

New Zealand :: North Island Sampler

Destinations: Auckland, Coromandel Peninsula, Rotorua

Your Itinerary Includes

- Arrival transfer from Auckland Airport to hotel
- 1 night Auckland
- 5 day car rental
- 2 nights Coromandel Peninsula
- 2 nights Rotorua
- Rotorua Hangi dinner and concert
- 1 dinner

Day 1 Fly USA to Auckland

Please note international air from the USA has not been included in the package price.

Day 2 You cross the International Dateline

The International Date Line is an imaginary line on the earth's surface that approximately coincides with the 180th meridian (LONGITUDE), and separates the calendar date. Traveling east across the line takes the traveler back one day; traveling west, takes the traveler forward one day.

Day 3 Welcome to Auckland, New Zealand

On arrival into Auckland, you will be met and transferred to your accommodation.

Auckland, 'City of Sails', located between two stunning harbors, enjoys a mild year-round climate. Auckland is the country's most visited region and largest urban area, offering exciting activities and great shopping.

The city lies across a 7-mile wide volcanic isthmus separating two harbors. The Waitemata to the east opens into the Hauraki Gulf, and to the Pacific Ocean. The Manukau Harbour to the west offers many estuaries and surf beaches and opens to the Tasman Sea.

Day 4 Drive Auckland to the Coromandel Peninsula

At your leisure for this delightful 2 hour drive via the main highway south and then east toward and over the Coromandel Ranges.

The Coromandel area has lush green rainforests riddled with groves of majestic Kauri trees - New Zealand's answer to the California Redwood which put this country on the map with its timber production at the turn of the century. There are many magnificent beaches where you are the only one basking in the sun unless, of course, you are at the very popular Hot Water Beach. Here, natural hot waters fill your personal sand spa just feet from the blue Pacific.

Fishing in the Coromandel offers NZ snapper, kingfish, swordfish, tuna and marlin. If a fishing rod is not for you, you can still get your dinner by gathering clams, mussels or oysters off the rocks. For divers

there is a two year old marine reserve to enjoy or you can go outside the reserve to the nearby rocks and dive for scallops, lobsters or abalone. The water offers other activities like kayaking to get a closer view of sea caves and the coastline, and between the months of December and March you can give a try at swimming with the dolphins, truly a euphoric experience!

Day 5 At leisure, Coromandel Peninsula

Many visitor attractions have been developed so that visitors can reflect on the region's former days. The Coromandel's history is captured in the many museums around the region. Guides are available to take visitors into the bush to view the remnants of the gold mining and logging era.

The Coromandel is a walker's paradise with many coastal walkways and inland bush walks ranging from several hours to several days. Huge kauris that were saved from the loggers' saws still remain and can easily be viewed.

Many artists and craftspeople have made the Coromandel their home, inspired by the region's idyllic setting. You can follow an arts and crafts trail from one side of the peninsula to the other following the popular Pacific Coast Highway.

For those who like to get wet, choose from the numerous water activities available – fishing, sailing, kayaking, snorkeling or swimming.

Day 6 Drive Coromandel Peninsula to Rotorua

At your leisure as you drive south toward the famous thermal wonderland of Rotorua – one of New Zealand's main tourist destinations. It is famous for its thermal wonders of bubbling mud pools and geysers, and as a center for the Maori Culture of New Zealand.

Allow for a 2 to 3 hour drive today. Some of your options for things to see in Rotorua include the Whakarewarewa Thermal area with its boiling mud pools and spouting geysers, the Maori arts and Crafts institute or beautiful rainbow springs where crystal clear pools are home to hundreds of giant rainbow trout. The Rainbow farm has various daily activities of a typical New Zealand farm such as sheep shearing, shepherding with sheep dogs, cow milking and butter churning.

Hangi dinner and concert This Twilight Cultural Tour offers transport to and from a Marae by coach. Tonight is a spiritual experience you will never forget with Marae protocol, entertainment, Maori culture and feasting.

En route to the Marae, the guide explains the protocol to take place. The group on board is prepared for the wero (challenge) and welcome to the Marae. Upon entering the exquisitely carved meeting house, you will hongi (greet - pressing of noses) with your host. The tradition means you are a friend and may consider yourself one of the family. Now sit back and enjoy the culture of the Maori people. See the fierce Haka (war dance), twirling of poi balls, stick games and other entertainment.

From here we move to the Hangi pit to see the traditional Maori method of food preparation before heading into the dining room for a Hangi (feast). After the feast, you are transferred back to your Rotorua accommodation by coach.

Day 7 At leisure, Rotorua

Rotorua is a thermal fantasy-island where geysers of boiling water erupt in the air, mud bubbles in mysterious pools and steam wafts in eerie clouds from the surface of the lake. Some of your options for

things to see today include the Waitapu Thermal area with its boiling mud pools and spouting geysers. Rainbow Springs is a major attraction where crystal clear pools are home to hundreds of giant rainbow trout. You could also visit the Agrodome for various daily activities of a typical New Zealand farm such as sheep shearing and shepherding with sheep dogs.

Day 8 Fly Auckland to USA

Allow 3-4 hours leisurely drive (145 miles), but if possible allow some time to take in the sights along the way back to Auckland. Return your rental vehicle at the airport depot before boarding your departure flight to the USA.