

Wairarapa Rail, Historic Homes & Luxury Lodges - itinerary

DAY ONE

D

Pickups are complete, our bus points the dial towards the southeast, and we will make our way through to Palmerston North for a one-night stopover. This wonderfully scenic route covers the complete spectrum of classic New Zealand scenery. There will be refreshment stops along the way. Late afternoon sees us arriving at the Palmerston North time to put the bags away, maybe go for a stroll, then meet for a social get-together before dinner on-site.

DAY TWO

B, MT, L, D

Today we travel to the beautiful historic 1856 home of Brancepeth Station; where we will meet with Ed Beetham and enjoy a Garden Tour and talk about this grand homestead. After morning tea in the gardens, we then move on to another historic and equally prestigious residence of Te Parae. Designed and built in 1905 the Te Parae homestead is still owned and operated by fourth-generation family members. Extensive park-like gardens surround the 600sqm two-storey home with a ten-acre lake forming a picturesque vista. Angela Irving (nee Williams) will be our host, as we take in a garden tour and talk finishing with a home-cooked lunch. We then set sail back to our hotel.

DAY THREE

B, MT, L, D

We begin your day on a delightful note with a full buffet breakfast to fuel your morning adventures. We will take a packed morning tea with us before setting forth on a scenic drive to the majestic Castlepoint Beach. For the adventurers at heart, a walk to the iconic Castlepoint Lighthouse awaits. Traverse along the wooden boardwalk, with the promise of breathtaking views as your reward. The expedition is a brief 30-minute journey, back and forth, surely a sight to behold. We then venture forth to Gladstone, en-route to a gustatory delight that awaits in Martinborough. Your destination, The Runholder, is a quaint establishment nestled

within Te Kairanga Winery. Here, the essence of wine country embraces you with open arms as you step into a realm of refined flavours. The wine-tasting room invites a journey for the palate, while the distillery whispers tales of tradition. Relish a shared family-style lunch, amidst a rustic yet elegant setting. As conversations flow, sip on a glass of wine, a personal indulgence to toast to the day's joys. This afternoon we will enjoy a scenic drive around Martinborough before returning to our accommodation in the late afternoon.

DAY FOUR

B, L, D

After our breakfast, we'll board the bus and head to the Fell Engine Museum in Featherston, where we'll learn about the fascinating history of this iconic landmark. We then make our way along the Western shores of Lake Wairarapa to the grand lodge Wharekauhau. Known as one of the world's exclusive retreats and is situated on a 5000-acre sheep station overlooking the spectacular Palliser Bay.

Wharekauhau has been designed with an Edwardian country mansion in mind. The lodge oozes warmth and character seldom found in a modern hotel. The elegant design, sumptuous furnishings, exquisite tableware and outstanding cuisine all combine to satisfy the senses. In the Grand Hall, tremendous, mullioned windows frame views of awe-inspiring beauty and massive fireplaces recapture the grandeur of yesteryear. A lodge tour and a beautiful three-course lunch await us. As the afternoon sun casts a golden glow, we make our way to the charming town of Greytown. Here, a trove of experiences awaits. Meander through the boutique stores, each one holding unique treasures waiting to be discovered. Take a stroll around, absorbing the quaint charm that the area exudes. History enthusiasts may find their hearts drawn to the Cobblestone Museum, a window to the past. And for the sweet-toothed, a visit to Schoc Chocolates is a sojourn to a world of sweet ecstasy.

DAY FIVE

B, D

After breakfast travel to the South Wairarapa and our first stop for an inviting morning tea at "The Land Girl," nestled in the heart of Pirinoa Village. This charming café, known for its cosy atmosphere, is the perfect backdrop for friendly

conversations and shared stories. As you sip on your tea, the village's quaint beauty and welcoming locals provide a glimpse into the serene rural life of New Zealand. Next, the journey takes you to the rugged and picturesque coastline of Ngawi and Palliser Bay Lighthouse. Here, in this natural sanctuary, witness the playful antics of seals in their natural habitat. For those feeling adventurous, a climb up the historic lighthouse reveals panoramic views that are simply breathtaking, offering a unique perspective of the stunning coastline. Lunch awaits at the Lake Ferry Hotel, where you can indulge in a leisurely meal by the lakeside. This idyllic spot, with its tranquil views and gentle breezes, is ideal for savouring the rich, local flavours and enjoying a moment of peaceful reflection. From here we meander our way to Wellington for our last evening together. The day culminates at the elegant Copthorne Hotel Oriental Bay in Wellington. As evening falls, gather for a delightful buffet dinner, a fitting end to a day filled with beauty and discovery.

DAY SIX

B

Gather in the lobby in the morning, ready for a day of scenic travel and comfort. As we depart to the train station, the anticipation of a memorable journey aboard the Northern Explorer builds. Once checked in, settle into the welcoming embrace of the train, a marvel of travel that blends modern convenience with timeless charm. As the Northern Explorer departs, indulge in a delightful breakfast on board. Watch the world go by through the expansive windows, offering an ever-changing landscape. The rhythmic motion of the train and the serene views create a peaceful atmosphere, perfect for relaxation and daydreaming. Upon arrival in Otorohonga, a comfortable coach awaits to take you on the final leg of your journey back home. This drive offers one last opportunity to soak in the picturesque views and cherish new memories and friendships made.