



Top of the North Island – 7 Day Itinerary

The top of New Zealand's North Island is famous for fantastic beaches, natural wonders and unique Māori history. Start in the vibrant, multicultural city of Auckland and head north to the beautiful Bay of Islands, renowned for stunning beaches, bays and forests.

The town of Waitomo, to the south of Auckland, is home to an impressive underground labyrinth of caves, rivers and glowworms, while nearby Rotorua is famed for authentic Māori culture and geothermal activity.

Day one

Auckland

Get out on Auckland's stunning Waitemata Harbour to see New Zealand's largest city from the water. [Hire a kayak](#) and paddle to nearby Rangitoto Island, formed by a series of volcanic eruptions between 550 and 600 years ago, join a whale and dolphin safari, or take a fishing charter to hook a tasty snapper or large marlin.

Auckland's also great if you're more inclined to indulge in a spot of retail therapy. Explore Britomart precinct and nearby High Street in the city centre or venture into the upmarket suburbs of Newmarket, Parnell and Ponsonby. Keep an eye out for the boutiques of acclaimed New Zealand designer labels such as Karen Walker, Kate Sylvester, World and Zambesi.

Day two

Auckland and Bay of Islands

Three hours north of Auckland lies the town of [Paihia](#), gateway to the beautiful, sub-tropical Bay of Islands.

The Bay of Islands is a blue, green and gold paradise of bays, forests and beaches and is home to some of New Zealand's most beautiful scenery. It offers great opportunities for diving and wildlife spotting.

Day three

Bay of Islands

Explore the best the Bay of Islands has to offer. Relax on some of New Zealand's most stunning beaches, take a beach or bush walk, swim with dolphins, charter a boat to go fishing or join a cruise to some of the bay's 144 different islands.

For a spot of history, visit the Waitangi Treaty Grounds in Paihia, where New Zealand's founding document, The Treaty of Waitangi, was signed by the English Crown and Māori chiefs in 1840.

Day four

Bay of Islands, Cape Reinga and Hokianga

Visit Cape Reinga, where the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean collide at the northern tip of New Zealand. Known in Māori as 'Te Rerenga Wairua', or 'The Leaping Off Place of Spirits', Māori believe their spirits depart New Zealand from this point to travel back to their spiritual homeland of Hawaiiki.

One of the most popular ways to see the stunning Cape Reinga area is a half-day guided scenic flight tour of coastal Northland. Flights depart from Paihia daily.

On Northland's west coast, try sandboarding down massive dunes on a 4WD tour along Ninety Mile Beach for an adrenalin rush, or explore spectacular Hokianga Harbour, home to the impressive Wairere Boulders.

Day five

Hokianga and Auckland

Waipoua Forest, south of Hokianga Harbour, is home to New Zealand's largest Kauri tree, Tane Mahuta (the lord of the forest), standing 51 metres tall (167 ft). Tours are available if you'd like to discover how the forest's kauri trees are intertwined with the lives of local Māori or the important role they play in the forest's eco-system.

Back in Auckland, head to the waterfront areas of Viaduct Harbour and Wynyard Quarter for dinner and drinks at one of the many restaurants, bars or cafes.

Day six

Auckland, Waitomo and Rotorua

Two and a half hours' drive south of Auckland, the town of [Waitomo](#) is home to an underground labyrinth of caves, rivers and glowworms.

Explore the caves on a guided walking and boat tour or, if you're feeling more adventurous, try a black water rafting tour. Black water rafting allows you to abseil into some of the harder to access parts of the cave system and navigate your way along the underground rivers by inflatable rubber inner tube.

From Waitomo, head east to [Rotorua](#) where you can take in a cultural performance or marvel over bubbling mud pools, dramatic geysers and natural hot springs in New Zealand's Māori culture and geothermal activity hub.

Day seven

Rotorua and Auckland

Return to Auckland to join a cultural tour of [Auckland Museum](#), where you'll learn the significance of the Māori taonga (treasures) within its walls and experience a spine-tingling haka - New Zealand's most famous dance. When you're ready, head to Auckland International Airport to catch your flight home.