flexibility of independent travel
- 7 days Hertz Group D car rental

SIGHTSEEING HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel to the picturesque Bay of Island and cruise the Hole in the Rock
- See Hobbiton, the original set from the multi-award winning Lord of the Rings trilogy
- Venture in to Waitomo Caves where the darkness comes alive with mesmerising glow worms
- Take the iconic Northern Explorer train from Auckland to Wellington and experience the extremes of New Zealand's scenery
- Take a tour looking at the unique aspects of the World's Coolest Little Capital, Wellington
- Catch the Interislander Ferry from Wellington to Picton, considered one of the most beautiful ferry journeys in the world
- Ride the Coastal Train from Picton to Christchurch, stopping at whale watching mecca of Kaikoura
- Experience Christchurch and see how it has been rebuilt from the devastation of earthquakes
- Drive to the highest point in New Zealand, the iconic Mt Cook
- Continue the drive to Queenstown, driving the mesmerising Crown Range.
- Spend time in Queenstown, the adventure capital
- See two glaciers in one day, Franz and Fox Glaciers
- Travel on board the TranzAlpine. Considered one of the world's greatest train journeys

TOUR ITINERARY

TRAIN INFORMATION

Northern Explorer, between Auckland and Wellington

The train company will automatically reserve your seat(s). Your seat number(s) will be on your Boarding Pass, which we print the day before travel ready for your arrival.

All seats are the same. They are large, they are comfy, they are reclined - and they all have amazing views!

All seats have New Zealand 3-pin power sockets and a headphone socket for listening to the onboard commentary (headphones are supplied).

Coastal Pacific Train, between Picton and Kaikoura

Scenic Class carriage experience combines comfort and panoramic views, making our trains the perfect way to explore New Zealand.

At the heart of our Scenic Class experience are spacious reclined seats, panoramic windows, glass shelves and skylights. These details bathe our carriages in light and bring New Zealand's famous landscapes to your seat.

Scenic Class carriages deliver extremely wide viewing angles by spacing the seating out. This spaciousness also creates generous amounts of legroom and comfort.

TranzAlpine, between Greymouth and Christchurch

Scenic Class carriage experience combines comfort and panoramic views, making our trains the perfect way to explore New Zealand.

At the heart of our Scenic Class experience are spacious reclined seats, panoramic windows, glass shelves and skylights. These details bathe our carriages in light and bring New Zealand's famous landscapes to your seat.

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Fine Print