

Christmas Getaway - Gisborne Stay and Play - itinerary

DAY ONE MT,L ,D

It's an early start as we head east today for our first day of fun activities. A short stop for morning tea on the outskirts of Whakatane will be our first port of call. From here we will make our way over the Ohope hill stopping at the lookout overlooking beautiful Ohope beach. We'll continue through to the Opotiki Museum housing a splendid collection of implements, vehicles, early pioneer photographs and exhibits focusing on Opotiki's once thriving shipping industry. We'll grab a bite to eat at Opotiki then continue through to Matawai. From here we'll be winding our way through to finish up in the later afternoon at our accommodation at Emerald Hotel. Dinner tonight will be at The River Restaurant.

DAY 2 B, L, D

After breakfast we will be spending some time around looking around the shops of Gisborne for those who want to indulge in a little retail therapy. From here we will sustain today's creative theme with a visit to the Tairāwhiti Museum & Art Gallery. Refresh and revive at the very popular Exhibit café for morning tea before exploring the exhibitions in the gallery, gardens and heritage collections housed in the museum. For lovers of Murray Ball's Footrot Flats cartoons we'll stop to admire Weta Workshop's tribute to Wal and Dog – a bronze cast sculpture outside the library before taking a stroll through Gisborne's beautiful rose gardens. Home to a large bird aviary the gardens also host an impressive array of mature trees and some sister city collections depicting American, Australian and Japanese gardens. From here we'll be gathering for lunch & a wine-tasting at Matawhero Wines. Current owners Richard and Kirsten Searle continue a grape-growing legacy started in the 1960s which today sees them producing 8 varieties from 45 vintages and garnering a slew of awards. Dinner tonight will be the Marina Restaurant.

DAY 3 B,L, D

Please note: Good walking shoes will be a prerequisite for today's round of events.

Today we will visit a local icon The Gisborne Farmers Market which has been helping local food growers get their goods to the public for 15 years, take your time to explore the produce and grab something tasty for your self whilst here. From here we will continue through to another fabulous location Eastwood Hill. Lunch today will be at Eastwoodhill – New Zealand's National Arboretum and in 2004 adjudged a Garden of National Significance. Founded in 1910 by Douglas Cook, the 135 hectares of exotic and native trees, shrubs and climber plantings is one of the region's most visited tourist attractions. We will be touring the gardens in a 12-seater jeep with a gourmet boxed lunch to ensure we spend as much time absorbing the astonishing beauty of our glorious surroundings. Our day then continues onto The Rere Rockslide - a giant 60-metre long natural rock-slide north-west of the city attracts hundreds each day in the warmer months to careen down Mother Nature's theme park ride on a bodyboard or inner tube. We won't be "riding the slide" here but we will instead head to the very beautiful Rere Falls to view. A return to town and a chance to relax and wander the shops or for those with energy still to burn, the paved, 1km Riverside Trail Walk awaits. We'll reconvene at the hotel late afternoon to put our feet up for a bit before Christmas Eve dinner at Peppers restaurant tonight.

DAY 4 B, L, D

Happy Christmas! A good way to kick off this special day will be our very pleasant meander through Gisborne's Botanical Gardens followed up with a walk on Wainui Beach to inhale the sea air and admire the ocean views. Christmas lunch will be a sumptuous feast put on by Emerald Hotel's Nick's Bar & Restaurant where there will be ample opportunity to eat ourselves to a standstill. Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve 10km from the city centre is semi-coastal and home to a small but significant remnant of the tall kahikatea (podocarp) forest. This will be an excellent place to walk off the excesses of our lunch but if this is too strenuous, the beach waits for a late afternoon stroll as the day draws to a close. Our evening meal will be an appropriately light supper before we turn in after our day of revelry.

DAY 5 B, L, D

Today's blend of discoveries historical, environmental and viticultural .We'll start by taking in the historically important Titirangi Domain on Kaiti Hill. Formerly an ancient Maori settlement, there are several lookouts to admire the extensive vistas over Poverty Bay, the Harbour and city. A World War II gun emplacement reminds of Gisborne's strategic wartime location and at the summit, Cooks Plaza is a space to reflect on our colonial past. The October 1769 landing of the first Europeans - Captain Cook and his crew - is marked by an obelisk erected in 1906 near the foreshore. From here we'll be gathering for lunch & wine-tasting at Wrights Vineyard & Winery Home of Natural Wine , we'll enjoy a tour of the vineyard and delicious antipasto platters with a winetasting. This afternoon we'll continue our trip up Wheatstone Road to get a bird's eye view of Gisborne before assembling mid-afternoon at Dive Tatapouri. We'll be hearing from their guides about the incredible work taking place at this unique marine attraction working with a range of stingray species and other sea life. foreshore. Following our time here we'll be heading back to our hotel. Dinner tonight will be at The Works restaurant.

Day 6 B ,MT,L

Time to head for home after breakfast via Opotiki and the history lessons continue as we pass by a number of historically significant sites through the Waioeka Gorge. We'll have a comfort stop and morning tea at the Manganuku camp site. We'll continue through to Cheddar Pottery and then onto Ohope where we'll enjoy a delicious lunch before heading back to Tauranga arriving late afternoon.