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## Waiheke Island Escape - 6 day New Zealand Tour



### Waiheke Island Escape

**Auckland shopping, gardens and museums. Waiheke Island sights, wineries, arts & crafts, plus more...**

Escape to Waiheke Island, what a contrast to Auckland and just a short ferry trip away. First see some sights of Auckland, chance to shop at the latest Mall, explore the Auckland Museum or Winter Gardens and dine at the top of the Sky Tower. Then unwind for 4 relaxing days on Waiheke, visiting wineries, boutique food producers, markets, arts and crafts and much more. This is a must see destination for our international A list celebs, so why not come and enjoy its many delights as well,

19th Mar 2021

\$2295 pp

**Day 1** With bags packed, and as always, a pick up at your door, we head off for a getaway to wonderful Waiheke Island. We enjoy a very relaxed drive to Auckland, getting to know your new tour mates and making sure we have plenty of stops along the way. Through the scenic Karangahake Gorge, we traverse the Hauraki Plains before climbing the Bombay Hills and then into central Auckland.

Before checking in to our city central hotel we offer the option for some retail therapy at the new Newmarket Westfield Shopping Mall, or if you prefer time to explore the Winter Gardens or Auckland Museum in the Auckland Domain. If these options are not for you then you can check into the hotel which is just a short 5 minute walk from the Holy Trinity Cathedral, a stunning building, well worth a visit.

Tonight we dine at the stunning Orbit Restaurant at Sky Tower, where you can enjoy 360 degree views of the city while having a lovely meal.

**Day 2** Time for us to skip across the Hauraki Gulf to Waiheke Island – our home for the next 3 nights. The ferry ride is spectacular with scenic views of the harbour, city and surrounding islands, such as Rangitoto and Browns Island. On this trip especially right in the middle of the Americas Cup races you may get to see these amazing yachts literally flying across the harbour as they practice for the actual race later in the day.

On arrival on Waiheke we head straight to the Ostend Markets, this is an island institution and should not be missed. It's a fun friendly, vibrant, diverse and interesting place for young and old and people from all walks of life. The Market has been a melting pot for all the people of Waiheke and its many visitors for around 30 years now. Chance to grab some interesting lunch snacks as you browse the many stalls, from food, arts, crafts and collectables, something for all.

Chance also to do a quick shop if you want at the adjacent Countdown for any of those nice treats you may fancy over the next 4 days at our apartments.

It's then just a short drive to our beach-side accommodation, time perhaps for a swim in the warm waters of the gulf or a stroll along the beach before dinner at a local restaurant this evening, our first on the island.

### Whats Included:

- 6 days of touring
- 5 nights quality accommodation
- Door to door service [home pickups]
- Quality Air-conditioned vehicle
- Fully guided with commentary
- All breakfasts and most dinners
- Some lunches
- Sky Tower Orbit Restaurant dinner
- Auckland Botanic Gardens
- Guided tours on Waiheke Island
- Wine tasting (at least two wineries)
- Visit to an Arts & Crafts gallery
- Visit Avocado and Olive oil makers
- Waiheke Island Village Museum
- Plenty of stops along the way

### You will see:

- Stunning scenery throughout
- The City of Sails - Auckland
- Sky Tower - Casino optional!
- The Waitemata Harbour
- Waiheke and the Hauraki Gulf
- The island from end to end

**Day 3** Today being a Sunday, we start as your guide and host usually does on Sundays, with a "BBQ and bubbles" breakfast, so join us in the courtyard and get to know your travelling companions better over a glass of bubbles or two.

Sundays are usually about relaxation, so we have made the activities optional this morning. Maybe you would like a morning boat cruise to explore the less

visited bays, for the adventurous you could do the Zip line. There are also the local church services you could attend if you wanted. Today we have arranged a special "Sunday Lunch" at a stunning location overlooking Palm Beach, this is usually our venue for the Christmas Day lunch on the Christmas tour. After our leisurely lunch we head back to our apartments to relax.

Dinner this evening is not included, so you can do your own thing, or try one of the local restaurants just a few minutes walk away [if you still have room].

**Day 4** Today we will be joined by our local guide for a morning exploring some of the many and lesser know artisan businesses on the island, such as Avocado and Olive oil producers, micro breweries and maybe another emerging winery. Our guide has a wealth of knowledge and is a real "Waihekean" so will impart some interesting stories as we travel the island.

Waiheke is also home to many gifted artists and the best place to see a range of their work is at the Waiheke Arts and Crafts Centre in Oneroa. So be sure to have your credit card to hand as there will be many works that may tempt you. Oneroa, the islands largest village on the island, has many interesting shops, boutiques, bars and cafes, so we have time here today for some "retail therapy" and for lunch as you please. This evening enjoy the company of your tour mates, with a wonderful dinner at another top local restaurant.

**Day 5** Today we explore the more remote eastern side of the island, leaving behind the residential areas where most of the 10,000 locals live. Joined again by our local guide, we travel along gravel roads, through farm land and vineyards, with truly spectacular views from hill top lookouts across the Haurakai Gulf to far off islands and the Coromandel Peninsula.

Our destination this morning is "Man O War" Bay and its beach front winery of the same name, the bay named by navigators in the late 1700s. This is part of a 4,500 acre family farm has 75 vineyards, as well as orchards, olive groves, restored native forests, beehives and livestock, all of which are used for our cellar door restaurant, a true farm-to-table ethos. Our visit begins with wine, olive oil and honey tastings, followed by our lovely included lunch today. Set amongst native trees overlooking the tranquil bay, this is a beautiful setting so you can see why visitors are not deterred by its remote location.

Following lunch and maybe a dip in the sea or a few games of Boule, we continue around the coast road, without many lookout points back to the mainland and Auckland City, past the many multi-million dollar homes of the rich and famous, sadly hidden behind secure fences, to our apartments at Onetangi for a quiet afternoon, before we head out to a local restaurant for dinner tonight, our last on the island, time to recount all the great experiences we have had.

**Day 6** Today we are homeward bound, departing Waiheke after breakfast and maybe that last stroll along the golden sand beach, we take the ferry back across the Hauraki Gulf to Half Moon Bay and begin our journey south.

We have one final treat in store though, our mid morning visit to the Auckland Botanic Gardens, covering 64 hectares of land and including 10 hectares of native forest, it opened to the public in 1982 so is a young garden by world standards. The gardens are home to more than 10,000 plants from around the world as well as many native species, so something for everyone to enjoy. Before we depart for Tauranga, you should visit Café Miko, located in the Huakaiwaka visitor centre, there is a wide selection of food available for lunch if needed, or just spend time here to wander the gardens and woodland.

We will make a mid-way stop in Paeroa on the route back to Tauranga and will have you dropped at your door late afternoon after this great trip.

#### Not included:

- Any lunches unless specified\*
- Morning/afternoon tea stops\*
- Any alcoholic beverages with meals

\* Please note, that unless specified in the itinerary we do not usually include the cost of lunches or morning and afternoon tea stops in the tour cost, but we always make stops where there are a range of options available so you can choose what you want, and have flexibility to do things on your own if you wish.



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