

Feb 28-Mar18 2023

NEW ZEALAND

An Unforgettable Land Adventure of 16 Nights Across Both the North and South Island of New Zealand



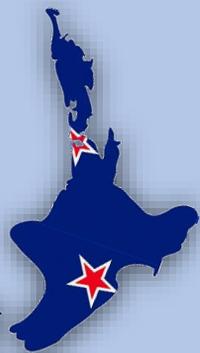
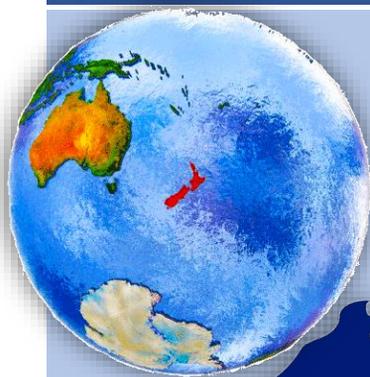
You are Invited to join Stewart Tours as we explore one of the most Beautiful Countries in the world, New Zealand



- 🌀 Unforgettable 16 Night Tour Across New Zealand
- 🌀 Comfortable & Beautiful Hotel Stays in 9 Different Areas
- 🌀 Touring on both the North and South Islands
- 🌀 Auckland, Rotorua, Wellington, Christchurch and more!
- 🌀 Sixteen Breakfasts - 6 Lunches - 8 Dinners Included
- 🌀 Multiple Boat Rides + Overland Scenery Safari by 4x4
- 🌀 Visits to Vineyards, Gardens, Valleys, Mountaintops, Estates, Glow Worm Caves, Volcanic Valleys and more!
- 🌀 Optional Add-on Tour to visit Australia 🐻



16-Night Tour - \$8,599_{pp}



Direct Flight

● Flight is only 1HR Longer than LAX to PARIS

Subject to Change - Tour Price Per Person



Stewart Tours
Small Groups Great Experiences

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16-Night New Zealand Itinerary

March 2

Known as the “City of Sails,” **Auckland** city extends over a narrow isthmus between the Waitemata Harbour on the Pacific Ocean, and the Manukau Harbour on the Tasman Sea and has spectacular natural features, including 49 dormant volcanoes. Auckland is the world’s biggest Polynesian city. This diversity is reflected in the lively arts and culture scene, a wide range of food and craft markets, vineyards, a hip cafe culture and outstanding restaurants. The dozens of islands of the Hauraki Gulf form a distinctive aspect of the Auckland landscape and provide a magnet for boat lovers, fishing enthusiasts and hikers. After arriving in Auckland this morning from the USA, **we have pre-reserved the hotel rooms**, so no waiting, you’ll enjoy direct access to your room to relax and nap. **This evening we transfer down to the waterfront for a wonderful welcome dinner overlooking Auckland’s Waitemata Harbour.**



March 3

We depart the hotel for a Full Day Auckland City Tour plus Waiheke Island. We drive along the waterfront of Tamaki Drive to Orakei & Mission Bay to visit Bastion Point. Next, visit the Auckland Museum with a local guide who shares stories of the people of Aotearoa, unique native species and the conflicts that have shaped the nation. You’ll hear exciting stories of the Pacific, New Zealand’s people, the flora, fauna and land forms of New Zealand’s unique islands within a memorial dedicated to those who have sacrificed their lives. The museum is located in one of New Zealand’s most outstanding historical buildings where we encounter exhibitions with the artistic legacy and cultures of the Pacific; the monumental carvings, buildings, canoes and taonga (treasures) of the Maori and the diversity of cultures which now combine to form the rich tapestry. We’ll stop by the Parnell Rose Garden, which contains more than 5,000 roses creating a blaze of color throughout summer and autumn. Then, board a ferry at the Downtown Auckland Ferry Terminal and enjoy the scenic 40-minute cruise to Waiheke Island through the beautiful Hauraki Gulf. Vineyards, olive groves, native bush and laid-back seaside villages cover the island. We’ll visit Mudbrick Vineyard for wine tasting of up to five varietals and a sumptuous two-course lunch at The Archive Bistro at the Vineyard. After lunch, wander the Rangihoua Estate and enjoy a tasting where the first olive oil was produced on the North Island.



March 4

This morning we move from **Auckland to Rotorua** and journey toward our first stop, the Waitomo Glowworm Caves. The Waitomo glowworm, *Arachnocampa luminosa*, is unique to New Zealand. Thousands of these tiny creatures radiate their unmistakable luminescent light. Marvel at the Glowworm Cave’s majestic and ornate cave decorations, its deep limestone shaft known as the Tomo, and equally magnificent Cathedral cavern where New Zealand’s own opera diva Kiri Te Kanawa once performed. Our guide will deliver an informative and entertaining commentary, sharing stories, cultural legends and the natural wonders of this living masterpiece. A highlight will be the subterranean boat trip through the Glowworm Grotto. (Cont.)

Rotorua is the center of an extensive thermal region. Geysers, bubbling mud pools and steaming, sulphureous lakes give evidence of nature's fascinating power. The surrounding lakes provide some of the world's best trout fishing. After our time seeing the glowworms, we'll visit Crosshills Farm, with hosts Debbie and Fraser Robertson. The whitish-grey, stone homestead, complete with dormer windows, French doors, wooden framing and exposed outside beams, might have you thinking you've somehow arrived in the French Provence. Wander under arches, through old iron gates and past ivy-covered wooden posts in this garden of nooks and crannies. With views of rolling, grassed hills beyond you'll be tempted to walk further, watched by inquisitive Jersey cows, along peaceful walkways. We'll enjoy a private country-style buffet lunch hosted at Crosshills Farm before continuing to our hotel, which is located beside mystical Lake Rotorua.

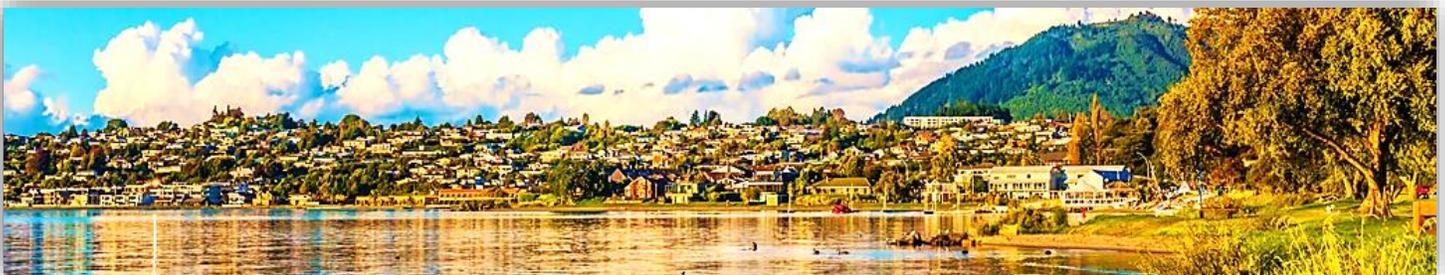
March 5

Enjoy a half-day tour today in the Rotorua region and the Waimangu Volcanic Valley. The Waimangu Volcanic Valley was created in 1886 when the Rotorua region was shaken by the eruption of Mt. Tarawera. The eruption destroyed the surrounding area and opened the earth along a 10-mile rift, splitting Mt. Tarawera in two, exploding Lake Rotomahana to 20 times its size and forming the seven craters that make up Waimangu Volcanic Valley. Our nature walk showcases a wide range of geothermal activity, plus New Zealand plants & birdlife in one of the newest eco-systems in the world. After a morning at the park, we return to the hotel to enjoy free time in Rotorua.

Just before dinner we journey to the Tia Puia Cultural Center for an amazing evening of Maori culture, food and music. Welcome ceremony commences with the blowing of a pukaea or putaratara (carved wooden trumpet or conch shell) by the kaimatire (lookout guard) posted in the puhara (defense tower). A toa (warrior) from the home tribe is sent out to challenge the elected male chief of the manuhiri (visitors) in an attempt to ascertain the reason for their approach to the village; whether they come in friendliness or animosity. We enter the traditional, fully-carved marae (Maori ancestral meeting house) as the women chant a welcome into the house. Enjoy the tribe singing traditional tribal song in support of their chief followed by a range of customary performances and authentic customs including the world famous haka (challenge). View the hangi meal being lifted from the earth oven before enjoying the feast of cultural storytelling, entertainment and Maori Kai (indigenous food). Finish with a ride on the people mover bound for the valley under the veil of darkness to end the evening beside the awe-inspiring Pohutu geyser enjoying Maori-inspired delicacies and a hot drink.

March 6

Today, we journey overland from Rotorua to Taupo. Prior to European settlement, Taupo was a closely settled area called Tapuaeharuru, in the upland heart of the North Island. Some 40 rivers and streams, from bush country, forest and farmland, come tumbling into the lake. Lake Taupo offers some of the best trout fishing in New Zealand. Before arriving in Taupo, we visit Huka Falls and explore the trail to the falls with a lunch at a local café on the Taupo lakefront afterwards.



After lunch we continue to Ohakune in Tongariro National Park. This national park has three active volcanoes - Mounts Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe. The three peaks were gifted by Te Heuheu Tukino IV, chief of the Tuwharetoa people to the people of New Zealand in 1887. This formed the nucleus of New Zealand's first national park. We enjoy a relaxing walk in the riverside forest with a guide learning about the area. Our hotel this evening borders the southern slopes of Mt. Ruapehu and the spectacular national park, one of the few sites in the world to receive natural and cultural designation from UNESCO. Enjoy dinner in this wonderful Alpine Lodge environment featuring only 30 rooms.



March 7

We make our way to **Wellington** today also passing through **Tongariro National Park** via **Taihape**. Wellington, the capital of New Zealand, is known for its vibrant arts scene, world-class café and restaurant culture and active outdoor lifestyle. This creative, cosmopolitan city is surrounded by the rugged beauty of green hills and has an easily walkable downtown area set around an attractive waterfront. It offers a mixture of modern and older style buildings and the strong Victorian influence is testimony to Wellington's early establishment as the country's center of political life. Wellington combines the sophistication of a capital with the warmth and personality of a village. We have an independent lunch today in scenic **Lambton Quay** today. In the afternoon we'll drive through Wellington past the Parliament building to the top of **Mount Victoria**, which offers panoramic views of the central city, nearby suburbs, the picturesque harbor, Cook Straight and even the South Island. Arriving at **Otari Wilton's Bush**, we'll experience a guided walk of this amazing 12-acre botanic garden created for the collection and preservation of New Zealand's native plants. It is nestled against the largest block of natural forest on the Wellington peninsula to survive initial settlement. The gardens were the brainchild of the eminent botanist, **Dr Leonard Cockayne**. It's been developed since 1926 with a focus on amassing the largest representation of New Zealand flora. A 75-metre-long **Canopy Walkway** entices you from the Information Centre entrance to the main plant collections area. The walkway, 246 feet above the forest floor, provides a unique chance to view life in, and from, the top level of trees. After the gardens, we return to the hotel in the heart of the Wellington for the evening.

March 8

Enjoy a free day in **Wellington** today to explore this wonderful intimate city. We'll meet again this evening and enjoy dinner together at a top local restaurant that showcases inspiring innovative cuisine from fresh New Zealand produce.



March 9

We know most of our travelers don't enjoy a day in the airport, so instead of flying like many tour companies do, we will enjoy a ferry ride to the South Island of New Zealand. The journey by boat takes 3 hours and is considered by many to be the most beautiful ferry ride in the world.



We arrive in **Picton**, a principal gateway to the South Island, which is situated on the eastern arm of **Queen Charlotte Sound** and is a popular holiday resort as well as being the main center of the **Marlborough Sounds**. We'll go overland to sunny **Nelson** and it lives up to its name with one of the highest sunshine hours in the country. The province has interesting topographical contrasts, from rugged mountains to extensive alluvial flats, from rough grazing land to intensive farming, from desolation to virgin forest. The region is also home to around 350 artists so it enjoys an enviable reputation for a vibrant arts scene. Once we arrive, we'll have dinner this evening in the **Boat Shed Café** located right on the iconic **Nelson waterfront**. The restaurant revolves around a seasonally driven menu which celebrates exceptional New Zealand produce every day. After a relaxing waterfront dinner, a relaxing night in our hotel in the very center of **Nelson** is perfect.

March 10

Today is a beautiful day to enjoy a walk and picnic lunch as we go overland to experience the Abel Coastline. We'll take a scenic cruise along the magnificent Abel Tasman coastline north to the golden expanse of Onetahuti. View the fascinating Tonga Island Seal Colony on the way. Land at picturesque Tonga Beach where an abandoned granite quarry site still holds evidence of this failed venture. Enjoy a walk over a forested saddle and around the golden sands of Bark Bay Estuary with its cascading waterfalls through lush native forest. Enjoy a picnic lunch in this unforgettable setting before we meet up in Barks Bay for the short return cruise back to our waiting coach. We'll return to Nelson after a spectacular and relaxing outdoor day exploring coastal paths.



March 11

This morning we explore on our way to **Kaikoura**. Kaikoura received its name from an early Maori explorer and translates as kai (to eat) and koura (crayfish). Today Kaikoura maintains its fishing heritage. The ocean's continental shelf is very close to the shore with an abundance of over two hundred species of marine life. The sights are truly unique - hundreds of fur seals sunbathing on the rocky shore, spectacular leaping dolphins and the most awesome of mammals, the sperm whale. We'll explore the Kaikoura coastline upon arrival, visiting Point Kean to view the nearby Fur Seal colony & the geological uplift caused by the Kaikoura earthquake of 2016. We'll enjoy lunch surrounded by the history of previous diners for centuries from the whaling and fishing community. After lunch we continue to **garden city of Christchurch**.

March 12

After a wonderful night at our hotel in lush green Latimer Square in Christchurch, we set out to explore the city. The center of the city is expansive Hagley Park and bordering the park is the botanical gardens and the Gothic-revival building which houses the Canterbury Museum. The Avon River gently winds its way around these inner-city landmarks and out through sprawling suburbs to the Pacific Ocean. Visitors to Christchurch will witness a virtual rebirth of the city following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. The urban city center is full of new secrets to discover. Prepare for new architecture and immense street art, cocktail bars and bustling restaurants, laneways and green public spaces. In contrast to the flat cityscape and the surrounding Canterbury Plains, the skyline to the south is dominated by the tussock and rocky outcrops of the Port Hills. We will visit the Canterbury Museum where you can experience their 4D show experience. We'll visit the Antigua Boat Sheds for an unforgettable Punting pole-powered boat ride along the Avon River (Think Gondola). An Edwardian-dressed Punter will guide us quietly past trailing willows, woodlands and the leafy banks of the Botanic Gardens or through the rebuilding city center of Christchurch on board a classic Punt. Lunch today is at the beautiful Curator's House at the Christchurch Botanical Gardens, a perfect setting to enjoy this lush green city. The rest of the day after lunch is free to enjoy Christchurch, maybe a little shopping!



March 13

We depart Christchurch and make our way overland to Lake Tekapo. Beautifully situated on the shores of turquoise-blue Lake Tekapo and with the Southern Alps in the distance, Lake Tekapo Village offers one of the most stunning panoramas. After an independent lunch, we'll continue to Mount Cook National Park Village. Aoraki Mount Cook (12,316 feet) is both the highest and best-known mountain in New Zealand. Rightly it gives its name to the national park which surrounds it. In all, 173,005 acres of ice, snow, rock, subalpine scrub, tussock and riverbed make up this park. Today you will experience the only Glacier Boat Tour in New Zealand as we set out for a 2.5-hour, up-close experience with icebergs on the glacial terminal lake. Enjoy the ever-changing ice face of the Tasman Glacier icebergs. Very few glaciers terminate into lakes and even fewer are readily accessible to travelers and today you will explore this surreal and beautiful environment. The evening, our hotel is on the doorstep of the magical lake and mountains of this region.



March 14

We journey today to Arrowtown and then onward to rural Te Anau. **Arrowtown** is a historic former gold-mining town. Located a 20-minute drive from Queenstown, this delightful village has maintained its rich heritage and historic buildings and is now a vibrant destination with world-class food and beverage offerings, shopping and attractions. A highlight is the Chinese settlement at the edge of the river. Built by the Chinese miners in 1868, this area of restored shelters and buildings paints a picture of earlier times. We'll visit the Chinese Goldmining Settlement and enjoy an independent lunch in the area. After lunch we continue to Te Anau, which is more correctly rendered in its original Maori form - Te Ana-au - which means "Cave of the Swirling Water." Beautifully located on the shores of the South Island's largest lake, Lake Te Anau, and with the majestic Southern Alps panorama as a backdrop, this small town is a haven for outdoor and nature enthusiasts. It is considered the gateway to Fiordland National Park, and to stunning **Milford Sound** and **Doubtful Sound**.

March 15

Surely a highlight today – the legendary **Milford Sound**! Remote, mysterious and uniquely New Zealand, Milford Sound is a spectacular reminder of the forces of nature that shaped this land. Formed thousands of years ago during the ice age, Milford Sound is the northernmost fiord in Fiordland National Park and is, without doubt, the most dramatic. Here in this place of unparalleled beauty, you will find cascading waterfalls, luxuriant forests and the towering pinnacle of Mitre Peak, rising one full mile to the sky. No matter what the fiord's mood, shrouded in mist or with sun glistening on deep waters, it will inspire you. We have a spectacular cruise to the mouth of the fiord with stops at various points that offer excellent viewing of waterfalls, rainforest, mountains and wildlife. Keep a look out for seals basking on the rocks, dolphins and penguins. Enjoy scenic highlights such as Mitre Peak and Pembroke Glacier all while enjoying the narration of the guides. (Cont.)



After our amazing scenic experience in Milford Sound, we'll continue for an overnight in **Queenstown**, set in the shadows of the jagged peaks of the Remarkable Range. The town is compact enough to travel around on foot and features a great range of restaurants, bars and boutique stores. The lake was created by glacial action thousands of years ago and a mysterious phenomenon causes the lake to vary several inches in depth every few minutes, giving credence to a Maori legend of an ancient Taniwha (demon) still breathing beneath the surface. Enjoy our lakeside hotel in Queenstown.



March 16

We get our safari on today, but not a wildlife safari, a location safari with breathtaking locations including some used in the epic filming of *The Lord of the Rings* by director Peter Jackson. We'll set out by Land Rover vehicles right from the hotel and travel historic goldmining roads high up into the hills. We will follow the Arrow River and even have a chance to try our hand at gold-panning in the footsteps of those who came before. Take in the spectacular panoramas across the Wakatipu Basin. Enjoy a refreshing morning tea as we explore by 4x4 vehicle for a few hours. Once we return to the hotel, the rest of the day is free to relax, walk along the lake or step out into Queenstown.



March 17

Today is a complete day open to enjoy the town of Queenstown on the South Island of New Zealand. But we have some extra fun for the evening to say goodbye to New Zealand. In the early evening we'll step aboard the TSS Earnslaw and enjoy a 40-minute cruise across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak Station. Onboard, the Captain provides an interesting commentary as we take in the spectacular views of Cecil and Walter Peaks and the western shores of Lake Wakatipu.

The original steam engines can be seen in operation from the open viewing area and you are welcome to visit the Fo'c'le Gallery to view the historic displays. We'll disembark the TSS Earnslaw at Walter Peak and take a short walk through the lakeside gardens to the recently refurbished Colonel's Homestead. Relax in this unique ambience in front of a roaring open fire and soak in the views from the stunning lakeside setting while the chefs prepare a gourmet BBQ on the grill. There's a selection of succulent New Zealand meat and seafood accompanied by delectable salads, tasty dessert treats and local cheeses. All meat and seafood is cooked on the BBQ and rotisserie in front of our travelers. After dinner, join an entertaining farm experience that gives an insight into life in the New Zealand high country including a sheep shearing demonstration. We have a starlit cruise at night back across Lake Wakatipu, with a sing-along from the ship's pianist. Definitely a fun farewell!



March 18

Today is the final day in New Zealand and the start of the optional Australia Program. Those travelers not continuing to Australia will be transferred to the airport for their return flight to the USA. We are sure you have spectacular memories of New Zealand, a destination that never fails to impress.



South Island, New Zealand

🏆 #1 in World's Best Places to Visit

New Zealand's South Island brims with majestic landscapes at every turn, from dramatic mountains to spectacular fjords. Here, you can admire the mountains of Fiordland National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, from hiking trails or a boat on Milford Sound. At night, journey to the University of Canterbury's Mount John Observatory to gaze at the starry skies. You can also indulge your inner daredevil in Queenstown (a favorite destination among bungee jumpers), sample delicious sauvignon blanc wine in the Marlborough region or explore New Zealand's most accessible glaciers – Franz Josef and Fox Glacier – on the island's west coast.

For travelers continuing to Australia - G'Day Mates, get ready for another 10+ days of fun in the Land Down Under!

