

# North Island – East to West, a Heartland. - itinerary

30% Deposit Required on Booking.

## DAY ONE

D

This morning we'll enjoy the beautiful countryside as we make our way to the East Coast of Hawkes Bay. Stopping for lunch and a few scenic vistas we know of along the way. At the Scenic Hotel Te Pania, you are right on the doorstep of Napier's Art Deco CBD and a stone's throw to the new and controversial Pier 'To Nowhere'. With the longer daylight hours, after dinner, take a stroll along the waterfront and take the time to enjoy the lovely Sunken Gardens as well as the multi-coloured water fountain

## DAY TWO

B, D

We meet our guide and bus with breakfast behind us to travel to the iconic Cape Kidnappers, visiting the world's largest mainland Gannet colony. In an air-conditioned 4 x 4 coach, you will travel in comfort through Cape Kidnappers Station and its International Golf Course. You will traverse riverbeds, broad rolling pastures and breath-taking inclines. During the drive, you will stop at a spectacular cliff top with panoramic views across Hawkes Bay. Having also passed through native forest and predator-proof fencing, you will arrive within a few metres of this massive colony. Our Driver/Guide will return us for lunch in Havelock and time to explore the village following your Gannet viewing adventure.

## DAY THREE

B, MT, D

This morning Annie is calling!! We head to the hills. The drive through the Kaweka Range is now one of the great scenic drives, recently sealed. This delightful road winds its way through rugged farmland, forested mountains and tussock covered pastures. We will stop to breathe in the mountain air, have a comfort stop and enjoy some morning tea at the Springvale Suspension bridge. We cross over the glistening Ngaruroro River then ascend the "the Annie". We descend past Erewhon

and turn south, heading into the remote Moawhango Valley, then into Taihape for lunch. From Taihape, our journey continues to Taumararui - our destination for the night.

## DAY FOUR

B, MT, L, D

Awake to find yourself nestled deep within the hidden valleys of King Country's "Forgotten World" region. After breakfast, we will get away a little earlier. The Rail Carting journey is like no other. Travelling on long ago closed lines between Taumararui and Whangamomona, we'll experience this remote area from the comfort of rail-carts which have been cleverly adapted to be self-driven along the tracks. Journey over bridges and rivers, through tunnels and townships that time has forgotten. There'll be plenty of photo opportunities as we're guided through ever-changing vistas. Once reunited with the coach at Whangamomona, we will continue through the rugged hills to Stratford and then on to our accommodation for the next couple of nights in New Plymouth.

## DAY FIVE

B, D

Today, we enjoy a relaxed drive to Hawera to visit the extraordinary Tawhiti Museum, a masterpiece created by artist Nigel Ogle. Renowned as the country's best private museum, it captivates with life-size exhibits and intricate scale models that vividly depict New Zealand's heritage. A highlight is the Traders and Whalers experience, featuring an engaging boat ride through historical scenes. After lunch, we head to Lake Rotokare, a hidden gem nestled in 230 hectares of forested hill country, wetlands, and a serene 17.8-hectare lake. Before returning to New Plymouth, we'll learn about this inspiring community-driven conservation project. After dinner, we'll head to the iconic Festival of Lights at Pukekura Park where an evening promises enchantment and the stunning light displays and vibrant summer night magic await.

## DAY SIX

B, D

After a leisurely breakfast, we visit the stunning Pukeiti Gardens on Mount Taranaki's lower slopes. Recognised as a "Garden of International Significance,"

Pukeiti is renowned for its expansive rhododendron collection and lush rainforest. Following a \$4.7 million refurbishment, it now features a 360-hectare plant collection, covered walkways, an aerial pathway, a Kokopu treehouse, and a transformed rainforest centre with a café. We'll enjoy a guided tour on their mobility vehicle and lunch at the café. Returning to New Plymouth, the afternoon offers free time for a relaxing wander along the city centre or waterfront. Art enthusiasts may opt to visit the Len Lye and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery. With energy restored and for those who would like to we'll cap off the day with another visit to The Festival of Lights located through Pukekura Park, soaking in its beauty under the twilight sky.

## DAY SEVEN

## B

This morning we head for home, stopping at Mokau for morning tea and maybe a sneaky whitebait fritter or two. We then continue through the Awakino Gorge counting the numerous whitebait stands along the way and over the scenic Mount Messenger. We'll stop for lunch and a comfort stop before arriving back home early afternoon.