

Charming Chatham Islands - itinerary

DAY ONE

D

The order of activities listed may change due to unforeseen circumstances such as weather. This is the nature of being on an Island but half the fun, of course. Your time on the Chathams will require you to be able-bodied and fully independent to participate in all organized group activities fully, such as farm walks. We head up to Auckland by road this morning, stopping on the way for morning tea and arriving in good time to catch our flight to New Zealand's easternmost outpost, the Chatham Islands. Our Air Chathams flight will touch down on the island late afternoon. As we descend, you'll be struck by the rich diversity of scenery below, with rolling farmlands, white sandy beaches, volcanic peaks and dramatic rocky outcrops. The Chatham Islands consist of two main inhabited islands, Chatham Island (90,000 ha) and Pitt Island (6,300ha) surrounded by smaller islands. We disembark and head to the Hotel Chatham to check-in. Built in the 1860s on the waterfront at Waitangi, our accommodation has a delightful vintage charm with all the modern hotel facilities.

DAY TWO

B, L, D

After breakfast we head west to Splatter Rock to take in the spectacular pillow lava-flow formations and marvel at the layered olivine basalt cliffs of Cape Young. This location is an opportunity for plant enthusiasts to view the famously huge Chatham Island forget-me-nots, thriving just above the high tide mark. We will be stopping for a picnic lunch along the way. After lunch we head to Waitangi West - home to the Chatham Island Oyster Catchers - travelling through a diverse landscape of coastal sand dunes, past lakes and spectacular views of large sand blow outs and remnant kopi stands. Dinner tonight is at the hotel.

DAY THREE

B, L, D

Some may opt to head out on a fishing charter from the settlement of Owenga but

for the rest, the day centres around land-based activities. After breakfast we head to the Kopinga Marae. Built for its panoramic views of the islands and opened in 2005 it pays tribute to the Chathams Moriori ancestors. Amazing views are all around us at our next stop at Rangaiki Cliffs and Shelley Beach where we will find a pretty spot to have a picnic lunch. While we are in the neighbourhood, we will drop in to visit Eva Cherie Tuck. Her art gallery displays an array of colourful artworks depicting the diversity of flora and fauna of the local landscape. As we set out for the journey back to the hotel, we will stop to pay our respects to Tommy Solomon who died in 1933. His commemorative statue marks his place in history as the last full-blooded Moriori – the indigenous people of the islands.

DAY FOUR

B, L, D

Bird-watching is on the agenda this morning as we head to the south coast after breakfast to visit the Albatross colony breeding programme set up by Taiko Trust at a protected site at Point Gap. We then move on to visit a local farm to learn more of the special challenges of farming on New Zealand's remotest islands. We'll head back to a fish and chip lunch at the hotel before a visit to the museum where the ancient and modern history of the islands is on show. A walk up Tikitiki hill and around the town will be a good way to get your bearings, take photos and enjoy the fresh air before dinner tonight at the hotel.

DAY FIVE

B, L, D

Don your hiking shoes as we are off after breakfast to explore the peaceful track of the Nikau Bush Conservation area. 19 hectares of regenerating forest are home to the native Nikau palm – usually in full bloom at this time of year. Following this, we stop at DOC's Ocean Mail Reserve where we will have a picnic lunch and enjoy fantastic ocean views and seabirds. Onwards then to Muirson's Farm to see a Sunderland flying boat restoration project. The Point Munning fur seal colony is our next stopover – over 200 years ago the processing of their skins and oil was a

thriving industry in the Chathams. Still regarded as a sacred treasure by the Moriori, the incredibly rare tree carvings at Hapupu are set to be a highlight of our entire stay. We stop here as our final activity for the day. Tonight's dinner is the famous seafood buffet dinner at the Kaingaroa Sports and Social Club.

DAY SIX

B, L, D

This morning we explore the private reserve of Te Mataarae before marvelling at the ancient Moriori carvings on the limestone walls of Nunuku's Cave. At our next stop Te Whanga Lagoon, the sands conceal buried treasure that you may be lucky to unearth this morning: fossilized shark's teeth millions of years old. We will be lunching here with a picnic before heading to the regenerating coastal forest of Henga Scenic Reserve. Featuring cheeky weka, fantails and other native birds, the spectacular limestone formations deep in the bush are breath-taking. There will be an opportunity for keen botanists to purchase native plants at Sylvia's Native Plant Nursery at Henga Lodge. Dinner tonight is back at the hotel in Waitangi.

DAY SEVEN

B, L, D

The penultimate day on the Chatham Islands is underscored with a highly recommended flight to Pitt Island - a fully escorted tour for those who want to explore further afield. If you decide to stick to the main island, we have a visit to the massive olivine Basalt Columns this morning - an unusual lava rock field created out of lava flows dating back 80 million years. We will be finding a pleasant spot for a picnic lunch at Port Hutt, previously the main harbour for the Chathams, where several vessels have run aground. Following this we will be taking a stroll through the utterly beautiful Admiral Gardens. Established by the Croon family, the garden boasts, in addition to a plethora of native and exotic plantings, vast swathes of the Chatham Island forget-me-not, a botanical mecca for bees, birds and butterflies. We will be lingering here after our garden tour to enjoy the Admiral Gardens hospitality with a buffet barbecue dinner before returning to Hotel Chatham for our last night on the island.

DAY EIGHT

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Sadly, we say goodbye after breakfast to the friendly and welcoming Chatham Islanders. We depart late morning on Air Chathams Bound for Auckland arriving early in the afternoon and connecting shortly thereafter for our Tauranga flight. Drop off to home will be late in the afternoon.

Important:

- *The order of activities listed may change due to unforeseen circumstances such as weather. This is the nature of being on an Island but half the fun, of course.*
- *This tour is not escorted by a No.8 Guide. No.8 Tours-NZ's Senior Travel Club is acting as a booking agent for this Chatham Island Tour and is responsible for your pickup and drop off to and from Air Chathams. On the Chatham Islands, you will be under the care and hospitality of Hotel Chathams and their team, who will be coordinating and executing the above itinerary.*
- *Your time on the Chathams will require you to be able-bodied and fully independent to participate in all organised group activities fully, such as farm walks.*