

Going up North to Winterless Northland - itinerary

DAY ONE

D

As we set out north, we head to the Auckland Botanic Gardens for our Morning Tea stop. From here, we head north across the Auckland bridge and to the Sculptureum Gallery in Matakana. With three sculpture-filled gardens, six art galleries, and a vineyard, there is something for everyone. From here, we head to Brick Bay Wines for a sumptuous lunch. Onwards and upwards in a northerly direction will see us arrive at Lodge Bordeaux in Whangarei, home for tonight. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

DAY TWO

B, MT, D

Today we will be visiting Butlers Point Whaling Museum & Garden in Hihi, stepping back in time to learn more about New Zealand's once-lucrative whaling industry. We'll have the opportunity to view the beautiful gardens, historic homestead and the vast collection of Whaling memorabilia which will make for a fascinating morning. Lunch will be at the famous Mangonui Fish and Chip Shop. A real Northland must do. From here, we will have tiki tour back down to the Historical Kerikeri Stone Store and take the time to view New Zealand's oldest building. Home for the night in the seaside Kingsgate Hotel.

DAY THREE

B, L, D

This morning we travel to the stunning golden beaches & coastline of Northland to Cape Reinga. We will be joining another tour company that has intimate local knowledge of the area. This will be a fantastic day out. Highlights include a short stop at the Ancient Kauri Kingdom in Awanui, along 90 Mile Beach, Te Paki stream, giant dunes, lunch, Cape Reinga and historical Gumdiggers Park.

DAY FOUR

B, L, D

Time for an exploration of the harbour today. We'll board the Fullers Catamaran, Dolphin Seeker, as we journey to the end of the Cape Brett Peninsula and onto the

world-famous “Hole in The Rock”. After our wonderful cruise, we’ll have lunch at the onsite café at Waitangi Treaty Grounds. Whilst here we can take the opportunity to have a guided tour around the grounds and a look around the museum.

DAY FIVE

B, L, D

After our big day, out we’ll enjoy a more leisurely pace to the day. Mid-morning, we’ll then catch the ferry over to Russell. We will split up, and some will have about an hour’s free time before lunch to wander, and some will have a mini-tour in a bus around Russell with a local guide. Then we all meet for a catered lunch at the famous Duke of Marlborough Hotel’. After lunch, the rest will enjoy the mini-tour while others take a little free time before we meet up and make our way back on the ferry to Paihia.

DAY SIX

B, L, D

After breakfast, we say farewell to Paihia and head out for a scenic drive to Opito Bay. From here, we head to the Magic Cottages. Tucked away just outside Kerikeri & the Bay of Islands, Magic Cottages at Takou River are beautiful, luxury retreats on the banks of the picturesque Takou River. Our hosts here will show us around their beautiful property, enjoy the flourishing birdlife, wander the beautiful riverbank through pasture and native bush, escape the noise and stress of daily life in the enchanted gardens—an extraordinary place. The next stop is Marsden Winery, for a delicious lunch. Over its two-decade history, Marsden Estate has become known for the quality of its authentic cuisine. Fresh produce sourced from around the region, and the superb local food is served on the terrace, shaded by grapevines, overlooking the lake, gardens and vineyard.

The afternoon meander will take us through Waipapa, arriving at the ferry at Kohukohu on the Hokianga Harbour to transport us across to Rawene for checking in to The Heads (previously known as the Copthorne Hotel and Resort). We’ll be dining at Bryers Room Restaurant in the hotel tonight, where you can indulge your penchant for fresh local seafood from the a la carte menu.

DAY SEVEN

B, L, D

Tane Mahutu has stood as a majestic sentinel in the Waipoua Forest for over 1,250 years. Occupying a place in the record books as New Zealand's most giant living kauri tree, we'll be stopping this morning to marvel at its towering canopy and massive circumference before moving on to have lunch at the Matakoho. The adjacent kauri timber-lined museum presents a fascinating insight into the area's incredible pioneering industry. Unique to this part of the world and displaying the many shapes, sizes and colours of kauri's beautiful golden resin, stopping in here is a must. As we make our way back to Auckland, we'll be carrying the beauty of this cherished region of New Zealand in our hearts and minds, not to mention our cameras. We are overnighing at the Spencer on Byron on the North Shore tonight, where we will be enjoying a delicious dinner for our final night together.

DAY EIGHT

B

After breakfast, we start our journey home via Hamilton Gardens. We will enjoy a tour of the Mansfield and Surrealist Gardens. The Mansfield Garden represents the early 20th century New Zealand garden described in Katherine Mansfield's short story 'The Garden Party'. The Surrealist Gardens are where we will step into a strange world where mysterious dreams have come to life! There is time for some lunch before we make our way home to Tauranga.