

New Zealand Coastal Odyssey Itinerary

[Link: New Zealand Coastal Odyssey](#)

Tour Overview

Discover the hidden gems of Aotearoa/New Zealand and its three main islands (the North Island, South Island, and Stewart Island) on this unforgettable 12-day expedition. From the bright lights of New Zealand's largest city to the geothermal wonderland of Rotorua, Dunedin's avant-garde fashion labels and the adventure playground of Queenstown, this is the ultimate Kiwi adventure to experience it all.

With the 9th longest coastline in the world measuring some 15,000 kilometres, you will wind through narrow fiords, circumnavigate small islands, explore secluded bays, and visit quaint seaside towns. Bordering the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and once part of Gondwanaland, New Zealand has a fascinating natural and cultural history from its first Polynesian arrivals through European settlement, early sealing and whaling and world-leading conservation efforts. Highlights include the sunken valleys and towering mountains of Fiordland's Doubtful and Dusky Sounds; the volcanoes, hot springs and geysers of Rotorua; the 'World's Coolest Little Capital' (Wellington); the scenic playground of the Marlborough Sounds; the Scottish city of Dunedin; the iconic wildlife havens of Stewart Island and nearby predator-free Ulva Island; the French-infused village of Akaroa; and the City of Sails, Auckland.

Those looking for a thrilling exploration filled with wildlife encounters will enjoy observations of dolphins and whale watching, as well as exceptional birdwatching, including several rare endemic species such as on Ulva Island, and an albatross colony on the Otago Peninsula. Those with a taste for gourmet delights will enjoy experiencing some of New Zealand's award-winning cuisine including the wines of Canterbury, Marlborough and cheese in Akaroa.

Our vessel Heritage Adventurer is built for exploring regions like New Zealand's intricate coastline, navigating through fiords, cruising up harbours, and allowing for Zodiac cruising to remote and isolated bays. We invite you to join us on this in-depth exploration of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Itinerary

Day 1: Auckland



Guests should make their way to the designated hotel where we will spend the first night of the expedition. This evening there will be an informal get-together at the hotel for dinner; an excellent opportunity to meet fellow adventurers on your voyage and some of our expedition team.

Day 2: Auckland

Today we enjoy breakfast in the hotel restaurant and have free time to explore Auckland before lunch and embarking Heritage Adventurer. You will have time to settle into your accommodation and familiarise yourself with the ship. You are invited to join the expedition team in the Observation Lounge and up on the Observation Deck as we set our course to Tauranga and our adventure begins.

Day 3: Tauranga/Rotorua



From our berth in Tauranga we drive inland, passing the rich horticultural region of the Bay of Plenty as we travel to the geothermal heartland of Rotorua. Marvel at the abundance of steam vents, geysers and bubbling mud pools as we explore one of the most geologically active regions on the planet and experience Māori arts, crafts and culture.

Day 4: At Sea

Sailing down the scenic North Island, enjoy a day at sea attending lectures, relaxing on board or looking for whales and dolphins from the Observation Deck, Lounge and Bridge as we sail to Wellington.

Day 5: Wellington



New Zealand's 'coolest little capital', Wellington is an exceptional natural harbour, where Heritage Adventurer will be docked in the centre of the action. From here you can easily explore this vibrant city. Visit the cable car, explore the world renowned Zealandia nature reserve, discover the Botanic Gardens and visit Te Papa New Zealand's national museum.

Day 6: Marlborough Sounds



This morning Heritage Adventurer sails into the sheltered waters of Marlborough Sounds, a beautiful labyrinth of waterways intersecting the northern shores of the South Island. Famed for the breathtaking beauty of their winding cobalt waterways, iconic landscapes, lush native forests, wildlife and remote coastlines these regions are also rich in early New Zealand history and the location of some of the country's most important conservation efforts. Take the opportunity to explore a coastal trail through the lush regenerating forest and watch for native birds including Saddleback, Parakeets and Robins on one of the island's nature reserves.

Day 7: Akaroa



Heritage Adventurer will make her way through the Akaroa heads and anchor in the sheltered waters off Canterbury's largest harbour. It was here, beneath the eroded volcanic hills of Banks Peninsula, that the French attempted to settle in 1840. The French connection remains to this day with a certain je ne sais quoi imbibing the township of Akaroa. Explore Akaroa, greater Banks Peninsula or one of the local nature walks.

Day 8: Dunedin



This morning sail into the beautiful Otago Harbour, watch closely for Northern Royal Albatross at the Tairoa Head Albatross Colony. Explore the famed fashion-forward city of Dunedin, the Edinburgh of the south, and its rich history as the gateway to Otago. Explore the scenic Otago Peninsula where New Zealand Sea Lions rest and former Bird of the Year Yellow-eyed Penguins/Hoiho can be spotted in one of their last mainland strongholds, and where the beautiful farmed hills roll down towards white sand beaches.

Day 9: Stewart Island



New Zealand's third island is well off the usual beaten tourist track. It is a wonderfully tranquil place; the scenery of untouched bushland is stunning. We will enjoy a morning exploring Ulva Island which is rich in history and wildlife, being a predator-free island since 1997 the bird song and wildlife is some of the best. In Paterson Inlet you will have time to explore the sandy beaches of Boulder Bay and West End Beach or just enjoy some time around Post Office Bay and Sydney Cove. Some of the wildlife you may get to see while walking the tracks on Ulva Island include Stewart Island Robin, Stewart Island Weka, South Island Kaka, Kereru (Wood Pigeon), Mohua (Yellowhead), Redcrowned Parakeet, Fantail, Bellbird and Tui. There are many more species that may also be seen, our knowledgeable expedition guides will be listening for bird calls and keeping a close watch in overhead canopies and the surrounding shrubs to identify further species. During our time in Paterson Inlet there will also be the opportunity to explore the quirky town centre Oban in Halfmoon Bay where a drink with a view can be enjoyed at the iconic South Sea Hotel. There are also some beautiful walks in the surrounding forests.

Days 10 & 11: Fiordland



We have two days to explore the incredible wilderness of Fiordland in the south-west corner of the South Island. This is an area rich in history, majestic scenery and abundant in wildlife. Fiordland was well known to local Māori, with the demi-god Tuteraki-whanoa being said to have used his adze, Te Hamo, to carve out the region's fiords. Captain Cook and his crew landed here on HMS Resolution in 1773, they were the first Europeans to visit Fiordland, subsequently spending five weeks in Dusky Sound. Cook's records of his discovery and maps attracted sealers and whalers. Historically this region is very important and shaped the future of the country. Fiordland's coast is only accessible by sea, making it the most remote region of New Zealand's mainland. Waterfalls, streams, rivers, and fiords are enveloped with misty veils that come and go, revealing steep gradients of mountain peaks and sheltered valleys. A rugged terrain, the thickly forested floors are covered with ferns, lichens, and mosses. Bottlenose Dolphins, Fiordland Crested Penguins and Little Blue Penguins are all residents of the fiords; during our time here we will look for them. Our schedule gives us the flexibility to visit as much as possible, areas we plan to explore include Doubtful, Dusky and Milford Sound, Acheron Passage, Astronomer's Point and Pickersgill Harbour. Enjoy a stunning sunset cruise in one of New Zealand's most iconic destinations, Milford Sound. During our time in Dusky Sound there will be the optional opportunity to experience an unforgettable helicopter flight through the Sound swooping down alongside Cooper Island and Cook Channel with a landing on Mt Pender where spectacular vistas across constellations of islands stretching into the horizon and dotting the winding fiords can be enjoyed. Our final plan will be determined by the weather. The Captain and Expedition Leader will work hard to make the best use of our time in this incredible region of New Zealand, including areas that a few New Zealanders have visited.

Day 12: Invercargill/Queenstown



Early this morning we will arrive in the Port of Bluff. After a final breakfast we bid farewell to our fellow voyagers and take a complimentary coach transfer to either Invercargill or Queenstown Airports. In case of unexpected delays due to weather and/or port operations we ask you not to book any onward travel until after midday from Invercargill and after 3pm from Queenstown. Note: During our voyage, circumstances may make it necessary or desirable to deviate from the proposed itinerary. This can include poor weather and opportunities for making unplanned excursions. Your Expedition Leader will keep you fully informed. This tour offers a variety of activities and excursions. Your personal interests will determine which of these you wish to join. Please note that some activities and excursions will run at similar times, and it will not be possible to participate in both. Accordingly, refunds for excursions and missed landings are not available. Voyages are planned and scheduled pending final regulatory approval.

What to Expect

The focus and emphasis of every expedition is getting you ashore as often as possible for as long as possible with maximum safety and comfort. Our Expeditions are accompanied by some of the most experienced naturalists and guides, who have devoted a lifetime to field research in the areas that we visit.

This is a general natural history and cultural expedition rather than a dedicated birding tour. Travellers can look forward to a mix of wildlife viewing, cultural experiences, and time to appreciate the region's incredible scenery — with opportunities for birding included along the way.

This expedition cruise necessitates passengers to be in reasonably good health. Zodiac cruises and transfer times can be lengthy. You must be able to climb stairs between decks on the ship, as well as the external gangway stairs to transfer between the zodiac and ship.

Some of our shore landings will be 'wet', requiring waterproof boots. Once you have left the zodiac, you'll find our shore excursions accommodate both those who wish to enjoy a gentle stroll and those who prefer more active hikes. The excursion may involve walking over uneven or sandy terrain in variable weather conditions. Our onboard specialists will join us on these shore excursions to provide interpretation and narration to these wonderful landscapes and experiences.

When the ship is underway, it is a wonderful time to join a naturalist on deck, take photos of the stunning scenery, or get caught up on some reading in the library. In addition, our resource staff will give informative talks at various times throughout the voyage.

Meals in the ship's dining room are a great opportunity to meet new friends and recount the day's adventures. Special diets can be accommodated with advance notice. Safety is also a top priority with us - our team has extensive experience in the field, and all of our Voyages are run in conjunction with operators with the highest safety standards. The Heritage Adventurer is equipped with a well-stocked hospital and medical doctor on voyages.

Weather, ice, government regulations, and community requests may necessitate changes to the planned itineraries and/or the cancellation of certain shore excursions and enhancements. Published

itineraries are examples only and we reserve the right to change or modify the itinerary and landing sites at any time prior or during an expedition. Changes will be communicated at your expedition orientation or during your onboard expedition briefings.

We know that everyone travels for different reasons. Over the years, however, we have found one common element among the guest who choose to travel with us - a thirst of knowledge and authentic experience. Knowing this drives us to ensure the highest quality learning experience on our trips, by taking time to carefully design each trip we offer.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- Pre/Post cruise transfers
- One night hotel accommodation in a twin share room (inc. dinner/breakfast)
- All on board ship accommodation with meals.
- House beer, wine and soft drinks with lunch and dinner
- All shore excursions and activities.
- Programme of lectures by noted naturalists.

Tour Price Does Not Include

- International/domestic flights
 - All items of a personal nature
 - Laundry
 - Drinks
 - Gratuities
 - Visas
 - Travel insurance
 - Optional Helicopter excursion
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