

Active Downunder

RIMU SMALL GROUP ESCORTED TOUR (MAX 16) 16 DAYS NORTH AND SOUTH ISLANDS



Intro

The Rimu Small Group Journey explores the highlights of the North and South Islands. Explore the geothermal activities and authentic Māori culture of Rotorua, cruise Milford Sound and make the most of the abundance of walking opportunities the country has to offer as you travel through New Zealand's fabulous landscapes.

Featured Experiences

- Narrow-gauge railway journey through native Coromandel bush
- Visit Hot Water Beach
- A private guide around a geothermal valley with geysers, mud pools and hot springs
- Visit Waimangu Volcanic Valley – or – experience Hobbiton Movie Set
- Delve into Māori life and enjoy a powerful cultural performance and feast
- Discover Napier's history and architecture on foot during a tour from a local guide
- Enjoy an evening meal at Mission Estate in Napier
- Travel on Wellington's famous Cable Car and visit Te Papa museum
- Scenic Interislander Ferry journey across the Cook Strait
- Wine tasting at one of Marlborough's premier wineries
- Cruise the turquoise waters of Abel Tasman National Park
- Visit world-famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes at Punakaiki
- Join a local eco-guided tour – or – an authentic 4WD adventure
- Explore the historic gold rush village of Arrowtown
- Cruise, with a picnic lunch, on the breath-taking Milford Sound

Culinary Inclusions

- 18 meals included
15 breakfasts (B) 1 lunch (L) 2 dinners (D)



Day 1 Auckland

Haere mai – welcome! Arrive into Auckland where you will be met and transferred to your accommodation. Spend the afternoon and evening at your leisure exploring the ‘City of Sails’.

M Social, Auckland

Day 2 Auckland to Coromandel Peninsula (B)

Travel across the fertile Hauraki Plains to Thames then head up the western side of the Coromandel Peninsula. This coastal drive is quite spectacular and on a clear day, keep an eye out for the SkyTower which can be seen across the Firth of Thames. Visit the nearby Driving Creek Railway climbing 120m on a narrow-gauge line to the ‘EyeFull’ Tower for panoramic views of the surrounding countryside and back over the Hauraki Gulf. Drive east across the Peninsula through beautiful scenery to reach the resort of Whitianga on Mercury Bay.

Oceans Resort, Whitianga – 2 nights

Day 3 Coromandel Peninsula (B)

White cliffs, golden beaches, inviting turquoise waters and green forests are the colours of the Coromandel, with scarlet highlights courtesy of the flowers of Pōhutukawa trees in summer, making this one of our favourite regions. Rightly famous is Hot Water Beach, where warm springs bubble up through the sand, and when the tide is right you can dig out your very own ‘spa’ pool for a wallow in the warm waters. Take a walk along the beautiful sandy beach at Hahei appreciating the breathtaking coastal scenery. Also visit Cooks Beach – named after Captain James Cook who sailed on the HMS Endeavour into Mercury Bay in 1769 – famous for its long golden sandy beach which is now a popular retreat for Kiwis during summer months.

From Cooks Beach you can choose to catch the short ferry ride back to Whitianga and walk to your accommodation or travel back with your driver.

Day 4 Coromandel Peninsula – Rotorua (B)

Taking the Pacific Coast Highway through the beachside towns of Whangamatā and Tauranga in the beautiful Bay of Plenty before turning inland to visit a well-formed bushwalk with scenic lookouts over Okere Falls. Rotorua is the epicentre not only of New Zealand’s geothermal activity but of Māori heritage. No visit to Rotorua would be complete without including Te Puia, not only an active

geothermal site, but the nation's centre for indigenous arts and crafts and a Kiwi conservation project. At Te Puia it's part of their culture to welcome, guide, entertain, and treat you like part of the family and you are treated to a private guide throughout your time here.

Millennium Hotel (or Regal Palms Resort), Rotorua – 2 nights

Day 5 Rotorua (B,D)

Today you have the choice of two excursions:

a) **Visit the Waimangu Volcanic Valley**

Site of the eruption of Mt. Tarawera in 1886 the devastating eruption buried local Māori villages and destroyed the world-famous 'Pink and White' silica terraces, once considered to be the eighth wonder of the world. This catastrophic event changed the landscape forever and created the valley you can now walk through, past boiling craters and jewel-coloured steaming lakes. Take a cruise across Lake Rotomahana to the site of the old silica terraces, hear the story of Guide Sophia and see the new terraces of silica slowly forming.

b) **Experience the real Middle-earth with a visit to the Hobbiton Movie Set**

Visit the delightful setting for The Shire that featured in Peter Jackson's films, The Lord of the Rings trilogy and The Hobbit film series. Your Hobbiton guide will escort you through the ten-acre site recounting fascinating details of how the movie set was created. The Hobbit holes, Green Dragon Inn, The Millhouse and other structures created for the films can be viewed, and you will see how this beautiful piece of Waikato farmland was transformed into The Shire from Middle-earth.

This evening visit Tamaki Māori Village for Te Pā Tū. The evening experience and feast is aligned to and changes with the maramataka (Māori lunar calendar). Feast on Māori song, tradition, and divine seasonal kai (cuisine) within the forest Pā (village) amidst towering Tawa trees, blazing bonfires, and forest-formed amphitheatre. Hākari (feasting) begins with forest horotai (canapes) and culminates in a lavish 4-course fusion feast. Hāngī is featured in varied seasonal menus designed by Māori chefs served to table, al fresco when warm, or in the wharekai (dining room) if cooler.

During summer months, Tū Te Rā celebrates harvest and concepts concerning ancient Māori warfare and peace. Over winter months, Tū Te Ihi celebrates the Matariki star cluster with mystical ritual, energy, and passion. Return hotel transfers included – other travellers will be on board.

Day 6 Rotorua to Napier (B,D)

Visit the powerful Huka Falls then view the vast Lake Taupō – more inland sea than lake, though its fresh waters teem with trout. Across the lake stands the mighty volcanic peaks of Ruapehu, Ngāuruhoe and Tongariro within the Tongariro National Park. Onto Napier to view one of the world's most complete examples of Art Deco architecture, second (arguably) only to Miami Beach. This joyful seaside town had a tragic birth, being virtually levelled by fierce fires that followed the devastating 1931 earthquake. Napier was rebuilt in the most up-to-date style of the time, which today is referred to as Art Deco. This afternoon your local guide brings history and architecture alive with entertaining stories as you discover Napier on foot. Today's journey has brought us to the North Island's wine country, so this evening's treat is dinner at New Zealand's oldest winery, Mission Estate, where you enjoy dinner in the restored seminary buildings with sweeping views of Napier.

Scenic Hotel Te Pania, Napier

Day 7 Napier to Wellington (B)

Travel through the vineyards and orchards of Hawke's Bay and the bush-clad ranges of the Wairarapa into New Zealand's capital city, Wellington. On arrival view New Zealand's magnificent Parliament Buildings including the iconic 'Beehive' building. From the Kelburn lookout take the Wellington Cable Car down into the central city precinct before visiting Te Papa – one of the most exciting museums in the world, featuring New Zealand insights; the shaping of its land, the spirit of its diverse peoples, its unique wildlife, landscapes and its distinctive popular culture.

DoubleTree by Hilton, Wellington

Day 8 Wellington to Nelson (B)

Your day commences with one of the most beautiful ferry journeys in the world. Travelling through the waters of Cook Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound the ferry is often accompanied by dolphins riding the bow waves. Disembarking in Picton travel the short distance to Blenheim in the heart of the Marlborough wine country. What better way to enjoy this region famous for its Sauvignon Blanc than with wine tasting at one of Marlborough's premier wineries? From Marlborough cross to the Nelson district a corner of the South Island blessed with a sunny microclimate and your base for the next two nights.

Heritage Rutherford Hotel, Nelson – 2 nights

Day 9 Abel Tasman National Park (B)

Paradise found! Abel Tasman National Park is a mosaic of golden coves and turquoise lagoons sheltered by forested ranges to the south. With few roads in this pristine wilderness, most journeys are made by boat.

This morning from Kaiteriteri, your tour includes a choice of one activity from these three options:

a) Non - Walking Option:

Full Park Scenic Cruise (3-4 hour cruise)

Enjoy a morning cruise exploration of New Zealand's smallest National Park. View world-famous Split Apple Rock, New Zealand Fur Seals, golden sands and the turquoise waters of Anchorage, Bark Bay, Tonga Quarry, Awaroa and Tōtaranui Beach. Enjoy time at your leisure in Kaiteriteri and return to Nelson on the late afternoon transfer.

Walking Option 1:

Astrolabe Beaches and Bays (7km, 2.5 hour walk)

After the Full Park Scenic Cruise, disembark at Apple Tree Bay for a self-guided walk to fabulous Anchorage Beach. Late afternoon shuttle transfer back to Nelson.

b) Walking Option 2:

Forest and Swing-Bridge (10.5km, 4 hour walk)

After the Full Park Scenic Cruise, disembark at Medlands Beach for a rewarding and varied self-guided walk to Anchorage Beach including the scenic highlights of the South Head lookout, the famous Falls River swing-bridge and Cleopatra's Pool. Late afternoon shuttle transfer back to Nelson.

Day 10 Nelson to Punakaiki (B)

Driving via the Nelson Lakes National Park - an enchanting alpine landscape of rugged peaks, forests, stunning glacial lakes and the beginning of the awe-inspiring Southern Alps make a stop at the quaint village of St. Arnaud on the shores of Lake Rotoiti. Turn inland to follow the Buller River Gorge - one of the world's best but least-known scenic drives, carved out of the forest by 19th century prospectors, it follows the deep river gorge, often crossing it on single-track bridges. Emerging from the forest the road hugs the coastline south to the small settlement of Punakaiki - renowned for its wild, rugged coastline and the famous 'Pancake Rocks' - these stratified limestone stacks are an extraordinary monument of nature.

Scenic Hotel, Punakaiki

Day 11 Punakaiki to Fox Glacier (B)

Journey south along the Great Coast Road which was recently voted one of the top ten coastal drives in the world by Lonely Planet. Pass through historic towns reaching Hokitika and its galleries specialising in pounamu (greenstone) jewellery and art works. Stretch your legs at the dramatic Hokitika Gorge where the blue/green waters pass through the rugged rocks. Continue south through forests and farmland, with views of the Alps to the east and the Tasman Sea to the west, to Franz Josef then on to the small remote village of Fox. The huge rivers of snow and ice of the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers flow from vast snowfields high in the Southern Alps, down almost to sea level. Weather

permitting, an optional helicopter ride with a snow landing is a terrific way to experience the sheer grandeur of these West Coast glaciers (extra cost).

Distinction Hotel Fox Glacier

Day 12 Fox Glacier to Wānaka (B)

Have your camera ready for your visit to nearby Lake Matheson for a morning stroll - when conditions are right the lake perfectly mirrors beautiful Mt. Cook in its still waters. Head over the Haast Pass along the river road beside the icy river and deep into Mt. Aspiring National Park. The atmosphere lightens as we reach lovely Lake Wānaka, reflecting the mountain peaks that in winter offer superb skiing, and the pretty resort town of Wānaka.

Edgewater Resort, Wānaka – 2 nights

Day 13 Wānaka (B)

This morning you have the choice of two excursions:

a) Today join a passionate local eco-guide

Depart Wānaka by boat and quickly leave civilization behind as you cruise across the lake to a predator-free island. The walking track leads from the landing and climbs steadily through native vegetation - filled with very vocal birdlife - to the top to the "island's secret"; a lake on top of the island with small islands in it! Unique and very photogenic, the echo of birdsong here is astounding. Carrying on a little further you come to the very top of the island and have a sweeping 360-degree view of Lake Wānaka, its surrounding mountains and valleys, and the Arethusa Pool below. This is the perfect spot to relax and enjoy the panorama. The flightless Buff Weka often join visitors on the island; this rare flightless bird has been extinct on Mainland NZ since 1920.

b) Experience New Zealand's most authentic 4WD adventure

Enjoy the perfect mix of incredible scenery, history, heritage and farming life. Explore remote and seldom travelled back roads of an authentic New Zealand High Country farm overlooking sparkling Lake Wānaka. Surrounded by snow-capped peaks, glaciers and wild river valleys you'll see farm animals including Red Deer, cattle and sheep up close and in their natural environment. Visit historical sites and experience what life was like for Wānaka's first farmers. With two optional walks, through pristine alpine meadows and ancient lakeside forests, this journey offers a unique insight into Wānaka's rich history, heritage, modern-day farming life and breath-taking scenery.

This afternoon is at your leisure to relax or enjoy your own choice of activities.

Day 14 Wānaka to Te Anau (B)

Depart Wānaka with your first stop at the much-photographed Cardrona Pub before traversing the Crown Range road to visit historic Arrowtown – a delightful gold rush village nestled below the beautiful peaks that surround the sparkling Arrow River. Continue your journey via the road pinned between the base of the Remarkables mountain range and spectacular Lake Wakatipu. Journey through a glacial formed valley that is now farmland, to reach Lake Te Anau, the largest (by volume) freshwater lake in the South Island and gateway to Fiordland National Park.

Distinction Hotel Luxmore, Te Anau

Day 15 Te Anau to Milford Sound to Queenstown (B,L)

The journey from Te Anau to Milford Sound is one of the most scenic experiences you can have on four wheels. Fiordland National Park, part of the Southwest New Zealand World Heritage Area is one of the great wilderness areas of the Southern Hemisphere. The scenery is spectacular with lofty mountains and deep valleys carved out by Ice Age glaciers. Described by Rudyard Kipling as the 'eighth wonder of the world', Milford Sound is breath-taking in any weather. Board a comfortable vessel for a cruise past towering Mitre Peak to the Tasman Sea. Keep an eye peeled for seals and dolphins which are often seen in the waters of the fiord. Following the cruise, retrace your journey back to Te Anau

travelling via the Cledeau Gorge, Homer Tunnel and the lovely Eglinton Valley then across the Southland farmlands and around spectacular Lake Wakatipu to Queenstown.

Scenic Suites Queenstown

Day 16 Depart Queenstown (B)

Haere rā – farewell from New Zealand. After breakfast you are transferred to the Queenstown Airport for your return home, taking with you your fond memories of your time in New Zealand. Alternatively, should you wish to extend your stay in New Zealand, we can assist you with additional travel arrangements.

2024 Departure Dates

23 Mar	20 Apr	11 May	26 Oct
23 Nov			

2025 Departure Dates

11 Jan	25 Jan	15 Feb	22 Feb
8 Mar	22 Mar	19 Apr	10 May

Based on double occupancy	Single Supplement
\$7,150 pp + \$200 pp booking fee	\$2,275 + \$200 booking fee

Excludes:

- Airfares
- Travel Insurance
- Any pre/post tour accommodations

All pricing is in USD

\$1,000.00 non-refundable deposit due at time of booking

Final payment due 75 days prior to departure.

At time of booking please provide passport copies and your excursion choices.

We can assist with airfares and travel insurance.

View our [booking conditions](#).