



16 Day Road Tour North Island

Route: Auckland – Thames – Coromandel – Whitianga – Whangamata – Matamata – Rotorua – Taupo – Tongariro – Piopio – Waitomo – Auckland.

Day 1 Auckland – Arrival Day

Today we met at 12 noon. The first day of our trip is designed to allow visitors to settle in. Your tour leader will hold a trip orientation meeting prior to lunch. Time will be set aside to fit you to your rental bike, or unpack your own, and take a short ride in Cornwell Park.

Meals: L/D

Cycling: Short warm up ride

Day 2 Auckland to Thames

After breakfast we leave the city by minibus and head for the village of Clevedon on the edge of the Hunua Ranges. It is here we start cycling on quiet roads. On reaching the coast at Kawakawa Bay we will have our first sight of the Peninsula with the Coromandel Ranges rising steeply from the sea.

Continuing south down the Firth of Thames the narrow road hugs the coast on its way to Miranda Bird Sanctuary. There are two climbs today with a final flat run from Miranda.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling:

Easy: Clevedon to Waharau (lunch) 38 km

Moderate: Clevedon to Waitakaruru 64 km

Challenging: Clevedon to Thames 90 km

Day 3 Thames to Coromandel

We visit a working historic Gold Mine before heading north past many pohutukawa trees leaning over the road and beach. The butterfly and orchid centre at Tararu is well worth a visit. At Tapu we turn inland to visit the picturesque Rapaura Water Gardens and have lunch. Returning to the coast there are two hills to climb - with great views - before the final descent to Coromandel. The town once flourished as a goldmining town; now it is a centre for crafts-people and 'alternative lifers'. Some of the old houses have been beautifully restored..

Meals: B/L

Cycling: Thames to Coromandel 66km. Short option Thames to Wilsons Bay 46km

Tour includes:

- 12 nights accommodation in 3 – 4 Star hotels, motels or chalets.
- 3 nights accommodation at farm stays.
- 15 Breakfasts (B)
- 8 Lunches (L)
- 11 Dinners (D)
- Tour guide
- Support vehicle & Luggage transfer

Grade:

2 Moderate



Day 4 Coromandel to Whitianga

This morning we take a ride on the Driving Creek Bush Railway and have the opportunity to view locally made pottery. Crossing the range to the east side of the peninsula, we have magnificent coastal views and great riding down to the seaside village of Whitianga.

Meals: B/D

Cycling: Coromandel to Whitianga 46km. Short option summit of Whangapoua to Whitianga 41km

Day 5 Whitianga to Whangamata

This morning we take the ferry to Flaxmill Bay. Past Purangi Vineyards, we head for Hahei where we can laze on the beach or walk to magnificent Cathedral Cove. After lunch we visit Hot Water beach where the natural mineral water rises through the sand. Those who have the energy can tackle the Pumpkin Hill climb with its views of Shoe and Slipper Islands and enjoy a great descent to Tairua before continuing around Tairua Harbour towards Whangamata.

Meals: B/L

Cycling: Whitianga to Whangamata 74km. Short option Whitianga to Tairua 38km.

Day 6 Whangamata to Matamata

Leaving the coast, we head inland through Karangahake Gorge to the Waikato Valley and south in the lee of the Kaimai Range. An attractive, varied route - gently undulating. An interesting diversion is to take the Historic Walkway (disused railway) through the gorge - you will need to walk a short distance through a tunnel. We are guests tonight of a local farming family.

Meals: B/D

Cycling:

Easy: Te Aroha to Matamata 40 km

Moderate: Waihi to Matamata 82 km

Challenging: Whangamata to Matamata. 111 km

Day 7 Matamata

We offer a wide variety of cycle rides on delightful little roads around Waikato. You also may like to spend some time relaxing at your farmstay.

Meals: B/D

Day 8 Matamata to Rotorua

A long gentle climb takes us to the bush clad Mamaku Plateau and a great descent, with panoramic views, to the thermal district of Rotorua. In the afternoon we will have time for some optional extras, such as the Agrodome (a sheep farming theme park) and a visit to the boiling mud pools and geysers for which Rotorua is renowned.

Meals: B/D

Cycling: Matamata to Rotorua 76km. Short option Matamata to HWY 5 34km.

Day 9 Rotorua. Rest and Activities Day

Rotorua has much to offer: Geysers and bubbling mud pools, a 4WD trip up Mt Tarawera, rafting, the Buried Village, the Green and Blue Lakes (a 32km cycle ride), fishing and, of course, shopping.

Meals: B

Cycling: No cycling today

Day 10 Rotorua to Taupo

We take a quiet back road through Waikite Valley and Waiotapu thermal areas on our way to Taupo. The thundering Huka Falls provide a noisy and spectacular entrance to the town of Taupo. Lake Taupo is New Zealand's largest lake at 606 sq km. On a good day there will be superb views across the lake to Tongariro National Park and its three distinctive mountains. The area is famous for trout fishing in the many streams that flow into the lake.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling:

Easy: Rotorua to Waiotapu 39 km

Moderate: Rotorua to Reporoa 50 km

Challenging: Rotorua to Taupo 105 km

Day 11 Taupo to Tongariro National Park

A varied, spectacular ride along Lake Taupo leads to the still active volcanoes in Tongariro National Park, the night being spent at the side of Mt Ruapehu. The mountain is permanently snowcapped and the North Island's highest at 2,797 m. On leaving the lakeside there is a substantial climb up to the plateau with a view of the entire lake. As we gain altitude there will be a distinct change in the vegetation, pine forests giving way to tussock grasslands.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling:

Easy: Taupo to Turangi 51 km

Moderate: Turangi to Tongariro National Park 47 km

Challenging: Taupo to Tongariro National Park 98 km

Day 12 Tongariro National Park

There are many excellent walks in the park, short and long, including the spectacular Tongariro Crossing. The Visitors Centre is well worth a visit. Alternatively, The Grand Chateau is excellent for spending a relaxing day.

Meals: B

Cycling: No cycling today

Day 13 Tongariro National Park to Piopio

After an exhilarating downhill ride we travel through ever changing scenery to King Country, a sparsely populated district known for sheep farms and limestone formations.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling:

Easy: Tongariro to Taumaranui 58 km (mostly all downhill)

Moderate: Tongariro to café 100 km

Challenging: Tongariro to Piopio 142 km

Day 14 Piopio to Waitomo

In the morning your hosts will show you the workings of a typical New Zealand sheep farm. After the day's ride, relax and soak up the old charm of Waitomo Hotel. A visit to the world famous caves (included) is a must, with the option of black water (cave) rafting for the more daring.

Meals: B/L/D

Cycling: Piopio to Waitomo 50 km

Day 15 Waitomo to Auckland

Today we follow delightful quiet back roads around Mt Pirongia to Te Awamutu and Pirongia where we take the minibus back to Auckland.

Meals B/L/D

Cycling: Waitomo to Pirongia 54 km . Short option Waitomo to Te Awamutu 42 km

Day 16 Auckland

After breakfast we must say farewell, a safe journey home and hope to see you again.