
North Island Leisure Walking Tour

Oct/Nov 2020

A unique tour curated specially for leisure walkers. Enjoy easy walks with a small group of like-minded adventurers, taking time to do those interesting walks that visitors often miss. Immerse yourself in the natural beauty that abounds in New Zealand. Connect with the heart and soul of small towns and discover something new each day.

Sun 25 Oct

Auckland

Welcome to Auckland! This morning we drive to the West Coast and visit **Piha** – a black iron-sand beach with surf that can be rather moody and very exhilarating. The area is wild, wind-swept and completely captivating. We'll take a stroll along the beach and do one of the walks in to the Waitakere Ranges. We continue on to **Kumeu Wine Country** for a wine tour and tasting. A lovely setting to spend the afternoon getting to know your fellow travellers. Check in to our downtown hotel late afternoon and in the evening we'll dine in one of the many waterfront eateries.

Accommodation: Auckland

Mon 26 Oct

Miranda

We'll board the first sailing across to **Rangitoto Island** - New Zealand's youngest volcano at just 600 years old. We fill in the morning with a steady climb on a well-maintained track past rugged lava scree and through the world's largest pohutukawa forest to the peak at 259 metres above sea level. At the top we'll be rewarded with spectacular views of the Hauraki Gulf and Auckland. For those who don't want to walk up, you can opt for the tractor ride to top. Later this afternoon we depart the city and take the scenic coastal drive to **Miranda Springs**. Time for a soak in the natural hot springs before sundowners and a BBQ dinner.

Accommodation: Miranda Springs

Tue 27 Oct

Waihi Beach

Today we visit **Paeroa** for a photo opportunity at the famous **L&P bottle** before continuing on to **Karangahake Gorge** at the base of the Coromandel Range. Our walk this morning will take us deep in to the gorge following the old railway line through tunnels, over bridges, past mining remains and the "windows". In the afternoon we call in to the small gold mining town of **Waihi** for lunch and a stroll down the main street to the **Martha open pit mine** and museum for a fascinating look at the history of mining in the area. A late afternoon stroll along Waihi Beach before sundowners and dinner.

Accommodation: Waihi Beach 2 nights

Wed 28 Oct

Waihi Beach

Today we will walk the **Homunga track** via Orokawa Bay to Waihi Beach. This is a lovely undulating track following the coastline across open land and through bush. You'll love the tune of the cicadas anthem, chortling tuis and the ocean crashing on to the coast as you stroll along. A very nice untouristy walk with stunning views along the way. Rest of day at leisure for shopping, relaxing or beach walking.

Thu 29 Oct

Mt Maunganui – Cambridge

A short drive through to The Mount this morning where you have the option to either walk the **Mt Maunganui Base or Summit Track**. Both options take around an hour to complete however the Summit does require a reasonable amount of exertion but it's worth it for the amazing views! This afternoon's drive will take us over the Kaimai Ranges to the Waikato. Our base for the next few days is the pretty town of Cambridge, known for its trees and champions and recently voted NZ's "**Most Beautiful Large Town**". Late afternoon orientation of the town including a stroll down Cambridge's own walk of fame – it's not quite Hollywood but you never know which famous Kiwi you might spot!

Accommodation: Cambridge 4 nights



Fri 30 Oct

Hamilton

This morning we'll visit **Zealong Tea Plantation**. Who would have thought in the middle of the Waikato you'd find an award-winning tea plantation! It all started with a camellia tree apparently. Our guide will lead us along the tea trail to learn how tea is picked and processed. We'll then learn the art of tea appreciation followed by a scrumptious high tea. The afternoon will be spent rambling through the popular **Hamilton Gardens**. The Gardens tell the story of gardening through different civilisations and time, and showcase a wonderful collection of plants and architecture. You will be astounded that Hamilton has such a fabulous internationally renowned treasure. From the Gardens we'll walk along the **Waikato River** to view the unique bridges, memorial gardens and beautiful homes.

Sat 31 Oct

Orakei Korako – Tirau

This morning we drive south to an active **geothermal area**. **Orakei Korako** aka "The Hidden Valley" is NZ's largest geothermal area with more than 250 hot springs and geysers. We will have plenty of time to explore the area by foot. We'll take a late lunch break in the quirky little town of **Tirau** where you'll come face-to-face with some corrugated characters. This afternoon's walk is along the rural **Te Waihou Walkway** to the internationally acclaimed Blue Spring. The water here is so pure and supplies around 70% of NZ's bottled water.

Sun 01 Nov

Maungatautari – Arapuni – Hobbiton

Just a short drive from Cambridge, is the **Maungatautari Ecological Sanctuary** where we will spend an interesting few hours on a morning guided stroll through the forest. Surrounded by the world's longest pest-proof fence, this ancient forest offers a sanctuary for populations of many of New Zealand's most endangered species – from birds to bats, frogs to reptiles, tuatara to giant weta. Later this afternoon will be a visit to "Middle Earth". Even if you're not a 'Lord of the Rings' fan, a visit to **Hobbiton** is a truly amazing experience. Stroll through the lush pastures of "The Shire" on a guided movie-set tour, past Hobbit Holes, the Mill and on to the world-famous Green Dragon Inn for a well-earned beverage.

Mon 02 Nov

Cambridge – Waitomo – Taumaranui

A short drive south brings us to the world renowned **Waitomo Glowworm Caves**. The glowworm, *Arachnocampa luminosa*, is unique to New Zealand and as our Guide takes us deep in to the cave we will see thousands of these tiny creatures radiate their unmistakable luminescent light. An informative commentary on the Caves' historical and geological significance and a magical boat ride beneath the glow will surely enlighten you! In the afternoon we'll do a series of scenic short walks in the area taking in different landscapes and natural features only found in this area. Our final stop for the day, the small King Country town of **Taumaranui**.

Accommodation: Taumaranui

Tue 03 Nov

Taumaranui – Whangamomona – New Plymouth

Early this morning we change our mode of transportation for self-drive **Rail Carts** (2 people per cart) and explore a forgotten world. We travel along the northern most section of an abandoned railway line which cuts through rugged farmland, across bridges and through hand-dug tunnels, some of them up to 1.5km long. We arrive in Tokorima around midday and meet up with our vehicle for a scenic drive along the **Forgotten World Highway** to the "**Republic of Whangamomona**". Learn about the controversial history of this quirky little town and visit NZ's remotest country pub.

Accommodation: New Plymouth 2 nights

Wed 04 Nov

New Plymouth

After breakfast, we set off for a walk along the award-winning **Coastal Walkway**. This is a flat easy walk with picturesque views as we hug the coastline walking a paved path between farmland and pounding waves and across the dramatic **Te Rewa Rewa bridge**. Fingers crossed for a clear day as the way this Bridge frames Mt Taranaki is an incredible sight. The rest of the day is free. The famous **Taranaki Garden Festival**, formerly the Rhododendron Festival will be on during our stay and offers an intriguing mixture of both unique and stunning gardens, each with their own story to tell. Or you might like to visit the contemporary art museum and home to the collection of modernist filmmaker and kinetic artist **Len Lye**, or **Puke Ariki** with its heritage and art collections.



Thu 05 Nov

Opunake – Whanganui

Leaving New Plymouth we head south along the coast to the popular surf town of **Opunake**. Our morning walk takes us around a beautiful lake, across cliffs and along the beach enjoying views of Te Namu Pa, Mt Taranaki and the ocean. After lunch in Opunake, we'll continue driving along the **Surf Highway** to Whanganui. This small city is located on the historically significant **Te Awa o Whanganui** – NZ's longest navigable river. It's a city with an interesting heritage, beautiful gardens and coastline, and arty locals extending manaakitanga (legendary hospitality). Afternoon orientation walk of the city.

Accommodation: Whanganui 2 nights

Fri 06 Nov

Jerusalem – Bridge to Nowhere

We'll head away early this morning for a scenic drive to the peaceful village of **Jerusalem**, the resting place of well-known poet James K Baxter. After a stroll around the gardens of the Sisters of Compassionate Convent and morning tea, we continue our scenic rural drive to **Pipiriki**. From here we board a jetboat for an exhilarating ride up the **Whanganui River** through pristine bush and deep gorges. See the world famous Drop Scene, the Dress Circle and the ancient pegs used by the river boat crew to help them negotiate these waters over 100 years ago. On arrival at Mangapurua Landing we have an easy 40 minute bush walk to the historic "**Bridge to Nowhere**" - gateway to the "**Valley of Abandoned Dreams**". After a picnic lunch, we walk back to the landing to meet the jetboat for more thrills on our journey back to Pipiriki where our vehicle awaits us for our return to Whanganui.

Sat 07 Nov

Kapiti Coast

This morning we visit a **Garden of National Significance** for a stroll through the exotic gardens, landscaped with stunning sculptures and plants from all over the world, from the jungles of Asia to the deserts of Africa and the Americas. We continue travelling south to **Peka Peka beach**. From here we will walk along the seashore to **Waikanae**. This is an awesome stretch of beach littered with driftwood and unspoilt sand dunes with fabulous views of **Kapiti Island**.

Accommodation: Kapiti Coast

Sun 08 Nov

Kapiti Coast - Wellington

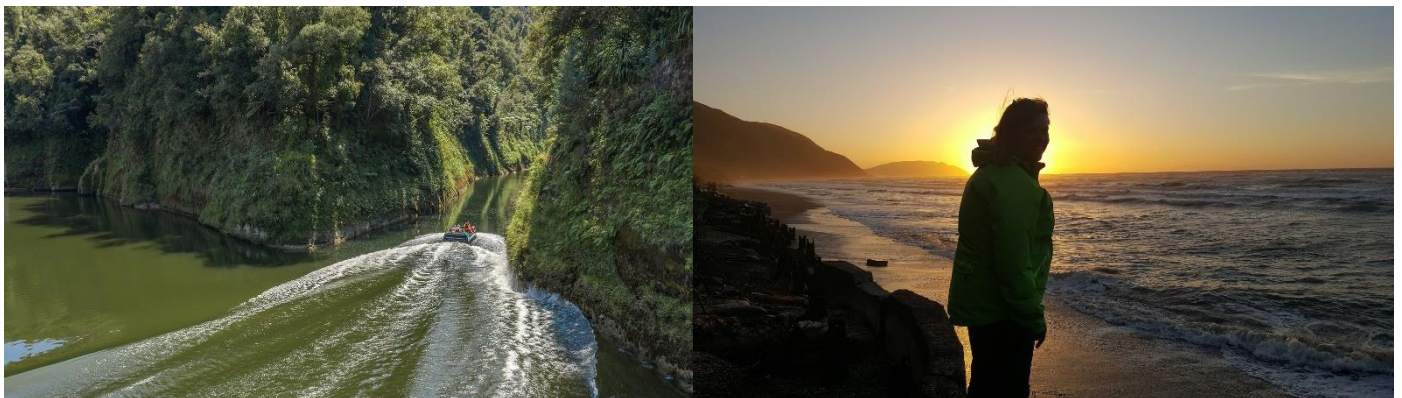
This morning's walk is optional - it's not for the faint-hearted as we will be reaching some heights with steep drops. The **Paekakariki Escarpment walk** will take us over farmland, bush, across two swing bridges and up and down some steep steps. This is one of the sections of the Te Araroa walkway and offers breathtaking views of the ocean, Kapiti and the South Island. Those who prefer an easier walk can take a stroll through the beautiful **Queen Elizabeth National Park** where there are numerous trails on offer. Later this afternoon we journey on to Wellington. Spend your last evening with your new friends, stroll along the glittering waterfront for drinks and a farewell dinner together.

Accommodation: Wellington

Mon 09 Nov

Wellington

Our tour ends today but if you don't have to rush off and would like to fit in one last walk, we can do some of the **Skyline Walkway** across the ridge tops of Wellington in the morning. Or you might feel the need for some retail therapy or perhaps a visit to Te Papa, the Beehive or a ride on the Cable Car.



Price

NZ\$4030 per person twin share

NZ\$1330 single supplement*

** if you would like us to find you a room-mate let us know*

Includes

- 15 nights accommodation (good quality hotels, homes and motels)
- Daily breakfast & 3 dinners
- Tour leader / walking guide
- Transportation in modern air-conditioned mini-coach
- Sightseeing as specified
- Tickets for Wine tour, Rangitoto ferry, Mangatautari, Hobbiton, Waitomo Caves
- Zealong Tea tour and high tea
- Jet boat ride on the Wanganui River, Rail Cart ride
- Airport transfer on Day 1

Excludes

- Meals and refreshments (unless specified in inclusions)
- Items of a personal nature

Group Size

Minimum 7 / maximum 12

How fit do I need to be

Expect to walk on average 5km per day. Some days may be longer and some may be shorter, some easy and some harder. There is lots of variety. The pace will be leisurely with ample time for a breather and photos. The tour is aimed at leisure walkers who enjoy the outdoors, meeting new people, discovering and socialising.

Pre & Post Tour Accommodation

Auckland priced from \$140 pp twin, \$280 single

Wellington price from \$115 pp twin, \$230 single

Auckland arrival

We will be departing around 9.30am on Day 1. If you are planning to fly in that morning, we will pick you up from the airport around 10am and continue on to Piha from there. Or you might like to arrive in to Auckland the day before.

Wellington departure

If you need to leave the tour on Sunday 8th Nov, that is fine and we can deduct the last night accommodation off the price. Book your departure for after 3pm.

About Your Tour Leader

Marie Coles is a born & bred Kiwi and grew up in a village in the South Island. She now resides in Cambridge with her husband and twins. Having worked in the travel industry for many years, Marie has travelled extensively throughout the world but lists New Zealand as her favourite destination. She has explored many nooks & crannies of her beloved homeland and with her local knowledge and passion for walking, Marie has carefully crafted this itinerary to include some iconic walks as well as venturing in to less-travelled areas. An added bonus is the excitement of different modes of transportation.



Marie on the Paekakariki Escarpment Walk

How to book

Tel 07 827 5100 or 0800 765 688

Email marie.coles@helloworld.co.nz or info@travelforsolos.co.nz

\$300 non-refundable deposit on confirmation. Balance due 07 Sep. Price is subject to change until paid in full.



Helloworld Cambridge
PO Box 59, Cambridge, New Zealand
07 827 5100

