

The Pacific East Coast Highway Including Lake Waikaremoana - itinerary

DAY ONE

L, D

This morning, we will enjoy the coastal views all the way to Whakatane, Opotiki, then on to Te Kaha. We will stop along the way for morning tea and some lunch, we will also spend a little time in the Opotiki Museum, which really punches above its weight. We will spend our night at the stylish Te Kaha Resort overlooking the shimmering waters of the rocky coastline. Fall asleep to the sound of waves lapping at the shores just metres from your room.

DAY TWO

B, MT, L, D

Our journey continues along the Great Pacific Highway, passing through small settlements, an area steeped in Māori history. We will visit the iconic Raukokore Anglican Church then travel on, calling into the beautiful Waihou Bay and enjoying its sweep of white sandy beaches we'll enjoy a spot of morning tea here. We then travel the picturesque road out to the deep water of Lottin Point to enjoy the sea, a tranquil spot and popular launch site for Game Fishing enthusiasts targeting giant Marlin, Sword Fish and Tuna. After this we'll enjoy a bite to eat along the way before stopping to admire what is thought to be the oldest pōhutukawa tree in the country. Road and weather permitting, we amble along the seaside road to the East Cape lighthouse. Those feeling energetic can climb the 700 steps to the East Cape lighthouse and be rewarded with breath-taking views from the top before continuing to our destination of the day Hicks Bay. We will enjoy a hearty meal, magnificent views, and rest tonight at the hilltop motel of Hicks Bay.

DAY THREE

B, MT, L, D

Getting away a little earlier today will allow us time to enjoy the great St Mary's church and its delicate carvings within. We will continue to Tokomaru Bay to visit the old Freezing works site, the historic pier, and a stop for picnic morning tea. We will then push on and detour to Anaura Bay, a picture postcard and historic East

Coast beach. From here we will continue our travels to the small rural town of Tolaga Bay for lunch. After refreshments, we walk along the historic Tolaga Bay wharf, New Zealand's longest, a 660m pier that stretches out in front of towering blue papa cliffs. Continuing our journey, we pass sheep and cattle farms in rugged hill country before arriving back on the coast. This afternoon we'll enjoy the iconic Tapatouri Bay's 'stingray experience.' Here we learn about the local orcas and of course, the friendly stingrays. Only if the tides are favourable, we will be able to feed the rays on the reef. It's a short drive to Gisborne, better known as 'Gizzy,'. This city enjoys some of the best weather in New Zealand. Upon arrival at our accommodation, we will take some time to relax before heading off-site for dinner.

DAY FOUR

B, MT, L, D

This morning, we will be travelling to Eastwood Hill, the National Arboretum of New Zealand, which encompasses 135 hectares of exotic and native trees, shrubs, and climber plantings. The botanical collection planted by Douglas Cook is regarded as the largest and most comprehensive collection of Northern Hemisphere trees south of the equator. After lunch, we will embark on a guided tour through this colourful and lush wonderland with our hosts. Following our afternoon at Eastwood Hill, we travel the short distance to the Rere Falls and the infamous Rere Rockslide before heading back to Gisborne to enjoy a scenic drive and some free time in town. We will enjoy another delicious meal off-site at one of the fabulous local restaurants, giving you some time prior to rest and recharge after your busy day.

DAY FIVE

B, MT, L, D

Good Walking Shoes or Gumboots Required for today. The home of the 'Children of the Mist,' the Tuhoe people, is our destination for the day. We will pick up a local guide and enjoy morning tea at her property and talk us through the area. Te Urewera National Forest Park is a 212,600-hectare temperate rainforest and the largest single tract of native forest in the North Island. The Park has an abundance of native birdlife with many rare lizards and our native bat. We will stop for morning tea with our local guide and then head through native bush to Lake Waikaremoana in the heart of the park. The North Island's deepest lake (250

meters) is surrounded by ancient native forests and features many dramatic waterfalls. Enjoy an informative talk from our guide about this fascinating region. We will then travel to Napier heading to Te Pania Hotel for our evening's accommodation where we will enjoy our meal on-site in the hotel's restaurant.

DAY SIX

B, D

Today we will enjoy a more leisurely pace and take some time to explore Napier's surroundings, heading to No.5 Cafe & Larder. From here we will continue through to Birdwood Garden, a magical place full of sculptures from all over the world, and beautiful gardens. We will then continue onto Havelock North for some free time to check out the local shops at your own leisure. After this we will then return to Napier and take the time to enjoy one of the many eateries that Napier has to offer. From here we will regroup for our Art Deco guided tour of the Town. A local expert will tell us about the Town festival, the 1931 earthquake and architecture that defines Napier. You will then be able to go for a stroll on the walk friendly waterfront or have a well-deserved shopping session or just head back to the hotel for a rest before dinner on-site.

DAY SEVEN

B, MT

This morning we'll make our way back to Tauranga via the Napier Taupo Road, enjoying photographic opportunities along the way including Kaweka, Ahimanawa Forest Ranges and Waipunga Falls. For morning tea, we will stop in at 280-acre Mohaka River Farm at the Kaweka Ranges foothills. Here you also be treated to a walk around the property to learn more of their sustainable farming practices and appreciate the serenity and the beauty this tranquil location enjoys. Taupo will be our lunch stop before heading home with a comfort stop in Rotorua along the way.