

Kia Ora New Zealand

Depart Cairns 16th October at 5.45AM arrive Brisbane 8.00AM – Virgin
Depart Brisbane 16th October at 10.10AM arrive Auckland 4.15PM – Virgin

Commence the following tour with AAT Kings in Auckland on the 16th October and ending in Christchurch on the 1st November

Day 1 [Welcome to Auckland](#)

Welcome to Auckland, New Zealand's City of Sails. Flights can arrive any time prior to 4.00pm; you will be transferred from the airport to your hotel. After check-in, you can explore Auckland. Take a walk down Queen Street, to the main shopping precinct or take a bus (leaves from outside the hotel) down to the Viaduct Harbour and the Auckland Waterfront region. This recently developed area of central Auckland has cafes and restaurants galore. Take a seat in the sunshine, enjoy a glass of one of New Zealand's famous Sauvignon Blanc's and watch the maritime activity on Waitemata Harbour. This evening, meet your fellow travelling companions and your AAT Kings Travel Director at a welcome reception back at your hotel.

Hotel: VR Queen Street Hotel & Suites

Day 2 [Auckland – Bay of Islands](#)

This morning, depart Auckland City and travel north over the Harbour Bridge past the sprawling suburbs of the North Shore of Auckland. Our travels then take you through Northland's lush farmland scenery before arriving into the beautiful Bay of Islands. This afternoon discovers the stories, people and events that shaped the past, present and future of Aotearoa New Zealand at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. During your tour you will view the world's largest ceremonial war canoe, the historic Treaty House and carved Meeting House. Stand on the spot where New Zealand's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi, was first signed in 1840. This evening enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Hotel: Copthorne Resort Bay of Islands, Garden Rooms, 2 nights

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3 [Bay of Islands 'Free Time'](#)

Today is a completely free day for you to experience the beauty of the Bay of Islands. Perhaps take a coach trip up to Cape Reinga - the very top of New Zealand via idyllic Ninety Mile Beach. Experience a day of sailing aboard a historic tall ship, enjoy wine tasting on a wine tour of the region, or join a tour of Russell and learn more about the settling of the Bay of Islands. Tonight, you are free to dine as you wish. Your AAT Kings Travel Director will assist you in booking all your optional experiences.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 4 [Bay of Islands – Auckland](#)

Enjoy a leisurely morning in the Bay of Islands before you travel back to Auckland. Our journey south takes us to Whangarei, the northern-most city in New Zealand, where you can wander around the art galleries and through the marina in the Town Basin. Enjoy a scenic drive through the Rodney District before arriving into Auckland late afternoon.

Hotel: VR Queen Street Hotel & Suites

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 5 [Auckland – Rotorua](#)

A city sights tour will start your morning in Auckland. Travel to the Auckland War Memorial Museum for views across Auckland City and the Waitemata Harbour. After leaving Auckland you

will follow the meandering trail of the Waikato River to Waitomo Caves. Tour the amazing limestone caverns and sail through the still waters 64 of the sparkling Glow Worm Grotto. From Waitomo to Rotorua you will venture through the King Country region which was at the centre of the New Zealand Wars in the 1860s. On arrival in Rotorua an orientation tour takes in views of Lake Rotorua. Tonight, an evening of culture, history and scrumptious food awaits you at the Tamaki Maori Village. Wander through the ancient forest village and learn about Maori art forms and traditions, followed by a concert featuring local performers. Experience an authentic Maori Hangi meal, steamed underground in the traditional way.

Hotel: Ibis Rotorua Hotel, 2 nights

Included Meals: Breakfast, Highlight Dinner

Day 6 [Rotorua 'Free Time'](#)

Today is your chance to experience the scenic wonders of the geothermal wonderland of Rotorua. You could explore Rainbow Springs Nature Park & The National Kiwi Hatchery, take a 'behind the scenes' tour through the working kiwi nursery and hatchery. Visit Te Puia and join a guided tour through the Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve, home to famous Pohutu Geyser and the bubbling beauty of the mud pools. Later, why not spend a little more time experiencing the thermal wonders, with a soak in the hot mineral waters of the Polynesian Spas? Your AAT Kings Travel Director will assist you in booking all of your chosen optional experiences.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 7 [Rotorua – Wellington](#)

Say Haere Ra (goodbye) to Rotorua this morning and journey out through pine forests and farmland to a little hidden spot, the turquoise torrent of rapids known as Huka Falls. The road ahead unfolds in a broad panorama of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake. The stunningly blue fresh water of Lake Taupo is home to some of the best trout fishing in the world. You will then journey south over the Central Plateau, New Zealand's main volcanic area. In a country of contrasts, perhaps nothing is more striking than the three peaks of Tongariro National Park rising starkly from the surrounding plateau of tussock and near desert. Pass through several small towns along the road to Wellington, each with their own personality and quirks. Probably the quirkiest of all would have to be Taihape... the self-proclaimed gumboot capital of the world. Travel along the Kapiti Coast, the traditional summer playground of the inhabitants of Wellington city. And as you follow the state highway, the Kapiti Coast becomes New Zealand's capital city, Wellington.

Hotel: Travelodge Wellington

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 8 [Wellington – Picton](#)

After a city sights tour of Wellington taking in New Zealand's parliament buildings, and a visit to Te Papa, the Museum of New Zealand, enjoy some time at leisure. Indulge in Wellington's renowned coffee culture or take a walk along Lambton Quay - the heart of the central business district of Wellington. You'll have lunch included today provided by 'Eat My Lunch'. 'Eat My Lunch' is a charity organisation that provides lunch for New Zealand school children who otherwise would be going to school without. By having lunch today, you are giving a lunch to a child in need. This afternoon, your AAT Kings crew and coach will join you on board the Interislander for a cruise across the Cook Strait, from the North Island to the South. Surprisingly it takes longer to cruise up the Tory Channel and Queen Charlotte Sound to Picton than it does to cross the open ocean of Cook Strait. You will meander through a maze of arms and inlets into the sleepy seaside village of Picton. Tonight, enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Hotel: Picton Beachcomber Inn

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 [Picton – Christchurch](#)

Travel to Kaikoura, where Sperm Whales can often be seen not far from shore (an optional whale-watching flight is available). Travel along the Pacific Ocean coast and across the colourful Canterbury Plains to Christchurch. Tonight, speak with your Travel Director about dining recommendations in Christchurch's inner city.

Hotel: Ibis Hotel Christchurch

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 10 [Christchurch – Omarama](#)

This morning you may wish to take a brief walk around the city centre and Cathedral Square before departure. See how Christchurch is rebuilding after the devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, and pop into the Transitional Cathedral in Latimer Square, the temporary home of the Christchurch Cathedral. It is the world's only cathedral made substantially of cardboard! After a Christchurch city sights tour, you will head out over the patchwork countryside of the Canterbury Plains to soak up some spectacular sightseeing. Sweeping views across the turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo framed by a backdrop of rugged hills and snow-capped mountains provide stunning alpine photography opportunities. You will view the little stone-hewn Church of the Good Shepherd and the bronze statue of a collie dog, the touching tribute to the sheepdogs which helped develop the Mackenzie Country. You may want to take in Mount Cook National Park from the air this afternoon, on a scenic flight out over New Zealand's highest peak, the Southern Alps and on to Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers (Optional Experience – at own expense). Your day finishes in the heart of the Mackenzie Country at Omarama. Tonight, enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Hotel: Heritage Gateway Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 11 [Omarama – Dunedin](#)

Your day starts with a journey along the Waitaki River, which marks the boundary between the regions of Canterbury and Otago, and with its large catchment it is an ideal source of hydro-electric power. From the Waitaki Valley you will then travel through to the township of Oamaru, with its stately tree-lined streets and its famous white limestone buildings. As well as shipping limestone to the bigger cities of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin for construction of their Town Halls and various churches, Oamaru locals made sure that their own town represented the best in limestone building the mid-late 1800's had to offer. This afternoon you will make your way down to the Southernmost New Zealand city, Dunedin. With the rest of your free afternoon you may wish to take part in an optional excursion to see more of the region. Take a Wildlife Cruise out to Otago Peninsula, visit the Speights Brewery – a New Zealand institution or ride the historic Taieri Gorge Railway.

Hotel: Scenic Hotel Dunedin City

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 12 [Dunedin – Te Anau](#)

This morning you have some free time in Dunedin. You may want to journey out to the gorgeous Larnach Castle – New Zealand's only castle. Or you may just wish to roam around the beautiful grounds of New Zealand's first university, Otago University. Dunedin, also known as the Edinburgh of the South, has strong connections to its northern hemisphere sister city, even down to sharing many of the same street names – so take a wander down George Street, noting Dunedin's Scottish ancestry. This afternoon travel through lush green pastures, crossing sheep-filled farming land. New Zealand is internationally known for its sheep farming, 66 and these are sights many visitors to this country recognise as typically 'New Zealand'. You are sure to find the perfect sheep photo here! As your journey continues, the rolling, grassy hills once again turn back into heavily forested, rugged mountains, and you meander your way up into the Fiordland National Park to the South Island's biggest lake and the town of Te Anau. This evening you have the opportunity to head out across the lake to the Glow Worm Caves for a tour (Optional Experience – at own expense). Tonight, enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Hotel: Distinction Luxmore Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 13 [Te Anau – Queenstown](#)

Today is one of those days where you will want to have your camera battery charged, and ready to go! After leaving Te Anau, you will journey through the Fiordland National Park and out to Milford Sound on one of the most scenic roads you could hope for. Travel through native rainforests, beech forests, alluvial flats and meadows. You will stop at Mirror Lakes where, as the name suggests, you can see the stunning mountain scenery perfectly reflected in the waters of the lakes. Then on to the Homer Tunnel, man's attempt to master the sheer rocky ranges, still left rough-hewn around the edges. As you emerge out the other side of the tunnel, you are presented with one of the world's most dramatic alpine drives, down through the Cleddau Valley. You will have a stop at the Chasm, where the roaring Cleddau River has carved its way through solid rock, and then it's on to Milford Sound, where you will cruise the waters of this natural wonder. Your cruise meanders down the sound, taking in the Bowen and Stirling Falls as they plummet from glacial hanging valleys sharply into the sea, and the sheer pinnacle of Mitre Peak, rising from the deep waters of the fiord. From the spectacular scenes of Milford Sound, you will travel on to the beautiful sights of Queenstown. An orientation tour skirting around the shores of Lake Wakatipu, takes you into the city centre.

Hotel: Copthorne Hotel and Resort Queenstown , 2 nights

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 14 [Queenstown 'Free Time'](#)

Explore exciting Queenstown your way! Take the opportunity to encounter a Queenstown legend and ride the Shotover Jet Boat or venture out on a Skippers Canyon Scenic Tour. If laid-back and relaxed is more your idea of fun, then join a Wine Tour and sample some of Central Otago's award-winning wines or visit our native birds at Queenstown's Kiwi Birdlife Park. Your AAT Kings Travel Director will assist you in booking all of your chosen optional experiences. After a day of activity, sit back and enjoy a peaceful evening cruise across Lake Wakatipu aboard New Zealand's oldest steamship, the TSS Earnslaw, to Walter Peak Station. Launched in 1912, the TSS Earnslaw is the largest and grandest vessel ever to ply Lake Wakatipu. Today, the TSS Earnslaw is believed to be the only coal-fired passenger carrying vessel still operating in the southern hemisphere. Partake in a gourmet BBQ Highlight Dinner at Walter Peaks' Colonel's Homestead and then enjoy an entertaining after-dinner farm show providing a glimpse into high-country farm life. On the cruise back to Queenstown, join in a vintage sing-along or grab your partner for a dance across the polished wooden floors of the Earnslaw.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Highlight Dinner

Day 15 [Queenstown – Franz Josef](#)

This morning you will leave the alpine wonderland of Queenstown behind, and begin the passage through Central Otago and out to Westland. On the way out of the Queenstown region, you will stop and visit the faithfully restored gold mining settlement of Arrowtown. As you amble down the beautiful tree-lined avenues, past the 19th century wooden buildings, you will feel like you have stepped into a movie set. From here you will travel over to Cromwell, situated next to the sparkling pristine waters of Lake Dunstan, where you will stop in at a local orchard for a taste of some of the town's delicious stone fruit. It is a day of gorgeous lakes, as after Dunstan, you will travel further into Central Otago and view the vivid blue waters of Lake Hawea, followed by Lake Wanaka, where the shoreline is charmingly lined by poplars and willows. Following an ancient greenstone trail, you will travel over Haast Pass, marking a change from the alpine scenery of the Southern Lakes, to the rainforest marvel of the wild West Coast. View the sheer drop of Thunder Creek Falls and the grand sight of Mt Hooker, flanked on three sides by extensive glaciers. Our final destination for today is the extraordinary rivers of ice that make up Franz Josef Glacier. You may want to get up close and personal with the glaciers on a helicopter flight. Your flight will hover over the snow face and may land high up in the valley so that you can walk across the ice

fall – subject to weather conditions (optional – at own expense). Tonight, enjoy dinner at your hotel.

Hotel: Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier (Graham Wing)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 16 [Franz Josef – Christchurch](#)

If weather conditions are unfavourable on Day 15, you will get another chance to fly up to the glaciers this morning or you might want to take a stroll through the small but lively Franz Josef village. Then you head off to the drift-wood strewn beaches of Hokitika. As well as being one of the few West Coast communities to embrace its coastal landscape, Hokitika struck it rich in the resource's stakes. Here you will visit a pounamu factory (native greenstone or jade), for the chance to see master carvers at work creating intricate pieces of jewellery and art. Maori tradition says it is bad luck to buy pounamu for yourself, so if you fancy a trinket of your own, make sure you have someone there to purchase it for you. From Hokitika, you will travel inland to the small settlement of Arthur's Pass. Here you will board the TranzAlpine train to Christchurch city. This spectacular train journey dates back to 1914 and is rated as one of the world's most scenic train trips. The train forges through tunnels and over viaducts with panoramic views of snow-capped peaks, icy rivers, beech forests, gorges and river valleys. This evening, join your AAT Kings Travel Director and Driver, and your new-found friends for a Farewell Dinner.

Hotel: Ibis Hotel Christchurch

Included Meals: Breakfast, Farewell Dinner

Day 17 [Farewell from Christchurch](#)

Your AAT Kings New Zealand holiday concludes this morning after breakfast. Your flights can depart any time today, and you will be transferred to Christchurch Airport for your onward flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Depart Christchurch 1st November at 5.00PM arrive Brisbane 5.45PM – Virgin

Depart Brisbane 1st November at 8.05PM arrive Cairns 10.25PM – Virgin

Cost per person \$6475.00 which includes the following:

Airfares

Airport taxes

17 day tour including meals and entertainment as per itinerary