



Lake Wanaka, New Zealand

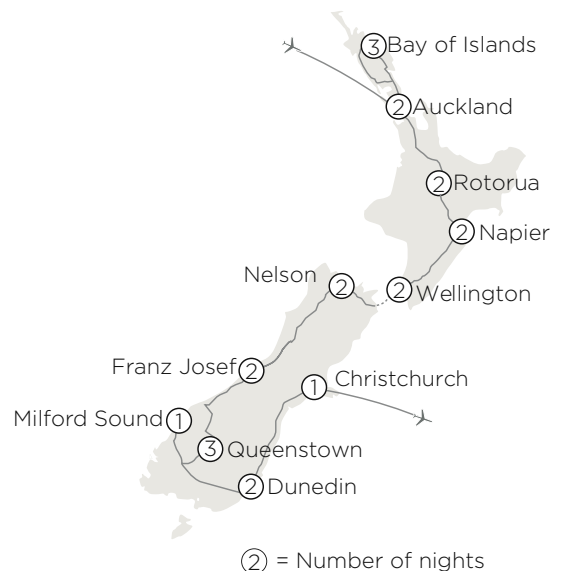
THE VERY BEST OF NEW ZEALAND

28 days from only £5,195 per person

New Zealand is known for so much - its stunning and other-worldly landscapes, its Maori culture and laid-back lifestyle, its unique flora and fauna; the list is endless. For that reason, if you're going to travel to the other side of the world, you need to allow plenty of time to appreciate everything that New Zealand has to offer.

Distant Journeys' Very Best of New Zealand tour takes in all the sights that would top anyone's wish list with the addition of some less well known gems that many itineraries just wouldn't have time to visit. For instance, we discover the Art Deco city of Napier; arty, bohemian Nelson and Wellington, the nation's capital.

The tour is leisurely paced with plenty of free time to explore as you please, and truly does provide you with the Very Best of New Zealand.





TOUR HIGHLIGHT

Milford Sound overnight cruise



An unforgettable overnight cruise on breath-taking Milford Sound is included in your holiday with Distant Journeys.

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 £397pp
- ✓ 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, Wellington, Queenstown, Dunedin and Christchurch
- ✓ 'Hole in the Rock' cruise in the Bay of Islands
- ✓ Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve
- ✓ Maori concert
- ✓ Maori village visit at Wairakei Terraces

We include even more

- ✓ Services of an experienced local Coach Captain
- ✓ All hotel portorage
- ✓ 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

THE VERY BEST OF NEW ZEALAND

Days 1 to 11: Singapore - Auckland - Bay of Islands - Rotorua



Auckland Harbour



Waitakere, Auckland

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

All flights to Singapore travel via Dubai. 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 or enjoy high tea at Raffles.

Breakfast and in-flight meals and drinks included

Day 5: Auckland, 2 nights

We change aircraft in Australia, and on arrival into Auckland we board our waiting coach and transfer to the Scenic Hotel Auckland, where we spend our first two nights in New Zealand.

In-flight meals and drinks included

Day 6: 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 breath-taking.

Breakfast included

Day 7: 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



Bay of Islands

Day 8: **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 Piercy 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 9: 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

We recommend: Cape Reinga



Take a tour to Cape Reinga, at the top of North Island, where the Pacific and Tasman meet, followed by a drive along Ninety Mile Beach.

Day 10: Rotorua, 2 nights

We travel south 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 11: **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 spouting 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.

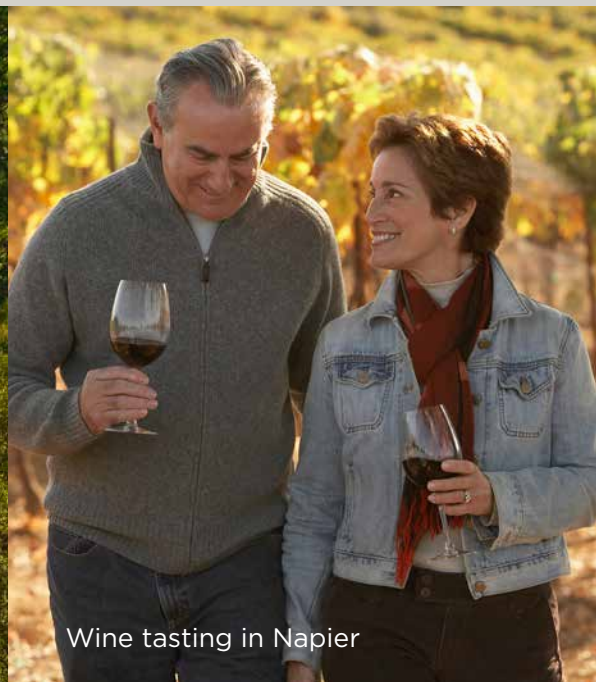
Breakfast and dinner included

THE VERY BEST OF NEW ZEALAND

Days 12 to 17: Napier - Wellington - Nelson



Huka Falls



Wine tasting in Napier

Day 12: Napier, 2 nights

After a leisurely start to our day we make our way along the Thermal Explorer Highway to Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake. Visit the impressive Huka Falls where the Waikato River suddenly narrows to a chasm less than 15 metres across and heaves its vast bulk over an 11 metre ledge to boil furiously in a deep semi-circular basin below. We continue to Wairakei Terraces, where we visit a Maori village. Our Maori guides walk with us through the geothermal and Maori cultural walkway, recounting stories of their history and guiding you around the varied art forms found in the village.

Our final destination is the Art Deco city of Napier, located in an area dominated by orchards and vineyards. Our next two evenings are spent at the delightful Scenic Hotel Te Pania, superbly situated on Napier's sea front.

Breakfast included

Day 13: Napier Freedom Day

Today is yours to spend as you please. Napier's city centre has the feeling of a time capsule - the seamless line of 1930's architecture is quite extraordinary. One of the ways to enjoy the streetscape is on a self-guided tour. Alternatively visit one or more of the local wineries on a tour to some of New Zealand's finest vineyards - Pinot Gris and Syrah are the region's signature wines.

Breakfast included

Day 14: Wellington, 2 nights

This morning our journey continues south via Hastings and the Kapiti Coast as we make our way to Wellington, New Zealand's capital. Upon arrival we shall make our way to Wellington's Copthorne Hotel Oriental Bay, where our evening is at leisure.

Breakfast included

Day 15: Wellington

Wellington is compact, cultured and full of character. Its interesting and varied architecture provides the ideal starting point for our orientation tour this morning. We visit Wellington's administrative area, taking in Parliament House, 'the Beehive' (you'll understand the name when you see it) and the government buildings. We then continue to the top of Mount Victoria for the finest view of the city and its picturesque harbour.

Your afternoon is at leisure - a visit to Te Papa museum is highly recommended, as it offers a fascinating insight into New Zealand's rich history and cultural heritage. Alternatively, ride a cable car to Wellington's beautiful botanical gardens.

Breakfast included

Day 16: Nelson, 2 nights

This morning we leave North Island in our wake as we board the ferry for our inter-island cruise to New Zealand's South Island. During the cruise, enjoy spectacular views as we approach Queen Charlotte Sound. With the possibility of birds and dolphins following, we make our way across the Cook Strait to Picton. Upon arrival we re-join our coach and make our way to Nelson where the remainder of our day is at leisure. Our next two nights are spent at the Nelson Rutherford Hotel.

Breakfast included

Day 17: Nelson Freedom Day

Nelson is a delight for explorers on foot. Scattered throughout the city are art galleries and workshops, historic buildings and street cafés. Today has been left as a Freedom Day so you can spend it any way you choose. Perhaps consider a trip to Abel Tasman National Park, New Zealand's smallest national park, blessed with golden beaches, sculptured granite cliffs, and its world-famous coast track. A cruise along the coast will take you to the very best scenery this region has to offer. Alternatively, you may wish to take a tour of some of the region's wonderful wineries.

Breakfast included

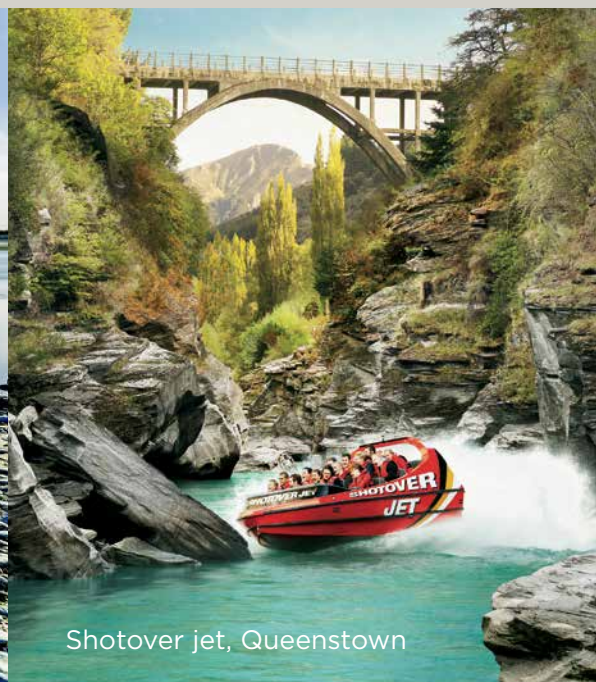


THE VERY BEST OF NEW ZEALAND

Days 18 to 21: Franz Josef - Queenstown



Haast River Bridge



Shotover jet, Queenstown

Day 18: Franz Josef, 2 nights

Journey south this morning along the Heritage Highway to the rugged west coast. Visit Punakaiki (Pancake Rocks), an incredible maze of limestone rocks with booming blow-holes stacked high above the sea. Our travels continue southbound taking us via Hokitika and Hari Hari travelling 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

We recommend: Scenic flight over Franz Josef Glacier



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

Day 19: 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 20: 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

Day 21: 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 the wine lovers amongst us, you may wish to follow Queenstown's wine trail – an enjoyable afternoon of wine tasting and sightseeing.

Breakfast included

We recommend: Queenstown TSS Earnslaw



Enjoy a cruise across Lake Wakatipu aboard the vintage steamship TSS Earnslaw, including a visit and sheep shearing show at Walter Peak homestead.



Queenstown

THE VERY BEST OF NEW ZEALAND

Days 22 to 26: Queenstown - Milford Sound - Dunedin - Christchurch



TSS Earnslaw, Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown



Clock tower, Dunedin

Day 22: 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 fabulous view across the lake to the Remarkables, why not take a gondola ride to the top of Bob's Peak? 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 23: **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

Day 24: 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 25: 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 26: 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



Milford Sound

THE VERY BEST OF NEW ZEALAND

Days 27 to 28: Christchurch - UK



Spice souk, Dubai



Jurong Bird Park, Singapore

Day 27: Depart Christchurch

All good things must come to an end, and this morning we transfer to Christchurch Airport. Our flights to your chosen UK airport operate via Australia and Dubai.

Breakfast and in-flight meals and drinks included

Day 28: Arrive UK

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

In-flight drinks and breakfast included

Why not combine with a tour of Australia?



If you wish to make the ultimate journey to Australasia, combining the Wonders of Australia or Very Best of Australia tours with The Very Best of New Zealand tour makes perfect sense.

Please see pages 82-89 for more details.

HOMEBOUND STOPOVERS

If you would like to break your journey on the way home, we have a selection of fabulous stopovers for you to choose from: Singapore, Sydney, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Bali or alternatively, enjoy a stay in Dubai, leaving a relatively short flight back to the UK.

Further information on these stopovers may be found on pages 128 - 131.

Dubai - 5* Marriott al Jaddaf

Two nights from only £295PP

Hong Kong - 4* Regal Kowloon

Two nights from only £345PP

Bangkok - 4* Amari Watergate Hotel

Two nights from only £195PP

Singapore - 4* Copthorne Kings Hotel

Two nights from only £245PP

Bali - 4* Melia Bali

Three nights from only £395PP

Sydney - 4* North Sydney Harbourview

Three nights from only £495PP

