



Discover New Zealand's' North Island

Summer School Break 2018 Tour

June 7-13th, 2018

5nts/7days from: \$1995 triple \$2195 dbl \$2695 sgl

Reserve by March 1st-Save \$50 per person!

Itinerary

Day 1 – June 7th, 2018 – Thursday- Departure from Honolulu (D/S)

Hawaiian Airlines # 445 Departs Honolulu at 2:40pm – Arrives Auckland at 10:00pm + 1

Please meet your Panda Travel representative at the Hawaiian Airlines check-in counter, Lobby 3, Makai side 3 hours prior to the departure time. Hawaiian Airlines will provide two meals on this flight, lunch, and snack.

Day 2 – June 8th, 2018 – Friday- Auckland

Harai Mai- Welcome to Auckland, the “City of Sails”. It is a thriving multi-cultural hub of cuisine, music, art and culture. Offering a background rhythm of Polynesian culture and a passion for outstanding food, wine and shopping, this summer school 2018 North Island tour will not disappoint.

Centered between two harbors and dotted with 48 volcanic cones plus a bordering rainforest, you will soon discover that Auckland is a city like no other.

It is the beginning of winter here in the Auckland region and the temperatures are ideal for touring, the range is low 50's to low 60's. Remember to bring along some warm clothing to keep the chill out.

On arrival, it is necessary to clear customs and immigration. You will need to claim your checked bags from the carousel. Once this is complete our local partner will be there to meet us and assist with the charter bus to our hotel, Rydges Auckland. The drive time will be approximately 45 minutes.

This 4* hotel is in the heart of Auckland's Central Business District, and just down the street from the iconic Sky Tower and SKYCITY Casino.

The 24-hour SKYCITY Casino features live entertainment, a theatre, and a choice of more than 20 restaurants, cafes, and bars. The Sky Tower, rising 1,077 feet above sea-level, offers breathtaking 360-degree views from 3 observation levels.

A currency conversion desk is in the Sky City Casino, main gaming floor area and is open 24/7.

Feeling hungry, there is Andy's Burgers & Bar, located in the Sky City Casino, open 24 hours a day. There is also a Denny's just a block away from our hotel and open 24 hours.



Accommodations: Rydges Auckland Hotel

Day 3 – June 9th, 2018 – Saturday– Auckland (B)

After breakfast at our hotel, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:30am as we are off on city tour of Auckland.

The morning begins with a visit to Mt. Eden, for stunning panoramic views of the entire city and its beautiful harbor. Mt. Eden is one of the region's volcanic cones and the highest natural point in Auckland. Discover its history as a traditional fortified Māori village. The symmetrical crater is known as Te Ipu Kai a Mataaho (the Food Bowl of Mataaho, the god of things hidden in the ground) and is considered highly sacred.



Views of the city from Mt. Eden



Looking down into the cone of Mt. Eden

Next, off to Parnell, Auckland's oldest suburb, full of charm and character. It is easy to fall in love with this area. The village is dotted with beautiful Victorian homes that now house some of Auckland's most noted cafes, restaurants, and boutique shops.

From here we are off to the central suburb of Grafton to see the Auckland War Memorial Museum and a stop nearby at the Winter Garden at the Auckland Domain, Auckland's oldest park.

While we will only be driving by the museum, if you are a history buff, consider coming back on your free time

The Auckland War Memorial Museum website states:

"The Museum tells the story of New Zealand, its place in the Pacific and its people. The Museum is a war memorial for the province of Auckland and holds one of New Zealand's top three heritage libraries.

It has pre-eminent Māori and Pacific collections, significant natural history resources and major social and military history collections, as well as decorative arts and pictorial collections."

The Auckland War Memorial Museum, located in Auckland Domain, is New Zealand's first museum. When the museum first started in 1852, it was set in a two-room farm cottage in Grafton.

An important feature which can be found outside the museum building is the cenotaph commemorating fallen soldiers. The cenotaph, made from Portland stone, was built for the first anniversary of the Armistice in 1919.

The official opening of the new museum in the Domain was in November 1929. The cost of the new building was \$250,000 - a fortune in those days. The building was extended after World War II to house more collections, and expanded again in 1960 to provide more floor space.

Works to restore the crumbling old heritage building started seriously in the mid-1990s and continued through in stages till December 2006. The works involved extensive refurbishment, redevelopment, and building.

Remember to look up to the frieze running around the top of the exterior of the building. The frieze is decorated with pictures of different scenes from the two World Wars. All the battles ever fought in, historically by Kiwis can be found engraved on the top of each window in the original building.

The bronze entrance door is decorated with poppies. The story goes that poppies are used to remember the dead in war because the flowers only bloomed after trenches had been dug up on European battlefields to bury the fallen.



Auckland War Memorial Museum



Auckland Domain



local Humble honey soda

Now it's off on the 15-minute scenic drive along Tamaki Drive on our way to Mission Bay, a seaside resort. From here you can enjoy the views across the harbor to Rangitoto Island.

From here we make our way back to city center via the Auckland waterfront and over the Auckland Harbor Bridge.



View of Auckland Harbor Bridge

Auckland's Harbor front

One of Auckland's shopping areas

Now back to our hotel in the early afternoon so that you have free time to go off and explore the area on your own as well as time for shopping.



Accommodations: Rydges Auckland Hotel

Day 4 – June 10th, 2018 – Sunday- Auckland-Hobbiton-Rotorua (B/L/D)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:15am as we journey off on a full day of touring and end the day in Rotorua, or commonly known as “Sulphur City”. This is one of the most tourist visited spots on the North Island, with nearly three million visitors annually.

To make the travel day easier, we will ask the hotel to hold our larger bags in storage until we return tomorrow evening; however, while they think it will be fine, it cannot confirm until we get closer. We ask that you bring along a small overnight bag for this evening.

The day begins with a drive to the township of Matamata which is the primary film location for both The Lord of the Rings and Hobbit films. The town came alive with The Lord of the Rings in 1999 and to this day continues to be an incredibly popular tourist stop. The drive time is approximately 2.5 hours and a stop will be made along the way.

One of the main filming spots is on a private farm nestled amongst rolling green country side. The family who owns the farm has allowed the rebuilt Hobbiton movie set to remain on site, made up of permanent materials so visitors can experience the Hobbiton they know from the films.

Our guided tour begins with a drive through the picturesque 1,250-acre sheep farm offering spectacular views across to the Kaimai Ranges, a mountain range separating the Waikato in the west from the Bay of Plenty in the east.

Look at Bag End, where Frodo and Bilbo's adventures began. Get lost among the hobbit holes and visit the Green Dragon Inn, the mill, and the Party Tree. Listen to spell-binding tales of how Hobbiton came to be.

After our tour, enjoy the Hobbiton Festive Feast buffet lunch.



Hobbiton: Gift Shop and snacks

sights along the Hobbiton tour

From here we are off to visit the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, established in 1929 by the New Zealand Parliament to guard and preserve Maori culture, housing the national schools of carving and weaving. You will be able interact with master craftsmen as they turn native hardwood and plant fibers into beautiful pieces of traditional art, spinning stories as they work.

You will have an opportunity to purchase a variety of craft works here.



Completed wood carvings

Skilled carvers at work

Traditional Maori dance

Next, we will be visiting Te Puia Thermal Reserves, featuring over 500 springs. The most popular is Pohutu, the largest active geyser in the southern hemisphere. She erupts once or twice every hour and sometimes reaching a height of 100 feet. Pohutu means “constant splashing” in Māori.

As well as being a spectacular sight, Pohutu is the most reliable geyser on earth. Eruptions can last from a few minutes to much longer. About 15 years ago, Pohutu erupted for over 250 days.

Today you will also see the bubbling mud pools. Look for Ngā mōkai-ā-Koko, the largest and most impressive active mud pool with a depth of 20 to 30 feet. Activity is dependent on rainfall and when active, the streaming bursts of mud reach temperatures of 200 degrees Fahrenheit.

You will also can witness the rare sight of the national icon, the Kiwi Bird, a nocturnal flightless bird. See live kiwi close-up and learn how these extraordinary endangered birds are protected.

There are five species of kiwi: brown kiwi, tokoeka, rowi, great spotted kiwi and little spotted kiwi. The kiwi here at Te Puia are brown kiwi. The kiwi has large strong legs, sharp claws, and a long beak. Its feathers are shaggy. The kiwi’s egg is huge, and females lay only one at a time. Years ago, there were about 12 million kiwis, but today there are fewer than 100,000.



Te Puia Thermal Reserves

Now we make our way to our hotel for the evening, The Millennium Rotorua Hotel, situated next to mystical Lake Rotorua and just a short walk to the city center. You are also just a short walk to town center. The hotel offers a heated indoor swimming pool, fitness center, day spa with sauna, private and communal hot baths.

After some free time to relax and freshen up, please meet your guide in the lobby for a buffet dinner at the hotel's restaurant.

After dinner consider a walk around the lake area or explore the covered arcade with a variety of shops, restaurants, and bars.



Covered arcade area



views of the lake

Accommodations: Millennium Rotorua Hotel  **30 minutes free in lobby per day**

Day 5 – June 11th, 2018 – Monday- Rotorua-Auckland (B/L/D)

Today, experience the many sights that Rotorua has to offer. Harken back to the bygone era of steamboats and luxury travel with a one-hour breakfast cruise on the Lakeland Queen. Enjoy spectacular lake views only accessible by boat including the mystifying geothermal area of Sulphur Bay with its milky white lake water, the bird sanctuary of the volcanic rock lave dome known as Mokoia Island and reflective views of the city center from the outdoor viewing platforms. On board commentary is provided.

From here we are off to the Agrodome, offering a unique New Zealand farm experience. Here you can see the world-famous farm show.

“You will be introduced to 19 different breeds of sheep; you will watch a live sheep shearing demonstration and participate in a fun sheep auction. It’s not just the sheep that are stars but also our

farm dogs too, watch them as they demonstrate their abilities to respond to certain commands, keeping both the sheep and the ducks in line! Hop onto the stage and hand feed the baby lambs or take the opportunity to hand-milk a cow."



Sheep show and the opportunity to go up on stage



experience milking a cow

Off to visit the organic farm right around the corner, aboard an all-weather, all-terrain vehicle. You will have the opportunity to hand-feed and take photos with all sorts of friendly animals, including Romney sheep, cattle, llamas, ostriches, pigs, and alpaca.

There is also a fruit orchard and olive grove where you can taste natural kiwi fruit juice and delicious honey.

Next, we are off on the Skyline Gondola as we rise high above Rotorua for stunning panoramic views over the lakes and towns. Hop on board one of the 8-seater cable cars and experience the beauty of the region's magnificent landscapes like never before.

It's a gentle ride along this 900-meter-long cable system and once at the top of Mt. Ngongotaha, sit down and enjoy a western style buffet lunch all while marveling at the stunning 180-degree panorama from your seat.



Skyline Gondola



Views from the buffet restaurant

After lunch, take a fun Luge Ride, part go-cart, part toboggan and gravity fueled with a full rider control over speed and direction using a unique braking and steering system. Small children can ride with an adult. Enjoy this exciting downhill experience through twists and turns all with a backdrop of dramatic scenery through the Redwood forest.

We now make our way back to Auckland, traveling north via Hamilton, New Zealand's fourth largest city and fertile Waikato region.

Once in Auckland, back to the Rydges Auckland Hotel. Enjoy time to relax and freshen up before joining your guide for dinner at the Sky City Fortuna buffet, located in the Sky City Hotel and Casino, just up the block.

After dinner, the remainder of the evening is free.

Accommodations: Rydges Auckland Hotel



Day 6 – June 12th, 2018 – Tuesday–Auckland–Devonport–Auckland (B)

After breakfast, meet in the lobby as we walk down to the harbor front for the short ferry ride to the historical seaside village of Devonport. It is a relaxed bayside village with many cafes, restaurants, and unique shops, all for you to explore.

Included is a narrated coach ride around the island to take in the beautiful views of the Auckland skyline.

You will have time to browse this quaint village and have time for lunch on your own.

At the designated time, please meet your guide for the ferry ride back to Auckland city. Once back you are free to enjoy the remainder of the day and evening.



Historic Esplanade Hotel



Devonport's quaint shops



Views of Auckland city from top

Accommodations: Rydges Auckland Hotel



Day 7 – June 13th, 2018 – Wednesday–Auckland–Honolulu (B)

It's our last day here in Auckland. After breakfast, please remember to check-out of your room by 10:00am. The hotel will hold your bags in storage until we meet back for the transfer back to the airport later this evening.

If shopping is on the agenda, you are just steps from of Auckland best shopping streets and arcades. There is **High Street** where some of Auckland city's best fashion is tucked away. From NZ's top designers such as Karen Walker, Zambesi, and Workshop, to shoes galore from Briarwood and Ashley Ardrey, to quirky cafe's and bars, High Street is a high-end fashionistas dream come true.

Another option is purchasing a day pass on the hop-on hop-off bus and explore more of the city's sights.

If you feel a bit adventurous, a walk down to the pier and ferry out to one of the neighboring island to explore. One of the more popular ones is the Waiheke Island Explorer. Once you arrive on the island hop on the buses and enjoy the many vineyards where can enjoy wine tastings.

There New Zealand Maritime Museum is also just a short walk down from the hotel, on the harbor front.



Visit an island by ferry



shop for omiyage-Tim Tams!



Visit the Maritime Museum

Please meet your guide in the lobby by 7:45pm with your luggage as we will be departing for the airport at 8:00pm to arrive at the Auckland Airport by 9:00pm to begin the check-in process. Don't forget to return your keys to the front desk.

Hawaiian Airlines # 446 Departs Auckland at 11:55pm – Arrives Honolulu at 10:35am (same day)