



Coromandel & the Far North Explorer

12 days | starts in Rotorua, finishes in Auckland

Beginning in Rotorua, we walk amongst some peaceful lakes of this volcanic area before heading to the coastal Bay of Plenty and the Coromandel Peninsula. Explore the rugged coastline and delightful bays with plenty of walks. If you fancy, take a relaxing kayak trip exploring amazing sea caves and off-shore islands. Visit one of Auckland's lush off-shore protected bird sanctuary islands in the Hauraki Gulf to get a real sense of what our country was like before the introduction of land based predators. Cruise, sail or kayak the Bay of Islands – the best way to explore the myriad of off-shore islands, or visit the very tip of NZ where the Pacific Ocean meets the Tasman Sea. Experience the meaning of New Zealand's unique Treaty of Waitangi in the historic town of Waitangi.

Moving to the western side of the Far North, explore the interesting settlements and stand beneath our biggest Kauri trees - at over 2,000 years old - they will take your breath away. Take a locally guided night time walk in a magnificent ancient forest gaining a fascinating insight into the Maori history and mythology so deeply entwined in the area. After a final evening in a beautiful seaside village, our tour finishes in Auckland, the 'City of Sails'.

This is a fantastic way to explore New Zealand's 'winterless north'. Our carefully selected walks give you a real feel for the areas, ranging from lake-side, to coastal, to giant ancient forests.

Day 1 Rotorua - Katikati

We waste no time getting into our first walk of the tour, with a walk alongside a beautiful lake on the outskirts of Rotorua [4hrs; Grade 2]. This interesting area has been shaped by a huge volcanic eruption that occurred 1886, and the pumice type volcanic soil is evident along the trail. Departing Rotorua we make our way to the Bay of Plenty coastal region, renowned for its great climate, lifestyle and home to our iconic kiwifruit. Our first night is spent on an organic orchard on the outskirts of Tauranga. (L/D)

Day 2 Katikati - Hahei

This morning we do a walk [3hrs; Grade 2] in a spectacular coastal reserve, with panoramic ocean views, mature forest, and pohutukawa tree-fringed bays. An opportunity for a swim in the surf at the end may be very inviting. We continue up the Coromandel Peninsula – a special part of NZ with a stunning coastline, quiet villages and long stretches of golden beaches. Our accommodation for the next two nights is in a small village – one of the most picturesque areas of the Coromandel. (B/L/D)

Day 3 Hahei

Another two beautiful walk options this morning take us to a secluded cove and along a sandy golden beach [2hrs; Grade 1], and the second is rich in history, encompassing the area where James Cook anchored in 1770 [2hrs; Grade 1]. We also visit a nearby beach that features thermal hot water springing right out of the sand. There is a guided kayak option available – exploring amazing sea caves and off-shore islands. Also time to relax and enjoy the ambience of this small village. (B/L/D)

Day 4 Hahei - Thames

Today we continue up the coast visiting some isolated bays, affording us magnificent views of the interesting Mercury Islands. We cross the steep and rugged peninsula to historic Coromandel Town, where you have the opportunity to lunch at one of the charming local cafes, before heading down the contrasting rocky western side of this coast with great views of the Firth of Thames. En route today we do a few short walks [Grade 1] exploring local areas. Eat out at a local restaurant in the old gold mining town of Thames. (B)

Tour Map



Grade



Tour Details

Tour Price: \$4,800
Single supplement: \$850

Deposit: \$500
What's included? See bottom of page.

Departure Dates:

May 8 – 19, 2012
Nov 19 – 30, 2012

Tours outside these dates are run on demand for groups of 8+ people and can be customised to suit your requirements.

Day 5 Thames - Waiwera

Drive along the sea-bird coast, with an opportunity to walk through the Miranda wetlands - an important wintering ground for thousands of Arctic nesting shorebirds (season and tide dependant). We do a walk [3hrs Grade 2] in the lovely forest of the Hunua Ranges before continuing north. Our accommodation for the next two nights is north of Auckland, adjacent to one of the city's most picturesque regional parks with splendid walking opportunities [Grade 2]. Hot thermal pools are available this evening also. (B/L/D)

Day 6 Tiritiri Matangi Island

Today from our base at Waiwera, we take a ferry across Gulf Harbour to the beautiful off-shore island of Tiritiri Matangi. Spend the day exploring this unique island, which has been cleared of predators and is a sanctuary for many of our native birds long extinct on the mainland. The walking trail also affords great views of the Hauraki Gulf - one of Auckland's favoured sailing playgrounds. (B/L/D)

Day 7 Waiwera - Pahia

Today we begin exploring the beauty of Northland. After travelling north in our vehicle, we have a short stop in the city of Whangarei before our first taste of a Northland forest. Our walk [4hrs Grade 3] takes us across farmland and into a tropical forest with great examples of our indigenous palms, tree ferns and broadleaf tree species. We take in the serenity while picnicking alongside a meandering stream deep in the forest. Back in the bus, we visit the site of an interesting historic Maori pa and battle site, before arriving at our accommodation in the small town of Pahia. (B/L/D)

Day 8 Bay of Islands

We use the relaxed town of Pahia as a base to explore the historic and picturesque spots of the Bay of Islands. Experience the meaning of New Zealand's unique Treaty of Waitangi when we visit the Treaty grounds. Opt to explore the quaint village of Russell - a short ferry ride across the bay from Pahia - and home to some of the country's oldest residences, or do one of the short walks in the area. Lunch and dinner are not included today to give you the opportunity to experience some local options. (B)

Day 9 Bay of Islands

Today is a free day for you to explore the Bay's islands and coastline at your leisure. There are many options such as a trip on a sailing boat or cruise vessel, a fishing trip or a guided kayak trip. Or take a day trip up to the top of the North Island to Cape Reinga, with its lighthouse and white sandy beach stretching for miles. There are some superb walking options as well. Alternatively just take some time out and relax and write postcards. (B/D)

Day 10 Pahia - Omapere

We continue our journey today taking in the best of the far north. Our first walk [2hrs; Grade 1] encompasses forest, wetland mangroves and river highlights. Our second walk takes us off the beaten track to a beautifully secluded peninsula with amazing views of the dramatic landscape and coast [2hrs; Grade 2]. We visit the historic fishing village of Mangonui where we dine of fresh fish and chips for lunch - a kiwi classic! The drive continues south west - an interesting journey through quiet rural scenery and the real heartland of the Far North. Stay the night in a tiny village on the contrastingly wild west coast, in a beachfront resort. (B/L)

Day 11 Omapere

Today we explore a wild deserted piece of coastline, seeped in history and featuring spectacular dunes, with a lovely walk [3hrs; Grade 2]. Later in the day we visit the magical and ancient Waipoua Forest, home to the giant kauri trees, and enjoy a series of short walks that showcase these amazing trees [1.5hrs; Grade 1]. We celebrate our final evening together back at our beachfront accommodation. This evening take an optional twilight forest tour with local Maori guides and gain a fascinating insight into the Maori history and mythology so deeply entwined in the area! (B/L)

Day 12 Omapere - Auckland

Today we reluctantly leave our little piece of paradise and head south again. After lunch we do an exhilarating coastal walk along Pohutukawa tree fringed cliff-tops, featuring dramatic headlands, off-shore islands and splendid isolation [3hrs; Grade 2]. Following our walk we continue on to Auckland where the tour ends, arriving in the city by approximately 5pm. (B/L)

Included in the tour package:

All prices are in New Zealand dollars and include GST of 15%. The fare includes just about everything including: 11 nights accommodation; 7 evening meals, 9 lunches, 11 breakfasts and plenty of healthy snacks in between (as indicated on the itinerary); 2 guides; ferry trip and locally guided walk to Tiritiri Matangi Island Reserve; a guided tour of the Waitangi Treaty Grounds; and all transport and guided hikes.

Testimonials

"What a lovely surprise to receive a package from NZ today containing the CD of our trip! It brought back many happy memories of one of the best holidays I've ever had. What excellent organization - the walks were wonderful and both the accommodation and Sue's cooking were superb. It's hard to pick out the highlights as everything was so good, but I especially enjoyed the commentaries as we drove along in the bus. I've learnt so much about the history and culture of NZ and of course about your native vegetation and animal and bird life. Another magical experience was the night-time walk through the forest to visit Tane Mahuta, and listening to our guide's beautiful voice singing through the misty stillness under the full moon...very special! Eric and I have been poring over your brochures and are already planning another trip, this time of course to the South Island. You certainly haven't seen the last of me. May PureTrails continue to flourish!"
Janet Sowden, Australia, May 10

"Many thanks, Sue and John, for a wonderful 12 days of touring, walking, wading, chatting, listening, eating and laughing. Our wonderings around Coromandel and Northland exceeded my expectations and your leadership, knowledge and cooking skills made every moment enjoyable. I look forward to meeting you again to ramble round the South Island next time."
Penny Sardone, Australia, April 08

"Here we are again for our 3rd PureTrails adventure! We are kiwi's - however the tracks and places we go are always interesting and most are quite new to us - I just love the places Sue and Hilary find for us to stay!"
Anne & John Roche, New Zealand, April 08

Not included in the tour price is 4 evening meals and 3 lunches; wine and beer [you are welcome to BYO]; and any optional adventure activities you would like to do along the way. We have indicated just some of the options in the itinerary, but the possibilities are endless!

Level of Difficulty:



Grade 1

Walks on well formed walking trails or beaches with a mostly even surface, possibly with some slopes or steps. Distances walked average 5 - 10km, with a 50-150m altitude gain. For this grade we recommend an average level of fitness.



Grade 2

Walks on well formed walking trails with some slopes or steps. There may be muddy patches, tree roots and rocks to negotiate. Distances walked average 5 - 12km, with a 150-400m altitude gain. For this grade we recommend an average level of fitness.



Grade 3

Walks on walking trails with some steep slopes or steps. There may be muddy patches, tree roots, minor stream crossings and rocks to negotiate. Distances walked average 5 - 12km, with a 300-650m altitude gain. For this grade we recommend an above average level of fitness.