



# Bay of Islands & Far North

March 2023 – 8 nights

## Tue 21 Mar WAIKATO – AUCKLAND – HOKIANGA

This morning we journey north from Cambridge, departing approx. 8.30am and driving via Auckland (pick up from airport around 10.30am) and on to the rural village of **Matakohe**. Spend some time in the award-winning Kauri Museum which tells the story of the kauri tree, the people and the industries that fuelled the building of our nation. By late afternoon we'll be settling into our accommodation located right on the **Hokianga Harbour**. You might like to stretch your legs with a roam along the beach before sundowners.

*Accommodation: The Heads Hokianga, Omapere (2 nights)*

## Wed 22 Mar HOKIANGA (B,D)

Lazy morning start, before we visit **Manea Footprints of Kupe** for a unique cultural encounter by way of a multisensory journey through art, toanga, film, digital interaction and a cultural performance. You will come away from this with a better knowledge of Maori and the Hokianga which is a great way to segue into our evening which is extra special. With a local guide, we head into the **Waipoua Forest** for a twilight encounter like no other! Prepare yourself for spine-tingling chants and song as our guide leads us into the forest. Come face to face with our national icon, **Tane Mahuta** (our largest giant kauri), and **Te Matua Ngāhere** (our oldest kauri). As day turns into night your senses become enhanced and you will be absorbing the spiritual energy of the forest – absolutely magic!

## Thu 23 Mar KERIKERI (B)

After breakfast, we set off for **Rawene** where there is time to look at the art galleries / shops and have lunch at a harbourside café. In the afternoon, we arrive in Kerikeri and check in to our lovely rooms surrounded by lush gardens. You might like a swim in the pool before we head to the **Kerikeri Basin** and do a scenic river walk to the **Rainbow Waterfalls**. If you're not feeling so energetic, stay with our minicoach and drive to the Waterfalls.

*Accommodation: Stay Kerikeri Motel (2 nights)*

## Fri 24 Mar KERIKERI (B)

This morning we tour through some of New Zealand's history. **Kemp House** is the oldest surviving European building in New Zealand and **The Stone Store** is the country's oldest surviving stone building. Time to learn all about the history from a local guide. You have the afternoon free to either laze by the pool, check out the shops in town or do a walk on another one of Kerikeri's gorgeous waterfall trails.

## Sat 25 Mar BUTLER POINT – KARIKARI PENINSULA (B,L,D)

This morning we continue our journey north to Hihi for an interesting tour of the Butler Point property including the **Whaling Museum, Butler House** and the extensive **Gardens**. This is a real Northland gem and always a highlight.

In the afternoon we do some exploring and walks on the **Karikari Peninsula**. The beaches here will take your breath away – simply stunning. We'll stop for an early dinner at New Zealand's northernmost vineyard – **Karikari Estate**. You might like to taste some of their superb wines produced from the slopes of this scenic vineyard.

*Accommodation: Taipa Beach Resort (2 nights)*

**Sun 26 Mar**                      **CAPE REINGA - MANGONUI**                      **(B,L,D)**

This morning we will drive over to **Kaitaia** and board a specially designed 4x4 passenger truck. Sit back and relax as our local tour guide shares some amazing stories of Far North legends and history. You can expect to see Houhora Heads and Mt Camel, the white silica sands at Rarawa, Te Pahi Giant Sand Dunes (sand boarding optional!), The Bluff, Aupouri Forest and 90 Mile Beach. Our main destination is of course **Cape Reinga** – the dramatic meeting place of the Tasman & Pacific Oceans. Lunch is included at Tapotupotu Bay.

This evening we visit the historic fishing village of **Mangonui**. Fresh fish from local boats is unloaded at the wharf in the village and much of it makes its way to the Mangonui Fish Shop. The shop has been selling fresh fish for over 70 years and tonight we have a fish & chip meal included for our dinner.

**Mon 27 Mar**                      **WAITANGI – RUSSELL**                      **(B,AT,D)**

We'll get an early start this morning and travel across to **Waitangi** to meet our local guide. On this informative tour you will discover contemporary museums, see carvers at work, attend a Maori cultural performance and visit the world's largest ceremonial war canoe. There will be free time to roam about the grounds with their wonderful sea views before catching the ferry across to Russell.

**Russell** features some of New Zealand's oldest and most significant buildings and the town's history is certainly interesting. Once known as the "Hell Hole of the Pacific" with a reputation as a lawless and rowdy port full of deserting seamen, runaway convicts, grog traders and settlers, Russell's history certainly makes for an interesting tour! We spend a few hours this afternoon exploring the town and surrounds ending at **Pompellier House** for a French inspired afternoon tea.

Later, check in to the town's most iconic hotel, **The Duke of Marlborough**, situated on the waterfront. The hotel is steeped in history and intrigue and claims to have been "refreshing rascals and reprobates since 1827"! Be sure to take some time to explore the curated art within the hotel. Watch the sunset as we dine in the picturesque hotel tonight.

*Accommodation: The Duke of Marlborough Hotel, Russell (2 nights)*

**Tue 28 Mar**                      **ISLAND CRUISE & RUSSELL**                      **(B)**

Enjoy stunning views of the islands as cruise past Cape Brett Lighthouse, the Hole in the Rock and Marsden Cross, where the first Christian sermon was held in NZ back in 1814. Hopefully we will also see dolphins on our morning out! There will be some time on one of the Islands for some walking and swimming.

Afternoon free to explore more of Russell.

**Wed 29 Mar**                      **WHANGAREI – AUCKLAND - WAIKATO**                      **(B)**

We say Haere Ra to the Bay of Islands and begin our return south. First stop is the iconic **Kawakawa** toilets followed by the new **Hundertwasser Art Centre** located in the **Whangarei** viaduct area. Friedensreich Hundertwasser was a painter, architect, eco warrior and extraordinary visionary who came to New Zealand in the 1970s and purchased land in Northland. His work and imagination left a lasting impression on the region and thanks to a team of loyal, creative friends, his art and architecture have been brought to fruition with a bright new building full of total uniqueness! After lunch we continue south via the infamous **Puhoi Pub** for our last refreshment together.

Traffic dependent, we should get to Auckland Airport around 4.30pm (recommend you book flights out from 5.30pm onwards). We'll then continue on to the Waikato, arriving early evening.

**Cost**

NZ\$3300 per person twin share\*

NZ\$800 single supplement

\*if you would like to twin share let us know and we'll endeavour to find you a room-mate

**Includes**

- Tour Escort / Chief Navigator
- Transportation in modern minicoach (12 seater)
- Pick up/drop off from Cambridge, Hamilton and Auckland Airport
- 8 nights accommodation (as specified in itinerary)
- Meals as specified (B=breakfast, MT=morning tea, AT=afternoon tea, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Entry & local guides as mentioned in itinerary including Hundertwasser Park, Pompellier House, Island Cruise, Waitangi, Cape Reinga day tour, Butler Point Museum & Garden Tour, Kemp House, Stone Store Museum, Manea, Waipoua Twilight Forest Encounter, Matakohe Kauri Museum

**Excludes**

- Flights, Travel Insurance, Meals (unless specified in inclusions) / Refreshments, Items of a personal nature & optional tours