Rotorua

WELLS GRAY TOURS
a world to experience

Hobbiton

SUPER NATURAL NEW ZEALAND

March 14, 2021 – 21 Days

New Zealand consists of 2 major islands and about 600 smaller ones. The population is 5 million. The largest city is Auckland with 1.6 million people, and the second largest is Wellington, the capital, with 400,000 people. Otherwise, most of the country is rural. There are 13 national parks and 3 World Heritage Sites, protecting the natural, historic, and cultural places.

This leisurely 21-day tour has enough time for a comprehensive visit to New Zealand. We fly to cosmopolitan Auckland, then travel north to the famed Bay of Islands. Other highlights on the North Island are the geysers of Rotorua, Waitomo Glow-worm Cave, the Hobbiton Movie Set, the Te Papa National Museum, and the beautiful capital of Wellington. The South Island is more rugged with high peaks, glaciers and splendid coastlines. Highlights are the International Antarctic Centre, Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, Mount Cook, a Zodiac trip among the icebergs of Tasman Lake, the Blue Penguin Colony, Royal Albatross Centre, Larnach Castle, and the spectacular drive and cruise at Milford Sound.

Activity Level: 2

40 Meals Included:

18 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 14 dinners

Fares per person:

$13,885 double/twin; $16,485 single

Please add 0.2% GST

Experience Points:

Earn 237 points on this tour

Redeem 237 points if you book by November 12, 2020

ITINERARY

Day 1: Sunday, March 14

Meet your tour director and the other BC travellers at YVR and check in with **Air New Zealand**. Our direct flight to Auckland departs in late afternoon and flight time is 13 hours.

Day 2: Monday, March 15

We cross the International Date Line, regaining this day on our return.

Day 3: Tuesday, March 16

Welcome to New Zealand! After clearing Customs in Auckland, we are met by our local driver and guide. Home to more than 1.6 million people, **Auckland** represents the largest urban area in New Zealand and is recognised as having the largest concentration of Polynesian people in the world. We drive into the city, then board Fullers Ferry and cruise through Auckland's harbour and Hauraki Gulf to the island suburb of Waiheke. At **Whitakers Music Museum**, we enjoy a 90-minute concert and learn the history of the instruments and their use. Next is Stonyridge Winery where we take a tour, and savour some tastings with lunch. We ride the Matiatia Ferry back into Auckland. The next two nights are at the Quadrant Hotel in downtown Auckland. Meet the group for a Welcome Dinner.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Quadrant Hotel, Auckland

Day 4: Wednesday, March 17

This morning, we drive up Mount Eden for a panoramic view. In downtown Auckland, we ride the fast elevators up the **Sky Tower**. At 328 metres, it is the tallest tower in the Southern Hemisphere and offers unparalleled coast to coast views from four observation decks. Are you brave enough to stand on the glass floor and photograph your feet and the big drop below? This afternoon, we visit the **Maritime Museum** to discover New Zealand's seafaring story. Through different themed galleries, explore how the first Polynesians got here, experience the hardships that European settlers faced, try your hand at yacht design, relax in a kiwi style bach, test your sea legs, and batten down the hatches in the rocking cabin.

Meals included: Breakfast
Accommodation: Quadrant Hotel, Auckland

Day 5: Thursday, March 18

Leaving Auckland, we head north to Matakohe and visit the amazing Kauri Museum, dedicated to the **gigantic Kauri tree**. It produces resins such as kauri gum, Manila copal and dammar gum, and the wood is used for yacht hulls, guitars and ukuleles. We see Tāne Mahuta, New Zealand's largest Kauri tree, which is about 2,000 years old, 45 metres tall, and 15.5 metres around. At Parkia Lookout, we admire the panoramic view stretching from the Tasman Sea through the 30-km long **Hokianga Harbour**. A dinner of local crayfish is included.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Copthorne Resort, Hokianga

Day 6: Friday, March 19

We drive across the North Island which here is only 70 km wide. Our destination is the **Bay of Islands**, a stunning region consisting of 144 islands abundant in natural beauty and marine life. We visit Waitangi and learn about the birthplace of New Zealand where the **Treaty of Waitangi** was signed in 1840 by the Māori Chiefs and the British Crown. The tour includes the Treaty House, the world's largest ceremonial war canoe, and Te Kōngahu Museum. Next is the village of Kerikeri, site of a colonial settlement in 1819 by the missionary Samuel Marsden. We stay two nights in Paihia at Copthorne Hotel which has a beautiful waterfront location. Tonight, we take a dinner cruise up the **Waitangi River** as far as Haruru Falls.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Copthorne Hotel, Paihia

Day 7: Saturday, March 20

We take a four-hour cruise in the Bay of Islands, watching for dolphins, whales, and other marine

life. The excursion passes the Cape Brett Lighthouse with a stop at iconic **Hole in the Rock**.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch
Accommodation: Copthorne Hotel, Paihia

Day 8: Sunday, March 21

We travel back to Auckland and continue south to the Waikato region. New Zealand's dairy industry is centred here, and education and dairy research have turned **Hamilton** into the country's fourth largest city.
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Hamilton

Day 9: Monday, March 22

We visit the **Waitomo Glow-worm Cave**. This tiny luminescent creature is unique to New Zealand, creating a magical feel to the subterranean wonderland. We admire shawl-like limestone formations, crystal tapestries, and thousands of pinpoint lights overhead, while floating through the dark caverns. This region is best known as the filming locations for The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, and the **Hobbiton Movie Set** is a must-see for fans of the movies. First, we have lunch at the Green Dragon Inn, then take a guided walk past Hobbit holes and Hobbit homes with filming scenes explained by the guides. We continue to the thermal wonderland of **Rotorua** and stay three nights.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Rotorua

Day 10: Tuesday, March 23

Rotorua is renowned for its geothermal wonders. We start by exploring **Wai-o-tapu** and its champagne pool, primrose terrace, and the Lady Knox Geyser. Lunch is a High Tea at the Prince's Gate Hotel. This afternoon, we visit the Agrodome for an exhibition of 19 breeds of sheep. Witness a live **sheep shearing demonstration**, a fun sheep auction with bidding from the floor, and the amazing ability of farm dogs to respond to commands and keep the sheep in line. You can even feed the baby lambs or hand-milk a cow! Tonight, we attend the **Tamaki Māori Cultural Village**. Enjoy an introduction to Māori customs and traditions, followed by an authentic Hangi meal that is cooked in an earth oven. The performance includes songs and dances, tales and legends, displays of weaponry and combat, the grace and beauty of the poi dance, and the spine-tingling haka finale.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Rotorua

Day 11: Wednesday, March 24

The marvels of Rotorua continue today with a visit to Te Puia, site of the famous **Pohutu Geyser** and Hells Gate. The walkway leads past violently boiling mud and exploding hot water pools, the largest hot waterfall in the Southern Hemisphere, and hundreds of other natural wonders. Enjoy a **mud bath**, then relax in the Spa Complex at Hells Gate, overlooking the awesome geothermal scenery. The local Māori acclaimed the therapeutic benefits of the water and bathed for centuries in these thermal pools. This afternoon, we are guests at **Whakarewarewa**, The Living Māori Village. For over 200 years, the Tuhourangi/Ngati Wahiao tribe has welcomed visitors, opening doors to their way of life, and sharing the geothermal treasures. After some rest time at the hotel, we board gondolas for the ride to the top of **Mount Ngongotaha** and an awesome view over the Rotorua Valley with dinner in the Stratosfare Restaurant.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Rotorua

Day 12: Thursday, March 25

We head south from Rotorua to Huka Falls where the Waikato River leaves giant Lake Taupo and hurtles through a narrow chasm. In **Napier**, we stop at a panoramic lookout encompassing Hawkes Bay and Cape Kidnappers, and we see many Art Deco buildings including one suburb with stylish, lovingly maintained buildings. Our next stop is the **Pukaha National Wildlife Centre** which is home to conservation breeding programs for many of New Zealand's most endangered wildlife. Kiwi can be viewed in the nocturnal kiwi house aviary. We continue to

Wellington, New Zealand's capital city, for a two-night stay.
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Doubletree Hotel, Wellington

Day 13: Friday, March 26

Our tour of **Wellington** starts with a ride up the funicular railway from downtown onto one of the high hills that divide the city. We also visit the Parliament Buildings, the Beehive, the Lady Norwood Rose Gardens, and Old St. Paul's Cathedral. A highlight is the amazing **Te Papa National Museum** which has exhibits about the natural environment, the vitality of Maori culture, art heritage, and history. The rest of the day is leisure time.
Meals included: Breakfast
Accommodation: Doubletree Hotel, Wellington

Day 14: Saturday, March 27

We fly from Wellington to **Christchurch**. Welcome to the South Island. This is considered the oldest city in New Zealand, dating to 1856. Our tour includes its best-known sights - the University district, historic Mona Vale Gardens, Hagley Park, and the beautiful flora of the Botanical Gardens. At the **International Antarctic Centre**, we have an insight into life in Antarctica - the coldest, windiest, driest, and most remote place on earth. See a volunteer dressed in extreme clothing, taste Antarctic food from a research station, meet some penguins, watch the movie *Beyond the Frozen Sunset*, and ride an Antarctic all-terrain vehicle. At Quake City Museum, we hear stories about the devastating earthquake of 2011. Next, we tour the temporary Christchurch Cathedral which is built mostly of cardboard and will be used until the original cathedral, severely damaged by the earthquake, can be repaired.
Meals included: Breakfast
Accommodation: Rendezvous Hotel, Christchurch

Day 15: Sunday, March 28

Leaving Christchurch, we head west across the Canterbury Plains, ascending into the spectacular Southern Alps. We stop at the Church of the Good Shepherd and the Collie Dog statue at Lake Tekapo, and drive along the shore of Lake Pukaki to reach **Mount Cook**, New Zealand's highest peak at 3,764 metres. We stay two nights at the renowned Hermitage Hotel which offers awesome views of Mount Cook. The **Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre** is at the hotel and you have an unlimited entry pass for the Planetarium, 3D movie *Mount Cook Magic*, and the Hillary Museum. Enjoy dinner in the Alpine Restaurant with its huge windows overlooking Mount Cook.
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Mt. Cook

Day 16: Monday, March 29

Another day of magnificent mountain scenery! We take a **Zodiac excursion on Tasman Lake**, skirting floating icebergs, to reach the icy 50-metre high face of the Tasman Glacier. This lake has been steadily growing as the glacier has retreated over the last 30 years. The afternoon is free time to explore the vistas near the Hermitage. You may wish to book a helicopter excursion to fly closer to Mount Cook.
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Hermitage Hotel, Mt. Cook

Day 17: Tuesday, March 30

Leaving the mountains, we drive to the east coast and the city of Oamaru. The **Blue Penguin Colony** provides an opportunity to see little penguins in their natural environment. Peek into the penguins' nests, stroll through their habitat, and learn about their fascinating lives. Next, we see the **Moeraki Boulders** which are unusually large and spherical rocks lying along a stretch of Koekohe Beach on the wave-cut Otago coast. Port Chalmers is a long inlet from the east coast and at its head is the city of **Dunedin** which has played an important role in New Zealand's history. Long inhabited by Māori, the discovery of gold inland from Dunedin in 1861 transformed the area into

the new colony's main commercial centre. We stroll through the **Dunedin Chinese Garden** which is the only authentic Chinese Scholar's Garden in the Southern Hemisphere and is a permanent reminder of the city's Chinese heritage. Tonight, we take a tour of Speight's Brewery with six samples with dinner at the Ale House.
Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Dunedin

Day 18: Wednesday, March 31

This morning, we visit **Nature's Wonders Wildlife Centre**, travelling on an 8-wheel drive, all-terrain vehicle for an exhilarating cross-country tour. We visit a breeding colony of Cormorants (Spotted Shag) and a colony of New Zealand fur seals and their pups basking on the rocks, then a beachfront ride takes us to a group of Little Blue Penguins and possibly a sighting of the rare and shy Yellow-Eyed Penguin. Next is the **Royal Albatross Centre** at Tairoa Head where we learn about this remarkable bird and see nesting albatross in their natural habitat. Lunch is included in the ballroom of **Larnach Castle**, followed by a tour of the mansion, built in 1874. It has panoramic views of the Otago Peninsula and exquisite gardens.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Dunedin

Day 19: Thursday, April 1

We drive to the foot of the mountains at Wanaka and visit **Puzzling World** which offers a mix of bizarre buildings, rooms of illusion, and the Great Maze. After lunch at the Edgewater Hotel, we stroll through Wanaka Lavender Farm, 20 acres of beautiful lavender fields and display gardens. At Queenstown, we board a jetboat for a thrilling ride on the **Shotover River**. Speed past rocky outcrops, skim around boulders, zip through dramatic canyons, and hold on tight during a 360° spin. (A life jacket and full-length spray coat are supplied.) This evening, we ride the **Skyline Gondola** to the top of Bob's Peak and enjoy dinner with a breathtaking view of The Remarkables, Coronet Park, Lake Wakatipu, and Queenstown.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Crowne Plaza, Queenstown

Day 20: Friday, April 2

The Road to Milford is the awesome drive from Queenstown, along Lake Te Anau, and through the Southern Alps to **Milford Sound**, one of the iconic attractions of New Zealand. These high peaks and fjords have been protected in **Fiordland National Park**, the largest of 13 federal parks, and Milford Sound with Mitre Peak is one of the most famous vistas in New Zealand. We take a cruise in Milford Sound with a stunning backdrop of sheer cliffs and cascading waterfalls. A farewell dinner is arranged in Queenstown.
Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation: Crowne Plaza, Queenstown

Day 21: Saturday, April 3

We board the TSS Earnslaw for a 1½ hour cruise on **Lake Wakatipu**. It is believed to be the oldest working coal-fired passenger steamship in the Southern Hemisphere. Nearby is the restored village of Arrowtown which boomed in 1862 during the Otago gold rush. In mid-afternoon, we fly from Queenstown to Auckland on Air New Zealand, then at 8 pm continue to Vancouver. We cross the International Date Line and arrive at noon on the same date.
Meals included: Breakfast

AOTEAROA

Since the first people arrived in Aotearoa, the Maori name for New Zealand, a thousand years ago, many cultures have made it their home. The country has a unique and dynamic culture, with European, Maori, Pacific, and Asian influences. New Zealand's awesome landscapes, lush forests, amazing wildlife, and pleasant climate make it a haven for many outdoor activities and a great place to unwind. The islands offer everything from snowy peaks and ancient glaciers to smoking active volcanoes and intriguing thermal activity; from crystal clear lakes to the surging Pacific Coast surf, from verdant rainforests to desert-like plains. New Zealand society is diverse, sophisticated, and multicultural, and the honesty, friendliness and openness of Kiwis will impress you. A great advantage of New Zealand is that all its diverse physical and artistic landscapes are so close to each other!

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Flight from Vancouver to Auckland
- Current air taxes, fees and fuel surcharges
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
- 18 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- 19 days coach transportation in New Zealand
- Fullers ferry to/from Waiheke Island
- Whitakers Music Museum with concert
- Stonyridge Winery tour and tastings
- Sky Tower in Auckland
- Auckland Maritime Museum
- Matakohe Kauri Museum
- Tāne Mahuta — "Lord of the Forest"
- Waitangi Treaty Grounds and Treaty House
- Historic tour of Kerikeri
- Waitangi River dinner cruise to Haruru Falls
- Bay of Islands cruise with Hole in the Rock
- Waitomo Glow-worm Cave
- Tour of the Hobbiton Movie Set
- Tamaki Māori Village feast with entertainment
- Wai-o-tapu thermal wonderland
- Guided tour of Te Puia Park & Pohutu Geyser
- Rotorua Mud Baths
- Sheep shearing and farm dog demonstration
- Living Maori Village
- Skyline Rotorua gondola ride with dinner
- Huka Falls Park
- Napier tour with Pukaha Wildlife Centre
- Wellington funicular railway ride
- Wellington sightseeing tour
- Te Papa National Museum of New Zealand
- Flight from Wellington to Christchurch
- Christchurch sightseeing tour
- International Antarctic Centre with movie *Beyond the Frozen Sunset* and all-terrain vehicle ride
- Quake City Museum
- Tour of temporary Christchurch Cathedral
- Church of the Good Shepherd
- Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre
- Zodiac trip on Tasman Lake to the glacier
- Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony
- Moeraki Boulders
- Dunedin Chinese Garden
- Speight's Brewery Tour with 6 samples
- Nature's Wonders Wildlife Centre
- Royal Albatross Centre
- Larnach Castle tour with lunch in ballroom
- Puzzling World
- Wanaka Lavender Farm
- Jetboat excursion on Shotover River
- Skyline Gondola at Queenstown
- Milford Sound cruise
- Cruise on Lake Wakatipu
- Historic Arrowtown visit
- Flight from Queenstown to Auckland
- Flight from Auckland to Vancouver
- Luggage handling at hotels
- Gratuities for New Zealand guides and drivers
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- **40 meals:** 18 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 14 dinners

Zodiac excursion on Tasman Lake

TOUR NOTES

Currency & Expenses: The currency in New Zealand is the dollar and, as of June 2020, a Canadian dollar is worth NZ$1.14. You should order New Zealand dollars from your bank 1-2 weeks before departure, or plan to use ATMs. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. Gratuities are included for all group meals and for New Zealand guides and drivers. Tipping is not expected for meals you buy on your own and tax is included on menu prices. Costs for meals you choose yourself are generally higher than in Canada. As this tour has been planned and priced 9 months before departure, it is possible that exchange fluctuations could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease.

Documentation: A passport is required and must be valid for three months after your return date. A Visa is not required for Canadians, but you must obtain a New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority before arrival.

Accommodation is booked in superior hotels in the range of 3 to 5 stars. Hotel costs are similar to those in large Canadian cities, so many travellers would consider them expensive. However, on an extensive holiday like this, you want to be staying in well-located and memorable accommodations.

Beverages: In many countries outside Canada and USA, it is not standard practice to include beverages with tour meals. On this tour, coffee, tea, or water is included at breakfast, and can be purchased for other meals. One bottle of water is complimentary per person per day.

Flight upgrades: Please enquire about current prices for upgrades on the flights between Vancouver and Auckland. Premium economy and business class may be available.

Triples are not available on this tour.

Activity Level 2: Due to the historic nature of some attractions and the nature walks looking for birds and animals, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk at least a kilometre, plus stand for an extended time on walking tours. This tour is not appropriate for people who require the use of a walker. Some days are long or have early departures. There can be long walks in the airports and you are urged to request a cart in advance or at check-in if this could be a concern. The coaches and vessels cannot carry a scooter. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, drivers and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be asked to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of $1,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due November 12, 2020. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy: Customers who transferred from 2020 to 2021 due to Covid-19 can cancel up to January 13, 2021 and the non-refundable portion from 2020 will be held back as a cancellation fee. After January 13, there is no refund.

New bookings after June 23, 2020: Up to September 30, 2020, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of $200 per person. From October 1 to November 12, the cancellation charge is $1,000 per person (your deposit). From November 13 to December 12, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From December 13, 2020 to January 13, 2021, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After January 13, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates or taxes and surcharges from airlines and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups are available within Greater Vancouver for an additional charge of $40 per person round trip. Please request no later than at final payment.

TOUR 25 This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

Photo Credits: Tourism New Zealand, Roland Neave

Experience points: This tour earns 237 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals $1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until November 12.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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