

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



New Zealand Explorer (NZL 2014/15)



TOUR
DURATION
19
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Busy

Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Standard

Tour Code: NZL

Tour Highlights - New Zealand Explorer

- ✓ Coromandel Peninsula - Stay on a farm among the beautiful, rolling hills of the Coromandel Peninsula
- ✓ Rotorua - Explore the geothermal landscapes of the Maori heartlands
- ✓ Napier and Hawke's Bay - Admire the Art Deco buildings of Napier and walk through the vineyards of Hawke's Bay
- ✓ Glaciers and fjords - Explore Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers
- ✓ Queenstown - New Zealand's adrenalin capital
- ✓ Milford Sound - Boat trip along the tranquil fjord
- ✓ Dunedin - Visit the Albatross Centre and discover the Edinburgh of the South

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 15 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Standard Lodge
1 night Standard Farmstay

Included Meals: 18 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners

Start Point: Join tour: Auckland

End Point: Tour ends: Christchurch

Transport: Bus, Boat, Ferry

Countries: New Zealand

New Zealand Explorer

This tour combines the best of New Zealand's North and South islands. We explore the dramatic landscapes of glaciers, volcanoes and snow-capped mountains, discover the extraordinary wildlife and roam the colourful streets of Napier. Along the way there is plenty of time to enjoy delicious Maori tribal cuisine and home-grown wine.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Busy

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others. Please note that the Tour Leader will also drive the touring vehicle on this tour.

DAY 1 Join tour in Auckland

Our journey begins in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city and a thriving sporting and cultural centre that lies sprawled across a narrow isthmus between the harbours of Waitemata and Manukau. Popularly known as the City of Sails, Auckland is surrounded by volcanic peaks and blessed with a profusion of beaches and museums, whilst its vibrant waterfront easily makes it one of the most exciting cities in the southern hemisphere. The country's most cosmopolitan city, with a rich mix of European, Maori and Pacific Island influences, Auckland is the largest Polynesian city on the planet and on arrival today there's free time to enjoy the city or relax at the hotel.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available



 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Guided tour of Auckland's highlights; head to Tairua

This morning we take in the delights of Tamaki Drive and Mission Bay, before we head for a guided tour of the Auckland War Memorial Museum. One of the city's most iconic landmarks, it is also one of New Zealand's most important museums, housing a large collection of Maori and Pacific Island artefacts, as well as an extensive exhibition that covers New Zealand's involvement in both domestic and overseas conflicts. The Cenotaph and the consecrated grounds that surround the museum serve as a memorial to those that have lost their lives during these conflicts, particularly during the First and Second World Wars. Departing Auckland we travel through rolling farmland, flat dairy plains, and the forested Coromandel Ranges, with views of the Pacific Ocean to Tairua. Tairua's Paku volcanic peak, and offshore views of the jagged Alderman Islands are the natural focal points of the area. We'll be spending this evening in the coastal community of Tairua, where you can enjoy some fish and chips on the beach and gaze out across the vistas that lie off the Coromandel's east coast.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Exploring the Coromandel Peninsula

We spend the day in the beautiful landscapes of the Coromandel Peninsula, which separates the waters of the Hauraki Gulf from the Bay of Plenty. A staggering mix of rugged coastline, golden beaches and native bush, the peninsula's interior is littered with a fascinating collection of abandoned mining equipment, old Kauri dams and timber machinery, providing us with an enthralling day's journey. We will visit the enchanting sands of Hahei Beach, fringed with pohutukawas trees and pink shells, whose offshore islands provide a perfect break-water that makes these waters ideal for swimming. The rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy some optional excursions in the area, including a chance to enjoy some guided bush walking or perhaps a kayak through the amazing sea caves of Cathedral Cove, rated as one of the best kayaking trips in the country. We'll be spending this evening in the coastal community of Tairua, where you can enjoy some fish 'n' chips on the beach and gaze out across the vistas that lie off the Coromandel's east coast.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Morning on Coromandel; afternoon visit Hobbiton, overnight farmstay

A leisurely morning in Tairua provides an ideal opportunity to explore a little more of the Coromandel. You can relax and enjoy brunch at a local cafe. If time permits there may also be the chance to take a short bush walk before we leave. Our journey today then takes us into the heart of North Island and the diverse landscapes of the Waikato region, travelling via the gold mining town of Waihi to learn something of the area's rich history as one of the world's most productive gold mining regions. Today we visit the Hobbiton Movie Set at Matamata where some of the original Hobbit holes from the Lord of The Rings still sit amongst the fertile hills that lie in the shadow of the Kaimai Ranges. We will discover the real Middle Earth on the most picturesque private farmland near Matamata in a fascinating two and a half hours guided tour. The set has been completely rebuilt and can be seen as it appeared in the films. A knowledgeable guide will accompany us through the ten-acre site recounting fascinating details of how the Hobbiton set was created. The Hobbit holes, the Mill and other structures created for The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit films can be viewed. Our evening's accommodation this evening is located on a working farm, where we will divide into smaller groups to enjoy the hospitality of our hosts, taking dinner and breakfast with the local families, touring the farm and learning something of the workings of a typical rural community. You will need an overnight bag for your farmstay.

Overnight: **Standard Farmstay**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5 Exploring Rotorua and Maori banquet

Today we head into the geothermal landscapes that surround the Maori heartlands around Rotorua, New Zealand's Sulphur City. You will have free time to explore the stunning Bath House building and a series of computer generated films that take you through the cultural and seismic origins of this fascinating region. This afternoon has then been left free to enjoy at your leisure, with options for mountain biking, relaxing spa treatments and volcano walking. This evening we attend a traditional Te Po banquet, where we are treated to a ritual Maori welcome, followed by songs, dances and a Maori hangi feast. After the dinner we then drive out to the Whakarewarewa Geothermal Valley to enjoy the valley's extraordinary illuminated attractions, including the Pohutu geyser.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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DAY 6 Drive to Napier via Wai-o-Tapu and Lake Taupo; visit Hawke's Bay Vineyard

This morning we pay a visit to the remarkable Waiotapu Thermal Valley, a dazzlingly colourful collection of bubbling pools and silica terraces that lie on the edge of the active Taupo Volcanic Zone before heading to New Zealand's largest lake. Occupying an ancient volcanic crater, Lake Taupo covers over 600 square kilometres and was created by one of the largest eruptions ever documented. Reaching depths of over 180 metres and drained by the Waikato River (New Zealand's longest river), the lake is famed for its trout fishing and provides us with one of the North Island's most stunning natural attractions. From here we continue into New Zealand's fertile wine country, where we visit the vineyards of Hawke's Bay and enjoy an afternoon of fine wine, gourmet cheeses and a tour of some of the area's best wineries. Famed for its Chardonnays and its superb reds, the area is home to over 80% of the country's Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah grapes and produces some of the richest and most exquisite wines in the country. Our final destination for the day is the engaging town of Napier, lying on the southern edge of Hawke's Bay, whose unique collection of Art Deco buildings makes it one of the most popular attractions on North Island.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Walking tour of Napier; drive Wellington

In 1931 Napier was destroyed by a massive earthquake that registered 7.9 on the Richter Scale. Following the wholesale destruction of the city, its centre was rebuilt in the popular Art Deco style of the period, creating a wonderful location to explore. We then head south, towards New Zealand's capital. Wellington has been New Zealand's capital since 1865 and its engaging mix of culture and art, combined with stunning harbour views and a backdrop of steep hills and precariously sited buildings, makes it one of the country's most captivating cities. On arrival we will visit the superb Te Papa National Museum, one of the finest museums in the world, filled with a staggering collection of Maori treasures, artworks and a unique Marae (Maori meeting house). After this we will also be some free time to continue exploring the museum's fascinating collections further, or to take a wander through Wellington's engaging city streets.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Free day in Wellington

Today we have a free day to explore the New Zealand capital, Wellington. There are several options for you to do. The top of the cable car, a Wellington icon running from Lambton Quay, gives a great close-up view of the city. From here, you can visit the Observatory and stroll back through the 26 ha Botanic Gardens, extending all the way down to the parliamentary complex. Wellington has been the capital city since 1865, and the Parliament's Buildings, including the 'Beehive', are well worth visiting. Apart from its importance as the political centre, the city offers a large cultural choice of museums and art galleries and an abundance of cafes, restaurants and boutique shops. You could visit Zealandia and see some of New Zealand's rarest birds, reptiles and insects living wild in their natural environment, including the hihi, tuatara, saddleback, kaka and (at night) little spotted kiwi. Or simply enjoy a leisurely stroll along the harbourside, which is particularly beautiful on a fine day or when lit up in the evening.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Ferry across Cook Strait to Picton; drive Kaikoura

This morning we cross the Cook Strait and head for the bustling port of Picton, at the head of the picturesque Queen Charlotte Sound. On arrival we drive south, following the eastern coastline of South Island to the town of Kaikoura. Surrounded by snow capped peaks of the Southern Alps, the town once lay at the heart of New Zealand's whaling industry and today provides one of the best places in the country to see these majestic leviathans up close. Translating from its original Maori as the place to eat crayfish, the town provides us with a relaxing location for an afternoon's gentle wandering. You could explore its craft shops and galleries, perhaps take a stroll along the Peninsula Walkway, or even enjoy some of Kaikoura's famous crayfish.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Optional whale watching trip

This morning is free to partake in a whale watching tour, where there is the possibility of seeing sperm whales (depending on the season). This area is also renowned for its pods of dusky dolphins and can boast an incredible diversity of seabirds, including 13

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species of albatross, 14 varieties of petrels and 7 types of shearwaters. Alternatively you may wish to relax and enjoy some free time. This afternoon we will head south to the Garden City of Christchurch. (Unfortunately in the aftermath of the earthquake there are still several sections of the city closed off to the public)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Drive to Hokitika optional Tranz Alpine to Greymouth

With an early start, crossing from the west to the east coast today we traverse some of New Zealand's most captivating natural beauty, as we pass through the rugged vistas of Arthur's Pass en route to the township of Hokitika at the mouth of the Hokitika River. For those that wish, there is the option to take the famous Tranzalpine train from Christchurch, meeting up with the rest of the group in Greymouth (the price is in the optional activities section of these tour notes and this must be booked through Explore at the time you make your booking). The journey takes you across the Canterbury Plains and through the beautiful gorges of the Waimakariri River Valley, negotiating some 16 tunnels and 5 viaducts as you head up into the dramatic landscapes of the Southern Alps. From here we continue on to Punakaiki Rocks to visit the amazing coastal rock formations before following the coast down to Hokitika, stopping off to take in the wild and rugged beauty of the west coast, before we finally arrive in the old gold mining town later this afternoon. Founded in 1864, Hokitika was once a thriving community of over 50,000, until the end of the gold seams saw its population drift away. Today it is home to around 4000 people and the gold has been replaced by paua (abalone) shell and greenstone (jade) jewellery. It still retains something of its old frontier spirit though and a stroll through its historic heart makes for an interesting diversion.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Drive to Fox Glacier

Crossing the Hokitika River this morning we head south, passing through native bush of Rimu and Kahikatea (white pine). The first European to discover the west coast was Abel Tasman in December 1642. Long and thin and enclosed by the Tasman Sea to the east and the Southern Alps to the west, it is a land of glacial deposits and alluvium that flows from the rivers and glaciers of the Alps. There are some 60 glaciers in the park, but only Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers are readily accessible. Franz Josef Glacier is one of the few that actually creeps down below the vegetation line and today we have an opportunity to walk up to the terminal face of this spectacular river of moving ice. A relic of the last Ice Age, named after the old Austrian emperor, Franz Josef Glacier has been moving forward at an astonishing rate of a metre a day for the past quarter of a century. There are a number of optional excursions available today, including glacier valley walks, heli-hikes that take you up onto the glacier itself and scenic flights over both Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers. We overnight in Fox Glacier.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Visit Fox Glacier then drive via Wanaka to Queenstown

A short drive south this morning brings us to Fox Glacier, named after a former Prime Minister of New Zealand. The track from the car park down to the glacier face crosses a landscape of ancient moraine that testifies to the continual advance and retreat of the glacier over the centuries. After our visit we continue on to the breathtaking setting of Lake Matheson, where we are treated to a picture perfect image of Mount Cook reflected in the lake's dark, mirrored waters. Our journey then continues across the River Haast and away from the coast, passing through the beautiful scenery of the Haast River Valley as we snake our way through the Aspiring National Park and onto the town of Makaroa. After a brief stop to refuel and refresh, we head next for the lakeside setting of Wanaka, impressively situated amongst an encircling ring of mountain peaks before the still waters of a lovely lake. The final leg of our journey today then takes us on to Queenstown, New Zealand's adrenaline capital and the most popular resort town on the South Island. Surrounded by mountain peaks (including the famous Remarkables), and set on Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown is a stunning location to break our journey for the next couple of days.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 In Queenstown

Queenstown's spectacular lakeside location, with mountain peaks rising on all sides, makes for an impressive list of possible optional activities. The skiing and snowboarding here is fantastic (all equipment available to hire locally) as are the more adrenaline-based activities such as jet boating. You can take helicopter flights over the stunning peaks of the Remarkables or tackle the Grade 3-5 rapids of the Shotover River. Another possible excursion is a half-day tour which combines a 90-minute jet-boat journey along the Dart River with a short hike into the rainforests of Mount Aspiring National Park and then heads back by 4-wheel drive to Queenstown, via

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Paradise (location of Lothlorien, Isengard and Amon Hen in the Lord of the Rings films). Bordering the Fiordland National Park, this trip takes you into some of the most beautiful wilderness areas in New Zealand. Alternatively, less active but equally rewarding options may be to sample some of the local Queenstown wines, or take a scenic boat trip on Lake Wakatipu on board the handsomely restored steamship the TSS Earnslaw.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 15 Drive to Milford Sounds; cruise to Te Anau

This morning we drive to the UNESCO World Heritage setting of Fjordland National Park and the stunning beauty of Milford Sound. Once described by Rudyard Kipling as the 8th wonder of the world, Milford Sound is a breathtaking setting of peaks and inlets that run some 15km inland from the Tasman Sea. Boarding a custom built boat, built along the lines of the old trading scows that used to ply these waters, we spend some time exploring the fjords and waterways of this incredible landscape this morning, looking out for dolphins, seals and penguins as we thread our way past towering cliffs and cascading waterfalls. Afterwards we then continue to the lovely setting of Te Anau, the largest lake on the South Island and second only to Lake Taupo in size. If time allows on arrival it may be possible to undertake a tour of the Te Anau Caves (optional), a two and a half hour river journey into the depths of the region's famous glow worm caves.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 16 Drive to Dunedin with wildlife spotting on the peninsula

Our journey today takes us across the spectacular Peninsula high road and on to the city they call the Edinburgh of the South. Dunedin was settled by Scottish settlers in the middle years of the 19th century and today presents a gracious setting of towers and spires that still retains something of its Gaelic heritage. Our route takes us via the town of Gore and, as we drive across country that was once home to Maori tribes and the great (but now sadly extinct) Moa, we take in the fabulous views out across the Pacific Ocean and Otago Harbour. Besides its Scottish ancestry, Dunedin is also famed for its wildlife, especially its albatross and penguin colonies, and this afternoon we will pay a visit to the Albatross Centre on the outskirts of the city. After a chance to wander around its exhibits and hopefully see a few of the famed birds in flight, we then board 8 wheeled all-terrain vehicles for a journey down onto Penguin Beach. Here we enter a world inhabited by yellow-eyed and blue penguins, fur seals and colonies of cliff-dwelling cormorants, all living together in complete harmony. A number of hides located along the beach-front allow us to view these remarkable animals in the wild, watching them go about their daily business free from the disturbance of human interlopers. At the end of our tour we return to Dunedin for the evening.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 17 Morning free in Dunedin. afternoon drive to Mount Cook via Moeraki Boulders

A morning of leisure allows a chance to see a little more of a city that can lay claim to a remarkable number of achievements. It was home to New Zealand's first university, as well as its first daily newspaper, first public art gallery and first public cable car system. It can also boast the country's first use of kerosene street lighting and its first chocolate factory! Indeed, in its heyday Dunedin was a progressive and vibrant centre of commerce, culture and education, an impressive claim for a city that lay at the ends of the empire. We depart the city and head north, stopping off to view the incredible boulders that lie strewn across Moeraki Beach, before continuing via the coastal towns of Oamaru and Timaru to the rural community of Omarama. Situated near the southern end of the Mackenzie Basin this is traditionally sheep country, but of late the region has also benefited from a growing reputation as one of the world's best gliding locations. For us though, it is our gateway into the dramatic vistas of the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 18 Drive to Christchurch

Today we head towards Christchurch, stopping en route at the glacial Lake Pukaki, where we have the opportunity to admire the magnificent glaciers of Mount Cook. The Maori name for the highest peak in New Zealand is Aoraki, which translates as the 'Cloud Piercer'. We also stop at Lake Tekapo and visit the 'Church of the Good Shepherd', the oldest church in New Zealand, the view from the church window over the Lake and up to the snow-covered mountains of the Southern Alps is particularly beautiful. We arrive to our final destination in the late afternoon.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Rooms Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **19** Tour ends in Christchurch

The tour ends in Christchurch this morning after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 18 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Auckland - Sky tower NZ\$28; Americas Cup sailing experience NZ\$160.

Coromandel Peninsula - Cathedral Cove kayak tour NZ\$95; Hobbiton movie set NZ\$75.

Rotorua - Polynesian Spa NZ\$43; guided mountain biking NZ\$90 (2hrs) NZ\$125 (3hrs).

Wellington - Cable car NZ\$7.

Kaikoura - Whale watching boat trip NZ\$150.

Tranz Alpine Train journey - Christchurch to Greymouth £100 - must be booked through Explore at the time of booking your holiday or at least 30 days before travel (subject to cancellation fee if within 21 days of travelling)

Queenstown - Jet boating on river from NZ\$165; Walter peak dining experience on HMS Earnslaw NZ\$115; Boutique winery tour NZ\$170; skytram NZ\$27.

Mt Cook - Helicopter flights; NZ\$215-410; Sir Edmund Hilary VC NZ\$27.

Christchurch - Visit the Red Zone - NZ\$15

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Foreign Exchange

New Zealand

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in all main towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: All major credit cards are accepted at all locations.

Travellers Cheques: Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices.

Local Currency: N.Z. Dollar.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: You can purchase New Zealand currency from home, otherwise we recommend £GB or \$US.

Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities only.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

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Booking a land only package with Explore

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

Joining Tour Abroad

Clients booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining **any** of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour. Your insurer may charge an additional premium for certain activities.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

Visa Information

New Zealand: Visas are not required for UK, US, Canadian and Australian citizens.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

USA (If flights transit):

Air New Zealand fly via the United States

According to US law, passengers will have to disembark, collect luggage and clear immigration before re-boarding for the onward flight.

Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). This applies if you enter the country by sea or by air on a carrier participating in the visa waiver scheme, holding a return/ onward ticket. The passport requirements are that it must be machine readable, and must contain a digital photograph of the holder and also an integrated circuit chip that stores biographic information.

All passengers travelling to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme must provide their details online no later than 72 hours prior to travel. British travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be detained and sent home.

When completing an application for transit you should enter the words 'In Transit' with your final destination location in the address line. Anyone applying for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ESTA) to travel under the Visa Waiver system will be charged a fee of 14USD (9GBP).

For more information, and to apply online, please visit the following website at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>. Once obtained, the application will be valid for a period of two years, or for the validity of your passport (whichever is shorter).

For more information about who is eligible for the VWP, or any other questions you may have regarding your eligibility, or machine readable passports, please contact your local consular office, or visit www.usembassy.org.uk

Vaccinations & Protection

New Zealand

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

New Zealand

New Zealand's climate is maritime: mild and pleasant with abundant sunshine, high rainfall and a few extremes of heat and cold. However, settled weather cannot be counted on at any time of year – all seasons can be experienced in one day! Generally the summer months (Nov-April) are warmest and most pleasant, with least rainfall. In the Southern Alps temperatures can fluctuate dramatically. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Clothing

You will need lightweight clothing, but also warmer clothing. Good rain gear is essential as is warm upper body clothing. Fine Merino products can be purchased in New Zealand and are warmer than synthetics. Please note that most accommodation in New Zealand has laundry facilities – washing machines and driers – available for guest use, and hairdryers are available in most places. Bring swimwear too.

Equipment

Bring a torch, a water bottle and sunscreen. Due to increased exposure risk in New Zealand, we recommend a minimum of SPF 30+. Due to lack of ozone, burn times are drastically reduced and adequate protection is a vital part of your holiday. Walking poles are useful on some walks. The diminutive biting sandfly (a type of blackfly) can be particularly bad on the west coast of the South Island. While their bites do not carry any disease, they can be particularly irritating for some people, the bite can itch dreadfully. Good insect repellents need to be carried (best purchased in New Zealand, as these are specific for the New Zealand sandfly). A good effective mild analgesic is available to soothe any bites.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes/trekking trainers. Sandals and/or old training shoes are useful if you want to do any whitewater rafting.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. A backpack or soft holdall preferably with wheels may prove more convenient due to the variety of transport used on this tour. You will be required to carry your luggage to/from on/off coaches, trains and ferries. You will need a small overnight bag for the Farmstay

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Food

The prices for meals and drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive. The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

New Zealand

Lunch £: 14.00

Dinner £: 18.00

Drink

New Zealand

Bottle of Beer £: 3.00

Water £: 1.00

Country details

New Zealand

Population: 4,414,400

Size of Country: 268,021 sq km

Major Language: English

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: -12

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Electric Supply & Plugs

New Zealand

3 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditions, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which supports AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers' flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. www.coolearth.org

Earth Matters

- [The Travel Foundation](#)
Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- [Tourism Concern](#)
Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety>

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2014.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2014 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2014. 2015/16 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2015.

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