

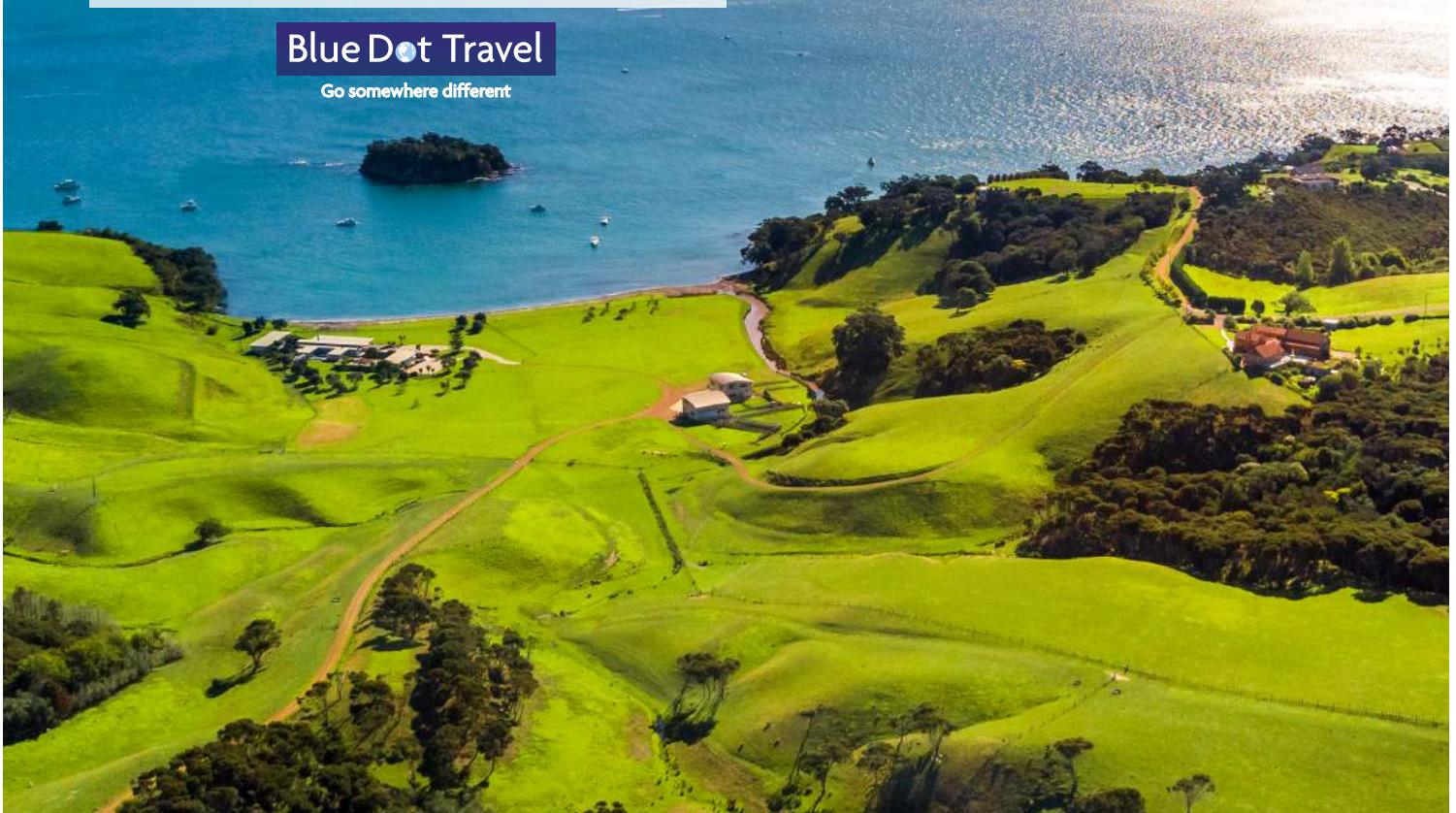
# New Zealand's North Island

Volcanic landscapes,  
culture and coastal  
cuisine

Departs 20th March 2022

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





**\$5,395 pp**  
Twin-share, excludes  
international flights  
Single supp \$1,290

## NEW ZEALAND'S NORTH ISLAND

Blessed with stunning nature, diverse landscapes, excellent food and wine and good-natured locals, New Zealand has the things we travel far and wide for, only a few hours flight away. Join us for the only way to experience New Zealand, at a laid back pace and with a healthy appetite.

Our 10 day North Island tour will take you through a mix of North Island highlights, and unique local experiences that showcase the culture and cuisine of New Zealand.

You'll encounter an array of landscapes: lush, green rolling hills; beautiful golden sand beaches, tumbling waterfalls, geothermal valleys filled with bubbling mud and sulphuric lakes, magnificent mountains and cosy laid-back beach towns. We'll make time for those special moments along the way like cruising through the spectacular and photogenic Cathedral Cove, learning about Māori culture with a local family, and hiking in Tongariro National Park – otherwise known as Mordor.

New Zealand's food and wine have established a world-class reputation, with quality produce fresh from the source. Our trip allows you to indulge in all that's on offer with carefully selected dining experiences included in the tour. Explore Waiheke island's artisan food scene, take an inside tour of New Zealand's oldest winery, browse local farmers markets and enjoy a beer at a local craft brewery.

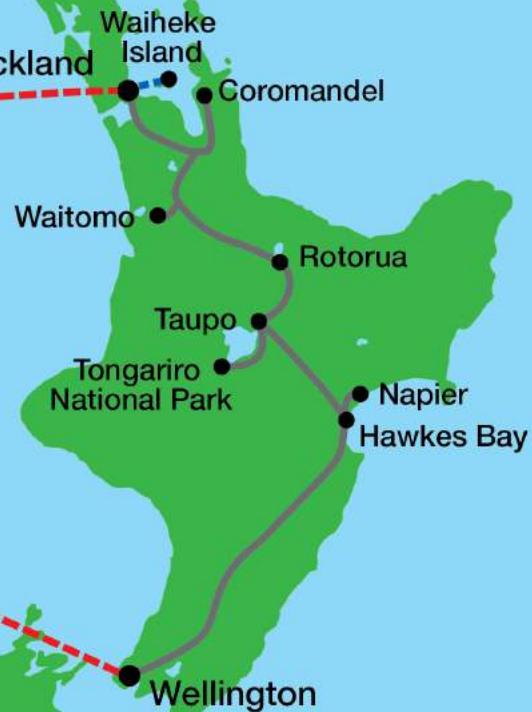
So grab your camera and a healthy appetite, and let's go live the good life with our friends next door!

# NEW ZEALAND NORTH ISLAND

Plane  
Vehicle  
Boat

From Australia

To Australia



## Day 1, Sunday 20th March

### Auckland

Kia Ora and welcome to New Zealand! Your local guide will meet you at the airport and transfer to our centrally located Auckland hotel. Auckland is New Zealand's most populous city and is a multi-cultural hub of food, music, arts and culture. Also known as Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland sprawls over volcanic hills and around twin harbours, offering an exhilarating mix of natural wonders and urban adventures. We'll spend the afternoon exploring the local highlights with our guide. This evening, a welcome dinner at The Conservatory Restaurant, situated directly on the waterfront. Known as "New Zealand's first living bar", the restaurant has a focus on sustainability and the bar is a living wall of plants. This is our first taste of the high quality produce New Zealand is known for, all free-range and predominantly locally sourced. D

## Day 2, Monday 21st March Waiheke Island

This morning we set sail to Waiheke Island, a haven of beautiful vineyards, olive groves and beaches, all just a 40-minute ferry ride from downtown Auckland. Known as the "Island of Wine," Waiheke Island is the ultimate culinary

destination. We'll experience Waiheke's scenery and some of the art it has inspired on a 3km (easy) walk along the foreshore, through the native bush of Atawhai Whenua reserve, to Alison Park which showcases several sculptures. There will be free time to

explore the  
gorgeous  
galleries  
and quirky  
stores of  
nearby  
Oneroa at  
your leisure.  
Several  
excellent  
galleries



feature local artists, or you may choose to explore one of the beautiful walks around Little Oneroa Beach. We'll continue to Stonyridge Vineyard for a tour of the vineyard, wine tasting and lunch. Nestled in a valley of shimmering olive trees and vines, Stonyridge is known for its premium red wines and picturesque location. We'll return to Auckland by ferry in the late afternoon, and your evening is free to explore the city with dinner at your leisure. B/L

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### Day 3, Tuesday 22nd March Auckland - The Coromandel

After breakfast, we'll travel to the coastal paradise of the Coromandel, an area cloaked in native rainforest, with dazzling white sand beaches and picturesque coves. At the appropriately named Hot Water Beach, naturally heated mineral water bubbles up from deep within the earth to emerge through golden sand. We'll stop here to relax, and

for a bit of fun, you can dig your own hot pool (shovels are available for hire at the local cafes). It's a strange but very pleasant feeling to be

lying in a pool of hot water just metres from the refreshing sea. The beautiful Cathedral Cove marine reserve is best viewed by boat, and we'll enjoy a cruise at Hahei, passing the stunning volcanic coastline and magnificent sea caves. We'll be spending the night in the laid-back town of Tairua, with views out to the twin peaks of volcanic Mount Paku and the jagged Aldermen Islands. Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant featuring the fresh and innovative cuisine the region is known for. **B/D**

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### Day 4, Wednesday 23rd March Coromandel - Waitomo - Rotorua

Today's drive takes us through the green hills of Waitomo. The area's name comes from the Maori words wai (water) and htomo (hole), and under the green hills lies a labyrinth of caves, sinkholes and

underground rivers. The glow worm, Arachno-campa luminosa, is unique to New Zealand, and the best place to experience them is at

Waitomo. Be amazed by the thousands of magical glowworms above, as you glide silently by boat in the world-famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves. Since the late 1880s, expert guides have provided informative commentary on the Caves' historical and geological significance. We'll stop for lunch at a local cafe, then continue our drive to Rotorua where we'll spend the next two nights. **B/L**



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### Day 5, Thursday 24th March Rotorua

Sitting within the Pacific Rim of Fire, Rotorua is a geothermal wonderland with bubbling mud pools, clouds of steam, and natural hot springs. It is also an important Maori cultural site and today we'll learn about Maori culture in an intimate and genuine setting. We'll travel by 4WD to off the beaten path cultural sites, into the home of the Ngāti Pikiao tribe. The passionate local guides will talk about the ways of life and heritage of the whanaū (family), weaving powerful narratives of years gone by and the spiritual essence of their tribe. We'll return to Rotorua, where you'll have time to enjoy the natural wonders of the area at Te Puia. Home to the world famous Pōhutu geyser, the fascinating Māori Arts and Crafts Institute and a Kiwi Conservation Centre, the park also features boiling mud pools and native bushlands. You may like to enjoy one of the many walks in the area or take advantage of the health benefits of the mineral waters by bathing in one of the hot pools. **B**

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### Day 6, Friday 25th October Rotorua - Taupo - Tongariro National Park

We have a scenic drive ahead today, with our first stop at Huka Falls where more than 220,000 litres of water per second barrels over the 11m high waterfall. We'll enjoy lunch at scenic Taupō, a township that sits on the north-eastern shore of massive Lake Taupō. Although it may look like you're on the shores of an ocean inlet, it's actually a freshwater lake said to be about the size of Singapore. We'll continue to Tongariro National Park,

centred upon three volcanoes –Tongariro, Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu. Tongariro became New Zealand's first national



park in 1887, and just over one hundred years later, the park was awarded dual UNESCO World Heritage status for both its cultural significance to the Māori people, as well as its outstanding natural features. We'll enjoy dinner in a spectacular setting at the iconic Chateau Tongariro Hotel, and spend the night here surrounded by the grandeur of the nearby mountains. **B/L/D**



### Day 7, Saturday 26th March

#### Tongariro National Park – Napier – Hawkes Bay

Tongariro National Park is home to some of New Zealand's most dramatic landscapes; a spectacular showcase of volcanic wonders, roaring waterfalls, old lava flows, and peculiar alpine gardens. It is an environment of staggering beauty and diversity, which we will enjoy on our hike to Taranaki Falls (3 hours). We'll pass through tussocks, alpine shrubland and gorges to reach the views of Taranaki Falls tumbling 20 metres over the edge of a large lava flow which erupted from Ruapehu 15,000 years ago. Our track returns through a volcanic landscape eroded by wind, rain and frost, a truly wild and unique landscape. Today's hike requires a good level of fitness; for those not up to it, there are alternative walks available. We continue our journey to Napier, located in Hawke's Bay. Napier is home to street after street of stunning and beautifully-restored Art Deco buildings; one of the most complete collections in the world. The surrounding area of Hawkes Bay is home to many fine wineries, and its legacy dates back to 1851 when French missionaries established Mission Estate. We'll enjoy a historic tour of the winery, showcasing its beauty and history, followed by a wine tasting. The elegantly restored historic seminary building provides a stunning location for the unique, award-winning Mission Restaurant, where we enjoy dinner together this evening. **B/D**



### Day 8, Sunday 27th March

#### Napier to Wellington

Go easy on breakfast, as we'll be visiting one of the oldest farmers markets in New Zealand this morning. The Hawke's Bay Farmers' Market showcases the region's finest produce straight from the source. Wander around the market, listen to live music and pick up a few local treats to enjoy while we relax for



lunch (own expense) at this charming market. After lunch, we'll continue to Wellington, recently named "the coolest little capital in the world" by Lonely Planet. Surrounded by nature and fuelled by creative energy, Wellington is a compact city with a powerful mix of culture, history, nature and cuisine.

There'll be some free time to explore and grab a quick bite for dinner before we meet to explore Zealandia on an evening tour. This 225-hectare

eco-sanctuary is a groundbreaking conservation project and the world's first fully-fenced urban eco-sanctuary. With an extraordinary 500-year vision to restore Wellington valley's forest and freshwater ecosystems as closely as possible to their pre-human state, it has already re-introduced over 20 species of native wildlife back into the area. During the night tour, our guide leads us by torchlight in search of some of the more distinctive sights and sounds of New Zealand's native forest, a truly wonderful experience. **B**

### Day 9, Monday 28th March

#### Wellington

Known as the culinary capital of New Zealand, Wellington is famous for its tucked-away bars, quirky cafes, award-winning restaurants and great coffee. This morning we'll head out on an orientation walk of the city and Mount Victoria, with its unbeatable views of the harbour and city. You'll then have free time to enjoy this fantastic city. The top of the cable car, a Wellington icon running



from Lambton Quay, gives a close-up view of the city. The Observatory and 26 ha Botanic Gardens nearby are a great place for a stroll. Wellington has been the capital city since 1865, and the Parliament's Buildings, including the "Beehive", are well worth visiting. Perhaps check out the National Museum "Te Papa", for an insight into NZ history and Pacific culture, or the Museum of Wellington City and Sea, internationally ranked as one of the world's best museums. In the afternoon we'll join a behind-the-scenes tour of Parrotdog Brewery, one of Wellington's craft beer breweries, followed by a tasting of course! We'll finish our day with a farewell dinner to celebrate the things that New Zealand does so well: excellent local seafood, friendly laid-back locals and stunning waterfront views. **B/D**

### Day 10, Tuesday 29th March

#### Wellington

Our journey comes to an end this morning, and after breakfast, you'll be transferred to the airport for your flight home. **B**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section. Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.