Natural and Cultural History of New Zealand

2019-2020 Itinerary

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You are responsible for arranging your flights to and from New Zealand. You should plan to meet in Christchurch, NZ on December 17th and the program ends in Auckland, NZ on January 7th

Day 1 (December 17th): Christchurch, NZ
- Arrive Christchurch – meet at Christchurch YHA Hostel
- Shop for groceries
- Museum visit
Accommodation: Christchurch YHA Hostel
Meals: Lunch and Dinner, self-catered

Day 2 (December 18th): Christchurch to Arthur’s Pass
- Drive (1 hour 30) across the Canterbury Plains and into the Southern Alps to your accommodation in Arthurs Pass National Park.
- Evening talk by the New Zealand guide, summarizing the natural history of Aotearoa New Zealand, and introducing the various flora, fauna, landscapes and ecological zones the program will cover in the weeks ahead
Accommodation: Arthur’s Pass YHA hostel
Meals: Lunch and Dinner, self-catered meals

Day 3 (December 19th): Arthur’s Pass to Franz Josef
- A guided hike/field trip in the Arthurs Pass region, highlighting the unique ecological/geographical character of the area. Bealey Spur or Cockayne Nature Walk and Otira Valley
Collect data in each area visited: temp, altitude, rainfall, geology, carry out short transect (secondary data supplied)

Stop to watch kea at Otira viaduct and observe and discuss the alpine environment of the Southern Alps as created by the rapid uplift of this range

Drive (3 hours) across Arthurs Pass and out of the Southern Alps to the West Coast, then south to the small town of Franz Josef.

Jade factory visit if time.

Short evening glow-worm walk.

Accommodation: Franz Josef YHA hostel

Meals  Breakfast, lunch and dinner, self-catered meals

Day 4 (December 20th): Westland National Park

Visit the Westland Tai Poutini National Park visitor center to learn about the glacier region, the National Park, and the wider Te Wahipounamu UNESCO World Heritage area.

Drive (10 minutes) to a short hike to view Franz Josef glacier: plant succession as glacier retreats

Drive (20 minutes) to Okarito lagoon for easy, un-guided sea-kayaking across the lagoon and up tributaries into the rainforest.

Drive (20 minutes) back to the Franz Josef accommodation.

Hot soak in Franz Josef Glacier hot pools

Accommodation: Franz Josef YHA hostel

Meals  Breakfast, lunch and dinner, self-catered meals

Day 5 (December 21st): Franz Josef Glacier to Wanaka

Drive south along the West Coast, across the Southern Alps over Haast Pass, and on to Lake Wanaka, stopping several times to hike short trails highlighting the changing ecology along the way.

Drive (40 minutes) to a short hike to Lake Matheson Mirror Lake

Drive (south along the West Coast, across the Southern Alps over Haast Pass, and on to Lake Wanaka, stopping several times to hike short trails highlighting the changing ecology along the way.

Ship Creek: Possible Maui Dolphin sighting. Short hikes: dunes, coastal and floating forest – zonation mirrors succession on plains created by 10 km aggradation since end of last ice-age.

Knights point lookout – marine fauna of area

Thunder Creek – beech forest

Cross the divide: East/West contrasting flora

Accommodation: Wanaka YHA hostel.

Meals  Breakfast, lunch and dinner, self-catered meals
Day 6 (December 22\textsuperscript{nd}): Wanaka to Te Anau
- Take a short drive to hike through an area formed by ice-age glaciers, and to climb a small peak, Mt Iron (1500ft) for a view of the surrounding alps and lakes.
- Drive (3 hours) to Te Anau.
- DOC bird park. Brief stop to see fauna of the area: blue duck, kaka, kakariki, takahe
- Ata Whenua – Shadowland: private screening of a short film showing spectacular aerial footage of Fiordland National Park.

**Accommodation:** Te Anau YHA hostel

**Meals**
Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.

Day 7 (December 23\textsuperscript{rd}): Milford Sound to Queenstown
- Drive (1 hour 30) to Milford Sound, including several short, self-guided hikes along the way: Mirror Lakes
- (Oxbow lake), Homer tunnel (sub-alpine flora, the Chasm.
- Scenic cruise through the fjord to the Tasman Sea. (lunch on board)
- Drive to the ski resort centre of Queenstown overlooking Lake Wakatipu.

**LJ Guide departs**

**Accommodation:** Queenstown Lakeside YHA hostel

**Meals**
Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.

Day 8 (December 24\textsuperscript{th}): Free Day in Queenstown
- Wake up in the ski resort center of Queenstown overlooking Lake Wakatipu. Here there are many recreational opportunities for students to book their own adventure activity or chill in town (e.g. bungy-jumping, mountain-biking, horse-riding, white-water rafting, fly-fishing, tandem paragliding, jet-boat, Kiwi bird park etc.) and we’ll finish the trip with a celebratory dinner.

**Accommodation:** Queenstown Lakeside YHA hostel

**Meals**
Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.

Day 9 (December 25\textsuperscript{th}): Free Day in Queenstown
- Free day in Queenstown

**Accommodation:** Queenstown Lakeside YHA hostel

**Meals**
Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.

Day 10 (December 26\textsuperscript{th}): Queenstown to Auckland
- Airport transfer (shuttle)
- Flight from Queenstown to Auckland
- Drive to Bay of Islands

**Meals**
Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.
Day 11 (December 27th): Bay of Islands

- Waitangi Treaty Grounds
  Discover the history of New Zealand. Waitangi Treaty Grounds welcomes you on a journey of discovery through New Zealand’s most important historic site. Understand how the growth of the relationship between Māori and the British lead to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 and how this unique document has shaped our nation over the course of nearly two centuries.
- Explore Russell’s Heritage Trail
- Dolphin watching

Accommodation: Paihia YHA hostel
Meals Included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner self-catered meals.

Day 12 (December 28th): Bay of Islands to Pakiri Beach

- Waipoua Forest – giant kauris
- Kauri Museum

Accommodation: Pakiri Holiday Park
Meals Included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner self-catered meals

Day 13 (December 29th): Tiritiri Matangi Island

LJ Guide rejoins group

Tiritiri Matangi Island is a wildlife sanctuary and one of New Zealand's most exciting conservation projects. 120 years of farming saw this small island stripped of 94% of its native bush but between 1984 and 1994, volunteers planted between over 250,000 trees. The island is now 60% forested with 40% left as grassland for species preferring open habitat. All mammalian predators have been eradicated and a number of threatened and endangered bird and reptile species have been introduced, including the flightless takahe and the tuatara.
- Depart Pakiri for Gulf Harbour
- Ferry trip to Tiritiri Matangi Island
- Guided walk – New Zealand’s unique bird dominated ecosystems, endangered species and their management.
- Coastal niche – the pohutukawa tree
- Discussion: optimising gene pool variety in small populations.
- Interactive exhibition: forest ecosystems.
- Explore other parts of the island or swim off sheltered Hobb’s Beach.
- Ferry back to Gulf Harbour

Accommodation: Pakiri Holiday Park
Meals Breakfast, lunch, dinner self-catered meals.

Day 14 (December 30th): Goat Island Marine Reserve

- Drive to Goat Island Marine Reserve
- Visit Leigh Marine laboratory – Auckland Uni outpost - visitor center Presentation from marine scientist
Rocky shore data collection

**Glass bottom boat ride OR Snorkel (adds $35 pp)**

**Accommodation:** Auckland YHA hostel

**Meals** Breakfast, lunch, dinner self-catered meals.

**Day 15 (December 31): Auckland to Rotorua**

Rotorua is our oldest tourist resort, because of the bizarre geothermal features spread through and around the city, including geysers, mud pools and hot springs. In the 1800s visitors travelled around the world to see the famous Pink and White Terraces, unfortunately destroyed by Mount Tarawera volcano in 1886. The city is still a thermal resort, as well as the heart of Maori culture but now also has a great range of adventure and cultural activities to keep the visitors there a bit longer.

- Drive to Rotorua (3h)
- **Te Puia** is Rotorua’s most spectacular geothermal Park, location of New Zealand’s biggest and most active geysers, as well as spectacular mud pools and boiling hot spring. Compare pre and post European Maori culture. Historical dependence on native flora and fauna, Maori impacts on these.
- **Chemical testing of hot spring water** (at Te Puia and based on methodology used by geologist monitoring volcanic activity in the area).
- Enjoy a **Maori Cultural show** (at Te Puia) and experience a glimpse of the way of life of Maori people before the arrival of the Europeans.

**Accommodation:** Treks YHA hostel Rotorua

**Meals** Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.

**Day 16 (January 1): Rotorua to Taupo**

Whirinaki Forest Park is a 55,000 hectare enclave of indigenous forest located south east of Rotorua which has a global ranking for its biodiversity and ecological features. Whirinaki’s most striking feature is its awe-inspiring trees, of which the totara, kahikatea, matai, miro and rimu stand supreme. It has been variously described as one of the great rainforests of the world and the finest of New Zealand’s remaining giant podocarp forests – or as David Bellamy describes it, the ‘Dinosaur Forest’. It is one of only two native forests in New Zealand where the canopy is seen in such completeness - a feature encountered nowhere else in the world.

- **Bird watching** in Whirinaki Forest Park
- **Stratification** and biodiversity studies in Whirinaki Forest Park
- **Guided walks**/ hikes in Whirinaki Forest Park
- Huka Falls
- Visit **Debretts Hot Mineral pools**

**Accommodation:** Silver Fern Lodge, Taupo

**Meals** Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.

**Day 17 (January 2): Taupo to Tongariro**

Tongariro National Park is noted for its volcanic and geothermal activity and cultural and recreational value. Tongariro was New Zealand's first national park, created following a gifting
of the sacred central North Island peaks to the nation in 1887 by Paramount Chief Te Heuheu Tukino IV (Horonuku). The park has been added to the World Heritage List

- Drop into the Whakapapa visitor centre for an introduction the geology and ecology of the Park.
- Take a three-hour hike (Silica Rapids) on the slopes of Mt. Ruapehu Volcano, the highest mountain in the North Island and the setting of many Lord of the Rings “Mordor” scenes.
- Mistletoe: an endangered semi-parasite
- Heather: an introduced pest
- Carry out an altitudinal zonation study (600 m to 1600 m - 2000’ to 5500’
- Data collection: succession on lava flows

Accommodation: National Park YHA, National Park village
Meals Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals.

Day 18 (January 3): Tongariro National Park and Surrounding Area
- Visit the Trout Centre for a tour introducing the wildlife of Tongariro National Park and conservation challenges, native and introduced (eg: trout and blue duck) and discussion of the influence of the Tongariro Power Scheme on the park’s ecology then the Round the mountain
- Follow the ring plain of Mt. Ruapehu to observe plant diversity and distribution in relation to eruption history and climate in the park, stopping at
  - Rangipo Desert
  - Tangiwai Memorial: the impact of lahars
  - Rimu walk, podocarp broadleaf forest

Accommodation: National Park YHA, National Park village
Meals Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals

Day 19 (January 4): Tongariro to Waitomo
Waitomo Caves village and cave system are major tourist attractions. The caves are noted for their stunning stalactite and stalagnite displays, and for their glowworms (the fungus gnat Arachnocampa luminosa). The word Waitomo comes from the Māori language wai meaning water and tomo meaning a sinkhole. These Caves are believed to be over two million years old and have been the centre of increasingly popular commercial caving tourism since 1900.
- Sanctuary Mountain
- Waitomo Glow worm caves
- Ruakuri Walk (30 minutes in Rainforest in a collapsed cave)

Accommodation: Waitomo Kiwipaka, Waitomo Caves Village
Meals Breakfast, lunch, dinner, self-catered meals

Day 20 (January 5): Waitomo to Auckland
- Hobbiton Movie Set: take a two-hour tour This is an opportunity to see a unique attraction, the set of the Lord of the Rings reconstructed specially for the filming of the Hobbit, a mecca for fans worldwide of author J. R. R. Tolkien but also a work of art in its own right.
- 2h30m drive to Auckland
• Free time

Accommodation YHA International, Auckland

Meals Breakfast, lunch, dinner self-catered meals.

**Day 21 (January 6): Auckland**

• Visit **Rangitoto Island** Volcano (adds $36 pp), formed by eruption from the seabed only 600 year ago so primary succession creating pohutukawa forest, is still underway. It’s also wildlife reserve and a World Heritage site.

**Accommodation**: YHA International, Auckland

**Meals**: Breakfast, lunch, dinner self-catered meals.

**Day 22 (January 7): Auckland – Program Ends – Depart for Home** (schedule your own flight home from Auckland)

• Free time in Auckland, depending on flight times
• Transportation arranged from the Auckland Youth Hostel to Auckland airport.
• Flight home