

SOUTHERN SPECTACULAR

**INCLUDES STEWART ISLAND, MILFORD SOUND,
DOUBTFUL SOUND & ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK**

HOME – BLENHEIM – CHRISTCHURCH – OAMARU – INVERCARGILL – STEWART ISLAND –
TE ANAU – QUEENSTOWN – FRANZ JOSEF – HOKITIKA – CHRISTCHURCH – NELSON –
HOME

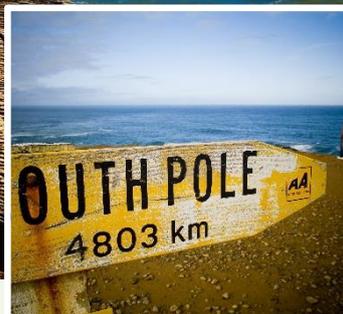
10 February 2023



**INCLUDES A SCENIC RAIL JOURNEY
TRANZ ALPINE TRAIN**

19 Day Fully Hosted Tour

Home From Pickups Manawatu, Horowhenua, Kapiti & Wellington



SOUTHERN SPECTACULAR ITINERARY

10 February 2023 – 28 February 2023

FRI 10 Home – Blenheim (D)

Departing this morning we travel to our capital city built on the hills around a magnificent natural harbour to connect with our early afternoon departure, cruising the Wellington Harbour out onto the Cook Strait on the **Interislander** and through New Zealand's only true sounds, the picturesque Queen Charlotte Sound into Picton. On arrival in Picton we reboard our coach and travel through the vineyards of the Marlborough Wine Country surrounding the town of Blenheim. Our Welcome Dinner together is in our hotel tonight.

SAT 11 Blenheim – Kaikoura – Christchurch (B D)

This morning we travel south along a thin ledge of land pinned between the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean and the rugged Kaikoura Ranges before arriving in the coastal town of Kaikoura, a popular whale watching area.

Here we join our **Whale Watch** experience for an exciting close-up encounter with the Giant Sperm Whale in their natural environment. The upwelling of nutrient rich waters around Kaikoura supports an abundant and diverse fauna of vertebrates, fish and marine mammals. At times you may also see Dusky Dolphins and the rare Hector Dolphins, NZ fur seals, sea lions and a large variety of seabirds.

Following our whale-watching excursion, we continue our journey across the farmlands of the North Canterbury Plains and the Waipara wine district, arriving into Christchurch through the northern suburbs. Dinner together is at the hotel this evening.

SUN 12 Christchurch – Oamaru (B MT D)

What varied landscapes ahead of us today – plains, spectacular mountain ranges, alpine and hydro lakes then arriving into a coastal town! We cross the alluvial Canterbury Plains, New Zealand's chief cropping area then turn inland passing through the small towns of Geraldine and Fairlie then cross Burkes Pass to the Mackenzie Country named after a 19th century sheep stealer.

We take time to view the quaint **Church of the Good Shepherd on the shores of Lake Tekapo** before travelling along the shores of glacial Lake Pukaki turning east at Omarama across Waitaki Plains past hydro-electric dams to the east coast and our home for the next two nights in Oamaru. Tonight, we dine together at a local restaurant.

MON 13 Oamaru (B D)

After the long drive south yesterday, we have a later start to the morning. Our first stop today is a guided tour and delicious morning tea at **Totara Estate**. This historic farm (originally 15,000 acres), was the birthplace of New Zealand's billion-dollar frozen meat industry. It was from Oamaru that New Zealand's first frozen meat was shipped in 1882 taking over three months to reach England, and thus began New Zealand's most important export industry. Here we explore the variety of restored farm buildings that show what mid-1800's life was like for a farm worker; constructed of local limestone the building include the stables, cookhouse, tack rooms, bunk house, and slaughter shed where the scene is set for the rigorous work on this estate.

Returning to Oamaru, we explore the heritage of Oamaru in the **Victorian Precinct**, where you will find, shops, galleries, and traditional crafts within some of the Southern Hemispheres most complete Victorian streetscapes and 19th century architecture. We take time to visit the quirky **Steampunk HQ** located in an 1883 Oamaru stone building, at the entrance of Oamaru's Victorian Precinct, featuring an interesting collection of retro-futuristic sci-fi art, movies, sculpture, and sound. This afternoon there is time at leisure, before re-convening this evening to dine at a local restaurant before we visit the **Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony** - be captivated by nature and watch the penguins in their natural habitat, as they return home from sea in the evening. We will be informed about the lives of the penguins during a commentary delivered by one of the guides. Then we make our way out to the grandstand and enter into the breeding colony on a boardwalk and walk among their nesting burrows. In the Premium Viewing grandstand, we will view the penguins from only a few metres away.

TUE 14 Oamaru – Invercargill (B D)

Today we continue south to Invercargill. Tides dependent, we will stop at **Moeraki Boulders** to see these unusual giant marble-like boulders on the beach before arriving into **Dunedin**, a city proud of its Scottish Heritage. Dunedin marks the start of the Southern Scenic Route, travelling south on State Highway 1 through the small town of Mosgiel past Lake Waihola and the rural communities of Milton and Balclutha. We continue on into **The Catlins Forest Park**, which is an area where native forest meets the waters edge; a place of hidden waterfalls and river valleys; of rocky coastal bays, inlets and estuaries where the great Pacific Ocean bites into the land. Travelling through some of the most lush and fertile farmland in the country we arrive in Invercargill, our most southern city and dine together this evening in our hotel.

Trip Highlights

- WHALE WATCHING IN KAIKOURA
- TRAVEL THROUGH MACKENZIE COUNTRY & BURKES PASS
- CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD & LAKE TEKAPO
- OAMARU "THE WHITESTONE CITY"
- STEAMPUNK HQ, OAMARU
- THE BLUE PENGUIN COLONY, OAMARU
- MOERAKI BOULDERS – *SUBJECT TO TIDES*
- BALDWIN STREET AND THE OCTAGON, DUNEDIN
- SCENIC JOURNEY THROUGH THE CATLINS FOREST PARK
- VISIT TO E HAYES MOTORWORKS COLLECTION
- QUEENS PARK, INVERCARGILL
- VISIT TO BILL RICHARDSON TRANSPORT WORLD
- TWO NIGHTS & TOUR ON STEWART ISLAND
- CRUISE TO ULVA ISLAND, THROUGH PATERSON INLET
- TRAVEL THE SOUTHERN SCENIC ROUTE TO TE ANAU
- FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK
- FULL DAY EXCURSION & CRUISE ON MILFORD SOUND
- FULL DAY EXCURSION & CRUISE ON DOUBTFUL SOUND
- VISIT PICTURESQUE ARROWTOWN
- LUNCH AT GIBBSTON VALLEY VINEYARD
- JOURNEY ON THE SCENIC DART RIVER JET, GLENORCHY
- SCENIC AERIAL GONDOLA RIDE TO BOB'S PEAK, QUEENSTOWN
- DINE AT THE LAKE FRONT PUBLIC KITCHEN RESTAURANT, QUEENSTOWN
- HELICOPTER FLIGHT TO FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER
- BREAKFAST AND WALK AT LAKE MATHESON
- SCENIC CRUISE ON LAKE MAPOURIKA, FRANZ JOSEF
- WEST COAST TREETOP WALK
- VISIT TO THE COOL LITTLE TOWN OF HOKITIKA
- STUNNING HOKITIKA GORGE & LAKE KANIERE
- VISIT PUNAKAIKI 'PANCAKE ROCKS'
- ARTHURS PASS NATIONAL PARK
- SCENIC JOURNEY ON TRANZ ALPINE TRAIN
- DINE AT THE CURATORS HOUSE RESTAURANT, CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS
- VISIT TO HANMER SPRINGS (*WITH TIME FOR HOT POOLS*)
- VIEW THE BIRTHPLACE OF LORD RUTHERFORD AT BRIGHTWATER
- ABEL TASMAN SCENIC CRUISE, INCLUDING A LIGHT LUNCH
- DINE AT HARBOUR LIGHTS BISTRO, NELSON

Southern Spectacular

Discover the Spectacular South Island on this epic scenic journey covering all of the "must-dos", through the mainland on to Stewart Island. Each day brings something new – from the rugged Kaikoura Ranges and Whale Watching, to the White Stone City in Oamaru and Blue Penguin Colony.

Continuing south through the historic city of Dunedin then into the beauty of The Catlins Forest Park, before making our way to Stewart Island for two nights. Our time on Stewart Island includes the renowned wildlife sanctuary of Ulva Island, before travelling back to the mainland to discover the double beauty of both Milford and Doubtful Sounds and in the heart of Fiordland National Park.

Of course no South Island tour would be complete without Queenstown, our home for two nights, as we journey deep into the heart of the world-renowned Mt Aspiring National Park, where myth, heritage and fantasy come to life as we experience a unique combination of breath-taking scenery and exhilaration, during our "not to be missed" Dart River jetboat ride, later topped off with magnificent views over Lake Wakatipu from Walters Peak.

Travelling north we take the passage through the Southern Alps and up the West Coast to Franz Josef Glacier, where we delight in everything this wonderful region has to offer. Heading north again we overnight in the cool little town of Hokitika, walk the excellent West Coast Tree Tops Walk and visit the whimsical Punakaiki "Pancake Rocks", all before sitting back and relaxing on our Tranz Alpine Train journey from Arthurs Pass National Park back through the Southern Alps to Christchurch.

Our final journey north sees us traverse the picturesque Beech clad Lewis Pass, as we head towards home, via the sunny the Nelson region and beautiful Abel Tasman National Park.

WED15 Invercargill – Stewart Island (B D)

This morning we visit **Queens Park**, where highlights of this New Zealand Garden of National Significance include a stunning rose garden, a rhododendron dell, an azalea garden, a Japanese garden, bush paths through a selection of native plants, rock and herb gardens, and a stumpery. An indoor Winter Garden features tropical and flowering plants, and a range of cacti are displayed in an adjoining structure. The park also houses an impressive bird aviary, farmyard area, and animal enclosures.

This afternoon we visit the fascinating **Bill Richardson Transport World**. **Transport World** is the largest private collection of its type in the world. Housed in over 15,000sqm of exquisite 'sheds' are over 250 vehicles including retro Kombi's, Henry Ford Letter Cars, Model T's, stunning 1930's V8's and 150 vintage petrol bowlers.

Later this afternoon we travel to Bluff for a photo of the famous signpost before boarding our **catamaran ferry to Stewart Island** and dining together tonight.





THU 16 Stewart Island (B L D)

This morning we meet our local guide and join a **Village and Bays Tour**, enjoying the comprehensive commentary providing an insight into Stewart Island's community, history and environment. Highlights include the Rakiura National Park entrance at Lee Bay, Halfmoon Bay, Horseshoe Bay and views of Paterson Inlet from Observation Rock. Our guide will share their local knowledge along the way, with time available for photo stops.

This afternoon we join the **Ulva Island Explorer** tour, with a picnic lunch box included, to cruise through **Paterson Inlet** viewing hidden coves and unspoilt beaches to visit Ulva Island - a renowned wildlife sanctuary where many rare and endangered native species of birdlife and plants flourish in a predator free protected environment. During the easy 45-minute guided walk through native podocarp forest with a specialist nature guide you will be able to view diverse plant species and abundant bird life. The island is home to such wildlife as native Weka, Robins, rare Saddlebacks and Yellowheads among other species, even Kiwi are known to wander around in the area. We dine together again this evening at the South Sea Hotel.

FRI 17 Stewart Island - Te Anau (B D)

This morning is an early departure from Stewart Island by catamaran ferry, arriving back in **Bluff** and re-join our coach and driver. Here you can sit back and relax, as we then take the **Southern Scenic Route** along the south coast through the town of Riverton to Te Anau, gateway to the Fiordland National Park, with dinner at our hotel this evening.

SAT 18 Doubtful Sound Excursion (B L D)

This morning we cruise across the crystal waters of **Lake Manapouri** to West Arm before boarding a coach and crossing the alpine route of Wilmot Pass through some of Fiordland's most dense rainforest. On reaching Deep Cove, we board a modern catamaran, the Patea Explorer for a scenic cruise exploring the waterways of the serene and isolated **Doubtful Sound**. Enjoy the spectacular alpine scenery including waterfalls, rainforest, and mountains all the way out to the Tasman Sea, with possible sightings of bottlenose dolphins and fur seals and when in season, the rare Fiordland crested penguin. An on-board nature guide will provide a commentary as we cruise, and a picnic lunch is included today. At the conclusion of our cruise on Doubtful Sound, we retrace our journey back over Wilmot Pass and across Lake Manapouri to Pearl Harbour, back to Te Anau. After our full day out, we dine together this evening in our hotel.

SUN 19 Milford Sound Excursion (B L D)

This morning we depart Te Anau for an excursion to **Milford Sound**. **Fiordland National Park**, part of the UNESCO Southwest New Zealand World Heritage Area is one of the great wilderness areas of the Southern Hemisphere. The scenery is spectacular with lofty mountains and deep valleys carved out by Ice Age glaciers. There are clear rushing streams and leaping waterfalls set in magnificent native rainforest. Rain and shine, the journey into Milford Sound captivates even the most seasoned traveller.

At Milford Sound we board a comfortable vessel for a scenic cruise down Milford Sound past towering Mitre Peak to the Tasman Sea. The Sound is dominated by the grandeur of Mitre Peak and the Bowen Falls and seals and dolphins are often seen in the clear waters of the fiord. Picnic lunch is served on board. From here we cross Southland farmlands travelling past a large number of deer farms that are a feature of this area, then across the rolling farmland of Southland. The terrain is quite bleak with tussock being among the prominent vegetation. Pass through Kingston at the southern tip of Lake Wakatipu, along Devil's Staircase and into the **Queenstown** region with dinner together this evening.

MON 20 Queenstown (B L D)

Today we make our way past the historic Edith Cavell Bridge to **Arrowtown**, a delightful gold rush village nestled below the beautiful peaks that surround the sparkling Arrow River. The heart of its history is Buckingham Street, a procession of small town heritage buildings that stretches into a tree-lined avenue of tiny miner's cottages. The buildings in this lovely precinct now house shops, galleries, bars, and restaurants. The town was established in 1862, during the height of the Otago gold rush with time for a wander to explore the town or take a walk along the river to the old Chinese Miners establishment.

Upon return to Queenstown, we head directly to Steamer Wharf where steeped in Queenstown's pioneering history, our experience commences with a cruise across Lake Wakatipu in the 1912 vintage steamship, the **TSS Earnslaw**. We disembark at **Walter High Country Farm**, one of the first farms established in the region and still a working farm. In the ambience of the Colonel's Homestead, enjoy a delicious gourmet BBQ lunch which the chef will prepare in front of you. After lunch enjoy an entertaining brief farm experience including a sheep shearing demonstration or take a walk around the beautiful lakeside gardens. On the cruise home breathe in the fresh alpine air on the Earnslaw decks as you watch Queenstown draw nearer. This evening is your own time at leisure, with dinner this evening at your own arrangement, allowing you the opportunity to sample your choice of Queenstown's excellent dining establishments.

TUE 21 Queenstown (B D)

This morning we journey out to **Glenorchy** where we take a scenic **Dart River Jetboat** ride up the braided channels of the Dart River in a wild and picturesque landscape, amidst the towering peaks, glaciers, and ancient forests of the spectacular Mt. Aspiring National Park (1 hour). We learn about the flora and fauna, history, and geology of this World Heritage Area from our experienced guide and enjoy a short walk (30 minutes) then return by jet boat to Glenorchy.

Returning to Queenstown in the early afternoon, with time for leisure before we ride the **scenic aerial gondola** later this afternoon, to **Bob's Peak** rising 450m/1500ft high above Queenstown. From here the panoramic views of Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu and the surrounding mountain ranges including The Remarkables are breathtakingly spectacular and a great photo opportunity.

This evening we dine together at a local restaurant on Steamer Wharf.

WED 22 Queenstown – Franz Josef (B D)

Today, leaving Queenstown behind, we travel across the fruit-growing Central Otago region, around the shores of glacial **Lakes Wanaka and Hawea** onto the rugged beauty of the **Haast Pass**, as we travel through the **Southern Alps**. We continue on up the **West Coast** past wild beaches, over mountain streams, through native rainforest and past bush-fringed lakes to the remote settlement of **Franz Josef Glacier**, our home for the next two nights. We dine together this evening at our hotel.

THU 23 Glacier Country (B D)

This morning we travel south to the beautifully situated "**Mirror Lake**" at the **Lake Matheson Café** to enjoy breakfast.

For those that would like to stretch their legs, there are two walks at Lake Matheson – one around the lake and a shorter one to a viewing point. Here nature has combined exactly the right ingredients to create stunning reflections of New Zealand's tallest peak (Aoraki) Mt Cook and Mt Tasman. The waters of Lake Matheson are dark brown so on a clear day they create the ideal reflective surface. After our time at Lake Matheson, we retrace our journey back along the bush lined road to Franz Josef.

Early afternoon we journey to **Lake Mapourika** situated a short drive north of Franz Josef Village. Here we take a 2-hour scenic cruise on the dark waters of this lake where on a clear day, the reflections can be amazing. The Jurassic rainforest fringed bays which reflect the surrounding Alps and Glaciers will leave you in awe of its beauty. Your knowledgeable skipper (owner & operator) has been guiding passionately in the region from the mighty Franz Josef Glacier to Lake Mapourika for the last 15 years! He will take you on a scenic journey, through the **Okarito Kiwi Sanctuary** & much more. Enjoy a great cup of tea or coffee while you watch curious native birdlife in the surrounding rainforest shoreline. Lake Mapourika is a landscape photographers dream!

Upon our return to Franz Josef, we have a tour highlight! A **helicopter flight high onto the snow and ice of Franz Josef Glacier** – wow! A 20-minute helicopter flight is the perfect opportunity to get up close to a glacier and touch snow. You will be captivated as you lift off and fly up and over the dramatic expanse of the Franz Josef and experience the solitude of a snow landing in this wonderful natural alpine environment. After a wonderful day out, we dine together tonight at our hotel.





FRI 24 Franz Josef–Arthurs Pass–Christchurch (B D)

Today we travel north across farmlands with the Southern Alps rising steeply to the east and vistas of the Tasman Sea to the west. South of Hokitika we make a stop for a special exhilarating treetop adventure among temperate rainforest giants – the **West Coast Treetop Walk**. Experience life with the birds, high in the ancient Rimu and Kamahi tree canopy as we take a walk along a steel platform 20 metres high and over 450 metres long. This 45–60-minute walk through the beautiful West Coast rainforest treetops will give you a unique perspective of the West Coast’s untouched forests.

This afternoon we head inland and visit the stunning **Hokitika Gorge**. Here the vivid turquoise water is surrounded by lush native bush. For those who would like a walk may take a 2-km loop walk along the stunning Hokitika Gorge and the pristine mature podocarp forest of the **Hokitika Scenic Reserve**, alternatively there is a viewing platform just 5-minutes from the carpark.

We then head north through Greymouth, the largest settlement on the West Coast before reaching the small settlement of **Punakaiki** on the edge of the **Paparoa National Park**. **Punakaiki** is renowned for its wild, rugged coastline and the famous ‘**Pancake Rocks**’ and blowholes. These stratified limestone stacks are an extraordinary monument of nature. Time here to see the Pancake Rocks before retracing your journey back to Greymouth.

From here we head inland to the small remote village of Arthurs Pass in the heart of **Arthurs Pass National Park** to board the **Tranz Alpine Train** for our scenic rail journey through the heart of the mighty Southern Alps. Travel across towering viaducts, through spectacular gorges and river valleys then the landscapes open up as you journey across the fertile Canterbury Plains and into Christchurch City. We dine together this evening at our hotel.

SAT 25 Christchurch (B D)

Today we have a day at leisure for you to explore Christchurch and see how it continues to rebuild from the 2011 Earthquakes. We regather this evening and dine together at a local award-winning restaurant **The Curators House**, situated in a heritage building in the lovely Botanic Gardens, with its own kitchen garden, fresh regional produce is served, with a Spanish influence

SUN 26 Christchurch - Nelson (B D)

Leaving Christchurch today we travel across the broad flat expanse of the Canterbury Plains, through the settlements of Culverden and Waipara to **Hanmer Springs**. We have time here for a stroll through the village or perhaps take a dip at the Hanmer Springs Hot Pools (own cost).

Continuing our travels, we head over the Lewis Pass, through the Maruia Forest to Murchison. Continuing north passing **Brightwater, the birthplace of Lord Rutherford**, the Kiwi science pioneer who split the atom, before arriving at **Nelson** – one of the sunniest regions of New Zealand and our home for the next two nights. We dine together this evening in our centrally located hotel.

MON 27 Nelson – Abel Tasman – Nelson (B D)

This morning we have an early start as we drive to **Kaiteriteri**, before boarding our **Abel Tasman cruise along the coastline** of Kaiteriteri to Totaranui and return, including all the highlights along the spectacular granite coast. We’ll stay onboard as the vessel calls into popular beaches along the coast; pause for photographs at the famous Split Apple Rock and view seabirds and seals at Tonga and Adele Islands.

We return early afternoon and journey back to Nelson stopping en-route at the charming Seaside Village of Mapua. Here the old fruit cool stores have been converted into galleries, the boutique design stores sell local arts and imported homewares, cafés serve coffee and local food and wine. Tonight, we enjoy our Farewell Dinner together at our hotel.

TUE 28 Nelson - Kapiti (B)

An early start this morning as we say goodbye to those leaving us in Nelson, as we travel across the top of the South Island through farmland and forestry plantations then through the vineyards of the Marlborough onwards to Picton. Here we board our morning sailing on the Interislander for our crossing to Wellington and back home, with time to reflect on your tour and perhaps swap contact details with newly found friends.

SOUTHERN SPECTACULAR

19 Day Tour Includes

Fully hosted by a YOURTours Host

Quality Accommodation & Coach

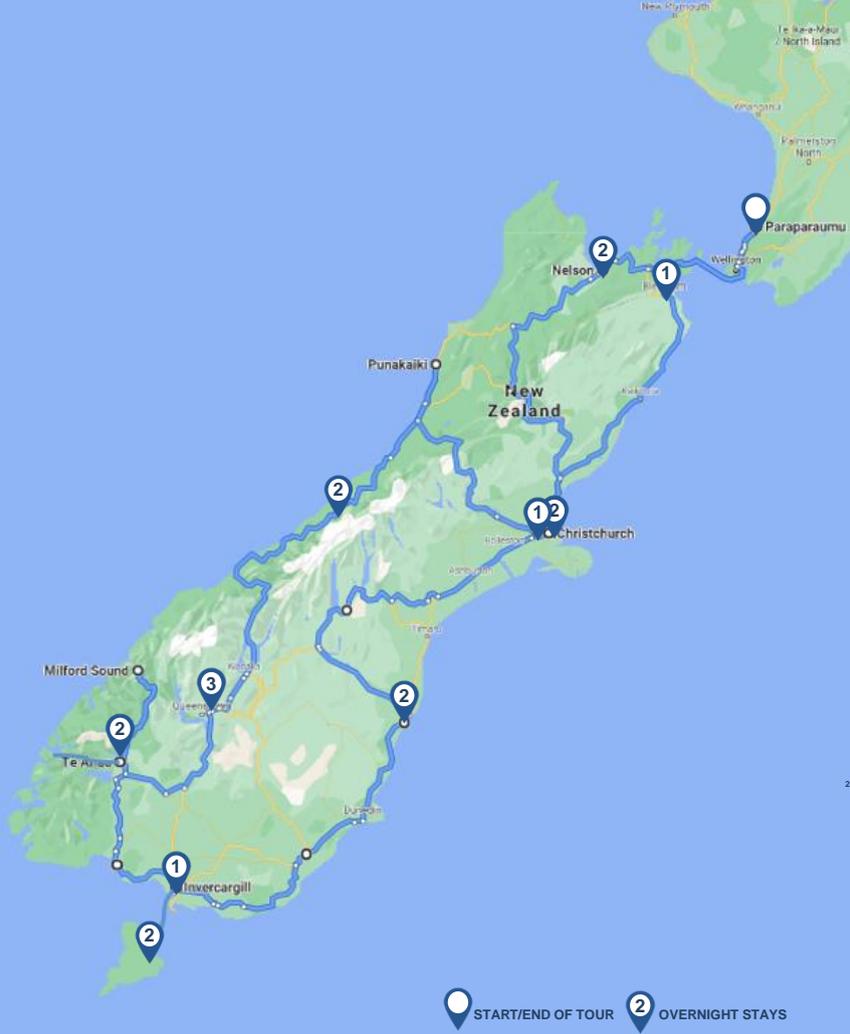
Sightseeing & Entrance Fees as indicated on itinerary

Meals include all breakfasts & dinners, and some lunches as per itinerary

Departs 10 February 2023

Price from \$9,985 pp twin share

Single supplement \$2,160



You are invited to join us on one of our fully escorted small group tours, with a maximum of 18 guests.

We are based on the beautiful Kapiti Coast with our guests joining us from all corners of New Zealand. We believe you will be pleasantly surprised by just how much we include in our tour price.

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