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New Plymouth Festival of Lights - a 4 day New Zealand Tour



New Plymouth Festival of Lights

Experience one of New Zealand's iconic festivals on our 4 day tour to the TSB Festival of Lights....

This is must see event for garden lovers and should not be missed. Join our small group tour for 4 days as we travel south and west through stunning rural scenery to New Plymouth with an alternative return route to see even more of the less travelled roads of New Zealand. With visits to four of the top gardens, including guided tours - the headline act is our evening visit to view the light displays at Pukekura Park. Plenty of time to see other local sights or just relax at our city central hotel.

25th Jan 2022 \$1595 pp Twin share

Day 1 - Departing the Bay of Plenty we head west, traversing the Waikato and then south through the King Country, making a stop for morning tea, before continuing on to Te Kuiti for a quick rest stop and to see the Colin Meads statue. This legendary All Black is the favourite son of this small King Country town.

Then on towards the rugged west coast for our lunch stop at Mokau and a chance to try some of the famous west coast whitebait at the Whitebait Inn. Situated high above the Mokau River (a significant whitebait fishery) the inn offers great food as well as panoramic views from the mountain to the sea which are breathtaking.

Its then just an hours drive along the coast to New Plymouth, our base for the next 3 nights. Tonight, we have a lovely dinner at our city central 4 star hotel, it's restaurant is rated number 1 on TripAdvisor.

Day 2 - Is our 'Round the Mountain' day, beginning with a guided tour at Pukeiti Gardens. This is a garden of national significance with rhododendrons and other exotics creating an explosion of colour amidst lush native rainforest. Pukeiti is a great place to visit all year round and we can learn stories and secrets of the garden and see it through the eyes of a gardener during our one-hour guided walking tour, with time after for morning tea before departing.

Next we head out into the Taranaki countryside as we travel around Mount Taranaki to Dawson Falls on the southern slopes of the mountain. Time here to take a short walk to view the falls or just relax and enjoy the stunning scenery from the almost 900m elevation. This is also our lunch location today, with plenty of choices for you at the historic Dawson Falls Lodge. This traditional mountain lodge was built in 1896 and its access road offers an unforgettable 6km drive through a tunnel of native forest.

After lunch we travel further around the mountain to Cairnhill Gardens. This gem of a garden has year-round interest and colour, with rhododendron, roses, clematis and mature trees. Paeonies, hosta, heuchera and iris feature strongly amongst the many perennials that nestle in and around the beds of this 'one level' garden, an easy walk.

Arriving back at our hotel, there is time to freshen up before we head out for dinner and the TSB Festival of Lights, which transforms Pukekura Park into a world of light and wonder! Each year there are new light installations to the festival, which adds magic to the park's large exotic specimen tree collection, inter planted within a margin of luxuriant native bush. Highlights are the native orchid and fern collection housed in a partially sunken conservatory. There are many special display gardens, all with the stunning backdrop and views of Mount Taranaki, this really is a must see destination, both day and during the festival at night.

Whats Included:

- 4 days on tour
- 3 nights quality accommodation
- Door to door service (Tauranga area)
- Quality air-conditioned vehicle
- Full commentary by your guide
- All dinners and 2 lunches
- Lunch at the Whangamomona Hotel
- Breakfasts each day
- Visit to Pukekura Park Gardens
- Visit to Cairnhill Gardens
- Visit to Pukeiti Gardens
- Visit to Tupare House and Gardens
- Guided garden tours

You will see:

- Stunning scenery throughout
- The Festival of Lights displays
- Amazing gardens and scenery
- The Whangamomona Hotel
- The Forgotten Highway
- Mt Taranaki and Dawson Falls
- Stratford's Glockenspeil Clock Tower
- Taranaki and The King Country
- Taumarunui and Te Kuiti

Not included:

- Any lunches unless specified*
- Morning/afternoon tea stops*
- Any alcoholic beverages with meals

Day 3 - We make a later start today and with less travelling there is more time to relax. Our first visit is to Tupare House and Garden, just a few minutes drive from our hotel. This is an 'arts and crafts' inspired property - a unique homestead, originally developed by Sir Russell Matthews and his family from 1932. With secluded gardens and elegant borders, Tupare is a real delight and we can soak up the atmosphere of this stunningly landscaped garden and unique homestead.

Tupare has recently earned the NZ Gardens Trust highest six-star rating - a distinction shared by only 13 other locations nationally. Our guided house and garden tour will let us experience the best of the garden as we wander the winding paths cut out of the hillside leading to surprising vistas and intimate garden rooms.

Returning to central New Plymouth, there is time for you to explore this coastal city at your leisure - which is known for its sunny climate, art galleries and beautiful parks. Chance for you to grab a bite to eat at any of the local cafes and browse the shops.

You may want to visit Puke Ariki - a combined museum and library. An amalgamation of the New Plymouth Public Library and the Taranaki Museum, its name (Māori for "hill of chiefs") is taken from the Māori village that formerly occupied the site.

Another option could be the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery & Len Lye Centre - a contemporary art museum and home to the The Len Lye Centre – New Zealand's first institution dedicated to a single artist - the pioneering filmmaker and kinetic sculptor Len Lye. The building itself is stunning - an award winning unique design.

We meet up again in the afternoon to tour some more of the city sights by coach, such as the Te Rewa Rewa Bridge, a pedestrian and cycleway bridge across the Waiwhakaiho River - it's spectacular shape and setting make it a popular landmark.

Along the waterfront we will see the famous Wind Wand - a 48-metre kinetic sculpture, made to designs by artist Len Lye. It is one of the main icons of New Plymouth and also lights up at night.

We return to our hotel for dinner this evening and you have the option to visit Pukekura Park after dinner to see the lights and gardens again.

Day 4 - Today we leave New Plymouth and head home. Leaving the dairy farms of Taranaki behind we make a short stop at the town of Stratford to view the Glockenspiel Clock Tower - the only one of its kind in New Zealand. A glockenspiel resembles a xylophone, but has metal rather than wooden keys. This is one of many Shakespeare-themed features of a town named after the birthplace of William Shakespeare.

We will time our visit to hear the chimes at 10am, when Romeo and Juliet emerge from the glockenspiel, reenacting a scene from Shakespeare's play 'Romeo and Juliet' as the glockenspiel plays for approximately 5 minutes. The wooden figures were made by Nigel Ogle of Hawera's famous Tawhiti Museum.

We continue and travel along SH43 to the famous Whangamomona Hotel - which is our lunch stop today. This is one of New Zealand's most iconic country hotels and also the headquarters of the Republic of Whangamomona. Formed in 1988 by some disgruntled locals annoyed by boundary changes imposed by the district council. Note that Passports can be purchased at the hotel to ensure safe passage through the Republic, or bring your own New Zealand passport to get the all important passport stamp!

After lunch we continue along the 'Forgotten Highway' through stunning native bush, heading north first to Taumarunui for a cafe and rest stop before our final stop of the day at Tokoroa before arriving home in the early evening.

* Please note, that unless specified in the itinerary we do not usually include the cost of lunches or morning and afternoon tea stops in the tour cost, but we always make stops where there are a range of options available so you can choose what you want, and have flexibility to do things on your own if you wish.

All Hinterland multi-day tours can be taken by clients from any region of New Zealand or Australia. Please contact us for details. Additional charges may apply.



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Enquire now

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