



# FAMILY NORTHERN EXPLORER

## ITINERARY



The Family Northern Explorer trip offers brilliant short walks, one big day hike and plenty of beaches for lots of swimming. It is a bit warmer in the 'winterless north' which makes camping all the more enjoyable. Highlights include the remote coastal hike on Day 2 near the Bay of Islands, optional sea kayaking at Whangaroa or Bay of Islands, the feeling of isolation at the very tip of New Zealand at Cape Reinga and sand boarding the giant Te Paki dunes. This trip suits children from the age of about 8 years. For families we make the days more flexible, so if some want to turn back halfway on hikes or take it easy, we can make that work. Just keep your guide informed.

LENGTH	5 days
GRADE	B: No outdoor experience required, just reasonable fitness
START	Auckland – 8:00am, 20m from Sky Tower base, corner Victoria and Federal Streets, Auckland
FINISH	Auckland – 4:00pm (approx.)
DEPARTURES	<b>On demand (minimum of four participants required)</b>
PRICE	Please contact us for pricing. Final price per person depends on group size and final accommodation.

**This is a sample itinerary of what we can offer for custom groups.  
If you have a group of four or more, we can craft a trip that suits your group.**

### “AN INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE”

*Our family (2 adults and 2 older kids) had an incredible experience on this hiking trip led by Malcolm. I honestly believe that this may be the best value for money NZ North island guided hiking experience that one could find. This tour conveniently departs from Auckland - then immediately heads North following the coastline. Within a few hours of starting, we already found ourselves in a cool, dark cave staring at hundreds of sparkling glow worms (with none of the commercial hype associated with other glow worm caves).*

*The remainder of the hiking trip included: beachside camping with great views, day hikes to awesome vista points, exploring the remnants of a historic whaling station, sand-dune surfing, a fun drive on Ninety Mile Beach, walking through an ancient Kauri forest and a successful nighttime kiwi walk (saw at least 2 of these curious flightless birds).*

*Another major highlight was a day spent kayaking with Richard Israel - owner of Northland Sea Kayaking. Richard has loads of experience, knows all the cool spots to explore and has a great sense of humor. The bottom line is that this tour provides a great variety of exposure to all that the Northland of NZ has to offer, in under a week, for a modest price. I have nothing but positive things to say about Malcolm and his great colleagues at Hiking New Zealand / Active Earth Adventures.*

# ITINERARY

## DAY 1 AUCKLAND TO BAY OF ISLANDS

1 km/1 hour hiking

Depart Auckland and follow the east coast northwards taking in a quick stop to supplement supplies for the next 5 days and a cafe for anyone who missed breakfast. We make a short deviation to a limestone cave with one of the best glow worm spectacles in the country then take the back roads to Elliot Bay. Explore this secret coastal spot before driving a few minutes over the hill into the sheltered inland water ways of the Bay of Islands. Set up camp just above the beach at a private campsite. Red-tinged pohutukawa trees (New Zealand Christmas trees) shade hidden coves and swimming beaches here. Have a swim then help out with meal prep and enjoy our first camp dinner. *Includes lunch and dinner*

NOTE: We stop at a cafe at 9:00am if you need to grab some breakfast. Useful things to have in your daypack today are: headlamp/torch, water shoes/closed toe sandals (there is a small cave to explore at lunch time), a pair of shorts, swimsuit, camera, wallet.

## DAY 2 BAY OF ISLANDS

9 km/6 hours hiking

Tumble out of sleeping bags and take a quick swim in the inlet. Refreshed, we break camp and hike northwards, ascending through regenerating native bush to the ridge top overlooking sandy coves and rocky headlands. Catching your breath, gaze out across the bright blue Pacific Ocean. We pass huge steel pots amid the ruins of an old whaling station - a sad reminder of the large number humpback and southern right whales lost to whaling here. Many of New Zealand's first European settlers came for the seal and whale hunt rather than our beautiful environment! Lunch at a cute cove of turquoise water with secret beaches and nikau palms. We then climb to Pukehuia (345m) the highest hill and best viewpoint in the Bay of Islands before a final descent to a perfect bush-fringed bay to enjoy a dip in the clear water. It is a short drive to the historic township of Russell. Then, after we take the ferry across the narrows to Paihia, the main tourist centre of the Bay of Islands, we stop briefly to restock before driving north to our campsite. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner*

## DAY 3 WHANGAROA/BAY OF ISLANDS KAYAKING TO 90 MILE BEACH

7 km/4 hours kayaking

Enjoy the option of guided kayaking (\$100-160) on either open coast, Bay of Islands or Whangaroa Harbour depending on the weather. Using a mix of single and double sea kayaks we kayak along beautiful bush-fringed coastline with red volcanic headlands, island outcrops, and sandy beaches. In Whangaroa, options may include climbing up an old volcanic plug (Dukes Nose) for views, or exploring by kayak the mangrove forests at the head of inlets. Lunch on return followed by a late afternoon drive up to Cape Reinga, passing Ninety Mile Beach and Te Pahi's massive looming sand dunes. Jump out here and impress each other with antics on our sandboards. We continue onwards, setting up a late camp at a beautiful sandy cove next to Cape Reinga. *Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner*





## DAY 4 CAPE REINGA TO KAURI FORESTS

2 km/2 hours hiking

Take the option of a cliff-top walk (or you can drive) to an 'edge of the world' experience at Cape Reinga where the Pacific Ocean meets the Tasman Sea. In the afternoon we leave the Far North and begin the journey southwards, passing through Kaitia, and across the Hokianga Harbour on a vehicle ferry for a fish & chips dinner on the beach before the final 40 minute drive to the Waipoua Forest. Visit New Zealand's biggest kauri tree Tane Mahuta on route. Settle into our basic forestry cabins, then after dinner (and as late as possible) drive 20 minutes to our night-time kiwi walk. The reserve we visit has a population of the endangered North Island brown kiwi whose numbers are nationally dwindling. They are intensively managed and protected from predators. There are no guarantees, but with a bit of patience and cunning we might see a kiwi or two (or they might stumble into us). Great fun and a very rare thing to experience. *Includes breakfast and lunch*

## DAY 5 - KAURI FORESTS

2 km/1 hour hiking

This morning we walk the Trounson Kauri Reserve trail in the shadows of these huge trees. An intensively managed mainland conservation island, surrounded by a sea of farmland, Trounson was once one of the best kauri forests in the country and provides refuge for many threatened species. Like many groves, Trounson is suffering terribly from dieback disease now. We arrive back in Auckland at approximately 4:00pm. *Includes breakfast and lunch*

### Notes:

Because of the adventurous nature of these trips we require a ratio of at least 1 adult per 3 children. If weather conditions limit our kayak option to the Bay of Islands we may spend both of the first two nights in the same campsite, leaving early the third day. Minimum numbers apply to the kayak trip (4). The kayaking is usually in harbour/inland waterways rather than open coast and as we mainly use double kayaks it's generally suitable for youngsters. As this trip can be subject to tide times and sea or storm surge conditions, activities may unfold in a different order than stated above, or loop hikes may reverse.

Your vehicle has snorkelling gear, boogie/sandboards, and a barbecue.



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# LIFE ON THE TRAIL

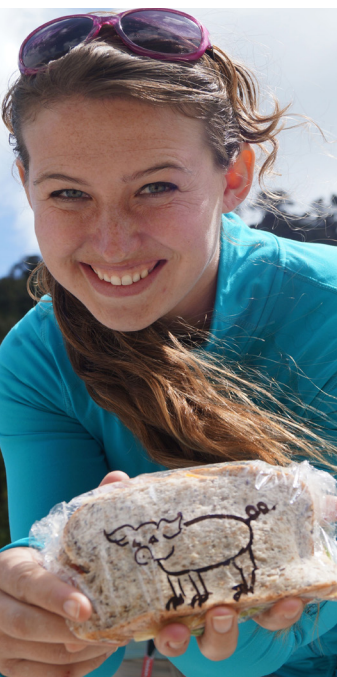
## GRADE B

- Average of 4-5 hours physical activity per day; up to 6 hours.
- At times carrying small backpack of 2-5kgs.
- Tracks generally in good condition.
- Altitude gains of up to 600m on hardest days.
- No hiking experience necessary.
- Reasonable standard of fitness required.
- Some energetic sections and climbs, but includes lots of time for relaxation and other activities.
- Normal fit active kids handle this trip just fine. And the big walk on day 2 has three beaches/swims on-route.



## GUIDES AND SAFETY

An excellent guide can make the difference between a trip of a lifetime and just an ordinary trip. That is why we work hard to make sure we hire the best guides. Our handpicked professionals come from a range of backgrounds. Each has extensive outdoor and hiking experience and a passion for New Zealand's wild and beautiful backcountry. Our guides will ensure that your time with us is truly inspiring, a huge amount of fun and safe. All guides are trained in Outdoor First Aid.



## FOOD

Everybody is involved with the preparation and cooking of meals: barbecues, salads, pancakes, curries, pasta, stir-fries etc. Vegetarian meals are no problem. For all essential dietary requirements we ask that you notify us prior to departure. That way we can cater correctly for your needs. There is always a lot of hiking snacks - muesli bars, chocolate, biscuits fruit and dried fruit. The vehicles carry a full range of cooking equipment including gas burners, frying pans and billies.



## TRANSPORT

We travel in a minibus, towing a trailer with camp equipment and luggage. We average 2-3 hours driving per day. We travel on a range of roads, from sealed highways to dusty, windy, bouncy tracks. We can stop whenever you want to take photos or check out the locals! We try not to drive too much, but occasionally we might need to do a 4-5-hour drive.



## ACCOMMODATION

The trip uses a range of accommodation from camping to basic cabins. We generally camp if the weather is fine so you get to enjoy the outdoors more. In less pleasant weather your guide will arrange accommodation for the group. Note that the accommodation and food costs are included in the price of this trip.

We camp as much as we can in Department of Conservation campsites, and in established campgrounds with showers. We provide 2-person tents for you to sleep in and closed-cell-foam sleeping mats. We frequently have a small campfire. If you require a tent to yourself please let us know in advance.



# LIFE ON THE TRAIL

## ADDITIONAL COSTS

Optional activities: Sea kayaking (NZ\$100-160\*) and fish & chips on night 4.

Optional activities are paid for during the trip.

\*Prices are correct at time of publishing.

## BOOKING CONDITIONS

### Payment

For bookings four or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 95 days prior to your trip.

For bookings within four months of the departure, full payment is required.

### Cancellations

95 days or more prior to departure – 80% refund of the deposit paid OR your full deposit is transferable to a future trip booked directly with Hiking New Zealand

94 to 21 days prior to departure – 80% refund of the full ticket price

20 to 11 days prior to departure – 50% refund of the full ticket price

10 days or less prior to departure – NO REFUND.

### Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.



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# PACKING LIST

## ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- ☐ Hiking boots or shoes (grippy tread) and socks
- ☐ Small day pack
- ☒ **Raincoat**
- ☐ Warm fleece/wool jersey (not cotton)
- ☐ Shorts or lightweight hiking trousers (preferably quick-dry)
- ☐ Long sleeve shirt (for sun protection)
- ☐ 3 pairs of socks
- ☐ Warm hat (optional December to February)
- ☐ Polypro/thermal – top (optional December to February)
- ☐ Sun hat and sunglasses
- ☐ Drink bottle (1 litre)
- ☐ Spare shoes or sandals
- ☐ Insect repellent and sunscreen
- ☐ Dry bag for clothes/valuables
- ☐ Casual clothing for travel and evenings
- ☐ Togs (swimming costume) and towel
- ☐ Warm hat (March to November)

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

Walking poles

### WE SUPPLY

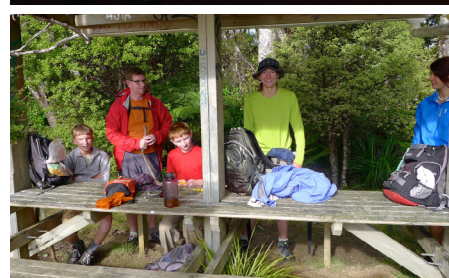
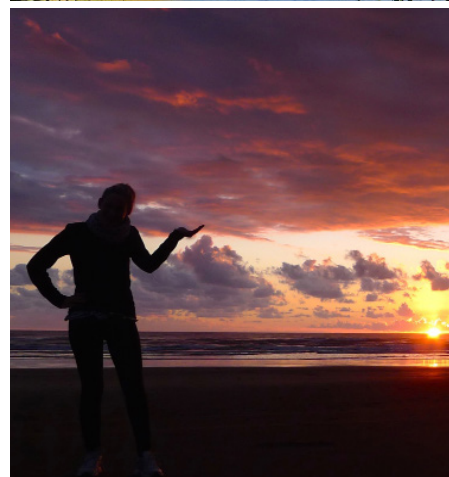
- Emergency first aid kit
- Thermarests (3/4 length)
- Plates, cutlery, mugs, pots, etc.
- Drinking water
- Safety Equipment and maps
- Pillows

## EQUIPMENT HIRE

We have high quality hiking equipment which you can hire for our Hiking Tours. Please arrange hire gear when you book. Requests for a hire equipment must be made at least 5 days before the departure date. (limited childrens sizes available)

Hire gear (NZ\$)	5-7 days trip
Backpack (60 litres)	\$35
Sleeping bag	\$40
Fleece jacket	\$30
Thermal top and long-johns	\$20
Raincoat	\$30
<b>Full set (all of above)</b>	<b>\$130</b>
Gaiters	\$20
Walking pole	\$15 each

It's not always easy packing - feel free to drop us a line if you have any questions.



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# IMPORTANT INFO

Here is a kickstart on a few things you need to know...

## WHEN HIKING

- Stay together. Wait if you have not seen the group for 10 minutes.
  - Wait at all track junctions, huts, or river crossings for everyone to catch up.
  - If you get separated, stop and wait until your guide finds you.
  - Watch out for sunburn. Remember, NZ sun burns fast, wear a hat and sun block at all times until you are familiar with its strength.
  - Drink plenty of water, it is safe to drink from most of the streams in the wilderness without treating the water but do ask.
  - Help and look out for each other on river crossings, bush bashing and rock scrambling.
  - Ensure you have correct clothing - see 'packing' list.
  - Hiking tracks in NZ can be quite muddy and sometimes rough with tree roots and rocks. But this is part of the fun.
  - Snow slopes are extremely dangerous - guide leads on snow.
- No fooling around unless guide gives the OK.

## CROSSING RIVERS

- River crossing accidents are a major cause of fatalities in the NZ wilderness so learning correct techniques from your guide is imperative.
- If your pack has a quick-release hip belt keep it fastened (to prevent the pack riding over your head if you end up swimming). Chest straps and other hip belts should be undone.
- Wear shorts not long pants. If wearing a rain-coat turn up and tuck under hip belt so pockets don't fill with water.
- You must wear boots when crossing rivers.
- To prevent the spread of Didymo (an invasive algae) boots, gaiters, socks etc. must be washed and dried before entering another waterway.

## KAYAKING

- Always attend the safety briefing.
- Always take spare warm clothing in case the weather turns bad.
- Go to the toilet before you get into the kayak.
- Wrap valuables and cameras securely in bags or dry bags and close PROPERLY. Put adsorbent cloth/t-shirt with camera.
- Always stay together.

## CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

- Always attend the safety briefing, know the meet times and 'back up' plans.
- High visibility clothes if road sections.
- Be aware if you are in the front or back of group (otherwise you might be chasing imaginary people).
- Stop to smell the roses - you might be wearing yellow, but its not the Tour de France!
- Helmets are compulsory in NZ.
- In NZ front and rear brakes are opposite to US and Europe.

## CAVING

- Does your torch/headlamp have good batteries - carry spares if you need.
- If you want to take a camera, make sure that it is wrapped securely in plastic bags or dry bags.
- Go to the toilet beforehand.
- Talk to guide if you are nervous about caving beforehand.
- Cave formations take thousands of years to form - please don't touch them unless your guide okays it.

## SWIMMING & BEACHES

Many NZ beaches are too dangerous for swimming, in particular the West Coast beaches.

Where conditions are suitable....

- Talk to your guide before you go swimming and don't swim alone.
- Respect the sea - never turn your back on the sea and watch out for freak waves & rips - even when beach walking.
- If you get into difficulty while swimming - raise one of your hands up above your head - stay calm.

- Be careful entering the sea. Don't run into the sea - there may be rocks below the water.
- For rescues, things that float are - sleeping mats, spare tyre, empty water bottles (jerry cans), thermarests and dry bags stuffed with clothing
- Look for Jellyfish - (check along water edge and don't swim if there are lots about) - treat with vinegar

## HOT POOLS (NATURAL)

- Keep head above water at all times - water may contain amoebic meningitis.
- Watch out for boiling water/mud hazards around and in the pool
- Remove jewellery as it tends to turn green or black.

## FIRES

- Observe all fire bans. Keep fires small, use only dead wood and completely put out with water before leaving and at night (includes wood burners in huts).
- Always have a bucket of water near fire to extinguish it and for burns (or stream/river nearby).
- Be careful when wearing synthetic clothing around fires. Sparks put holes in Gore-Tex and tents.
- Do not use axe without guide's okay - wear boots.

## HYGIENE & TOILETS

- You'll get to a shower mostly every 1-2 days, otherwise there are rivers to have a wash in.
- Keep streams, lakes and rivers clean - when cleaning and washing, take water and wash well away from the water source (drain used water into soil to allow it to be filtered) - all soaps/detergents are harmful to water-life.
- Laundry facilities are limited while on trips (every 2-3 days).
- Always use toilets when they are provided even though long-drops may be a bit rustic!
- In situations where there is no toilet, bury toilet waste. No 1's (pee) off the track - No 2's (poop) in 5-10 cm deep hole 50-100m from any water (lake, river or stream), bury toilet paper, cover up hole with soil/leaf litter. Please do not burn toilet paper.
- Sanitary pads/tampons are treated as rubbish - carried out by user - ask guide for sanitary rubbish bags.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CARE

- Correct hygiene and toilet practices are essential to keep water supplies (rivers, lakes) safe to drink.
  - Remove rubbish - pack it in, pack it out. Please help guide to separate rubbish, recycling and compost.
  - Keep to the track where there is one - protect native plants and animals
  - Respect cultural heritage.
  - Enjoy your visit - camp carefully and leave no trace of your visit.
- Will the next visitor know you have been there?

## OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER...

- Hypothermia - make sure you wear & carry the correct clothing!
- Fitness - hiking all day with a backpack on is hard work, get fit before you come on a kiwi-style trip. If you are fit enough you will be able to take part in all the hikes.
- Hire gear - use the supplied liner with sleeping bags, carry all hire gear in pack not tied to outside. Please tell us if any repairs are required.
- Equipment - it is so easy to lose stuff in shared huts. Help us keep an eye on gear.
- Roads - remember kiwis drive on the left, look carefully when crossing the street for an ice-cream.
- Tipping - it is not expected in NZ to tip for service, but if you feel your guide has done an excellent job, tips will be accepted graciously.

**Thank you for reading. Have a wonderful trip.**

*Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*