



# Hidden Gems of the North

## AN 11 DAY TOUR OF THE NORTH ISLAND'S UNIQUE AND HIDDEN GEMS

Start touring the North Island in NZ's capital city - exploring fascinating Weta Workshop and tranquil Zealandia Ecosanctuary. Then travel north by luxury coach to take in the beautiful vistas of Taranaki and New Plymouth. Head over to Tongariro National Park for a scenic gondola ride on the new Sky Waka. An art deco experience in Napier follows, with a visit to one of the wonderful Hawkes Bay wineries. Explore the uniquely themed Hamilton Gardens, have lunch at Zealong Tea Estate, visit fanciful Hobbiton and the famous glowworm caves of Waitomo. Finish the North Island off with an evening's dinner and sail on Auckland's glorious harbour before flying home.

**Everything's included – transport, accommodation, meals and a fun sociable group of like-minded travellers, all keen to experience the scenic beauty of Aotearoa!**



#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Weta Workshop & Zealandia Ecosanctuary
- Pukeiti Gardens & Govett-Brewster Art Gallery
- Huka Falls & National Trout Centre
- Mt Ruapehu's new Sky Waka
- Napier Art Deco Vintage Car Tour & Hawke's Bay Winery
- Fanciful Hobbiton, Hamilton Gardens & Zealong Tea Estate
- Waitomo Glowworm Caves & Sailing Auckland's Harbour

## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Arrive in Wellington

On arrival, transfer to your hotel. After a welcome briefing, take a stroll to Courtney Place for a Welcome Dinner in the dining and entertainment hub of Wellington.

*Meals – Dinner*



### Destination Information

Wellington - Nestled at the bottom of the North Island on the Cook Strait, Wellington sits at the heart of New Zealand – and so it should as the capital city. Famous for a vibrant creative culture fuelled by great food, wine, craft beer, coffee and events, Wellington is a cosmopolitan city with an energetic personality.

### Day 2: Wellington - Weta Workshop & Zealandia Ecosanctuary

After breakfast head to Weta Workshop, the award-winning design studio that has created special effects for many blockbuster movies such as Lord of the Rings and Avatar. Our



private tour will unlock some of the movie magic! Afterwards it's a short drive to the tranquil urban forests of Zealandia Ecosanctuary for lunch and some time to enjoy a scenic guided walk. The Ecosanctuary is home to a huge variety of native birds and you may even spot a tuatara in the wild! On our way back to the hotel, you will have the option of being dropped off at the Botanical Gardens, for those who want to experience the Cable Car ride down to the city centre (at own expense). Dinner tonight will include a chance to taste some famous Wellington microbrews.

*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### Destination Information

Weta Workshop – An award-winning special effects and prop company based in Wellington's suburb of Miramar producing effects for both television and film. The company is named after the New Zealand wētā, one of the world's largest insects.



Zealandia - The world's first fully-fenced urban ecosanctuary, with a 500-year vision to connect people with nature and help native wildlife flourish in Wellington and beyond. The 225-hectare ecosanctuary is a ground-breaking conservation project that protects over 40 rare native wildlife species.

### **Day 3: Wellington - New Plymouth**

Leaving Wellington, travel north along the west coast, stopping for a short tour of the iconic Foxton Windmill - a full-size replica of a traditional 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch flour mill.

Our next stop will be the amazing Tawhiti Museum, widely acclaimed as the best private museum in the country. The creation of artist Nigel Ogle, this museum uses life size exhibits and minutely detailed historical dioramas to present NZ heritage in a series of engaging displays. Enjoy lunch in the Museum's themed café and a wander through the museum itself afterwards. Later this afternoon, we arrive at our accommodation in New Plymouth and dine at a wee gem seaside.



*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### **Destination Information**

Foxton Windmill – De Molen (Foxton Windmill) was officially opened on 13th April 2003 and is a replica of a traditional 17th Century Dutch flour mill. The project was hatched in 1987 between two Dutch immigrants who had settled in Foxton because the surrounding landscape reminded them strongly of home - flat lands, lots of green grass, surrounded by water and there was always an abundance of wind. The only thing missing was a windmill!

Tawhiti Museum – Widely acclaimed as the best private museum in the country, the museum uses life size exhibits and scale models to present NZ heritage in a series of super realistic and engaging displays. All the displays are designed and built on the premises in the 'Body Shop' and accompanying studios.

New Plymouth – New Plymouth is the largest city of the Taranaki region on the North Island's west coast. It is named after the English city of Plymouth in Devon as it is here that the first English settlers migrated from. New Plymouth is also well-known for its dormant volcano – Mt Egmont.

### **Day 4: New Plymouth - Pukeiti Gardens & Govett-Brewster Art Gallery**

You may fancy a long walk on the beach this morning before breakfast in the hotel? Official sightseeing however begins at Te Rewa Bridge - a New Plymouth landmark that is reminiscent of a whale skeleton or a breaking wave. Next, drive to the famous Pukeiti Gardens, at the foot of Mt Taranaki, for lunch in the Rainforest Eatery and to have a walking tour of their extraordinary seasonal gardens.





This afternoon, drive back to New Plymouth to have a guided tour of the architecturally-stunning Govett-Brewster Gallery which celebrates the extraordinary work of Len Lye, modernist filmmaker and kinetic artist.

*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **Destination Information**

Pukeiti Gardens – Pukeiti hosts one of the world’s biggest and most diverse collections of rhododendrons and other exotic plants, creating an explosion of colour among lush, native rainforest and mountain streams. It is located in a gap between two sections of the Egmont National Park, to the northwest of the main cone of mesmerizing Mount Taranaki.

Govett-Brewster Gallery - The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery is NZ’s most courageous museum of contemporary art and the global home of Len Lye’s art and ideas post film-making.

#### **Day 5: New Plymouth - Lake Taupo**

Relax and enjoy a scenic drive through some of the most untouched parts of New Zealand. Our first stop will be for a unique alpaca experience and light lunch at Nevelea Alpacas, nestled in the hills of the King Country on the adventure highway. Before arriving at our hotel in Taupo this afternoon, we'll stop and take a short walk to the magnificent Huka Falls where more than 220,000 litres of water per second barrel over an 11 m high waterfall. Dinner tonight will be in Taupo itself.



*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

#### **Destination Information**

Nevelea Alpacas – This is the largest alpaca farm in New Zealand and is home to over 950 friendly alpacas. Alpacas have been valued for their soft luxurious fleeces for generations, their fleece has been called ‘the fibre of the gods’. At one time, South Americans also used their fleeces as a form of currency.

Taupo – A town in the central part of the North Island which sits adjacent to the vast waters of Lake Taupo, an old volcanic caldera. Water based activities, such as trout fishing and jetboating, are popular – as well as volcanic hot springs and other natural wonders.

#### **Day 6: Tongariro National Park**

On our drive to Tongariro National Park this morning, we'll stop for a tour of the National Trout Centre - a fascinating museum, aquarium and hatchery near Turangi. Afterward, we'll continue on our journey into the National Park and ascend Mt Ruapehu on the new Sky Waka, New Zealand’s largest



gondola, enjoying the panoramic views of its three volcanos. A buffet lunch will be at the Pinnacles - New Zealand's highest dining experience. Later this afternoon, enjoy some free time back at the hotel before heading to dinner in the township of Taupo again.

*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### **Destination Information**

Tongariro National Park – Home to three active volcanic mountains, as well as iconic and majestic landscapes, Tongariro National Park is NZ's oldest, attracting adventurers of all ages since 1887.

National Trout Centre – Learn about the history of Trout and Fly fishing on the Tongariro River, one of the best fishing rivers in the world. View one of NZ's best collections of native freshwater fish in the Aquarium and walk through the working trout hatchery with up to 16000 baby trout or "trout fry" in residence.

Sky Waka - Ride 1.8 kms through the sky on the most advanced gondola in NZ, with floor to ceiling, 360 degrees views. Journey over waterfalls and ancient lava flows and take in the majestic scenery of Mt Ruapehu and its neighbouring volcanoes, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro.

### **Day 7: Taupo - Napier**

After an early breakfast, take a scenic drive to Napier where you'll enjoy an Art Deco Vintage Car Tour of the city. Some wine tastings and lunch will also be had at one of Hawke Bay's leading wineries before checking into your hotel later this afternoon. Take the time to wander around Napier's waterfront, botanical gardens and boutique shops. Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant in the city.



*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### **Destination Information**

Napier – A coastal city set amid the renowned wine-producing region of Hawke's Bay. Rebuilt after the 1931 earthquake, Napier is known for art deco landmarks like the zigzag-patterned Daily Telegraph Building. Along the tree-lined waterfront promenade the Marine Parade, the Pania of the Reef statue depicting a Maori maiden, is a symbol of the city.

### **Day 8: Napier – Hamilton**

On our journey to Hamilton today, we'll stop and explore one of the best thermal reserves in New Zealand - Orakei Korako. Before a light lunch at their Café, we'll take a short boat ride across the lake to explore the thermal park ourselves. Dinner tonight will be in Hamilton's CBD and is walking distance from our hotel



*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*



### **Destination Information**

Orakei Korako Geothermal Park – A boat-accessible geothermal area featuring geysers, hot springs and mud pools, as well as a riverside cafe. Also known as ‘Hidden Valley’, the park area is highly active and a ‘must see’ attraction.

Hamilton - New Zealand’s fourth largest city, Hamilton is a thriving metropolitan hub on the banks of the mighty Waikato River. The area now covered by the city was originally the site of several Maori villages, including Kirikiriroa, from which the city takes its Māori name.

### **Day 9: Hamilton Gardens, Zealong & Hobbiton**

Explore the themed gardens at the award-winning Hamilton Gardens, including their recently completed surrealist garden. Lunch will be at New Zealand’s premier tea plantation, Zealong Tea Estate, in their luxuriously appointed restaurant. This afternoon we’ll visit the enchanting village of Hobbiton – one of the locations used in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Dinner tonight is back in Hamilton.



*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### **Destination Information**

Hamilton Gardens – The 54-hectare park is based on the banks of the Waikato River and includes enclosed gardens, open lawns, a lake, a nursery, a convention centre and the Hamilton East Cemetery. It tells the Story of Gardens through themed gardens only most dream about.

Zealong Tea Estate – Zealong is the only commercial tea estate in New Zealand, producing 100% organic award-winning tea, and is a world-leading destination for tea, art and hospitality.

Hobbiton Movie Set - An aerial search in 1998 led Sir Peter Jackson’s team of location scouts to the Alexander farm, a stunning 1,250 acre sheep farm in the heart of the Waikato. They quickly realised that the Hobbits™ had found a home here, and the region featured in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit trilogies.



### **Day 10: Hamilton - Auckland**

Our last day of touring in the North Island is very special indeed - starting with a guided tour through NZ’s famous glowworm caves in Waitomo. After lunch, we travel up to Auckland and check into our hotel located right in the CBD. This evening, we’ll experience a bit of sailing, and our Farewell Dinner, on Waitemata Harbour.

*Meals – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner*

### **Destinational Information**

Waitomo Caves - Known as one of New Zealand’s best natural attractions. The Glowworm Caves are made up of two levels - the upper being dry and decorated with stunning, delicate

cave formations and the lower level consisting of stream passages and glowworms explored by boat. Many guides are direct descendants of the Maori chief who originally explored the cave system.

Auckland – Based around two large harbours and encompassing 48 volcanic cones, Auckland is NZ's largest city. Also known as "The City of Sails" Auckland is a multi-cultural hub of food and wine, music, art and culture.

### **Day 11 – Auckland**

After breakfast in the morning, your tour officially ends. We will transfer you to Auckland Airport (if required).

## Hidden Gems of the North – Travel Information

### **TOUR INCLUSIONS**

- All meals and accommodation (3.5 – 4.5 star)
- All transportation and transfers
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- National Escort

*The only thing you have to pay for are personal expenditures such as drinks, optional excursions, insurance of any kind, early check-in or late check-out, laundry and souvenirs.*

*Tipping is also not included for both the coach driver and national escort.*

### **PHYSICAL FITNESS – LEVEL 2**

To travel on any of our tours requires a reasonable level of fitness, but it is more about spending time on your feet, over uneven surfaces, rather than covering large distances. You will need to be agile getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing steps. Our National Escort will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of the tour in New Zealand, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

### **ITINERARY CHANGES**

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

### **INSURANCE**

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents with them while on tour. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character. Hotels are generally rated as local 3.5 – 4.5 star standard. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff, and partners, to ensure that standards meet your needs and our requirements.



### **TRANSPORT**

Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Please note that it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner.

### **GROUP SIZE**

The group size for our Wendy Wu Tours Local Edition tours will be no more than 18 travellers in each group. All of our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 14 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

### **LUGGAGE**

All travelers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20 kilograms and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 7 kilograms. It is advisable that your luggage is lockable.

### **OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Any optional activities offered on tour will be at additional cost and are to be paid locally.

### **AFTER YOUR BOOKING**

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation. Your final payment will be due 45 days before departure. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately two weeks prior to departure.

**Last updated: February 2022**