

Classic | Cities & Coastal Highlights Tour

Auckland to Christchurch – 10 Days

Cities & Coastal Highlights is also offered as a Christchurch to Auckland tour. See the end of this itinerary for details.

Day 1

Auckland

Welcome to Auckland

Kia Ora!

Welcome to Auckland, New Zealand's City of Sails! Auckland is known for its multicultural hub of food, music, arts, and culture.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Auckland has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to visit the Sky Tower or go shopping along bustling Queen Street. You may even fancy a drink in one of the charming bars or eateries of Vulcan Lane.

Your tour officially begins this evening, as you join your fellow travellers and Tour Director this evening for a welcome reception.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

A welcome drink is included in tonight's reception

Activities

Welcome Reception

Day 2

Auckland to Tongariro National Park

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

Today, you will marvel at rural New Zealand's lush landscapes from the comfort of your seat aboard the Northern Explorer scenic train. From the green pastures of the Waikato to the icy mountain streams of Ruapehu, you won't want to miss a moment. If you are interested in culture and history, be sure to listen to the audio

commentary as you cross historic viaducts and traverse up the Raurimu Spiral, an engineering marvel. This experience is one like no other.

At the base of this geological wonder is Ohakune, 'the carrot capital of New Zealand', where you'll stay the next two nights to experience your chosen adventure.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Train Experience

Mini excursion to view expansive views across the volcanic landscape

Day 3

Tongariro National Park

Discover Tongariro National Park

Today is free for you to discover one of the region's many exciting excursions. Choose from the optional activities on offer and personalise your perfect holiday. Perhaps you will enjoy a hot tub soak, or a meander along the lazy river.

If you're after an active day, why not explore Ohakune's historical cycle trail? Rent e-bikes and discover old viaducts, tunnels, old settlers' camps and reclaimed native forests along the Old Coach Road!

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Day 4

Tongariro National Park to Wellington

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

After breakfast, we begin our day by travelling to Mt Ruapehu. You won't want to leave this mini excursion to Middle Earth without a panoramic photo in hand!

Joining the Northern Explorer train once again, you will wave goodbye to this UNESCO World Heritage Site as you settle into your uber-comfortable seat. Don't get too comfortable though; dramatic rivers, gorges, and ravines are just around the bend! Stretch your legs and explore the open-air carriage to acquire the best views from the train.

As you glide through rich green farmland and past a dramatic coastline, indulge in afternoon tea while drinking in the views. All too soon the train will arrive into Wellington leaving the picturesque Porirua Harbour behind you.

Arriving at Wellington Railway Station, you are just a stone's throw from downtown, the Beehive, and Parliament Buildings. Welcome to New Zealand's Capital City! You won't want to waste a moment of time after checking into the hotel - your evening is free to explore this award-winning cultural and culinary capital from Queen's Wharf to Cuba Street and beyond.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Afternoon tea aboard the train

Activities

Mini excursion to view expansive volcanic views across the North Island
Northern Explorer Scenic Train Experience

Day 5

Wellington

Explore Wellington

The perfect day does exist – and it includes exploring Wellington!

Today is free for you to experience vibrant Wellington as you please. Start by joining an included tour at Te Papa Museum and then head

off to explore Cuba Street's cafés, bookstores, and eccentric shops. Surround yourself by native birdlife and regenerating forest at Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary. You won't get bored with the plethora of activities on offer. From coffee, culture, historic buildings to botanic gardens and much more...the list goes on! If you need any suggestions or recommendations, just reach out to your helpful Tour Director or our Travel Centre to pre-book an experience.

Enjoy dinner tonight with your fellow travellers and Tour Director.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Introduction Tour at Te Papa Museum
Group Dinner

Day 6

Wellington to Marlborough

Crossing Cook Strait

This morning you will say poroporoaki ki te motu raki (good-bye to the North Island) as you sail to the South Island, crossing the Cook Strait on the Interislander ferry. As the shores of the North Island slowly disappear, enjoy a hearty seafaring breakfast on board.

Around midday, you will be spoiled with captivating harbour views as you enter the Queen Charlotte Sound. Admire the beauty of this coastal paradise as you arrive at the gateway of the South Island, Picton. Step off the Interislander Ferry and experience Marlborough.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Interislander Ferry

Day 7

Marlborough to Kaikōura

The Coastal Pacific Scenic Train

The morning is yours to explore. Meander through the local craft stores and coastal walks in Picton, or perhaps discover the Omas Aviation Museum in Blenheim. Enjoy the waterfront cafés before boarding the Coastal Pacific train for another highlight rail journey through the Marlborough Wine Region.

Today you will be travelling to Kaikōura. Relax and let the train glide you across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breathtaking beauty. Keep an eye out for the fur seals lazing on the rocks!

Once in Kaikōura, the evening will be yours to enjoy some iconic kai moana (seafood) at one of the quaint restaurants.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Train Experience

Day 8

Kaikōura to Christchurch

Explore Kaikōura

Today will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. You will have the opportunity to go whale watching! Enjoy today's optional thrill of an up-close encounter with the world's largest-toothed predator, the Giant Sperm Whale who live in the waters of Kaikōura year-round.

Want to get an aerial experience of the wildlife? Why not request a plane ride to capture the true grandeur of it all?

Whether you have decided to go whale watching or swimming with the dolphins and seals, we're sure you will be feeling peckish. Head to the hub of the action on the main street to sample some iconic New Zealand food - you can't go wrong with the humble Kiwiana fish and chips. Work off the deep-fried delights by wandering through the wonderful array of local artisan stores and souvenir shops.

In the late afternoon, your journey will continue, once again, on the Coastal Pacific Train en route to Christchurch, or “The Garden City”. The spectacular scenery won’t cease to amaze as you journey south through the rolling hills and extensive plains. Enjoy the relaxing journey with a glass of wine in hand.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner on train

Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Train Experience

Day 9

Christchurch

Explore Christchurch

Christchurch, the hub for South Island exploration is also a wonderful city that blends modern architecture and technology with the existing 19th-century Anglican ‘gothic revival’ architectural influence. Often remembered for its earthquake in 2011, the city is rebuilding itself as a multicultural haven. So, without further delay, jump on the historic tram to learn the history, tales, and culture of Ōtautahi Christchurch.

Enjoy your free time as you explore the Arts Centre, Quake City Museum, Christchurch Art Gallery, and Botanical Gardens. Ride on the city tram to uncover Christchurch's great history, or relax as you punt on the Avon River. There is also a multitude of delicious cafés tucked into quaint side streets we're sure you will love. If you are in the mood for something different, set off for Akaroa, an ‘incroyable’ French coastal settlement just an hour and half from the city centre.

A farewell dinner awaits as you join your fellow travellers once again to tell them about the exciting places you have discovered.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Christchurch)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Christchurch Tram City Tour

Farewell Dinner

Day 10

Christchurch

Departing Christchurch

Your journey will end after enjoying breakfast at your hotel.

Not ready to leave Christchurch? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Transfer to airport

Classic | Cities & Coastal Highlights Tour

Christchurch to Auckland – 10 Days

Cities & Coastal Highlights is also offered as an Auckland to Christchurch tour. See the start of this itinerary for details.

Day 1

Christchurch

Welcome to Christchurch

Kia Ora!

Welcome to Christchurch – New Zealand’s Garden City! The largest city in the South Island, Christchurch is known for its historical earthquake in 2011 and how it rebuilt itself into a charming, multicultural city that blends modern architecture and technology with the existing 19th-century Anglican influence.

After checking into your hotel and reading your welcome letter from your Tour Director, head out and explore all that Christchurch has to offer. This is the perfect opportunity to wander through the enticing stalls at Riverside Market or explore the botanical gardens before heading to the art gallery, museums and other city attractions.

Your journey will officially begin as you join your fellow travelers and Tour Director at this evening’s welcome dinner.

Accommodation

3 – 4 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Dinner

Activities

Welcome Dinner

Day 2

Christchurch to Kaikōura

The Coastal Pacific to Kaikōura

Your first train journey departs Christchurch on route to Kaikōura. Enjoy breakfast on board as the smell of aromatic coffee dances through the carriages. In a few short hours, you will step foot into

marine wildlife paradise.

Kaikōura has a range of exciting activities to choose from. Will you seek the whale watching, albatross, or dolphin encounter, or simply peruse the local artisan and gift shops? The rest of the day is yours to explore.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Train Experience

Day 3

Kaikōura to Marlborough

The Coastal Pacific Train to Marlborough

After breakfast, your Tour Director will guide you back to the Kaikōura Railway Station to board the Coastal Pacific train for the next leg of your journey.

Relax and let the train glide you across remote beaches, between mountains and sea, on a timeless journey of breath-taking beauty. Keep an eye out for the fur seals lazing on the rocks!

This afternoon you'll arrive into your final South Island destination. Soak up the views and maybe even join a wine tour to enjoy delicious wine amongst the vines. Listen to passionate wine makers describe the history and processes of these flavorful grapes. The evening is free for you to explore.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (1 night)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Coastal Pacific Scenic Train Experience

Day 4

Marlborough

Crossing Cook Strait

This morning you'll say good-bye to the South Island as you sail towards the capital. Crossing Cook Strait on the Interislander Ferry,

to Wellington

the South Island shores will slowly disappear as you enjoy a hearty seafaring lunch onboard.

Spoiled with harbour views, admire the coastal paradise as you glide through the scenic Queen Charlotte Sound and arrive into Wellington. Step off the Interislander Ferry and start your North Island adventure by exploring Wellington city.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Lunch

Activities

Interislander Ferry

Day 5

Wellington

Explore Wellington

The perfect day does exist – and it includes exploring Wellington!

Today is free for you to experience vibrant Wellington as you please. Start by joining a Te Papa Introduction Tour and then head off to explore Cuba Street's cafes, bookstores, and eccentric shops. Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary is just around the corner where you can surround yourself by native birdlife and regenerating forest. You won't get bored with the plethora of activities on offer. From coffee, culture, historic buildings botanic gardens and more, the list goes on! If you need any suggestions or recommendations, just reach out to your helpful Tour Director or our Travel Centre to pre-book an experience.

Dinner awaits as you join your fellow travelers once again to tell them about the exciting places you have discovered.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Wellington)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Te Papa Introduction Tour

Group Dinner

Day 6

Wellington to Tongariro National Park

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

Today you'll be heading north aboard the Northern Explorer Train to explore Tongariro National Park. Sit back and relax while the smooth train travels along the Kāpiti Coast. You won't want to get too comfortable though; dramatic rivers, gorges and ravines are just around the bend! Stretch your legs and explore the open-air carriage to get the best view of the fantastic scenery.

Upon arrival into the national park, the afternoon is free for you to experience all the outdoor activities Ohakune has to offer.

Accommodation

3 – 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Train Experience

Day 7

Tongariro National Park

Discover Tongariro National Park

Today is free for you to discover one of Ohakune's exciting excursions. Choose from the many optional activities on offer and personalise your perfect holiday. Perhaps you will hop aboard a historical rail cart journey or join a horse trekking experience that takes you along expansive hills, mountains, rivers and into the native bush.

If you're after an active day, why not explore Ohakune's historical cycle trail? Rent e-bikes and discover old viaducts, tunnels, old settlers' camps and reclaimed native forests along the Old Coach Road!

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Ohakune)

Meals Included

Breakfast

Day 8

Tongariro National Park to Auckland

The Northern Explorer Scenic Train

After a charming morning exploring the local shops and cafés of Ohakune, you will once again board the Northern Explorer train heading north to Auckland.

Along the way you'll wind down the historic Raurimu Spiral and traverse the Central Plateau with its three iconic volcanic mountains dominating the desert plains of Tongariro National Park. Soar over the icy mountain streams of Ruapehu and traverse into the Waikato, famous for its dairy farming and green pastures.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Auckland)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Northern Explorer Scenic Train Experience

Day 9

Auckland & Waiheke Island

Island and Winery Hopping

Begin your day with a delightful breakfast at the hotel before embarking on an indulgent day out on Waiheke Island.

Enjoy the freedom of hopping on and off as you please with your included ferry and bus tickets, departing hourly from the Downtown Ferry Terminal. Explore the picturesque Waiheke Island at your leisure, with buses ready to whisk you away to the next scenic spot half-hourly from the island's ferry terminal.

After a day of sipping and sightseeing, choose any return ferry back to Auckland, ensuring you're on time for a memorable farewell dinner with your guide at one of Auckland's renowned restaurants.

Accommodation

3 - 4 Star Accommodation (2 nights in Auckland)

Meals Included

Breakfast, Dinner

Activities

Waiheke Hop on Hop off Wine & Dine
Farewell Dinner

Day 10

Auckland

Departing Auckland

Your journey will end after enjoying a final breakfast with your fellow travellers.

Not ready to leave Auckland? Reach out to our Travel Centre to pre-organise your extended stay.

Meals Included

Breakfast

Activities

Transfer to airport