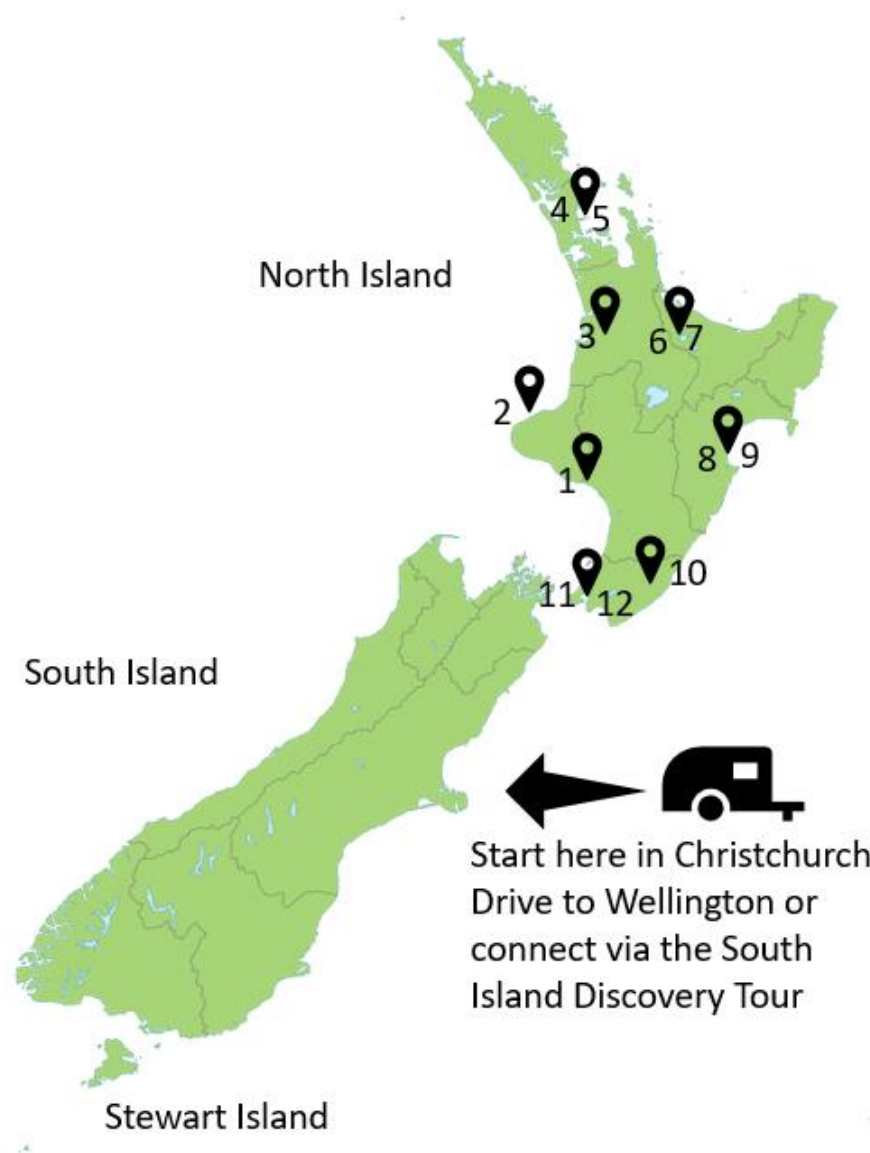


North Island Discovery

12 days



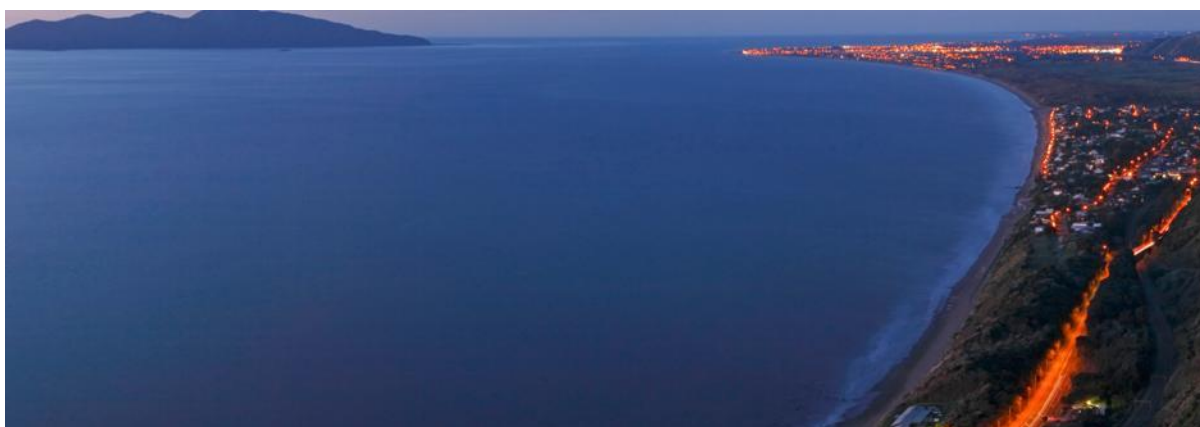
This route takes in the key sites in our fabulous North Island. Designed to be matched up with the South Island discovery or alternatively collect your rental car and come pick up your caravan in Christchurch and head up to Wellington to take your tour of the North Island. From Wellington you will follow the coast to New Plymouth to see our famous Mt Taranaki then inland for some adventure at Waitomo before the big lights of our capital city. From Auckland you will cut through the middle of the north island where you can stop at Rotorua for an amazing opportunity to get up close to our mud pools and natural geysers and the opportunity to explore the Maori culture. Finally, your last leg takes you to east coast where you can enjoy some fabulous wine and food before returning to Wellington.

Day 1

Wellington to Whanganui (2.5h)

You'll be spoiled for choice of short adventures to keep you entertained on your way from Wellington to Whanganui/Wanganui. Offshore from Waikanae is Kapiti Island, a nature reserve where visitors can book tours for close encounters with rare birds. In Paekakariki there's an escarpment walkway and electric tramway, and in Waikanae you'll find the Mangaone walkway. In other spots along the route are parks, walks, a car museum, bike tracks and scenic outlooks galore. Levin is a major clothing industry hub and has many factories. In Bulls, stop for lunch and check out the many antique shops.

There is plenty to keep you busy in the river town of Whanganui/Wanganui. For most of its history, the river was the heart of this town, and museums and river adventures attest to this. Take a cruise on the Steamer Waimarie, check out the museums and the River Market, or head up the hill to the war memorial tower and elevator.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
Whanganui River Top 10 Holiday Park 460 Somme Pde, Aramoho, Whanganui www.wrivertop10.co.nz	Blyth Street Whanganui	NZMCA Park 23 Oxford St, Marton

Day 2

Whanganui to New Plymouth (2.25h)

Enjoy the dairy farms, scenic little towns, and views of Mt Taranaki along your route north.

At Hawera, if you prefer beach views and a stop at the town of Oakura, follow the ‘Surf Highway’ around Cape Egmont. Or you can take the inland route via Stratford and enjoy the green serenity of farmland. If you would like to get a closer view of the Mount, there are walking tracks on its lower reaches.

The city of New Plymouth has plenty to keep the traveller busy, well fed and well informed about the area. Be sure to visit the world class Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/Len Lye Centre to experience one of New Zealand's best-known artist's kinetic sculptures, exhibited in an impressive and state of the art gallery.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
Fitroy Beach Holiday Park 1D Beach St, Fitzroy, New Plymouth www.fitzroybeach.co.nz	Oakura Greenwood Rd, Tataraimaka, New Plymouth	NZMCA Park Huatoki Domain Recreational Reserve, Huatoki St, New Plymouth

Day 3

New Plymouth to Waitomo Caves (2.5h)

Visitors will enjoy the drive along the sparkling Tasman Sea as they drive north through seaside villages. There are lots of picnic and walking spots along the way, especially at Awakino. Waitomo is famous for its caves and Kiwi House. World class systems of limestone caves beneath the surface of this area provide adventure at every level, from serious spelunking to leisurely walking or boat tours. Try the black (a bit less hair-raising but still lots of fun) or white-water rafting adventures to fully appreciate the wonder of these

underground grottos full of stalactites, stalagmites, and colonies of glow worms. Visit the Kiwi House for an up-close encounter with the national bird.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
Waitomo Top 10 Holiday Park 12 Waitomo Village Rd, Waitomo Village, Waitomo www.waitomopark.co.nz	The Haggas Lookout 971 Te Anga Rd, Waitomo	Otorohanga NZMCA Park 9 Waipa Esplanade, Otorohanga

Day 4

Waitomo Caves to Auckland (2.5h)

The trip north from Waitomo heads right through the dairy heartland of New Zealand. Stop in at Hamilton to see the University, the mighty river, the beautiful public gardens, or some of its museums and galleries. Take a detour here and head out to Raglan, famous for its unique surf breaks. A community of surfers has grown up around the area and it is a great place to visit for a coffee, some interesting cafe food, the laid-back vibe, and a chance to watch (or ride) the exquisite waves.

The landscape becomes even more hilly and lush as you head north and enter the environs of Auckland. Here, in New Zealand's largest city of over a million people, spread across volcanic hills and hugging two harbours, you will find plenty to keep you entertained for a day or two.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
Remuera Motor Lodge 16 Minto Rd, Remuera, Auckland www.remueramotorlodge.co.nz	Waikato River Riverbank Rd, Mercer www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz	NZMCA Park Harvard Ln, Ardmore, Auckland

Day 5

Spend the day in [Auckland](#)

Auckland is New Zealand's largest city, with over 1 million people spread across multiple centres. It is situated between two harbours, Waitemata (Auckland) and Manukau, and sits amongst dozens of volcanic cones. Auckland is a great place to visit museums, art galleries, war memorials, historic Maori sites, parks and gardens, and climb small volcanic hills. It hosts concerts, the ballet and opera, numerous theatre productions and offers unlimited eating and drinking options, as well as vineyards.

Its Sky Tower holds a casino and sky walk, where visitors can view the expanse of the city. Take a ferry over to the Victorian charm of Devonport, or out to Waiheke Island, full of vineyards and craft shops, or venture further to Rangitoto, the volcano that watches over the harbour.

St Heliers and Kohimarama are beach areas not far from the city along beautiful Tamaki Drive, and the newly developed Viaduct Harbour, Britomart and Wynyard Quarter area is a pleasure to wander around or stop for a meal and a bit of people watching. Nature lovers can head out to hike the Waitakere Ranges or stroll the black sand beaches of Piha and Muriwai. The choice is yours.



Recommended accommodation options:

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Remuera Motor Lodge 16 Minto Rd, Remuera, Auckland www.remueramotorlodge.co.nz	Waikato River Riverbank Rd, Mercer www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz	NZMCA Park Harvard Ln, Ardmore, Auckland

Day 6

Auckland to Matamata to Rotorua (3h)

On your way south, back through the dairy heartland, stop at the town of Matamata and head out to Hobbiton, the complete town for hobbits, with the pub from the Lord of the Rings trilogy, developed as a tourist attraction.

Rotorua is the hub of New Zealand's volcanic plateau and it lets you know about it with geysers, hot springs, bubbling mud pools and a nether-worldly sort of feel to the landscape, especially at locations such as Whakarewarewa. It's also a hub of uniquely New Zealand tourist experiences. Head to the Polynesian Pools and spas for a soak, boat around one of the stunning lakes, or out to Mokoia Island.

Try your hand at the interactive farm experiences available at the Agrodome, and visit Fairy Springs to learn about our trout. The area is a sacred place for Maori and one of the best areas to learn about, interact with, and enjoy Maori culture, from cultural performances, to a visit to the excellent museum, or one of the many geothermal nature reserves that have tourist attractions and tours.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
All Seasons Holiday Park 50-58 Lee Rd, Hannahs Bay, Rotorua www.allseasonsrotorua.co.nz	Lakefront Parking Mataiawhea St, Ohinemutu, Rotorua www.rotoruanz.com	Ngongotaha NZMCA 61 Ngongotaha Road Rotorua

Day 7

Spend the day in [Rotorua](#)

There is so much to see and do in Rotorua, and it is so representative of the New Zealand experience, that it is worth spending a day or two, no matter the weather or time of year. Along with all of the geothermal based tourist attractions, there are adventures to be had! Try world class rafting, Zorb Ball rolling (rolling yourself down a hill, that is, inside said Zorb ball), ziplining, or one of a dozen other offerings. At night, be sure to try a Maori dining experience, known as a hangi, or take in a cultural performance. Try your hand at trout fishing, tramp into native forests near the Buried Village, or kayak around one of the stunning lakes. Rotorua has plenty for everyone.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
All Seasons Holiday Park 50-58 Lee Rd, Hannahs Bay, Rotorua www.allseasonsrotorua.co.nz	Lakefront Parking Mataiawhea St, Ohinemutu, Rotorua www.rotoruanz.com	Ngongotaha NZMCA 61 Ngongotaha Road Rotorua

Day 8

Rotorua to Taupo to Napier (3h)

There's so much to do in this area of the country that it's worth spreading out your trip. On the way to Taupo, the scenery continues to be both other-worldly and volcanic and lush, as well as obviously managed by human hands, with its pine plantations and signs of forestry all over. If you haven't had enough of the geothermal wonders of the area, it's worth a stop at less well-known attractions such as Orakei Korako and Wairakei Power Station.

Further on is Huka Falls, with its luxury lodge nearby, New Zealand's most visited natural attraction. Take a tour down the raging river, or walk in to see the falls on foot. Lake Taupo is actually a massive volcanic crater which formed New Zealand's largest lake. It also hosts one of the country's longest and most popular bike races, around its perimeter, and there is plenty to enjoy in the village. On your way to Napier, be sure to stop at the Waiarua Falls lookout, to view the twin waterfalls.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
Kennedy Park Resort 11 Storkey St, Napier www.kennedypark.co.nz	Puketapu Reserve Dartmoor Rd, Puketapu, Napier www.hastingsdc.govt.nz	Erikson Road NZMCA Park 165 Eriksen Rd, Napier

Day 9

Spend the day in [Napier](#)

In Napier you can walk through town to see beautiful 1930s Art Deco buildings, built in response to the devastating earthquake in 1931 which levelled the whole town. This city is proudly known as the world's Art Deco capital. Other attractions are the gannet colony, aquarium, and world class golf course at Cape Kidnappers. Multiple vineyards and farms dot the area, making Hawkes Bay a mecca for serious foodies. Its sister city of Hastings hosts one of the best Farmers Markets around and its restaurants celebrate the produce of the Hawkes Bay.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
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Day 10

[Napier](#) to [Martinborough](#) (3.5h)

It's a long journey south today. Stop in the lovely old town of Masterton on the way. Recommended is the wildlife sanctuary at Mt Bruce. Every year in March, Masterton hosts the international Golden Shears competition, an important part of the local culture. Enjoy the clean, green Wairarapa scenery as you drive south. At Featherston, you'll turn left towards Martinborough.

Martinborough has a long history, established vineyards, many local craftspeople, a very pleasant town, and restaurants and cafes which have created a name for the town as a gourmet hub. Spend some time enjoying the area's hospitality.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
Carterton Holiday Park 198 Belvedere Road Carterton	Lake Domain Reserve South Soldiers Settlement Road Lake Reserve Featherston	POP 529 Bidwills Cutting Road Greytown

Day 11

[Martinborough](#) to [Wellington](#) (1.5h)

Your route today is lush and green, clean, and enjoyable. The road straightens out after the mountains and allows for plenty of spots to stop for a picnic. Take it slowly and stop along the way in the beautiful Hutt Valley to enjoy some local cakes, coffee, or crafts, or go for a bit of a hike over one of the hills.



Recommended accommodation options:

Campground Option	Free Parking Option	NZMCA Option
Camp Elsdon 18 Raiha St, Elsdon, Porirua www.campelsdon.co.nz	Evans Bay Marina Carpark Cnr Evans Bay Pde & Cobham Dr, Kilbirnie, Wellington www.wellington.govt.nz	Plimmerton NZMCA Park 7 Ulric St, Plimmerton, Porirua

Day 12

Spend the day in [Wellington](#)

New Zealand's capital city, Wellington, is a great walking city, full of character, charm, history, and of course, politicians. It is home to Victoria University, and the presence of the students lends a hip, young, artistic air to the place. Its hills are legendary and will keep you on your toes, but the relaxing and foot friendly harbour area is never far away.

Wellington has shopping, restaurants, nightlife, street art and theatre, beautiful parks, and a gorgeous waterfront. Of particular note are Te Papa, the National Museum, and for fans of the Lord of the Rings movies, Weta Cave Workshops, where visitors can experience the art and science behind the creation of these award-winning films.

Wellington hosts sport, music, theatre, dance, and cultural performances year-round, and is proud home of WOW, NZ's World of Wearable Arts extravaganza, held in early spring each year. Head up the slopes of Mt Victoria and enjoy the beauty of the Botanic Gardens along the way and the view of the city from the top.

Visit Zealandia and the Zoo for encounters with wildlife, or head out to Oriental Bay to enjoy the beaches and seabird colonies. At night, Courtenay Place has plenty of nightlife, and theatre opportunities abound in the city, to be enjoyed after a meal at one of the many world-class restaurants.





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