

New Zealand North Island Explorer

Days 1 & 2: Auckland

Welcome to Auckland, enjoy your first day exploring this cosmopolitan city. Visit the Viaduct Harbour precinct, housing a variety of shops, cafés and restaurants. Take the ferry from downtown Auckland across to the seaside suburb of Devonport and enjoy lunch and a spot of shopping. Alternatively, walk to the summits of Mount Victoria or North Head for 360° views. Take a leisurely drive west and visit the breathtaking Waitakere Ranges and the rugged West Coast, with its thundering surf beaches at Piha & Karekare. Stop off in Kumeu and visit the wineries in this region.

Stay

Rendezvous Hotel Auckland - Clarion Collection, Auckland (City Centre)

Quality Hotel Barrycourt, Auckland (Parnell) ■

Quality Inn West End, Auckland (Grey Lynn) ■

Quality Hotel Lincoln Green, Auckland (Henderson) ■

Comfort Inn & Suites Kudos, Auckland (Mangere) ■

Days 3 & 4: Auckland - Whangarei - Paihia - Auckland, 158 km

Heading north you will drive over the Auckland Harbour Bridge towards the bays and beaches of the North Shore. The town of Orewa spreads along the edge of a large, white sand surf beach. Enjoy native forest and farmland scenery all the way to Warkworth. A drive through the Dome Forest will lead you into the rural service town of Wellsford. From here you can take a side trip to Pakiri – a great beach for surfing and horse treks. Whangarei is a subtropical city on the edge of a beautiful harbour. Be sure to visit Whangarei Falls. Whangarei is an aquatic playground with more than 100 beaches, pristine harbour and off-shore islands. It's one of the world's best sub-tropical dive spots. For those who prefer land-based pursuits, Whangarei has a vast array of galleries, cafes and stunning walkways to explore.

Stay

Comfort Inn Settlers, Whangarei ■

Days 5 & 6: Auckland - Hamilton, 130km

As you cruise down the southern motorway, suburban scenery gradually gives way to the farmland of South Auckland. Follow the motorway all the way to Bombay, a major market garden area. The Waikato River will accompany you for much of your journey through the green countryside. Places of interest along the way include the wine growing area of Te Kauwhata and the coal-mining town of Huntly. The city of Hamilton is carved in two by the mighty Waikato River, with attractions including historic gardens, riverboat cruising and a giant free-flight aviary.

Stay

Comfort Inn Southern Cross Hamilton, Hamilton ■

Days 6 & 7: Hamilton - Rotorua, 110km

Cambridge township is located in the heart of the Waikato's affluent horse breeding district. It has a relaxed country atmosphere, lovely tree-lined streets and many well preserved heritage buildings. Rotorua sits squarely on the Pacific Ring



of Fire, so volcanic activity is part of the city's past and present. Explore the geothermal areas and discover the unique culture of New Zealand's Maori people. Rotorua is entertaining in any weather, at any time of the year.

Stay

Clarion Collection Wai Ora Lakeside Spa Resort (Holdens Bay), Rotorua ■
Comfort Inn & Suites Coachman, Rotorua ■

Days 8 & 9: Rotorua - Taupo, 80km

The road to Taupo will keep you entertained with its unusual, volcanic geography. You will also drive through large tracts of plantation pine forest. Take a side road to a geothermal park, where you will discover geysers, silica terraces and craters of boiling mud. Towards the end of your journey you will encounter the amazing Wairakei Geothermal Power Station, with other attractions including Huka Falls and a world-acclaimed golf course. The resort town of Taupo sits on the edge of New Zealand's largest lake - Lake Taupo, which is well stocked with sizeable trout. You will find everything a traveller could wish for, including an excellent choice of restaurants. Most accommodation establishments make use of the underground thermal activity to provide hot mineral spas for relaxation.

Stay

Quality Inn Sails Taupo, Taupo ■

Days 10 & 11: Taupo - Napier/Hastings, 140km

Travelling from Taupo to the Hawkes Bay region you'll see fantastic scenery with a bit of everything - rugged hills, beautiful valleys, gentle plains and scenic vistas. At Tarawera you can walk to the hot springs, which are above the Waipunga River. You might also want to stop at the Waiarua Falls lookout, to view the twin waterfalls. The town of Eskdale heralds your arrival in Napier, now considered the Art Deco capital of the world. The vineyards of Hawkes Bay, along with the gannet colony at Cape Kidnappers are all within easy reach of Napier and Hastings. Just a short scenic drive from one another. Stay and enjoy the Mediterranean climate and gourmet foods and wines that this region is famous for.

Stay

Econo Lodge Westshore Beach, Napier ■
Quality Inn Napier, Napier ■
Comfort Inn Fairmont, Hastings ■



Days 12 & 13: Napier/Hastings - Wellington & Paraparaumu, 320km

Wellington is New Zealand's capital city. Along with being the arts and cultural capital it is compact, cultured and full of character. Nestled between the harbour and the hills, the downtown area is ideal for exploration on foot. Enjoy cafés, restaurants, museums and all kinds of shopping with dance, theatre and musical performances all within a short walk of city centre hotels. Alternatively base yourself in the outer suburbs or surrounding towns and easily explore all the natural wonders that surround Wellington including the beauty of Paraparaumu.

Stay

Quality Hotel Wellington, Wellington ■

Comfort Hotel Wellington, Wellington ■

Quality Inn Angus, Wellington (Lower Hutt) ■

Comfort Inn Elliotts Paraparaumu, Wellington (Paraparaumu) ■

Alternatively from Napier you can head up the East Coast to Gisborne to soak in some sun.

Quality Hotel Emerald, Gisborne (May 2011)

Day 15: Wellington - Wanganui, 190km

Wanganui lies at the mouth of Wanganui River - the longest river in NZ with sightseeing cruises. It boasts a superb regional museum and renowned Sarjeant Art Gallery.

Stay

Quality Inn Collegiate, Wanganui ■

Day 16: Wanganui - New Plymouth, 165km

Journey to New Plymouth, which has a strong English heritage and culture. Nearby you will find the majestic Mount Taranaki (Mount Egmont) a dormant volcano, which is surrounded by Maori legends. The city of New Plymouth is known for its beautiful parks and gardens. It also has a strong arts community, take the opportunity to check out the current exhibitions.

Stay

Quality Hotel Plymouth International, New Plymouth ■

You may choose to travel back to Auckland from here or alternatively return to Wellington and continue your journey and explore the South Island.



New Zealand South Island Adventure

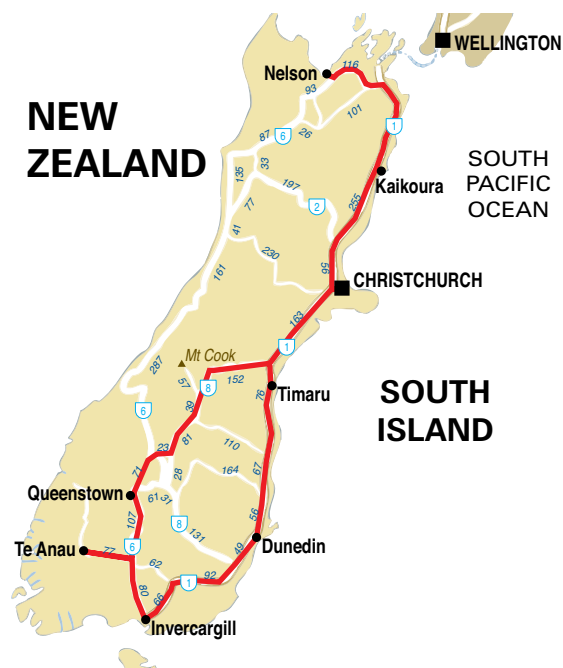
Day 1: Nelson - Kaikoura, 247km

Just a short flight across Cook Strait from Wellington is the South Island's northern-most city of Nelson - the perfect place to begin exploring all that New Zealand's South Island has to offer. Nelson hosts a variety of festivals throughout the year – be sure to check before your arrival which ones may be happening during your stay. Nelson is home to the 'World of Wearable Art' museum, which showcases winning designs from the famous fashion event.

Head south to Kaikoura, nestled close to the Seaward Kaikoura Mountains (part of the Southern Alps) – the ideal spot to take advantage of the huge number of walking tracks through this beautiful part of the world.

Stay

- Quality Hotel Leisure Lodge, Nelson ■
- Comfort Inn Kaikoura Mediterranean, Kaikoura ■



Day 2: Kaikoura - Christchurch, 181km

Explore the north-east coast of the South Island around Kaikoura before heading further down Highway 1 to Christchurch, the largest city on the South Island. Christchurch is known as the 'Garden City', full of elegant 19th-century buildings and leafy avenues. Visit the Botanical Gardens (established in 1863) with 30 hectares of exotic and native plants bordering the Avon River or wander through the Canterbury Museum near the Arts Centre. Try punting on the Avon River – sit back and relax as the boatman takes you on a relaxing punt ride through the central city. The city is full of delights including the historic trams, which loops the city centre, or the Christchurch Gondola and International Antarctic Centre.

Stay

- The Marque Christchurch – Clarion Collection (City Centre)
- Chateau Blanc Suites – Clarion Collection (City Centre) ■ ■
- Quality Inn Towers On The Park, Christchurch (City Centre) ■
- Econo Lodge Canterbury Court (City Fringe) ■

Day 3: Christchurch – Timaru, 164km

After enjoying everything Christchurch has to offer, make your way south down Highway 1 towards Dunedin. En route, you can break up the drive at Timaru, located approximately halfway between Christchurch and Dunedin. Timaru is home to New Zealand's second-largest fishing and cargo port. If visiting during summer, be sure to visit Caroline Bay, one of New Zealand's prettiest beaches.

Stay

- Comfort Hotel Benvenue, Timaru ■



Day 4: Timaru – Dunedin, 197km

Continue south to Dunedin. You'll be pleasantly surprised at all there is to do in Dunedin, with a wide range of museums and art galleries, not to mention the Speight's Brewery and Cadbury World chocolate factory tours! There are also historic houses and beautifully landscaped gardens to admire. Regarded as the wildlife capital of New Zealand, Dunedin offers an abundance of opportunities to view rare wildlife in their natural habitat. These include the Yellow-Eyed Penguin, Hooker Sea Lion and New Zealand Fur Seal and the world's only mainland breeding colony of the Royal Albatross – it's all on the city's doorstep!

Stay

Quality Hotel Cargills, Dunedin ■ ■
Quality Inn Alcala, Dunedin ■

Day 5: Dunedin - Invercargill, 220km

Invercargill is the southernmost city of New Zealand's South Island and is the gateway to some of New Zealand's most beautiful scenery including Stewart Island, Fiordland and the Catlins. The rich history, cultural attractions, parks, gardens and cosmopolitan lifestyle make visiting Invercargill such a pleasure. Just a short drive from Invercargill is Bluff, the southernmost point of mainland New Zealand. Bluff is famous for its rugged natural beauty and its succulent seafood - well worth a visit!

Stay

Comfort Inn Tayesta, Invercargill ■

Day 6: Invercargill - Te Anau, 158km

Travel to Te Anau, the entrance point to Milford Sound and the Fiordland National Park - World Heritage Area. Take a joyflight to view the magnificent mountain peaks, the glacial valleys and the breathtaking waterfalls by spending a memorable day cruising Milford Sound.

Stay

Comfort Inn Explorer, Te Anau ■ ■

Days 7: Te Anau - Queenstown, 200km

Travel to Queenstown, the adventure capital of the world! Choose from a vast array of year-round activities including jet boating, mountain-biking, heliskiing, skydiving, white-water rafting, kayaking and tandem hang-gliding. Try the sumptuous food and wine delights of the region or head out on a majestic steamboat cruise to Lake Wakatipu.

Stay

Comfort Inn Melbourne Lodge, Queenstown ■
Quality Inn Hurley's, Queenstown ■ ■
Clarion Suites Highview, Queenstown ■

Queenstown Airport has direct flights to both Auckland and Christchurch, where you can connect with international or domestic flights home.

Please note: Hotels and their details on this itinerary are subject to change. Correct as at time of printing.

