

Wilderness Adventure Tour



16 Days - North and South Islands

Absolute
NEW ZEALAND

Outline Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive Auckland, and drive to the West Coast
Accommodation: Bethells Beach Cottages

Day 2

Half Day Wilderness Tour
Accommodation: Bethells Beach Cottages

Day 3

Drive to Waitomo Caves - St Benedict's Caverns Tour
Accommodation: Te Tiro Pioneer Cottages

Day 4

"Spellbound" Glow Worm Tour
Drive to National Park
Accommodation: Ahuru Lodge

Day 5

Pre-Dawn Tongariro Crossing
Accommodation: Ahuru Lodge

Day 6

Drive to Whanganui, 3 Hour Canoe/Kayak Trip
Accommodation: The Flying Fox Retreat

Day 7

Kapiti Island Overnight Kiwi Spotting Tour
Accommodation: Kapiti Nature Lodge

Day 8

Kapiti Island
Accommodation: Kapiti Nature Lodge

Day 9

Travel to the South Island: Cook Strait Crossing
Accommodation: Awaroa Eco-lodge

Day 10

Abel Tasman National Park
Accommodation: Awaroa Eco-lodge

Day 11

Drive to Greymouth for a wilderness Camping Experience
Accommodation: Thermal Bush Camp

Day 12

Tranz Alpine Journey Train to Christchurch, then Drive to Akaroa
Accommodation: Oinako Lodge

Day 13

Swim with Dolphins, then drive to Oamaru
Accommodation: Pen-y-Bryn Lodge

Day 14

Drive to Moeraki Boulders and Otago Peninsula.
Royal Albatross Tour
Drive to Bluff and Fly by Helicopter to Stewart Island
Accommodation: Port of Calls B&B

Day 15

Stewart Island Sea Kayaking Tour
Accommodation: Port of Calls B&B

Day 16

Ferry Crossing or Helicopter Flight to Bluff
Homeward Bound or Extend your Trip!

Featuring

Bethells Beach Cottages - Waitakere

A stay at Bethells Beach Cottages is a sensory experience that will leave you feeling replenished and in tune with life.

There are two cottages and a contemporary apartment to choose from- All have magnificent sea views and are fully appointed so guests are completely self contained.

The cottages are beautifully crafted and provide a high standard of natural luxury.

In the evening the Scandinavian hot tub is the perfect place to soak and take in the beautiful vista while you enjoy a drink and watch the sun go down.



Te Tiro Pioneer Cottages - Waitomo

These Wilderness Cottages were built to capture the unique beauty of its surroundings.

As a family, they felt they should share with others the magic of what has kept them here on the family farm for 5 generations.

In any kind of weather the views are breath taking. The area includes; 1000 acres of farm and 660 acres of native bush which has been put into the QE II Trust to protect it for generations to come.

The farm is a fantastic example of what Waitomo is renowned for; caves glowworms, rough limestone out-crops, lush green fields and friendly people.



Featuring

Ahuru Lodge - National Park

Ahuru Lodge is situated in the stunning scenic beauty of New Zealand's central plateau, near Tongariro National Park, Turoa Ski Field, Mount Ruapehu and Ohakune.

The Lodge is nestled within 5 acres of restful native gardens with every suite overlooking the trout-filled Tokiahuru Stream, near Ohakune. Expansive views sweep across gently sloping lush rural and native bush land to the dramatically beautiful Mount Ruapehu.

Relax, unwind, soak up the ambiance, this is a perfect place to enjoy a relaxing but stimulating holiday. Each of the five guest suites has a sunny private deck enjoying breathtaking views to Mount Ruapehu and private direct access to the river. The many features of Ahuru Lodge facilities include New Zealand cedar sauna room, mineral spa tub with sublime river and mountain views, loggia and gallery room – both with open fireplaces, library snug with open fire, river swimming, disabled access.



The Flying Fox Retreat - Whanganui

Arrive by flying fox or boat to The Flying Fox Retreat; a place where the history of early Maori, who were the original inhabitants of this river valley, and the European people who followed them in the 19th century, combine in a legacy of physical and spiritual reminders of their presence.

Stay in a lovingly hand-built cottage surrounded by century old walnut trees on a terrace which overlooks the river.

Framed by native forests and organic gardens and orchards, the cottages are comfortably furnished with a collection of rescued furniture and family treasures. Or sleep under the star filled night sky in a secluded camping area.

During the day canoe on the river, explore the organic certified property, with lush vegetable gardens and heritage fruit trees surrounded by the native forests of The Whanganui National Park or simply relax.



Featuring

Kapiti Nature Lodge - Kapiti Island

Kapiti Nature Lodge offers visitors a comfortable, relaxing unique nature experience in one of the world's great conservation environments. Amazing birdlife is at the door, allowing visitors to be as active (i.e. taking bushwalks, swimming, snorkelling or scuba diving) or inactive (i.e. breakfast with the seals, seafood gathering and preparation) as you would like to be.

Staff are committed to providing the best of professional service, with great meals, comfortable surroundings, the best of natural wonders. Simple, clean and functional, the accommodation is provided in cabins, which each contain four bunks. Ensuite ocean view accommodation also available.

The dining room, reading/recreation room, conference room and bathroom facilities are located by the main building within 50 meters of the cabins. Eating at the lodge is a family affair, so be prepared to be joined by extended family at meal times. Our chefs prepare buffet meals making best use of fresh, seasonal, local product and seafood.



Awaroa Eco Lodge - Abel Tasman National Park

Nestled in a National Park in the northern tip of the South Island, This 5 Star lodge is 100 meters from one of the most pristine white beaches in the country.

Careful attention is made to preserving this pristine and unique natural environment with white beaches, seal colonies, wetlands, native kanuka forests and birdlife.

Enjoy the multitude of activities, or simply relax on the beach, and enjoy local wines while waiting for friends to return from the Abel Tasman walk.

Foodies can revel in the combinations of beef, game bird, seafood, plus seasonal greens and produce sourced from the lodges own gardens. Voted in the New Zealand Tourism Awards (2005) as Best hotel In Eco Tourism.



Featuring

Oinako Lodge - Akaroa

Delight in premier Bed and Breakfast accommodation in one of Akaroa's most significant historic homes, circa 1865.

Features include a sweeping French staircase, marble fireplaces, ornate plaster ceilings, Akaroa Harbour views and a private tranquil garden.

Six elegant guestrooms enjoy an elevated position on the first floor. All are of generous proportions and overlook the Harbour, surrounding garden or mountains. The ensuites are luxurious and four include relaxing spa baths.

Gourmet breakfasts using fresh, local produce are served in the original dining room overlooking the rose garden.



Pen-y-Bryn Lodge - Oamaru

Pen-y-Bryn Lodge is a small luxury hotel offering exclusive lodge style accommodation in five elegant and superbly appointed guestrooms with modern ensuite facilities, in a hillside location overlooking historic Oamaru with views of sea and mountains.

The Lodge offers unrivalled visitor accommodation, fine dining and the warmth and humour of famed Kiwi hospitality. Guests gather in the evenings, warmed by blazing log fires to savour first class table d'hôte cuisine.

Choose from a wide variety of outdoor activities or simply indulge and relax at the Lodge, play billiards on the genuine slate table in the magnificently panelled billiard room, or curl up with a good book in the library.



Featuring

Port of Call B&B- Stewart Island

This is a unique, quality B&B in a relaxed and tastefully decorated home overlooking Halfmoon Bay and Foveaux Strait.

On 20 acres of native bush it has abundant birdlife, several walking tracks and the historic Stone House. Being a 6th generation Stewart Island family, they are keen to show you Stewart Island, home of the new Rakiura National Park, and the special things and places this island has to offer.

Wake in the morning with the aroma of fresh coffee and a hearty and generous breakfast to get you off to a great start.



Wilderness Adventure Itinerary

Day 1

Welcome to the Waitakere's

DRIVE TO TE HENGA- BTHELLS BEACH

ACCOMMODATION
Bethells Beach Cottages
Te Koinga Cottage

Fly into Auckland - 'The City of Sails'; a title gained from the view of yachts seen against the cityscape.

Pass through Customs and collect your rental vehicle and drive to Bethells Beach on the wild and untamed West Coast; home of black sand, surf spots and amazing wilderness. Bethells Beach is also called "Te Henga", its Maori name, meaning sand.

Follow the windy road to Bethells Beach Cottages; believe me it is worth the drive! Relax and enjoy a home cooked dinner and a soak in the hot tub under the stars.



Day 2

Half Day Wilderness Tour - Auckland's West Coast

HALF DAY WILDERNESS GUIDED TOUR

ACCOMMODATION
Bethells Beach Cottages
Te Koinga Cottage

MEALS
Full Breakfast

Be met by a guide and taken to some spectacular spots in the Waitakere ranges where you will walk through bush amongst New Zealand's famous kauri trees and giant tree ferns, unwind by spectacular cascading waterfalls and take a swim beneath them. You will enjoy breathtaking panoramic views extending from the Tasman Sea to the Pacific Ocean.

The Waitakere Ranges is Auckland's largest regional park. No other city in New Zealand has such a wonderful asset so close to it.

Learn about traditional Maori carvings and local stories about the area before watching the infamous West Coast sunset. Experience the power of the wild and rugged west coast, and feel the black sand beneath your feet as you stroll along some of the most awe-inspiring beaches the world has to offer.

Enjoy your evening dining at a local restaurant or at the Cottages.



Day 3

Waitomo Caves and Cottages

DRIVE TO WAITOMO CAVES

ST BENEDICT'S CAVERNS TOUR

ACCOMMODATION

Te Tiro Pioneer Cottages
Double Cottage

MEALS

Full Breakfast

Heading south bypassing Auckland's CBD to the fertile plains of the Waikato, pass by some of the North Island's most important cultural locations - particularly the sacred Maori burial ground of Taupiri Mountain, and Turangawaewae Marae - home of the Maori King.

If you are seeking surf head to idyllic Raglan; one of New Zealand's top surfing locations.

Continue driving south to the world renowned Waitomo Glowworm Caves where a Tour of St Benedict's Caverns awaits.

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. This is a three hour dry trip into New Zealand's prettiest Cave. Commencing with two abseils to get into the cave system and a walk through the 'Mines of Moria' to reach the Cathedral - a chamber 40m high and 100ft long - just bristling with stalactites.



Day 4

Glow Worms and National Park

SPELLBOUND GLOWWORMS TOUR, THEN DRIVE TO NATIONAL PARK

ACCOMMODATION

Ahuru Lodge
Double Suite

MEALS

Full Breakfast, Pre-Dinner
Drinks & Hors d'Oeuvres,
Complimentary Mini Bar

This morning become 'Spellbound', this tour is one of the most unhurried glow worm tours in New Zealand. Time (up to 20 minutes is needed) is allowed for your eyes to adjust to darkness, then raft on an underground stream and be amazed at the effect of thousands of softly shining glow worms. Walk along a gorge path which will bring you to the Cave of the Spirit, Te Ana o Te Atua, quiet and contemplative, soft light reveals a time vault preserving evidence of past explorers, extinct animals, and abandoned stream passages. This is a really memorable cave experience.

When ready, drive south until you reach the central volcanic plateau, and the stunning Tongariro National Park.

View the triplet volcanoes of Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe; whilst Ngauruhoe and Tongariro are dormant, Ruapehu is known to belch smoke from time to time, last erupting in 1996.

Check into Ahuru Lodge; overlooking the trout-filled Tokiahuru Stream, near Ohakune. Have an early night as you will be woken at 1.30am for your Pre-Dawn Tongariro Crossing!



Day 5

Breakfast on a Volcano - Tongariro Pre-Dawn Crossing

PRE-DAWN GUIDED TONGARIRO CROSSING

ACCOMMODATION

Ahuru Lodge
Double Suite

MEALS

Full Breakfast, Pre-Dinner
Drinks & Hors d'Oeuvres,
Complimentary Mini Bar

Up at 1.30am with the Milky Way at your fingertips and shooting stars screaming in the clarity that only the pre-dawn can achieve, witness the sunrise at the Red Crater Summit at 5:00am, then it is breakfast at Ketetahi Hut, Mt Tongariro.

The route is the same as followed during the day with one exception....no crowds! The 12-mile Tongariro Crossing is considered the best hike in New Zealand.

This untouched volcanic terrain offers a fascinating look at a very alien environment, complete with twisted lava formations, volcanic steam vents and other diverse scenery.

Spend the rest of the day relaxing in either the cedar sauna room or mineral spa tub, or perhaps read in the library snug with open fire. If you after some more adventure how about The Ohakune Mountain Ride, drive up to 1620m (5315 ft) then ride down at your own pace back to town.



Day 6

Flying Fox Retreat and the Whanganui River

DRIVE TO WHANGANUI

CANOE OR KAYAK 3 HOUR TOUR

ACCOMMODATION

The Flying Fox Retreat
Cottage

MEALS

Full Breakfast

Drive approx 4 hours to Whanganui, following the famous Whanganui River as it flows from Mount Tongariro to the city. Whanganui is a provincial city rich in both Maori and European history.

Make your way to Koriniti, 45 kilometres northwest of the city. Here you can either travel by flying fox or boat to The Flying Fox Retreat; a lovingly hand-built cottage surrounded by century old walnut trees which overlooks the river.

The cottages are comfortably furnished with a collection of rescued furniture and family treasures or sleep under the star filled night sky in a secluded camping area.

Explore the river by canoe or kayak on a 3 hour expedition; this gives the opportunity to travel ancient paths and to imagine those who have travelled before.



Day 7

Kapiti Island

FERRY CROSSING TO KAPITI ISLAND

OVERNIGHT KIWI SPOTTING TOUR

ACCOMMODATION Kapiti Nature Lodge Ensuite Room

MEALS Brunch, Dinner

Spend the morning enjoying a leisurely breakfast and exploring the organic certified property, with lush vegetable gardens and heritage fruit trees.

Continue on your journey south to Waikanae where at 3pm travel by ferry to Kapiti Island; 'The jewel in the crown of New Zealand's conservation estate', this island provides the necessary 'pest and predator' free environment for many of New Zealand's most endangered bird species.

Take a kiwi spotting adventure; you won't be disappointed as there is approximately 1200 Little Spotted Kiwi on Kapiti Island.

Dinner at the lodge is a family affair, so be prepared to be joined by extended family at meal times. The chefs prepare buffet meals making best use of fresh, seasonal, local product and seafood.



Day 8

Paua, Seals and Crystal Clear Waters

GUIDED DAY WALK

ACCOMMODATION Kapiti Nature Lodge Ensuite Room

MEALS Full Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Enjoy the spectacular sunrise and dawn chorus of early morning bird song, before a leisurely breakfast.

Join one of the island family members and gather Paua (Abalone) from rocky shores; they are considered a delicacy in Māori cuisine.

Visit the local seal colony as they cavorting in crystal clear marine sanctuary waters.

Spend the day exploring the islands; there is a range of walks; including coast walks, bushwalks, or the Okupe Loop walk which offers a great lookout spot across Cook Strait.

The Kapiti Marine Reserve, immediately adjacent to the lodge offers fabulous swimming, snorkeling or scuba diving. Rest in a salt water hot tub and reflect of life on Kapiti Island.



Day 9

Farewell North Island and Hello South Island!

COOK STRAIT FERRY CROSSING

ACCOMMODATION
Awaroa Eco Lodge
Superior Suite

MEALS
Full Breakfast

Farewell Kapiti Island and travel to Wellington; the capital city of NZ which is set between a magnificent harbour and rolling green hills.

Walk through the city and enjoy lunch at one of the superb cafes before boarding the ferry for the three hour journey across Cook Strait; this stretch of water connects the North and South Islands. This crossing is considered one of the most scenic in the world, cruising through the majestic Marlborough Sounds. A breathtaking introduction to the South Island's beauty that lies ahead.

Leaving Picton, pass thru Nelson up to Abel Tasman National Park. Water taxi to Awaroa; a bay nestled in the northern tip, the Awaroa Eco-lodge is 100 meters from one of the most pristine white beaches in the country. There are a multitude of activities on offer or simply relax and enjoy local wines and delicious food, most of which is sourced from the lodges own gardens.



Day 10

Abel Tasman National Park

SWIM BRIDGE, BUSH & BEACH TRIP

ACCOMMODATION
Awaroa Eco Lodge
Superior Suite

MEALS
Full Breakfast

The Abel Tasman is New Zealand's smallest national park at 225sq km. Small in size but big on beauty!

Golden beaches border the translucent turquoise sea, and sandy estuaries fringed by natural forests... The walking tracks here both in land and coastal are world famous for there out standing beauty.

Take an exclusively guided walking adventure where you cruise into the heart of the National Park with full commentary to introduce you to this fascinating coastline.

You disembark at idyllic Medlands Beach - Bark Bay and walk from here to the long golden-sand beach of Anchorage, via Torrent Bay. The track weaves through sunny groves of Manuka and fern between breathtaking views of the granite coast and lush gullies of mature forest. Cross the spectacular swing bridge at Falls River. Allow extra time to take a short side track beside a crystal forest stream to visit tranquil Cleopatra's Pool.

Spend the evening enjoying an evening of gourmet food, interesting company and local wines at the Lodge.



Day 11

Punakaiki & Thermal Bush Camp

OVERNIGHT THERMAL BUSH CAMP

ACCOMMODATION Bush Camp

MEALS Full Breakfast, Barbecue Dinner

This is an outstanding drive through forested mountain scenery and the rugged Buller Gorge to the west coast and Punakaiki. Here; remarkable pieces of natural sculpture, a series of stratified limestone stacks which, over many thousands of years, have been eroded to give the effect of giant piles of neatly stacked pancakes. Another prominent feature to watch is the blowholes that regularly throw up columns of dazzling spray.

Continue onto Greymouth, it is here that you will join a small group to begin your wilderness camping experience.

Start with a two hour walk to the hidden wilderness campsite, the only way in is by walking (or helicopter) and all gear is supplied and carried for you. On arrival everyone helps to set up camp.

The camps hot pools are natural rock spas with hot water bubbling up from underground, Imagine relaxing with a glass of wine in one hand and some of New Zealand's excellent barbecue food in the other as you soak up the heat while gazing at the beautiful scenery.



Day 12

Greymouth to Akaroa - Tranz Alpine Experience

TRANZ ALPINE TO CHRISTCHURCH

ACCOMMODATION Oinako Lodge The Jade Room Bath Spa

MEALS Full Breakfast

At the end of your camping experience, meet the famous Tranz Alpine train; it is rated as one of the top six scenic train journeys in the world.

This coast to coast journey takes you through some of the world's most extreme and beautiful scenery. It stops in the heart of the Southern Alps at Arthur's Pass before descending to the Canterbury Plains and on to Christchurch.

On arrival, collect a rental vehicle and drive to Akaroa; the only attempted settlement by the French in New Zealand.

Overnight at Oinako Lodge, Akaroa Historic Home B&B; one of the most significant historic homes in the area, circa 1865. Features include a sweeping French staircase; ornate plaster ceilings and stunning harbour or mountain views.



Day 13

Dolphin & Blue Penguin

SWIM WITH THE HECTOR DOLPHIN

ACCOMMODATION

Pen-y-Bryn Lodge
Double Guest Room

MEALS

Full Breakfast

Today swim with the tiny, rare Hector Dolphin. This is the only place in the world that you can get so close to these mammals. Whilst on the water be sure to take in the seascape which is dominated by towering volcanic cliffs teeming with marine birdlife.

Leaving the sparkling waters of Akaroa Harbour, travel across the wide Canterbury Plains, down the east coast passing numerous rural towns, you'll cross several large braided rivers brimming with trout and salmon.

Arriving in Oamaru, check into Pen-y-Bryn Lodge; savour first class table d'hôte cuisine and play billiards on the genuine slate table before being collected for your evening viewing experience of the blue penguin.

Watch as up to 180 penguins return from a busy day at sea, climb the steep rocks and make their way inland to their burrows. It is quite a sight.



Day 14

Moeraki Boulders & Royal Albatross

ROYAL ALBATROSS TOUR

DRIVE TO BLUFF AND HELI-FLIGHT TO STEWART ISLAND

ACCOMMODATION

Port of Call B&B
Double Room

MEALS

Full Breakfast

Follow the scenic coastline to Moeraki and stop to observe an ancient geological phenomenon, large stone spheres embedded in the beach known as Moeraki Boulders.

Continue your journey to Otago Peninsula; haven to the only mainland breeding colony of Royal Albatross in the world, special nesting area of the yellow-eyed penguin (Hoiho), the world's rarest, and home to colonies of New Zealand sea lions and fur seals.

Continue driving South to Bluff; a small town located at the bottom of the South Island and 'Gateway to Stewart Island' - famous for its oysters.

Board a helicopter and fly to Stewart Island; the Island's special qualities are its clear, clean waters, the lush rainforest, sweeping sands, and the unspoilt natural beauty. The wildlife, bird life and rare plant life is some of New Zealand's best, where else will you see seals, penguins and dolphins all from the roads. New Zealand's national bird, the kiwi is found all round the Island.

Stay 2 nights at Port of Call Bed & Breakfast; a relaxed home situated on 20 acres of native bush overlooking Halfmoon Bay and Foveaux Strait. Being a 6th generation Stewart Island family, they are keen to show you the sights and sounds of Stewart Island.



Day 15

Sea Kayaking & Picnic Lunch at Stewart Island

SEA KAYAKING TOUR

ACCOMMODATION

Port of Call B&B
Double Room

MEALS

Full Breakfast, Picnic
Lunch

Wake in the morning with the aroma of fresh coffee and a hearty and generous breakfast to get you off to a great start.

It is almost a cliché to call it one of New Zealand's best-kept secrets, but given that so few people are aware of its unspoiled tranquility, it probably deserves this label more than any other place in the country.

Take a sea kayaking tour along the Inlet's shoreline, view sea-life in crystal clear water and the native bird songs that will accompany you.

Enjoy a picnic lunch at Millars Beach, and then walk to the site of the old whaling base.

Spend the late afternoon exploring the island before dining at a local restaurant.



Day 16

Homeward Bound or Extend your Trip!

FLY OR FERRY FROM STEWART ISLAND TO BLUFF

MEALS

Full Breakfast

Either ferry or fly from Stewart Island to Bluff... this is where this adventure itinerary ends.

From here you could extend your holiday and drive 3 hours to Fiordland and experience Milford and Doubtful Sounds before continuing onto the Adventure Capital of New Zealand; Queenstown... the choice is yours, after all it is your holiday.

Use this sample itinerary as a starting point. Then pick and choose to suit you; add or take out activities or add days to spend more time in an interesting spot. Choose your preferred level of accommodation; from 5-star resorts to camping. We can even arrange your own private guide.



- Absolute New Zealand Arrangements End -

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