



— 2023 —

# NORTH ISLAND TOUR

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# NORTH ISLAND TOUR

Tour Length: 15 Days

Tour Departs: 04 March 2023

Tour Ends: 18 March 2023

## OVERVIEW:

While the North Island can often be overlooked in comparison to the South Island when it comes to natural beauty, it is full of its own natural wonders and treasures. On this 15-day tour, we are showcasing some of the best highlights that the island has to offer. Come with us as we explore some of the major cities & towns and also venture off the beaten path as we take you to areas, little known and rarely visited, but some of the most beautiful places in the country.

Staying in some luxurious hotels throughout, with plenty of sightseeing and majority of your meals included, this tour is full of highlights and we look forward to you joining us on our adventure.

## HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- 2 nights Whitianga, including visit to Cooks Beach, Hot Water Beach & Cathedral Cove
- Heritage train from Waihi to Waikino, part of the Hauraki Rail Trail
- Te Araroa – birthplace of Sir Apiana Ngata and home to NZ's oldest & largest Pohutukawa tree
- 2 nights Gisborne, including visit to Kaiti Beach – Captain Cook's first landing place
- 2 nights Napier, including lunch at Mission Estate Winery and visit to the famous gannet colony
- 2 nights Tongariro National Park, including "The Rail River Run" day tour
- 1 night at the stunning Peppers Resort in Martinborough
- 2 nights Wellington, including Kapiti Island day tour

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Whitianga
- Heritage Train from Waihi to Waikino
- Te Aroroa
- Gisborne
- Napier
- Tongariro National Park
- Martinborough
- Wellington





## TOUR COSTS PER PERSON

Share Twin or Double Room  
NZD \$7,950

Supplement for Single  
Room NZD \$2,200

## TOUR COSTS INCLUDE:

- First Class hotel accommodation for city stays
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary – B= Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary
- Tips and gratuities to local guides, drivers, train staff etc.
- Deluxe air-conditioned coach transportation
- Baggage handling of one suitcase per person
- Services of a Maher Tours Leader

## TOUR COSTS EXCLUDE:

- Meals and sightseeing not specifically mentioned in the itinerary
- Travel insurance (assistance and advice offered)
- Items of a personal nature such as room service, telephone calls, laundry etc.

Flights are additional – the best available airfare will be quoted at the time of reservation to combine with this land package.

**BOOKING CONDITIONS:** Deposit of NZD\$1,000.00 per person is due upon confirmation of the booking.

Final payment date: Wednesday 25 January 2023.

To register for this tour please contact us on 0800 500 518 or [tours@mahertours.co.nz](mailto:tours@mahertours.co.nz)





## DAY TO DAY ITINERARY

### Saturday 04 March

Arrive Auckland (D)

Meet the group today in Auckland. Tonight, we enjoy a welcome dinner together.

### Sunday 05 March

Auckland - Coromandel - Whitianga (B, D)

Today we travel by coach to head to the small township of Coromandel on the Coromandel Peninsula. On arrival, there is time for lunch before we head up to the world-famous Driving Creek Railway and Potteries, a unique single gauge mountain railway through a replanted native forest up to a superb viewing tower. After a short Scenic drive up the 309 Road, the story of

Coromandel will continue to unfold. With a rich history of extensive logging and booming gold mining, Coromandel has undergone some radical changes which will be highlighted as you encounter the majesty of one of the few remaining groves of giant Kauri, and hear the story of this great forest. We meet our coach back in Coromandel town and travel to Whitianga where we stay for two nights. Whitianga is the main town on Mercury Bay. When native forests were being harvested on the peninsula in the 1800s and early 1900s, Whitianga was a timber port. Ships from Europe sailed in to Whitianga's deepwater harbour to load up with valuable kauri. Today, the township depends on fishing, farming and tourism for its prosperity.

### Monday 06 March

Whitianga (Cooks Beach, Hot Water Beach, Cathedral Cove) (B, L, D)

After breakfast today, we catch the ferry from Whitianga to Cooks Beach. The area boasts some of NZ's oldest history - Capt James Cook sailed on the HMS Endeavour into Mercury Bay in 1769 and made anchor at Cooks Beach off Purangi. Our coach meets us here and we then head off and spend the day exploring some of the most well-known and beautiful spots in the Coromandel, visiting Hahei and Cathedral Cove, where there is the option to take a walk (approx. 30-40mins each way) through ferns and forests, providing some stellar





coastal views. At the end of the walk, we come upon a gigantic arched cavern which passes through a white rock headland to join two secluded coves. The cathedral-like arch gives the whole area an air of grandeur. The beach is sandy with shady Pohutukawa trees along the foreshore - a perfect place to sit & relax for a while! Our last stop for the day is Hot Water Beach to check out the stunning natural hot springs that come up onto the beach and can only be accessed at low tide. We return to our accommodation in Whitianga late afternoon.

### Tuesday 07 March

Whitianga - Tauranga (B, D)

Departing Whitianga we continue our journey through to Tauranga.

Enroute, we stop in Whangamata for morning tea. There is time to explore the town and enjoy a walk along the beach, if you wish. Travelling south, we reach Waihi where we visit the Gold Discovery Centre before joining the heritage train for the journey to Waikino – part of the Hauraki Rail Trail. We rejoin our coach and drive through to Karangahake Gorge where you have the opportunity to do a short walk. Many Kiwi's will have driven through the breathtaking Karangahake Gorge but few will have ventured into the walkways, old tunnels, and discovered the rich history hidden in the gorge. Not only is this one of the most stunning stretches of river in the country

it was home to one of the busiest and most lucrative goldstrikes in the country. Arriving into Tauranga late this afternoon, our accommodation is the luxurious Trinity Wharf, located on the waterfront.





## DAY TO DAY ITINERARY

### Wednesday 08 March

Tauranga - Hick's Bay (B, D)

We depart Tauranga after breakfast and head to Mount Maunganui, where we can stop and take photos.

Our next stop is Kiwifruit Country – a working kiwifruit orchard where we learn about 'the story of kiwifruit', located in Paengaroa. After our visit, we make our way to Whakatane where we can pick up some lunch before continuing through Opotiki where we pick up our local guide, who will accompany us for the next few days, while exploring the East Cape.

We are off the beaten track now and we join a part of New Zealand where local Maori communities protect the history and traditions. We arrive in Hicks Bay around 4:30pm this afternoon and enjoy dinner together again this evening.

### Thursday 09 March

Hick's Bay - Gisborne (B, D)

We depart our accommodation and visit Tairawhiti Pharmaceuticals – a company that has been processing manuka oil for the last 15 years. The oil has powerful anti-bacterial properties, and the research conducted into the effectiveness and properties of the oil have become more widely recognised. It is used in the treatment of MRSA and in other natural skin care products. Tairawhiti's production so far has been from manuka harvested from the wild. The demand for Manuka oil is now well in excess of supply so the company intends to develop 300 ha of plantations over the next five years to replace its current wild harvest source. We enjoy a tour of the extraction facility before there is time for manuka honey tastings & some morning tea.

Making our way to the tiny coastal





settlement of Te Araroa - it is here we find Te Waha-o-Rerekohu, New Zealand's oldest and largest Pohutukawa tree. At around 600 years old, it stands proudly in the grounds of the local school. Te Araroa is also the birthplace of Sir Apirana Ngata, who made it his life's goal to uplift the Maori race spiritually, culturally, and economically.

We stop at a scenic point where we can view the historic East Cape lighthouse, which stands 154 metres above sea level and is accessed by a walking track of some 700 steps.

Next up is Saint Mary's Church in Tikitiki. This is one of the finest Māori churches

in New Zealand. It was built in 1924 and consecrated in 1926 as a memorial to the soldiers of Ngāti Porou who died in World War I. For Maori culture this is a significant site and requires a lot of respect from any visitor. A visit to this part of New Zealand is very different to the commercial travel experiences you may find in a place such as Rotorua. The decoration of the church displays a meeting of two cultures. The structure is typically European, but the extensively carved and decorated interior is typically Māori. Sir Apirana Ngata was the mastermind behind the spectacular interior design. In the 1920s he began a personal crusade to revive the dying art and craft skills within Ngati Porou and Māoridom



## DAY TO DAY ITINERARY

in general. Saint Mary's was one of his first initiatives. The church was carved by local Ngāti Porou carvers; Ngāti Porou weavers completed the tukutuku (woven panels). The ornate pulpit was a koha (gift) to the church by Te Arawa tribe. The memorial board in the church lists names of soldiers from the area who lost their lives in the world wars.

At lunchtime, we arrive in Tokomaru Bay where we tour the historic wharf and freezing works under the guidance of a group of historians who describe the local efforts to restore the wharf. At the conclusion, there is time for lunch at the Tokomaru Bay Tavern (own account), before we continue on to Tolaga Bay. Here, those that wish can choose to walk the length of New Zealand's longest wharf. At 660 metres in length, this is no ordinary pier.



We arrive at our hotel in Gisborne at approximately 5:00pm and there is time to check in and freshen up prior to dinner. Tonight, we are dining at USSCO, located in the historic Union Steam Ship Company (USSCo) building at the river-end of Gisborne's CBD.

### Friday 10 March

Gisborne (B, L, D)

Today, we venture out to Eastwoodhill Arboretum - the National Arboretum of New Zealand, encompassing over 131 hectares planted in exotic and native trees, shrubs and climber plantings. The collection was planted by Douglas Cook and is regarded as the largest and most comprehensive collection of Northern Hemisphere trees south of the equator. We enjoy a guided jeep tour.

Afterwards, we visit Kaiti Beach. This is the site of Captain Cook's first landing in New Zealand (9 October 1769) and nearby is picturesque Te Poho O Rawiri Marae. For those interested in Māori culture, Gisborne is an essential port of call – old traditions are still evident in many parts of the city. Oral history records Titirangi (Kaiti) Hill as the point of arrival for the migratory waka (canoe), Horouta, which brought the first Māori to the area. In the afternoon we visit two of the leading wineries who produce Chardonnay for which this part of New Zealand is famous for, enjoying a platter-



style lunch at one of the wineries. We return to our hotel to freshen up, prior to dinner this evening at a fabulous local restaurant.

### **Saturday 11 March**

Gisborne - Napier (B, L D)

Today we journey South again, this time onto the world's great Art-deco city of Napier. We stop enroute at the New Zealand equivalent of NASA's Cape Canaveral, though on a smaller scale. Kiwi ingenuity is often all around you in New Zealand and the decision/opportunity to launch satellites from Nuhaka just after the Mahia peninsula, is one of the more interesting concepts. Moving towards 100 launches we will stop to view if something is scheduled to launch at Rocketlab. Continuing on, we make our way through to Wairoa where we stop for lunch. We arrive Napier mid/late afternoon.

### **Sunday 12 March**

Napier (B, L)

Napier is unique and is regarded as one of the world's great art deco cities. Street after street of stunning and beautifully-restored Art Deco buildings have made Napier famous as one of the most complete collections of Art Deco buildings in the world. Today we head to Cape Kidnappers where we join our experienced guides and visit the largest mainland gannet colony in the world. Enroute we stop for lunch at Mission Estate Winery. Offering elegant, classic surroundings, magnificent views, world class cuisine and wines combined with the stunning vineyard location makes Mission Restaurant one of Hawke's Bays premier venues.

We return to Napier late this afternoon and the remainder of the day is at leisure.





## DAY TO DAY ITINERARY

### Monday 13 March

Napier - Taupo - Tongariro National Park (B, D)

Departing Napier this morning, we journey to Taupo where we stop for lunch (own account) at the funky L'Arte Café and Gallery, in Acacia Bay, created by mother & daughter duo, Jo & Judi Brennan. After lunch, we depart Taupo, and travel to Tongariro National Park, where we will be staying at the Chateau Tongariro, located in the heart of the park. Before checking in, we travel on the Sky Waka gondola to enjoy breath-taking views through floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Pinnacles and the valley below.

### Tuesday 14 March

Tongariro National Park (B, L, D)

Today, we spend the day with Forgotten World Adventures, doing the The Rail River Run. Travelling along the first section of the Forgotten World Railway, between

Okahukura & Tokorima, including the line's longest tunnel (Tunnel 24 - 1.5km long); combined with a Jet Boat journey along the scenic Whanganui River, between Cherry Grove (Taumarunui) & Ohinepane. Enjoy the best of both worlds, encountering 10 tunnels and 20 bridges, as you travel 40km by rail and 23km by Jet Boat on the Whanganui River, a mixture of nostalgia and adrenaline. Lunch and afternoon tea are included today.

### Wednesday 15 March

Tongariro National Park - Martinborough (B, D)

A relatively long coach journey today as we make our way south to Martinborough. We travel the Desert Road to Waiouru where we stop at the Army Museum, and then continue down through Taihape (watch out for the gumboot!) and Bulls, before arriving in Palmerston North where we stop for lunch. We reach Martinborough mid-afternoon and there is time to rest and relax prior to meeting up for dinner this evening.





### Thursday 16 March

#### Wairarapa Day Tour (B, L)

This morning, we visit Kahikatea Gardens. We then have time to explore Greytown - perhaps grab a coffee and morning tea at one of the many cafes. This country village oozes metropolitan style - there is a sophisticated mix of independent boutiques, galleries, antique stores and restored Victorian wooden buildings line the Main Street. We then make our way by coach back to Martinborough, packed with colonial charm, home to over 20 wineries most within walking distance of the quaint village square which is laid out in a Union Jack pattern. Some of New Zealand's best pinot noir comes from the town's friendly family-owned vineyards. We enjoy wine tastings, followed by a late lunch at one of the best vineyards in town. We make our way to Wellington later this afternoon, the remainder of the day is at leisure.

### Friday 17 March

#### Kapiti Island Day Tour (B, L, D)

A relatively early morning as we leave the city today to experience the richness and wonder of Kapiti Island. Here we learn of the unique balance of conservation, ecology, and local human history Kapiti offers. Our experienced nature guide will walk with us and explain the rich human and ecological history and help us identify the flora and fauna. We sit down with the

family and enjoy a delicious cooked lunch at the Lodge, surrounded by one of the most rich and diverse nature reserves in New Zealand. Expect to see some of our most beautiful and endangered birds up close and personal. We return to Wellington late-afternoon, with time to freshen up before our final dinner together this evening.

### Saturday 18 March

#### Depart Wellington (B)

Tour ends. Transfers to Wellington Airport will be provided for those that require them.





## 2023 NORTH ISLAND TOUR

### NEW ZEALAND

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