



Essential DownUnder Travel's Exclusive

COROMANDEL & EAST CAPE CULTURE TOUR

Meals included indicated by B, L, D

DAY 01 **KIA ORA AND WELCOME TO AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND**

After arriving Auckland International Airport, you will be met by our local representative who will deliver your travel documents. Transfer by private car to your accommodation. Remainder of the day free to explore the city at your leisure.

ACCOMMODATION: MERCURE
HOTEL AUCKLAND (2 NIGHTS) Deluxe
room



DAY 02 **AUCKLAND**

Spend a day exploring Auckland from a Maori perspective with a small group coach tour. First visit Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill), originally the site of a Maori fortified village, to see the panoramic views of the Hauraki Gulf, Auckland City and Rangitoto Island. You will learn the significance of this place to Maori, as well as the controversial history of more recent times.

Next you will travel to a boutique village where you can buy your lunch at a café, enjoy mixing with the locals, and view some authentic Maori/NZ-made arts and crafts.

Then continue on to the west coast for a bush walk by a fresh water stream. Walk amongst the plants and trees, and learn some of the ancestral knowledge of the traditional Maori medicinal and practical uses for them. Learn about the Maori Creation stories and Tane Mahuta - God of the Forest. The day finishes by exploring the realm of Tangaroa, God of the Sea, with a walk along the velvety sands of one of Auckland's famous black sand surf beaches.

DAY 03 **AUCKLAND/COROMANDEL PENINSULA**

This morning collect a Mitsubishi Outlander or similar 2 litre automatic 4WD vehicle. Drive south over the Bombay Hill, east around the Firth of Thames into the relatively untouched beauty of the Coromandel Peninsula.

En route you may wish to stop at the Miranda Shore Bird Centre, an important wintering ground for thousands of Arctic nesting shorebirds (cost not included).

Then drive to the gold mining region of Thames township. Time permitting you may wish to drive up the coast visiting the lovely Rapaura Water Gardens (cost not included).

Continue to Coromandel Township, where well-known potter Barry Brickell's narrow gauge Driving Creek Railway runs. He built the track through the forest to bring clay down the mountain to his kilns (tour included). Enjoy a scenic ride in this open sided Driving Creek Railway train on its 3km narrow gauge track with 3 tunnels, 2 spirals, 5 reversing points and 6 viaducts originally constructed to retrieve clay for the local potter Barry Brickell. It now provides a interesting ride through the thick regenerating Coromandel bush with a panoramic view at the mountain top terminus (The Eyefull Tower!).

From here drive down the Peninsula to the summer resort of Tairua. Your accommodation is a motor inn set on the edge of the with tropical plantings and white shell pathways. There is a restaurant next door.

ACCOMMODATION: PACIFIC HARBOUR HOTEL (2 NIGHTS)

DAY 03

COROMANDEL PENINSULA

(L)

This morning join your guide for full day tour, which will take you into the native bush where you will learn about the flora and fauna of the area as well as the history of this gold mining region and the myths and legends of the locals.

In the afternoon travel along the Pacific Coast with panoramic views of off-shore islands and white sandy beaches. Visit Hotwater Beach to see the hot mineral water bubbling out of the sand then see scenic Cathedral Cove (moderate fitness for walk required or take a boat cruise at extra cost) learning more about the area as you go. Lunch included.

DAY 04

COROMANDEL PENINSULA

Today travel down the Pacific Coast Highway through the resort town of Whangamata, the Port City of Tauranga and the Kiwifruit Capital of Te Puke. Continue on to the town of Whakatane. Your accommodation is a motel located across from the harbour with a café on site.

ACCOMMODATION: WHITE ISLAND RENDEZVOUS (1 NIGHT)
Deluxe studio motel unit

DAY 05

WHAKATANE/TE KAHA

This morning enjoy a helicopter trip (weather permitting/minimum numbers apply for trip to operate) across to the sub-marine volcano of White Island situated 48 kms off shore. Enjoy a guided tour of the island, learning about the history and features (hardhat and gas mask supplied) before returning to the mainland (duration 2.5 hours).

This afternoon travel around the East Cape coastline past sandy beaches and small bays to Te Kaha.

ACCOMMODATION: TE KAHA BEACH RESORT (1 NIGHT)

DAY 06

TE KAHA/ANAURA BAY

Drive to the township of Te Araroa to meet your local Maori guide for the morning. Leave your rental vehicle at Te Araroa, then with your guide enjoy a trip to the most eastern point of New Zealand to see the lighthouse on the East Cape and enjoy a picnic lunch (weather permitting). The area has a lot of history and stories which will be shared with you.

From Te Araroa drive your rental vehicle following your guide to Awatere Marae (Maori meeting house and grounds) where you will be welcomed and taken to see the carved Meeting House, and to meet the Master Carver who did much of the work here (available conditions permitting). Continue the tour travelling to St Mary's Church at Tikitiki - one of the most ornately carved Maori churches in the country, and learn about the stories the carvings have to tell.

Leave your guide at this point and drive south down the coast through Ruatoria and on to Anaura Bay which is nestled on the sea edge. Time permitting you can relax on the beach, swim, take a scenic walk or perhaps explore more of the area.

Your accommodation is a guesthouse at the north end of the bay overlooking the ocean.

ACCOMMODATION: RANGIMARIE B&B (1 NIGHT)



DAY 07 (B)

ANAURA BAY/GISBORNE

Breakfast at the guesthouse before driving on to Whangara to meet the guide who will take you on a tour of the country where the famous movie, 'Whale Rider' was filmed. From the beach see the Marae where the film was shot, view the whale props and see the waka (canoe). Please note if there is a tangi (funeral) taking place at the Marae, the tour will be cancelled.

Continue your journey south to Gisborne. En route you may wish to stop at Tologa Bay, where New Zealand's longest wharf is to be found. The area is also significant in that Capt James Cook landed at Cook's Cove on his first exploratory journey. Drive into the city of Gisborne, which is the first city on earth to see each new day. Gisborne is home to one of the most historically important sites in New Zealand - the first meeting place between Maori and European, when Captain James Cook first came ashore from the Endeavour in October 1769.

ACCOMMODATION: EMERALD HOTEL (1 NIGHT)



DAY 08 **GISBORNE/LAKE WHARAMARINO**

This morning you may wish to enjoy more of the area perhaps visiting the wineries, enjoying the beach or driving out to the Eastwoodhill Arboretum to see the collection of flora (not included).

Later in the day drive down south across the Mahia Peninsula, then inland to Tuia and Lake Whakamarino, near the Te Urewera National Park, which contains the largest forested wilderness remaining in the North Island, and Lake Waikaremoana.

Your accommodation is a self-contained cabin with private bathroom facilities behind the main lodge and surrounded by mature trees. Meals are available at extra cost at the lodge.



ACCOMMODATION: LAKE WHAKAMARINO LODGE (2 NIGHTS)
Self contained cabin

DAY 09 **TE UREWERA NATIONAL PARK**

Day at leisure for your own choice of activities – there are excellent walking tracks around nearby Lake Waikaremoana, horse treks, kayaking, guided tours and of course excellent trout fishing (not included).

DAY 10 **LAKE WHAKAMARINA/DEPART NEW ZEALAND**

Drive from here to Rotorua/Gisborne Airport and return rental vehicle (airport return fee applies). Depart Rotorua/Gisborne. You may wish to continue with other touring in New Zealand.

COST PER PERSON – USD \$2,701.00*

**Based on double occupancy. Price subject to confirmation of all arrangements fluctuations the exchange rate. Price is valid through Feb. 2009. Call for an updated price.*