Lord of the Rings & Hobbit Filming Locations

14 Days - North and South Island

Absolute
NEW ZEALAND
Day 1
Arrive Auckland
Visit Hobbiton in Matamata
Accommodation: Kamahi Cottage

Day 2
Discover the Waitomo Caves
Accommodation: Kamahi Lodge

Day 3
Geothermal Activity in Rotorua
Accommodation: Treetops Lodge & Estate

Day 4
Mt Doom – Tongariro National Park
Accommodation: Chateau Tongariro

Day 5
Drive to Wellington
Accommodation: Ohtel

Day 6
Middle Earth Filming Locations Tour
Accommodation: Ohtel

Day 7
Scenic Flight to Nelson
Accommodation: Bronte Lodge

Day 8
Chetwood forest, Mt Olympus & Mt Owen
Accommodation: Bronte Lodge

Day 9
Scenic Drive to Methven “Erewhon”
Accommodation: Terrace High Country Downs Resort

Day 10
Edoras, the City of the Rohan
Accommodation: Terrace High Country Downs Resort

Day 11
Mt Cook and then onto Queenstown
Accommodation: Sofitel

Day 12
4WD Safari of the Scenes
Accommodation: Sofitel

Day 13
Remote Locations Scenic Flight
Accommodation: Sofitel

Day 14
Free Day - Depart Queenstown or Extend your holiday?
Kamahi Cottage – Waitomo

Kamahi Cottage is a boutique country cottage located an easy 30 minute drive to the world famous Waitomo Glowworm Caves. It offers luxury country Bed & Breakfast accommodation in a tranquil setting. Enjoy stunning sunsets, panoramic uninterrupted views, a stress free setting and warm hospitality. Tastefully designed and decorated, Kamahi Cottage is ideal as a romantic retreat or a place to unwind. It’s a charming haven where you can relax on the veranda in hammock chairs; take an invigorating walk over the farm or a farm tour in the comfort of our own 4 Wheel Drive vehicle. Enjoy a gourmet breakfast and delicious home-cooked meals with fresh seasonal produce.

Treetops Lodge & Estate – Rotorua

Treetops Lodge offers the ultimate in world class luxury accommodation. Nestled amidst magnificent native forests and valleys, Treetops Lodge & Estate offers a uniquely New Zealand experience. The Lodge with its’ elegant architectural style derived from this country’s pioneering past; timber and stone finishes echo the beauty and simplicity of the great outdoors. A sanctuary and retreat of breathtaking terrain in 2,500 acres of secluded native forest and game reserve, seven trout streams, four lakes, over 70 kilometers of hiking trails, mountain bike riding, and horse riding and the ultimate in tranquillity and splendour.
Chateau Tongariro

Chateau Tongariro sits nestled in the shadow of three towering active volcanoes, and at the very foot of the majestic and sacred Mount Ruapehu. The 800 square kilometre Tongariro National Park – a dual listed World Heritage Area – provides a stunning natural playground bursting with diverse landscapes for visitors to the Chateau to discover. With arid badlands, crater and alpine lakes, sparkling rivers, breath-taking lunar landscapes, lush rainforest and alpine meadows to be explored, staying at the Chateau Tongariro is an all-seasons, utterly unique experience not to be missed. The Bayview Chateau Tongariro is classed as a Category One Heritage Building, and offers lavish décor and furnishings, heavenly cuisine, and a superior standard of service, all set against a backdrop of remarkable scenery.

The Ohtel – Wellington

Located in the Capital city’s exclusive seaside neighbourhood of Oriental Bay, is a brand new 10 room boutique Hotel. The Ohtel building itself is a stunning, contemporary 4 storey concrete structure, embedded into the base of a steep coastal cliff face. While modern urban boutique hotels aren’t unique, the ‘Mid-Century’ furnishings that adorn the interior spaces of Ohtel certainly are. From chairs to ceramics, tables to clocks – these are all statements within the hotel.
Bronte Lodge – Nelson

Bronte Lodge, also known as Country Estate has been at the heart of a family for five generations. The estate lies on the headland of Nelson’s historic Bronte Peninsula, overlooking Waimea Estuary and cradled between ocean and mountains.

Complete with coastal orchard and vineyard is typical of the abundant fruits of the Nelson region. The stylish villas at Bronte Country Estate are so luxuriously comfortable you will be reluctant to leave. Each elevated apartment-style villa is set amidst its own mature stand of New Zealand native trees, allowing for complete privacy. The architectural design places you ‘in tune’ with the environment – all the better to appreciate the natural setting – either in the double spa or relaxing in the lounge soaking up the unforgettable views.

Terrace High Country Downs Resort – Near Methven

This resort is perched on the edge of the spectacular Rakaia River with stunning views up to Mt Hutt. Enjoy a leisurely lunch before teeing off on the Terrace Downs Golf Course; this stunning 18 hole golf course is rated among the top 3 in New Zealand. The views are awesome, which constantly challenges players to keep their eyes on the ball. Spend the evening dining at one of the Resort’s three restaurants; which range from ‘The Grill’, specialising in outdoor cuisine complete with a specialised wood fired oven to ‘Avoca’, an award winning fine dining restaurant.
Sofitel Hotel & Spa – Queenstown

With her infinite palate of delights, centrally located Sofitel Queenstown Hotel & Spa combines local spirit with French tradition for the most sophisticated sense of luxury. Providing exceptional personal service, the hotel truly embodies the Sofitel concept ‘art de vivre’ – the art of living. Designed to take your breath away, Queenstown’s most exquisite guest rooms feature Sofitel “MyBed”, separate rain shower and spa bath for two and the luxury of a personal espresso machine, under floor heating, broadband and Wi-Fi connection and DVD player with surround sound to name a few. A pillow menu and plush New Zealand possum throws add yet another fine touch. LCD televisions entertain in both bedroom and bathroom and with balconies off most rooms, the exterior view is just as inspiring with lake or mountains seemingly close enough to touch.

Hotel facilities include a state-of-the-art boardroom, five-star dining at Vie and the cozy Nue Lounge with library and Champagne bar. The ‘piece de resistance’ is Le Spa – a relaxing haven where mind, body and spirit unite, featuring a celebrated range of traditional rituals and signature European massage and beauty treatments for body and face.
Day 1
Auckland to Waitomo

‘Haere Mai’ … Welcome to Middle-earth

Having cleared customs & immigration formalities, collect your car and make your way to Hobbiton.

A couple of hours south of Auckland lies the lush farmland of the Waikato. Famous for dairying and fine thoroughbred horses. Situated on the most picturesque private farmland is the original film set for the LOTR trilogy and now again for the yet to be filmed The Hobbit. It's easy to see why these green pastures and rolling hills were chosen to portray Hobbiton and The Shire. On this two hour, the Rings Scenic Tours' guides will fill you in on all the main points of the production including the history of how the site was chosen, and if you've seen the movies as often as this chap has then it really does bring the tour to life.

Day 2
Discover the Waitomo Caves

Today head south to the green rolling landscapes of the Waikato, yet this is one region in particular holds more than just surface appeal… literally. For Waikato also boasts an extensive labyrinth of underground caverns that formed over millions of years. The caves at Waitomo are one of New Zealand's most commanding wonders – a celebration of nature's work over the last one hundred thousand years. There are hundreds of miles of labyrinthine caves, glow-worms, under ground lakes, stalactites and stalagmites, and all manner of limestone crustaceans - a lost world waiting to be discovered. You can take a walking tour to see the millions of glow-worms or glide through on a barge, take a black water rafting trip, or even abseil (rappel) down into the abyss!
Day 3

Geothermal Activity in Rotorua

Your journey to Rotorua will take you through a mixture of farmland, lakeland and forest. You’ll know you’ve arrived in the city of Rotorua when you see (and smell!) the geothermal steam plumes.

Geysers, mud pools and thermal springs have been attracting visitors to Rotorua since the 1800s and the living, breathing landscape never fails to amaze. Perched on the edge of a large lake, in the crater of an ancient volcano, this picturesque city is also the heartland of New Zealand’s Maori culture. With 16 sparkling lakes within 20 minutes drive of the city, as well as magnificent forests surrounding, Rotorua has earned the reputation as the North Islands outdoors adventure centre offering an exciting array of experiences.

**FROM THE DEPTH'S OF WAITOMO, INTO THE CAULDRON OF ROTORUA**

**ACCOMMODATION**
Treetops Lodge & Estate

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Day 4

Mt Doom – Tongariro National Park

Tongariro is New Zealand’s oldest national park and a dual World Heritage area. This status recognises the park’s important Maori cultural and spiritual associations as well as its outstanding volcanic features. It is a place of extremes and surprises, a place to explore and remember. From herb fields to forests, from tranquil lakes to desert-like plateau and active volcanoes - Tongariro has them all. Thanks to a geologically turbulent past, the area provided The Lord of the Rings crew with the perfect raw materials to create vivid scenes of Mordor, Emyn Muil, Mount Doom and the Plains of Gorgoroth.

Mount Doom, Orodruin or Amon Amarth (Mount Ngauruhoe) was a volcano in Mordor where the One Ring was forged in Sammath Naur, the Crack of Doom, a fiery chasm within the mountain. It was the ultimate destination for Frodo’s Quest of the Ring.

The park also offers many hiking options from shorter walks to waterfalls and fascinating volcanic features - including the crater of Ruapehu or the eight hour Tongariro Crossing, features phenomenal volcanic scenery and fine views of Lake Taupo and Mt Taranaki.

**MOUNT DOOM, ORODRUIN OR AMON AMARTH**

**ACCOMMODATION**
Chateau Tongariro

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Day 5
Mt Ruapehu via Ohakune to Wellington

Just a short drive from Mt Ruapehu is Ohakune, home to Ithilien camp, which was filmed in the nearby bush; continue on towards Wellington, the capital of New Zealand and film base for Lord of the Rings.

Wellington is an easy 3-4 hour drive from here and to any Rings enthusiast is production Central. Home to the cast and crew for over 3 years and the base for WETA Workshops and Peter Jackson, several areas within the region were used for filming. Mt Victoria was used as the outer reaches of the shire and where the Hobbits hid to escape the Nazgul. Other areas easily reached from Wellington are the hidden refuge of Rivendell and the encampment of Dunharrow.

Day 6
Middle Earth Filming Locations Tour

A unique, small group, exciting full day in Middle Earth, with the exhilaration of a helicopter trip over the amazing limestone formations that formed Dimholt Road (the army of the dead).

Take lunch in the serene surroundings of a leading New Zealand winery then you will travel by road and visit the filming locations for Rivendell where Frodo recovered from his knife attack; the Anduin River where Aragorn was washed ashore after the attack of the Wargs; the Gardens of Isengard, the site of the Orcs Felling the Trees and where Gandalf rode to see Saruman; go to the Mount Victoria lookout and Hobbiton Woods where you can race to the Ferry and get off the Road; Buckland Forest where the Hobbits hid from the Nazgul/Black Riders and where they found the mushrooms on the Road; Dunharrow Rohirrim encampment; visit the quarry for the filming of Helms Deep the fortified ravine in Rohan and Minas Tirith; the location of Bree.

End the day in the district of Miramar. Miramar is production central and the home of Peter Jackson and many of the cast and crew. Your host will return you to your Wellington city accommodation.
Day 7
Scenic flight to Nelson

After a quick 30-minute flight across Cook Strait you arrive in sunny Nelson....

Nelson has a mild Mediterranean climate and is well known for its beaches, bush clad hills and artisans, with over 300 in the region. Harrington Brewers in Richmond brewed a special bear for Hobbiton and the scenes from The Prancing Pony. Over 20,000 litres of the brew were provided to the film crew and enthusiasts can purchase Harrington's Stout from the brewery in Richmond. Jens Hansen Gold and Silversmith in central Nelson submitted designs for the One Ring and went on to produce the 40 rings required in production, one almost 16 cm in diameter. One of the rings is on display there and you can buy copies in both 9 and 18 ct gold.

Day 8
Chetwood forest, Mt Olympus & Mt Owen

Lifting off from our Base at Wakefield we travel across to the Takaka Hill and our first location. Down below we will see the area used to portray the Chetwood Forest as the Ranger ‘Strider’ led the hobbits into the rough country east of Bree in an attempt to escape the Black Riders. Nearby is the world famous Harwoods Hole and we circle this before continuing to Mt Olympus. Crossing deep valleys we soon arrive at the strange pinnacle rock formations that were used to portray the jagged country south of Rivendell. The rough and strange country the Fellowship travel through is epitomised at these strange rocks that literally seem to grow from the side of Mt Olympus.

It was here, as the nine rested and cooked a meal, that the crebain crows of Saruman searching for news of the One Ring spied the travellers below. Hurriedly extinguishing their fire they hid behind the pinnacles in an attempt to escape discovery. After circling the locality we then continue across a dramatic mountain landscape to the Dimrill Dale at Mt Owen. Distraught at the loss of Gandalf, the remaining members of the Fellowship escape the mines and throw themselves to the ground in their grief. Filming was undertaken here for ten days and the results are one of the most moving moments in the film.

The dramatic limestone rocks here could have originated on the moon and again, are unlike any other landscape in New Zealand.
**Day 9**

Scenic Drive to Methven “Erewhon”

Today is a very scenic drive, taking you along the spectacular Buller River, through the Lewis Pass and into Hanmer Springs...

Hanmer Springs: A beautiful alpine village blessed with a picturesque perfect backdrop, a river snakes through a broad alluvial valley nestled amongst the snow-capped Southern Alps. Take time to soak in a Natural hot spring, a walk through quiet forest or take a short mountain bike or horse trek.

Continue through the Canterbury Plains and inland towards Mt Hutt to your final destination Methven.

Methven: Dwarfed by a magnificent backdrop of mountains, this once quiet, rural village and has a lot to offer with wide open spaces, friendly people and a strong outdoors community and is integral to the filming of the LOTR films.

**Day 10**

Remote Journey into Edoras, the City of the Rohan

Journey to the remote and beautiful Mt Potts high country station, home of Mt Sunday; and see how this peaceful mountain was transformed into Edoras, the capital city of the Rohan people in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Immerse yourself in the natural, unspoilt beauty of this breathtaking area with its sparkling clear lakes, glistening blue rivers and fresh, crisp mountain air. This amazing day includes 4WD access onto Mt Sunday/Edoras itself, a delicious champagne picnic lunch, full running commentary from our friendly and knowledgeable kiwi tour guides and spectacular scenery you will never forget.

**ACCOMMODATION**

Terrace High Country Downs Resort

**EDORAS, 4WD AND CHAMPAGNE PICNIC**

Terrace High Country Downs Resort
Day 11
Mt Cook and then onto Queenstown

Descend towards the stunning glacial fed lake of Tekapo. Stop to view the tiny Church of the Good Shepherd, built of local stone and oak in 1935. Travel up the western side of Lake Pukaki to the Mt Cook National Park, a World Heritage listed site. Mt Cook is Australasia's highest mountain at 3764 metres. The park covers over 70,000 hectares of breathtaking alpine scenery and is also home to the Tasman Glacier; the longest in the Southern hemisphere.

Looking towards the Alps from the town of Wanaka, at the end of the lake you can see the backdrop used when Gandalf flew to Rohan with Gwaihir after his rescue from the Orthanc. Take a drive past Glendhu Bay, Treble Cone Ski Field towards the head of the Matukituki Valley and onto Queenstown, New Zealand’s Adventure Capital

Day 12
4WD Safari of the Scenes

Explore the magical side of New Zealand and understand why this beautiful country was chosen to portray Middle-earth. The Queenstown area featured prominently in the filming of the incredibly popular Lord of the Rings trilogy.

The perfect tour for those that want the thrills of an off road adventure but also want to discover exciting Lord of the Rings film locations. The Wakatipu Basin tour takes you to The Remarkables, which were used as various mountains throughout the trilogy including the Misty Mountains. Travelling part way up this beautiful mountain range you get a birds eye view onto Deer Park Heights, which was used for the refugees of Rohan and the Battle of the Wargs scenes.

Travelling from The Remarkables we head to the Kawarau Gorge where the filming took place for the Argonath, or Pillars of the Kings. Leaving the Kawarau Gorge the trip heads to Arrowtown where the loss of The One Ring at Gladden Fields was filmed. Near Arrowtown you will experience some true off road adventure. Following a historic gold mining road up the Arrow River you will cross the river to get to the Ford of Bruinen. At this point you can indulge in morning or afternoon tea and try your hand at a spot of gold panning.

From Arrowtown you will travel to the entrance of Skippers Canyon where you will be offered spectacular panoramic views of the Wakatipu Basin and over Skippers Canyon.
Remote Locations Scenic Flight

By air, see the locations for the river Anduin, Ford of Bruinen, the Rohan camp at Dunharrow and Nen Hithoel, where Frodo saved Sam from drowning. Included is a landing and bush walk at the location of Lothlorien, the battle of Amon Hen, where Boromir is struck down, Fangorn Forest and Saruman’s Tower at Isengard.

As we take off we climb high above the Kawarau River. This was one of the locations for the River Anduin, which the Fellowship travels down in their boats after leaving Lothlorien. The Pillars of the Kings stand out to all devotees of the film.

From there we fly by the side of Coronet Peak to view Skippers Canyon from the air. The location formed the backdrop to the Ford of Bruinen, where the Black Riders are swept away by the flood. Then we fly to Mount Aspiring and recreate the first scene from the Two Towers “The Foundations of Stone” finishing this part of the tour by Mount Earnslaw and overhead Paradise. This was a location for Lothlorien, where the Fellowship meet with the Lady Galadriel and Celeborn; the Battle of Amon Hen, where the Orcs attack the Fellowship and Boromir is killed; and Isengard, where Gandalf meets with Saruman in the garden and is later imprisoned on the top of the tower. Where Gandalf challenges the Balrog on the Bridge of Khazad-dum, as we descend to land at Glenorchy the Grant and Jura glaciers are visible as is Dan’s Paddock, where Gandalf’s ride to Isengard was filmed.

After taking off from Glenorchy we arrive over the Greenstone Valley, the location of Dunharrow. Another 10 minutes flying takes us over Mavora Lakes, the location of settings such as The Lawn of Parth Galen, where the Fellowship landed after their voyage down the Anduin; the lake of Nen Hithoel, which Frodo And Sam paddled across after Frodo is accosted by Boromir and they leave the Fellowship; and Amon Lhaw, where Frodo and Sam land after paddling across Nen Hithoel.

Free Day - Depart Queenstown or Extend your holiday?

Queenstown boasts adventure activities in all forms, from extreme to relaxed exploration. Here you can take a thrilling jet boat ride, pan for gold, raft the white water rapids, take a wine trail, fish for trout, play golf or 4WD sheer canyons. It is also a great base from which to explore the Fiordland National Park, gateway to the awesome Milford & Doubtful Sounds. There are numerous activities from which to choose and your Tour Host will be pleased to offer advice and help you in your selection.

- Absolute New Zealand Arrangements End -