

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



New Zealand Explorer (NZL 2017)



TRIP DURATION
19
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: NZL

Trip Highlights - New Zealand Explorer

- ✓ Rotorua - Explore the geothermal landscapes of the Maori heartlands
- ✓ Glaciers - Take walks through dramatic glacier valleys
- ✓ Napier and Hawke's Bay - Admire the Art Deco buildings of Napier and sample wine in the vineyards of Hawke's Bay
- ✓ Queenstown - New Zealand's picturesque adrenalin capital.
- ✓ Milford Sound - Boat trip in the UNESCO World Heritage Fjordland National Park
- ✓ Dunedin - Visit the Albatross Centre and discover the 'Edinburgh of the South'

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 16 nights Standard
Hotel
2 nights Standard
Lodge

Included Meals: 18 breakfasts, 1 lunch,
1 dinner

Start Point: Join trip: Auckland

End Point: Trip ends: Christchurch

Transport: Bus, Boat, Ferry

Countries: New Zealand



New Zealand Explorer

This trip combines the best of New Zealand's North and South Islands. We explore the dramatic landscapes of glaciers, volcanoes and snow-capped mountains and discover the extraordinary wildlife. Witness the magnificent Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers, sample wine in the vineyards of Hawke's Bay, explore the geothermal landscapes of the Maori heartlands and discover Queenstown, New Zealand's picturesque adrenalin capital surrounded by the magnificent 'The Remarkables.'

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.

Accommodation Grade: 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: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.



Your trip 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

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

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. We check into our hotel and have free time to explore this city, before meeting our Explore leader in the evening.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

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

This morning we take in the delights of Tamaki Drive and Mission Bay, during our tour of the city of Auckland. Popularly known as the City of Sails, Auckland is surrounded by volcanic peaks and blessed with a profusion of beaches and museums. 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. Departing Auckland in the afternoon 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 and gaze out across the vistas that lie off the Coromandel's east coast.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Explore the Coromandel Peninsula, overnight in Tairua

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 and old Kauri timber machinery. 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.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Free morning, afternoon visit Hobbiton, drive to Rotorua

Our journey today 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. We will then head to Rotorua.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Visit Wai-o-Tapu, evening Maori banquet

Today we visit the geothermal wonderland Wai-O-Tapu. You can walk at your own pace and absorb the unique features including the world famous champagne pool, geysers, bubbling mud, steaming ground, expansive vistas, huge volcanic craters and sinter terrace formations. Following this you will have free time to explore the stunning Bath House building inside the Rotorua Museum 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 or a relaxing spa treatments. 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 Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6 Drive to Napier via Lake Taupo; visit Hawke's Bay Vineyard

This morning 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 Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Free time in Napier; head to 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 have some free time take a wander through Wellington's engaging city streets.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Free day to explore the capital

This morning 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). The rest of the day is left 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 Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Ferry across Cook Strait to Picton; continue to Nelson

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 west, following the coastline of the South Island to the town of Nelson. A lively city on New Zealand's north-west coastline, Nelson is a haven for hikers, beachgoers and kayaking fans, and is known as the 'sunshine capital' of the country. Located next to the wine making region of Marlborough, Nelson also has its fair share of wineries as well as being a great starting point for visiting the Abel Tasman national park, full of golden sandy beaches, rocky outcrops, seals and forest birds. On arrival you can explore the city, which is a magnet for artists and craftspeople and boasts a number of excellent galleries.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Free day; optional activities in Abel Tasman National Park

We have a free day to explore the surroundings of Nelson. Many of us may wish to head up to the Abel Tasman national park, to undertake one of the many walks, cruises, or kayaking tours that can be done in the area. The park itself boasts some of the most beautiful beaches in the country and there are options for relaxing on the beach for those who are that way inclined! Alternatively you may wish to relax in town or do one of the many coastal walks around Nelson.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 11 Transfer to Hokitika via the scenic West Coast Road

We have an early start today as we head down the Great Coast Road towards the township of Hokitika at the mouth of the Hokitika River. This journey takes us on one of the greatest coastal drives in the world, passing through Punakaiki Rocks to visit the amazing coastal rock formations, as well as the seal colony at Cape Foulwind. The wild and rugged beauty of the west coast surrounds us on our journey, before finally arriving into 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. The town was put back on the map in 2013, after it was used as the gold-rush era setting of the winner of the 2013 Man Booker prize, Eleanor Catton's *The Luminaries*.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Visit Franz Josef Glacier en route to Fox Glacier

Crossing the Hokitika River this morning we head south, passing through native bush of Rimu (red pine) 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 Franz Josef and Fox are the most famous. Up to 10 years ago the Franz Josef Glacier was one of the few glaciers worldwide that actually crept down below the vegetation line. Today however this glacier has receded so that one can only view it at a distance. This relic of the last Ice Age, named after the old Austrian emperor, Franz Josef Glacier had at times been moving forward at an astonishing rate of a metre a day for the last quarter of a century. Needless to say the whole landscape of this glacial region is quite fascinating and 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 town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Explore Fox Glacier then travel via Wanaka to Queenstown

A short drive south this morning brings to the breathtaking setting of Lake Matheson, where weather permitting we are treated to a picture perfect image of Mount Cook reflected in the lake's dark, mirrored waters. Following this we will head to Fox Glacier, named after a former Prime Minister of New Zealand. The track from the car park along the glacial valley crosses a landscape of ancient moraine that testifies to the continual advance and retreat of the glacier over the centuries. 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 Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 14 In Queenstown; optional rafting or jet boat trip

Queenstown's spectacular lakeside location, with mountain peaks rising on all sides, makes for an impressive list of possible optional activities. This town is well known for its adrenaline-based activities such as jet boating or you may wish to 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 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 Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 15 Journey to Milford Sound; 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 excursion that takes you across the lake then on a short boat trip into the depths of the region's famous glow worm caves.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 16 Continue to Dunedin wildlife spotting on the peninsula en route

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 hop onto our vehicle 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 Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 17 Morning free, 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 town of Oamaru 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 (if anyone taking the optional helicopter flight).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 18 Return 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 (weather permitting). 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 Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 19 Trip ends in Christchurch

The trip ends in Christchurch this morning after breakfast.

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 18 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner included in the price of this trip. 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 Trip

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

Food

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 £: 20.00 - 24.00

Drink

The prices for 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.

New Zealand

Bottle of Beer £: 3.00

Water £: 1.00

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\$105

Rotorua - Polynesian Spa NZ\$45; guided mountain biking NZ\$150 (2hrs) NZ\$170 (3hrs).

Wellington - Cable car NZ\$7.50; Zelandia NZ\$17.50

Abel Tasman - Various tours (kayaking, walking, sailing) from NZ\$70

Queenstown - Jet boating on river from NZ\$135; Walter peak dining experience on HMS Earnslaw NZ\$120; Boutique winery tour NZ\$180; skytram NZ\$32.

Fox Glacier and Mt Cook - Helicopter flights; NZ\$235-750;

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore 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 £GBP or \$US.

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

Joining your Trip

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.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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 booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

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Travel Aware

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 www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

EXPLORE! Share your experiences with us



We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

New Zealand: Visas are not required for UK, US, Canadian and Australian citizens. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

USA: (including those in transit) 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) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit)

For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>
Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

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 Trip

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.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

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

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, self-guided, private journeys & 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, 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.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

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, 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: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

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.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

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 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip 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: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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