

Christmas in Pretty Russell, Bay of Islands - itinerary

DAY ONE

L,D

Welcome aboard our Christmas Tour! We start our journey today by departing Tauranga and stopping for morning tea along the way. We'll make our way through the hustle & bustle of Auckland stopping for lunch at the Warkworth Hotel north of Auckland city. From here we'll have a comfort stop in Whangarei before continuing our journey to Russell. Russell's location in the Bay of Islands makes it a popular spot for water-based activities, such as boating, fishing, and swimming and it is known for its quaint streets lined with old buildings and picturesque waterfront views. Upon arrival, we will check into The Duke of Marlborough Hotel, and settle in. We'll then enjoy our dinner onsite at the Duke Restaurant. Get ready for a festive and exciting journey ahead!

DAY TWO

B,D

Welcome to the second day of our exciting Bay of Islands tour. Today, we start our day with a delicious breakfast onsite at the Duke of Marlborough. With a relaxed start, you can take your time to explore the charming town of Russell, or simply relax on the Duke's deck while soaking up the breathtaking views. Mid morning, the group will meet for a tour of Russell to explore the beautiful attractions and history of the area. After this we take our time the opportunity to learn some more history of the area with a tour of Pompallier House, a historic French Mission Station that offers a fascinating insight into the past. Next, you will have some free time to explore the Russell Township. If you want a spot of lunch there are many cafes to choose from, or relax at the Duke, depending on your preference. You could also visit one of the locations you passed on your tour to discover more of this fascinating area. Late afternoon we will depart for Paroa Bay Winery for a fabulous dinner and wine-tasting experience at Sage Restaurant. Come along and indulge in the delicious wines and a sumptuous dinner in a picturesque setting.

DAY THREE

B,L,D

After breakfast at the Duke of Marlborough, you will have a choice of catching the Okiato Vehicle Ferry to catch the vehicle over to Paihia or catch the passenger Ferry that runs between Russell & Paihia. Once we arrive, the bus will pick up the passengers from the ferry terminal in Paihia who choose this option. From here we will make our way to the Old Packhouse Markets in Kerikeri, a popular meeting place for locals and visitors alike. The markets offer an eclectic mix of vendors, live entertainment, and a variety of ready-to-eat food choices. We'll then stop at the retail shop of Makana Confections where you can purchase from the boutique chocolate factory. After exploring the markets and chocolate factory we will head down to the stone store to have lunch at The Plough & Feather, a cozy restaurant in Kerikeri located by this. Time permitting you could pop over to the store for a look at the shop. Next, stop we will visit Sovrano Limoncello Orchard, located in Kerikeri. Here, we will have the opportunity to taste delicious Limoncello, a sweet Italian liqueur made from lemon zest, and purchase some to take home if we desire. We will then head back to Paihia, where customers who want to catch the passenger ferry will be dropped off, while the rest of the group continues on the bus across the Opua Vehicle Ferry Terminal. Once we arrive back in Russell we'll catch our breath before enjoying a lovely dinner on the deck at the Duke of Marlborough, overlooking the stunning Bay of Islands.

DAY FOUR - Christmas Day

B,L,D

Merry Christmas everyone! Today is a special day, and we have a wonderful itinerary planned for you. We'll start the day with breakfast onsite at the Duke of Marlborough before we head out into the harbour for Christmas lunch. We will be picked up by ferry from Russell and embark on what promises to be a memorable experience for all. We will arrive at Otehei Bay, a picturesque and tranquil bay located on Urupukapuka Island, one of the largest and most popular islands in the Bay of Islands. The bay features crystal-clear turquoise waters and pristine white sand beaches, surrounded by lush native vegetation and rolling hills. Visitors can take a leisurely stroll along the beach, go swimming in the clear waters, or explore

the island's scenic walking trails. In addition to its natural beauty, Otehei Bay offers a range of visitor amenities, including a cafe, bar, and restaurant, as well as public restrooms and changing facilities. Whilst here we will enjoy a buffet-style Christmas lunch, and indulge in some delectable treats while enjoying the stunning views. We will depart the island mid afternoon .After we arrive back there will be time to relax and freshen up before our festive feast, where you can enjoy the warm ambience and hospitality of the Duke. It's sure to be a memorable Christmas Day with us in the beautiful Bay of Islands.

DAY FIVE - Boxing Day

B,L,D

We'll take our time to savour the moment and enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the Duke of Marlborough. We'll catch the ferry across to Paihia and arrive at Waitangi for a guided tour and cultural concert. Immerse yourself in the rich history and culture of Waitangi, where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840. From here we make our way into Paihia to the wharf where we'll enjoy a delicious lunch at Charlotte's Kitchen, located right smack bang at end of the wharf in Paihia ,it has gorgeous views. You will notice some similarities between the Duke and Charlotte's Kitchen interior as the artwork adorning the walls is created by the same artist Lester Hall .His art is a way of making sense of New Zealand's multi-cultural history. You can either spend your afternoon relaxing in Paihia or simply unwind at the hotel. For those who want to enjoy a happy hour, the Duke has got you covered, followed by a final dinner at the Duke to cap off an unforgettable time in this little piece of paradise.

DAY SIX

B, MT,L,D

Get ready for a day full of excitement and culture as we explore the beautiful town of Whangarei. We start the day off with a delicious breakfast onsite at the Duke of Marlborough before we depart Russell. Our first stop will be at the charming Helena Bay Cafe' where we can enjoy some coffee and pastries while admiring the beautiful artworks at Helena Bay Gallery. Next up, we head to Whangarei to the

Riverside Café in Whangarei for a relaxed lunch overlooking the picturesque Quayside. After this, we'll enjoy and explore some of the town's cultural highlights. Our first stop will be a guided tour of the Hundertwasser Art Centre, located in Whangarei where you can marvel at the impressive architecture and unique art pieces. The Hundertwasser Art Centre is a cultural centre and museum dedicated to the work of the Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser. The building's design is inspired by Hundertwasser's architectural philosophy, which emphasizes the integration of natural forms and a rejection of straight lines. We will also take our time to visit the quirky Claphams National Clock Museum to learn about the history of timekeeping and see some of the world's most extraordinary clocks. After a day of information and exploration, we will check into the Distinction Whangarei Hotel & Conference Centre, where we will spend the night and enjoy dinner at the hotel restaurant. Get ready for a day full of culture, art, and beautiful sights!

DAY SEVEN

B, MT, L,

As our adventure together comes to an end, we begin our final day with breakfast served on-site at the hotel. After this we'll embark on the last leg of our journey, but not without a few more memorable stops along the way. Our first stop will be at the charming Eutopia Café in Kaiwaka for a refreshing morning tea. Next, we'll head to The Auckland Botanic Gardens. This is located on Hill Road, Manurewa, covering 64 hectares, attracts over 1 million visitors each year and is a member of the New Zealand Gardens Trust. We'll enjoy a leisurely lunch at the delightful Miko café which is located in the gardens. Whilst here you are welcome to take a short walk around some of the beautiful gardens or just relax in the café. We'll then continue our way back home stopping along the way to stretch our legs. Once we arrive back at our final destination we will bid each other farewell for the rest of the festive season.