GEEO ITINERARY

New Zealand 7/8/2027

Day 1: Auckland Arrive in Auckland at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting in the evening.

Arrive at any time. There are no planned activities until the Welcome Meeting in the evening. The nearest airport is the **Auckland Airport (AKL)**.

Consider arriving 1-2 days early to explore the city, adjust to the time zone, and buffer against flight delays. We can request extra hotel nights for you before the program begins.

Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting
Hotel check-in is normally between 2–3 p.m. Check with reception for the exact time and location of the group welcome meeting, typically between 5–7 p.m. Please make every effort to attend this meeting. If you're running late, send a message in the group WhatsApp or call the emergency number on your trip voucher so that your tour leader can let you know where and when to meet the group.

After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another.

> **Joining Instructions**
> Taxi: $70-80 USD, approximately 30 minutes.
> Super Shuttle: ($33 for 1 person + $8 per additional passenger | ~1hr) A 24-hour door-to-door shuttle service. Boards outside the terminal.
> SkyDrive Express Bus: ($18 NZD / ~$12 USD per person | ~1hr) Departs from outside the airport terminal every 10-15 minutes. Terminates at Sky Tower, which is a 20-minute walk from the hotel. *Note: If you have heavy luggage, the Super Shuttle may be a better option for door-to-door service*.

Day 2: Auckland/Rotorua While en route to Rotorua, stop at the Waitomo Glowworm Caves. Take a boat ride through this spectacular underground realm to see thousands of flickering glowworms light up in the dark.

Drive to the lakeside town of Rotorua, situated over an active geothermal zone and known for its volcanic features and rich Maori heritage. Stop en route at the Waitomo Glowworm Caves, where you enjoy a peaceful boat ride through 30-million-year-old caverns covered with magical glowworms that are unique to New Zealand. Hundreds of thousands of these tiny creatures radiate luminescent light in underground caves carved by rivers and time.

Approximate travel time: 7-8 hrs by private vehicle

Day 3: Rotorua/Maori Village Visit Rotorua and opt to check out the geothermal area or go whitewater rafting. In the evening, visit a Maori village for traditional ceremonies, a Hangi meal, and entertainment.

Rotorua sits over an active volcano and is home to a number of amazing geothermal parks with bubbling mud pits and multi-colored pools. Opt to visit one of the sites, like Hell's Gate, or go whitewater rafting nearby.

Visit the Mitai Maori Village and learn the story of Tamatekapua's migration to Aotearoa via the *Te Arawa* canoe and the Māori/Pasifika connection told in dance form. Enjoy a delicious Hangi meal, similar to a

Hawaiian lū‘au, with dishes such as chicken, sweet potato (kumara), and lamb steamed over heated rocks.

Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner

Day 4: Rotorua/Wellington Take in the ever-changing scenery of the North Island and travel to the capital, Wellington.

Pack a book and download your favorite podcasts in preparation for a long travel day on the North Island to the capital, Wellington. We will have stops along the way in places like the mighty Haka Falls and the ‘Gumboot capital of NZ’, Taihape.

Approximate travel time: 7-8 hrs by private vehicle
Meals included: Breakfast

Day 5: Wellington Enjoy the atmosphere in this relaxed but lively city. After an orientation walk, enjoy a free day to explore.

Take a brief orientation walk in Wellington with your tour leader. After the orientation walk, enjoy a free day to explore. Opt to take the cable car up to the botanical gardens or visit the Te Papa Museum, home to historical Maori artifacts and modern exhibits. Find the stairwell just outside the entrance and descend into the foundations of the building to see how the museum is constructed on shock absorbers to withstand New Zealand’s many earthquakes.

If you opt for a guided tour of the Weta Workshop, you will get a unique behind-the-scenes look at how the workshop helps design some of the world’s biggest films. Get up close and personal with props from *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Day 6: Wellington/Kaikoura Fly to the South Island, then travel to the seaside town of Kaikoura.

Fly from Wellington to Christchurch on the South Island, then travel by bus to Kaikoura, known for its diverse marine life. Stop at a local winery and opt to sample some of the wines produced on site.

Approximate travel time: 1 hr by plane, 3 hrs by private vehicle
Meals included: Dinner

Day 7: Kaikoura/Hanmer Springs Enjoy a free morning by the sea in Kaikoura. In the afternoon, travel to Hanmer Springs.

During a free morning in Kaikoura, opt to follow in the path of Paikea, the Maori “whale rider,” and head out to the open seas in search of Giant Sperm Whales as they spray and dive their way through the waters off Kaikora. Or search for wild dusky dolphins; depending on conditions, most groups have 20-40 minutes of swim time with the dolphins.

Next, travel to Hanmer Springs. Upon arrival in Hanmer Springs, opt to take a soak in the hot springs.

Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle

Day 8: Hanmer Springs/Franz Josef Take in the scenery while traveling across

the Southern Alps to the South Island's West Coast.

Stretch out and enjoy the stunning scenery while traveling across the Southern Alps from Hanmer Springs to Franz Josef. The Southern Alps mountain range extends along much of the length of New Zealand’s South Island. Franz Josef is in the rugged and remote West Coast, where you will stay in the rainforest near the world’s fastest-moving glacier. The Māori refer to the area as Waiau.

Approximate travel time: 8 hrs by private vehicle (including stops)
Meals included: Breakfast

Day 9: Franz Josef Enjoy a free day to explore the area around Franz Josef. Opt to explore the glacier with a heli hike.

There are plenty of optional activities in the area to suit just about any budget and preference. Feel free to relax, or try optional activities like heli hiking, glacier valley walking, quad biking, lake kayaking, or a hot pool visit. Your tour leader has more ideas if you need them. Just ask!

During a helicopter hike, you can take a once-in-a-lifetime helicopter ride high up on Franz Josef Glacier, and then hop out and trek on the white and blue ice. Or you can take a guided interpretive walk that follows ancient glacial pathways carved into the landscape by ice and water along the Franz Josef glacier’s retreat. If you’d rather ride than walk or fly, a two-seater ATV quad bike is a great way to explore rainforests, riverbeds, grasslands, sand, and mud. You can also explore the stunning Lake Mapourika by kayak; the lake was created as the Franz Josef glacier retreated 14,000 years ago.

Note: Optional activities in Franz Josef are strictly subject to weather conditions and may be cancelled at short notice

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 10: Franz Josef/Queenstown Travel through the scenic countryside from Franz Josef to Queenstown.

Continue to Queenstown, the adventure capital of the world. With beautiful scenery and tons of activities, there’s something for everyone. Enjoy the great nightlife.

Approximate travel time: 8-9 hrs by private vehicle

Day 11: Queenstown Enjoy free time in Queenstown. With beautiful scenery and tons of activities, there's something for everyone.

During you free time in Queenstown, opt to go bungee jumping (“bungy” in New Zealand, its birthplace), jet boating (also born here!), skydiving, paragliding, hiking, or mountain biking. Or take it a little slower and travel by gondola to the top of a local peak.

Opt to pre-book a Queenstown jet boating activity along the Shotover River ahead of time. Imagine a fast-paced whitewater ride with sharp turns and spins expertly navigated by a trained driver. Just email travel@geeo.org after booking to sign up.

If you prefer a slower pace, discover the breathtaking Lake Wakatipu aboard the TSS Earnslaw, a traditional steamship that was first launched in 1912. This 90-minute cruise highlights the stunning alpine scenery that surrounds Queenstown and lets you check out the views while relaxing on deck.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 12: Queenstown Enjoy the stunning scenery of Fiordland National Park and Doubtful Sound on a day cruise.

Cruise through the stunning Doubtful Sound, one of the most untouched, remote places in the world. The only way to get here is by boat across Lake Manapouri, then bus across Wilmont Pass to Doubtful Sound. Marvel at the steep cliff walls and cascading waterfalls, and keep an eye out for area wildlife: dolphins, penguins, seals, and a variety of birds. This isolated part of New Zealand is truly a special place! Take in the waterfalls and wildlife, then return to Queenstown for the night.

Approximate travel time: 6 hrs (Queenstown – Doubtful Sound round-trip) by private vehicle
Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch

Day 13: Queenstown/Tekapo Visit Aoraki/Mt. Cook National Park and spend the afternoon hiking the region, taking in the alpine scenery.

Head through the center of the South Island New Zealand's highest peak, Mt. Cook. Learn more about mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary at the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park visitor centre. Aoraki/Mount Cook is both a village, a national park, and the name of New Zealand's highest mountain. Located in central South Island, the park includes a mix of rocks and glaciers, as well as alpine plants including the world's largest buttercup, the Mount Cook lily. There are several short hikes that offer spectacular views.

Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle
Meals included: Breakfast

Day 14: Tekapo/Christchurch Continue on to Christchurch and learn about how the city was rebuilt following an earthquake in 2011. Enjoy one final night together with the group.

Travel to the Garden City of Christchurch, a little piece of England in New Zealand, still recovering from a devastating earthquake.

Once in Christchurch, take a brief orientation walk with your tour leader, and enjoy free time with your travel companions on your last night in New Zealand.

Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle

Day 15: Christchurch Depart at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Christchurch at any time. The nearest airport is **Christchurch Airport (CHC)**. If you wish to extend your stay in Christchurch, consider requesting post-trip accommodation with us.

Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk.

Meals included: Breakfast

Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive 10% off the lesser value program(s), up to 3 programs per year.
Interested in extending your time abroad? Beyond our educator programs, we can also help you book from G Adventures' extensive catalog of tours. These tours aren't tailored to educators the way our programs are, but booking through GEEO means you'll receive a discounted

educator rate while supporting our nonprofit work.

Where you'll stay

The hotels listed below reflect the properties expected to be used for this program. Final accommodations are subject to change based on group size, availability, or seasonality. The confirmed start and end hotels are listed on your trip voucher:

Day 1 Auckland (Jul 8): Oaks Auckland Hotel

Day 2 Rotorua (Jul 9): Sudima Lake Rotorua

Day 3 Rotorua (Jul 10): Sudima Lake Rotorua

Day 4 Wellington (Jul 11): Naumi Studio Hotel Wellington

Day 5 Wellington (Jul 12): Naumi Studio Hotel Wellington

Day 6 Kaikoura (Jul 13): The White Morph

Day 7 Hanmer Springs (Jul 14): Drifters Inn Hanmer Springs

Day 8 Franz Josef (Jul 15): Rainforest Retreat

Day 9 Franz Josef (Jul 16): Rainforest Retreat

Day 10 Queenstown (Jul 17): Heartland Hotel Queenstown

Day 11 Queenstown (Jul 18): Heartland Hotel Queenstown

Day 12 Queenstown (Jul 19): Heartland Hotel Queenstown

Day 13 Lake Tekapo (Jul 20): Godley Hotel

Day 14 Christchurch (Jul 21): Bealey Quarter

****Itinerary Disclaimer****: While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.*