



Milford Sound, New Zealand

MAGNIFICENT NEW ZEALAND

23 days from only £3,995 per person

New Zealand is like no other place on earth – packed full of amazing and diverse landscapes. New Zealand’s North Island is dominated by ancient volcanoes, stunning coastal scenery and pristine beaches. South Island possesses high mountain peaks, deep fiords, lush rainforests and magnificent glaciers.

A Distant Journeys leisurely touring holiday visits all the must-see attractions during our comprehensive 23 day tour. We explore the country’s breathtaking scenery, vibrant cities and rich Maori culture – and experience an unforgettable overnight cruise aboard Milford Mariner, on spectacular Milford Sound.

Our unhurried itinerary generally includes two or three night stops in each destination, allowing plenty of Freedom Days to fully explore each area at your own pace.





Bay of Islands

feefo  66 reviews
 Product Rating: **100%**
 ON THIS ITINERARY

TOUR HIGHLIGHT

Overnight cruise on Milford Sound



Distant Journeys have included an overnight cruise on Milford Sound, undoubtedly a once in a lifetime experience.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Flights with leading scheduled airlines

- ✓ Return economy class flights with Qantas / Emirates from London Heathrow, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle or Glasgow
- ✓ Alternatively fly with Singapore Airlines from London Heathrow at no additional cost
- ✓ Premium Economy and Business Class upgrades are available on selected international routes for a supplement

Great choice of included stopovers

- ✓ Your choice of two night outbound stopover in Singapore, Dubai or Bangkok (dependent on choice of airline)
- ✓ Your stopover includes airport transfers, accommodation, daily breakfast and a city sightseeing tour

Carefully selected hotels

- ✓ Superior hotels in great locations, as detailed in the itinerary
- ✓ Overnight accommodation on-board the Milford Mariner

Many meals included

- ✓ Daily breakfast included, worth £313pp
- ✓ Maori Hangi dinner in Rotorua

Overnight cruise on Milford Sound

- ✓ Private en-suite cabins on-board the Milford Mariner
- ✓ Dinner and breakfast included

Unforgettable experiences included

- ✓ Sightseeing tours in Singapore, Auckland, Rotorua, Queenstown, Dunedin and Christchurch
- ✓ 'Hole in the Rock' cruise in the Bay of Islands
- ✓ Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve
- ✓ Maori concert
- ✓ Scenic rail journey on-board the TranzAlpine Express

We include even more

- ✓ Services of experienced local Coach Captains
- ✓ All hotel portage
- ✓ All overseas transfers and transport in modern air-conditioned coaches
- ✓ All airport charges, security charges and applicable fuel surcharges
- ✓ UK Air Passenger Duty
- ✓ No surcharge guarantee
- ✓ ATOL protection for your holiday

MAGNIFICENT NEW ZEALAND

Days 1 to 6: Singapore - Christchurch - Franz Josef



TransAlpine Express

Day 1: Depart UK

Depart from the UK airport most convenient for you with Qantas / Emirates, at no extra cost: London Heathrow, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle or Glasgow.

In-flight meals and drinks included

Day 2: Singapore, 2 nights

Arrive into the wonderful city of Singapore and transfer to the four star Copthorne Kings Hotel, situated in an enviable position close to the banks of the Singapore River.

In-flight meals and drinks included

Alternative Stopover - Dubai or Bangkok

We have based days 2 - 4 of this itinerary on flights with Qantas / Emirates and a stopover in Singapore. If you prefer, you may choose to stop in Bangkok or Dubai at the same price. Alternatively you may choose to travel with Singapore Airlines from London Heathrow. Your included stopover with Singapore Airlines will be Singapore.

All stopovers include transfers to and from the hotel, daily breakfast and a city sightseeing tour. Flight timings vary dependent on your choice of stopover. Please speak with one of our travel experts for more details.

Day 3: Singapore

Known as 'the crossroads of Asia', Singapore is a city where east meets west; a cosmopolitan melting pot with an inspirational identity. This morning, enjoy a tour of this wonderful city. Included is a stop at Merlion Park with impressive views of Marina Bay. See the historic Civic District, Thian Hock Keng Temple and the fabulous orchid gardens set within Singapore's botanical gardens. Return to the hotel where the rest of our day is free to spend as we please.

Breakfast included

Day 4: Depart Singapore

A day at leisure in Singapore until it's time to leave for our evening flight to Auckland. Perhaps explore the impressive Gardens by the Bay.

Breakfast and in-flight meals and drinks included

Day 5: Christchurch, overnight

We change aircraft in Australia, and on arrival into Christchurch we board our waiting coach and transfer to the Heartland Hotel where we spend our first night in New Zealand.

Breakfast included

Day 6: **TOUR HIGHLIGHT**

Franz Josef - 2 nights and TranzAlpine Express



After breakfast we transfer to Christchurch railway station in plenty of time to catch the TranzAlpine Express, arguably one of the most scenic rail journeys in the world. Cross the fertile farmlands of the Canterbury Plains, and enjoy thrilling vistas over deep gorges as we travel alongside the ice-fed Waimakariri River. We climb the mighty Southern Alps, where at every turn, spectacular views of the chiselled alpine landscape will take our breath away. At Arthur's Pass we join our waiting coach to make the spectacular descent down the western side of the Southern Alps through thick native beech forest. Our travels continue southbound taking us alongside striking wild scree-scarred terrain with forests of Crimson Rata and Kahikatea. Just a few miles further south we pass Lakes lanthe and Mapourika before reaching Franz Josef and entering the Westland National Park. Our next two nights are at the Franz Josef Glacier Hotel.

Breakfast included

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Days 7 to 11: Franz Josef - Queenstown - Milford Sound



Queenstown



Walking Franz Josef Glacier

Day 7: Franz Josef Freedom Day

Today is left completely free to absorb the beauty of Franz Josef. For those that so wish, we shall drive to the Franz Josef Glacier terminal where we will have the opportunity to walk to view the glacier. Weather permitting we may also take an optional scenic flight (at an additional cost) over the glacier and the awe-inspiring Alpine region.

Breakfast included

Day 8: Queenstown, 3 nights

Incredible scenery today as we travel across the Haast River Bridge and via Clark Bluff along one of the most exciting scenic roads ever built. Travel along the shores of Lakes Wanaka and Hawea as we enter New Zealand's Central Otago region. We continue via Lake Dunstan, created by the mighty Clyde hydro dam in 1994. Later in the afternoon we reach beautiful, cosmopolitan Queenstown, and our home for the next three nights, the four star Millennium Hotel, situated only a short walk from the centre of town.

Breakfast included

**We recommend:
Scenic flight over Franz Josef Glacier**



Enjoy an optional helicopter flight over awe-inspiring Franz Josef Glacier.

Day 9: Queenstown

Queenstown smiles south across Lake Wakatipu into an incomparable alpine scene. Poplars and willows surround the lake front and the lake seems to glisten every shade of blue. This morning we take a tour to visit nearby Lake Hayes and on to the historic mining town of Arrowtown. The heart of its history is Buckingham Street, a procession of small town heritage buildings that stretch into a tree lined avenue of tiny miners' cottages. Be sure to try one of the cream teas in one of the quaint tea rooms. Your afternoon in Queenstown has been left at leisure.

The thrill seekers amongst us may wish to try the Shotover Jet - an exhilarating boat ride amongst the crags and boulders of the Shotover River canyon. For a more serene experience maybe stroll by the lakeside or take a gondola ride to the top of Bob's Peak for a magnificent panoramic view of Queenstown.

Breakfast included

Day 10: Queenstown Freedom Day

Today has been left free to take advantage of the incredible variety of activities available in and around New Zealand's most glamorous alpine resort. For a relaxing experience, follow Queenstown's wine trail, an enjoyable day excursion of wine tasting and sightseeing. There is also an opportunity to take an optional leisurely cruise (at an additional cost) across Lake Wakatipu aboard the vintage steamboat TSS Earnslaw. The cruise includes a visit to Walter Peak Homestead and a sheep shearing show, before returning to Queenstown aboard Earnslaw.

Breakfast included

Day 11: **TOUR HIGHLIGHT** Milford Sound, overnight



Today we visit the magnificence of Fiordland National Park and Milford Sound. The scenic drive takes us through Te Anau, and a variety of landscapes - farmland, native tussock grasslands, lush beech forests and impressive glacial valleys - before arriving at Milford Sound. In the height of summer Milford Sound attracts thousands of tourists each day; but when the day ends, visitors depart and a silence descends.

Distant Journeys have included an overnight cruise along Milford Sound, undoubtedly a once in a lifetime experience. On board the wonderful Milford Mariner we cruise the full length of New Zealand's most spectacular fiord to the Tasman Sea, before anchoring for the night in a sheltered cove. Our night aboard Milford Mariner will be a truly memorable experience, with nature guides on hand to assist, and the option to go exploring in the tender craft or kayaks, or simply relax on deck. After the day's activities, enjoy a sumptuous evening buffet in the spacious dining saloon before retiring to your private cabin with en-suite facilities.

Breakfast and dinner included

MAGNIFICENT NEW ZEALAND

Days 12 to 16: Dunedin - Christchurch - Rotorua



Dunedin

Day 12: Dunedin, 2 nights

After a truly wonderful experience as well as a hot breakfast, it's time to make our way back to the jetty ready for the next part of our journey. A morning drive takes us via Mossburn and Lumsden to Gore. Fresh, green farm scenery will accompany us to Balclutha, which has a distinctive arched concrete bridge. Milton is the last sizeable settlement before we reach Dunedin. Known as the 'Edinburgh of the South', Dunedin is South Island's second largest city and is considered New Zealand's architectural heritage capital, with its lovingly restored Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Our next two nights are spent at the Distinction Hotel Dunedin, conveniently located close to the Octagon.

Breakfast included

Day 13: Dunedin

Enjoy a city sightseeing tour this morning travelling past Otago University, New Zealand's first. Our sightseeing also takes in the city's neo-Gothic churches, town hall, opulent theatres, and other 19th century buildings. We have time to admire the beautifully landscaped trees and plants of Dunedin Botanical Gardens and the spectacular views of the Otago Peninsula and Harbour before we return to our hotel. Our afternoon is at leisure to spend as we please.

Breakfast included

Day 14: Christchurch, overnight

This morning, our travels take us north once more. We stop at Hampden Beach to witness the geological curiosities known as the Moeraki Boulders, huge spherical boulders which are scattered along the beach, whilst others can be seen emerging from the sandstone cliffs. Each boulder weighs several tonnes and is up to two metres in diameter. According to Maori legend, the boulders are gourds washed ashore from the great voyaging canoe Araiteuru when it was wrecked upon landfall in New Zealand hundreds of years ago. Scientists explain the boulders as calcite concretions formed about 65 million years ago. The soft mudstone containing the boulders was raised from the seabed around 15 million years ago and waves, wind and rain are excavating them one by one. Later in the day we arrive at the Heartland Hotel Cotswold in Christchurch for our final night in New Zealand.

Breakfast included

Day 15: Rotorua, 2 nights

We travel to North Island this morning via Auckland as we make our way to the world-famous thermal region of Rotorua. The next two nights are spent at the four star Millennium Rotorua, superbly situated close to the shores of beautiful Lake Rotorua.

Breakfast included

Day 16: **TOUR HIGHLIGHT** Rotorua sightseeing and Maori Hangi



Sightseeing this morning takes us via Rotorua's famous Bath House, a Tudor-style building within the Government Gardens. We continue to Te Puia, home to the Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve, with its spurting geysers and boiling mud pools. Your afternoon is at leisure to relax.

For those that so wish, optional activities include a float plane flight over Mount Tarawera, or perhaps an afternoon enjoying the healing properties of the thermal pools at the nearby Polynesian Spa may be more appealing? Rotorua is the heart of New Zealand's rich Maori culture and this evening we attend a concert featuring traditional song and dance, including the world famous war dance - The Haka. Also included is a Hangi buffet dinner, cooked using traditional Maori methods.

Breakfast and dinner included

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Days 17 to 23: Bay of Islands - Auckland - UK



Mt. Eden, Auckland



Bay of Islands

Day 17: Bay of Islands, 3 nights

Our travels today commence with a drive over the impressive Waitemata Harbour Bridge. Journey past dairy farms and rolling hills as we make our way north. We continue to the Waipoua Kauri Forest Reserve, where we stop to view the gigantic Kauri tree Tane Mahuta, 'Lord of the Forest.' We then travel across country to the beautiful Bay of Islands and our home for the next three nights, the Scenic Hotel Bay of Islands, located in the picturesque seaside town of Paihia. **Breakfast included**

Day 18: **TOUR HIGHLIGHT** Bay of Islands cruise



Visiting this stunning area wouldn't be complete without a cruise around the Bay of Islands, no doubt one of your tour highlights. Cruise via Red Head Passage to Cape Brett and Ptergi Island and on to the famous 'Hole in the Rock'. In these world-famous deep-fishing grounds dolphins and schools of fish are frequently seen. Our return trip visits historic Russell, once known as the 'Hell Hole of the Pacific', but now a peaceful and picturesque township. Our free afternoon provides an excellent opportunity (at an additional cost) to visit the grounds of the Waitangi National Reserve where, in 1840, the British and Maori chiefs signed the Waitangi Treaty. **Breakfast included**

Day 19: Bay of Islands Freedom Day

Although our day has been left at leisure, we have the opportunity to join a fantastic optional trip to Cape Reinga. This full day excursion visits the northern tip of New Zealand, where the Tasman Sea meets the Pacific Ocean. The area holds special spiritual significance in Maori tradition, as the place where Maori spirits return to their traditional homeland, Hawaiki-A-Nui, via the roots of a lone (and still standing) 800 year old pohutukawa tree. Highlights of today's tour include magnificent coastal landscapes, the Te Paki sand dunes and a drive along Ninety Mile Beach. **Breakfast included**

Day 20: Auckland, 2 nights

After breakfast, it's time to leave the Bay of Islands, and make our way to the Grand Millennium Hotel, Auckland, for our final two nights in New Zealand. **Breakfast included**

Day 21: Auckland

This morning, we will take an orientation tour of the city. Known as the 'City of Sails', Auckland is New Zealand's most populous city, with a beautiful waterside setting and a landscape dotted with volcanic hills. We drive along the beautiful coastline of the famous Waitemata Harbour. In the distance see Rangitoto Island, an extinct volcano, dominating the horizon.

We continue to the stylish Viaduct Harbour, host to many America's Cup celebrations. Your afternoon is free to enjoy as you please. Perhaps take a trip to the top of Sky Tower; the panoramic views from the tallest building in the southern hemisphere are truly breathtaking. In the evening we'll celebrate our time in this magnificent

country - and the friends we've made - with a celebratory dinner at our hotel.

Breakfast and dinner included

Day 22: Depart Auckland

All good things must come to an end and this morning we transfer to Auckland airport. Our flights to our chosen UK airport operate via Australia and Dubai/Singapore.

Breakfast and in-flight meals and drinks included

Day 23: Arrive UK

Breakfast is served shortly before our arrival into London Heathrow, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle or Glasgow.

In-flight drinks and breakfast included