



“Kia Ora!” GirlFriends Explore Nature and Culture in New Zealand

January 6-18, 2019

January 6 _____ (D)

Arrive in Auckland, New Zealand by 3pm. We will facilitate a group transfer at a local hotel or at the airport. We will meet and then check into our hotels (all will be 3 or 4 stars).

After a brief rest we will our first **GirlFriendCircles Meet and Greet** with a **Welcome Cocktail and Welcome Dinner.**

January 7 **Auckland: The Queen City of New Zealand** _____ (B, L)

After breakfast at our hotel, we are off to engage with a representative of **Global Women**. Established in 2009, the organization is a catalyst to transforming the leadership landscape of women in New Zealand and a champion of diversity and its positive impact on business performance. We will learn about women’s contribution to New Zealand’s economy and represent women leaders across industry sectors. We are then off to enjoy a **vibrant city tour**. We start in the city center including Queen Street, Karangahape or 'K' Rd, and Ponsonby. Then we'll cross over the Auckland Harbor Bridge where you will be treated to some of the best views of Auckland's skyline as we head back to the city, and explore Silo Park and Viaduct Harbor on the waterfront before making our way to the **Auckland Domain**. Situated atop a 62,000 year old volcano, the Auckland Domain is a beautiful city park which offers expansive views across the harbor to Rangitoto, Auckland's most iconic landmark. Continue through **Parnell Village**, where historic buildings have been transformed into a trendy shopping district. We will enjoy lunch and then enjoy a visit to the **Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki**, we will focus on contemporary Kiwi artists and the Maori portraits.

Dinner is on our own but we will make a reservation for those interested that features some of the local seafood.

January 8 **Waiheke Island: Hiking, Beauty, and Wine** (B,L)

Enjoy a day excursion on **Waiheke Island**. Today we will enjoy a 35 min ferry ride and start to immerse ourselves on native Maori culture. We will enjoy a moderate hike with our local Maori guide (this will be about 2 hours) who will share local history, cosmology stories and a picnic lunch with us while we are wowed by the coastal scenery. Our afternoon's highlight is **wine tasting at a local vineyard**. Waiheke Island is a renowned wine region that produces critically acclaimed artisan wines and provides distinctive wine experiences. Waiheke's vineyards produce wines of intense varietal flavor, with the freshness and purity of a pristine environment. We end our day in the City of Sails to enjoy dinner and local music at the **Auckland Jazz and Blues Club**.

January 9 **Kerikeri: A Day of Scenery & History** (B, L)

Today we check out of our hotel to enjoy a scenic drive toward the Northern tip of the North Island to Kerikeri (about 3 hours). We will visit **Rainbow Falls** upon arrival and then have lunch. Then, to stretch our legs we'll enjoy an easy 1.5 mile stroll along the river to **the Stone Store**, New Zealand's oldest building. Rewa's Village will take you back to a time before European settlement. Established in 1819, the **Kerikeri Mission Station** is one of the first places in New Zealand where Māori invited visitors to live among them. Built under the protection of local chiefs who were keen to harness the trade and technology of Europe, Kerikeri Mission Station grew amidst a backdrop of tribal warfare and ever-increasing visits from foreign ships. An option for this evening include checking out **The Centre** – a local arts & performance venue.

January 10 **Kerikeri: Leisure, Arts, and Cooking Class** (B, D)

This morning is dedicated to some deserved leisure! Sleep in, wander around the cute town, expand your horizons along the **Kerikeri Art & Craft Trail** and enjoy walking through the quaint shops. We'll reconnect after lunch to visit the **Wharepukue Sculpture Park** trail which shows works selected from open submissions and proposals by local, national and international artists. After we will meet a local **Soap Maker** and learn about her salves and traditional soap making. Lastly, we end our day cooking our own great dinner with a local chef.

January 11 **Waitangi: The History of the Maori** (B, L)

This morning check out of the hotel and we leave for a **full day excursion to Waitangi**, celebrated as one of the most significant places in all of New Zealand. The Waitangi Treaty Grounds is where a treaty was signed between the Maori and the Europeans. We will have lunch here, experience a Kapahaka cultural

performance, and have time for paddling in a waka (Maori canoe). We will also meet a representative of the Maori organization and learn about the work, education and advocacy fostering Maori rights and sovereignty. We will learn about anti-racism efforts behind the Waitangi Tribunal in 1985. Return to our Auckland hotel to enjoy time for dinner together.

January 12 **The Hobbit Movie Set: Green & Gorgeous** (B,L)

After a hearty breakfast, we check out of our hotel and before a brief visit to **Māori and Pasifika Trades Training Auckland**, a group of training and industry organizations working together to help Māori and Pasifika become leaders in the trades. We will learn about their women's vocational training project. Then we are off for our day excursion to the **Hobbiton Movie Set**. This is the beautiful iconic backdrop for the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit movies. The location is the largest "green set" in the world. We will have a "Shire" inspired buffet lunch on site. We then make our way to Tauranga to check in to our hotel where we will reconvene at the hotel for dinner to enjoy the sunset with a facilitated **GirlFriendCircle**.

January 13 **Tauranga: Pottery, Hot Springs, and Honey** (B, L)

Today we explore Tauranga-- a popular destination for outdoor beauty, lush parks and watersports. This harbor side city in the Bay of Plenty region hosts historic buildings and a bridge over the harbor connects Tauranga to Mount Maunganui, a beach town with hot saltwater pools and an extinct namesake volcano with winding walking paths. We start our day with a ceramic making class at **Selena Pottery and Farmstay** with its sweeping views of the Mountain. After lunch, we will enjoy time to visit **the Waiotapu Thermal Wonderland** considered "One of the 20 Most Surreal Places in the World" with its **colored geothermal reserve** and have time to **soak in the hot springs**. We end our day with to visit to the **Redwoods Tree Walk**. The later evening is free to explore the Bay and its biodiversity, or perhaps stroll the town and enjoy dinner.

January 14 **Tauranga: Pick Your Perfect Day!** (B, D)

Today, we will help the group plan whatever day each person most wants! We will have a full day for optional **eco-excursions at the Bay of Plenty**.

Choose from:

- 1) Swimming with Dolphins:** You will have the opportunity to swim with more than just **dolphins**, as the waters of the Bay of Plenty **hold seals, whales, sunfish and blue penguins**. (Dolphin swimming tours depart from Tauranga and have a different style of swimming where you hold onto the back of the boat while it slowly pulls you along, making you seem a lot more interesting to the dolphins.)
- 2) Kayaking:** Or do you prefer kayaking? Waimarino Adventure Park has New Zealand's only kayak slide, The Blob, kayaks, rock climbing,

diving boards, Italian Pedallos and plenty more experiences for a day filled with water and adventure!

3) Hiking: Or, go on one of the gorgeous hikes around the area!

4) Relaxing Or simply spend the day relaxing on a beach, strolling through the town, or finding any other adventure that suits you!

(Note: additional fees will be determined by the activity you choose). We meet back up at 7:30 for dinner together.

January 15 **Fly to Christchurch on the South Island** (B, L)

After breakfast we will check out and then make our way to airport in Auckland. Depending upon the flight times we will have lunch and then we will fly to the **South Island's city of Christchurch**. Christchurch is the most populated city on the island. It is nestled around the gentle River Avon, and with a similarly temperate climate to the south of England, the city was famous for a gothic cathedral, green parks and gardens. We will enjoy a **walking tour from Cathedral Square and visit Canterbury Museum**. We will check into our hotel. Tonight we are free to explore local bars and restaurants together.

January 16 **Oamaru: Penguin Watching Excursion** (B, L)

We check out of our hotel to start our morning with a breathtaking panoramic views of city and explore the cities **street art culture**. We will enjoy local pieces with our guide and end visit at the **Christchurch Art Gallery** (Te Puna O Waiwhetu). Then we are off to Oamaru to **see the world's smallest penguins, in their natural environment**. Blue Penguins nest close to town under the cliff along the historic harbor foreshore. **The Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony** is just beyond the Victorian Heritage Precinct and you are within walking distance of the town center, close to shops, restaurants and accommodation. We will visit their **day time viewing** facility, the blue wing, makes this easy as you look down into the top of 10 nesting boxes through viewing tunnels. We will break for dinner and then enjoy a **special evening viewing** to see the penguins arrive home from their days fishing, in groups that we call 'rafts'; they will walk up the stony ramp in front of you and cross into the breeding colony back to their nesting burrows.

January 17 (B,D)

After breakfast and time for a morning walk we check out and return to Christchurch. Upon arrival we will have free time to enjoy lunch and shop. Then we are off exchange with the **New Zealand Federation of Women's Institutes**. We will learn about their work to encourage and support women in their communities. Established in 1921, they are the largest national women's organization. We will discuss women's issues and their action for gender equality and facilitating friendship and health communities. We will share our GirlFriendCircles model with them. We end our afternoon with a fabulous **Gondola Ride**, to experience stunning 360 degree views and a place to enjoy

our final group photo! We end our journey celebrating together are out
Farewell Dinner.

January 18

(B)

We will check out of the hotel and drive to the airport. Or stay the weekend on your own to wander and explore on your own.

This Journey is Powered by ...

